



APRIL 2020

WICHITA, KANSAS

## SFA uses online outreach during pandemic

During this unprecedented time in history, St. Francis – like many other churches – is in a unique position. Although public Masses are canceled for the time being, and all on-campus events have been canceled or postponed, St. Francis is able to reach parishioners online through various media.

St. Francis has many platforms available to communicate to parishioners – its website, social media, livestream videos, audio recordings, email, and more. The “COVID-19: Updates for St. Francis” page, linked on the homepage of [stfranciswichita.com](http://stfranciswichita.com), garnered more than 2,600 views in the first week after Masses were canceled. That page is the source of the most up-to-date information on the current situation.

Also linked on St. Francis’ website homepage are online

homilies from Fr. Jarrod and the occasional guest. Among other messages, Fr. Jarrod shared a message to young people, and Fr.



*The Patterson family gathers in their living room for a livestream Sunday Mass on the SFA YouTube channel.*

Isaac shared recommendations on forming a daily prayer routine and creating a home altar (if you missed it online, see page 4 of this issue).

To sign up to receive these homilies, reflections and tips to grow spiritually via email, visit [stfranciswichita.flocknote.com/MessagesfromFath](http://stfranciswichita.flocknote.com/MessagesfromFath).

St. Francis has been live-streaming Masses and

other services via its YouTube channel. You can find it at [www.youtube.com/c/StFrancisofAssisiCatholicChurchWichitaKs](http://www.youtube.com/c/StFrancisofAssisiCatholicChurchWichitaKs) or by searching “St. Francis of Assisi - Wichita, KS” on YouTube. The channel also includes video messages from parish priests and staff; for example, Fr. Drew did a video about spiritual communion.

Meanwhile, St. Francis School transitioned to continuous learning – a blend of online activities, teacher calls and assignments to work on at home – after spring break.

Although school looks a lot different these days, one part of the day was not lost in transition: receptionist Julie Owen’s daily announcements. Before the school building had to close for the pandemic, Owen announced birthdays and led prayer over the loudspeaker each school day. Now, she continues this tradition by recording morning and afternoon announcements for families to play at home.

*Online outreach ... cont. on p.6*

# Focus on what you know until we meet again

I am sitting here in church, social distancing of course, in the middle of Holy Week. It's quiet now and I miss all of you. I miss the daily Mass goers. I miss the families at Coffee & Rolls. I miss the long lines for Holy Communion at Sunday Mass. These are scary, confusing times, and maybe it can make us question what we know.

As I sit here, I know that we have a beautiful church with glorious stained-glass windows. Our pipe organ, statues and crucifix all adorn the rocks and stones that accent our walls and make up this space that we have worshipped in since it was built in 1977. I know that St. Francis is much more than a building of rocks and stones. I know the good stewards, the good people of St. Francis made this a holy place, holy ground.

I know that I have great confidence in our parish family. I know that I will never forget the trials of Easter 2020 and the separation and isolation we felt in not being together. I also know that we long



to be together again. I know that I will never again take for granted all the kids singing "Sanctuary" at an All School Mass. I know that I will have tears of joy when we are all back together to pray the Prayer of St. Francis after each Mass.

And I know that I will try my best to never take for granted, Lord, your presence in Holy Communion when I receive you.

I encourage you to think about the things you know and your prayers that you will take away from this Easter season 2020. We are a stewardship people!

May the Lord bless you and keep you safe. This church of ours is holy ground – not because of the rocks and stones, but because of you.

We miss you. We will see you soon. St Francis, pray for us.

## Master Facilities Plan is on hold

In my article in March 2020, I said that we were going to present a Master Facilities Plan to the diocese. Due to COVID-19 and the accompanying changes to our current operations, we have made the decision to delay the submission of our Master Facilities Plan to the diocese.

The Operations Council still believes that these facility improvements are vital to our long-term health as a parish. The Council will continue to monitor our financial status and determine when will be the correct time to move forward with our Master Plan and these needed improvements to our campus grounds.

