

# KOLBE'S STEWARD

**STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER**

**St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church**

**Fall 2011**

## **OUR FIRST MASS**

### **We Celebrate and Follow the Way of the Lord**

**Father David and  
Deacon Miguel's  
first procession as  
we become St.  
Maximilian Kolbe  
Catholic Church**



**It was standing room  
only as the parish  
flocked to it's new  
home. There were  
close to 700 faithful  
this first weekend.**



## **5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**AUGUST 14, 2006 – 2011**

## A Message from our Pastor . . .

The parish of St. Maximilian Kolbe was born at the end of the boom. The housing market caved in, cutting home value in half. Good-paying construction jobs became extinct. Trying to save their homes, people lost their savings for retirement. As health insurance became too expensive for some, health care suffered.

Even if you found a job in another city, your home mortgage was so far underwater that you could not afford to sell your house. Half of the mortgages in Florida in 2010 were underwater. The majority of home sales in our area were foreclosures. Marriages were strained and families were uprooted by the Great Recession.

Our patron saint, Father Maximilian Kolbe, lived in one of the worst places in the worst moments of history. A prisoner in the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz during World War II, he ministered to his fellow prisoners. He shared his daily piece of bread. He carried more than his load of logs. He prayed with the dying prisoners.

And when the Nazi camp commander, in reprisal for the escape of a prisoner, sentenced ten random men to starve to death, Father Kolbe stepped forward. He stepped out of line to ask the camp commander, "Let me take his place." The surprised commander agreed. One man's life was spared. Father Kolbe went to his death.

Father Maximilian Kolbe was murdered in Auschwitz on August 14, 1941. The day of his death became the day of our parish's birth, August 14, 2006.

Like our patron saint, the parish of St. Maximilian Kolbe has been a witness to hope in the midst of despair.

In our first five years, we have lived the Mass. We blessed the homes of hundreds of newcomers, including a strong and devoted Hispanic community. Rather than drop their children at the curb on Wednesday evening, hundreds of parents came inside to learn more about their own faith.

Every weekend, we transfigured the Stone Lakes Elementary School cafeteria into our beloved churcheteria. Showing that the church was not a building but above all the people of God, we worshipped God in the midst of an ordinary cafeteria. We set aside ten percent of our weekly offering for works of mercy and justice.

Through these simple practices of word, worship, and mission, we praised our loving God. We served others beyond me and mine.

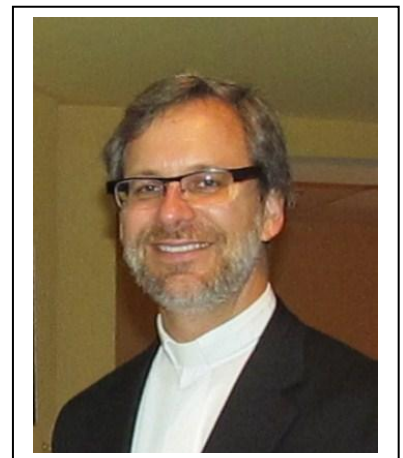
Bishop John Noonan, on behalf of the Diocese of Orlando, bestowed the Witness to Hope award to St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church. The award recognized the witness that our parish has given in its short five years.

So many people have told me, "I am so glad that I found St. Max." What they really meant was, "I am so glad that I found the Lord."

Our hope is in the Lord, who made heaven and earth. May we, like our patron saint, shine to give glory to God.

In Christ,

Father David Scotchie



**A 5-YEAR  
JOURNEY WITH  
THE LORD**



Maximilian was born in 1894 in Poland and became a Franciscan. He contracted tuberculosis and, though he recovered, he remained frail all his life. Before his ordination as a priest, Maximilian founded the Immaculata Movement devoted to Our Lady. After receiving a doctorate in theology, he spread the Movement through a magazine entitled "The Knight of the Immaculata" and helped form a community of 800 men, the largest in the world.

