



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



Providing “New Beginnings” Through the Alpha Series

Before one can truly embrace stewardship as a way of life, they must first have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. After all, it’s difficult to share our gifts if we don’t recognize from whom they came. And it’s difficult to serve willingly if we don’t understand the higher purpose behind it. One of the reasons why parishes struggle, says St. Timothy parishioner Orlando Plasencia, is that sometimes people are “educated” in the faith without being truly converted.

“I oftentimes think the longest distance of faith is between the mind and the heart,” Orlando says. “It’s such a short distance physically, but you can’t truly have faith without a combination of the two. You have to know the Lord first — to know *who He is* — before you can truly follow what He teaches.”

This is why Orlando and his wife, Lisa, are excited to help pilot the Alpha Course here at St. Timothy this fall, along with fellow parishioners George Martin and Paul Smith. Used globally by countless Catholic and other Christian churches, Alpha is uniquely designed as an



St. Timothy’s Alpha Steering Committee — (from left) Orlando Plasencia, Lisa Plasencia, George Martin and Paul Smith

evangelization tool. Its purpose is to aid men and women from all different faith journeys, as well as the “unchurched,” to explore the core beliefs of Christianity. Generally, this is accomplished over a period of 11-12 weeks in small-group gatherings, designed to create an open and non-judgmental environment — a place of warmth and welcome where the “big questions” of life can be pondered and discussed.

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STEWARDSHIP

A Need to Give

When the church needs a new roof or the local food bank needs donations, we jump at the chance to give for the sake of the need. It's part of our human nature — we identify a need, and we want to give of our time, talent, and treasure to help.

But as a stewardship people, we are called to give of ourselves not simply because the Church has needs, but because each of us has *a need to give*. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "We need to give our money to individuals and families in need, to the Church, and to other worthwhile charitable organizations because giving money is good for the soul and because we need to return thanks to a loving God for all of the many blessings each of us has received" (67).

As fellow members of the Body of Christ, created in God's image, we should strive to go beyond simply co-existing with one another on earth. The life we live should be fueled by love for each other. This love should dictate how we live — by giving of ourselves.

Jesus Christ showed us the perfect example of this self-giving love when He died on the cross. His death was a completely selfless act. He gave of

Himself for our sake, offering us — through that gift — life everlasting.

As Christ's disciples, we follow His example, and we give of ourselves for the sake of others, out of love and an inherent need to give.

That's not to say that we gain nothing through our gifts. In fact, in His goodness, God sees to it that we do. Most of us have experienced what happens when we give of our time, talent, or treasure. We feel as though we get more out of it than we give. If you speak to someone who serves at the soup kitchen or someone who has made it a regular practice to tithe to the Church, you are likely to find that he or she feels blessed to be able to give. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops points out, "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 21).

Find out for yourself. Get involved in a ministry. Make a commitment to put some money in the collection basket next Sunday. Don't wait to find out if there is a need — give of yourself right now. You will be richly blessed for doing so.



What Is the Real Purpose of Our Lives?

Dear Friends in Christ,

Do you ever think about your purpose in life? Even as a priest, I certainly do. There are days and times of frustration when I think, “What am I really supposed to do? What does God want me to do? Why am I here?” For eons, philosophers have considered these very questions and written about them.

But the truth is that we, as Catholics, already know the answers.

When we consider the many facets of life in our parish community, there are numerous activities and endeavors that go beyond attending Mass. From fundraising efforts, to social outreach/service, childcare and more, there are many ways in which we serve our community.

Yet, as we undertake these important pursuits — both within and outside of the parish — we must always remember that our ultimate goal is salvation. After all, the only reason we exist, the only reason our Church exists, is the same as the reason Jesus joined us and became a part of us here on earth — He came to save humanity.

We use the term the “body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself as it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.



When our lives are complete, we do not base our success or failure on how much money we have, or whether or not we are famous. Nor does our success or failure depend upon the difference between health and sickness, or pleasure and pain, or even being nice or nasty. Rather, it is the difference between being saved and not being saved.

I often think of my family members who have already crossed the bridge of salvation, and as a priest, I deal with that issue with others on a very regular basis. Sometimes, I wonder if they ever fully realized that salvation was the answer to so many of our questions in life.

I am surrounded by memories of those who have gone before, as are almost all of you. We use the term “the communion of saints” in many ways in our Church. Someday, we will know more about the “communion of saints” and how it all works. In the meantime, we pray for everyone who has gone before us, hoping they have made it home.

