

# KOLBE'S STEWARD

## STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

**St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church**

**#3 Winter 2011**



### *Advent helps us prepare well for Christmas*

**O**ur society is especially good at focusing on the externals of Christmas. Some stores have Christmas aisles ready immediately after Labor Day. You can hear Christmas music non-stop right after Thanksgiving. While these

contribute to a festive atmosphere, it's important to remember that the Advent Season is a gift from the Church to help us prepare our interior for Christ's coming. As the Catechism says, "When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming." If we use this time well to recommit ourselves in our relationship with the Lord, we will be prepared to better appreciate the externals of the Christmas season.

Christmas spending is a major issue for many families. Take time now to think through your gift plan for Christmas. Don't put your Christmas bills on credit cards if you won't be able to pay those bills in full come 2012. Keep in mind those who have fallen on hard times. Volunteer for a local outreach, whether it is a soup kitchen or other ministry. "Adopt" a needy family by providing them food and gifts. Allow your children to participate financially by sharing some of their allowance for this purpose. What a marvelous way for children to learn about the joy of giving – and becoming a good steward.

# A Thanksgiving Blessing

Good and gracious God,  
As we gather together this Thanksgiving, we  
pause from the normal routines of our daily lives  
to give thanks and praise for the abundant  
blessings you have bestowed upon us.

You have entrusted us with the wonders of your  
creation and given us the freedoms and  
opportunities to creatively collaborate  
in your divine plan.

Bless all of us who gather here in your name.  
Give us the grace to be good stewards of your  
bounty, the courage to proclaim the Gospel in  
word and deed; and the wisdom to claim nothing  
for ourselves, but return all to You with increase.

Bless this food we are about to share and  
all those who brought it to our table.

Bless our loved ones, family and friends who are  
not with us this day; and on those who travel, that  
they may reach their destinations safely

And in a special way, bless those who are less  
fortunate than we are today. Grant that we  
who are filled with Your abundance never  
close our hearts to those most in need of Your  
mercy, particularly the hungry, the  
homeless and the poor.

We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your  
Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy  
Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.



# A Stewardship Saint – A Simple Saint

## St. Teresa of Avila 1515-1582



St. Teresa of Avila founded the Discalced Carmelite religious community of women and was one of the first two women to be named Doctor of the Church (with Catherine of Siena) because of her extraordinary contribution to Christian mysticism and spirituality.

Born in 1515 to a large, aristocratic Castilian family in Avila, Spain, Teresa entered the Carmelite monastery when she was 20 years old. She spent a number of relatively average years in the convent before she experienced a vision that changed her life forever.

In 1554, while praying before a statue of the crucified Christ, Teresa underwent a profound spiritual conversion.

She later wrote: “When I fell to prayer again and looked at Christ hanging poor and naked upon the cross, I felt I could not bear to be rich.” She prayed that she might be as poor as Jesus. Teresa had a number of mystical experiences centered on Christ’s passion. She was motivated by these visions to reform her religious community which had relaxed the observance of its original rule.

In 1562, Teresa established a convent in Avila with thirteen other nuns where she felt the primitive Carmelite Rule could be strictly observed. Their communal life was marked by prayer, poverty, manual work, abstinence from meat and solitude. This convent would become the model for 16 other Discalced convents she would establish between 1562 and 1582 while traveling across the rugged Castilian countryside by mule. In 1567, she met St. John of the Cross, who she enlisted to extend her reform into the male side of the Carmelite community.

St. Teresa was a prolific writer on the spiritual life and left a substantial body of writings on Christian mysticism. These works include the *Way of Perfection* and *Meditations on the Song of Songs*. Her masterpiece was the *Interior Castle* which was a disguised autobiography. For St. Teresa, the test of growth in the spiritual life was the extent one responded to Christ’s stewardship call to love one’s neighbor.

Teresa died on October 4, 1582, and was canonized in 1622. She is the patron saint of Spain.

# SPOTLIGHT ON MINISTRY

## RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

By Nanette Parratto-Wagner

A small, but dedicated, group of parishioners and friends of St. Maximilian Kolbe have managed to surpass the success of previous collections for local pregnancy crisis centers. The story begins with one man on a mission – to rally and support workers to increase the harvest. He succeeded.