Maximilian went to Japan where he built a comparable monastery and then on to India where he furthered the Movement. In 1936 he returned home because of ill health. After the Nazi invasion in 1939, he was imprisoned and released for a time. But in 1941 he was arrested again and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

On July 31, 1941, in reprisal for one prisoner's escape, ten men were chosen to die. Father Kolbe offered himself in place of a young husband and father. And he was the last to die, enduring two weeks of starvation, thirst, and neglect. He was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982. His feast day is August 14th.

August 14, 2006 St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church was established in the Diocese of Orlando, Florida. Father David Scotchie is the founding pastor.

# A Stewardship Saint - A Simple Saint

**St. Francis of Assisi**  
**1181-1226**

Perhaps more well-known than any other saint, Francis taught others how to live in simplicity. But first, he had to teach himself.

As the son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Francis liked to spend money and enjoy himself. He dreamed of someday becoming a great knight. He went to war, was taken prisoner for a year, and finally returned home, only to suffer an extended illness. He again went to war, outfitted with expensive clothing and equipment. But when he came upon a poor, ragged knight, he felt ashamed and insisted they trade clothes

Francis became ill again, and was unable to continue on with the soldiers. During this time, he heard a voice ask him to serve the Master and return home. He did, and began to spend much time in prayer. He realized that to give himself to Christ he had to conquer himself first, detaching himself from all that kept him from God. One of his first tests came when he passed a leper while on horseback. Repulsed, Francis wanted to gallop quickly away. Instead he forced himself to stop, give the leper some money, and kiss him.

One day while Francis was praying he saw Christ on the crucifix ask him to repair His house. Taking the words literally, Francis began to rebuild the church of San Damiano, begging for alms to do so. His father, enraged at the change in Francis, took him home, beat him, locked him up for a time, and then disinherited him. Francis continued his work, living in poverty and often ridiculed by the people of Assisi.

In 1209, on the feast of St. Matthew, Francis' way of life was confirmed to him when the gospel of Matthew (10: 7-19) was read. In it, Jesus instructed his apostles to go preaching the good news, to freely give, and to go without gold, or a second tunic, shoes, or a walking stick. Francis embraced these words, living so simply that he possessed only one coat, tied with a cord around his waist. He begged for alms to continue rebuilding churches, and for food to eat. He served lepers and others who were ill. He lived in a hut built of wood and clay.

As men came to join him, a simple rule was established and submitted to Rome for approval. Francis refused any property to be held by the order, so that they could live in simplicity and poverty. He wanted even the food they ate to be simple. The brothers worked for their food with manual labor, and by begging. They served the poor in whatever way they could, for Francis insisted that they always give what little they had to anyone in need.

Francis devoted his life to prayer and preaching, guided always by his desire to live as simply as Jesus did. He believed that the more simply he lived, the closer he would grow to Christ.

In 1224, Francis received the stigmata. The last years of his life were marked by great suffering - both from his failing health and the stigmata, as well as from increasing divisiveness among the Friars Minor regarding the rule of poverty.

In a final act of simplicity, as he lay dying, Francis asked to be placed on the ground, naked, covered with an old, borrowed habit.

St. Maximilian Kolbe belonged to the Franciscan Order.

Fr. Giles, Fr. David, Fr. Vianny, and Fr. Patrick are Franciscan priests from San Pedro who serve weekly at St. Max.

"It is in giving that we receive"



# VOCATIONS



ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE VOCATION CUP

The purpose of the Vocation Cup, a consecrated chalice, is to focus on and provide an awareness of prayer in the home for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, the permanent diaconate, the religious life, and lay ministry.

Each week at Sunday Mass, the celebrant will use the Vocation Cup as a precious blood cup. After purifying the Vocation Cup at the end of Communion, he calls a family, individual or couple forward to receive the Vocation Cup. They receive a blessing and take the cup home, putting it in a place of honor.