Pray for me as I pray for you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Kenneth J. Malley".

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley

We use the term the “body of Christ” to describe the Church with Christ as the head. We are all parts of that body, and the parts of the body must move in the same direction as the body itself — it simply won’t function if the parts are moving in different directions. We are all in this together.



A Radical Way to Follow Christ



When he was first becoming acquainted with the monastic life, Abbot Isaac Camacho, O.S.B. remembers that the Abbot had a saying: “Monastic life is nothing but a radical way to follow Christ!”

“Who does not want to be radical in their youth?” Abbot Isaac says. “That is why I found monastic life so attractive!”

At St. Leo Benedictine Abbey, a small community of monks living in Central Florida follows the Rule of St. Benedict and seeks to follow Christ and sanctify their lives. Abbot Isaac became the sixth Abbot of St. Leo Abbey on Oct. 27, 2007.

“I have been a monk at St. Leo Abbey for more than 25 years, and this July I will celebrate 30 years as a monk,” Abbot Isaac says. “I am happy about this because monastic life is comparable to a marriage with the community. There have been many low and high points in my journey.”

Abbot Isaac describes a few key components of the Rule of St. Benedict — the way the monks should live their lives. The first is community life, meaning the monks live under an Abbot and the Rule of Saint Benedict (RB). The second is a call to humility, one of the hardest chapters in the RB.

“The third is obedience, and St. Benedict demands from monks not only obedience to the Abbot but to the Rule that guides the life of the monastery,” Abbot Isaac says. “This challenge of obedience is not an easy thing to accomplish, and it is so important that we make a solemn vow to live under obedience.”

The fourth key facet of the RB is conversion of life, and the Rule emphasizes that the godliness, advice and authority of the Abbot have one single purpose — to bring the community to a holy life.

“Conversion is not an option, but a demand from Christ to be holy and good as our Father is holy,” Abbot Isaac says.

There are several ways that individuals can enter into a relationship with the monastic life of the monks at St. Leo Abbey, and the Abbey’s website and Facebook page offer much useful information.

The Abbey has one of the largest gift stores in Central Florida, and St. Leo Retreat Center offers retreats for

ist: St. Leo Benedictine Abbey

adults and youth. There is also a guesthouse that individuals can reserve for a quiet retreat from the world.

Volunteers are always welcome to support the Abbey, and there is also a group of Oblates — men and women who follow Christ, not only Catholics but all kinds of Christians — that meets the first Sunday of the month.

“We have a meeting with this group of people who want to follow the monastic life, but they are married or not considering living in a monastic community,” Abbot Isaac says. “Instead, they come and learn our way of life, and they incorporate it into their lives the best they can.”

Individuals can also join in the spiritual life of the monks by using the same app that the monks use to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

“The iBreviary is a free app that is excellent for anyone who wants to join us in prayer,” says Br. Lucius Amarillas. “Many clergy and religious utilize this app for their daily prayer mainly because it is easy to navigate, and it is updated with the latest liturgical feasts and translations.”

If you would like more information about St. Leo Benedictine Abbey, please visit their website at saintleoabbey.org. The reception office may be reached at 352-588 8624.

Providing “New Beginnings” through the Alpha Series

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“We’re all so busy in our lives that we don’t often take time to consider life’s biggest questions,” Lisa says. “Alpha provides a safe setting where there is no judgment or doctrine of any kind. We hope people who attend Alpha will feel like a guest in our own home and feel free to make any comments or ask any questions.”

“These small groups allow people, whether they are educated in Catholicism or not, to ask questions, exchange ideas, form new relationships and, hopefully, encounter the Holy Spirit,” Orlando adds. “Alpha lays down a foundation for the basic Gospel message — to truly allow people to encounter the person of Christ.”

Though each Alpha Series looks a bit different, they all have three things in common — food and fellowship,

some form of talk or video presentation, and small-group discussion. Over time, this creates a deep sense of community among participants as they encourage each other to explore the faith further. This, in turn, leads to a new beginning of sorts as participants are hopefully inspired to more fully embrace the Gospel.

“‘Alpha’ is the beginning of the Greek alphabet,” Lisa says. “Similarly, this course is just the beginning of what we hope will be a life long journey of Christian discipleship. Alpha provides an opportunity for relationships with Jesus to blossom. As a result, our parish community can become an even more vibrant place where people from the outside will be encouraged to come in and share,” Orlando adds.

