Message from the Pastor

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Louise,

The days leading up to Christmas will pass all too quickly. For most of us they are both a joy and a chore. As much as we may stress over holiday preparations, we relish the time it affords us to spend with our family and friends.

I have many childhood memories of active Christmas holidays and weeks that came before. A good number of these memories are of occasions when I was led by the hand (often rather firmly, so I wouldn’t run off!): navigating crowds through malls and department stores, shopping for Christmas Eve dinner at the very lively 9th Street Italian market district, or visiting other places in Center City Philadelphia to take in Christmas window displays, and light shows. Surely there are a few of you native to the Philadelphia area who can share in this nostalgia. I also remember moments – in more than one parish church – being led by the hand to the manger scene, to make a visit to the infant Jesus, to Mary and Joseph, and being taught to pray. As I have spent time pondering how to encourage others to live our faith, I have to acknowledge that my own faith grew through being led by the hand to the Lord – and not just once, but many times and by different people.

Christian people must remember our need to be led to encounter Christ. Just as importantly we need to recognize our role in leading others to Him. While we all run the risk of being carried away from our focus on Jesus Christ as we concern ourselves with holiday details, the season of Advent is the Church’s way of leading us by the hand to encounter our Savior right in our midst.

I am humbled and touched to have come to know good people and families who have been led to encounter the Lord Jesus at St. Louise Parish. I pray that this season He will renew us in His Love.

With sincere wishes for a Joyous Christmas and many Blessings in the New Year, I am

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Joseph E. Sioli
Pastor
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MARCELLA LANTZMAN, a St. Louise parishioner and our new Sacristan, has a love of baking. She graciously shared a family recipe that has been a Christmas tradition in her family for generations.

“This recipe was handed down from my Oma, who lived in Germany,” Marcella explains. “When we lived in the US, Oma would send us a package each Christmas via boat – airmail was way too expensive! My mom, my brothers, and I waited anxiously for it to arrive. Many of the cookies my Oma baked were in pieces by the time they arrived, but we didn’t care, they were a ‘taste of home’ for my mom and a cherished gift for us. My mom has continued the tradition and we now anxiously await her package each year and treasure the love and time she takes to prepare these delicious gifts for us.”

**Butter Cookies**

**Recipe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUTTER COOKIES</th>
<th>EGG WASH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250 grams (2.21 sticks) butter</td>
<td>2 egg yolks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 egg yolks</td>
<td>2 tsp water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>185 grams (0.93 cups) sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375 grams (3 cups) flour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pinch of cinnamon</td>
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</tbody>
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**Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Beat the butter until smooth. Add 4 egg yolks and blend well. Add in sugar until light. Slowly add in flour and cinnamon until dough forms. Roll into a disc or ball and refrigerate for an hour or overnight. **Note:** Be careful not to overwork or overhandle the dough.
3. Lightly flour your work surface and roll out dough. Use cookie cutters (we favor stars) and quickly move to parchment-lined cookie sheets.
4. With any leftover dough, shape into pretzels or little loaves of bread. (My brothers and I loved when our Oma included those!)
5. Gently paint an egg wash on top of dough. Bake for 5-8 minutes. Enjoy!
Each year the parishes of our Diocese of Pittsburgh participate in the Parish Share Program (PSP). PSP supports the work of the Church throughout the diocese, making it possible for our bishop and those who work with him to minister to Catholics and our neighbors, to educate seminarians and to further the work of the Church in many more ways. St. Louise de Marillac Parish’s assessment for this year is approximately $228,000.00. Any donations to PSP received in excess of our goal return directly to our parish to be used for ministries and programs – with the added benefit of remaining free from any future assessment.

We have asked that each family in the parish prayerfully consider pledging $325 to this year’s PSP. However, if that amount is not feasible for you, any contribution to this important program will be greatly appreciated.

If you have not made a donation to the Parish Share Program this year and are considering making a year-end donation to the parish, please consider designating it to Parish Share.

Kindly fill out the pledge card below and return both the “Parish” and “Diocese” copies to the Parish Office.

If you wish to make a contribution, you can include a check payable to “St. Louise de Marillac Parish.”

If you use Faith Direct, you may call them at 1-866-507-8757 to arrange your pledge or do so through their website at www.faithdirect.net. Our parish code is PA27.

We appreciate the generosity of our parishioners, in supporting both our own parish and so many other good and important works. We are indeed fortunate to have formed such a vibrant parish community and to have established a sound financial foundation.
With responsibility for over 700 students in grades one through eight in the religious education program, St. Louise de Marillac Director of Religious Education, Lynn Lachut, is a busy woman. While it might be easier to continue doing things as they have been done in the past, Lynn is continually looking for ways to improve the educational experience. This year, she is especially excited about the change in the eighth grade curriculum.

Responding to Bishop Zubik’s Pastoral Letter, The Church Evangelizing, and with the encouragement of our pastor, Father Joseph Sioli, St. Louise de Marillac Confirmation preparation classes are using Decision Point, a Confirmation program offered by Dynamic Catholic.

Evangelization is a personal and powerful conversation that leads to conversion of heart, mind, and soul. Decision Point is designed to ignite a conversation about the genius of Catholicism between candidates and their parents, sponsors, catechists, teachers, peers, and priests. This program demonstrates the relevance of Catholicism in every aspect of the students’ lives, and convinces them they should always give God and the Church a central place in their lives.

Lynn says that Decision Point covers everything that would be traditionally taught in preparing young people for Confirmation, but the program also covers a series of life issues, helping to make a powerful connection between preparing for Confirmation, God, and the candidates’ everyday lives.
Presented by Matthew Kelly, Decision Point is structured around 72 short films and is designed to promote dialogue about our Catholic faith. There are 12 sessions, each presented over a two-week time span. Each session includes Bible references, inspirational stories, and discussion and journal questions. Students receive a workbook, and parents are encouraged to follow the videos, which are available online. Parents are also encouraged to open a channel of discussion with friends and family about our faith.

Hunter Lantzman, a junior at Upper St. Clair High School who is in his second year of teaching eighth grade CCD at St. Louise, is enthusiastic about the Decision Point program. “I like it a lot better than what we did last year,” said Hunter. “It’s a lot more interactive.”

He explained that last year’s classes were mostly spent reading from the book and lecturing, while this year, the class incorporates the use of videos and is more discussion-based. “A lot of last year’s format was instructional (about our faith), which is great,” said Hunter, “But Decision Point takes it a step further, from ‘here’s what our faith is’ to ‘here’s how to put it into practice.’ “

Based on class discussions, Hunter thinks his students like the Decision Point program. They’re more willing to open up, he said, adding that during almost every class, they bring up at least one point that he didn’t consider. “They bring up fresh ideas and new and interesting takes during our discussions. I didn’t see that last year.”

Hunter’s students like the class discussions. Sarah Suchko said that while there were a few exceptions, her past CCD classes were kind of bland – read the book, do a worksheet. She said the Decision Point program is “more involved, more hands on, and with more class discussion.” Her classmate, James Deluliiis, also likes the group discussions and called the program “great.” He thinks the one message from the program that he will always remember is: “Be the best version of yourself.”

Lynn says, “We believe this program will not only prepare our young Catholics for the Sacrament of Confirmation in a dynamic way, but also teach and inspire them to respond and cooperate with God’s grace in all circumstances of their daily lives long after Confirmation has passed.”

To learn more, reference dynamiccatholic.org and click on Decision Point/View program. There is a free application that can be downloaded to your phone. A sign-up for weekly emails is also available on the website, which may be of particular interest to parents and sponsors.
In October, the St. Louise de Marillac Youth Ministry Program hosted a diocesan-wide Middle School Faith Rally for young people in grades 6 through 8.

