



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



Parish Manager Brian Smith Counts His Blessings

In early 2017, Brian Smith took a leap of faith when he applied for the position of Parish Manager here at St. Timothy. For decades, Brian had been in the restaurant business, moving around the country opening restaurants while also raising a family. He had just moved to Naples, FL, where he was establishing yet another new restaurant, when he received a call from Fr. Bill Swengros, pastor at Brian's previous parish, St. Paul Catholic Church in Tampa.

Fr. Swengros, who knew Brian well through his participation in the Knights of Columbus, told Brian that the position of Parish Manager had opened up at St. Timothy, and encouraged him to apply. And so, in March 2017, Brian found himself making quite a career change — and he couldn't be happier that he did!

"I feel very blessed to be here at St. Timothy," he says. "In my experience as a district manager of restaurants, I was responsible for quite a bit of staff, maintaining the standards in the facilities area and public relations. A



Brian Smith, Parish Manager

lot of the skills were applicable to the Parish Manager role, though this position has a much more peaceful and prayerful pace."

As our Parish Manager, Brian views himself as a servant of the parishioners and Fr. Malley. In addition to being responsible

continued on page 2

January 2019

In this Issue

- 3 New Year's Resolutions
- 4 Saving Babies and Helping Mothers in Need: *The St. Timothy Life Ministry*
- 6 Prayer: *Becoming More Generous with Our Stewardship of Time*
- 7 The Children's Holy Hour: *Inviting Our Young Ones Into a Special Form of Prayer*

17512 Lakeshore Rd.
Lutz, FL 33558
www.sainttims.org



Parish Manager Brian Smith Counts His Blessings

continued from front cover

for the facilities, grounds and personnel at our parish, he also helps coordinate ministry activities, parish events and Liturgical celebrations.

Reflecting on his recent career change, Brian is thankful for the opportunity to transition into a parish role at this time in his life. While his three children were younger, Brian's priority was providing for them and their education. However, his faith always remained a central part of his life. Now that his children are grown, he is seeking to fill his days with even more purposeful work and activities. Recently, he traveled to the Dominican Republic on a parish mission trip, and he will be making a similar trip to Jamaica next month.

For Brian, using his time and talent to serve God's people — whether it is through his work as Parish Manager, his participation in the Knights of Columbus, or various mission trips — has been a way to give thanks for the many blessings in his life.

"There are moments in life where you really appreciate the blessings you have," he says. "On the Dominican Republic trip, witnessing people walking for miles to get water or sleeping on mud floors, you realize how blessed we are here."

An unexpected family tragedy has also led Brian to count his blessings on a daily basis.

"A few years ago, my son was in a bad accident while body surfing," he says. "A wave threw him down, and he

was paralyzed from the neck down. Through a lot of weeks and months, he recovered so that today he can walk with a walker. Most people with that kind of injury never walk or use their arms again. I now see people all around me that have disabilities, which makes me realize how fragile life is and much more aware of my blessings."

Brian is thankful that he took a leap of faith two years ago and applied for the position of Parish Manager at St. Timothy, and he has been enjoying life in our vibrant parish ever since.

"What I enjoy is that it's always a prayerful space," Brian says. "We begin meetings with prayer, and I love that we established a Eucharistic Adoration Chapel where we can go to pray. I'm completely humbled by the witnessing of the people around me. I'll come in to the office and there might be 20 people trimming roses outside — they just show up and help. I also help handle the financial side, and I'm humbled by the generosity of those around me. It makes me feel good to be a part of things here."

"St. Timothy is just a beautiful, active community with so many faith-filled people who are wonderful witnesses to the Catholic faith, serving the parish in so many ways," Brian adds. "It's a very open and inviting parish, and there are so many opportunities for people to participate. There really is a place for everyone to be as involved as they wish to be."

"St. Timothy is just a beautiful, active community with so many faith-filled people who are wonderful witnesses to the Catholic faith, serving the parish in so many ways. It's a very open and inviting parish, and there are so many opportunities for people to participate. There really is a place for everyone to be as involved as they wish to be." — Brian Smith, Parish Manager

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we arrive at the New Year, it is customary that we make resolutions, which hopefully will be carried out during the course of the year. So many times these resolutions pertain to our physical lives (for example, we resolve to exercise more, build a healthier diet, become more organized, etc.) These resolutions may also involve the mental aspect of our lives — reading more, attending more cultural events, and so forth.

