

# THE STILLWATER CATHOLIC

SERVING ST. FRANCIS XAVIER AND ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISHES

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 “Therefore Go and Make Disciples of All Nations”  
Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards
- 3 November is a Time for Thanksgiving
- 4 The Gift of the Most Holy Eucharist
- 6 An Update on Our New Church Project

## Forming “Living Stones” Through Greater Hospitality

A church is so much more than the bricks and mortar from which it is built. At its heart, a church is about its members each coming together in worship of our Eucharistic Lord. As such, it is meant to be a place of warmth and love, allowing us all to experience a taste of heaven here on earth – a place where our relationships with Christ and one another are nurtured and deepened. As Pope Francis states, “The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 114). That’s why parishioner Mary Davenport is so excited about the upcoming plans at St. Francis Xavier to expand our Hospitality Ministry.

“God has truly blessed the Catholic Community in Stillwater!” Mary says. “We have a new church and facility to worship, grow, serve, and connect. However, the people are the true living stones. Hospitality, one of the Four Pillars of Stewardship, will play an important part in helping our parish become a warm, welcoming and inviting atmosphere for everyone. We are a Catholic family! As a family, we want everyone to have that feeling of belonging, to encourage involvement and make them all feel truly appreciated.”

Continuing its tradition of greeting parishioners before weekend liturgies, this newly expanded ministry hopes to take hospitality to even greater heights, more fully encompassing parish life. There will be a permanent welcome kiosk where new parishioners and visitors can learn more about St. Francis Xavier Parish and our Stillwater Catholic community. This will also be an excellent tool for providing information about various ministries,

*continued on back cover*

NOVEMBER 2017

*“Therefore Go and Make Disciples of All Nations”*

## Evangelization, the Church, and Our Commitments as Stewards

According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus’ parting words to us before He ascended to heaven after His resurrection included these instructions: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

That is, quite frankly, a call to evangelization. Clearly, evangelization is not new to the Church – it is traced to that call from Jesus Christ, a call to His apostles and followers of that time, and that call continues today in relation to us and our lives as Catholics. “Evangelization” has become a bit of a “catchphrase” in today’s Church. Of course, it is not a new idea, nor is it a new call.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis’ absolute first publication – officially an apostolic exhortation – was titled *Evangelii Gaudium*, which means “The Joy of the Gospel.” In that document, the pope had much to say about evangelization, including this: “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.”

Nevertheless, the idea of evangelization is nothing new. Pope St. John Paul II issued an encyclical in December 1990 titled *Redemptoris Missio* – “The Mission of the Redeemer” – in which he called for the church to renew its efforts in evangelization. This has become known as the “new evangelization,” but within, what Pope St. John Paul II says is that the Church “must renew her missionary commitment.” He adds, “Faith is strengthened when it is shared and given to others.”

Yet, it would seem that some Catholics resist this call to evangelization, perhaps recalling images of street preachers, television evangelists or door-to-door groups saying

“repent” or talking about the “wages of sin.” Or, we may feel that evangelization is the role of saints or missionaries or Catholic priests. The truth is that evangelization is born from a love of people and a desire that everyone comes to know the love of Christ and the blessings of living as part of His Kingdom.

Over a decade before Pope St. John Paul II addressed this issue, Pope Paul VI issued an apostolic exhortation in 1975 titled *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – “Evangelization in the Modern World” – in which the pope said, “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing of all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.”

So, what does this mean to us as faithful stewards? Obviously, each of us is called to be an evangelist. That does not mean we go door-to-door or stand on street corners proclaiming our faith. Our own mission statement has a strong flavor of evangelization, especially because of our effort to embrace stewardship as a way of life. In recent years, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued two pastoral letters – one called *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy of Catholic Evangelization*, and the other titled *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*. The connection between stewardship, evangelization and discipleship is obvious, it would seem.

Pope Francis also said in his first official statement *Evangelii Gaudium* the following: “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ.” That is who we are, or who we should be.



# November is a Time for *Thanksgiving*

Dear Parishioners,

**N**ovember seems to automatically bring us to thoughts of thanksgiving and Thanksgiving – it is both a time of year when we tend to think in terms of gratitude to God, and a time when we also formally celebrate our American holiday. Our memories of Thanksgiving are filled with food, of course, but they are also filled with thoughts of family and a sense of togetherness and a sense of our faith.

But this is also a significant month in the Church from a number of perspectives. Nov. 1 is a Holy Day, the Solemnity of All Saints. The next day is All Souls Day, a day devoted to all the saints in our lives – living, not living, known, and unknown.

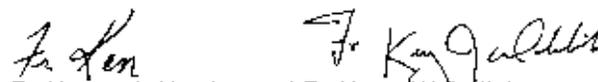
Most of us have people in our lives who have had a profound impact on us – people we can consider our own personal saints. This month is a wonderful reminder to think of them, thank them, and thank God for making them a part of our lives.

Our Thanksgiving holiday falls on Nov. 23, and is a time for families and gratitude. Thanksgiving became official in the United States in 1863, and in his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln made very clear Whom we needed to thank. “To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which

are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God,” Lincoln said. In other words, we all need to thank Almighty God for our many blessings.

