

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church

Altar Serving Engages Youth in the Faith and Liturgy

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Beyond our personal giving, an important part of stewardship is passing on the torch by involving our young people in the faith. This was a theme of Pope Francis' 2015 visit to the United States when he asked: "Do we challenge them? Do we make space for them and help them do their part? To find ways of sharing their enthusiasm and gifts with our communities, above all in works of mercy and concern for others?"

Here at St. Margaret Mary, the Altar Server Ministry plays a key role in responding affirmatively to the pope's questions. As high school senior, and current altar server, Kristopher Shepard points out, it makes young people feel involved and that they are an important part of the Church.

"For kids, there are often limited roles as to what they can do in the Church," Kristopher says. "Most of the ministries are run by adults. Altar serving is a great way for young people to become more involved and to feel like they are having a real impact on the Church."

Kristopher first started altar serving

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Shepard Siblings Kristopher (high school senior), Maddison (seventh-grader), and Nicolaus (high school sophomore) all continue to enjoy giving their time to the Lord through altar serving.

We encourage all young people to consider becoming part of this important liturgical ministry. To learn more or to become an altar server, please contact Terri Dirnberger at terri_dirnberger@saintmargaretmary.org

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Altar Serving Engages Youth

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as a sixth-grader. At that time, shares Kristopher, he would often find himself bored during the Mass, staring off into the congregation and passively watching a liturgy that he didn't fully understand. Seeing this, his mom suggested he begin altar serving. Since most of his friends were already participating, Kristopher agreed. The result was a completely transformed Mass experience as he became an active participant, and began truly understanding what was taking place upon the altar.

"Instead of just sitting there like a robot, I became involved, and had a part to play," Kristopher says. "It became a lot more engaging and I learned a lot more. So now, even when I'm not serving, I'm aware for the different parts of the Mass. I don't want to say that it's more entertaining, because that's not what the Mass is really about, but I feel much more involved and connected with my faith."

Fellow altar server Joshua Martell, a freshman, has similar feelings about altar serving, saying that it motivates



Being an altar server has led Joshua Martell to be more engaged in the liturgy, in turn making him feel more involved as a member of the Church.

him to pay better attention and makes him feel "more part of the Church."

"I feel a lot more engaged in Mass through altar serving and I pay attention more," Joshua says. "When you are serving, you have to pay attention so that you can know what you are doing. I like that through it, I get to do stuff for the Church and actually participate, rather than just sitting and watching everyone else serve."

The Altar Server Ministry is open to all parish boys and girls in fifth grade and older who have been baptized and received their first Holy Communion. Altar servers play an essential role in each liturgy by assisting Father with the celebration of the Mass, ensuring that it goes smoothly and reverently. Becoming an altar server does require preparation and training – yet, according to Joshua, this is one of the things that makes the ministry so special.

"For me, altar serving allows me to give more of my time and talent to God," he says. "It's not something you can just up and do. You have to learn and prepare

so that you can do it well and reverently. And in the process, I've learned a lot of things about the instruments used, the way things are done, and the reason the Church does them that way."

By doing their part for the Mass and for the Church as a whole, altar servers learn that they matter, and that they are an important part of Christ's plan. In Kristopher's case, altar serving all of these years has helped show him the importance of living out his faith, both during and after the Mass.

"A lot of times people will say, 'I'm Catholic just because I go to church on Sunday,'" Kristopher says. "That's like saying 'I'm a car because I sit in the garage.' The Mass is important because it is the greatest prayer of all, but there is more to being Catholic than just sitting in a pew once a week. You have to go out and live it. I think through altar serving, I've been able to learn that, and really make my faith my own."



Fr. Daniel Zdebik, Parochial Vicar, said the the altar server is "a special friend of Jesus," at a recent Sunday Mass on May 21st, which honored the altar servers.

He said that an altar server has the privilege of wearing the white garment, symbolizing our baptismal garment. They are here not to serve the priest or deacon, but Jesus Christ himself. Fr. Daniel inspired the servers by saying that they "are the light of the world," because they carry the lit candle, which symbolizes Jesus presence among us..



St. Margaret Mary altar servers prepare for the Recessional during Sunday Mass.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Time Is Limitless... Or Is It?

Dear Parishioners,

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

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

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

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.

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



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

Peace and Goodness,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Sarnicki". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Peter Sarnicki OFM, Conv.