Over 175 middle schoolers joined us, with students coming from as far away as Aspinwall, East McKeesport, and even Beaver County! St. Louise was represented well with 80 teens and more than 15 high school youth volunteers. These young teens were entertained by Catholic singer, songwriter, and speaker Chris Padgett. Chris sang a few songs to get the group engaged and then transitioned into a talk, punctuated by outbursts of silly antics and humor. He challenged the teens to reevaluate their images of Jesus, i.e., stained glass window Jesus or buddy Jesus, and instead see Jesus for who He is. Jesus is the God-man who loves us more than we love ourselves and sacrificed everything so that we might be in heaven with him. The faith rally gave the teens an opportunity to be more open to living their faith and to dive more deeply into a relationship with God. It was truly remarkable to see 6th, 7th, and 8th graders energetic and excited about their faith!
From June 21-26, our high school teens will participate in the annual Mission Week, which focuses on serving locally by working in the Pittsburgh area, including Carnegie, Collier Twp., Monaca, New Brighton, and Rochester, to name a few.

We have teamed up with the St. Bernard and St. Valentine Youth Ministries to develop a weeklong service experience. The teens will stay at Gilmary Catholic Retreat Center in Coraopolis at night and during the day will go out to serve those in need. During the evenings, the teens will experience Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, a few catechetical lessons and, of course, lots of time to hang out! This week provides our teens the opportunity to deepen their relationship with Christ by reaching out to those in need.
A special thank you to St. Louise parents and parishioners, the faculty, administration, and all those who helped to make this a great event!

Through your generosity and hard work, we’ve raised over $90,000 for the school to date.
BASKETBALL

The Basketball season is underway. The expectations are high for both the JV and Varsity squads.

Highlights for the upcoming BOYS BASKETBALL SEASON

- 6 TEAMS INCLUDING:
  - 2 Rookie League Teams (4th Grade)
  - 3 Prep League Teams (5th/6th Grade)
  - 1 Varsity Developmental League (VDL) Team (7th/8th grade)
  - Junior Varsity (5th/6th Grade)
  - Varsity (8th Grade)

Highlights for the upcoming GIRLS BASKETBALL SEASON

- 4 TEAMS INCLUDING:
  - 2 Fourth Grade Developmental teams
  - Junior Varsity (5th/6th Grade)
  - Varsity (7th/8th Grade)
  - Little Dribblers

LITTLE DRIBBLELERS

Our Little Dribblers program is designed for students in grades 1-3, to develop fundamental basketball skills while learning teamwork, strategy, sportsmanship, and a joy for the sport. Skills taught include passing, shooting, dribbling, and basic rules of the game. Values such as teamwork, hard work, and respect for others are stressed at sessions.

Good Luck to the St. Louise Basketball Teams and the Coaches!

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

With 72 participants, St. Louise entered seven teams in the Diocese of Pittsburgh Girls Grade School Volleyball League, including three varsity and four junior varsity teams.

Highlights for the girls VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAMS

- In the diocesan playoffs, Varsity Green finished in 2nd place in its section and tied for 5th place out of 47 varsity teams in the diocese; Varsity Gold finished in 3rd place in its section and tied for 17th place in the diocese.

- Varsity Green also won the St. Mary Condor Classic Tournament.

- Although they weren’t playoff contenders, the Varsity White team, comprised entirely of 7th graders, had a successful season and won the St. Killian Varsity “B” Shamrock Spike Volleyball Tournament.

Highlights for the girls JV VOLLEYBALL TEAMS

- After a perfect season with a 14-0 record, JV Green made it to the semi-final round of the diocesan playoffs, winning the section and finishing in 4th place out of 47 JV teams.

- JV Green won the Bishop Canevin Fall Classic Tournament, the Oakland Catholic Tournament, and the St. Alphonsus Fall Classic Tournament, and finished 2nd at the St. Mary Condor Classic Tournament.
FOOTBALL

St. Louise entered the Diocese of Pittsburgh Grade School 2014 Football Season with a varsity, junior varsity (JV), and a developmental team, with a total of 40 boys participating.

JV FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS

Junior varsity highlights included: JV ended the season in 1st place with a 6-1 record in regular season competition. The team entered the diocesan playoffs as the #1 seed, but was narrowly defeated by the North Catholic Ironmen in an exciting playoff game.

VARSITY FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHTS

Due to injuries, the varsity team, which had started the season with only 11 players, was forced to suspend its season after only three games. Thanks to these 11 players, who worked hard and exceeded all expectations.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Cross Country team continues to grow and now has more than 40 participants.

CROSS COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Catie Hasset and Sean Sullivan each earned a medal in the Diocesan Championship meet. Paige Mattes earned a medal in the South Hills Championship.

CHEERLEADING

The St. Louise cheerleading program is full of spirit and pride this season and putting smiles on the faces of all the STL Trojan fans.

Our squads consist of 55 (and growing) Pep Squad cheerleaders, 12 4th graders, 24 Junior Varsity cheerleaders, and 20 Varsity cheerleaders. Cheerleading is a year round sport beginning with home football, basketball, and playoff games. March marks the beginning of the competition season, and this year the Diocesan Cheerleading Championship will be held at St. Louise on Saturday, March 28th. Under the successful leadership of Mrs. Testa the girls work as team, develop confidence, and have fun while holding their heads high and proud as St. Louise cheerleaders.
Kindergarten Registration

Saturday, January 31, 2015
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
School Lobby

Full day and half day classes are available.
Prospective Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 1st.

To register your child, please bring:
• your child's original Birth Certificate
• your child's original Baptismal Certificate (unless baptized at St. Louise)
• your child’s immunization record
• registration fee — $50.00 for one child; $75.00 for two children; $100.00 for three or more children
  (non-refundable and non-applicable)

Please join us during Catholic Schools Week on Tuesday, January 27th from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm for our Open House, Ice Cream Social and Book Fair. This is a wonderful opportunity for your family to tour our school and meet our teachers.

If you would like to schedule a private tour, please call the school office at 412.835.0600 to arrange an appointment with our Principal, Mr. Ken Klase.

For additional information about our school, please visit our website at www.stlouiseschoolpa.org.

Currently serving 500 students in Kindergarten through 8th grade • Full-day and half-day Kindergarten classes are available • On-site child care offered for all students before and after school • Tuition assistance is available • Students consistently score above the national average on standardized tests • SMARTboards in every classroom • iMac computer lab and multiple PCs in every classroom • Wide variety of sports programs and extra-curricular activity programs • Dedicated priests, faculty, staff and administrators
Save the Date!

Luau Gala 2015

Friday
February 6, 2015

A Night Full of Fun, Great Food, Beverages & Spirits, Live & Silent Auctions, Class Art Projects, Raffles, Dancing, Friendship & Fundraising to Benefit St. Louise de Marillac Catholic School!
The students of St. Louise de Marillac School are accustomed to participating whole-heartedly in monthly service projects. We do many of the same projects year after year, motivated by the idea of making a difference within the community. The students learn that generosity of mind and spirit can make a difference in the lives of others. One of these yearly service projects is providing a Thanksgiving meal in Mooncrest, a housing community tucked within the hills of Moon Township.

The school was introduced to the people of Mooncrest 10 years ago by Sister Rene, a Felician sister who devotes her time to managing the community center and after-care program in Mooncrest. The center is a welcoming and stabilizing environment for the families of this humble community. Sister Rene not only provides a nurturing place for the kids to gather after school to do homework and have a healthy snack, but also offers other support services for the families, who work hard to make ends meet.

Years ago, Sister Rene spoke to the students of St. Louise about the inability of some Mooncrest families to have a true Thanksgiving dinner. With limited income, it was difficult for these families to have any extra money to put towards the ingredients for such a meal. She proposed the first Mooncrest Thanksgiving service project and, in its first year, the families of St. Louise students provided enough to feed a handful of Mooncrest families. Each year the number of families has grown and this year we were asked to feed 41 families.

The goal of the Mooncrest service project has always been to provide each family with all of the ingredients for a full turkey dinner, as well as extra staples. With the help of the teachers, students are assigned items to donate and we collect those food items the week before Thanksgiving. During this process, we take every opportunity to point out to our students that we are fortunate to not have to rely on the generosity of others for our own food.

