

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH



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Meet The Navarros

Family Finds a Welcoming Home at St. Vincent de Paul

For many parents, all too often, bringing their little ones to Mass is accompanied by an anxiety about the disruption they may bring. So, when a church is warm and welcoming to its youngest parishioners, it can make a world of difference in the faith lives of families.

When Meg and Willy Navarro first came to St. Vincent de Paul with their four young children, they immediately felt at ease here.

“We had been going to a different parish,” Meg says. “It got difficult to go to church, because we were getting looks every time our kids made any noise. There was a period of about four months when we weren’t attending Mass because we had become so discouraged. Then, about three years ago, a friend told us about St. Vincent de Paul, and we fell in love with it right away. The people were just so welcoming, and the priest even referred to kids as a sign of life in the Church.”

Since joining St. Vincent de Paul, Meg has been led to become more involved in parish life by their children — Matthew, 9; Peter, 7; Isabel, 6; and David, 3. Early on, the older three kids began attending the Children’s Liturgy of the Word during Mass. When little David begged to accompany his siblings, Meg began taking him as well, and now she leads some of the sessions.

“I love Children’s Liturgy of the Word because I didn’t really own my faith until I was in college, and I don’t want my kids to be like that,” Meg says. “I want them to feel their faith active in their life from the very beginning, so that is why I believe faith formation is so important.”



The Navarro children — (back, from left) Matthew and Peter; (front, from left) Isabel and David

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Meet The Navarros *continued from front cover*

While Meg has a career with Lockheed Martin, she has always had a heart for teaching, so she was beyond thrilled when she was asked to teach the kindergarten faith formation classes in our parish.

“Teaching the kindergarten class is fun, because the kids really want to be there,” Meg says. “I love the questions they ask and getting to see them start to explore their faith and really be fascinated by things. Another thing I love about it is how much I learn from the kids!”

For the Navarro family, actively living the Catholic faith doesn’t end at the conclusion of Mass or their faith formation classes. Instead, Meg and Willy find it important to make the faith a priority in their children’s everyday lives as well.

“We want our kids to have a really close relationship with Jesus so that He’s involved in all their decision making,” Meg says. “We talk a lot about listening to Jesus in your heart. I tell them that God is there with you every day, He’s planting a seed in you, and your decisions have a bigger purpose for you than right now.”

Thanks to the warm welcome received by young families at St. Vincent de

Paul, the Navarros have found a faith community that their children now think of as “home.” Willy is the support behind Meg as she teaches Children’s Liturgy of the Word and faith formation, and the couple believes that their involvement in the parish has truly blessed their marriage. Feeling encouraged to bring their children to Mass and to the many family-friendly events — like the fish fry — has brought the family even closer together.

Reflecting on the three years they have been parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul, Meg is thankful for the many blessings that being a part of parish life have brought her family, and for the additional “faith family” they have found here.

“It all goes to giving back from all you’ve been given,” Meg says of her involvement in parish life. “And just being able to go to Mass on Sunday and have people that know you and recognize you — and who would miss you if you weren’t there — is a huge comfort. If you feel like no one would miss you if you were gone, it’s easy to get lost, but when you feel like people know you, it really opens new doors.”



Willy and Meg Navarro

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A Letter From Our Pastor

This Month and Beyond, Let Us Share the Faith in Word and Action

Dear Parishioners,

When reading through our newsletter, it is clear that we often discuss and reflect upon the topic of ministries — within our community and beyond — and how Christ shares His ministry with us.

As a faith community that is committed to living out stewardship, we all share in Christ's ministry. And while we share our many gifts with God and His Church, we take the truths set forth in the readings from Scripture and apply them to present-day life. Of course, that's what you are supposed to do when you share your faith with your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

But what does it mean to "share our faith"? Well, it is exactly what parents — as the "domestic church" — are supposed to do with their children. Furthermore, lay people act as catechists when they teach religion classes in Catholic schools or help with religious education programs in their parishes.

"Sharing the faith" also encompasses serving and providing assistance to those in need, both within and beyond the parish community, or bringing the Eucharist to the ill or homebound who cannot regularly attend Mass. In these ways and more, lay people have many opportunities to participate directly in the ministry of the Church.

But as the Second Vatican Council reminded us, "An apostolate of this kind does not consist only in the witness of one's way of life; a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life" (*Apostolicam Ac-*

tuositatem, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 6).

