



SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH



METROPOLITAN MINISTRIES

Changing Thousands of Lives, One Person at a Time

They don't like to be thought of as just a "homeless shelter"—and for good reason. Although Metropolitan Ministries does have extensive facilities housing homeless families and individuals, the services they provide include much more.

Metropolitan Ministries — also known as "Metro" — began in 1972, an outreach of 13 downtown churches that saw an increasing need for assistance within the local homeless community. What began nearly 50 years ago as churches uniting their resources to serve hungry people sandwiches

on the sidewalk, has now become an impressive force for good in the community.

Today, Metro spans four city blocks in downtown Tampa, expanding to an additional outreach center in Pasco County. Their goal is simple, to "care for the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless through services that alleviate suffering, promote dignity, and instill self-sufficiency" as part of the ongoing mission of Jesus Christ.

"We were founded by churches who saw the need firsthand and knew they had to do something

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Metropolitan Ministries serves families in need in a variety of ways, from housing to education, to counseling services and more.



Metropolitan Ministries serves to alleviate food poverty through their programs which serve meals to thousands of people, each year.

November 2019

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Metropolitan Ministries

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about it," says Justine Burke, who serves as the VP of Marketing and has been part of Metro for the past 12 years. "That philosophy has never changed."

There are many different programs through which Metro serves those in need, both the homeless and the working poor. Some are in need of short-term assistance and others require more extensive help. Metro's outreach family resource center helps families with buying groceries, paying utility bills and navigating other assistance programs, with a focus on preventing homelessness for those who are high risk. Their residential program gives homeless families a place to live and receive various services, such as counseling, case management, relationship training, Bible study, youth enrichment programs, job training programs, and other education programs. Metro also works with local landlords to help people obtain affordable housing for those in need.

Food assistance is another significant part of Metro's efforts, providing 2,500 hot meals each day in the community — equating to 912,000 meals each year. This holiday season alone, Metro will provide meals to 30,000 local families.

The outreach also has a "street team," the Metro Brigaide, comprised of people who go out into the community to find homeless people, wherever they are, connect with them and share with them about the services available at Metro.

"There are people who don't even know what kind of help is available to them or have literally just given up," Justine says. "Metro Brigaide builds relationships and trust with people to introduce them to what help is there for them."

Metro believes strongly in the importance of addressing underlying issues in order to create sustainable change in people's lives, whether through trauma counseling, education or professional skills training.

"We're not creating band aids — we really want to change lives," Justine says. "We do help people with immediate needs, but the real core of the mission is to change their lives for the better, permanently."

"There's always a reason why someone ends up here at the door, and those things have to be addressed before someone can really change their life," she adds. "You have to address the body, mind and spirit of a person — that's the foundation of everything."

In addition, Metro has several social enterprises — including a catering business and bakery — in which current and former clients can work, with the money going directly back into their job training program.

"We teach them things like the culinary skills to help them get jobs so they can get out the situation they're in," Justine says. "A reason why a lot of people become homeless is because they have a lack of marketable skills in the job environment. So that's our big thing."

The 25,000 volunteers who serve at Metro are a necessary part of their efforts in the community. Involvement ranges from those who stock shelves in the food pantry, to those who donate their professional expertise.

"We can't do it alone," Justine says. "But when everybody comes together, that's when real change can come about. We're so blessed because we see that here every day."

Justine encourages St. Timothy parishioners to become involved in the work of Metropolitan Ministries, whether as a volunteer or by making a financial gift.

"We like to say we're God's hands and feet," Justine says. "If you want to do God's work, you can find that here."

At the end of the day, Metro hopes to be a vehicle of God's love to those in need here in Tampa.

"Jesus loved and welcomed everybody and didn't judge anybody," Justine says. "He helped everybody. He didn't care what their sins were. That's how we look at our people who come in the door. People just need to be loved, heard and hugged, and told there is hope for them, and their God-given worth is something we recognize. We don't worry about [your past], we worry about where you want to go from here."

