



# The Anastasian

June 2016

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# THE Anastasian

Since 1935

Welcome to The Anastasian. We hope you all enjoy this newsletter. St. Anastasia is a large, vibrant parish with many different groups engaged in wonderful activities that give life to the parish. We hope this newsletter will offer you the chance to learn more about the many ways our friends and neighbors in Christ engage with the parish to deepen their faith and enrich their lives. And you'll see they are having a lot of fun too! Please let us know what you think and how we can improve. Please email us at [promotion@saintannies.org](mailto:promotion@saintannies.org). You can also "like" us on Facebook or follow Lucky on Twitter at [@luckycolagreco](https://twitter.com/luckycolagreco).



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Front Cover image : Children at First Holy Communion Mass

#### Photo captions:

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# A Letter from our Pastor Father Colagreco

Dear Members of Saint Anastasia Parish,

Thank you to the members of the Promotion Committee for the latest issue of The Anastasian. This is third issue since this publication has been revived and I hope all who read it will find it to be informative and a help to you to stay in touch with what's happening in your parish.

In this edition you will find a brief summary of some of the recent happenings and events affecting many different aspects of parish life. The work of the Endowment Fund, which provides a financial foundation for our school, is explained for those of you not familiar with this endeavor. Recently the RCIA program was in the parish focus as four members of this group were received into the Catholic Church at Easter. See what they have to say about this process. The article on the Scouts provides insight on the many facets of the Scout organization. Read about what our eighth grade Student Council members have to say about their memories and experiences over the years and enjoy the photos from one of the hope-filled and inspiring yearly liturgical happenings – First Holy Communion. Last, but certainly not least, there is a reflection on an event that is a rarity in any parish – the ordination of a parish member. Thomas O'Donald who was ordained to the Priesthood this May, offers his reflection on this very special time for the Church, the priesthood and himself.

As you can see, much has been going on. Please try to keep in touch with us. If you haven't signed up for Constant Contact, take a moment to do so. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook. One parish community is possible but it takes a little work from all of us.

Have a relaxing summer!

Fr. Colagreco

[www.saintanastasia.net](http://www.saintanastasia.net)



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# Reflections

## on the Call and Journey to Priestly Ordination

Thomas O'Donald

"Throughout these past seven years I have grown alot. I was only twenty years old when I entered the seminary, and it was the biggest commitment I had ever made."

by **Thomas O'Donald** (written prior to his ordination to the priesthood)

As I approach Ordination I want to thank our Pastor, Father Colagreco and all the priests and parishioners of Saint Anastasia for their prayers and support over the years. I distinctly remember meeting Monsignor Cribben seven years ago, to inform him of my intention to apply for admission to the Seminary. He gave me a big hug and invited me to stay for dinner!

Throughout these past seven years I have grown a lot. I was only twenty years old when I entered the seminary, and it was the biggest commitment I had ever made. I was very nervous about what it would be like and if I would be able to "make it." Through my years at the seminary I was able to develop a firm trust in God's plan for my life.

I also formed great friendships with other young men who studied at St. Charles. Not all of them stayed but they have all been a great sense of support for me during seminary days. I am the only one from my original class being ordained for Philadelphia.

As my time at the seminary comes to a close, I'm approaching another big transition in my life, one of priestly ministry. I will be ordained at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on Saturday, May 21. I will celebrate my first Mass on Sunday, May 22 at St. Anastasia. I am nervous about what it will be like to serve as an ordained priest but I am confident in Our Lord's steadfast support and grace. As the Saint Anastasia community has supported me in the past with your prayers I ask that you continue to do so as I embark on the next phase of God's plan. Also, please continue to foster and pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life from the many wonderful families at Saint Anastasia and throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.



2016 RCIA participants: Chris Delgado, Jenna Gray, Doug Hill, and Mariana Curtin

# RCIA

## The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

by **Sister Mary Barrar, SSJ**

RCIA is a spiritual and educational process designed to welcome adults into the Roman Catholic Church. That says it all and yet it says nothing. It says nothing about the experience of persons who embark on this journey of faith and who come to find a place in the Church and the parish of St. Anastasia. It says nothing about the wonders of God's grace in the lives of the participants. As a team, it is a privilege to be with women and men who want to learn and live the Catholic faith. It is a privilege to see the growth in their relationship with God and the bond of community that grows among them and the team. The RCIA team, Linda Cellucci, Jerry Sweeley, and Sister Mary agree that the best way to describe RCIA is through the experience of the participants. Our new Catholics this year are Chris Delgado, Jenna Gray, Mariana Curtin, and Doug Hill. Enjoy the reflections they want to share with you, the parish community that has welcomed and supported them throughout their journey.