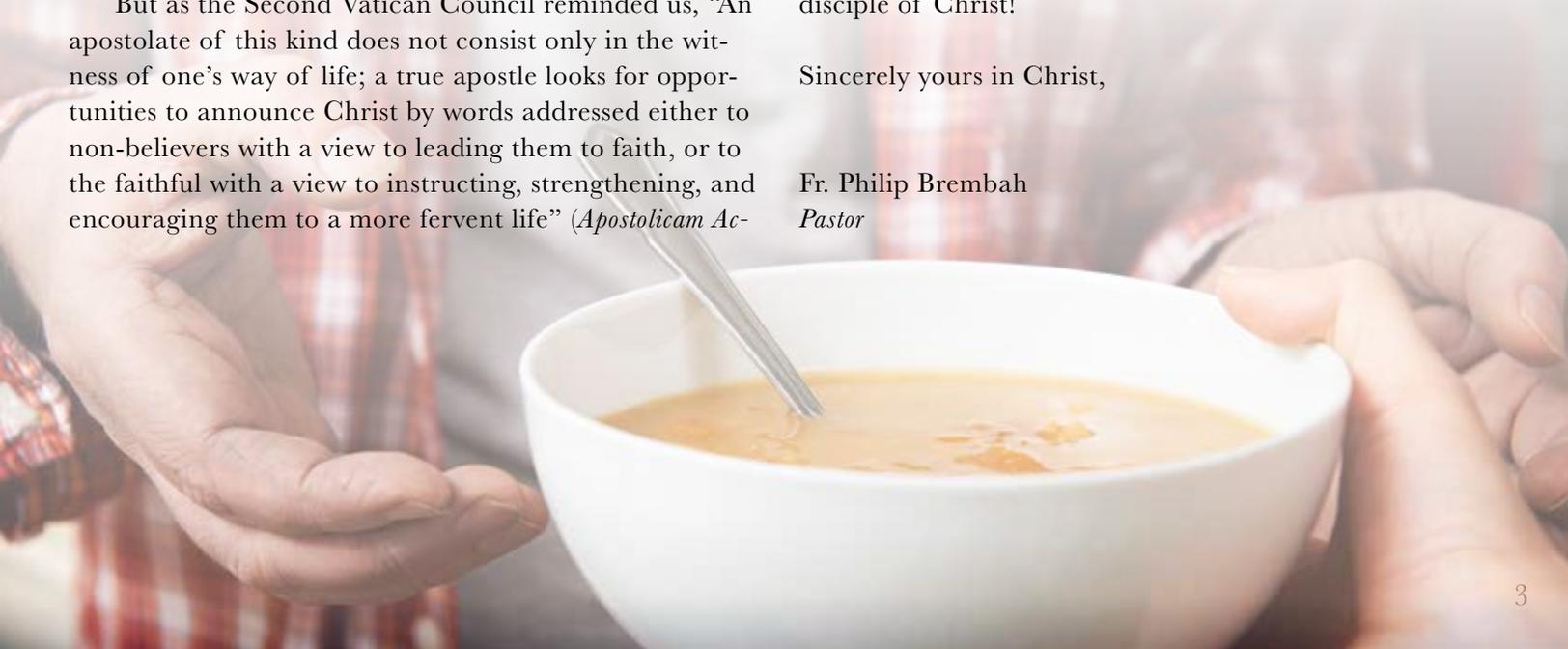
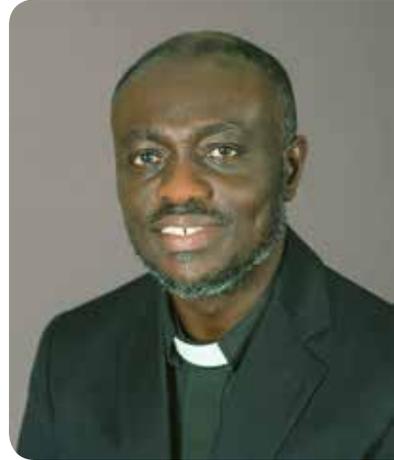
In other words, we must proclaim our Christian faith through our actions and how we live our lives — and *also* be prepared to share it in words if we are given the opportunity. With this in mind, we may each want to make a commitment of time to study the Scriptures and the Church's teachings so that we may be better prepared to share the faith!