Too often we forget about the spiritual part of our lives. Our souls need to be tended to, and we need to make sure that we are deepening our relationship with God throughout the entire year.

I would like to give you a list of possible spiritual resolutions. While it might seem difficult for one person to undertake *all* of these, hopefully anyone can try several of these resolutions at one time or a number of them throughout the year.

- Attend Mass once a week over and above weekend liturgies.
- Spend an hour (or any amount of time) in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a week.
- Pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* (the *Divine Office*) at least once a day.
- Read and meditate on a chapter of Scripture each day.
- Take up a devotion of the Church (e.g. Rosary, Stations, novena, other prayers, etc.) and pray it daily.
- Read a spiritual book once a month.
- Make a morning offering as you begin your day, then an examination of conscience as you end your day.
- Offer a prayer of blessing/thanksgiving before/after a meal.
- Take time to pray daily with your spouse/family.
- As an individual or a family, take time once a week to do some form of charitable work for example, visiting those who are homebound or in a nursing home, doing some work for an elderly friend or neighbor or bringing food to someone in need, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully it gives you an idea that the small things done with great love can make a world of difference — both in your life and the lives of others. Do not try to overdo any of these, but build up to doing them on a regular basis, thus laying a reasonable foundation upon which to build. Enjoy doing these resolutions, and see what a blessing they are for you and others. Let us pray that 2019 will be a year of grace and favor from God. I wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Kenneth J. Malley





SAVING BABIES AND HELPING MOTHERS *The St. Timothy*

Sometimes, it's easy to tune out information that's difficult or unpleasant. It's easier to stay in our comfortable world, giving little or no attention to things that don't seem to directly affect us. But sometimes, we're forced out of our rosy lives and forced to face the reality around us.

"I used to view abortion as something that happened in a galaxy far, far, away," says parishioner Theresa Swanda. "But I ended up doing 40 Days for Life, and going out and standing in front of that abortion clinic, being right there and knowing what's going on inside — it changed me.

"I can't ever again think of it as something that doesn't affect us right now, here, today," she adds. "It's right here, it's in my neighborhood."

This past fall, Theresa felt God nudging her to become more involved in pro-life work.

"I was standing at the kitchen sink doing dishes one night," she says. "And I said to the Lord, 'I really feel badly that I haven't done more with pro-life things. I really should be doing something.'"

It wasn't long before doors opened and Theresa found herself taking on a role of Co-Chair of the Life Ministry at St. Timothy, as well as coordinating our parish's involvement in 40 Days for Life, a global prayer campaign seeking to end abortion, which takes place every fall.

"It is an international campaign for people to come together, praying at an abortion clinic, for an end to abortion," Theresa says.

The campaign is a joint effort of many local churches and pro-life organizations which volunteer to ensure that every time slot during the 40 days is filled with people committed to prayer. This year, our parishioners volunteered to fill three days, praying at Tampa Women's Health Center.

"We stand in front of the abortion clinic, we watch the women come in and go out, and it breaks our hearts and we just keep praying," Theresa says. "This was my first time doing



St. Timothy parishioners gathered for three of the 40 days to pray in front of Tampa Women's Health Center, a local abortion clinic.

HELPING MOTHERS IN NEED: My Life Ministry

it and it was quite a growth experience because before this I never thought of myself as a person who would go stand on the street in front of an abortion clinic. Going out there was a life-changing experience for me.”

On the final day that the group from St. Timothy’s was there to pray, we had a particularly moving experience. A young woman, scheduled to have an abortion, began talking to a sidewalk counselor, who convinced her to come across the street to a crisis pregnancy center and receive a sonogram of her unborn child.

“He did the talking and we were praying our hearts out,” Theresa says. “She got a sonogram which showed her baby, fully formed at 12 weeks and she said, ‘I can’t abort this baby, I want this baby.’ She came and talked to us and showed us the picture of her baby and we were crying, we were so happy. I said to her, ‘Stay close to God, trust in Him, and He’ll take care of you.’ And she said, ‘Well I have a relationship with God and I told Him, ‘If He didn’t want me to have this abortion, He was going to have to stop me on the day of the abortion. And here you are.’ That struck me so hard — I knew it was a gift from God.”