Our Office Staff: *The*

“We would love for more parishioners to get more involved in our parish, and it doesn’t have to be a huge commitment – maybe once a month or once a week, whatever they can offer. I think when people start to volunteer, they feel at home in the parish. There are already a lot of people that are very involved, but we are always inviting whoever might be contemplating if there is a place for them. We have a lot of ministries, and there is always a place for everyone!” – Margaret Przybylko, Business Manager

To keep a large and vibrant parish running is no easy task. But here at St. Margaret Mary, we are blessed with an amazing office staff that doesn’t just keep parish life ticking, but does so with a smile! Office Manager Linda Settles, Business Manager Margaret Przybylko, and Financial Secretary Amy Schneider are just three members of a team of staff dedicated to making our parish a truly wonderful place to worship and serve.



(From left) Margaret Przybylko, Business Manager at St. Margaret Mary, and Amy Schneider, Financial Secretary

As Office Manager, Linda Settles is often a first point of contact for visitors and newcomers to St. Margaret Mary, as well as parishioners who are looking to get started with sacramental preparation or one of our various ministry opportunities. For Linda, being a welcoming presence is not only an enjoyable aspect of her role, but also an essential one.

“When you have young couples coming in for marriage and baptism, I think it is critical that they feel welcome,” she says. “You have to have a smile on your face when they walk in – you want them to know that, yes, we are human! I have kids that age, so I understand – I want to make the millennials feel welcome here. We also have Saturday and Sunday receptionists, Mary Ann Watt and Donna Church; because Father Peter wants people to have the opportunity to come in, even if they can’t come in on a weekday.”

Although Linda interacts with countless people each day, she has a gift for remembering faces and little things about almost everyone she comes in contact with – and this is



Weekday office assistant, Sue Czech, works at her desk, while St. Francis of Assisi oversees from above.

no small feat in a large parish like ours! In addition, when she came to St. Margaret Mary in the role of Office Manager almost nine years ago, she already had close to 20 years of experience working for the diocese.

Having an experienced background in parish office management certainly comes in handy, as each day in the office brings new and challenging adventures.

“A typical day here is – not typical!” Linda laughs. “On a ‘typical’ day, you are already thinking of

“Heartbeat” of the Parish



Linda Settles, Office Manager at St. Margaret Mary

what you're going to do that day as you're driving in, and then everything changes when somebody comes in. Maybe someone has lost a spouse and is arranging a funeral, or other different situations where you won't let the person sit and wait because you want to help them out."

For Business Manager Margaret Przybylko and Financial Secretary Amy Schneider, learning to switch gears quickly is also an important element of working in the business office here at St. Margaret Mary.

"The days are very unpredictable, but you just handle whatever comes your way, prioritize and get it done," Margaret affirms. "Amy and I work together to make sure the parish is functioning well [on the business side of things]."

In addition to the day-to-day business of paying bills and making deposits, Margaret and Amy take care

of a lot of the "human resources" side of things in the parish, including payroll and taxes. They also work closely with the Facilities Manager, Patrick Colcernian, when financial decisions are being made about the parish buildings and grounds.

Margaret and Amy work as a team, filling part-time positions that, together, keep the business office ticking while allowing them increased flexibility to balance work and family life. Margaret has four children and Amy has five – and there is a set of twins in both of their families – so these two moms have a lot in common.

"Between the two of us, we have a baseball team!" Amy says. "I have close ties to the school because my kids are there, so I enjoy getting to work here where I can be a part of their sacraments and be involved behind the scenes with things."

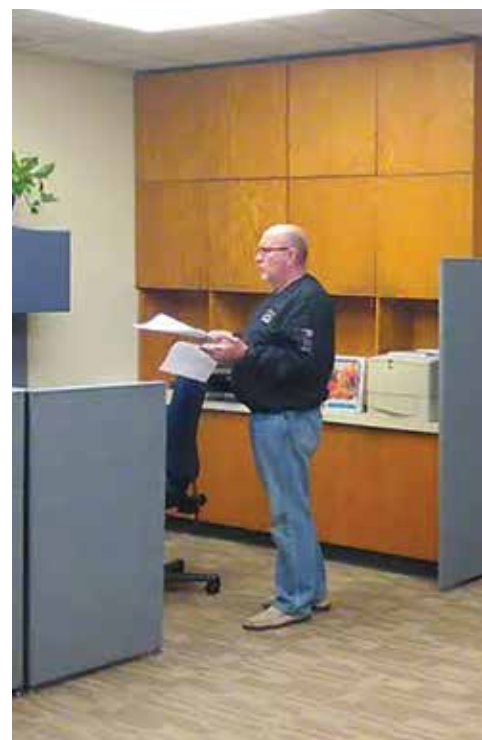
Something that Linda, Margaret, and Amy all share is an excitement about all of the wonderful things going on right here at St. Margaret Mary. They love that their work here at the parish allows them to get to know the parishioners, and all of our various ministry teams.

All three women would greatly encourage anyone who is interested in more actively living out their faith to explore the countless opportunities for getting involved in parish life.