St. Timothy’s pilot series of Alpha will begin on Aug. 30 and will last through early November, while a second session will begin in mid-January. Please look to the bulletin for further announcements and consider becoming part of this new beginning. For more information, please contact either Orlando Plasencia at oplasencia@aol.com or 813-391-7332, or Lisa Plasencia at lisap923@gmail.com or 813-391-7329.



Getting to Know Our "Summertime" Saints



St. Christopher

School is out, and summer is now in full swing. The days are longer, warmer and filled with plenty of fun summertime activities.

This summer, as we take family vacations, get together for barbecues, spend time by the pool, and enjoy all of the usual summertime activities, we can also take the time to reflect on some of the saints who are associated with the summer.

Family vacations are perhaps the most iconic of all summertime activities. Although there is no patron saint of vacations, there are a number of saints associated with traveling. One of the most popular is St. Christopher. According to his story, St. Christopher was an extremely tall and strong man who served Christ by helping people cross an especially dangerous river. That is why many people wear St. Christopher medals while traveling — to ask for his blessing and protection.

For those of us who are taking road trips this summer, there is St. Frances of Rome, the patron saint of cars and drivers. While St. Frances died well before cars were invented, her story says that her guardian angel went ahead of her when she traveled at night and lit the road with a lantern to keep St. Frances safe.

There are also saints we can look to when traveling by plane. St. Joseph of Cupertino was a Franciscan friar who is said to have frequently and miraculously levitated off the ground during intense prayer sessions. Because of this levitation, he is recognized as the patron saint of air travelers. St. Therese of Lisieux is also associated with aviators and flying.

If you are going on a cruise this summer, you can ask for the intercession of St. Brendan the Navigator, an Irish monk who founded the Clonfert monastery and monastic school, and is the patron saint of mariners and sailors. He and his brothers sailed the Atlantic Ocean and evangelized on a number of islands, and may have even reached the Americas.

Another favorite summer activity is swimming. Whether you choose a pool, a lake or the ocean, seek the intercession of St. Adjutor of Vernon, a knight who was captured in the First Crusade. His captors tried to force him to give up his faith, but St. Adjutor escaped by swimming to his freedom. For this reason, he is the patron saint for sailors, swimmers, and drowning victims.

The summer is also a time of amusement and enjoyment. One of the biggest national celebrations of the summer is the Fourth of July. For this type of summertime activity, we look to St. Barbara, the patron saint of fireworks.

There are also a number of saints with feast days during the summer. The feast day of St. Anne, the mother of Mary and Grandmother of Jesus, is celebrated on July 26. July 31 is the feast day of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who is also associated with stewardship. These are just two of the many saints whose feasts we celebrate this summer.

No matter what kinds of activities we choose to enjoy during the summertime, let us remember to honor the saints who have gone before us, and give their intercession for us as we walk through our own journeys of faith.



St. Joseph of Cupertino



St. Brendan the Navigator



St. Adjutor of Vernon

For Parishioner Mark Kingery, Stewardship Is “Everything”

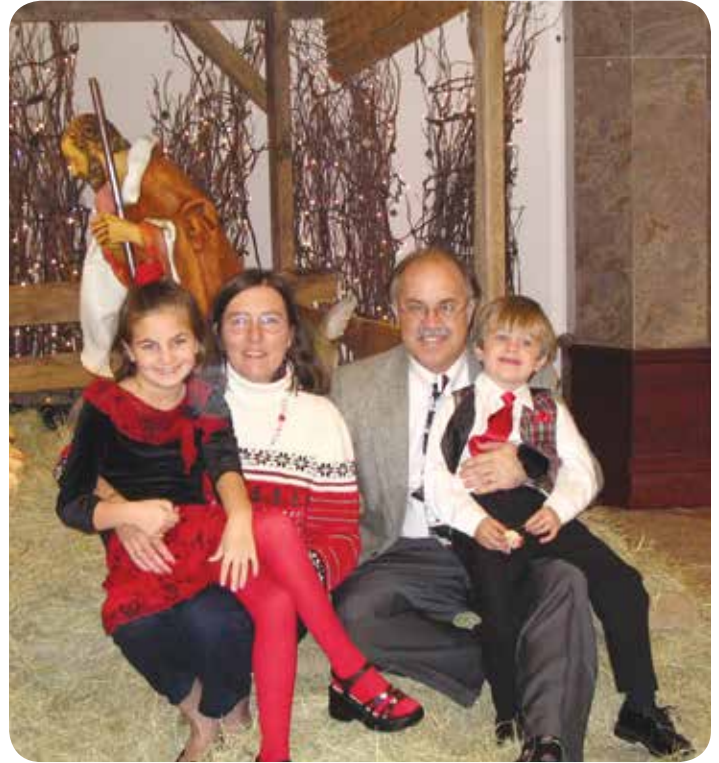
When asked what stewardship means to him, parishioner Mark Kingery answers with one profound word — everything. It’s a way of life that has seen Mark through some of life’s most joyful and sorrowful moments — a lifestyle that has continuously blessed and transformed him as he has embraced St. Augustine of Hippo’s words: “Without God, I can’t; without me, God won’t.”