“One of the most important facets to me is the Mass. It is something that has been at the root of wanting to become a Catholic. Through the RCIA process, I have come to an understanding of the church, its teachings and how they fit into my life today. I have a strong desire to keep building my faith. Even more, I know that faith needs to go beyond my new wife and me so that we will pass the faith on to our future children.”

Chris Delgado



“My RCIA experience was amazing. It gave me the opportunity to learn about the faith at a pace I was comfortable with and to meet a wonderful group of individuals. We became a close knit group ready to learn, share, and laugh. Our session on the sacrament of marriage helped me to value the sacrament and to realize that my relationship with God is like a relationship I would have with another person whom I love deeply.”

Jenna Gray



“I am a Catholic. What a statement for me! After wandering this earth for many years, I have found a home in the Church and at St. Anastasia. Although I look the same, my internal transformation is profound. I hope to grow in spirituality and in the immense bounty of our faith. Where would I be without the Eucharist? There should be a church-wide RCIA. Rediscover what riches we have! You will be amazed!”

Mariana Curtin



“For the last several years, I have wanted to start the RCIA process but with my work schedule I figured it would be too difficult. Sister Mary assured me that the team would work around my schedule. For the last several months, we have discussed faith, the sacraments, the bible, and prepared the Sunday readings. Our first RCIA Sunday Mass set the tone for how we were welcomed to the community of St. Anastasia. We received a round of applause during each ceremony and tons of well wishers each time. I am so happy that I finally went through the RCIA process. I guess it is like most things in life, marriage, having children, etc. If I had known it would be this great I would have done RCIA years ago!”

Doug Hill

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Marie Kamper, Declan Dowd, Jimmy Blaisse, Kevin Vu, Mikayla Dever

by **Joe Crimmins**

Saint Anastasia's Student Council plays a vital leadership role in the school as well as the parish community. The Student Council functions as an advisory group as well as a service group for the school. Members of Student Council are elected from grades 4-8 to serve as classroom representatives. The Student Council Officers meet regularly with the principal to determine needs of the student body, activities and service projects. Some of the projects implemented by Student Council include service to local shelters, food kitchens, and nursing homes. Activities sponsored by Student Council within the school include, homecoming game day activities for younger students, a pumpkin decorating contest, prayer-partner decorating of the Christmas tree and ornament craft and preparation of several liturgies throughout the school year.

To get insight into their roles as leaders, the Promotion Committee asked the 8th grade Student Council to respond to the following questions:

**1. What was your favorite project/initiative and why?**

**(James Blaisse)** I enjoyed selling popcorn to raise funds for the children in our partner school in Malawi, Africa. Their school is very poor, and the students need a lot of financial help.

**(Declan Dowd)** My favorite project was raising money to buy school supplies for students in Malawi, Africa. Last year, two students in my grade set up a 5K run to raise even more money.

**(Marie Kamper)** I really enjoyed bagging popcorn because we are able to raise money for an important cause and make a difference to the poor in Malawi.

**2. What have you learned about your Catholic faith during the time you have spent while working on Student Council?**

**(James)** While working on student council I have learned that a person should not always expect a reward for doing service. I know the idea of service for others is a fundamental Catholic idea.

**(Declan)** During my time on student council, I have learned that being a Catholic means serving others. When you're on student council, you have to always be willing to help others and I think that the same standards apply to all Catholics.

**(Marie)** My Catholic faith is very important to me as a student at St. Anastasia. Catholic faith teaches us to do good works for others and remember God. The projects that I have participated in as a member of student council showed me that every little good deed that you perform can make a big difference in someone else's life.

**3. How has your experience at St. Anastasia prepared you for high school?**

**(James)** This year I have learned to be a leader. I also learned from my classmates how to be a friend, and from my coaches



how to take instruction and play well and fairly in CYO sports. From my involvement with Boy Scouts and CYO at St. Anastasia I have also learned how to do my best, serve others and be team player.

**(Declan)** Saint Anastasia has prepared me for high school by having great teachers who are always willing to help and challenge me to do better. Sometimes, we might get a lot of homework, but it is only preparing me to succeed in high school.