It was a glorious day, made by the Lord, to go bargain hunting. Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, Jamie sent forth his workers to gather baby and maternity items from Avalon Park Fall Yard Sale sellers. Armed with \$325, they returned with over \$8,550 worth of goods. The citizens of Avalon Park opened their hearts to this mission, and gave generously of the goods they had sought to sell.

Jamie's bargain hunters brought back 16 bags and boxes of clothes (infant, toddler, and maternity) - all donated! (not a penny paid!); 12 deluxe strollers; 12 toddler car seats; 7 infant car seats; 7 pack-n-plays; 4 high chairs; 8 bouncy seats; a very nice changing table dresser (donated by one of our parishioners); toys; books; and many, many more items.

Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jamie directed his troops in the loading of a U-Haul, 3 cars, 2 SUVs, and 1 pick-up truck to deliver the goods to 3 women in our parish and neighborhood who chose life for their unexpected babies, as well as to 4 local pregnancy crisis centers: JMJ Life Center, Beta House, Cornerstone Baptist Pregnancy Center of Orlando, and Life Choices Pregnancy Center in Longwood. Please check out our video on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bWjAJ-9FyA>.

So, what will you be doing in the Spring when Avalon Park hosts its next yard sale? Will you join the harvest of abundance? Will you help reap more than you sow? The harvest continues all month long – please help fill the pack & play in the lobby of Stone Lakes Elementary School throughout the month of October, Respect Life Month, appropriately also known as the month of Mary, the Mother of God.

Feel free to contact our ministry any time at [respectlife@avaloncatholic.org](mailto:respectlife@avaloncatholic.org) or call Nan Wagner at 407-249-8235.



# COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

By Maryann V. Thomas

Happy New Year from the Council of Catholic Women! That's right – it's a new year filled with faith, fun and service for the CCW and we kicked it off with a potluck dinner on September 25<sup>th</sup> where we rolled out our busy agenda of events for the upcoming months and celebrated Father David's birthday. By the time this newsletter is distributed, CCW will have sponsored a successful Blessing of the Animals celebration in honor of the Feast of St. Francis (see full article by Nanette Parratto-Wagner, below) and concluded its annual All Souls Dove Tree fundraiser to benefit Hospice of the Comforter where parishioners purchase doves to be placed on a tree in our churcheteria in remembrance of a loved one who has passed on. During the next few months, CCW will also be baking to support our Youth Group and conducting the annual Angel Tree gift collection for church and community families. Upcoming meetings will be held on November 20, when our topic will be "Human Trafficking," and December 18, when we will hold our "All That Glitters" Christmas Party. If you are a Catholic woman, you are eligible to join us and we encourage you to do so. For more information about membership or any of our meetings or service projects, please visit our website at: <http://stmaxkolbeccw.catholicweb.com/>.

*Council of Catholic Women sponsor Deacon Miguel's Faith Filled Blessing  
Blessing of the Animals in Celebration of the Feast of St. Francis*



The good Lord was smiling upon this spectacular Saturday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of October. The sky was crystal clear blue. The air was dry with a gentle breeze. The dogs (25 of them) and 1 guinea pig were in awe, and very well behaved (with exception of one squealing Schnauzer), as Deacon Miguel Pagan blessed his new sibling (his parents' new, disabled, Shih Tzu puppy) and the dear companions of 63 attendees. Faith, Love, and Charity were shared in abundance. Deacon Miguel reminded us of the story of St. Francis' saving the people of Gubbio, Italy, from a man-eating wolf. St. Francis commanded the wolf to cease his man-eating ways in the name of Christ and the wolf lay down at his feet, tame as a lamb, all past transgressions forgiven. As Christ sacrificed for His love of us, so we owe God's gifts to us, the animals and the earth we depend upon, the same compassion and care. This is the message of the Blessing of the Animals. The Council of Catholic Women embraced this Feast Day Celebration by providing informational pamphlets and free items for care of our companion animals, including paw print bandanas. Opportunities to serve local animal rescue organizations were provided for all to take home to reflect on and to consider how to give back to our communities. Remembrances of St. Francis's life and ministry were given freely to mark each blessed pet with a St. Francis paw print prayer charm, St. Francis prayer cards for animals and St. Francis Serenity prayer cards. The women of St. Max's CCW look forward to sharing the blessings of this celebration next year, with our wider community and in support of more local animal rescue groups. Thank you to all who helped and to those who came to share the blessing of their beloved companion animals.

