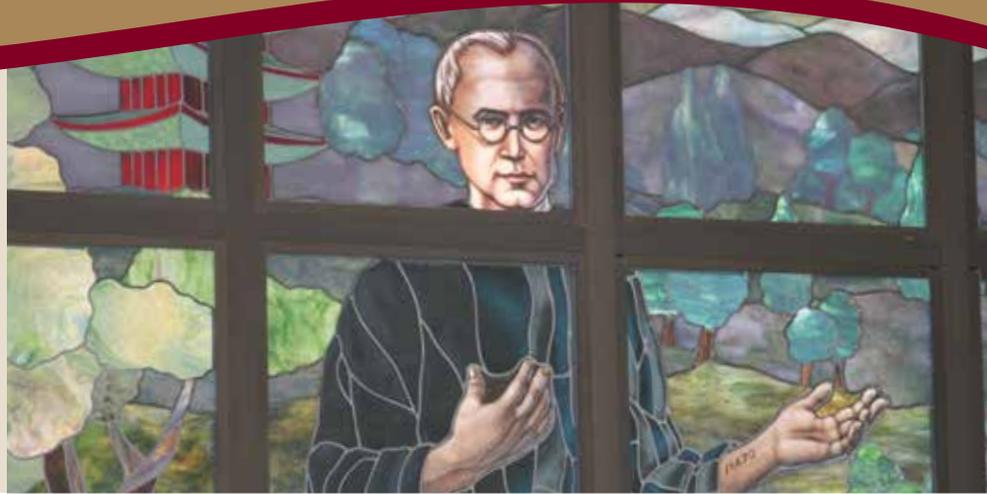


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Being the Face of Christ to Those in Need

Sometimes, good things begin with a few simple, thought-provoking questions. What more can we do for our fellow brothers and sisters? How can we show others we care? How can we assist our pastor in ministering to everyone? A few years ago, the parish attempted to find an answer to these questions through the Stephen Ministry. Trained Stephen Ministers – ordinary parishioners such as Laura Turco, Marilyn Adams, Cathy Burton, Paula Fogt, and Chuck Michael – have answered the call to bring the presence of Christ to those in need.

“With the Stephen Ministry, ministers participate in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy through visitation and spiritual companionship,” says Chuck Michael, ministry coordinator. “The seeds of faith that Stephen Ministers offer by meeting once a week with a care receiver promotes healing while one is going through a difficult season of life. During these confidential meetings, hope endures and good works happen through the lay-caring relationship.”

Inspired by St. Stephen, the Stephen Ministry involves training and organizing lay persons to provide one-on-one care to people going through a difficult situation such as divorce, terminal illness, loneliness, or grief. Of course, members of the parish clergy do a wonderful job ministering to these needs. Sometimes, however, there are so many needs within a parish community that they can't possibly help everyone. The Stephen Ministry relies on trained individuals, parish staff, and lay leaders from the community to fill this gap.

“St. Teresa of Avila reminds us that we are called to be the hands and feet of Christ here on this earth, and why



*Commissioning of the Stephen Ministers Class of 2015.
The Commissioning of the Class of 2016 for Stephen Leaders and
Ministers will be at the noon Mass on Sunday, September 25.*

else are we here if not to help one another?” Paula Fogt says. “A lot of people are hurting, and sometimes the pain gets in the way so much so that they forget there is another way to feel. And that’s what a Stephen Minister does – reminds people God is there for them, He is still here, and that His love can be part of the healing.”

But training doesn’t happen overnight. Chuck explains that Stephen Ministers attend 50 hours of training and that the program is thorough – covering skills such as the art of listening, feelings, distinctively Christian caring, maintaining boundaries, assertiveness, and crisis intervention. Once training is complete, a Stephen Minister, or caregiver, is then commissioned to offer

continued on page 3

The MODERN SAINT

A Letter From Our Pastor



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP – Part Three

“We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern.” – Pope Francis, homily at the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Vatican City, Sept. 16, 2013

My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

As I shared with you in my pastor’s letter in both the March 2016 and June 2016 *Modern Saint* newsletters (which you can re-read on our website, www.saint-max.org), voting is one of the many responsibilities and duties we have in exercising our citizenship. As Catholic Christians, exercising this right takes on a unique dimension – we have to have *well-formed* consciences and be *well informed* about all the issues. In Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is virtuous, and participation in our democratic process is a serious obligation. Most Catholics participate in this process primarily (but not exclusively) by voting, but continual advocacy for just laws and policies is also fundamental to this participation.