"We would love for more parishioners to get more involved in our parish, and it doesn't have to be a huge commitment – maybe once a month or once a week, whatever they

can offer," Margaret says. "I think when people start to volunteer, they feel at home in the parish. There are already a lot of people that are very involved, but we are always inviting whoever might be contemplating if there is a place for them. We have a lot of ministries, and there is always a place for everyone!"

On behalf of the parishioners here at St. Margaret Mary, we feel blessed that Linda, Margaret, and Amy have all found *their* places here in our parish offices, and we thank them for the hard work and dedication that keep the heart of this parish beating each and every day!



Dcn. Mike Leroy stops by the office.

Stewardship

Got Talent? Bring It to the Spotlight!

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling overlooked — and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are specially blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder

at the thought of a classroom full of 5-year-olds, and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks — cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

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Sharing the Wonderful Gift of Music

When Chrissy Retzer was a young child, she opened a precious gift that God had given to her, and then she made a critical decision. Instead of keeping this gift – the gift of music – for herself, she decided to share it generously with the little world around her. And to this day, she is still busy sharing it as a Mass cantor, an Adult Choir member, and the director of both of our children’s choirs.

“I have always felt that singing was a talent God gave me, and it fills me with joy to share it with others,” Chrissy says. “I want to foster the love of singing and serving the Church from a young age in the hearts of the children at our parish. I tell the kids in my choir that we sing for Jesus, and we want people to hear that in our voices.”

Our parish is privileged to have several choirs that continually remind us of the beauty of our Catholic faith, and the Creator who endows each of us with inestimable talents.

The children’s choirs – which together include about 40 members – sing for the 11 a.m. Children’s Family Mass on the fourth Sunday of each month during the school year. Joyful Noises is for students in kindergarten through second



grade, and Heavenly Voices is for third through fifth-graders. Both choirs sing a combination of traditional Catholic songs as well as popular children’s songs. At Christmastime, they sing a beautiful version of “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” in Latin. Adult Choir Director Terri Dirnberger offers a piano accompaniment to their songs, and they incorporate hand gestures into their songs when appropriate.

In working with the children, Chrissy has found that the children are blessed in return for giving their time and talent to our parish family.

“The kids really do love being in the

choir,” she says. “And their parents, as well as the entire congregation love it, as well! They bring the joy of faith and music to the Mass in a way that adults can’t. Being in the choir helps them pay attention to the Mass and learn to work with their peers, as well. They work very hard and continue to improve.”

The adult choir, which also has about 40 members (singers and musicians), rehearses together one night weekly then splits into smaller groups to sing for the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass, and the 7:00, 9:00, and 11:00 Sunday Masses. The Youth Choir (Grades 6-12), practices on Sunday afternoon and sings for the 4:30 p.m. Sunday Mass. Resurrection Choir sings for funerals, and both adult and youth choirs participate in the liturgies for Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, Confirmation, First Communion, and other special occasions.

Sonny Atadero, who serves as a tenor in the adult choir, is another example of someone who freely shares God’s gift of song with those around him, and enjoys it to the full.

“First and foremost, I love singing, especially in a group,” he says. “It is a form of relaxation for me. I also like being in the choir because it helps me fulfill my Sunday Mass obligation and it makes it more meaningful. It has become a way of life for me. When you sing songs for Mass, it helps you reflect more on the homily and



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the Mass readings. I also really like the group that we have – it is friendly and close-knit, and I have found it to be a good source of fellowship.”

Admirably, as a father, Sonny has found that being in the choir nurtures the seeds of faith he is planting in the hearts of his children.

“It allows me to show my children that being in a ministry helps you to grow closer to Christ and to your parish community,”

he says. “It also shows them the importance of sharing one’s time and talents.”

He has also witnessed firsthand what a grace the choir’s presence can be in the lives of others.

“The Adult Choir really enriches the personal worship experience of the members of our congregation,” Sonny says. “Parishioners often approach our director, Terri, and tell her how much our singing means to them.”

If you would like more information about the Adult Choir, please contact Director of Music and Liturgy Terri Dirnberger at 847-658-7625 ext 1120 or terridirnberger@saintmargaretmary.org. For the Children’s Choir, please email Chrissy Retzer at chrissyretzer@yahoo.com. Sign-up sheets for the children’s choirs will be distributed in August – make sure to fill one out if your child is interested!

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Monday - Thursday: 7:00 & 8:30 a.m. | **Friday:** 7:00 & 9:15 a.m. | **First Friday:** 7:30 p.m. in Polish

Saturday: 8:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. (6:30 p.m. in Polish)

Sunday: 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. (1:00 p.m. in Polish)