For more information on Metropolitan Ministries, please visit their website at www.metromin.org — you can find details on how to sign up as a volunteer, make a donation, take a tour, and much more. For regular updates and stories of the work being done, follow Metropolitan Ministries on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

A Letter From Our Pastor

A Month Filled with Gratitude

Dear Friends in Christ,

The month of November of course brings to mind thoughts of thanksgiving. These aren't just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day — although I look forward to it with happy anticipation — but thoughts regarding the many reasons we should be thankful.

We begin the month with a Holy Day of Obligation, the Solemnity of All Saints, on Nov. 1. It is a stewardship feast in so many ways, instituted to honor all saints, known and unknown. The communion of saints — the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven to us who are still in our pilgrimage — is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read about the lives of the saints to be encouraged and inspired by their examples. Plus, we are strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and their prayers aid us.

We follow All Saints' Day with All Souls Day on Nov. 2 so we can honor and commemorate all those others who may have been "saints" in our lives. It may have been a mother or father, sister or brother, son or daughter, next-door neighbor, good friend, grandparent, uncle or aunt, cousin, teacher, or student — the list is endless. We have been blessed in our lives with people who have shown us what it means to be a good Christian, what it means to be a good steward. During this month of November, we need to thank God for those people in our lives. In fact, we need to thank God period, which is another important element of this month.

Toward the end of the month we celebrate what is mainly a secular holiday, Thanksgiving, but this national holiday is so grounded in our Christian stewardship tradition. This year is the 156th anniversary of the first official Thanksgiving in the U.S., as proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, during the horrors of the Civil War. In the beginning of that proclamation, President Lincoln stated, *"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 takes great care to recognize God's presence in all of the "thanks."

Couldn't we say those words of Lincoln about our lives, about the life of our parish this year? In fact, we could say it every month. Stewardship is the appreciation of our many, many blessings, both personally and as a faith family.

From the beginning of the month, when we thank God for the example of the saints and "saints" in our lives, to the end of the month, when we thank God for basically everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to remember and to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship really is — approaching God; approaching each day; approaching all those with whom we come in contact — with grateful and loving hearts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley





The Blessings of Stewardship Reach Far

In 2006, Fr. Joseph Sserugga with the Apostles of Jesus missionary order came to make his annual mission appeal at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Richboro, Pa. One group of parishioners was so moved by Fr. Joseph's presentation that they began planning a trip to visit his parish in Uganda. When they asked him what they could do to help, Fr. Joseph's reply was simple — "Come and love my people."

From that initial trip — when the group from Pennsylvania truly did fall in love with the people of the St. Charles Lwanga Parish in Ibanda, Uganda — a nonprofit organization named Building a Bridge to Uganda was born. Two of the organization's founders, Chuck and Linda Ormsby, are close friends of St. Timothy parishioner Ray Ploucher. After witnessing the good work being done by this ministry, Ray became involved, giving presentations and helping the organization with fundraising here in Florida.

Ray continues to be amazed by what Building a Bridge has been able to accomplish in just over a decade.

"In 2007, the group went over and put in a well and built a school in the small village of Ibanda where Fr. Joseph

is from," he says. "Then in 2010, the [Apostles of Jesus] missionaries said that they had a one-mile by one-mile piece of land in the jungle in Luwerro. So they all went to look at it, and my buddy Chuck said, 'We need to clear this and build something.'"

By 2012, the first two buildings of the school had been erected — the chapel and a classroom that doubled as a dormitory. That first year, there were 60 children from nearby peasant farming families enrolled in the school. Well, you know what the Bible says about God blessing us tenfold — today, there is a large campus with 600 students attending high school there!

The school, named Pope John Paul II High School, may be the largest project that Building a Bridge to Uganda has undertaken, but it is far from the only one. The organization also supports the Ibanda Babies Home, an orphanage for abandoned infants and children up to age 5. In addition, the group helps provide relief to myriad situations they come across during their visits to the country — whether it be the purchase of bicycles for students who may walk up to two hours through the jungle to get to school, or replacing



Pope John Paul II High School in Luwerro, Uganda, made possible by the non-profit organization Building a Bridge to Uganda



A peasant farmer family outside the school in Luwerro, Uganda

Year Beyond Our Parish Walls *Building a Bridge to Uganda*

the dung floor of a nearby primary school with concrete. Currently, Ray is working to raise funds for a much-needed expansion to the faculty dormitory at Pope John Paul II High School.