Since 1975, the Catholic bishops of the United States have approved statements about *faithful citizenship*. This year is no different, as our bishops are offering to us once again the document titled *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. (To learn more about this document – available in both English and Spanish – and learn more about the political responsibility of Catholics, please visit the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.usccb.org.) This statement represents the teaching of our bishops in guiding Catholics to form our consciences in accord with Catholic teaching as we

prepare to exercise our civic rights and duties as participants in our democracy.

We here at St. Max have plans to cooperate in this effort this fall. For the seven weeks prior to the general election, we will zero in every week on a different social teaching of the Church. Catholic Social Teaching is an indispensable element of the Faith, based on our realization that every human being is made in God’s image and likeness. This recognition of the value of others, and our call to help the less fortunate, is based in the message of Jesus to love one another as God has loved us. We plan to follow this schema:

- Week 1 – Sept. 25 – *Dignity of Work and the Right of Workers*
- Week 2 – Oct. 2 – *Life and Dignity of the Human Person*
- Week 3 – Oct. 9 – *Solidarity*
- Week 4 – Oct. 16 – *Rights and Responsibilities*
- Week 5 – Oct. 23 – *Family, Community, and Participation*
- Week 6 – Oct. 30 – *Care for God’s Creation*
- Week 7 – Nov. 6 – *Poor and Vulnerable*

We will also reproduce in the bulletin any flyers from the Catholic Conference of Ohio regarding statewide issues.

All of these resources and efforts – nationally, state-wide and parochially – are not intended to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. The Church does not endorse any political party or individual candidates. The Church does lift up her teachings so that the faithful can form their consciences on issues and candidates' stances so that we cast informed votes.

And finally, prayer is always at the foundation of all we do and all we are as Catholics, not just in preparation for an election, but each and every day of our lives. *"Let us pray for leaders that they govern us well. That they bring our homeland, our nations, our world, forward, to achieve peace and the common good... [Help] us to better participate*

in the common life of a people: those who govern, with the service of humility and love, and the governed, with participation, and especially prayer" (Pope Francis, Sept. 16, 2013).

All are encouraged to take these next several weeks to become better formed and better informed as we prepare to vote this year and for years to come.

God bless one and all!



Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor

IN GOD WE TRUST

The Stephen Ministry *continued from front cover*

confidential, one-to-one care to a care receiver experiencing a life challenge. It is important to note that the caregivers are not counselors, but are trained caregivers whose role is to listen, to care, to console, and to pray with and for the care receiver.

"The training is very extensive," says Stephen Minister Laura Turco. "I remember at one point – between the class meetings, homework, and reading – wondering what in the world I had I gotten myself into. But I knew it was a good fit for me, and so I always found the time. And I'm so grateful I did. Being a Stephen Minister has given me the opportunity to see the power of prayer at work. I have witnessed miracles."

Everyone who steps forward to work with this ministry does so after much prayer and discernment. In many ways, it is truly a calling. Some Stephen Ministers feel called to share their skills, some have retired and are looking for ways to give back, and some have been on the receiving end of the ministry and now want to pay it forward.

"Twenty-five years ago, I was living in Rochester, N.Y., when there was a crisis in my life," Cathy Burton says. "But I was blessed to belong to a parish that had a Stephen Ministry, so when someone asked if I wanted to meet with a Stephen Minister, I agreed. It was so helpful to be able to talk to someone and have that person pray with me and for me. I especially liked that it was Christ-centered. I could have found help in a clinical setting, but my faith was important to me and I knew it would be

part of my healing. And having personally experienced the healing that can come through this ministry, when I heard they were bringing a Stephen Ministry to St. Max, I just knew I had to sign up."

Finally, the underlying principle of the Stephen Ministry is acknowledging that while ministers provide the *care*, it is God who provides the *cure* – that is, only through the transforming power of God's love can a person journey from brokenness to wholeness.