# CROWN MINISTRIES

By Maribel Lugo

“What shall I return to the Lord for all He has given?” Ps. 116:12

In my personal experience, it has been of great blessing and benefit the knowledge received from the Crown Ministry classes based on scriptural study. This offered me the opportunity of learning how to manage the money in a wiser way, according to God's request in the Holy Scriptures. I, nowadays, give testimony of all the errors committed when there is ignorance in the management of the economy. As a result, we fall in financial situations, and mainly it is more evident in these days, that result in a negative chain of events that affect the marital situation, family and working environment, and so on. I recommend to all to take these classes as soon as you have the opportunity which will be of great personal benefit and will help you greatly.

En mi experiencia personal ha sido para mi de gran bendicion y beneficio el conocimiento que me ha brindado estas clases del crown ministry con el estudio de la biblia de una manera mas sabia de administrar el dinero segun Dios lo pide en las sagradas escrituras, y doy testimonio hoy dia de todos los errores que se cometen cuando hay el desconocimiento y como resultado caemos en situaciones seconommicas y sobre todo se hace evidente en estos dias el cual se esta viviendo situaciones sobre todo en la economia y que se vuelve una cadena porque afecta el ambiente matrimonial, familiar, en el area de trabajo y asi sucesivamente. Les recomiendo a todos que a medida que tengan la oportunidad de poder tomar estas clases veran el gran beneficio personal y que les ayudara grandemente.



The next Crown Ministries Classes will be in January, 2012

# FAMILY LIFE & FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

By Nancy McComas

The Family Life and Fellowship ministry welcome both Eleanore Smith and Ellen Brighton to the group as leads for the First Step ministry. Eleanore will start with the November 3<sup>rd</sup> First Step meeting and Ellen has already been working on the list of those who have agreed to provide home visits as part of First Step. Maria Torres will continue as a lead helping integrate the Hispanic community into the First Step Ministry. A huge Thank You to Kathy McGuinness for all that she has done with the First Step ministry and we wish her the best as she continues her work serving the St. Max parish.

The Military Ministry had a card box out in October for parishioners to write notes/cards of thanks to send over to MSG Rodriguez and his army unit, a parishioner of SMK. The cards will be sent in time to be received for the Thanksgiving holiday. The ministry continues to seek ways to support families of the military.

In November MOMS will continue reviewing “Having a Mary Spirit”. The MOMS Ministry is planning the third annual MOMS Brunch for Christmastime.

The marriage ministry meets twice a month at the safety center in Avalon. They are working on an offering to enrich the bond of marriage throughout the advent season for the parish.

In December, we will be splitting the Hospitality ministry into two groups; Ushers and Hospitality (Greeters & refreshments) Ann Mahoney will lead the Ushers and we also welcome Cathy Campbell who has accepted the lead position for Hospitality.

# HISPANIC MINISTRY

By Alvaro Blandon

On the first week of October we started 3 Why Catholic groups. We have a total of 32 parishioners registered to attend the second part of Why Catholic.

The Hispanic Ministry is organizing a special celebration for the Feast of the Virgen de la Guadalupe after the 12:00 p.m. Mass on Sunday December 11, 2011. After Mass we will be offering a small snack and the Spanish choir led by Juan Orozco will be presenting Christmas carols from Central and South America.

On our October Hispanic Ministry meeting we will be confirming the date and place for the Feast of the Three Wise Men. More details will follow.

We are in the process of organizing a visit to a Senior Community Center to bring them an afternoon of games and music and maybe some dancing too.



En la primera semana de Octubre comenzaremos con tres grupos las seis secciones de Por Que Catolico? En total seremos 32 parroquianos en esta segunda fase de Por Que Catolico?

El Ministerio Hispano esta organizando un evento especial para la Virgen de la Guadalupe el domingo 11 de Octubre despues de la Misa de las 12:00 p.m. Ofreceremos una merienda al terminar la Misa y a continuacion el coro de St. Max bajo la direccion de Juan Orozco hara una presentacion de canciones dedicadas a la Virgen. Quisieramos pedirle a Doris Ramos que ponga un anuncio en el boletin de la ultima semana de Noviembre y la primera semana de Diciembre anunciando este evento. Tambien haremos anuncios en las cuatro Misas de la Primera semana de Diciembre.

En la proxima reunion del Ministerio Hispano se confirmaran la fecha y el lugar para la Celebracion de los Tres Reyes Magos. Seguiremos informando sobre este evento.