As the years go on, we often see the same families. They are a bright light in our delivery day, often greeting us with warm hugs and pure joy. In those moments, we are reminded how much we truly have and how little others live on. It is not unusual for those of us on the delivery team to be stopped and asked if we have anything extra to give. It is with a heavy heart that we sometimes have to turn people away because we have nothing left. What is most remarkable is that the residents of Mooncrest often say that they will pray for us!

Mooncrest is a special community with significant need. Many of those who assist with the food delivery say that meeting these families and witnessing their appreciation and joy leaves a lasting impact. It is difficult to walk away from this community and not think of each of these families on Thanksgiving Day. We have much to be thankful for at St. Louise de Marillac School, and the desire to serve others and provide for those less fortunate is an ideal that we try to instill in the students every day.
Bishop Canevin High School

Bishop Canevin Adopts Jesuit-Modeled “House System” for Students

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam – “For the Greater Glory of God” is the motto of the Jesuits and the newly adopted motto of Bishop Canevin High School which is grounded in Ignatian Spirituality, focused on the spiritual direction of St. Ignatius Loyola.

With this Ignatian charism alive at Bishop Canevin, one of its new transformational programs is the “House System,” much like those adopted in Jesuit schools throughout the world.

Students have been divided into communities or “Houses” which primarily aims to further the Ignatian principle of “cura personalis” (care for the entire student) and to serve as social support by providing students with more leadership opportunities, promotion of healthy competition, increase of student spirit, and strengthening relationships between students, faculty and administration.

The Bishop Canevin Houses each represent one of four prominent Jesuits whose namesake helps to distinguish to which House a student belongs: Rahner House (Fr. Karl Rahner, S.J.), Kostka House (St. Stanislaus Kostka, S.J.), Faber House (St. Peter Faber, S.J.) and Ricci House (Fr. Matteo Ricci, S.J.). Each House is comprised of approximately 80-100 students, about 25 from each of the four grade levels. Students remain in the same House during their entire time at BC.

Throughout all the interaction and House activities during the school year, each House will develop a special identity as a group. They will develop a logo, crest and shield that will reflect the personality of their House’s namesake. Each House will be supervised by a collection of teacher-mentors responsible for the overall formation of the House. And, each House will select student-leaders who will work with the teacher-mentors to create a healthy spirit of camaraderie.

“The House System will help to emphasize other aspects of school life aside from academics,” said BC School President Ken Sinagra. “While our school has excellent academics, extracurriculars and academics, the House System will help to focus on our need to care for the whole student, which is a hallmark of Jesuit education.” At Bishop Canevin, teachers and administrators serve as more than academic guides. They are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, moral, social, emotional and spiritual development of every student. The mission of the school is to help each student develop a sense of self-worth and become a responsible, ethical and moral human being giving back to the greater community.

“The House System will serve to instill in our young men and women a real sense of Christian community,” said Karen Walker, BC Principal.

BISHOP CANEVIN HIGH SCHOOL

For over 55 years, preparing students for a life anchored in faith, enlightened by learning and committed to the promotion of charity and justice.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Crusader Shadow Days Through Mar. 31

Rolling Admissions Applications received after Jan. 20 are reviewed for acceptance on a rolling basis.

For more info, please visit our website: bishopcanevin.org/joinus/dates-deadlines, or contact Mrs. Marianne Reinhart at 412-922-7400x28.

As the only Ignatian/Jesuit based high school education in Western PA, our teaching philosophy is grounded in Ignatian Spirituality. It asserts that God is present in our world and active in our lives, and instructs students to live as men and women for others.

Bishop Canevin H.S., 2700 Morange Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15205
www.bishopcanevin.org/ignatian-spirituality // 412.922.7400
An essay by Jacqueline Sluss, a 7th grader at St. Louise de Marillac School, was awarded 2nd place overall in the Diocese of Pittsburgh’s annual Children’s Educational Essay/Poster Contest.

Students in grades 5 through 8 from Catholic Schools throughout the Pittsburgh area participated in the contest, which was held in October 2014. Each year, the Diocese of Pittsburgh works with the Homeless Children’s Education Fund to select a topic that students use as inspiration to create a poster or write an essay. This year’s topic was, “How can we give a voice to children and families experiencing poverty and homelessness?”

In addition to receiving a $250 Tuition Assistance Grant from the Diocesan Department of Education, Jacqueline was also given the opportunity to participate in a touching service experience at Shepherd’s Heart Veteran’s Home in Pittsburgh, which was coordinated by Dr. Bowes, from the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Susy Robison, from the Homeless Children’s Education Fund. Jacqueline and the other winners prepared and delivered lunches to veterans, and were given a tour of the facility to learn about the work Shepherd’s Heart does to restore veterans’ dignity by providing temporary housing, employment assistance, and life skills training.

During the awards ceremony, Bill Wolfe, Executive Director of the Homeless Children’s Education Fund, described how its non-profit organization helps educate and empower homeless children right here in Pittsburgh. Jacqueline was so moved by the experience that she chose to pay her gift forward and donate her $250 tuition grant to the St. Louise de Marillac School Angel Fund.

How can we give a voice to children and families experiencing poverty and homelessness?

**BY JACQUELINE SLUSS**

Have you ever been in a situation where you completely lost hope? Have you ever felt like giving up? A great population of people feels this way every day. They feel no need to be on this earth anymore. Don’t just sit there and let this happen to people, reach out and help them.

There are many ways to help people experiencing poverty and hopelessness. Helping share in any surpluses that we have of basic necessities like food and clothing can go a long way in giving dignity to families in need. Instead of throwing away old clothing or shoes, we should donate gently worn clothing and shoes. Even kids can help other kids by having donations made to a charity instead of receiving presents at a birthday party.

Education is a valuable resource that should be provided to all children regardless of income. Donating books is a great way to share knowledge and inspire people. We could start a back to school campaign and collect school supply donations so that families in need could provide children with paper, pencils, and basic things they need to have a successful school year.

In our blessed lives, every little detail you may think is small could be a life changing event for someone experiencing poverty or hopelessness. We have to remember that people in this situation are not invisible and little things matter to people just as much as the big things do. You can also just go and have a conversation with someone in need of hope. Your kind words, thoughts, and prayers can change someone’s life forever. It can give them hope in their life. Just being kind and friendly to someone gives them hope that someone actually cares. Every act of kindness and love is a step towards ending poverty and hopelessness.
During the season of Lent, we are presented with a special moment in which to reflect on our relationship with the Lord and with the Church. We are called to deepen and renew our faith through prayer, penance and works of charity. Lent will hopefully also help us to strengthen the bonds of our community at St. Louise. This time of year also brings the 15th annual Family Fish Frys at St. Louise. They are held every Friday of Lent (except Good Friday) beginning February 20, 2015 in the LeGras Parish Center. This is an opportunity for members of our parish, school, and surrounding community to share food, fellowship, and fun with friends and family.
It’s been about nine years since I was first welcomed as a volunteer by our homeless and needy brothers and sisters for their Monday evening gathering on the Boulevard of the Allies. Another volunteer recently pointed out how fitting it is that we meet on the Boulevard of “Friends”... I had never even thought of the appropriateness of the name of our meeting place!
This unique ministry began over 25 years ago when the hearts of a husband and wife from Aspinwall, Miss Nancy and Mr. Ralph, were stirred by the plight of those living in despair in downtown Pittsburgh. It has been both an honor and a privilege to play a small role in the weekly service experience they began. (Side note: I fully admit that I do feel less privileged when the winter temps dip to the teens on Monday evenings!)

Our many volunteers have a multitude of roles to fill throughout the evening, but nothing else we do is as important to us as honoring the dignity of our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is our primary mission, with the distribution of practical assistance, such as food and clothing, being our secondary focus of the evening. Most of our special Monday night friends have spirits that have been wounded somewhere along the line. In showing respect to each of them as best as we can in the few hours that we have, we feel that we can perhaps in some small way, provide them with a sense of hope to help them with the many challenges they face in their daily lives.

