



# ASSUMPTION

*of the*  
*Blessed Virgin Mary*  
PARISH

## WILLIS FAMILY ENJOYS LIVING STEWARDSHIP AS MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH FAMILY

JULY 2017  
*Inside*

If you walked into Mrs. Betsy Zoellner’s first-grade classroom on May 19, you would have found Trey Willis doing one of the things he absolutely loves best – giving of his time to make our parish and school community shine all the brighter.

“I volunteered to be a ‘mystery reader’ for Danica’s class, and I read the class two books,” he says. “My wife, Jeni, taught at the school for many years, and we have always enjoyed helping out there and at the parish however we can. There are so many things our family loves about the Assumption parish community.”

Trey and Jeni’s daughter, Lainey, 4, attends the parish school as well (they also have a 1-year-old son named Raleigh). Trey serves as the chairman for the school’s Technology Committee, and Jeni helps out with the Parent Teacher Organization, is a Girl Scout Troop Leader, and finds support by belonging to the Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group.

“We are so happy about everything that our kids are exposed to in our faith community,” Trey says. “They are getting faith formation on a very regular basis in an open, safe and loving environment. As a dad, it makes me proud that my kids are so open about their faith, and so proud of it! I am so grateful for the wholesome environment of our parish family.”

And, by being fervent and faithful stewards of their time, talent and treasure, the Willis’ have discovered the deepest joys life has to offer.

“Being involved at church gives us an opportunity to be together as a family and share our faith with our children and others,” Trey says. “My kids



*The Willis Family*

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## THE EUCHARIST AND STEWARDSHIP AS A WAY OF LIFE

More than 20 years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. This document was an invitation to follow Christ Who gave of Himself for us. Each of us is called to serve our neighbors and to be stewards of God's creation and of all that has been entrusted to us. However, to truly understand stewardship, we must look to the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the total gift of our loving Savior to us. Stewardship is our response to that gift.

Even the word "Eucharist" implies stewardship. The word "Eucharist" finds its roots in the Latin word *eucharistia*, which in turn came from the Greek word *eukaristos*, which meant, quite simply, "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." How fitting that we, who are called to be a stewardship people, celebrate at the focal point of every Mass an act of thanksgiving and gratitude — namely, the reception of Jesus' gift to us — the Eucharist.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the bishops speak of the Eucharist in this way: "The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity... we enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in Him, with one another. Here His love — indeed, His very Self — flows into us as disciples and, through us and our practice of stewardship to the entire human race."

When we receive Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, we hear the minister say, "The Body of Christ." To this, we respond, "Amen" — which means in Hebrew, "Yes; it is so." This is the essence of stewardship. We should enter the Church for Mass out of "gratitude." We recognize the presence of the Lord in Holy Communion, and then we truly receive the Lord. What is left for us to do is the fulfillment of stewardship — that is, sharing what we have received in love of God and neighbor. Our entire experience speaks to stewardship — we are grateful; we recognize the real presence of the Lord; we receive the Lord; and then we share what we have received.

Christ's gift to us through the Eucharist is an



invitation to us. We are called to give beyond what is convenient or what may be comfortable. We are called to forgive even when forgiveness may not be deserved; we are called to love even when that love is not returned. We are called to love as God loves us.

The Eucharist is stewardship celebrated. The Mass is more than a ritual. It is an actual encounter with God, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to the Eucharist with our complete selves. What we experience in the Eucharist should, in turn, translate into our daily lives. We are committed to the Church, which is Christ's body. We show our love for His body by acts of charity and generosity. We spend time in prayer, expressing our gratitude and our love.

God's greatest gift to us is His own life poured out through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Jesus' death on the cross has freed us from sin and given us eternal life. God's love for us is without limit, and He offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Stewardship is how we respond to that gift.

## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

### *We Are Blessed as a Church and a Nation*

Dear Parishioners,

The month of July may seem like a bit of an “in-between” month. Of course, it sits in the middle of summer. During the month of June, we celebrated the great Feasts of Pentecost, the Holy Trinity, the Body and Blood of Christ and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus – these served to remind us of the incredible gifts we have received as Catholics.

Now, a look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. We know that Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary,” even though it might seem that way – especially after a month of celebrations.

However, one thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we also are Americans, and we should be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of faith, and grateful for the gift of liberty we receive as citizens of the United States of America.