– Pat Burns,

Director of Stewardship & Finance

## FUNERALS

**Helen Damm**, wife of Larry, mother of Paul, Kevin and David, March 2

**Maynard Reid**, husband of Mary Lou Reid, father of Chrissy Elson and Scott Reid, March 6

**Rachel Little**, mother of Marilyn Malakar, Susan Vancadsand and David Little, March 9

**Troy Horine**, brother of Connie Schlegel, March 13

**Ann O'Toole**, wife of Daniel, mother of Lori O'Toole Buselt, Jennifer Snyder, Amanda Mason and Shawn O'Toole, March 15

**Clarence Cox**, father of Richard Cox and cousin of Gayle Graf, March 15

**Patricia Turner**, mother of Bernice Lenczuk, Charlene Denton, Ann Turner, Mark Turner and Marty Turner, March 22

## NEW PARISHIONERS

**Tania Soto**, 2 children

**Nick and Lisa Gorges**, 2 children

**Tony Rosales**, 1 child

**Joshua and Kaitlin Leonard**, 5 children

**Jeanna Lewis**

## BAPTISMS

**Mia Josephine**, daughter of Evan & Devona Lies, March 1

**Izaac Daniel**, son of Clay & Andrea Law, March 8

**Mariska Ann**, daughter of Clay & Andrea Law, March 8

## Stewardship Thought

*"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1*

*God our Father, You are always so faithful. I believe You will do what You say You will, even when I don't understand the circumstances around me. I know You are still at work in my life.*

# Having had our fill of bad surprises, how about a good one for a change?

Have you ever been traipsing along deep in thought, focused more on your thoughts than what is happening around you? I'd bet nearly everyone has done this. I'd also bet that on at least a few occasions when you've done this, somebody said "Hi" to you, and because you were off in another place in your mind the greeting startled you.

One step you were noodling over or solving a dilemma or issue in your life, and the next step you were startled back to earth, so to speak.

I've experienced such a surprise greeting myself a few times like this. The most memorable one – and my most ungraceful reaction to it – involved a time I was walking, deep in thought while carrying a fresh cup of hot coffee. I rounded a corner and a friendly person said "Hi" to me; in my startled state, I launched the coffee. The cup didn't leave my hand, but most of the coffee left the cup – straight up – and then all over the floor. Luckily, not much of it landed on me or my friendly greeter.

During this viral pandemic we have a lot on our minds. Who would've

ever thought just a few short weeks ago we'd ever see the following: No March Madness; NBA season suspended; River Fest taking its



only pause in its half-century tradition; and the baseball season in serious peril?

More importantly, we find ourselves plunged into the depths of the most uncertain and painful times in recent memory. People have been ordered to remain home. Families, businesses and schools have scrambled to face challenges many have never experienced in their lifetimes. People are being laid off from work. Masses are suspended. Lives are being lost. People are coming to grips with very real impacts and needs as we all face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, you're likely traipsing around with your mind occupied with many things. If you were to receive a surprise greeting out of the blue, you'd be forgiven for perhaps being a bit startled by it. At the risk of ruining the surprise, I'm writing to let you know you may indeed receive such a warm greeting.

Back in the summer of 2017, various stewards of the parish took on the task of personally visiting the homes of parishioners. This was part of the Faith Forward process in which the parish strove to discern its long-term needs and priorities, and in doing so, feedback from all was solicited.

Today, we've asked many of these same parish stewards to reach out by phone to all of you. A phone call from one brother or sister in Christ, to another, simply to say "Hi" and make sure folks are doing ok. This pandemic provides an opportunity for the strong spirit of community in our parish to be used to help our brothers and sisters in Christ face the needs before them. Reach out to one another. Love one another. Things might be upside down right now, but our love of neighbor continues, and will help all of us retain the strong community that is St. Francis.

My apologies if I've ruined any surprise, but perhaps I've mitigated the risk of flying coffee.

