

St. Cecilia

CATHOLIC CHURCH

For Patricia Barsotti, Discovering St. Cecilia Opened Many Doors

Parishioner Patricia Barsotti fondly recalls the time 25 years ago, when she would spend weekends with her granddaughter – and the important step on her faith journey that grew out of that time.

“We went around to all the different churches,” Patricia says. “St. Cecilia’s had a Children’s Faith Formation program beginning in kindergarten, for the children not going to Catholic school. My granddaughter went there, and that was our introduction to St. Cecilia’s and we’ve been involved ever since.”

Although Patricia and her husband, Gene, are longtime residents of San Francisco, growing up in the city and attending Catholic schools, it wasn’t until they were looking to help their granddaughter grow in her faith that they ended up across town at St. Cecilia’s.

Over the years since becoming a parishioner, Patricia has found many ways to serve the community. From being involved with the Little Children’s Aid under the archdiocese, Little Sisters of the Poor and Packard Children’s Hospital, and serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) at St. Cecilia’s for the past 20 years, Patricia loves to give back to her community.

She finds that being involved has helped her grow in her faith.



Gene and Patricia Barsotti

“Being an EMHC – I enjoy that very much,” Patricia says. “It definitely increases my faith and appreciation of Mass. It’s amazing. I’m not a morning person, but on the days I go to Mass, it’s no problem to get up.

“It’s made me feel much more connected to the parish community – it’s sort of like a second home,” she adds. “It brings you closer and stronger with your religion, being part of the parish.”

Through the many circumstances that life brings, Patricia has found the importance of remaining closer to the Lord, in prayer.

“I talk to Him a lot just during the day – just in small ways, nothing really

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Service

The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10:25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him - feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the Gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

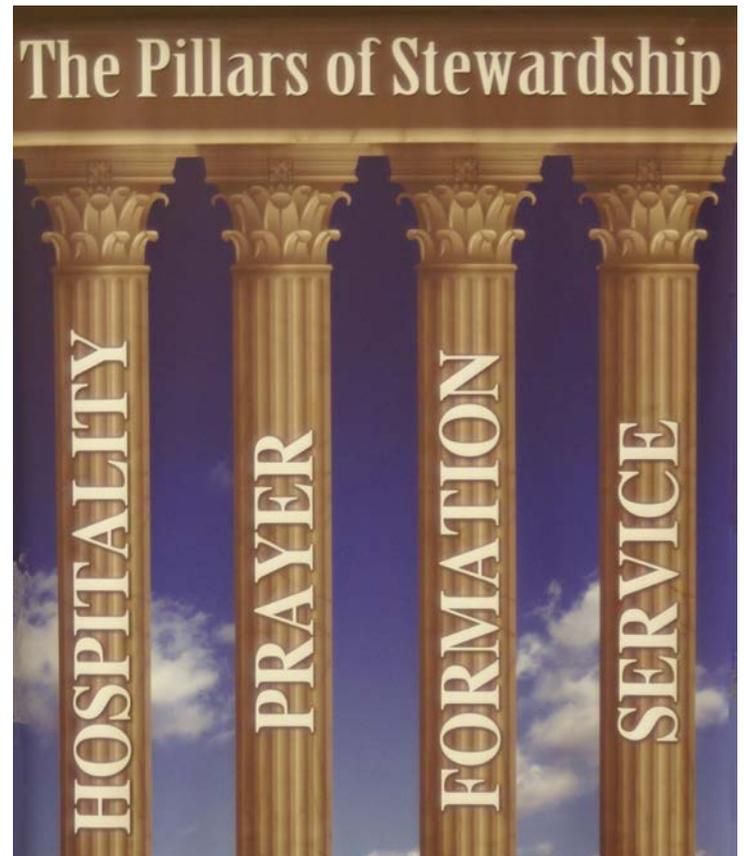
As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the basis of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."

It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist - in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochial-

ism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and nonprofit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for volunteers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Where Are Our Priorities?