**(Marie)** I was blessed to have many dedicated teachers at St. Anastasia who helped me become a better student. They really go above and beyond for their students. For example, Mrs. Woodruff spent so much time with me to help me understand Social Studies. She made sure I knew what I was doing each day while also making Social Studies very interesting.

Based on the insights provided by some of the Student Council members, it is clear that the volunteer work, fundraising and community outreach projects that our parish youth performs helps to fulfill St. Anastasia's Parish Mission by being "... committed to growing in a deeper relationship with God and with one another. We strive to become a more vibrant parish by inspiring an atmosphere of belonging, of welcoming, and by promoting opportunities to share and spread our Catholic Faith, so that we may be more united as one parish community." On behalf of the entire St. Anastasia parish community, the Promotion Committee would like to thank the members of Student Council for taking the time to provide insight into their role as leaders of the school as well as their dedication to the entire parish community.

## O Sacrament Most Holy

by **Erin Howe**

We celebrated First Holy Communion at St. Anastasia Parish on May 7th and 8th, 2016. The children, 143 total from our parish school and CCD program, prepared for the reception of this holy sacrament in many ways.

On April 8th, the students attended a retreat day coordinated by Mrs. Theresa Haggerty. On this day, parent volunteers acted as "shepherds" and group leaders and assisted the students through stations geared toward First Communion preparations. From a sacristy presentation led by Father Colagreco and Father Kozak, to chapel mediation, to music, craft and game stations, the students experienced a fun, faith-filled day!

The students also prepared to receive the Eucharist through classroom lessons, presentations, and activities and at home through prayer, instruction and name-banner making with their families. The students were excited to receive our Lord in the Eucharist for the first time! They expressed their love for Jesus and their thanksgiving through The Table Prayer song performed in sign language during Communion Meditation.

Many thanks to all the members of the Saint Anastasia Parish community who assisted in helping the students prepare for this special time. May God Bless the First Communicants of 2016!



Michelle Eburuoh



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# Don Johnson

A St. Anastasia Parish Star since 1980's

by **Bob Blaisse**

Did you know Don Johnson is an Eagle Scout? Not the Don Johnson of 1980s TV fame, Don Johnson of St. Anastasia fame for service to the youth of our community. Donald J. Johnson, husband of Joan and son-in-law of our beloved former parish secretary, Pat Dudley, who passed away in April. Yes, that Don Johnson who has served his parish and community for more than 30 years as a Scout Leader of Cub Scout Pack 315 and Boy Scout Troop 315.

Boy Scouting in Newtown Square dates back to the days of "Troop 1, RFD, Larchmont, PA" which reflects Newtown Township's rural standing in 1922. Since then, the chartering organization of Troop 1 has changed from the MN School District, to the Newtown Township Business Association, to the Newtown Square Baptist Church and then, in 1947, to St. Anastasia Parish. This parish has continued to be its chartering organization now for nearly 70 years.

In the late 1960s, Boy Scouts of America required Troop 1 to change its unit number to Troop 315. A few years later, Don Johnson, a Boy Scout himself at that time, stood on the parade field at Resica Falls Scout Reservation and watched the landing on the moon. Soon thereafter, Johnson earned the rank of Eagle Scout and took an oath to do his best to use his training to always be an example and influence for better Scouting. He has surely been a good example and influence on the scouts with whom he has worked.

In 1984 Don and Joan Johnson moved to Broomall so their son Donny could begin first grade at St. Anastasia School. That year Donny became a Cub Scout of Cub Pack 315. It was then that Donny's dad began faithful service as a Scout Leader. First as a Den Leader, then as Cubmaster of Cub Pack 315, Johnson taught boys in first through fifth grade the Scouting values of Family, God and Country. In 1988 when his son Donny crossed over into Boy Scout Troop 315, Johnson became Scoutmaster of the troop and has continued in that leadership role for the past 28 years.

Since being chartered by St. Anastasia in 1947, Boy Scout Troop 315 has guided boys, ages 11 through 18 in camping, outdoor survival skills, respect of nature and the importance of giving cheerful service to their community. The troop also develops leadership among peers, a skill which helps boys to grow into strong confident young men in their community. Since becoming chartered by St. Anastasia Parish, Troop 315 has been honored to have 56 Eagle Scouts, more than half of who recall Don Johnson as their Scoutmaster who mentored them towards Scouting's highest rank. Less than five of every one hundred Boy Scouts achieves the rank of Eagle Scout.