Although the initial encounter with the young woman was now months ago, many St. Timothy parishioners who are involved with 40 Days for Life, as well as Catholic Charities, continue to help and support her.

“The young woman was 21 years old and she was 12 weeks pregnant,” Theresa says. “When she went home, her boyfriend threw her out of the house and her mother wouldn’t take her because she wouldn’t get an abortion. A couple days later she was sleeping on the street. Catholic Charities got her shelter and we filled two trucks with everything you could possibly need as a new mother. We

“I used to view abortion as something that happened in a galaxy far, far, away. But I ended up doing 40 Days for Life, and going out and standing in front of that abortion clinic, being right there and knowing what’s going on inside — it changed me. I can’t ever again think of it as something that doesn’t affect us right now, here, today. It’s right here, it’s in my neighborhood.” — Theresa Swanda

had to step up to the plate and now she knows we’re there for her and she’s going to continue her pregnancy.”

For Theresa, the experience was deeply impactful. “I didn’t know how much it was going to affect me,” she says. “In the whole experience, I really felt like I was doing God’s work. It changed me. What struck me was the holiness of the people that came. They came and prayed and offered up their suffering to God for the end of abortion. These people made a difference.”

“There’s also a growth in your spirituality and your relationship with God,” she adds. “I could feel Jesus and Mary with us. I think everybody that went felt closer to God.”

Theresa encourages her fellow parishioners to consider becoming involved with this ministry.

“I’m begging you — come down there and pray, prayer is so powerful,” Theresa says. “It is so rewarding, it will change your life.”

If you would like more information about Life Ministry at St. Timothy, future 40 Days for Life campaigns, or to find out how you can be involved in supporting the young woman who chose life for her baby and will be giving birth in the new year, please contact Theresa Swanda via call or text at 813-843-3375, or by email at theresa.swanda@verizon.net.



Prayer:

BECOMING MORE GENEROUS

WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

A professor stood in front of a class, and in his hand was a big glass jar. He put six big rocks in the jar, with the rocks up to the edge. He then asked his students, “Is the jar full?” And they replied, “Yes.”

The professor told the students, “No, it’s not.” Then, he pulled out gravel and put it in the jar. He then asked, “Now is it full?” The students once again replied, “Yes.” The professor responded, “No, it’s not.” He reached down and pulled out sand, which he poured into the jar with the same responses. Then, he reached down again for a pitcher of water, and poured water in, all the way to the brim. Then he asked, “Now is it full?” And the students replied, “Yes.”

The professor then asked, “Okay, what lesson do you learn from this?” The students responded, “No matter how many things you’ve got in the jar, there’s always room to put a little more in.” The professor told them, “No, that’s not the lesson. The lesson is, if I didn’t put the big rocks in first, they would have never fit!”

Most Catholics can appreciate this story — in particular, how it can apply to our own prayer lives. Essentially, every person has to decide what the “big rocks” are in his or her life. And, for us Catholics, prayer should be one of those big rocks in the jar.

As Catholics, we *know* that prayer is important, and we know that we can and should always pray more. Yet, connecting with God in this way often slips through the cracks of our busy lives.

The stewardship spirituality is about trying to become ever more generous with our Time, Talent, and Treasure. And there is a reason why “Time” is first in line. Among other things, time in a stewardship context refers to the time we spend with God in prayer. We need to take time to talk to God and take time to

be quiet and seek to listen as He expresses His love for us and wants us to know His inspiration in our life.

There are many different forms of prayer — from weekly prayer, such as the Mass, to daily personal prayer. A daily Rosary is one of the most universal spiritual practices that can enrich the lives of Catholics around the world. Even if the decades are spread out throughout the day, or even if you pray just one decade a day, you will find yourself growing closer and closer to the Lord.

Morning and night prayer are also important disciplines to maintain. Set aside a comfortable place in your home where you can find silence. Maybe focus on a spiritual image and take time to center yourself with Scripture or some other kind of spiritual reading.

For many, spending large portions of the day in silent prayer may not always be possible. But make it a priority to find those moments of quiet throughout the day, and to find ways to incorporate prayer in the midst of your busy schedule. When you get into a vehicle, pray — before a meal, after a meal, if you’re faced with a tough decision. Just pray!

