

December 2023

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MEET PARISHIONERS DAVE AND GEORGIA PAULS

*Living out Intentional Stewardship
by Sharing Gifts of Time and Talent*

Dave and Georgia Pauls have been parishioners here since 1995. Being close to two different parishes at the time, they chose to join St. Patrick's.

"St. Patrick's was the one we felt most at home at," Dave says.

Over the years, Dave and Georgia have been involved in many ministries and raised their six children in the parish. Around the time when they joined the parish, a friend of theirs asked if Dave might consider teaching in Religious Education. He agreed and taught in the program for many years. Georgia still serves in the program.

Shortly after joining the team for Religious Education, Dave had another friend invite him to join the Sacristan Ministry.

"It just grew from there," he says.



Dave and Georgia Pauls have been parishioners at St. Patrick's since 1995.

"Those two people coming to me are what prompted me to get involved."

Today, Dave and Georgia remain active participants in the parish community. Dave serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, frequents Eucharistic

Adoration, participates in the Knights of Columbus, and serves on the Stewardship Committee and Pastoral Council. He also helps out with the Newcomers' Reception about twice a year and leads the committee for it.

Georgia is a member of the Vocations Committee, and together, she and Dave are mentors in the FOCCUS program for couples considering marriage. For them, sharing their stewardship gifts through service to the Church is an important part of their lives as Catholics.

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St. Patrick

CATHOLIC CHURCH

STEWARDSHIP OF TALENT

Bring Your Gifts to the Spotlight!

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling overlooked — and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are uniquely blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder at the thought of a classroom full of 5-year-olds,

and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks — cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

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A Letter From Our Pastor

ADVENT:

Receiving Gratefully and Sharing Generously as His Disciples

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

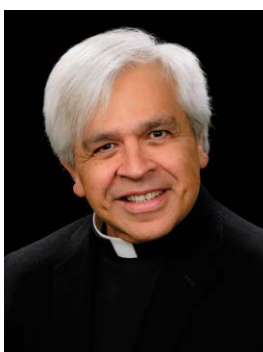
A few weeks ago, we changed our clocks from Daylight Savings Time to Standard Time. For us, that meant moving our clocks back an hour on a Saturday night before going to bed. Though we now have light earlier in the day, each day we are losing some more daylight.

As we live through these darkest days of the year, our Church also celebrates Advent and Christmas this month. Advent is a time of hopeful anticipation of what is to come — the Second Coming of Christ and the celebration of His birth. As Advent moves us to the darkest day of the year, we embrace the themes of hope, peace, love, and joy. As the amount of light in each day begins to grow, we celebrate that the Light entered into its creation in the birth of Jesus.

Each Sunday is an opportunity, as we light a new candle on the Advent wreath, to reflect on how these four themes are lived out in our lives as disciples.

Hope — No matter what comes in our life, can we live in a spirit of hope in our Lord who is always with us? Can our confidence in God's amazing and generous love sustain us even in the darkest moments of life?

Peace — So many things can try to rob us of peace: the death of a loved one, job loss, busyness, economic uncertainty, and success to name a few. Can we trust the Prince of Peace enough to know that we are not



alone, that both God and His people are with us in all times?

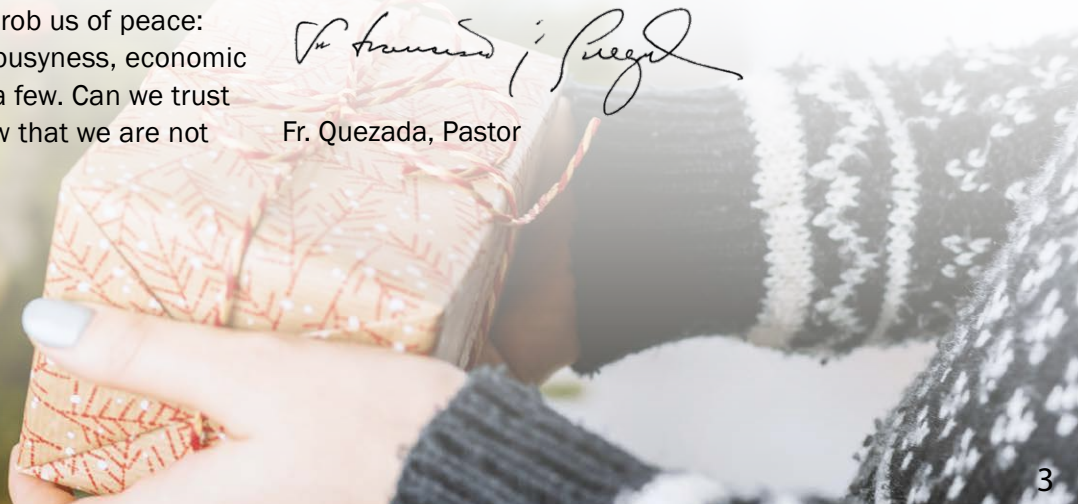
Joy — This Advent, instead of looking for external sources of joy, can we give time to our Lord in prayer, forming a deeper relationship with Christ and allowing Him to become our fountain of joy?