"As a Stephen Minister, I am not doing this by myself," Marilyn Adams says. "I am constantly praying to God asking what He wants me to do and say when I meet with my care receiver. It's His work being done, and I'm just helping."

The Stephen Ministry is about loving care and mercy. Please consider taking to prayerful discernment if the Holy Spirit is calling you to serve the parish and utilize your gifts by bringing Christ's presence to another. Our application process to be a Stephen Minister begins Sept. 15 and training begins in January 2017. For more information, please contact Chuck Michael at stephenministry@saint-max.org

YEAR OF *Counsel the*



“The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2447). Throughout the Holy Year of Mercy, each month a work of mercy will be highlighted for both reflection and action.

Counseling the doubtful, a spiritual work of mercy, is an act of love to help others to be certain about what they should do to know, love and serve God. At first glance, counseling the doubtful may seem rather similar to last month’s highlighted work of mercy instructing the ignorant. Even though counseling may involve some aspect of teaching (such as providing information and perspective), teaching has learning as its goal, while counseling aims to assist with decision making. In reality, counseling the doubtful is spiritually akin to feeding the physically hungry.

@ St. Max

*Do you feel run down or discouraged?
Are you anxious or worried about the future?
Are you suffering from an addiction or low self-esteem?
Is your marriage or family in crisis?
Do you have an unplanned pregnancy?
Do you want someone to talk to?*

Everyone most likely has struggled at one time or another with emotional difficulties related to stress, family relationships, parenting, behavioral problems, self-esteem, addiction, or grief and loss. Sometimes these challenges may become so serious or unmanageable that the benefit and experience from talking with a professional counselor becomes the best option a person can exercise.

Even though not a specific parish ministry, living and witnessing their trifold mission to enlighten, serve and empower, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio (as a department of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati) has highly trained and licensed counselors, social workers, and a psychiatrist who can help manage and navigate through various life issues. CCSWO strives

to help clients achieve improved mental health and family relationships. Providing highly individualized care, they strive to strengthen our community one individual, couple or family at a time.

CCSWO serves people of all faiths and income levels. They accept some major insurance providers, Medicaid and offer a sliding scale fee for those without insurance. They offer individual, couple, family and group counseling, as well as in-home counseling for older adults or physically disabled individuals.

CCSWO partners with Gate of Heaven Cemetery for those grieving and Project Rachel for post-abortion care for women.

To learn more about CCSWO’s services and locations, you can call 866-635-9716 for a confidential appointment. You can also complete an online referral and someone will call you back. Go to <https://www.ccswoh.org/services/counseling/>. Evening appointments and Spanish-speaking counselors are available. The closest CCSWO offices to Liberty Township are in Cincinnati (7162 Reading Rd., Suite 600, 513-241-7745) and in Hamilton (1910 Fairgrove Ave., 513-863-6129).

MERCY

Doubtful

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE – SEPTEMBER 2016

Individual Confessions

Thursday mornings after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

Thursday evenings at 6 p.m.

Saturday mornings after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

Saturday afternoons at 3 p.m.

@ Home

You can best prepare to offer counsel by first attending to your own spiritual growth and development.

- Take advantage of the sacraments.
- Explore personal prayer and meditation.
- Increase your knowledge of our faith and its traditions.
- Pray for persons who are confused about what they should do next.

Everyone has moments of doubt in their faith journey. Nevertheless, we should always remember that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and turn to Him along our journey.

Has someone asked you for advice? Orient your response to Christ.

- Accompany a friend who is struggling with the decision to join a parish group for service or faith formation.
- Share a book you found useful in dealing with life's challenges.
- Invite a person to pray with you, perhaps even inviting them to Sunday Mass.
- When someone comes to you for advice or just to talk about a problem, say a silent prayer to Jesus asking for His help for you to be a good listener and to offer good suggestions.
- Parents – guide your children, by word and example, in making moral decisions.
- Take time for a short heart-to-heart talk to build up the confidence of someone filled with self-doubt.