Ultimately, the bottom line is this — just as in any human relationship, communication is a central aspect of a vibrant relationship with God. Prayer is fostering this communion of love with God. He loved us into existence and He wants us to enter into a loving conversation with Him. We’ve got to talk to Him. And we have to listen to Him. He will take care of everything if you just trust Him. He’s knocking at the door and waiting for us to open it in prayer.

THE CHILDREN'S HOLY HOUR: *Inviting Our Young Ones Into a Special Form of Prayer*

For a mother or father with young children, the thought of a family holy hour can seem intimidating if not downright impossible. Many of us find it difficult to keep our children still and quiet for five minutes, let alone an entire hour. And yet with our many cares and responsibilities, slipping away for a private holy hour can be equally challenging. This is why, says young mother and parishioner Kristina Markford, St. Timothy's weekly Children's Adoration Hour is so important, "filling a real need" in the faith community.

"As an adult, I like going to adoration but I am also responsible for my kids and I can't always go kid-free," Kristina says. "I also want to be able to invite my kids into this special form of prayer, but we have to be sensitive to the others praying in the chapel. This Children's Holy Hour really allows the intimidation and fear to be lifted. It allows us to invite our children into the amazing practice of Eucharistic Adoration, no longer feeling stressed if our child asks questions or if their crayons fall to the floor."

Available each Friday from 9-10 a.m. in the Adoration Chapel located in the Parish Hall, the Children's Holy Hour allows parents and children to worship our Eucharistic Lord in a kid-friendly atmosphere. This means you might see mothers nursing babies, toddlers running around, or children quietly coloring pictures. The goal, says Kristina, is to help expose our children to the beauty of adoration while also providing parents with an opportunity for prayer.

"It can be chaotic, but at the same time it is so blessed," Kristina says. "It's a closed room, so the kids can move around and it is completely safe. Adults can sit in their chairs while their children crawl at their feet. We even have a sign at the door letting people know that this is a Children's Hour. That way, anyone who walks through the door knows what they are in for ahead of time."

Families are welcome to stay for the entire hour, or to stop by for shorter visits. This helps "relieve the pressure," says Kristina, allowing families the freedom to do what is best for them.



Mothers and children gathered together for Eucharistic prayer during St. Timothy's weekly Children's Holy Hour.



A mother assists the children in writing down their prayer intentions on a chalkboard so that all can pray for them together.

continued on back cover



SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

17512 Lakeshore Road
Lutz, FL 33558
813-968-1077
www.sainttims.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Tampa, FL
Permit No. 3311

The Children's Holy Hour *continued from page 7*

"Kids are kids, so we want families to be able to pop in for however long they can — whether that means they come for five minutes, 20 minutes, or the full hour," Kristina says.

The format of the Children's Holy Hour is intentionally loose, enabling children and parents to pray in the manner most suitable to them. And although efforts are made to keep the chapel quiet, it's not "stone silent," says Kristina, but rather full with life and childlike faith. Then in the last 15 minutes the group is brought together through an interactive religious story followed by communal prayer time.

"One of our regular moms was previously a teacher and she tries to have a religious children's book, a Bible story, or some kind of parable prepared that the children can understand," Kristina says. "Then right before we leave, we say our basic prayers with the kids, teaching them the Our Father,

Hail Mary, and Glory Be. We also sing a few songs acapella, like the Tantum Ergo and recite the Divine Praises."

As a mother herself, Kristina has been deeply grateful for this built-in prayer time. It has also helped her become more connected with other moms and dads of the parish, as they work together to form their children in the faith. Sometimes, play dates are even coordinated afterward. Yet most importantly of all, Kristina feels blessed to witness her own sons', along with that of the other children's, love for God take root and blossom.

"My 3-year-old now knows the Tantum Ergo song and parts of the Hail Mary and Glory Be," Kristina says. "He is my wild child, the one who will do things like scale the kitchen counter, and yet when we go [to adoration], he knows. We walk in and he says 'hi' to Jesus and gets to really live out that childlike faith."

We invite all parents to take advantage of the St. Timothy Children's Holy Hour. For more information, please contact Kristina Markford at 909-261-8860 or Knmarkford@gmail.com.

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.