– Travis Pearson,  
Parish Life Administrator

## The Vernacular

This monthly newsletter is published by and for the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. It is normally mailed to each registered parish household by the end of each month. It can also be emailed to parishioners upon request.

To submit articles, high-resolution photos or story ideas, send an email to [sfavernacular@gmail.com](mailto:sfavernacular@gmail.com). Deadlines are the 10th of each month. Contacts for the Vernacular are news editor Lanette Belton, 722-3952, and copy editor Ann Walden, 249-2430. New volunteers are always welcome.



# Create home prayer altar, rule of life

The following is an excerpt from Fr. Isaac's guide, a complete copy of which is available on the parish website. In response to Father's suggestions, several parishioners have set up altars in their homes and shared photos with us via social media; see accompanying photos.

In Psalm 46, God invites us to stop to recognize his presence in our midst:

*"Be still and know that I am God, exalted over nations, exalted over earth! The Lord of hosts is with us:*

*the God of Jacob is our stronghold." (Ps 46:11-12)*

God asks us to keep ourselves still; he does not impose it. He wants us to stop before him and remain freely, by choice, that is, with love. He does not stop us like the police who arrest a fugitive delinquent. He wants us to stop as one stops before a beloved person, or how one stops before the tender beauty of a newborn who sleeps, or at a sunset or a work of art that fills us with wonder and silence. God asks us to stop in recognition that, for us, his presence fills the whole universe, is the most important thing in life, which nothing can exceed.

"To stop before God means to recognize that his presence fills the instant and thus fully satisfies our heart, in whatever circumstance and condition we find ourselves." – Fr. Mauro-Giuseppe Lepori

## Set up home prayer altar

In addition to the dinner table (another altar of the domestic church), it is a good idea at all times – but even more so during the current stay-at-home time – to have a prayer altar in your home. You do not have to be living with family to do this. If you do live with family, consider also creating altars in your individual bedrooms.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches on the importance

of a home altar: The most appropriate places for prayer are personal or family oratories (CCC 2696). For personal prayer, this can be a "prayer corner" with the Sacred Scriptures and icons, in order to be there, in secret, before our Father. In a Christian family, this kind of little oratory fosters prayer in common (CCC 2691).



*Tips for creating your own altars:*

- Keep it simple.
- Place the altar in a prominent place in your house.
- Push a small table against the wall and cover it with a beautiful sheet or fabric.
- Place on the table a crucifix or holy image, a bible, real flowers and a candle.

## Create family rule of life

Your daily schedule should be supported by moments of prayer, like "telephone wires supported by utility poles every few hundred yards," recommends Fr. Jose Medina.

Return to your prayer altar at these daily moments of prayer. At your altar, the family will stop before God and "recognize that His presence fills the instant and thus fully satisfies our heart," Medina said.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School sent out a fine proposal for a daily schedule. A common rhythm of the day can be supported by "Come Holy Spirit, come thru Mary" as you rise, the Angelus three times a day before meals, the rosary after dinner, and the Memorare before going to sleep.

Or, you can join us five priests in the rectory from your home for the Morning and Evening prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours, at 8:15 a.m. and 5:45 p.m.

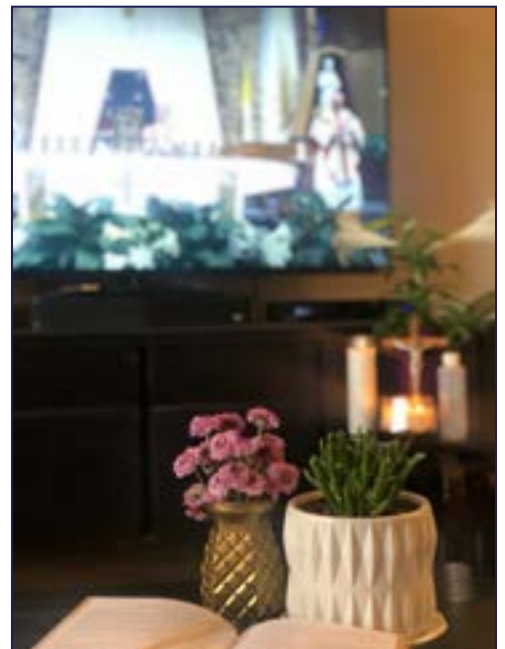
All this prayer can be done at the

sacred space of your home prayer altar.