There was a gentleman many years ago who, when handed a shirt pressed meticulously by Miss Nancy, responded with these words, spoken softly and seemingly to himself: “This almost makes me feel human again.” I have never forgotten the profound statement he made that night. It is not uncommon for those individuals in our line to offer their heartfelt thanks, providing the volunteers with tender affirmation that the love we intend to share is sensed by those we are serving in His name. It is in hearing such words that one realizes that hope is a natural virtue that emerges when someone feels that there are people who truly care and want to help.

Most of us who are parishioners of St. Louise are blessed with the comfort of knowing that if we fell on hard times, there would be family and friends offering their assistance in a heartbeat. The brothers and sisters that we serve simply don’t have that type of network in place to provide them with hope for a brighter tomorrow. It is with great humility that the volunteers are able to offer that small ounce of optimism that is appreciated when life’s journey is a little rough. It is with a grateful heart that I thank all of the parishioners of St. Louise for continual support of this very special ministry as we rely so heavily on the kindness of others to supply us with what we need to take to “share” on Monday evenings.

A few years ago, we helped a distraught young woman who had just become homeless a few days earlier. She commented that she was having trouble wrapping her head around the fact that she no longer had a place to call home and that she had to rely on charity to survive. Miss Nancy engaged her in conversation and promptly informed her that our group wasn’t there to offer charity, but simply to “share” what we had with others. It was amazing to see how Miss Nancy’s words helped to transform this young woman’s perspective regarding what she was experiencing. When I later asked Miss Nancy about her response, she shared that it was the Holy Spirit who had placed those words on her tongue as they were quite obviously hand-chosen to address this woman’s discouraged heart at this time in her life.

An outstanding scripture message to carry with us in our hearts as we humbly head into the city on Monday evenings comes from Romans 15:13, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”.

In closing, I thank you all once again for your dedicated support of this ecumenical effort. Please know that the thoughtful gestures of kindness by you, the caring parishioners of St. Louise de Marillac, are very well received by appreciative hearts as we continue to share prayer, “goods,” and a gentle spirit of hope weekly with our neighbors in downtown Pittsburgh. God Bless +

For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in...

- Matthew 25:35
On Friday January 30, 2015, St. Louise de Marillac Parish and School will host two events with Fr. Leo Patilinghug, a priest with a unique recipe for ministering to marriages and families.

By masterfully opening the Church’s great pantry of theological wisdom on marriage and families and blending these ingredients with his comedic and culinary talents, Fr. Leo provides his audience with a great feast of truth and hope to savor and digest. EWTN and Catholic radio host, blogger, indefatigable international speaker, author, and founder of the family apostolate, Grace Before Meals, Fr. Leo will present, “An Evening for Marriage”, a couples’ night of faith, flavor, and fun, celebrating marriage and family. He will also present “Spiritual Combat for Kids” to St. Louise School children in the morning.

Every year, the Diocese of Pittsburgh chooses a theme on which its Catholic schools are to focus throughout the school year, particularly during the last week of January when they celebrate Catholic Schools Week. This year’s theme is HOPE. As the Catholic Schools Week planning committee cast about for ideas, they asked, “Where are we most in need of hope today?” The answer became clear: The meaning and value of marriage and family is under constant assault by our culture. With the day-to-day pressures of busy schedules, economic worries, and the constant bombardment of confusing media, not to mention the omnipresence of technology in the hands of husbands, wives, and children, people are hungry for hope; hope that convinces them that their harried marriages and struggling families are worth attending to, cherishing, nurturing, and fighting for.
Who would be such a bearer of hope for the families and married couples in the parish and school? The answer came quickly: Why not invite that veritable juggernaut of evangelical joy and hope, Fr. Leo Patilinghug of Grace Before Meals? Who better to feed the hunger for hope than he who has dedicated his life to “elevating culture and married life one meal at a time”?

The parish has invited Fr. Leo to deliver a dynamic talk to St. Louise students on January 30, the final day of Catholic Schools Week, during which he will arm the students with the church’s wisdom for spiritual combat. He blends his uncanny knack for relating to kids, his talents as a double-black-belt martial artist, and his hilarious break-dancing skills with practical spiritual advice for kids navigating the battles of day-to-day modern life.

In the evening, St. Louise will provide a “Date Night,” complete with spirits and appetizers, Fr. Leo’s presentation and cooking demo, and a full dinner for all attendees. All school and parish couples, young and young at heart, are invited to taste and see the hope and joy the church wishes to offer families and marriages.

ABOUT FR. LEO

Born into a loving family to parents from the Philippines, Fr. Leo inherited the wonderful attitude so characteristic of Catholic Philippine culture – where there is always room and lively conversation at the table. This practice of radical hospitality and deep appreciation for the way in which sharing a meal and face-to-face presence with one another opens the door to deeper communion is the foundation for Fr. Leo’s apostolate of hope which, in his own words, is about “strengthening marriages and families around the kitchen counter and family dinner table.” Fr. Leo has found a priestly vocation in bringing couples and families back to the table not only for nutrition and gustatory delight, but also for the feeding of souls with prayer, conversation, and real presence to one another across the table.

A central motif of Christ’s ministry is that lovingly prepared meals consumed around a table draw people into deeper communion. As Catholics are fed and drawn together into the Body of Christ by Christ Himself at the lovingly prepared banquet of the Mass, we recognize the echo of this sacrament in meals we share with spouses and family. Fr. Leo focuses his ministry on encouraging us to mindfully and prayerfully tap into these daily meals and use them as opportunities to not only feed bodies, but more importantly to nourish souls and strengthen matrimonial and familial bonds.

FEED YOUR MARRIAGE!

In addition to the Fr. Leo event, St. Louise Parish will offer another fun Marriage Enrichment Opportunity: 3 Date Nights!

Treat yourself and your spouse to these special evenings dedicated to feeding your marriage. Each of the 3 Date Nights includes a brief, fun, and thought-provoking DVD, small group conversation and prayer, followed by a dismissal for you and your spouse to go out on a date. Mark your calendars and watch for further information in the bulletin: Saturdays, Feb. 7th, March 7th, and March 21st, 5:00 - 6:30 pm, LeGras Hall.
Q: Fr. Leo, what is it about your own experience of family life that inspired you to become a priest dedicated to nourishing marriages and families?

Fr. LEO: I had the fortune of seeing how my parents share good times and bad times at the family dinner table. It was a privileged place for the family to talk, learn, and experience the stuff of life that helps a young person feel rooted.

Q: When and how did you begin to see that a ministry to the family and to marriage could arise from your love of cooking?

Fr. LEO: After some measurable success in the Grace Before Meals movement (including the book, popular website, invitations to speak around the world, and even winning a throw-down against Bobby Flay on the Food Network), I thought I had accomplished “enough.” But in prayer, God was reminding me that if I really want to strengthen families, I have to strengthen the source of families by strengthening the relationship between mom and dad. At the same time, I was helping couples in marriage counseling to find opportunities to talk and learn about marriage by rekindling their “dating” experience, which always includes food. So, it became a natural connection: strengthen relationships through food!

Q: What do you understand to be the biggest threats to marriages and families, and how is your Grace Before Meals ministry a response to this situation?

Fr. LEO: Not taking time to strengthen the relationship through healthy conversation and moments to celebrate. If couples do not actively strengthen their marriage, the devil works easily to destroy it, or perhaps worse, makes the couple feel ambivalence toward each other.

Q: Tell me about some of the projects on which you are currently working even as your other ministries continue.

Fr. LEO: I created a liturgical vessel to safely separate low-gluten communion wafers for easier distribution of Eucharist to people with special needs. I also started The Table Foundation: Elevating Culture and Family Life On Meal at a Time, which will expand the mission to connect food, faith, and culture in unique and dynamic ways!

Q: Do you have anything you’d like to say to our parish as we excitedly prepare for your visit on January 30th?