Don Johnson, you are a St. Anastasia Parish star of service to the youth of our community. Thank you for so well honoring your own Eagle Scout Oath as you taught the values of Scouting, including to always: Be Prepared, Do Your Duty to God and Country, and to obey The Scout Law by always being: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent!

Note: Boy Scout Troop 315 welcomes contact from all former members as far back as 1947 to help the troop memorialize its long history. Scoutmaster Johnson invites all boys, 5th grade through high school age, interested in making new friendships, community service, learning outdoor skills and investigating careers through merit badge achievements, to join Troop 315 which is currently enrolling new Scouts while planning its July summer camp week at Resica Falls Scout Reservation. Contact Don Johnson: [dcjs315@yahoo.com](mailto:dcjs315@yahoo.com).



# St. Anastasia Endowment

by **Eric Till**

This year, St. Anastasia School celebrates the 20th anniversary of the St. Anastasia Endowment Fund. In late 1995, a few dedicated parishioners had the foresight and desire to insure the future of St. Anastasia School by the creation of an Endowment Fund with a purpose of defraying future costs to the school. By the beginning of 1996, the Pastoral Council approved the idea, and a board of directors was established to lay the foundation for this fund. By November of the same year, the St. Anastasia Endowment Fund was officially born when Fund Agreement, which outlines the purpose and methods of the Fund, was signed by the then current pastor Rev. John J. Shellen and the founding members Bernadette Baraldi, Herbert White, Richard Rodney, Robert Blaisse, Louis D'Angelo, Lee Kirkland and Ellen Murray.

These members had an ambitious goal of raising \$1,000,000 in three years. They solicited the members of the parish, past alumni of the school and community businesses, asking for their financial support to make this goal a reality. Because of the dedication of these individuals, the volunteers that helped them, Fund board members that followed their footsteps and the generosity of those who gave donations throughout the years, the Fund hit the \$1,000,000 milestone in 2015.

The Fund's trust agreement enables the board members to disburse up to 3% of the value of the Fund annually to address the needs of the school. These disbursements cannot come from donated funds - those are restricted and cannot be spent. Because of this, any money donated to the Endowment is invested in mutual funds to help grow the account. It is only the interest, dividends and investment appreciation that can be used for disbursements (these are the non-restricted funds). Since the beginning, this Fund has given \$582,000 to the school for facility improvements, tuition assistance and classroom technology upgrades. As the Fund grows, the annual amount given to the school increases, which reduces the parish's financial burden.

The Fund continues to receive financial support through several revenue streams. For one, occasionally parishioners will simply make a donation by cash or check. Many individuals have also purchased a brick in the Endowment Fund brick program, a program in which bricks can be purchased, engraved and placed in the concrete in front of the school for \$75 each. This is a great way to commemorate a student, teacher, or family member. There have been a number of times when family members of the deceased have requested that donations be made to the Endowment Fund in lieu of flowers. This is a nice way to direct money to this Fund from others outside the parish without having to actually having to part with any of your own money. Occasionally parishioners have even supported the Fund by including it in their will.

In December of 2015 the President signed the PATH Act making permanent the provision allowing IRA owners age 70½ and over the ability to distribute up to \$100,000 from their IRA directly to charity. The monies distributed to charity count toward the annual required minimum distribution and are not included in income. This can be an attractive way to enact charitable gifts to charities such as The St. Anastasia School Endowment Fund. IRA qualified charitable distributions can be attractive for individuals that would like to lower their adjusted gross income (AGI), or who don't itemize deductions but would like to make tax advantaged charitable contributions, or whose annual gifting is otherwise constrained by the annual gift limits (i.e. 50% of AGI for cash gifts and 30% of AGI for gifts of appreciated securities).

The parish should be very proud of its established Fund. Its success is supported by the fact that St. Annie's tuition remains one of the lowest in the surrounding area. Its students learn in a modern educational environment, with technological tools at the teachers' and students' disposal. Saint Annie's students not only receive a first class education, but are also instilled with strong moral values. Indeed, 20 years after its inception, we have good reason to celebrate.



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We, the parishioners of Saint Anastasia, are a strong faith based community, grounded in more than a century of Catholic tradition, rooted in worship and service. Compelled by the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are committed to growing in a deeper relationship with God and with one another. We strive to become a more vibrant parish by inspiring an atmosphere of belonging, of welcoming, and by promoting opportunities to share and spread our Catholic Faith, so that we may be more united as one parish community.