A SAINT of MERCY – St. Dymphna

St. Dymphna lived in the seventh century, the daughter of the pagan Irish king Damon and his Christian wife. At age 14, she consecrated herself to Christ and took a vow of chastity. Shortly thereafter, her mother died. Damon loved his wife deeply, and after her death his mental health sharply deteriorated. Eventually, the king's counsellors pressed Damon to remarry; he reluctantly agreed, but only on the condition that his new bride would be as beautiful as his deceased wife. After searching fruitlessly, Damon began to desire his daughter because of her strong resemblance to her mother. When Dymphna learned of her father's intentions she swore again to her vow of chastity, fled his court and sailed towards the European continent, eventually landing in present-day Belgium. The widespread renown of her generosity (one tradition says she supported the building of a hospice for the poor and sick) enabled her father to ascertain her whereabouts. Her father Damon traveled to Dymphna to bring her back to Ireland. When she resisted his advances, he drew his sword and struck off his own daughter's head. According to tradition, those with epilepsy, mental illness or "under evil influence," and who visited Dymphna's grave, were miraculously cured. Thus, she is invoked as patroness against mental illness. Her feast day is May 15.

Welcoming the Littlest Ones Our Parish Nursery



Amie Lee reading to children in the nursery

When we consider how we can personify the stewardship pillar of hospitality, many different things come to mind – introducing oneself to someone new at Mass; welcoming families staying at the parish through the Family Promise Ministry; sitting with someone you don't know at a pancake breakfast. However, here at St. Max, we want to make sure hospitality begins right from the start, welcoming our smallest parishioners.

Charlotte Flanagan, who directs our Early Childhood Program and coordinates our parish nursery, hopes that through the ministry of the parish nursery, children will experience hospitality from the parish from the beginning.

"We want them, at the earliest ages, to be comfortable in the church," Charlotte says.

The parish nursery, which officially re-opened in March, serves children ages 6 months through 3 years,

and is available at the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Sunday Masses. This ministry, available every Sunday – with the exception of holidays – is run by volunteers who choose to serve the parish in this way.

"The people who are volunteering are there because they *want* to be," Charlotte says, emphasizing that anyone can drop off their children during Mass without feeling an obligation to volunteer in the nursery.

The nursery gives children an opportunity to experience a fun, safe and loving environment, helping to create positive memories of their first experience of our parish, and of the Church. Whether they're playing with a manger scene, listening to a story from a children's Bible, or just being rocked in a chair by a caring volunteer, the nursery allows children to experience at a young age the love of God through others.

"I want all the children to feel very welcomed and very loved," Charlotte says.

Volunteer Amie Lee has an 18-month-old daughter who benefits from this ministry, and Amie has been surprised by how much of a blessing it's been to both of them.

"I really, really love it – I didn't know how much I would love it," she says. "It's a way of meeting parish families that I wouldn't necessarily have met. Seeing how [the kids] interact and play together, it's so much fun."

Amie has also found that serving the children has deepened her relationship with God.

"In the Gospels, 'Let the little

children come to me,' and 'having faith like a child' – those are some of my favorite verses, and we get to see that every Sunday, and it's awesome," Amie says. "It helps you simplify and refocus on the simple things. When you step back, this is what it's about, these little beings God created. It's pretty awesome."

Amie is also glad that her daughter is finding a sense of "home" at the parish, before she is even 2 years old.

"One of the reasons I bring [my daughter] is because our church is so big, but having connections and getting involved at an early age, I think it's so important," she adds, "It's really a second family for us. The more people we can meet, it's just extending that family for us."

Charlotte encourages those who might not have previously utilized the nursery to come check it out.

"I challenge anyone to come down and see what we offer children in the nursery," Charlotte says. "They're learning about Jesus and the Gospel at an age-appropriate level. The nursery is where it starts."



The "kitchen" area of the nursery

If you have questions or would like more information on the nursery, or would like to get involved by volunteering, please contact Charlotte Flanagan at cflanagan@saint-max.org or 513-777-4322, ext. 129. All volunteers are trained through the VIRTUS program to ensure a safe environment for all the children we serve.

The nursery is located in the Fr. Porter Family Life Complex. There is no cost for families to utilize the services provided by the nursery. The nursery is also open for various other parish events. For more information, contact Charlotte Flanagan.