Each day for a week they pray for an increase and perseverance of vocations. Family members are given a variety of prayers and Scripture readings as resources for their individual and common prayer. They are encouraged to pick a week that is special for them, when all can participate, and to get the children involved. The following Saturday they return the Vocation Cup for another family to take home to pray.

A prayer journal also travels with the Vocation Cup. Each week, the family, individual or couple that has the cup enters reflections, prayers, or scripture verse. Over time, this diary becomes a spiritual journal for the parish.

A vocation is a call from the Holy Spirit, a gift from God that is nurtured in prayer. When we pray for vocations, we lift up to our Father those men and women who he is calling in a very special way.

St. Maximilian Kolbe's Vocation Cup is from Assisi, Italy, the hometown of St. Francis of Assisi. It is made from local olive tree wood. In 1910 St. Maximilian Kolbe entered the Franciscan Order.

You will hear more about the Vocation Cup in the months to come and will be able to sign up to bring the Vocation Cup into your home as an opportunity to pray for vocation.

## Prayer for Vocations

O God, you sent your Son, Jesus, to bring eternal life to those who believe. I join him in praying for laborers for your harvest. May your Holy Spirit inspire men and women to continue his mission through your priesthood, diaconate, religious life and lay ministry. May this same Spirit make known your will for my life.

Amen

# Our Formation Team Planning

December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006

We gathered at the Diocesan office to establish our goal and mission statement and to realize the path that lies before us as a Catholic community.



We established a process for finding best practices that we would use as our guideline for our formation. The work has begun in earnest for us all, we are ready to Follow the Way of the Lord!



## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Anointed by the Holy Spirit, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church

welcomes all to know Jesus Christ,

celebrate the Eucharist and

serve others through selfless stewardship

as we follow the way of the Lord.

“When we had the initial “mission” statement all day retreat to come up with the mission statement for St. Max, this was a very special day in my mind. And we instituted one of Fr. David’s memorable lines from his first homily “Follow the Way of the Lord” into the mission statement.”

~Brenda Kolbrich

# MINISTRY HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS

## St. Maximilian Kolbe Council of Catholic Women

By Anne Lowe

Our ministry, The Council of Catholic Women, was started in the fall of 2007 at the request of Father David. He appointed Anne Lowe, President. Eleanore Smith, Treasurer, and Kathy McGuinness, Secretary. We had guidance from established CCW affiliations including St. Peter and Paul, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Blessed Trinity parishes. At our first meeting six women from St. Maximilian Kolbe, Karen Hill from Blessed Trinity, and Father David attended. At that meeting we chose the Christmas Angel Tree as our first project.

We made Christmas brighter for The Covenant House, J.M.J. Life Center, some children from Stone Lakes Elementary School, and two parish families. This has become an annual event along with the Mary & Me Tea, The All Souls Dove Tree, and Catholic Days at the Capitol. Over the years we have partnered with other St. Maximilian Kolbe ministries. Faith Formation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation celebrations, Pastoral Care and Outreach with School Backpacks, Dress for Success, and the Cell Phone Drive. We helped the Hospitality Ministry by cooking and serving food for St. Max events and the Youth Ministry by providing sweets for their bake sales and for their mission trip last summer to our sister parish in the Dominican Republic, our CCW members sent handmade dresses for the little girls. For many it was the first new dress they had ever had.

Our membership has increased to thirty two and counting! We meet the third Sunday of every month. Meeting and ministry information is always published in the St. Max newsletter and on our website, <http://home.catholicweb.com/StMaxKolbeCCW>. Future topics for meeting programs will include, Human Trafficking, Feeding the Hungry, the upcoming National Elections, Breast Cancer, Type II Diabetes, and Alzheimer's Awareness, and the Vatican II and You.

Through the Holy Spirit, our Council of Catholic Women Ministry looks forward to following our mission statement, to support, empower and educate all women of the parish in spirituality, leadership and service.

We would like to thank our moderator, Father David, the Parish Council, the Pastoral Care and Social Justice Commission, and all the people of the parish for their prayers and participation in all our projects. It says in Proverbs 16:9 "In their hearts, humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps". In the years ahead we invite all the women of St. Maximilian Kolbe to join us as we step up for the Lord.



