



St. Alexius



Our Lady of the Angels



St. Paul's



Stewardship as a "Part of Life" Meet Mary Kay Meier

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For lifelong St. Paul parishioner Mary Kay Meier, stewardship and Christianity have always been synonymous. Baptized here as a young child, St. Paul's community has been part of nearly every important event and change in her life. It's where she learned about the faith and received her first sacraments. The place where she was married, becoming a bride and eventual mother. It's where her children were catechized and received their sacraments. And most recently of all, it's where the funeral Mass for her beloved husband, Jerry Meier, was held.

"Pretty much every major event in my life has taken place within this church," Mary Kay says. "I guess that's why I don't really consider stewardship a choice. To me, it's just part of being a Catholic – that you give. It's a priority in my life, rather than something I'll do if I can get everything else done. I think you have to make stewardship a priority, just like you do with everything else that matters in life."

Mary Kay first learned about the importance of prioritizing her faith from her own parents as a young girl. She remembers faith just being a part of the fabric of life, as the family gathered before meals and each evening for prayer together. Her parents



Parishioner Mary Kay Meier with her late husband, Jerry were always very active at the Church, and the family prayed the Rosary together each night during Our Lady's months of May and October.

"It was just part of who I was as a child," Mary Kay says. "And it stayed with me through my adulthood. I just really loved going to Church. In fact, I used to go during the week, attending First Friday services so that I could gain a plenary indulgence."

In her adult life, Mary Kay has been involved as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and a religious educator. Yet, her greatest contributions and acts of stewardship has come from her professional

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Meet Mary Kay Meier *continued from front cover*

skills as an accountant and financial advisor. Thinking of herself as a kind of “steward of the parish finances,” Mary Kay has spent countless hours serving on the parish’s Financial Council, overseeing the monthly income and expenses of parish life, budgeting and creating financial reports for the parish.

“It’s really important to me that we are accountable to our parishioners with how we spend the money that we have,” Mary Kay says. “I’m always trying to reflect and distinguish between parish needs and parish wants, so that we as a community can be good stewards of our finances. I spend a lot of time trying to appreciate what we have in our parish and what we’ve done – to not simply focus on what we may want but instead looking at what the parish needs. This is often hard to do, but something that I feel is very important.”

Using her gifts in this way and becoming involved in the faith community, says Mary Kay, transforms church from a building or mere religion to a living family. It strengthens her during times of sorrow and reminds her that she is never alone. It anchors her to Christ and transforms her liturgical experience to one of active participation.

“Being involved in any ministry within the Church helps make you feel that you are part of the community,” Mary Kay says. “It becomes a safe place for you to go – a



Some of Mary Kay’s greatest blessings in life – her husband and grandchildren

welcoming place that gives me peace and reminds me that God is always there when I need Him.”

Having always felt a strong desire to serve God, Mary Kay is thankful for these opportunities to use her God-given talents for His glory. It brings her tremendous joy to be part of the community in these ways, and has been a great source of comfort to

her, particularly as she grieves the recent loss of her husband.

“I’m just thankful that we have this parish here, and thankful for the opportunity to participate in some of the ministries,” Mary Kay says. “It makes me feel like I’m giving back to God for everything He has given to me, like I’m living my life for Him.”

“Being involved in any ministry within the Church helps make you feel that you are part of the community. It becomes a safe place for you to go – a welcoming place that gives me peace and reminds me that God is always there when I need Him.” – Mary Kay Meier

A Letter From Our Pastor

Time Is Limitless...Or Is It?

Dear Parishioners,

Some years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June. In thinking about that, it made me realize that we all like to measure time – not necessarily in minutes and hours, but certainly in terms of what happens at particular times of the year. In the Church, we celebrate so many occasions that measure time – Easter, Christmas, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, the feast days of our saints, and much more, all of which give us that sense of moving forward.

In our own lives and the lives of our families, we mark birthdays, anniversaries, Baptism days, and more dates than we can possibly remember. These dates commemorate or remind us of a point in time. Time is also one of those gifts from God that we attach to the idea and life of stewardship.

We are fond of saying that time is the one thing given to all of us in equal amounts. However, we all know that is not necessarily true. Does a mother with several children have the same amount of time as a person with no family? Does a company manager who is expected to be available seven days a week have the same amount of time as someone who works a 9-to-5 job?

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we



tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.