Love — Can we take time this Advent to savor the many loving relationships of our life, especially our relationship with Jesus, the Father, the Holy Spirit, the saints, our parish community, and our loved ones? Embracing this love will help us to look forward with joyful anticipation to the fullness of the Kingdom of God that awaits us.

God did not make us for darkness but rather for His light. May this Advent and Christmas fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love so that we live every day as children of God's light with a renewed spirit, receiving gratefully and sharing generously as disciples of Jesus.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Quezada, Pastor





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REFLECTIONS ON THE SEASON

A Call to Prayer and



As we enter into the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we are invited to celebrate the greatest moment in history — the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. To help us prepare and fully immerse ourselves in these seasons, Fr. Francisco has shared some beautiful insights and reflections.

“The season of Advent is a time of preparing for the coming of God,” he says. “It is a time to calm our spirit to listen for the coming Lord. As we see with Elijah, He comes in a whisper. We have to step out of the normal

mapping of our lives to hear the words of God.”

The season of Advent focuses us on the reality that God became man. Unfortunately, the world has obscured this season of spiritual preparation by commercializing it and declaring it as the time to buy gifts and decorate to impress your friends and family. This Advent, we are all encouraged to resist the hustle and bustle of the commercialized holiday season and slow down through family prayer and acts of charity.

“As Christians, we are part of society and live in the world, but are not to be of the world,” Fr. Francisco says. “This is the struggle of the disciple — to live this out.”

By being bogged down with the many shopping sales and otherworldly celebrations during the lead-up to Christmas, many experience a sort of holiday stress. This is the exact opposite of what Advent is really about.

Accompanying the need to calm our spirits and prepare our hearts for the coming of God, Fr. Francisco emphasizes the importance of charitable works during this season.

“The heart of Christmas is tending to the poor,” Fr. Francisco says. “All Christians are called to remember the poor during Christmas.”

As Jesus enters the world into an impoverished state, being born in the manger of the Christmas crèche, we are reminded of the poverty around us and should take this time to imitate Christ’s love for the poor.

“This parish historically tends to the poor all year round,” Fr. Francisco says. “The St. Martin de Porres Apostolate and St. Raphael Ministry are two good examples. During Advent, we focus on a group of people who are poor with the St. Nicholas Advent Tree. This year we will be sending the items collected by the Advent Tree to our senior citizens — the elderly who are in assisted living facilities.”

All are encouraged to donate to the Advent Tree and to

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SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Tending to the Poor

do other small acts of charity during the Christmas season.

Christmas is more than just a single day of celebration – it is a season that starts on Dec. 25 and ends on the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord.

“Christmas is a time to feast on the reality that God came to be – the incarnation,” Fr. Francisco says.

During this season, three practical approaches can help us celebrate properly – the first is to pray together as a family, the second is to embrace your family members with love, and the third is to find peace in Christ.

This year Christmas Eve is also the fourth Sunday of Advent, which means that we will have a packed 24 hours of liturgical celebration. Sunday morning Masses on Dec. 24 will be said for the fourth Sunday of Advent. That afternoon, there will be Christmas Masses at 4:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and midnight. On Dec. 25, Christmas Day, Masses will be celebrated at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. We all must remember to go to Mass both Sunday mornings for our fourth Sunday of Advent obligation and again to one of the Christmas Masses!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 3 – First Sunday of Advent

Dec. 8 – Immaculate Conception Holy Day

Dec. 9 – Men’s Retreat, *Sponsored by That Man is You! and the Knights of Columbus*

We will have our **Christmas Food Baskets** again this year.

The **St. Nicholas Giving Tree** will benefit those in nursing homes and assisted living homes.





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CREATING FAITHFUL ADVENT TRADITIONS

As the Christmas season approaches, it is easy to get swept up in the commercialism that tells us Christmas begins on Black Friday. But Advent-centered traditions are a simple way to differentiate between the two seasons. Traditions can help us embrace what this season truly means and allow us to consider ways to enter into careful preparation for the birth of the Christ Child with our families.

While hanging stockings, consider hanging one for Jesus so family members can place “gifts” in the stocking for Him. These can be commitments made on a notecard offering to give up desserts during the week or promising to do one extra chore for another family member. Advent can be as much of a time for fasting and almsgiving as the season of Lent – after all, both seasons prepare our hearts for a great feast of the Church.