Sixth through eighth-grade students embodied their faith by hosting a Merciful March Fun Fair to benefit Children's Hospital. They raised money to buy books and pajamas for Emergency Room patients.



First through third-grade RFY students flying kites as part of their lesson about the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.



Living out their faith through service, fourth and fifth-grade RFY students held a bake sale during the St. Max Fish Fry to support four parish families who either have a loved one battling cancer or are a family of a deployed soldier.

Bringing Faith Into the “Real World”

RELIGIOUS FORMATION OF YOUTH CLASSROOM PROGRAM

In today's culture, it can be particularly difficult for young people to find the correlation between the faith they encounter both at church and home, and the experiences of their everyday life. Surrounded by ever-expanding forms of media and endless peer pressure, many of our youth feel caught between two seemingly separate lives. This makes our children's faith formation all the more important as we seek to bridge the gap, helping to make faith both a relevant and intricate part of everyday living.

“Faith formation helps us to integrate the knowledge of Scripture and Church teaching with our life and culture,” says Mary Lou Baker, Coordinator of Religious Formation of Youth, or RFY. “It provides a Catholic lens through which we can examine the broader world with others who hold a set of common values.”

Mindful of this, St. Max's RFY Classroom program is designed to help support parents in their vital role of forming saints and new leaders of God's Church. Mary Lou describes the program as a “training ground for learning,” where each child learns how he or she “fits into God's plan.” As such, the program puts great emphasis on each child's unique calling, seeking to provide frequent opportunities for students to encounter Christ on a personal and real level.

“One of the many advantages of faith formation is that it provides a structured environment where students work alongside their peers and the parish community to develop and nourish their ultimate calling as disciples,” Mary Lou says. “It is a place where they explore the presence of

God in their daily lives and learn how the liturgy and the sacraments transform us all into images of Christ.”

In a concrete way, this is done through the weekly classes attended by roughly 350 youth in first through eighth grades as they ponder, discuss and encounter together their Catholic faith. Parents have the option of enrolling their children for classes on Monday evenings either from 5:15-6:30 p.m. or from 6:45-8 p.m. during the school year. A third option is also available exclusively for fourth through eighth-graders on Sunday evenings from 6-7:15 p.m. Using the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* faith formation program, these classes center on the liturgical year using the Sunday Gospel as their main focus.

“Each lesson flows from the words of Jesus Christ,” Mary Lou says. “This allows children to learn their faith – including instructions on doctrines, sacraments, commandments, and prayer – within the rhythm and seasons of the liturgical year, encouraging a growing participation in the life of the parish community.”

Yet, to truly make faith relevant to our youth's daily lives, we must go beyond mere instruction. This is why here at St. Max, our RFY Classroom Program works to provide its students with ample opportunities to personally experience the beauty and richness of the Catholic faith. This is accomplished through service projects and, perhaps most effectively of all, through Eucharistic Adoration, provided monthly for all grades.

“In order to grow spiritually, we believe that the interior life needs silence and intimacy with Jesus,” Mary Lou

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RELIGIOUS FORMATION *continued from page 7*

says. “During adoration, the students are able to actually *feel* the presence of Jesus instead of just reading about feeling His Presence from a textbook.”

The fruits of this time alone, explains Mary Lou, have been abundant for all age levels. It allows young children to open their hearts to Jesus; it helps increase their desire to receive Jesus in the form of Holy

Communion; it allows older students to form a true friendship with Christ, drawing strength from Him and becoming increasingly open to His plan for their life.

So, whether in the classroom, engaging in special service projects, or through devotions like Eucharistic Adoration, the RFY program at St. Max truly takes a holistic approach to forming our young disciples.

For additional information on this program, either to enroll your child or to get involved as a volunteer, please contact Mary Lou Baker at 513-777-4322, ext. 120 or mbaker@saint-max.org.

*Have you moved, or do you have a new phone number or new email address?
Please contact the office at 777-4322 ext. 101 or culm@saint-max.org to give us an update!*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sat. Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sun.:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. | **Mon. - Sat.:** 8:30 a.m.
Sacrament of Penance: Saturdays after the 8:30 a.m. Mass & 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.,
Thursdays after the 8:30 a.m. Mass & 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.