Another thing that June brings to mind is how life slows down for most of us. Young people are on summer vacation from school. Families and individuals take vacations. Unfortunately, some see it as a time to take a bit of vacation from worship. We can see it in

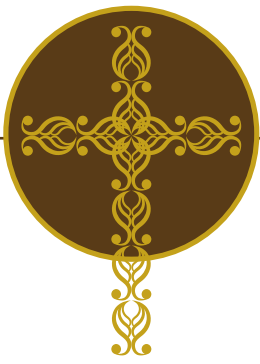
declining Mass attendance and in the reduced number of activities within ministries and organizations.

We all mark time. We all know that it is limited, and can be fleeting. That is why even countries celebrate special days that mark time – throughout the summer season, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. How do we mark time as individuals, as families, and in our parish communities? That may say more about our understanding of stewardship than anything else. Maybe now, as summer is upon us, is the perfect time to concentrate *more* on our spiritual habits, rather than less.

In our Father's hands,

Fr. Greg Paffel





From Bored to Bold:



Vincent Marthaler (center) enjoys growing in his faith as part of youth group.



Vincent Marthaler serves as an altar server at St. Alexius, and also participated in Living Stations of the Cross (Jesus).

When 14-year-old St. Alexius parishioner Vincent Marthaler was younger, Mass wasn't exactly something he looked forward to every Sunday.

"I thought Mass was boring," he says. "I thought it was a waste of an hour of my weekend."

But two years ago, Vincent became an altar server – and it changed everything.

"One day, I was at Religious Education classes, and they were doing Stations of the Cross, and one of the servers got sick," Vincent recalls. "They were like, 'Does anyone else want to try it?' and I was like, 'Why not?'"

"Before, I really didn't like going to Church," he continues. "But being a server made it fun. I'm closer to God because I'm a server and I know a lot more about Mass. When you're sitting in the front of church you can't really zone out. Listening to the readings is my favorite part of Mass, hearing about what Jesus did, it's really cool. Serving gives you something to do, it brings me closer to the Church, makes me want to be there."

And little did Vincent know that becoming an altar server would be the start of his journey closer to God and his faith. It wasn't long before he found himself feeling more connected within the parish family, from getting to know the parish priests, to being greeted and appreciated by various parishioners who noticed his efforts.

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Meet Vincent Marthaler

Serving at the annual Sausage Supper has also become a way that Vincent enjoys serving and giving back to his parish community.

“It’s nice to see people come in, some people I see every year,” he says. “They always leave with a smile on their faces and it’s always nice to see people happy. It’s kind of a family tradition – the whole parish helps and it’s nice to be a part of it.”

Vincent recently started attending Youth Group, as well, and has begun to appreciate the importance of having Catholic friends who offer support in the faith.

“For Lent, I gave up swearing and my friends who are Catholic, if I swear, they remind me, ‘You gave that up! You can’t do that!’” Vincent says with a smile. “It’s nice to have friends who are Catholic.”

This past spring, he had the opportunity to attend Castaway, a three-day retreat experience offered to young people from the Diocese of St. Cloud. Not only did it strengthen his faith, and give him the chance to meet other young Catholics, but it also made him bolder in his beliefs.

“Not very many people like to share their religion at school, but ever since Castaway I wear my cross every day,” Vincent says. “I used to just wear it under my shirt, but the retreat really opened me up.”

Vincent encourages other young people to give God a chance and take a step closer to Him, whether through getting involved in the youth group, or finding ways to serve in the parish community.

“I learned that Jesus would always have my back,” Vincent says. “I wish more teenagers knew Jesus will always be there, even through the hardest times.”

Vincent, we’re so glad you’re part of our parish family and we look forward to getting to know you better and supporting you in your faith journey for years to come!

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Vincent (top right) had a chance to grow in his faith, with other young people, at the Diocesan Castaway retreat earlier this year.



Vincent is involved in serving his parish and community.



Keeping Our Stewardship Commitments in the Summertime

The kids are out of school and our fast-paced lives centered on school and youth sports activities have slowed down. Our own internal clocks are now on summer time. We're ready for a break from our hectic lives.

And while we take vacations and enjoy the leisurely pace of the season, we need to remember that summer is not the time to take a vacation from God. In fact, summer can serve as the perfect opportunity to grow in our relationship with God, especially since most of us have considerably more free time.

So, instead of neglecting our faith due to busy days and late nights, try these simple steps to embrace God during the quieter summer months and during your vacation.

Get More Active in a Parish Ministry

The summer is actually a perfect time to get more involved in a parish ministry. Because we no longer have to get the kids to and from school, or get them to sporting events or other activities that normally occur during the school year, our schedules are a bit less cluttered. Summer is indeed a perfect time to fill some downtime with service to God through ministry and giving of your talents. Take a look through the parish ministries to find something that suits your particular interest or talent.