Fr. LEO: I am looking forward to sharing the message and feeding hungry hearts with God’s incredible message. Hopefully, they will “taste and see the goodness of the Lord”!(Ps 34:80)

To learn more about Fr. Leo and his marvelous apostolate of joy and hope, Grace Before Meals, visit GraceBeforeMeals.com.

You can sign up to receive inspiring and informative emails from Fr. Leo and follow along as his apostolate of hope for marriage and family continues to flourish. Help spread the Good News of hope for marriages and families, and plan on feeding your marriage by coming to “An Evening for Marriage” at St. Louise in LeGras Hall on January 30th!
The phrase “Do small things with great love” was used many times during our St. Louise Youth Ministry Mission Trip this past summer. When we first arrived at the Gilmary Retreat Center, which would be our home base for the next 5 days, we didn’t fully understand the meaning of the phrase. As we continued on the mission trip, however, Mother Teresa’s famous quote became deeply embedded in our hearts.
Within minutes, little kids were holding my hands and pulling me different ways. They wanted all of us to play with them, making me wonder if many of them did not receive very much attention at home.

When lunch time came around, we helped Rita bring the kids inside and serve them their food. We had our own lunches and each of them included a little snack along with a sandwich and fruit. Our leaders told us to save our snacks for the car because we didn’t want any of the kids to see them. Truthfully, the kids’ lunches did not look appetizing. Some of them refused to eat, and it was sad to think that they would go hungry. After that first day, I promised myself that, from then on, when I ate lunch with them, I would eat something simple like their meal.

Before we left that day, and on every day after, we gave the kids our snacks that we had planned to eat in the car. We thought that we could always have these types of small pleasures when we got home, or even at the retreat center, so why not give them to kids, who might not have anything else to eat that night?

We had already formed bonds with each one of them and had started to learn what games they liked to play. For the next five days, playing with kids and seeing the happiness that they got from our small actions was my life. Although these actions were small, they were presented with great love.

On the last day, the kids cried and begged us not to leave. It really changed me to see the impact we had had on these kids over the course of only five days. All of us promised that we would come back and that we would never forget them.

Seeing how the small actions of just a few teenagers could affect people was amazing. Whether we were playing with kids or rebuilding a house, we changed people’s lives through our small acts.

The St. Louise Youth Ministry gave me an experience that changed my life, and, hopefully, the lives of others. I definitely learned that small actions done with great love can change your community and the world.
During the Christmas season, we would like to thank all those who contributed to the Parish and School in 2014. Through your kindness and generosity may we continue with God’s work and provide for the future needs of our community. If you have not contributed in the past, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a year-end donation and adding St. Louise to your list of donations for 2015.
What is a Good Measure of Giving?

Tithing is the practice, established by God in the Old Testament, of returning 10% of your blessings to God. Originally the tithe was given to the temple or the Church in the form of produce or livestock, and later offered in currency. Whether one gave monetary income or profit from the fields was really not as important as it was for the believer to understand that the tithe was what was owed to God. The tithe was not given based on the needs of the priests, of the Church or of the poor. It was given simply in recognition and gratitude for the blessings that God had bestowed on the individual.

Although the Church teaches that offering some form of material support to the Church is obligatory for all Catholic adults who are able to do so, it doesn’t specify what percent of one’s income should be given. Christians are dispensed from the obligation of tithing ten percent of their incomes, but not from the obligation to help the Church.

The key to understanding how God wants us to give to the Church is found in the writings of the Apostle, Paul, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, “On the first day of the week [Sunday] each of you should set aside whatever he can afford,” (1 Cor 16:2). St. Paul later writes to the same community: “So I thought it necessary to encourage the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for your promised gift [donation], so that in this way it might be ready as a bountiful gift and not as an exaction. Consider this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work (2 Cor 9:5-8). To be clear, God doesn’t demand a fixed amount of money from us; he wants us to give from the heart.

Offertory Gifts of Treasure

Faith Direct 13%
Envelope User 87%

EGiving

Although the number of parish families enrolled in our eGiving program, Faith Direct, continues to grow every year, many have not realized the ease and benefits of the service. If you are not enrolled, please consider signing up today.

egiving is convenient: With Faith Direct you won’t have to write a check each Sunday morning or search around for your offertory envelopes.

Faith Direct means consistency: Through Faith Direct you can support our ministries even if you are out of town or unable to attend Mass. This gives us a better idea of the funds we will have coming in week after week, and allow us to better plan our programs and services.

egiving is cost-effective: Every parishioner signing up with Faith Direct means one less package of envelopes to print and mail out – and the savings can be used to further expand our ministries throughout our community and reach more people with Christ’s love. (It also means that together, we’ll be using less paper and easing our impact on the environment.)

Signing up is easy. To enroll please visit the Faith Direct website, www.faithdirect.net and use our church code: PA27. You may also call 866-507-8757 to speak with someone directly.

Online banking: If you are enrolled in online banking, please consider setting up an automatic payment for your offertory contributions. This is another easy way to automate your giving without enrolling in the Faith Direct program.
Tithing is Such a Great Sacrifice... Are There Any Real Benefits?

In addition to the fact that you are following God’s will and providing your Church with the resources it needs to carry out the work of Jesus Christ here on earth, those who embrace tithing report that this approach has numerous benefits. The satisfaction that comes from gratefully sharing your blessings is tremendous.

- When you take a hard look at your spending and plan to make God first in your budget you quickly begin to realize the difference between what you need and what you want.
- You begin to eliminate the endless clutter of material wants from your life and start to more fully appreciate the many blessings that you already have.
- You realize that commercialism works to convince us that we never have enough of the right things, even though God has already blessed you with all that you need.
- You stop being “consumed by consumerism” and “possessed by your possessions” and begin to slow down and prioritize not only how you spend your money but also how you spend your time.
- Once you stop trying to satisfy yourself with material possessions and spending, you may even find that you enjoy simple pleasures more fully – especially time to deepen your relationships with God, with loved ones and with your community.

Ultimately, those who tithe often feel that the practice brings more joy, more peace, more contentment and more balance to their lives.

Here Is An Easy Formula For Determining Your Tithe To Your Parish, Assuming A 10% Tithe.

- Take your pre-tax income.
- Round it to the nearest thousand.
- Then take off the last three zeros. For example, a person making $40,000 annually would take off the last three zeros and be left with $40.
- This is the amount you should be giving every week, if you are giving 5% back to God through your parish.
- You would also want to be giving the same amount – the other 5% – to other charities that are important to you, such as schools, hospitals, social service agencies, missions, religious orders, etc.
- Those who tithe often suggest starting with a feasible set amount and increasing it 1% per year until you reach your desired tithe.
- We are called to give from the heart. God does not demand a fixed amount of money from us.
Parish Gifts of Treasure

For the period 07.01.2013-06.30.2014

Total annual parish gifts of treasure, contributed by St. Louise parishioners, have the following distribution:

- 5.69% $2,501-$5,000
- 12.83% $1-$100
- 13.04% $501-$1000
- 14.22% $1001-$2500
- 17.98% $101-$500
- 12.83% $1-$100
- 34.41% No recorded contributions
- 1.42% $5,001-$10,000
- 0.41% $10,001+

Includes offertory, Parish Share, Capital Campaign, School Collection and Diocesan Collections. Does not include loose cash.

St. Louise de Marillac Stats

For the period 07.01.2013-06.30.2014

- 1937 registered & contributing households
- 153 new families
- 2953 actual number of families
- 9162 actual number of members
- 501 enrolled at STL School
- 623 enrolled in CCD
- 155 enrolled in homeschool CCD

Baptisms: 138
First Communions: 162
Confirmations: 98
Marriages: 34
Funerals: 52
Our Campaign for The Church Alive! is an opportunity to help serve the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the diocese, as well as nourishing our own Catholic community here at Saint Louise de Marillac Parish. This endeavor was designed to ensure the long term ability of the Diocese of Pittsburgh to support our immediate priorities, launch new programs and address local parish needs in one coordinated effort.