Just as Fr. Joseph had predicted in his 2006 appeal, once the visitors came to Uganda, they fell in love with his people. And once they fell in love, the blessings began to flow!

Ray traveled to Ibanda and Luwerro with Building a Bridge to Uganda in 2016 and 2019, and his experiences there gave him a whole new perspective on his Catholic faith.

"The people are as poor as you can imagine, but they are so joyful," Ray says. "When you walk through the jungle and into a clearing with a little mud hut, they come out and greet you with a smile. They are really great people with incredible stories of what they have been through. They are very, very close to God."

"I see their love for Jesus and I wonder if it's because they don't have any distractions," he adds. "Here we have our cars, phones, electricity — do we take time to really sit back and spend time praying or talking to Jesus?"

After observing the ways of life in Ibanda and Luwerro, Ray now has an even greater desire to cultivate his relationship with the Lord.

"Obviously, we believe in Jesus, but do we know Him?" he asks. "I believe that when the people [of Uganda] read the Bible, it's like reading a letter from their mom or dad. They know the voice, they know the tone. So that's something I took away from my trips there — a need to strengthen my personal relationship with Jesus."

Ray strongly believes that each and every one of us is called to be a disciple and to serve God's people, whether

it is here in our local community or across the world. In his experience, he has always received much more than he has given. Sometimes, the most abundant blessings may even happen when we least expect them.

"Fr. Joseph says that you never know what God has in store for you," Ray says. "But just look what happened in Uganda — it's a miracle in the jungle."



Students hard at work in a Pope John Paul II High School classroom in Luwerro, Uganda

Are you interested in learning more about the amazing work being done by Building a Bridge to Uganda? There are many ways to help — financial donations of \$500 provide the tuition, room and board of a student at Pope John Paul II for an entire year, but smaller amounts can also go a long way! For more information, please visit their website at bridgetouganda.org, or contact St. Timothy parishioner Ray Ploucher at 813-774-1788 or rayploucher@reactampa.com. Ray is also happy to give presentations on the organization for any groups that may be interested.



Questions and Answers About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

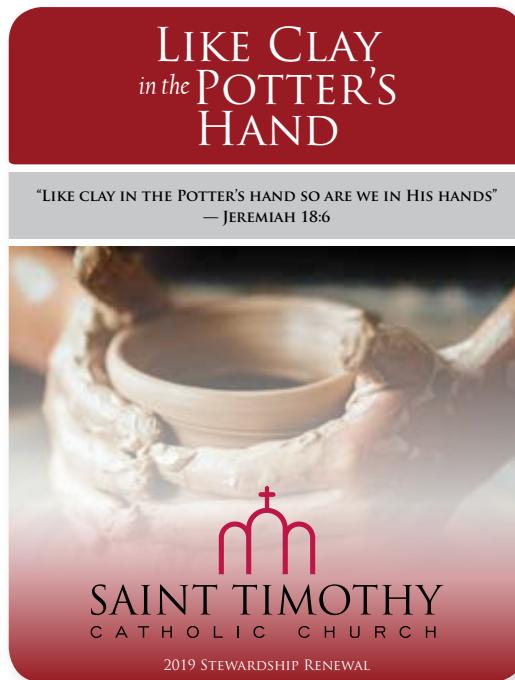
I feel like my life is already too full with family and work obligations. How can I possibly share my time and talents with St. Timothy?

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Before you fill out your Commitment Card, take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?

As part of the renewal process, it is important that we consider our current level of participation in parish life at St. Timothy. Sometimes, the call to stewardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.



Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.

I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey. Begin by checking the box that says, "Attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation," and take some time to discern additional ways in which God is calling you from that starting point.