# Military Ministry

By Lisa Lozano-Diaz

*“To provide faith based support to Military Members and Families during deployment and non-deployment status, to include retirees and Veterans of the Armed Forces.”* This is the mission statement of the Military Ministry. The ministry was formed in 2009 primarily because of the uniqueness of being in the Military in the Orlando area. There isn't a base or fort, where usual support is found for men and women in uniform. The goal was to provide a place where Military members as well as their families can come together for prayer and support. Through God, the ministry has grown and been able to support the great men and women who serve our country. We have supported the Wounded Warrior event for two years, have sent cards of thanks to men in women in combat areas, collected toiletry items for two soldiers, parishioners of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, as well as their unit, have had guest speakers from Military One Source inform the families of the resources available for them and most importantly are continuously praying for all military. The ministry continues to look for ways to support and serve the Military community through Jesus Christ.

[www.SMKMilMin.webs.com](http://www.SMKMilMin.webs.com)





First Pastoral Council 2007



Pastoral Council 2011

## Pastoral Council

By Dick Gentner

The Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish Pastoral Council had their beginnings back in early 2007 with a leadership discernment process, parish planning meetings and establishment of a Mission Statement. The first formal council meeting was on June 16, 2007. Members were Father David, President Michelle Owens, Doris Ramos, Peggy Alvarado, Lisa Knapp, Melodie & Fred Winters, John Sacher, Joe Pietzyk, and Fran Fierko.

Since that time the parish pastoral council has established the five commissions: Family Life & Fellowship, Evangelization & Faith Formation, Liturgy & Worship, Stewardship & Development, and Pastoral Care and Social Justice. The five commissions have now evolved into 35 separate active ministries that carry out our Mission Statement, “Anointed by the Holy Spirit, St Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church welcomes all to know Jesus Christ, celebrate the Eucharist and serve others through selfless stewardship as we follow the way of the Lord”. There are currently 7 council members serving 3 year terms.

Looking to the future, the parish pastoral council will continue to provide the vision and leadership to the St. Max parish to guide it forward. One of the main objectives for the future is to strengthen our parish spiritual growth and to development a real sense of Stewardship for our Lord.

# Hispanic Ministry

By Alvaro Blandon

The Spanish Ministry of St. Maximilian Kolbe started in 2007. This Ministry was founded by Milly Alvarado, Gioconda Pisani, Miguel Perez, Johanna Cedeno and Gladys Mercadal among others. Deacon Miguel Pagan was the person who initiated the movement to create this Ministry.

The principal mission of this Ministry is to gather the Hispanic Community to celebrate Mass, participate in the different Ministries of the Parish and enrich our Faith through Spiritual Retreats. Also to celebrate important dates in our Catholic Church such as the day of the Virgin of the Americas and the Virgin of Guadalupe and a special day for the children as is the feast of the Three Wise Men.

Due to the increase of the Hispanic community in St. Max, Father David decided to celebrate the first Spanish Mass on June of 2008. We must recognize Father David's efforts in Celebrating three Masses every Sunday , specially the 12:15 Mass which he does in Spanish.

At the present time the Hispanic Ministry has 60 active members and our doors are opened to any else who wishes to join. Together we will work hard to be able to build our Parrish, something that we all the parishioners of St. Maximilian Kolbe well deserve, Hispanics or not Hispanics.

May God bless all of you

El ministerio hispano de St Maximilian Kolby nacio en el año de 2007. Este fue fundado por Milly Alvarado ,Gioconda Pisani, Miguel Perez, Johana Cedeno, Gladys Mercadal y otros. Cabe mencionar este ministerio fue impulsado originalmente por Diacono Miguel Pagan.