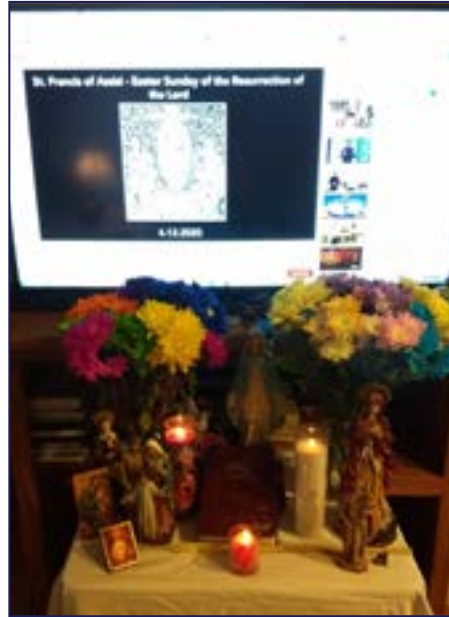
Eat all your meals together as a whole family, sharing thanksgivings for where each of you saw His presence today. Take care of the home together. Schedule plenty of time for personal silence and prayer; schedule plenty of time to be outside, together, being creative; schedule the limited times to use screens – ask yourself multiple times a day, "Am I using this screen to escape or distract myself from what is happening before me?"

We have been given this time to be with those given to us, those right in front of us, not to live in Zoom. Things will fall apart – make the family agreement to regularly forgive and ask for forgiveness. Ask for grace at your prayer altar.

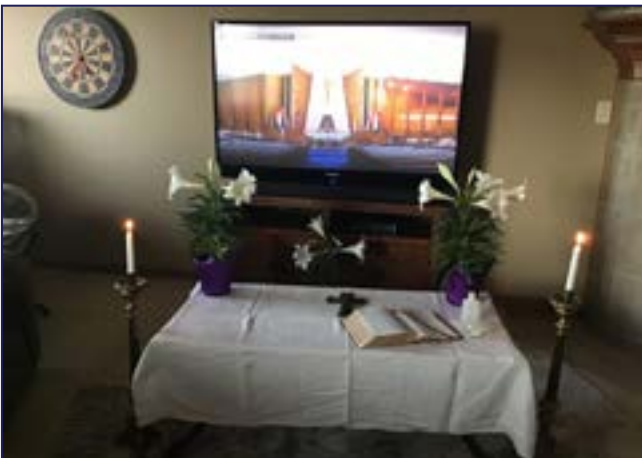
*We have all been forced to stop, dear Lord, we accept the opportunity you have given us to awaken to the incredible joy that is being together as a family, in the same place, at the same time, undistracted – here is the Kingdom! Mary and Joseph, help us. Be with us. Thank you.*



*Cont. on next page*

*Home prayer altar ... cont. from p.4*

Many parishioners shared with us photos of their home altars; a few examples are shown.



## Stewardship Focus: Pillars of Life

*This is a regular series created by our Stewardship Council, shedding light on the Pillars of Life: service, prayer, formation and hospitality.*

### **Formation**

God gave you wonderful tools and abilities, says St. John Chrysostom, but it's up to you to use them the way God meant them to be used. – "A Year with the Church Fathers" by Mike Aquilina

### **Prayer**

At times we can find prayer distracting, boring or dry. Distractions are normal, We can overcome them by acknowledging the distraction, asking for the grace to focus, and loving more intensely in those moments. Many of the saints struggled with praying being boring or dry. When we find prayer boring or dry, let us remember that God never allows us to endure a period of trial that will not lead to abundant graces. Difficulties strengthen our faith and purify our love.