While we have not yet become the nation our ancestors envisioned for us, we trust, as Catholics, that God has called each one of us, and all of us together, to bring Christ to the world. Our founders were blessed by God to fashion a purpose for our growth as a nation that is not yet realized, but firmly rooted in faith and a profound respect for the dignity of the human person.

In 1886, just over 140 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.” He continued to say that “in



the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.”

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others. We are blessed – by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of freedom – and we must always remember to thank God for that. Let us pledge ourselves again to be faithful disciples, following Mary in her mission of bringing Christ to the world and to be faithful citizens, becoming the nation God has called us to be.

Per Matrem Ad Filium,  
(Through the Mother to the Son)

Fr. Mitch Doyen,  
Pastor

## Funeral Luncheon Ministry Offers

Whether our Funeral Luncheon Ministry is serving 250 or as few as 15, a constant guest in our parish center is Christ.

“All of the time, Christ is there,” says Mary Peters, Funeral Luncheon Ministry Co-Chair. “He’s there.”

Mary, along with her husband, Mark, oversees the ministry that organizes and serves a luncheon to mourners after a funeral at our parish.

“A long time ago, when we had kids in school, I was a ministry ‘captain,’” Mary says. “Then we did Fr. Burke’s funeral in 1995. We did it in the old gym, and it was huge. And now, in June 2016, I have become ministry leader.”

Manda Suehara, parish Funeral Coordinator, first meets with the family of the deceased to discuss the funeral arrangements. Manda will ask the family if they want to have the luncheon after the funeral Mass, and if they do, she calls Mary with the details.

“Our luncheons are held at the parish center,” Mary says. “Or, if it is unavailable, we ask the Knights of Columbus if we may use their facilities. They gladly let us do it.”

Once Mary gets the request for the luncheon, she calls the “captain” from her group whose turn it is to plan the luncheon. The captain then calls his or her workers.

Mary and Mark set up the room for the luncheon, and Mary calls volunteers on her list to tell them what food she wants them to bring. The selections typically include hot dishes in winter, or salads and relish trays in the warmer months.

Families are not charged for the luncheon.

“But lots of the time, we get voluntary donations,” Mary says. “Most of the time, these go to Manda.”

The ministry takes care to decorate the parish hall for the luncheons to provide a comfortable, appropriate space for the mourners.

“We have special décor for the hall,” Mary says. “I went out and got white tablecloths and



*Mary and Mark Peters, Co-Chairs of the Funeral Luncheon Ministry, work with their captains and volunteers to provide luncheons to parishioners who have lost a loved one, and to their families and friends. Mary prepares the tables with appropriate decor as a welcoming gesture.*

made centerpieces with red vases and white roses, and I place a cardinal – that represents a loved one. Families don’t have to worry about anything with the luncheon, and can relax during the grieving that they are able to get away from for a little bit. It’s definitely a ministry of hospitality. We welcome them. We want them to know we’re here to comfort them, help them in this sad time.”

For Mary, serving on the Funeral Luncheon Ministry is part of her being as a member of Assumption Parish. And she sees that same dedication among her fellow ministry members – a dedication that lets those they serve experience Christ’s presence.

“They feel it’s family,” Mary says of the other ministry members. “They want to do it and they love doing it. They go above and beyond the call of duty, and we couldn’t do it without them. We couldn’t do it at all.

“I’ve been here since I was 12,” she says. “I

# Loving Hospitality in Times of Need



Several members of our Funeral Luncheon Ministry enjoy a break before guests arrive. The ministry works to make sure all are made to feel welcome, and to provide comfort during a difficult time.

love this parish! I can see this love in the faces and smiles. And the families we serve love the luncheons. People thank us all the time. They totally appreciate it. We've never had one when no one has said anything. They are very appreciative and very thankful. 'I don't know what I would have done,' people say to us. 'You are very welcoming.' These are the words that people say to us. They really appreciate it."

*Interested in joining the  
Funeral Luncheon Ministry?  
Please call the parish office  
at 636-240-3721.*

## *Willis Family Enjoys Living Stewardship as Members of Our Parish Family* continued from front cover

love being in Vacation Bible School, going to movie night, and having Catholic friends at school."

Furthermore, the Christ Renews His Parish ministry, or CRHP, has been a tremendous spiritual gift for both Trey and Jeni.