Estamos en el proceso de organizar una visita a un Senior Community Center para pasar una tarde de juegos y musica con ellos. Y tambien, quizas, una bailadita.

En la medida que otros nuevos proyectos salgan a la luz, les seguiremos informando.

## SACRIFICIAL GIVING WITNESS TALK FROM OCTOBER 16 AT THE 8:30AM MASS



Good morning, my name is Rod Marris and I am here today to tell you a love story.

Now my 7 year old out there is saying, eww dad, a love story? But this love story has adventure, conversion, transformation and a mysterious 6 fingered man. Ok, so there is no mysterious 6 fingered man, but the rest is true.

A few weeks ago a group from the parish attended a ministry morning of reflection featuring Dan Schutte, who wrote such wonderful songs as City of God and Here I am Lord.

After the morning we went to lunch and I was sitting next to Sheila Madden. She asked me to give a Stewardship Witness Talk on Sunday October 16, at the 8:30 mass. After I got done choking on my Italian sausage sub with no onions, extra hot peppers, I reluctantly agreed. I said to her, ok, a stewardship talk, that means I can talk about time, talent and treasure... She smiled at me and said, mostly treasure.

When I thought about this, I came to that old story about a traveler in Maine who asked for directions. The response from the old New Englander he asked was "ya can't get there from here". So it is for me with the discussion of treasure, I can't get there without talking about time and talent first.

So, I immediately began to think about my inspiration for the talk and I came right back to the morning of reflection we had just attended. Dan Schutte's message that morning was clear. The mass is not about showing up and watching Father David perform. The mass is all about participation. The participation of everyone sitting right here today.

I can point to one significant period of time at St. Max that helped me deepen my participation. I was blessed to attend the very first RCIA program offered at St. Max. In 2008, I became a catholic. I recall people like Mary Braud who led us with her teaching. People like Sarah Milewski who helped teach, but also shared her love of being a lector. Father David who led us spiritually, and Ron Demeth, my sponsor, who showed me that a regular old guy can have such a deep love for the Lord.

Today, I participate in ministry as a counter, lector, I am on the parish council, representing Family Life and Fellowship and I am on the core team as we kick off our retreat, Christ Renews His Parish.

While my participation in these ministries is important to me, nothing compares to my participation with the rest of you in the Eucharist. Here I am transformed as I receive the blood and body of Jesus Christ. When I pray after communion, I am always led to ask the Lord to be with me as I live the mass for the next six days. Father David, you have truly instilled in me our mission; to live the mass.

Just as we participate together in the Eucharist, we also participate together as we bring our gifts forward in offering. Our gifts are transformed as well, helping to change the lives of our parishioners through the myriad of ministries we have at St. Max. I look back at my experience in RCIA and feel so blessed for such programs. We also help transform the lives of people in our community and in our sister diocese through our parish tithe.

Jesus teaches us in our gospel reading today that we need to take a close look at our ways and be truthful with ourselves. Are we giving to others and God as we should, or are we letting other values get in the way? As a family, we will be sitting down to work on our budget. As always, we will be putting God as line item number one.

Over the past five years I have learned so much at St. Max, not the least of which is to be very careful who I sit next to at lunch.

Thank you and God Bless

# OUTREACH MINISTRY

## WOODBURY FOOD PANTRY

By Sheila Madden



Fifteen years ago, Woodbury Presbyterian Church started a food pantry every Monday to help the ten homeless people in the area. Today they serve 240 people, of whom only 20 are homeless.

A year ago, St. Max joined in partnership with Woodbury under the guidance of Kathy McGuinness, Pastoral Advocate. St. Max, through our tithe, shares the expense of operating the pantry and we have as many as 14 people show up on Monday morning to serve the poor in our area.

Besides parishioner food donations from both churches, Woodbury Food Pantry receives food from Second Harvest, Panera Bakery, Publix, BJ's, and Pizza Hut.

John, an unemployed man who has received food for two years, has developed a friendship with the people who are there to serve him. The kindness he receives reflects his joyfulness in his difficult situation.

Joseph, a homeless man who lives in the woods, comes to Woodbury Food Pantry every Monday morning, not just to receive food but to work and serve others. He moves heavy cartons, cleans up at the end, and is available to serve wherever he is needed. At noon, he returns to his tent in the woods.



A single mother of four comes in for the first time. This is all new to her in her new unemployed status. Being very timid, she asks, "how does this all work."