La mision principal del ministerio es de integrar la comunidad hispana a la celebracion de la eucaristia, participacion en los diferentes ministerios que ofrece la parroquia. Incrementar nuestra fe a travez de retiros espirituales. Celebrar dias importantes de nuestra iglesia catolica. Por ejemplo la celebracion de nuestra Virgen de America, la virgen de Guadalupe y la celebracion de los reyes magos.

Debido al incremento de feligreses hispanos en nuestra parroquia , padre David decidio celebrar la primera misa en español para Junio 2008. Un gran esfuerzo de parte de nuestro parroco David debido que esta se realiza el dia Domingo a las 12:15 de la tarde despues de haber realizado dos celebraciones anteriores y no solamente eso si no que esta es hecha en Español.

Actualmente el ministerio cuenta con mas de sesenta miembros activos y tenemos las puertas habiertas para recibir nuevos miembros. Trabajaremos juntos para que muy pronto comencemos a construir nuestra parroquia que muy merecido lo tenemos todos los feligreses de St. Maximillian hispanos y no hispanos.

Que Dios los bendiga,



# Faith Formation at St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church

By Nancy Watson

In late Fall 2006, Fr. David announced at all the masses that he was holding a meeting for anyone interested in Faith Formation at the parish. A group of about 20 parishioners showed up for this first meeting and listened to Fr. David discuss his idea to hold intergenerational faith formation events beginning in just 2 months! Melodie and Fred Winters, Bill and Amy Lamb, Vivian Lack, Kathy McGuinness, Bob and Barbara Jones, Wanda Johnston and Nancy Watson were all in attendance and joined the core planning team. Melodie and Fred were pronounced our fearless leaders, given their experience in intergenerational events from another parish. Some members were charge of music, others cared for food, and still others cared for craft projects and figuring out activities that would appeal to different age groups.

Soon, other members became involved: Julia Vorster, Mark and Cheryl Niederkorn, Paul and Cristina Giammarinaro, John Zoll and many, many others. That spring our small, but mighty core team somehow pulled off putting on 5 separate intergenerational events, with over 300 people attending some number of the sessions. The Holy Spirit was active within our faith community! Listening to the Lambs lead us in singing Cry the Gospel and Our God is an Awesome God that year, made us all strive to grow in discipleship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

During the 2007/2008 year, some of the names and faces changed, but we held 9 intergenerational events at Avalon Middle School and even began offering Sacramental Preparation for 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup> Communion. Dan Hardester joined us for part of the year as our Director of Faith Formation and shared his gifts with the parish. The highlight of that year had to be the spectacular starlit 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation Service held in the courtyard at Avalon Middle School. The sky was crystal clear, making it was easy to plainly feel the loving kindness of our dear Lord.

In 2008/2009 the Seder Meal intergenerational event is probably the event many remember best. Janine Corneau helped us better understand the Jewish heritage and symbolism from the Seder which is part of our Liturgy of the Eucharist at mass. Fun, food and dancing – a Holy good time was had by all. We also began offering age-specific Faith Formation sessions. Adults met in the cafeteria, while kids met by grade in the Stone Lakes Elementary classrooms. Confirmation Preparation also began to be offered within our parish.

With the 2009/2010 year, we began our second year of offering age-specific Faith Formation and were so pleased to have Denise Kriscunas join us as our new Director of Faith Formation following Janine Corneau's retirement to live with family in Kentucky.



# MEMORIES

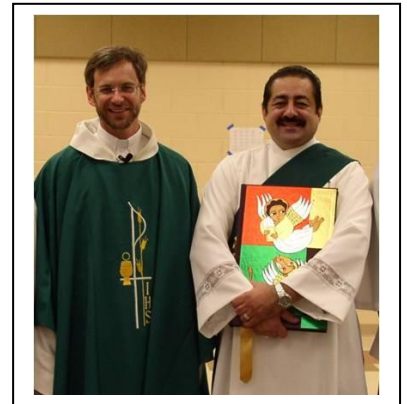
Having moved here from New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, what our family craved most was a sense of belonging. When St. Max started up, we threw ourselves into ministry and have since found many friends who are our bonds to this community. Celebrating a Sacrament is one of the most spiritually affirming experiences in life. My oldest daughter had celebrated her First Communion just a few short months before Katrina hit and uprooted our family. Seeing my oldest celebrate Confirmation and my youngest celebrate her First Communion this spring really cemented what St. Max means to us... Carrying forward from that first Mass Fr. David celebrated, our family always tries to 'Follow the way of the Lord!'