Finally, November also brings us to the end of one Church year and the beginning of a new one. The Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 26 officially begins the final week of our liturgical year, and the First Sunday of Advent is on Dec. 3. From the beginning of the month when we thank God for the example of the saints and the saintly people in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God, about approaching each day, and about approaching all those with whom we come in contact, with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Kenneth Harder and Fr. Kerry Wakulich  
Pastors

*That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God,  
about approaching each day, and about approaching all those with  
whom we come in contact, with hearts filled with gratitude and love.*

## THE GIFT

# Most Holy

By Rev. Lawrence

**“T**he Jews quarreled among themselves saying, ‘how can this Man give us his flesh to eat.’” – John 6:52

The murmuring or quarrel among the Jews after Jesus’ teaching about eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, as contained in the Gospel of John chapter 6, has continued among many persons till this day. Many have argued that Jesus only spoke figuratively or even metaphorically especially when one considers the “I am” sayings of Jesus in the same Gospel of John. If Jesus spoke figuratively or metaphorically and the Jews misunderstood him and started walking away (John 6:66), why didn’t Jesus call them back to clarify His teaching?

Jesus’ offer of His Body and Blood as real food and drink is indeed the “new manna” that came down from heaven, unlike the manna the people of Israel ate in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4-35). This real food and drink is given by Jesus for “the life of the world” and whoever eats it “will live forever” (John 6:51). This food is understood in the Catholic Church as the Holy Eucharist, the very Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Church really believes in the real presence of Jesus in the holy Eucharist. Going through all the texts of the institution of the holy Eucharist in Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and the discourse in John 6, there is no indication that Jesus meant a figurative usage when he said, “This is my body,” “This is my blood.” There is enormous evidence to show that even from the apostolic period and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, Christians believed that the Holy Eucharist is the Real Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Didache, known as the teachings of the 12 Apostles, and in use by the first century, we see detailed instructions on the celebration of the Eucharist. Here, the Eucharist is seen as the True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In St. Clement of Rome (99 A.D), an Apostolic Father, we see him encouraging his colleagues (fellow Bishops) to offer the Eucharist in a holy and blameless manner for it is indeed the Body and Blood of the Lord (*Letter to the Corinthians*, 40, 41, 42). For St. Ignatius of Antioch (35-107 A.D), an Apostolic Father, he attacked the “Docetists” (those who denied the incarnation) who stay away from prayers and the Eucharist for thinking that the Eucharist is not the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Letter to the Smyrneans*, 7:1). St. Polycarp of Smyrna (69-155 A.D), also an Apostolic Father, was the disciple of St. John the evangelist. Like his contemporary St. Ignatius of

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Antioch, he attacked the “Docetists.” At his martyrdom, he prayed God to accept his body about to be burned at the stake like the “sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Further evidence shows that the Fathers and Theologians in the subsequent centuries in the Catholic Church devoted time to expounding the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. In St. Irenaeus (130-200 A.D.), an Apologist, we discover “the finest expression of Systematic Theology” in the 2nd century. He draws attention rather to the effect of the Eucharist in our lives. According to him, we look forward to the “resurrection of our bodies because they have been nourished by the cup which is His (true) blood and by the bread which is His (true) body” (*Cfr. Against Heresies*). There is also a beauty of expression of “the real presence” in the thoughts of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom. They paid attention to what happens at the consecration during Mass. The thoughts of St. John Chrysostom are very beautiful. In one of his homilies, he said that “it is not man that causes what is present (bread and wine) to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified. The Priest is the representative when he pronounces those words, but the power and the grace are those of the Lord. The (spoken) word ‘This is my body’, ‘This is my Blood’...changes the things that lie before us...” For St. Augustine on his part, “that which you see is bread and the cup, which even your eyes declare to you; but as to that in which your faith demands instruction, the bread is the body of Christ, the cup is the blood of Christ... these things are called sacraments for this reason, that in them

one thing is seen, another thing is understood.” The list of evidence is indeed endless.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “in the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained*’” (CCC, 1374). This is brought about by the fact that during “the consecration of the bread and wine [at Mass] there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation” (CCC, 1376).

For a worthy reception of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, Christians are expected to approach the altar with reverence and devotion. They are to be conscious of Who they are going to receive in the Eucharist, and not just because every other person on their seats are going to receive! They are to strive to be in the state of grace, without mortal sins (this, of course, is the official teaching of the Church). In appreciation of the gift of Jesus Himself in the Holy Eucharist, I encourage all Christians to read and meditate regularly on John chapter 6, 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* numbers 1322 – 1429.

I will conclude with the words of St. Francis of Assisi: “Let the entire Man be seized with fear; let the whole world tremble; let heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the Living God, is on the altar in the hands of the priest” (*Letter to Friars*). What a great gift we have in the Holy Eucharist!