**Online outreach ... cont. from p. 1**

Patsy Zaruba, school counselor, has provided online resources for parents navigating the current challenges with their children on the school's continuous learning page (linked on the home page of the school site).

Both the church and school have seen an uptick in engagement on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The church accounts – @KSSFACChurch – have become a platform for parishioners to find a sense of community. Posts include information about livestreamed Masses, inspiration from daily Mass readings, and even videos of Seraphina, Fr. Jarrod's Lhasa Apso.

Facebook has the largest audience of the church's social media accounts, with more than 1,600 followers. A Facebook post of the Mass livestream for March 29 amassed 81 comments. One grateful parishioner summed up many of the comments in her sentiment, writing, "We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to watch Mass live from the safety of our home. Thank you to everyone who has made this possible!"

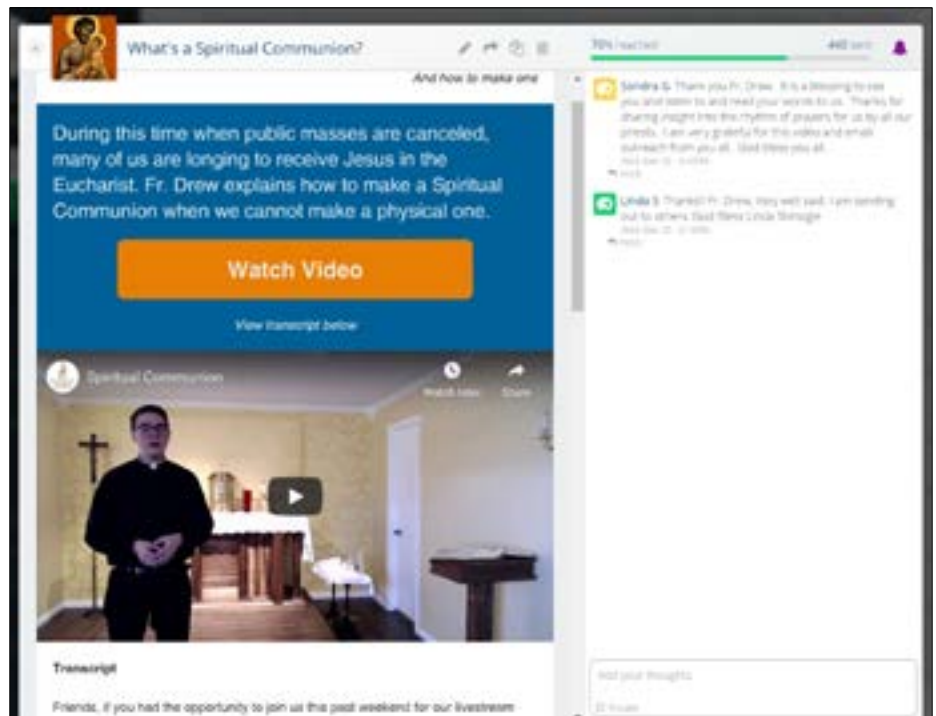
In addition to showcasing photos of students learning at home, the school accounts – @SFAVikings – host weekly family challenges ("Pray a rosary with your family") for parents to document and post.

Although it is difficult not to

be able to gather on the parish campus, St. Francis is staying connected with members. If you haven't already, please connect with the church via its website, social media accounts, and YouTube streams.

Visit [stfranciswichita.com](http://stfranciswichita.com) for the most up-to-date information on the current situation.

– *Rebecca Vodola, Director of Communications and Alumni Relations*



A few examples of our online outreach, including Flocknote (above) and YouTube (below).



# SFA offers convenient online giving options

We are pleased to announce the introduction of our online giving program to provide an electronic option for making regular donations. Through our partnership with Vanco, your donation can now be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit or debit card. Online giving offers convenience for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our parish.