Need more ideas? Create a manger bed for Jesus. For every good deed that a member of your family performs, place some straw in a small manger displayed somewhere

prominently in your home. By Christmas, there will be a fitting bed in which the Christ Child can be placed. Or consider participating in a gift outreach and make the shopping experience for that gift a family outing. By focusing on the person who will receive the gift, you will help make the act of shopping more meaningful.

While there are many activities to help prepare our hearts for the Christmas celebration, nothing centers us more securely in this season of Advent than participating in the liturgy. Try to attend parish penance services or take part in service opportunities organized by our parish ministries. As a family, spend time with the Blessed Sacrament in Eucharistic Adoration, reminding your children that the Christ Who dwells there in the monstrance is the same Christ Who came to this world as a baby – for it will be there in the presence of Christ that we can truly sing, with hearts ready to receive Him, “Oh come let us adore Him, oh come let us adore Him.”



MUSIC MINISTRY: *Sharing Time and Talents to Bring Our Hearts Closer to God*

The importance of what music does to elevate the liturgy and bring our hearts closer to Him as we celebrate the Mass is clear — and it is even more evident during the Advent and Christmas seasons. The response we feel deep in our hearts as we hear the calm and preparatory songs of Advent lends a hand in preparing our hearts spiritually to celebrate the birth of Christ. The beautiful Christmas carols that bring peace and joy to our hearts are something that affects every single one of us. This allows us to appreciate the dedication and hard work that our talented musicians of the parish share with us throughout the whole year.

The Music Ministry at St. Patrick's includes a choir that sings at the 9:30 a.m. Mass as well as several regular accompanists and cantors for the rest of the Masses. These musicians practice and prepare to make sure that they are ready to sing and play for the Mass. The choir has weekly rehearsals just for Sunday Masses and for holidays or high feast days, they have additional practices to learn extra music and practice with the additional instrumentalists that join them.

"Christmas has become very commercialized," says Patty Henderson, the Director of Worship and Liturgy here at St. Patrick's. "There are parts of this that bring us joy and it is good, but from a spiritual standpoint, we want to meditate on the birth of our Savior. When we think about His vulnerability and our own weakness, we can look at Him and lay down our own inadequacies and walk in the blessed hope of the Resurrection."

At Christmas, many additional musicians step up to

sing or accompany the choir. This year, with Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday, nine Masses take place in two days. This schedule is a challenge for all of those involved and any additional musicians are welcome to join to support the ministry.

"For me, singing is praying twice," Patty says. "I refer to it as my 'prayer language.' Anything given to God or being done for God should be done with excellence and a pure heart as a gift. It allows me to give that gift from my heart back to God — the very gift that He gave me. It is like I am baring my heart as I bring that to celebrate Mass with the community."

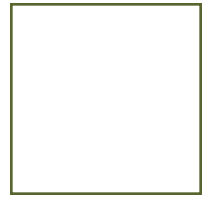
As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child at Christmas, hustling and bustling to decorate our homes, buy and wrap gifts, and attend parties and concerts, let us take note of just how much the music that fills the air affects our ability to immerse ourselves in the joy and celebration of this season. Additionally, as we sit in Mass each week, notice the importance of the music as we prepare spiritually to welcome Christ into our hearts.



*Those interested in being a part of the Music Ministry may contact
Patty Henderson at 719-598-3595 or phenderson@stpatcs.org.*

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Sunday Masses

Saturday Vigil: 4:30pm
Sunday: 7:45am, 9:30am, 11:30am

Weekday Masses

Wednesday, Friday: 7:00am
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 12:00pm

DAVE AND GEORGIA PAULS *continued from front cover*

“The reason that we serve is we believe it’s our duty to be involved in the Church,” Dave says. “It’s just like tithing — the Church gets our first fruits. And so, that also means our time. Back when we were pretty poor, it was through talent and time that we were able to do our tithe. Over time it’s grown more and more important to us — the more we do to help out in the Church, the more we grow in our walk with Christ.”

Dave recognizes and appreciates how Fr. Francisco has led our flock with a mission of intentional stewardship. He credits this as inspiration for him and Georgia on their faith journeys.

“That has really been beneficial,” he says. “It’s giving us more tools. I wouldn’t have made some of the gains I have without him. He really brought home stewardship and how it’s a way of discipleship. So that has meant a lot to me.”

Because service has been part of their journey for so many years, Dave recognizes it as something that

has become a natural part of their lives. By donating their talents, Dave and Georgia are living “stewardship” at St Patrick.

“It’s just part of us now,” he says. “It’s part of me. I don’t even give it a second thought. Sometimes it’s difficult — it requires a lot of effort leading a committee. But when you see the thankfulness on newcomers’ faces that they’ve been recognized, you know you’ve done the right thing.”



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