Of course, the month of October draws us a little closer to the end of the year — thus, we are soon approaching the celebration of Thanksgiving, and the Advent and Christmas seasons. In the next few months, we will each have so many opportunities to share our faith through words and actions. I ask you to prayerfully consider how you will take advantage of these opportunities, living as stewards carrying out His ministry every day, for the rest of this year and beyond.

May God grant you the grace to share richly as a disciple of Christ!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Philip Brembah
Pastor



FALL FESTIVAL

Event Provides Oppor

Though we tend to think of evangelization almost exclusively in terms of the Word proclaimed, often-times hearts are won to Christ indirectly — an invitation to a parish event, a smile given when most needed, or a fun afternoon where joy and laughter are shared. This, says event coordinator Amy Minton, is exactly the kind of evangelization that takes place year after year during St. Vincent de Paul's annual Fall Festival. Describing it as a "community outreach" event, this family fun day helps further unite and grow our parish family.

"I think any event that goes on at the church and doesn't simply involve sitting down in the classroom or pews helps build up our community," Amy says. "It's a time to visit with the people you sit in the pews with every Sunday, to see them out of their church clothes, having fun with one another, and to watch our kids interact with and form those bonds."

This year's Fall Festival is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 28, from 3-5 p.m. in the Johnson Activity Center and upstairs classrooms. Put on for the community, it's designed to get individuals and families on the parish campus for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Festival Activities include bounce houses, carnival food and snacks, face painting, a cookie walk, and a wide variety of games. The Fall Festival typically hosts



Youth have fun in their costumes at a past Fall Festival.



Not only does the Fall Festival provide fun for our youngest parishioners, Amy Minton says, but it also further unites our community by bringing people onto our parish campus.



Parish teens helping out with the Fall Festival by calling out numbers for Bingo.

..... Opportunity for Fellowship While Evangelizing to Community

anywhere from 500 to 700 people, Amy says, and is targeted specifically toward children in sixth grade and below.

“Kids are encouraged to come out in costume and many parents do so as well,” Amy says. “It’s just a fun event and a great way to invite others to our church.”

In addition to all the Festival’s fun activities, each child also leaves with a large bag of candy and a flyer of upcoming parish events. This, Amy says, is way to make members of the community more aware of the many offerings St. Vincent de Paul has, hopefully planting the seed for future involvement.

“Our goal is really to create a spirit of openness and an overall welcoming environment,” Amy says.

This is only possible, however, through the generosity of many parish volunteers — adult and teen volunteers are needed each year to help set up, oversee and break down the Festival.

“The Friday before the event is when we do all of the setup from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,” Amy says. “Then, too, anybody who can help the day of is welcome. We will need adults who have completed the diocesan Keeping Children Safe Awareness training in each of the classrooms, we’ll need at least 10 adults by the inflatables, and then we’re looking for junior high and high school-age kids to help out as well.”



Some of the giant inflatables available for children to play on.



Face painting is a fun activity at the Fall Festival.

We invite all parishioners to support this community outreach event by either attending or volunteering. The cost of admission is \$5 and a large bag of candy per family. All adults and youth interested in volunteering can contact Amy Minton at fallfestival@svdpcc.org.

Join the Ranks and Honor the Dignity of Life in October

All Catholics are summoned to action — this month, and beyond.

October is Respect Life Month. Respect Life Sunday, as designated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, is celebrated each year on the first Sunday of October.

And as we face the looming culture of death, we are all summoned to action. An apostolic exhortation by Pope St. John Paul II, titled *Ecclesia in America*, described this culture of death's effects on the "powerless" within American society:

"I am thinking here of unborn children, helpless victims of abortion; the elderly and the incurably ill, subjected at times to euthanasia; and the many other people relegated to the margins of society by consumerism and materialism. Nor can I fail to mention the unnecessary recourse to the death penalty ... Faced with this distressing reality, the Church community intends to commit itself all the more to the defense of the culture of life" (*Ecclesia in America* 63).

Respect Life Month is the perfect time to prayerfully examine our consciences in light of these critical issues, which directly violate the dignity of the human person. This includes not only the evil of abortion, but also euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, capital punishment, and contraception — all of which are vital contributors to the pervasive culture of death.

So we must individually ask ourselves, "Do I, in my personal, day-to-day choices, respect life? If so, do I boldly proclaim this belief or merely stand idle? Do I exercise my right to vote and support candidates who promote a culture of life? Am I known within my home, family, and/or workplace as someone that respects life?"