I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life at St. Timothy. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out our mission as ministry participation and financial contributions are. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.

I'm reluctant to make a financial pledge for the year in case my circumstances change and I'm unable to fulfill it. Should I?

Your Commitment Card is not a legally binding contract; it is a pledge of intentions. Make your pledge based on what you are setting out to do to give back to God, and do your best to fulfill that pledge. If your financial circumstances change, your gift will likely change, as well, but it is still important to prioritize God first.

The Small Group Ministry

A Truly Great Way to Share in Faith, Fellowship and Friendship

Faith isn't meant to be lived in isolation. As social beings, God created us for community. There, surrounded by our brothers and sisters in the Lord, we receive the necessary encouragement for life's difficult times, the inspiration to keep moving forward, and the immeasurable blessings of fellowship.

"We Christians aren't supposed to go through this journey alone," says parish secretary Carrie Rush. "We are supposed to live in community with others so that we can support them, love them, and remind them when they need that reminder that Jesus is with them — that God's got your back. Especially when you are going through a valley, you need people around you to support and love you through it."

Carrie says that her initial understanding of the importance of community was formed through her experience within the Episcopal Church. Living in Virginia at the time, she and her husband, Brad, were actively involved in small group ministries sponsored by their church. There, within that more intimate context, the Rushes were blessed with a solid group of friends — a community of believers there to get them through life's difficult moments and to cheer them on in the spiritual journey.

When the couple later decided to enter the RCIA process here at St. Timothy, once again they were blessed with that experience of a small group, this time through their fellow candidates and catechumens, sponsors and RCIA instructors.



Members of the Small Group Ministry enjoy the opportunity to gather for prayer, fellowship and spiritual enrichment.

"Thanks to that experience, we knew lots of people almost instantly and we had just moved here," Carrie says.

Yet what they experienced, Carrie adds, shouldn't be limited to the short term in one's life or during the season of Lent or Advent. Small groups are something that can benefit all of us, no matter our stage of life. This is why Carrie is so excited to help launch St. Timothy's new Small Group Ministry.

"We are in the infancy of this ministry right now, and have about 10 people meeting weekly," Carrie says. "We are training these participants to eventually become leaders of their own group. We are also constantly inviting people to join us so that we can grow and then multiply into additional small groups."

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"Once people experience it for themselves, they usually stick around. It is just a great way to remember how involved God is in our life. It helps us remember the things that we are grateful for. And, yeah, when you look at all the different ways that we are called to share our time, talent and treasure, this is truly a great way to spend some of your time — being in a community, listening to the Gospel, and growing in faith with other parishioners." — CARRIE RUSH



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The Small Group Ministry

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Similar to the small groups experienced by current Alpha participants, the idea is to gather parishioners together weekly for faith, sharing and fellowship. These groups can be gender exclusive or co-ed — geared toward a specific age group or spanning multiple generations. No matter the specific demographics of the group, their common mission is to form a spiritual system of support and camaraderie, strengthening members through the ups and downs of life.

"I picture eventually having small groups meeting every day of the week, morning and evening," Carrie says. "Some meetings will take place at the church while others might occur at parishioners' homes. We hope to provide a whole variety of small group opportunities. We will keep track of all of the groups and when someone expresses interest, we can find a group that is a good fit for them."

Not only are these small groups an excellent way to foster a greater sense of community amongst parishioners, they also help members become more aware of God's presence in their lives. Carrie describes the weekly gatherings as a sort of 'booster shot' for the week, lifting up the group members and sustaining them in their everyday living.

"Once people experience it for themselves, they usually stick around," Carrie says. "It is just a great way to remember how involved God is in our life. It helps us remember the things that we are grateful for. When you look at all the different ways that we are called to share our time, talent and treasure, this is truly a great way to spend some of your time — being in a community, listening to the Gospel, and growing in faith with other parishioners."

All St. Timothy parishioners are encouraged to come out and experience the benefits of the Small Group Ministry for themselves. For more information, please contact Carrie Rush at either carrie.rush@sainttims.org or 813-968-1077, ext. 241.

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.