~Mary Braud



"When I first heard of a new parish opening on the East side of the county I got very excited because I was planning to move to Avalon Park. I inquired about it and I wrote a letter to Bishop Wenski asking to be assigned to this new parish. Sure I needed the pastor's clearance first. I met with Fr. David and right off the back we struck a friendship a mutual respect for each other. I had only been a deacon for two years. I had served at Good Shepherd and Blessed Trinity. I still remember the first mass...we all prepared for that big day...it was a great blessing and has continued to be. I look forward to growing old in this community and being here for a very long time."

~Deacon Miguel Pagan



"Our very first meeting at Stone Lakes Elementary before the church even opened was the first organizational meeting getting all the ministries set up. I was truly amazed at how many parishioners came and how so many volunteered to set up the ministries. A true spiritual community at work."

"Father's first homily where he talked & coined the expression "Follow the Way of the Lord" was a very memorable homily and a very memorable day seeing all the parishioners come out for the first mass."

"When Fr. David came to our home to give the sacrament of the sick to our son who had just gone through a surgery, Fr. anointed our son and prayed over him. Our son healed much more quickly than the doctor had anticipated which surprised the doctor."

~Brenda Kolbrich



Our family moved to Avalon Park in 2005 and we could not find a parish where we felt at home. Slowly we grew discouraged at attending Mass and I felt a sadness because I knew that was wrong. I started to hear rumors that Avalon Park would have a Catholic Church. I immediately got in touch with the Diocese and they gave me Fr. David's email address for more information. I was happy to hear there was going to be an initial meeting for those wanting to help setup the church. We attended the meeting for St. Max in our 'churcheteria' and I was thrilled to see how many people showed up. I quickly signed up for Hospitality and offered my services to work the bulletin (now known as the newsletter). Fr. David came to our home to explain how he wanted the newsletter setup and soon after my work started. I was thrilled that I could help build our parish and the sense of belonging was back! Church was no longer an optional thing we did on Sundays!

Through the years we've gotten to know Fr. David along with some great St. Max members. He blessed our home and has participated in events that are special to our family. He has been a great support system when things get tough but has also shared in our joys. Fr. David made extra efforts to comfort us when we found out our son had Down Syndrome and now shares the joy of our little Enrique by attending the annual walk for children with Down Syndrome.

Deacon Miguel baptized Enrique and made it extra special by asking our then 5 yr. old Antonio to be his altar server – a proud moment for him as well as the rest of us!

On our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Fr. David blessed our marriage and participated in our celebration. He was like part of the family!

Fr. David goes out of his way to 'gather his sheep' and put us to work! He calls us by name to help out in the different parish needs and that's what makes St. Max so special – we all have a special place in our parish where we can put our talents to work for God.

Going from an occasional visit to Mass on Sundays to a family committed to a parish is a long road but belonging to St. Max made that transition incredibly short! Both my husband and I belong to a ministry and we look forward to our 7 yr. old, Antonio, doing his first communion and then becoming an Altar Server. As far as our 2 yr. old Enrique, he will probably continue to run through the school hallways while Fr. David is trying to preach but we hope for a speedy potty training period so he can start attending CLOW!

We thank our good Lord for the blessing it is to belong to St. Max!

~Doris Ramos



The rectory came completely furnished as a model home for a family. One of the rooms was completely furnished for a child's bedroom with twin beds, dresser, bedding, wall plaques all in a Nemo theme.