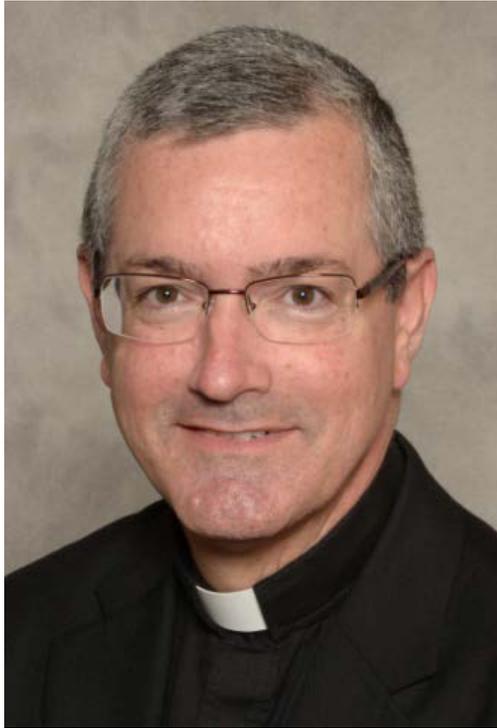
Dear Parishioners,

I am in hopes that you are aware that we are completing and will continue to celebrate the holiest time of the year in our Church. Easter Sunday, April 1, is the high point of the year for us as Catholics. We will, of course, continue to celebrate this holy time until Pentecost Sunday, which is May 20 this year. That is correct – our Easter season continues until then.

St. Paul provided some sage advice. He said, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Regardless of your opinions on what happens after resurrection, we can agree that it will be something “above” this life. Paul might be asking us if we put God first in all things. Life can become very encumbered with possessions, money, power, and even our egos.

Our goal should be to put God at the top of our lists. If that is not what we do, we may need to adjust our priorities. If we have not moved in that direction during Lent or in the past, now is the time to do it. We must constantly strive to not allow earthly things to become our gods.

It was St. Gregory the Great who said, “God made us to be the gardeners of paradise.” Some stewardship people have maintained that God has given each of us a garden – and when we are judged, we only hear one question, “What have you done with the garden I gave you?”



What have we done? What are we doing? First, we must recognize and acknowledge that we are all gifted, admittedly in different and varied ways. Despite what we see as our gifts or how we measure them, we need to ensure that we are using them in ways that serve God and others – ways that show good discipleship and stewardship on our parts.

Were you aware that the month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit in the Church? The term “spirit” translates from the Hebrew word *ruah*, which means “breath.” Truly, as Catholics, the Holy Spirit has been breathed into each of us, and is part of the garden we have received. Do we turn to Him? Do we rely on Him for strength? Do we even grant

that He is part of our very being? We should. We need to, as St. Paul advised, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth.”

May God bless you in all you do, and strive to do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Mark V. Taheny

Fr. Mark Taheny
Pastor



For God, For Country: The

Since 1883, the Young Men's Institute (YMI) has been operating as a fraternal Catholic order adhering to its motto of "Pro Deo, Pro Patria" – For God, For Country. Today, over 2,000 members – called brothers – in several states honor this motto by working together on worthwhile programs and activities supporting our Catholic faith and our community. In addition, YMI brothers enjoy fun, social events (e.g., dinners, tournaments, picnics) and other family benefits (e.g., scholarships, death benefits).

St. John Bosco Council #613 is the local YMI Council operating from St. Cecilia Parish. Brothers meet each month for a business meeting and fraternalism, and they host a social event almost on a monthly basis. All Catholic men are welcome to join, as the membership ranges from those young men in their teens to those above 90 years old!

"I am proud to be a member of the Young Men's Institute here at St. Cecilia," says Mike Amato, President of the local Council. "We do and have done a lot of good community service for many years. I have been privileged to serve as the President of our Council for the past 10 years. I have belonged to the organization for 14 years, and my father was a



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longtime member even before that."

The Mission of the YMI is to provide for the mutual aid and good will, the moral, intellectual and social improvement of its members, devotion to the Catholic Church, and loyalty to our country. To achieve this mission, the YMI dedicates itself to the education of its members in things Catholic, in things Ameri-

can and in all things that will lead all men to their ultimate salvation. The YMI is the only beneficial and fraternal organization originating in the West, which has become a national organization.