Our parish target was $2,370,000. Forty percent of the funds we receive up to our target stay at St. Louise and 60% of all funds received over the target stay here as well. To date we have received nearly $3 million in campaign pledges which equates to nearly $1.3 million dollars for initiatives in the parish and school.

WITH OUR PORTION OF THE FUNDS WE WILL ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

- Pursue Pastoral Plan of Evangelization, Ongoing Renewal & Re-engagement of Both Active & Inactive Parishioners
- Improve Furnishings & Storage to Allow for Wider Use of Parish Facilities for Outreach, Parish Organizations & Volunteer Opportunities
- Replace School Building’s Boiler & Roof
- Continue Improvements to Parish Campus Walkways & Landscaping
- Build Parish Savings Account for Future Capital Expenses
We Don’t Get Paid Unless You Do!

We Don’t Get Paid Unless You Do!

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Medjugorje

A Glimpse Into Our Personal Journey

BY SHARON SIPE & JACKIE ALGER

Trying to communicate a personal spiritual experience to a large audience is challenging. We hope that you will read this article with an open heart and mind so that you can be transported to a place over 5,000 miles away – a little village in between two mountains, in a small, remote part of our world, where God has graced us with the most amazing miracle of our time: the appearance of our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Jackie and Sharon at the top of Cross Mountain. Inside the cross is a relic of the actual “Cross of Christ” given by the Vatican when the cross was erected in 1933.
Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, located close to the Ukraine, is a place where war, poverty, and unrest still permeate today. This unlikely location is also the site where six visionaries claim to have been experiencing apparitions of the Blessed Mother since 1981, in which she appears to them as a three-dimensional young woman with long dark hair and blue eyes, wearing a gray servant’s robe.

According to these visionaries, during one of the apparitions, Our Lady communicated the following message: “Dear children, I invite you for your individual conversion. This time is for you! Without you, God’s plan cannot be realized. Dear children, grow day by day closer to God through prayer.” This decree, a personal invitation from Our Lady, in order to come closer to her Son through her, inspired us to visit Medjugorje seven months ago… and continues to burn deep into our hearts, making it possible to keep Medjugorje personal today.

We embarked on our 5,000 mile journey in April 2014 with a local group called Mother’s Pilgrims. The trip, which was hosted by Mother’s Pilgrims’ founder Cathy Howe, took us from Pittsburgh to New York; New York to Frankfurt, Germany; Frankfurt, Germany to Dubrovnik, Croatia; and finally from Dubrovnik to the little town in Bosnia-Herzegovina, no more than a speck on the world’s map.
Fifteen hours gives you many chances to ponder your decisions. We wondered what we were doing this far away from our families, our children, our lives. Couldn’t we have found spiritual fulfillment at St. Louise?

When we had told a dear friend of ours about this calling to travel to Medjugorje, she said, “You will know. Pray, and Mary will open the door for you to come to her if it is her will.”

Landing in Dubrovnik, we began the last leg of our travel adventure – a three-hour bus ride to Medjugorje. What do you do on a bus ride for three hours with 45 Catholics? …you pray! Father Joe Freedy, our spiritual advisor, led the group in our inaugural rosary. Our rosaries were the one item that all of us had brought, not realizing that this one item, so small, so personal, would be the one thing that never left our hands. In lieu of our cell phones, the rosary became the tool we used to stay connected. We logged onto God’s Facebook page as we meditated on the Mysteries of the Rosary portraying the pictures of Christ’s life. Sixty beads brought us so much comfort, joy, sorrow, and healing that the rosary became a fixture of our daily lives that began even before we set foot on holy soil.

Over the seven-day pilgrimage, our daily itinerary included Mass, praying the rosary either when we where climbing Apparition Hill (the place where Our Lady first appeared to the visionaries) or in our intimate groups, encountering the Blessed Sacrament at the adoration chapel, reciting the Stations of the Cross while ascending Cross Mountain, and meeting with various visionaries. Our hearts were filled with grace and joy beyond words.

On the morning of May 2, 2014, we prepared for the monthly apparition that Mirjana expected to receive. Mirjana is one of the six visionaries who claims to have seen the Blessed Mother on a regular basis since she was sixteen years old. The day prior to the apparition, we attended the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that our hearts would be ready to receive the graces that would be given to us during our pilgrimage.

“Pray, and Mary will open the door for you to come to her if it is her will.”

Medjugorje sanctuary and church.
The walk to the base of the mountain was awe-inspiring. With over 10,000 pilgrims waiting with anticipation, we began to pray the rosary together. Several languages were being used, including English, Croatian and Italian, yet all prayed in unison. Soon everything became silent. Our Lady’s presence was on earth and among the thousands of people you could hear a pin drop. Even the animals in Medjugorje did not make a sound. Although Mirjana was the only person who saw the Blessed Mother, all of God’s creation knew that the Queen of Heaven was in our midst.

A few days later, we met a local woman from the village who had a special connection to the Blessed Mother. In a very intimate conversation with us she looked into our eyes with motherly love and said, “This world has turned away from God. Our Lady needs you. Don’t judge others. When you do, your heart is hardened and you can’t pray for them. Open your heart and show them God’s love.” It was as if Our Blessed Mother, in a gentle, loving gaze, was speaking to us through this woman. As we departed, we knew this was the defining moment of our trip. In fact, being privileged to write this article enables us to partially fulfill what Our Lady has requested of us.

Many beautiful graces were bestowed in Medjugorje… the miracle of the sun, the weeping statue of the resurrected Christ, and the conversion of hearts. Although these are, without a doubt, miracles, they do not fully define the significance of what is happening in this holy place. What we have come to realize is that Our Lady invites all of us to come closer… to meet her and her Son in prayer, particularly by praying the rosary. The rosary, which we had come to realize in Medjugorje, is the symbol of love in the face of evil.

Along with the rosary, the Blessed Mother asks us to go to confession regularly, receive Christ in the Eucharist, read Holy Scripture, and fast. God’s plan for our salvation didn’t end on Calvary. Through Christ’s passion and resurrection, He made it possible for us to attain heaven. It is Christ’s mother, our heavenly mother, constantly inviting and reminding us what we need to do to obtain the necessary graces to go to heaven. It is Our Lady’s greatest desire that all souls, all of her children, come back to God and that Jesus is adored in every heart.

In the early morning of our final day in Medjugorje, the peace within our hearts had overcome any apprehension we had felt on our initial departure. We struggled with how to continue this spiritual journey once being integrated back into our regular busy lives. Could we marry these two worlds to create a harmonious relationship knowing the inevitable distractions we would face?

At first, we relived our experiences by telling our story to numerous groups who were curious about our trip.
May these words resonate in your soul and bring peace and happiness, knowing that our Heavenly Mother invites you to a deep relationship with her and her Son.

Almost seven months after this amazing spiritual awakening, we feel blessed to have the opportunity to continue to share our passion for Our Blessed Mother with our St. Louise community. With Women of Grace, 33 Days to Morning Glory, and the Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother, we hope that we will spark our extended family with the energy, love, and devotion that we felt in Medjugorje. We would like to close with Our Lady's words... “If you knew how much I loved you, you would cry with joy.”

HOW TO PRAY THE ROSARY

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and then pray the Apostles’ Creed.
2. Pray the Our Father.
3. Pray three Hail Marys for faith, hope and love and then pray the Glory Be and the Fatima Prayer.
4. Announce the First Mystery and then pray the Our Father.
5. Pray ten Hail Marys while meditating on the Mystery. Follow up by praying the Glory Be and the Fatima Prayer.
6. When you get to the next single bead, announce the Second Mystery and then pray the Our Father.
7. Repeat step 5 and continue with Third, Fourth and Fifth Mysteries in the same manner.
8. After you have finished the fifth Mystery and are back to the centerpiece, finish the Rosary by praying the Hail Holy Queen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

FATIMA PRAYER

Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of thy mercy.