Fr. David said, "Kathy find a family who can use all of that furniture". A woman had called the parish office the day before saying she was going to be a foster Mom, and did we know where she could get some furniture for the 2 little boys that were coming to live with her.

We were so excited – a perfect match right in time for Christmas! We had to wait for the Diocese office to sign the closing documents on the house before we were able to get the key. It was December 23 – the last day the diocese and real estate offices were going to be open before Christmas. I had called everyone I could at the diocese office pleading this transaction be done before everyone left. It was close to 5pm and I was losing hope quickly.

Fr. David heard me mumbling and he suggested we pray. I drove home and received a phone call from the Avalon real estate office. The documents were signed if I could be there in 15 minutes – I could have the key to our rectory!

Christmas Eve morning Joanne, Mike Daniels and I helped pack up the furniture for the family. It was our first Saint Max Stewardship project with Father David leading us in prayer, and a Merry Christmas for two little boys who had never had their own beds now had an entire new bedroom!

~Kathy McGuinness

"During the first year of our parish, Ana and I participated in the group meetings to help determine our parish mission statement. We chaired a group that looked at the best practices of Catholic churches across the United States. Coming up with a mission statement gave us a chance to discuss what St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish was all about. It really hammered home the idea that the parishioners had an important role in our parish. Whenever I look at the mission statement--"Anointed by the Holy Spirit, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church welcomes all to know Jesus Christ, celebrate the Eucharist, and serve others through selfless stewardship as we follow the way of the Lord," I reflect back on those important spiritual discussions. It continually reminds me of our parish's special commitment to God and to our community."

~John Sacher



## St. Max Parish History



### 2006 – 2007

#### Blessings

- St. Max was established August 14, 2006 (August 14 is the Feastday of St. Maximilian Kolbe). Our first Mass was held on September 2, 2006 in the Stone Lakes Elementary School “churcheteria” in Avalon Park. We had 3 Masses that weekend—Saturday 5:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- Pastoral Council and Finance Council were established
- Generations of Faith, our parish family faith formation, began
- First Ministry Fair held with a dozen ministries
- Hired a part-time parish secretary (Joanne Daniel), a part-time bookkeeper (Ana Sacher), and a full-time director of liturgy and music (Lydia Britton)
- 284 families registered as of April 2007 and an average weekly Mass attendance of 828 people

#### Leaps of Faith

- Tithed 10% of the Sunday collection to works of justice and charity in the community
- Community-raisers like car washes encouraged, fundraisers like raffles discouraged
- The parish bought a house for \$300,000 at 4013 Alcott Circle in Avalon Park for the parish office and a residence for Fr. David

### 2007 – 2008

#### Blessings

Had our “First” First Communion for 40 children

Baptized 5 adults and 11 children at the Easter Vigil

Added a Mass. Four Masses held on the weekend Saturday 5:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.

School of Faith, our weekly faith formation program, began

Hired a part-time Youth Minister (Vivian Lack), part-time Faith Formation Administrative Assistant (Nancy Watson), part-time Stewardship Administrative Assistant (Shann Roach), part-time Family Life Minister (Kathy McGuinness)

Held a Three Kings party, parish picnic, and parish anniversary party

Collections of food and funding for Catholic Charities, Converge and BETA house, 50 back packs with school supplies, Angel Tree for Christmas presents to needy families, long-sleeve shirts for migrant workers

Second Ministry Fair with two dozen ministries

Our first full-time Director of Faith Formation Dan Hardester resigned in December 2007 due to health reasons.

Janine Corneau became our full-time Director of Faith Formation

519 families registered as of April 2008 and an average weekly Mass attendance of 948 people

#### Leaps of Faith

Tithed 10% of the Sunday collection to works of justice and charity in the community

## 2008 – 2009

### **Blessings**

First Mass in Spanish August 17, 2008

Developed Master Site Plan to build a parish community center in Avalon Park

Called and Gifted campaign to identify time and talent of parishioners

Third Ministry Fair, three dozen ministries

Janine Corneau resigned in May 2009 as Director of Faith Formation to move to Kentucky. Hired Denise Kriscunas

58 children receive First Communion

Gave \$21,000 from our parish tithes to help build a middle school in our sister diocese in the Dominican Republic

646 families registered as of April 2009 and an average weekly Mass attendance of 1,017 people.