As with every movement of a Christian heart towards goodness, it is imperative that our efforts issue forth from a prayerful foundation. The work of the Holy Spirit allows us to receive the zeal necessary to promote the sanctity of human life, even in the face of suffering.

This October, please pray for a revitalization of the culture of life. Every night, as a family, meditate on the prayer from John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. As you pray, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with apostolic boldness, and ask the Lord to guide your heart towards ways in which you can personally contribute to the culture of life.

The call is clear, the stakes are set, and all Catholics are summoned to action. How will you respond?



Pope St. John Paul II's Prayer for the Revitalization of the Culture of Life

*O Mary,
bright dawn of the new world,
Mother of the living,
to you do we entrust the cause of life
Look down, O Mother,
upon the vast numbers
of babies not allowed to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women
who are victims of brutal violence,
of the elderly and the sick killed
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.*

*Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love
to the people of our time.*

*Obtain for them the grace
to accept that Gospel
as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives and
the courage to bear witness to it
resolutely, in order to build,
together with all people of good will,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God,
the Creator and lover of life.*

—Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*

SERVING THE MASTER

Jesus tells us in the Gospels that we cannot serve two masters. This idea that we can only truly “follow” one master can also be found in today’s spiritual literature, where much is written about having “a divided heart.”

Indeed, the business world is full of motivational speakers trying to convince us to be “focused” and “single-minded” in the pursuit of success.

But why must we be focused on serving only one master, of being driven by one motivation? Jesus adds to this admonition the command that we must love God and “hate” mammon. Does He mean that we must “hate” wealth or its pursuit? What could Jesus have meant?

When we choose one master over the other, we place the rejected master in service to the other. Therefore, if we choose to serve God as the ultimate focus of our lives, then we can also use wealth to serve Him. However, we can also fool ourselves into thinking that we are serving God when, in reality, we are only serving our own agendas. There are three basic ways that we sometimes think of God that, in turn, lead us to fooling ourselves about who we are really serving as the master of our lives.

First, there are those who relate to God only when there is an emergency. We can call this the “God as paramedic” approach. If something or someone we love or deeply care for is in danger, we immediately go about calling, serving, and worshipping God. Our motivation is that He will protect or heal that person or thing. God is not master here. Instead, our love or attachment to that person or thing is what influences our devotion and piety.

The second approach is one we can call the “God as my personal insurance policy” method. This is adopted by folks who usually attend some sort of religious congregation, and may perform an occasional act of charity. But most of all, they “believe” in God. The bottom line here is that the person’s “faith” pays the premium on the eternal policy, thus keeping him either affiliated to God, or out of the flames of damnation. Personal protection, rather than faithfully serving God, is the main motivation of this approach.

The third and final method is the “God is my friendly neighbor” approach. People adopting this method are regularly involved in religious activities, and may even belong to parish groups or associations.

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MASSES

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Weekdays: (M/Th/Fr) 8:45 a.m. in the chapel
(Wed) 6:00 p.m. in the chapel

Holy Days: 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Tuesday Morning Prayer: 8:45 p.m. in the chapel

Confessions: Saturday: 4-5 p.m. in the chapel

Stewardship: Serving the Master continued from page 7

But with this approach, all religious and parish activities serve only to gain social acceptance and respectability in the eyes of one's peers. This method treats God simply as a friendly neighbor to whom we tip our hats and say "good morning," and perhaps offer occasional help by doing Him a favor. This method is founded on the desire to project a certain image that falsely dictates our relationship to God.

All three approaches demonstrate that our agendas, and not God's, are the central focus. God's Person is being used in all three ways to serve the individual. These instances have God made to serve us, rather than us serving Him. When we serve God, putting Him at the center of our lives, everything and everyone is placed in such a way as to serve Him. This is what "God as Master" means.

Whom Will You Serve?

We can fool ourselves by rationalizing about whom we serve. However, it is through prayer and worship, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance, and being intimately connected to the local Church that help us remain focused on God as our master, and to not surrender to temptations, physical pleasures or societal pressures. When we surrender to the devil, the flesh and the world – the three traditional enemies of the Christian that correspond to the three rationalizations – we place our individual selves as the ultimate master and are no longer serving God. But when we place all of our gifts in service to Christ, then we are following Christ's command. We are serving the one, true master. Service to God is not performed in isolated instances. Instead, this service is every day, in all that we say and do. The choice is yours. Whom will you serve?