"Jeni was a spiritual director for a CRHP women's group, and she was so moved by her experience that I decided to check it out too!" Trey says. "Now I am a leader for the CRHP men's group. The CRHP retreat is a phenomenal experience. It gives you time to focus on where you are on your spiritual journey and helps you identify something deeper

in your connection with Jesus. It helps you to be more like Him in your daily life."

As parents, Trey and Jeni also cherish the fellowship they receive at Assumption, and feel it is a real lifeline for them.

"We have found a number of sincere couples at the parish who are truly committed to one another and to what they believe," Trey says. "They inspire us and are such great influences in our lives and in the lives of our children. We love and appreciate them, and enjoy the camaraderie we have with them. They continually remind us to live as followers of Jesus Christ."

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## “BE TRANSFORMED BY THE SACRED LITURGY”

### *The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery*

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest’s green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ’s passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church’s liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ’s birth, and following a celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present



moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God’s grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.

The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and

a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporeally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child’s experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”

## MEN'S GROUP MEMBERS SHARE IN LIVES OF FAITH AND SERVICE

For Protestants and Catholics alike, there is a growing gender gap when it comes to religion. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center Survey, 60 percent of women describe religion as “very important” in their lives, as opposed to the mere 47 percent of men with the same response. Over the years, we’ve seen a tragic decline in men’s activism within parish life, resulting in decreasing priestly vocations and compromising the “domestic church.”

“I’ve been to many other parishes throughout my life where it seemed that the women were running all of the ministries,” says Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary parishioner Tony Kinkelaar. “This is problematic, because we need men to become leaders in their homes and in the Church.”

Yet, at Assumption, notes Tony, there remains a healthy balance between female and male participation. And one of the key reasons for this difference is Assumption’s 24/7 Men’s Group. First formed in 2008 as a product of the Christ Renews His Parish Retreat, the Men’s Group exists to help support and encourage men in their roles as spiritual leaders, both within the family and throughout the parish community.

“It’s designed to help keep the men involved in the parish and to make us accountable for each other,” Tony says. “I think it is so important for

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*By more actively and engaging the men of our parish, the 24/7 Men’s Group is able to help restore the “domestic church” and build up Christianity within our community.*

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Generally meeting the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m., the 24/7 Men’s Group helps create a community of brotherhood amongst its male members. Open to any registered parishioner age 18 or older, meetings include opportunities for fellowship and prayer, guest speakers, and discussions of upcoming events. Service is another important part of the ministry, as members seek to help the parish whenever needed.

“When we first started this ministry, we envisioned us just being available to help in whatever way was needed,” Tony says. “Today, we get requests from all kinds of parish organizations for help. Then there are also certain things that we do annually, like the Easter Egg Hunt, our Fourth of July BBQ, and our Golf Tournament each fall.”

Through these activities, Men’s Group members are able to remain true to their mission of leading “lives of service and humility” and of building a “spiritual consciousness which overflows” into the outward community.

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ASSUMPTION  
*Blessed Virgin Mary*  
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## *Men's Group Members Share in Lives of Faith and Service*

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Through his years of involvement in the Men's Group, Tony has noticed a marked difference in his relationship with Christ and His Church. Surrounded by a community of brotherhood, he is daily challenged to grow deeper in his faith while also being strengthened through life's trials. Then, there has been the added blessing of the close friendships that have been formed amongst the group's members.

"Just to be around the example of other Christian men makes a huge difference," Tony says.

"That accountability is really huge. It helps keep us anchored to live the life of Christ."

New members are always welcome – the hope is that this ministry will only continue to grow, as men are actively engaged in the faith, strengthening our parish and society as a whole.

"We're always looking for ways to recruit other men from the parish," Tony says. "I love seeing the men become actively involved in our parish family, which is truly so important for the good of our homes and the future of our Church."

*If you are interested in joining, simply show up at the next meeting, which will be advertised in the bulletin, or contact Tony Kinkelaar at either 314-705-4001 or [tk3987@gmail.com](mailto:tk3987@gmail.com).*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Saturday:** 9:00 a.m. (MH), Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., Noon

**Daily Mass:** Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m., MH at 6:30 a.m.

**Perpetual Adoration:** 24 hours a day, seven days a week

**Reconciliation:** Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Chapel, Saturday 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church