### **Leaps of Faith**

Commitment to build a parish community center and develop a community recreation area at a cost of \$5.6M to be paid by the parish with loans from the Diocese of Orlando

Tithed 10% of the Sunday collection to works of justice and charity in the community

## 2009 – 2010

### **Blessings**

Newcomer orientation *First Step* began

Took title on December 16, 2009 to seven acres across the street from Avalon Middle School

779 families registered as of April 2010 and an average weekly Mass attendance of 1,082 people

### **Leaps of Faith**

Commitment of 10% of the Sunday collection towards construction, in addition to the capital campaign pledges

Tithed 10% of the Sunday collection to works of justice and charity in the community

Father David made a three month sabbatical June-August 2010

## 2010 - 2011

### **Blessings**

Eight youth and four adults went on the first mission trip to St. Maximilian Kolbe Middle School in Los Frios, Dominican Republic

Fr. David blessed St. Maximilian Kolbe Middle School

Bishop Noonan confirmed sixty-five at Avalon Church

Received the Witness to Hope Award, the highest honor bestowed at the Diocesan Light of Faith Awards for outstanding achievement in the area of communication and evangelization

823 families registered as of April 2011 and an average weekly Mass attendance of 1,102 people

### **Leaps of Faiths**

Tithe 10% of the Sunday collection to works of justice and charity in the community

Pledged \$50,000 over four years for the educational expenses of St. Maximilian Kolbe Middle School in the Dominican Republic



# Stewardship & Development Commission

By Sheila Madden

In January 2009, Father David invited two dozen parishioners to a brainstorming session for stewardship of time and talent. The first meeting was to help the group discern how to become part of the *Called and Gifted* Steering Committee. We planned a Ministry Fair for April, a Spiritual Gifts Inventory to help discern our spiritual gifts and call to ministry, and drafted a five-week Bible study on spiritual gifts that took place during Lent. Our goal was to help parishioners count their blessings, care for their blessings, and share their blessings.

At the conclusion of the *Called and Gifted* campaign, the steering committee was asked if they wanted to continue on and become the Stewardship and Development Commission. In May 2009 the Stewardship and Development Commission was formed and consisted of Jill Meunier, Deacon Jim Multeri, Jose Neira, Maria Torres, Mary Franceschini, Mike Madden, Shann Roach, Lysa Knight and Sheila Madden. .

The first year we met monthly at different homes, always starting with dinner and conversation, followed by a meeting. As we were learning what was needed to become a stewardship parish, we studied and discussed the bishop's pastoral letter on *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.

That first year we held a Sacrificial Giving weekend in the Fall, distributed the Annual Stewardship Report. Other events included Our Catholic Appeal in February, a Ministry Leaders Brunch, a Commissioning Weekend for blessing of ministry, and a Time and Talent Weekend in the Spring. We initiated Faith Direct electronic giving, and instructed on the meaning of stewardship at School of Faith. In addition, we changed from a single Ministry Fair a year to five Ministry Weekends with a different commission leading each time.

The Stewardship Commission continues to grow and learn that stewardship is not about raising money. It's not even about building up our parish ministries and increasing participation. Stewardship is all about Christ. Stewardship begins with a conversion of heart. The true steward makes a commitment to the Lord – not merely to the parish. He gives His life to God because He wants to follow Him, and everything else – his time, his talent, and his treasure – follows suit. Christ is what it's all about – in our prayer times, in our ministries, and even in our offertories. We are merely stewards of our lives and of the many gifts we have, and, thus, we must live our lives for Him.

Stewardship is loving the Lord with deep joy, feeling sincere gratitude for our blessings, and giving back selflessly. This is what Christ calls us to be – His disciple.