JOYFUL MYSTERIES
MONDAY & SATURDAY
The Annunciation of the Lord to Mary
The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth
The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
The Presentation of our Lord
Finding Jesus in the Temple

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES
TUESDAY & FRIDAY
The Agony of Jesus in the Garden
The Scourging at the Pillar
Jesus is Crowned with Thorns
Jesus Carried the Cross
The Crucifixion of our Lord

GLORIOUS MYSTERIES
WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
The Ascension of Jesus to Heaven
The Descent of the Holy Ghost
The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
Mary is Crowned as Queen

LUMINOUS MYSTERIES
THURSDAY
The Baptism in the Jordan
The Wedding at Cana
The Proclamation of the Kingdom
The Transfiguration
The Institution of the Eucharist

Once the dust had settled and reality had set in, Medjugorje and all its simplicity seemed more distant. We had been inspired by the people of Medjugorje, including the six visionaries, who have families, yet remain committed to their prayer lives. In the center of their busy lives, God takes priority. On one occasion, while riding in a village cab, we were taken aback by the fact that the cab driver was listening to the daily Mass on the radio. This humbling moment called our attention to the choices the people of Medjugorje make to involve God in their everyday lives.
Marcie Kramer, a parishioner of St. Louise, has worked in the school cafeteria for 34 years. She started as a cafeteria volunteer in 1975, was hired as a full-time employee in 1976, and was promoted to Cafeteria Director in 2000. She retired in 2006, but returned in 2008. To all who know her, it’s clear by the way she pours her heart into all that she does that working at St. Louise is an act of love.

“I love my job and have made many friends over the years,” Marcie says. “I have had the pleasure of meeting many St. Louise family members who have volunteered in the cafeteria, and I enjoy interacting with the children at lunchtime and talking with the teachers.”

When Marcie began working in the school cafeteria, her three children were 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade students at St. Louise de Marillac School. She now has seven grandchildren. Cory and Alex currently attend St. Louise; Samantha and Lauren are St. Louise graduates; Jake attends The School for the Blind; and Bella and Dax attend Bethel Park schools.

Marcie is famous among friends and family members for her homemade sauce, mac and cheese, and apple crisp, and she was kind enough to share her Apple Crisp recipe.

### Marcie Kramer’s Famous Apple Crisp

**FILLING**
- 10-12 apples
- cinnamon and flour for dusting

**DIRECTIONS**
1. Preheat oven to 350°
2. Spray 9” x 13” pan with cooking spray
3. Peel and slice 10-12 apples, or drain 3 20-ounce cans of sliced apples (don’t use pie filling)
4. Place apples in bottom of pan
5. Mix together ingredients for “crumble” with fingers or low mixer
6. Sprinkle a light coating of flour and cinnamon on top of apples
7. Put the “crumble” on top of apples
8. Bake at 350° for 1 hour

**CRUMBLE**
- 1 2/3 cups flour
- 2 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 sticks margarine
- 1 Tbs. cinnamon
While it would appear that secular society has artfully hijacked our holy days, stripping them of their spiritual meaning and origins (and profiting from the ransom), we really don’t have to go much farther than our own backyard to find ways to keep Christ securely at the heart of Christmas.

Recently, a number of our St. Louise Parish and School families generously shared with us how they keep Christ at the center of their Advent/Christmas traditions. We share them with you here, in the hope that you will find hope and inspiration this season and throughout the new Year.

THE ADVENT WREATH & CALENDAR

Some of our St. Louise families prepare for Christmas by lighting an Advent wreath every night (or weekly) and reciting the prayers from a pamphlet (or even finding them online nowadays). They bless the wreath and explain to their children its meaning: It is round with no beginning or end to remind us that God is everlasting. It is evergreen, a sign of the hope and life he gives to us. The four candles mark the thousands of years that God’s people waited for the Savior. The purple candles represent both Jesus’ royalty and our repentance. The pink candle is a symbol of hope, that our waiting is almost over and our salvation is nearly come. Others include a white Christmas candle in the center of the wreath and light it on Christmas Eve to show that Christ is the Light of the World.

To further build up expectation of Christ’s coming, some families use an Advent calendar (which usually has Scripture quotes) that day-by-day tells a little bit of the Christmas narrative. One family shared how their particular calendar goes through the whole story of salvation from Genesis to Jesus, explaining why Jesus came to save the world.

While these are the most common practices, they each have their own special family touch. Still there are many other different traditions we can all learn from, but let’s hear from these families in their own words.

OUTDOOR NATIVITY AS FOCAL POINT

My husband built a life-size nativity a few years ago, and we put it in the front yard every year since. It is truly the focal point in our yard. It includes Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the barnyard animals. Other than lights and a spotlight, there are no other Christmas decorations, thus keeping the focus on the true meaning of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, our son Ethan puts Jesus in the manger. Although we do it the same way every year, it always seems special.

The Pievach Family

ST. NICHOLAS DAY (DECEMBER 6)

We celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas by putting one of our shoes outside our bedroom doors. St. Nicholas brings a small gift: an orange, an apple and a candy cane in each shoe to help remind us of his story. We also watch his life story in the animated movie called “Nicholas, the boy who became Santa,” which we bought at JMJ Bookstore.

The Talerico Family

From an early age we told our children the true story of St. Nicholas and explained how he came to be known as Santa Claus. Saint Nicholas is Sinter Klaas in Dutch, from which is derived the name Santa Claus; and though the shoes outside the door is a Dutch tradition, it became popular even among other ethnic groups in our melting pot country. In addition to setting out our shoes on the eve of St. Nicholas’ Feast Day, we have our children write their letters to Santa Claus and put them in their shoes, which are gone in the morning and replaced with a small treat.

In this letter they wish Santa Claus a happy feast day, thank him for the gifts they received the previous Christmas, and share with him the list of things they hope to receive this year; but in particular we ask the children to include at least one spiritual gift they need. This is usually a virtue each child knows he or she needs to work on: patience, obedience, attentiveness, charity, and so on. By the way, Mom and Dad have to write letters, too. If one in the family can’t think of a virtue, the other seven are only too happy to make suggestions. So each of us goes into the new year with a particular virtue we need to practice. (After all, if you’re going to ask Santa for a guitar, he’s going to expect you to practice that too.) In this way we can please Jesus, just like the very generous St. Nicholas.

The Rainone Family
GIFTS OF SERVICE FOR JESUS

One of our family traditions came from St. Louise teacher Mrs. Cugini. We make a small stable. Then on multiple thin strips of paper we write various ideas: nice things to say or do for others, blessings we are thankful for, or special intentions to pray for. Each day from Thanksgiving through Christmas we select one of the strips of paper, read it together, follow through with the service or sign of appreciation, and then add the paper as hay to the stable in preparation for Jesus. Easy to do and very meaningful! Thanks Mrs. Cugini!

The Romano Family

During Advent, our church displays a Christmas tree with angel ornaments. Each angel contains the first name and age of a baby, child, adult, or elderly person along with suggested age appropriate gifts. We have our children choose an angel from the tree. We explain to our girls why we do this and have them help us pick out and wrap the presents, and write a note to the individuals letting them know that we are thinking of them and wish them a blessed and merry Christmas. It gives our family an opportunity to bring the joy of Christ to those who are less fortunate in our local community during Christmas.

This year will be the first year that my kindergartner will join me for my traditional trip to the McMurray Nursing Home for Christmas caroling with a local woman’s organization. I feel that Amelianna is old enough now to understand that the elderly community enjoys our visit and singing along with our group. We are spreading Christmas cheer and are following in Christ’s footsteps by giving joy to those who are lonely, even at this special time of year.

The Tray Family

Several years ago the adults in our family decided to forgo our Christmas grab bag and donate the money to their inner city parish in memory of our deceased parents.

On Christmas Eve our children listen to their father read the story of the nativity from the family Bible. Our children then place a candle in a carved out rutabaga and place it on the windowsill to light the way for Mary and Joseph, as had been the custom of their grandparents in rural Ireland.