When travel, illness or other circumstances – such as the current pandemic – prevent you from attending Mass, this program can allow for your one-time or weekly donations to continue uninterrupted.

Just go online to [www.stfranciswichita.com/stewardship/online-giving](http://www.stfranciswichita.com/stewardship/online-giving) to set up your account.

Vanco also provides a couple ways to give to the parish using your mobile device. First, you can download the GivePlus app from your app store. Second, you can simply text the dollar amount you'd like to donate to 844-436-6821 (minimum \$3).

With these online and mobile giving options, Vanco matches the contributions to the names or phone numbers in the parish contribution database, making it possible for them to be posted to your giving records. Vanco does charge a small convenience fee for its services; this fee is paid for by the parish and does

not come out of your contribution amount.

Rest assured, you are welcome as always to drop off contributions in the mail slot at the church office or mail them to the church. In addition, the parish continues to offer its weekly or monthly ACH direct option as it has for many years; it is our preferred method vs. the online options but offers less flexibility for the giver.

If you would like assistance or have questions about any of these giving options, please contact me in the church office.

– Pat Burns, Director of Stewardship & Finance

## FINANCIAL REPORT - APRIL 2020

	March	Fiscal YTD*
<b>Contributions Needed</b>		
(5 weeks @ \$ 110,000 per week)	\$ 550,000	
(39 weeks @ \$ 110,000 per week)		\$ 4,290,000
<b>Contributions Received</b>	\$ 439,704	\$ 3,684,472
<b>Contributions Long/(Short)</b>	<b>\$(110,296)</b>	<b>\$ (605,528)</b>
Other Ordinary Receipts (Other Gifts & Misc.)	\$ 18,011	\$ 182,724
Building Fund	\$ 12,492	\$ 175,532
Extraordinary Receipts **	2,703	\$ 92,563
Bequests	\$ -	\$ 30,000
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>\$ 472,910</b>	<b>\$ 4,165,291</b>
<b>Long/(Short)</b>	<b>\$ (77,090)</b>	<b>\$ (124,709)</b>

	March Actual	Fiscal YTD* Actual	Fiscal YTD* Budget	Fiscal YTD* Cost Variance
<b>Expenses</b>				
United Catholic Stewardship	\$ 42,408	\$ 400,903	\$ 415,900	\$ 14,997
St. Francis of Assisi School	184,030	1,943,048	2,000,000	56,952
Bishop Carroll Catholic High School	121,813	921,043	916,584	(4,459)
Other Educational Programs - PSR/RCIA/Etc.	(4,019)	12,659	22,950	10,291
Parish Salaries and Benefits	39,103	368,760	364,126	(4,634)
Utilities, Maintenance, and Property Insurance	23,655	140,738	137,600	(3,138)
Charity	112	11,073	19,500	8,427
Supplies	8,585	100,852	101,750	898
Other	9,816	52,345	46,000	(6,345)
Capital Outlay	9,778	275,395	242,600	(32,795)
Call to Share, Missions	-	42,000	-	(42,000)
Investment with Chancery	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 435,281</b>	<b>\$ 4,268,816</b>	<b>\$ 4,267,010</b>	<b>\$ (1,806)</b>

**Contributions less Expenses - Long/(Short)** \$ 37,629 \$ (103,525)

Prior Year Surplus/(Deficit)

0

\* July thru Current Month

\*\* Includes Endowment Investment Gains



*“He has risen, just as he said.”*

*Matthew 28:6*

Online Outreach & COVID-19  
- page 1 -

Home Altars  
- page 3 -

## **e-Vernacular Only in April and May**

Due to the coronavirus quarantine and a need to reduce expenses where we can, we will use email and social media only in April and May to distribute the Vernacular. There will be no hard copy of the parish newsletter mailed to parishioners the next two months, after which we will decide what to do about future issues. Thank you for your understanding.