“It’s truly been an incredible journey, just seeing how God always provides,” Mark says.

Born in a devoutly Catholic household, faith has always been an important part of Mark’s life. His mother in particular emphasized the importance of making prayer a priority. She was “Catholic to the core,” always ensuring her family attended Mass every Sunday and Holy Day. This example made a big impact in Mark’s own life as he gradually made the faith his own.

Yet even still, Mark had no real concept of this term “Christian stewardship” until he and his wife, Debbie, were invited by Father Dennis Hughes to attend a weekend retreat on what the Bible says about money and wealth. The retreat was led by a local Baptist preacher and based on the book *The Word on Finances* by Larry Burkett.

“I remember being amazed by the wisdom in the Bible relative to finances and how much the Bible actually talked about money and wealth,” Mark says. “I was also surprised by the key concept of stewardship — that God owns all things and that our role is simply to develop and manage his gifts to the best of our ability. Even so, it took me some time to grasp that concept and I don’t think I really got it until a few years later when I was watching the 1993 Heisman Trophy presentation and heard Jim Lampley of ABC say to Charlie Ward’s father, ‘You must be very proud of Charlie.’ To which Charlie’s father said, ‘No, we’re not proud of Charlie because that would be a sin, but we are grateful that God gave Charlie the athletic ability to win this award.’ I think when we think and speak in such terms,



Parishioner Mark Kingery with his beloved late wife Debbie, and their two children, Amy and Brian.

it enables us to more easily recognize God’s providence and our total dependence on Him.”

Convinced of stewardship’s essential nature, Mark soon began wholeheartedly giving of his time, talent, and treasure here at St. Timothy’s. He helped start our parish’s first Stewardship Committee, which he served on until becoming the Chairman for St. Timothy’s Capital Campaign Committee for the new church in 1998. He has also used his financial expertise as a CPA here at the parish in countless ways, served as an usher for over 25 years, is a member of the Hospitality Committee, and again serves on the Stewardship Committee.

“I encourage people to adopt stewardship as a way of life,” Mark says because I’ve seen over and over again what it can do for people who make that decision. People

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For Parishioner Mark Kingery, Stewardship Is “Everything”

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sometimes think stewardship is just about the money, but really, it’s about faith — about following our Lord’s commands to love and serve one another and trusting God to provide for our needs. When we get people to pray and to slowly understand what stewardship is really about, the rest just falls into place.”

Though his faith was already important to him before, embracing stewardship has brought Mark’s relationship with Christ and the Church to new heights. It’s freed him from the burdens of worrying over finances, trusting that God won’t ask us to give what we don’t have. It has supported him through life’s struggles, most especially the loss

of Debbie to cancer this past October. It has become his everything — something he is passionate about sharing with others for their good, as well as the good of our Church.

“Speaking personally, Debbie and I always recognized how blessed we were to be members of St. Timothy because at one time or another, our fellow parishioners touched us by their love and compassion, inspired and humbled us by their faith and dedication, and amazed and gratified us by their generosity and talent,” Mark says. “And that’s what stewardship does, because none of us can outdo the generosity of our Lord.”

“I encourage people to adopt stewardship as a way of life because I’ve seen over and over again what it can do when they make that decision. People sometimes think stewardship is just about the money, but really, it’s about faith — about following our Lord’s commands to love and serve one another and trusting God to provide for our needs. When we get people to pray and to slowly understand what stewardship is really about, the rest just falls into place.” — Mark Kingery

• Mass Schedule •

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m. • Sunday: 7:30, 9, 11 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. • Daily: Mon-Sat 9 a.m., Wed 6:15 p.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.