"Our Council has been an active part of St. Cecilia since 1907," Mike says. "We currently have more than 100 members. Our Councils are set

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— Mike Amato

Young Men's Institute at St. Cecilia

up as regional groups, so we serve and include men from three parishes — St. Cecilia, St. Thomas More, and Sts. Peter and Paul. I have also served the national organization as the Grand Secretary for 10 years.”

Throughout the year, the YMI sponsors and hosts a number of events. Many of these are for YMI membership, in keeping with organization goals, but many are also open to others.

“Last year, for example, we presented more than \$17,000 in scholarships to Catholic students ranging from elementary school to high school to college,” Mike says.

The brothers meet at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Green Room at St. Cecilia. There are various levels of membership, beginning with junior YMI members who can join at age 13. Thus, current membership ranges in age from 13 to 97.

“Our annual Jim Calabretta Essay Contest is currently underway,”



Some of the top winners from each division of the essay contest — (from left) Francesco Spagnoli (Sts. Peter and Paul School), Mike Amato (President, YMI St. John Bosco Council #613), Christian Bustos (St. Thomas More School), Sophia McMaster (Burlingame High School) and Krystal Cheng (UCLA).

Mike says. “This year, we received 14 essays from college students, 20 from high school students, and 33 from middle school students. On April 14, we will be hosting an awards banquet at Sts. Peter and

Paul’s Church, where we will issue 50 scholarship awards totaling \$17,000! So, save the date and plan to attend! Last year, we estimate that we donated more than \$40,000 to worthy causes.”

While any YMI Council #613 brother can help to provide you information about the YMI, the following brothers can provide you an application form and can answer specific questions about our organization:

*Mike Amato, President — 650-871-9164
Cosmo Amato, Treasurer — 415-392-3560
Mike Dimech, Secretary — 650-589-2111
Fr. Joe Landi, Chaplain — 415-664-8481*

You may find additional information about the YMI online at www.ymiusa.org, or email Mike Amato for more YMI Council #613 information at mamato871@aol.com.

Steadfast in Faith and Devotion St. Catherine of Siena

On April 29, we celebrate the feast day of a doctor of the Church — one who remained absolutely devoted to living her life for Christ, even in the face of familial misunderstanding in her youth, and through societal opposition and turmoil during her later years. As stewards in our fast-paced, highly technical — and often fractured — world, we can always look to the life and example of St. Catherine of Siena, and strive to remain steadfast in our faith while facing our own modern-day challenges.

Born in mid 14th century Italy to a large family, and in the midst of a plague outbreak, St. Catherine of Siena was her parents' 25th child, although half of her siblings did not survive through childhood. Young Catherine resisted her family's desire for her to marry — she even went so far as to begin fasting and cutting her hair short in protest. Her parents eventually relented, as Catherine strived to humbly serve her own family, treating her own father as Jesus, her mother as Mary, and her brothers as the apostles.

Such was Catherine's desire to remain in service to her own family that instead of entering a convent, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic at age 18. This enabled her to continue serving her family at home, even as she was part of a religious society. In time, she learned to read and began giving her family's own possessions to those in need — even though her parents didn't necessarily approve of her entirely altruistic approach to service.

Continuing with her faithful devotion as part of the Third Order of St. Dominic, Catherine developed a following of her own, as she wrote letters offering spiritual encouragement and instruction. Controversy would ensue, as her writings began to comment on public matters through her firm lens of faith.

In the midst of these spiritual developments, at age 21, Catherine underwent a profound change, as she experienced what she called her "mystical marriage to Christ." Through this experience, she was directed to help the poor and the sick.

Catherine began serving those in need in hospitals and homes, which inspired followers to assist in these important missions of service, love and mercy.

Furthermore, she continued to comment on public matters, petitioning for peace in the midst of political fracture and strife. This continued through the Great Schism, beginning in 1378, as Catherine spent two years — the last years of her life — in Rome, praying and pleading for unity in the Church, and for the cause of Pope Urban VI.

By January 1380, Catherine was gravely ill, unable to eat or drink — shortly thereafter, she lost the use of her legs. At only 33 years old, she would pass away on April 29, 1380. She was canonized nearly a century later, in 1461.