George, an elderly man from Avalon Park, keeps repeating "I am so blessed," as he is given food.

When asked why they keep going back to serve at Woodbury Food Pantry, St. Max parishioners say, "I have learned to be more compassionate," "We come to give back to those in need," "We are so blessed to be here," "I enjoy being here."

Samaritan Resource Center is also on site to help break the cycle of homelessness and poverty by meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless and other at-risk folks in East Orange County as a witness to the love of Jesus Christ.

Samaritan Resource Center offers help with food stamps, Medicare and Medicaid applications, VA access, disability insurance, unemployment filing, legal services, free phones, resumes and job searches, showers, haircuts, transportation, and spiritual guidance.

Parishioners of St. Max are asked to continue to support Woodbury Food Pantry by bringing non-perishable food to Mass weekly, gift cards for food or gas, and prayers of Thanksgiving for the blessings in our lives and our ability to serve the Lord through serving His least ones.



# Kolbe's Kid Corner

## Stewardship Word Search

C	A	C	A	L	L	E	D	G	S
O	G	M	G	I	F	E	D	O	T
N	R	I	D	E	T	G	U	C	E
V	A	S	F	L	N	P	L	A	W
E	T	S	O	T	E	Y	A	W	A
R	I	I	R	P	L	B	T	I	R
S	T	O	K	U	A	D	A	S	D
I	U	N	O	O	T	S	M	P	S
O	D	D	O	G	E	C	A	L	P
N	E	F	M	S	I	T	P	A	B

Directions: Fill in the blanks below with the best answer, then find the words above. They can go in any direction.

1. We are gifted and c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to holiness, community, mission and ministry, and Christian maturity.
2. We are called to be good s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
3. "P \_ \_ \_ \_ G \_ \_ first!"
4. "Stewardship without spirituality is like eating soup with a f \_ \_ \_ ."
5. Stewardship is a c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ process.
6. Our bishops call us to invest ourselves in the m \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of the Church.
7. "Fostering stewardship as \_ w \_ \_ of life."
8. The right attitude is g \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
9. Time and t \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
10. We are called to be disciples by our b \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

# Should Thanksgiving be Cancelled?

The economy is still not improving very rapidly. Our pensions, retirement funds, or other investments have seen a 40-60% loss this year. Many have lost their jobs, fear they will lose them, or are having their hours or pay cut. With all this bad news we might ask, what do we have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Day? How can we possibly celebrate a holiday where we give thanks for our prosperity given this past year?



If we think of our lives only in terms of money, wealth, possessions, and earthly success, we should just skip Thanksgiving this year and every year. Thanksgiving is not a secular holiday to celebrate all the money we have made and the things we possess. Nor is it about turkey, football, stuffing, or pumpkin pie. From the very first Thanksgiving in 1621 at the Plymouth Plantation, thanksgiving has been observed as a religious holiday. It is a day set aside to thank God for the many blessings we have received from God. Yes, sometimes these blessings can come in the form of a good harvest or good health but our gratitude to God should go beyond our mere superficial measurements of success.

Instead of looking at our lives through human eyes, we need to look at our lives with the eyes of Christ. If we look at our lives with Christ's eyes, we would see that our money, possessions, jobs, prestige, and place in society mean absolutely nothing. None of these draw us closer to God and, unfortunately, often keep us from God as we place them ahead of our relationship with God. Christ's eyes would see God's love and blessings everywhere, even in difficult economic, physical, or emotional times. We would see the fullness of God's love in the Mass where we are invited to partake in the actual body and blood of Jesus in the form of bread and wine. We would see God's love and blessings in the everyday and in those with whom we live and work.

This Thanksgiving Day, let us not celebrate the superficial things that do not bring us closer to God. Let us see and thank God for all the blessings we receive every day and especially for the gift of Christ in the Eucharist, a term derived from an original Greek expression which means "thanksgiving."



## **Stewardship of Hospitality Prayer**

**My church is composed of people like me.**

**I help make it what it is.**

**It will be friendly, if I am.**

**Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.**

**It will do great work, if I work.**

**It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I**

**am a generous giver.**

**It will bring other people into worship and**

**fellowship if I invite and bring them.**

**It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness**

**and faith. And a church with a noble spirit,**

**if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.**

**Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate**

**myself to the task of being all the things that**

**I want my church to be.**

**Amen**