Mary Jane Collins

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!

We spend much time together as a family during this beautiful time of year. We gather on Christmas Eve (brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins). We break bread together, share our faith together, and give thanks for God’s many blessings throughout the year.

Jean McGarvey

After our Christmas dinner, I bring out for dessert a special cake decorated with “Happy Birthday Jesus” (for our family, it must be a Bethel Bakery cake). We sing Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus, and the youngest at the table blows out the candles.

Mary Campbell CCD 6th Grade Teacher

CHRISTMAS: NOT JUST DAY BUT A SEASON

Unlike the retailers, we keep our decorations up until at least the Feast of Epiphany, when the wise men visit Jesus. In late December, we attend an open house at St. Emma’s Monastery in Greensburg. Here they display hundreds of nativity sets from all over the world. We also get to participate in singing Christmas carols, as well as the special prayers (Vespers). My aunt is actually a nun here, which makes this a very special visit!

The Talerico Family

We got a great idea from friends of ours a few years ago. Each year during the Christmas season we go downtown to see the decorations in Market Square and PPG then grab dinner at one of the restaurants. While we are at dinner, the kids choose a family in the restaurant and we pick up the tab for their dinner anonymously. It’s great way to “pay it forward” and show the kids that “giving” during the Christmas season can be even more rewarding than “receiving.”

Nancy & Casey Gillespie

We hope this brief flight through our families’ traditions inspires everyone to find creative ways to keep Christ in Christmas and, more importantly, at the heart of the family.

If you would like to submit your answer to next issue’s Voices From The Masses question, “Catholic family life is an opportunity to recognize the grace of God in daily living. How do you nurture your family’s faith?”, please submit your response to Herald@stlouisedemarillac.org.
God bless the following young men and women who received the gift of the Holy Spirit on Saturday, October 18, 2014.

2014 Celebration of Confirmation

- Andrea Aiello
- Matthew Banbury
- Benjamin Barnot
- Taylor Bartusiak
- Zoe Baumcratz
- Kennedy Bayer
- Elyse Belak
- Joshua Blamer
- Santina Bohlander
- James Boston
- Casey Bruchwalski
- Annalise Butler
- Samantha Coda
- Gabriella Como
- Daniel Conley
- Julia Conlon
- Jake Cortes
- Michael Coury
- Kristen Cox
- Angela Coyle
- Kyleigh Cummings
- Brendan Fortunato
- David Frauen
- Andre Frenette
- Nathalie Frenette
- Dominic Galiotta
- Alexander Gasper
- Samantha Gilbert
- Michael Gleason
- Gianna Guarino
- Nicole Habjan
- Ryan Haggerty
- Chelsea Hallman
- John Hansberry
- Emma Harris
- Elizabeth Hartnett
- Jacqueline Haus
- Luke Hirata
- Stephen Hudock
- Logan Janosko
- Christopher Jason
- Wyatt Keating
- Alexandra Keeling
- Aidan Keith
- Clare Kovacs
- Grace Krah
- Ryan Krapp
- Adam Kusluch
- Katrina Kuss
- Thomas Kyle
- Tomasina Lackner
- Jack Lang
- Jacob Lantzman
- Edward Lawrence
- Casey Lentz
- Caroline Lesnitian
- Christopher Lloyd
- Paul Luniewski
- Maxon Maciejewski
- Alexander Majkic
- Cora Marchand
- Donald Marchisotto, Jr.
- Brian McGinness
- Michael McKeever
- Anna McLinden
- Nickolas McNally
- Kyle Meintert
- Andrew Miller
- Austin Miller
- Alexander Molinaro
- Emily Moltoris
- Brett Moore
- Megan Nagy
- Jessica Natali
- Caroline Nelson
- Brandon Novak
- Gianna Olmo
- Karlie Olson
- Patrick O’Neill
- Jamie Oswald
- Abigail Ottaviano
- Ashley Pendergast
- Kathryn Phillips
- Rianna Piacquadio
- Chloe Potosnak
- Willa Potosnak
- Sean Puskar
- Casey Quinlan
- Molly Quinlan
- Shane Quinlan
- Anthony Rach
- Kara Rantovich
- Mara Rayburg
- Angelo Rhad
- Julius Riske
- Nicholas Rock
- Andrew Rosati
- Sarah Russell
- Justin Sackett
- Daniel Scheerer
- Maximilian Schuler
- Constance Seely-Gant
- Kayla Senneway
- Benjamin Smith
- Bria Smith
- Samantha Smith
- John Steve
- Emma Stueben
- Morgan Sullivan
- Margaret Syverson
- Emma Tarcson
- Alexis Taylor
- Mia Taylor
- Kelsey Thompson
- Greydon Tomkowitz
- Elizabeth Trupiano

Baptisms from June-November 2014

- Charlotte Louise Ali
- Michael Jason Billing, Jr.
- Anthony Joseph Blom
- Jackson Patrick Bobek
- Brayden Michael Boss
- Ava Jane Byrne
- Sophia Marie Chiminio
- Jonah David Clark
- Tanner Everett Copeland
- Madeline JoAnne Curran
- Rainey Catherine Dankert
- Eliana Rose Faber
- Addison Quinn Fritz
- Stephen Carter Gerwel
- Catherine Scout Hafenbrack
- Ava Scarlett Halliwell
- Charlotte May Hammond
- Lincoln Michael Hand
- Jacie Layne Hunter
- Bianca Selene Ibelia
- Kaiza Violet Kaiser
- Michael James Masters
- Gavin Anthony Maurer
- Piper Louise Mayfield
- Gia Rae Meucci
- Jeremy Michael Messinger
- Aubrey Caroline Morr
- Rosemary Claire Mozes
- Logan Richard Newman
- Elizabeth Celeste Novelli
- Beckett Caleb O’Brien
- Leo Scott Pascarella
- Lorenzo Vitale
- Piaguido
- Winston Hank Rulon
- Nora Hope Sada
- Cody Michael Schroek
- Emmet James Stupar
- Emma Grace Tennant
- Jack Louis Charles Turner
- Noah James Tuttle
- Jaxon Mirko
- Vuchenich
- Knox Brett Weinheimer
- Helen Elizabeth Youschak
- Lucas Matthew Zeiler
- Zoey Addison Zimmerman

Weddings from June-October 2014

- June 7: Christopher Bouriat - Jennifer Hays
- June 14: Justin Gaspar - Kristen Kish
- June 14: Zachary Fine - Laura Degnan
- June 21: Connor McLean – Lisa Smith
- June 28: Michael Del Re - Olivia Boyd
- July 12: Dylan August - Nicole Thomas
- July 19: Matthew Guzzo - Lisa Norkus
- July 26: Jarrod Ranone - Tracey Betschart
- August 2: Steven Magill - Kathryn Stevens
- August 30: Stephen Connell - Laura Boehm
- September 12: Edward Matthews - Kaitlyn Ligman
- September 20: Robert Raimondi - Beth Ann Golembiewski
- September 20: Patrick Slusser - Amy Zoeckler
- September 27: Garret Viglione - Jennifer Simko
- October 4: Robert Torchia - Stephanie Baret
- October 11: Gabriel Kapfhammer - Ashley Sicher
- October 11: Zachary Dodd - Kayla Dixon
- October 25: Jerome Nypaver - Caitlyn Nolan
- October 25: Luke Beery - Rachel Suchy
- November 29: Jeffery Jones - Shannon Booth

Want your Parish or School group to be featured in the next issue of the Herald? E-mail Lisa Osterhaus, Director of Stewardship at losterhaus@stlouisedemarillac.org.
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Want to be a Partner in Education? Please contact Lisa Osterhaus at losterhaus@stlouisedemarillac.org or 412.833.1010.
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320 McMurray Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
412-833-1010
www.stlouisedemarillac.org

Merry Christmas

Christmas 2014 Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve:
4:00 p.m. in the gym and the Church
6:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. and midnight in the Church

Christmas Day:
9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 12:30 p.m.