Despite her short life, St. Catherine of Siena made a profound impact on the Church through her spiritually direct writings, her work serving those in need, and in preserving the unity of the Church in the face of great societal upheavals — all while being singularly devoted to living a life for Christ. Her status led her to be declared a co-patron of Italy (alongside St. Francis of Assisi) in 1939. And in 1970, Pope Paul VI declared St. Catherine of Siena a doctor of the Church.



Baptismal Preparation Class Offers Guidance and Support

New parents and prospective godparents can find guidance for their upcoming faith responsibilities by attending one of our monthly Baptismal Preparation classes, offered at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday in the Collins Center.

Fr. Michael Liliedahl leads the sessions that are open to not only our parishioners, but also to prospective godparents from other parishes.

“We are happy to welcome them,” Fr. Michael says.

The preparation class is required of parents and godparents who will be welcoming a new child into their lives. The class will cover what the Sacrament of Baptism will mean to the child.

“Baptism is when a child is spiritually adopted by God, into the Family of God,” Fr. Michael says. “The Church pledges support to the child, parents and godparents. The child has its Original Sin washed away, and the child is restored to its original holiness and welcomed into the Family of God.”

For the parents and godparents, Baptism means they are not alone in having Christian witness.

“They have the whole Church and the parish with them in helping the child grow in their faith,” Fr. Michael says.

During the class, the message Fr. Michael hopes to impart is that Baptism is the beginning of the child’s spiritual life. The real work for the parents, godparents and the child begins with actually living the Christian life after Baptism. The godparents are in a supporting role for the parents in helping the child live a Christian life.

“As the child grows older, the godparents can provide support that the parents may not be able to,” Fr. Michael says. “The child may feel more comfortable speaking to his or her godparents about some things.”

There are a number of things parents and godparents

Anyone with questions about the Baptismal Preparation Class may call the church office at 415-664-8481. No registration is necessary.



can do to promote the child’s faith formation.

“They can try to live the faith themselves, which is more than anything they say or do,” Fr. Michael says. “The way they live their lives is the biggest testimony to the child. The best thing is to live their own lives in accordance with the Gospel.”

While the Church recommends that a child be baptized as soon as possible after birth, Fr. Michael says he usually sees children being baptized anywhere from a couple weeks after birth to six to seven months after — and sometimes longer. There usually are between four to five Baptisms per month here at St. Cecilia.

Our custom for Baptisms is to conduct them after Mass on Sunday so the family has its own ceremony.

“[Parents and godparents] can try to live the faith themselves, which is more than anything they say or do. The way they live their lives is the biggest testimony to the child. The best thing is to live their own lives in accordance with the Gospel.” — Fr. Michael Liliedahl

St. Cecilia Catholic Church

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For Patricia Barsotti, Discovering St. Cecilia Opened Many Doors

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big," Patricia says. "During the day, I often thank Him, or when something comes up, ask, 'Can you give me a good answer?'

"If somebody was around here, they'd think I was nuts for talking to myself, but I'm talking to God," she adds, smiling.

Patricia is also grateful for the support and community that she and Gene have developed over the years at St. Cecilia.

"If you're not there or your husband's not there, someone will say, 'Is everything all right?'" she says. "You may not even know their last names, but you see them and you know them, and you miss them if they're not there. It's amazing, when my husband was sick, and several years back when I was, how many people were concerned. There's a lot of compassion and concern among the parishioners."

She encourages others to find ways to become involved.

"There are so many diverse things that go on at St. Cecilia's — there's something for everybody," Patricia says. "There are so many programs. The parish as a whole is very warm and accessible.

"When you do some of the extra activities, you get back twice as much as you put in to it," she adds. "You meet nice people and lifelong friends, and it's very rewarding. You definitely get more out of it than you'd ever think."

Discovering the community of St. Cecilia's 25 years ago certainly opened many wonderful doors for Patricia and Gene.

"It opened a lot of doors for us that we were very grateful for," Patricia says.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 5:00 p.m. (Vigil Mass) **Sunday:** 7:30, 9:30 (Family Mass), & 11:30 a.m.

Weekdays: 7:00, 9:00 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.

Reconciliation (Confessions): Saturday, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.