## An Update on Our



*Photo 1, Oct. 10, progress on North Drive, looking east, by Larry Hoberock*



*Photo 2, Oct. 6, masonry progress on east and west towers, looking northwest, by Mark Pruitt*



*Photo 7, Oct. 6, elevator installation underway, ground floor, looking south, by Mark Pruitt*



*Photo 4, Oct. 6, teen lounge and stage, looking west, by Mark Pruitt*

Since our last update, progress slowed a bit on outside work due to extensive rain. At least three more workdays were lost over this period, bringing to 40 the total workdays lost since the project began. While Nabholz has not formally claimed these days to extend the project, they have the right to do so, although they, as well as we, hope not to do this.

In spite of the delays on outside work, the north drive concrete work is almost finished (Photo 1), and work began on the west drive during the third week of October. Progress continues on the final phase of masonry work on the east and west towers (Photo 2). Scaffolding has

been removed, signaling completion of the masonry work on the west transept, shown in Photo 3.

Interior progress has been good. The teen lounge is almost finished (Photo 4), and the gym floor, wall pads, and basketball goals have been installed (Photo 5). Kitchen equipment has been delivered and placed (Photo 6), and hook-up is underway. At long last, the elevator to the choir loft and balcony has been delivered, and installation is underway (Photo 7). Progress on the nave installing GFRG (graphite-fiber-reinforced gypsum) architectural details continues, but as of press time of this newsletter, the ceiling ribs have not yet been delivered. Delivery of these was expected by the end of October.

# New Church Project



*Photo 3, Oct. 6, west transept entrance, looking northeast, by Mark Pruitt*



*Photo 5, Oct. 18, gym floor, wall pads, and one of two basketball goals, looking southwest, by Larry Hoberock*



*Photo 6, Oct. 6, kitchen equipment in place, looking southwest, by Mark Pruitt*



*Photo 8, Oct. 6, nave progress from the balcony, looking northeast, by Mark Pruitt*

We were recently notified that our first shipment of reredos, altar, and associated statues arrived at the Port of Houston from Italy this week, will be sent by rail to Dallas, and then shipped by truck to Stillwater. The CONEX container for all of this is expected to arrive at our site before the end of October. Also, the giclée reproductions of the Leonard Porter paintings of the Stations of the Cross arrived and are in storage. Unfortunately, the frames in which these are to be mounted will not likely be here in time to mount these for Lent 2018.

As we draw nearer to the finish of this fantastic project, which has captured the imagination of all who have seen it, let us give thanks to God for this sterling oppor-

tunity to give glory to His name, help stir all our brothers and sisters to renewed commitment to their faith, and bring others into the fold. As always, many thanks to all who have completed their pledge payments and to those who are continuing with their payments. Such a project requires all of us to do our parts.

*Answers to names of reredos statues of apostles in the October Church Project Update feature: Photo 6 – left St. Paul; right St. Peter; Photo 7 – St. John the Evangelist; Photo 8 – St. James. Did you notice the modern representations of writings? Three of the apostles hold books, but books were not invented at the time these apostles lived – writings were done on scrolls.*

# THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF STILLWATER

## St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

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### St. Francis Xavier

#### Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil, 5 p.m.

Sunday, 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 1 p.m. (Español)

#### Daily Mass

Tuesday - Thursday, 8 a.m., Friday, 12:10 p.m.

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday, 5:45 - 7 p.m.

Saturday, 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### St. John the Evangelist

#### Sunday Mass

Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5 p.m. during semester

#### Daily Mass

Mondays at 12:10 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 5:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 12:10 p.m. & 9 p.m. during semester

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Change Service Requested

## Living Stones *continued from front cover*

which will help to bring new members into parish life right away. New parishioners will also be personally contacted by Hospitality Ministry volunteers, making them feel even more welcomed by the faith community. Because parking for the new church will be mostly downhill, the ministry hopes to eventually obtain funds to purchase golf carts that can help transport elderly and those needing assistance to the church entrances.

All of this will be done with the intention of creating a greater family environment, drawing old and new parishioners alike into the life of the parish community.

“Our goal is to create a warm, welcoming, and inviting atmosphere where everyone feels greeted with ‘open arms’ of love – a place where all can worship, grow, serve, and connect with one another,” Mary says.

Only by fostering a greater spirit of hospitality can we grow into our full potential as a parish. As Mary says, when everyone feels welcomed and appreciated, we are able to grow in that spirit of “love and camaraderie.” This in turn, adds parishioner Damona Doye, helps make people want to continue coming back, becoming increasingly active members of our faith community.

“I am hopeful that through this ministry, people will find our new church warm and welcoming, which will lead them to become active members and not just passive churchgoers,” Damona says. “Having more active members will allow us to offer more types of ministry and be more visible in the community through service.”

*To help this ministry grow into its full potential, the Hospitality Ministry is actively seeking both new members and leadership. All that is needed is someone with a ready smile and a passion for creating a more hospitable environment. For more information or to get involved, please contact Mary Davenport at 405-747-5651 or [mary@teamstillwater.com](mailto:mary@teamstillwater.com), Angela Pradia 405-762-9405 or [angie\\_mylady@yahoo.com](mailto:angie_mylady@yahoo.com), or Damona Doye 405-612-4967 and [damona.doye@yahoo.com](mailto:damona.doye@yahoo.com).*