Vacation Bible School, for Kids and Adults

Vacation Bible School is a great way for younger children to learn about God through songs, activities and fellowship. The fun-filled lessons build upon Gospel teachings while keeping kids' attention. For older children, it is a great opportunity to offer service by being a team leader or assistant. Adults can also help plan, decorate, organize, and teach during the week. It's a wonderful activity for the entire family!

Give Thanks for the Sun

Praise God for the sun, time off from school, and easygoing days by visiting the adoration chapel to say a quick prayer. Bring a journal or rosary along to help stay focused. Little children can even bring a religious coloring book to give thanks to God on their terms. Or, before heading to the pool, why not attend daily Mass with the kids? It's a perfect way to start the day and set the tone that – vacation or not – God is still an important part of your family life.

Don't Take a Vacation from Mass

Often while on a vacation away from our parish family, we are not familiar with where to attend Mass. Don't let that be an obstacle for you. Check out masstimes.org in order to find out where and when to go to Mass. In addition, if you are lodging at a hotel, the concierge will assist you with directions to the nearest Catholic Church.

Summertime Stewardship of Treasure

The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer is that God doesn't go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

So, enjoy the warmer temperatures and the relaxed atmosphere. Just don't forget who provides the sun and the sand! And most importantly, remember to take God with you wherever you go on vacation!

Lifelong Parishioner Merle Felling Gives Back

As a lifelong parishioner at Our Lady of the Angels, Merle Felling has been involved in parish life since he was a boy. Over the years, he has been able to grow in faith and give back to the parish that has given him so much.

Merle, an Air Force veteran, just celebrated his 45th wedding anniversary with his wife, Kathy. They have four grown children, two boys and two girls – his oldest daughter lives in the area and is also an active parishioner at Our Lady of the Angels. As a child, Merle grew up understanding the importance of service to the parish.

“I’ve been a parishioner since I was a baby on, so I’ve seen many changes and seen the parish grow,” he says. “It’s been a wonderful bunch of pastors over the years. I was in the choir when I was in grade school – that’s probably the first thing I was ever involved in!”

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Merle Felling and his wife, Kathy

“I think you need to lead by example – if you’re up there participating, it will hopefully enlighten other folks to do the same. I understand that at different places in life, you may not have as much time or ability to serve, but I’m 68 now and have a little more time. I try to do as much as I can to help the parish and the pastor fulfill their mission, whether it be service around the church or giving financially.” – Merle Felling



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Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:00 p.m. - St. Paul's
Saturday 5:00 p.m. - Our Lady of the Angels
Saturday 8:00 p.m. - St. Paul's
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - St. Paul's
Sunday 8:30 a.m. - St. Alexius
Sunday 10:00 a.m. - St. Paul's
Sunday 10:30 a.m. - Our Lady of the Angels

Reconciliation Schedule

Thursday 4:00 p.m. - St. Paul's
Saturday 3:00 p.m. - St. Paul's
Saturday 4:00 p.m. - Our Lady of the Angels
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - St. Alexius

Lifelong Parishioner Merle Felling Gives Back

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Now, Merle serves as an usher and as an altar server – both of which are goals he has hoped to accomplish since childhood.

“I always wanted to be an usher as a little guy, and I wanted to be a server, but I didn’t study enough so I didn’t pass my Latin!” he says. “It was really nice when I was able to become a server when they brought on the seniors.”

Serving in these liturgical ministries has helped Merle to grow in his understanding of the Mass, and to grow in faith.

“I feel like I have grown closer to God,” he says. “It’s definitely been enlightening to be more involved in the Mass, and it also feels more fulfilling.”

Merle has also been a member of the parish’s Finance Council for the past 32 years.

“I always had a strong interest in the finances,” he says. “[Previous pastor] Fr. Kinzer is Kathy’s uncle, and he asked me to be on the Council. I continued to stay on

and support all the next pastors. I really enjoy facilitating the various tasks that allow us to keep the buildings and grounds of the church maintained, to keep the parish a good worship environment. I also enjoy working together as a team with the other council members.”

As a parishioner who gives not only of his time and talent, but also his treasure, Merle feels that he merely is doing the will of God. He plans to continue to serve, and hopes to inspire others to do the same.

“I think you need to lead by example – if you’re up there participating, it will hopefully enlighten other folks to do the same,” he says. “I understand that at different places in life, you may not have as much time or ability to serve, but I’m 68 now and have a little more time. I try to do as much as I can to help the parish and the pastor fulfill their mission, whether it be service around the church or giving financially.

“I certainly enjoy it,” Merle adds. “I want to continue to do it as a long as I can! It’s been a great experience.”

