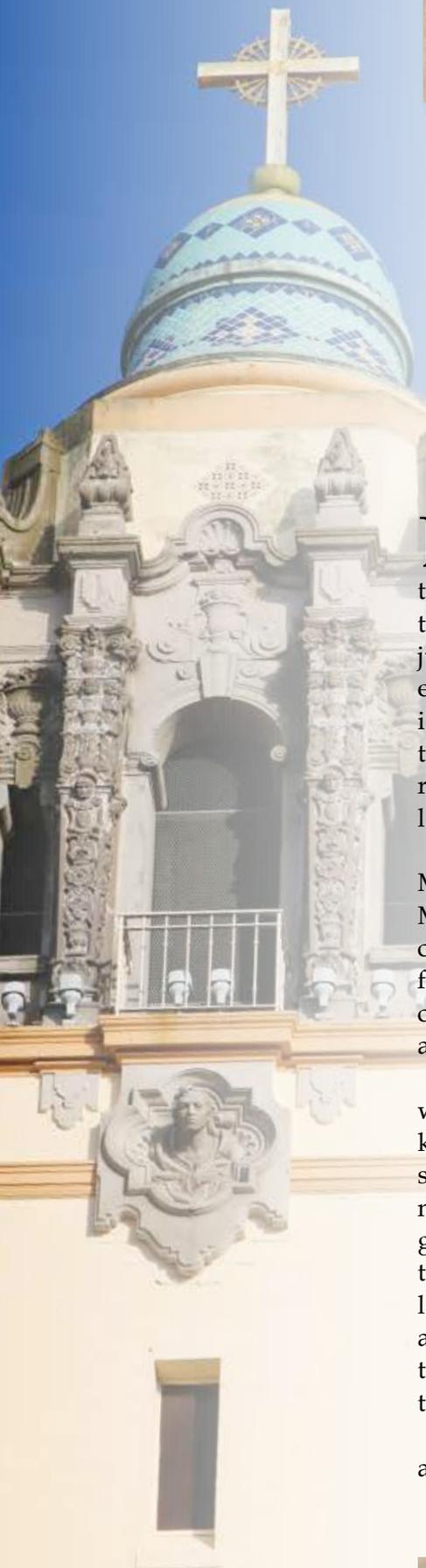


# St. Cecilia

CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Bill and Sue Collins:

### *Living the Faith as Part of Our Family*

Babies crying at Mass. Watching children grow up. Celebrating the sacraments. Praying for people in times of need. All of these things are just part of the package in a family – especially a big Catholic family. And it’s the thread of those experiences – that sense of family – that has been running throughout Bill and Sue Collins’ time at St. Cecilia’s.

“We generally go to the family Mass at 9:30 a.m. and it’s a really good Mass – there’s kids crying and nobody cares,” Bill says. “One week, the Confirmation students came to Mass. A couple of them spoke and it was such a good feeling to hear them.”

“We get introduced to the people who are going through RCIA and we know them and pray for them,” Sue says. “The kids in the First Communion class? We’ve watched these kids grow up! When we first started going to St. Cecilia’s, we’d see a pregnant lady, and then she’d come in with an infant. You’d watch that family through Confirmation, graduation – they all grow up!

“One of the things that I love about St. Cecilia’s is that the sense of



*Bill and Sue Collins enjoy being part of the parish family at St. Cecilia’s.*

community and family,” she adds. “You sit in the same church, and the same pew, every Sunday, and it’s like you’re a little family.”

Both born and raised in the city, Bill and Sue both attended Star of the Sea elementary school in the

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## Living the Faith as Part of Our Family

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Richmond District. They met as young teenagers on the playground, and are celebrating 57 years of marriage this month. After spending several years of their early marriage at St. Monica's, where their two daughters attended school, they moved to St. Cecilia's when their children were in middle school.

It wasn't long before they started becoming involved at the parish in one way or another, especially when their grandchildren, now ages 26 and 28, started attending school at St. Cecilia's. Bill, who was affectionately known as "Coach Grandpa," helped coach the third-grade girls in basketball with his good friend and fellow parishioner, Jack Fitzpatrick, as well as high school juniors and seniors in the CYO league. Sue went from being an active volunteer to payroll, working for a number of years as the aide for the second-grade class.

And that was just the start. Sue has served the parish as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for over 15 years and Bill has been involved with both the Men's Club and the Knights of St. Cecilia.

The Collins family has enjoyed spending time with the parish community, and they love getting to meet and socialize with fellow parishioners.

"One of my favorite things is the St. Patrick's Day dinner every year," Sue says. "People from three weeks old to 95 are there and everyone's wearing green."

They have also appreciated seeing the ways that the parish family has come together to support its members in times of grief.

"You could feel the parish gathering together," Sue says of the moments she witnessed the parish coming together in difficult times. "People just rally around each other."

After experiencing some health issues this past year, Sue recalls the impact that it had on both her and Bill, knowing there were fellow parishioners who were praying.

"We felt so supported and it really made a difference in the way I was able to deal with it," Sue says. "We were just able to be very positive through the whole thing. Support from family and friends – it makes a big difference."

"People would tell us, 'I'm praying for your wife,'" Bill says. "I was so thankful. To hear all these people say they were praying, it really hit home."

Sue shares that her faith has grown deeper over the years, and continues to grow as she has become involved in the community and parish family, through witnessing and learning from the examples of others.

"Other people's faith instills something different in you," she says. "My faith has always been there, but it's nice to know that there's other people who feel the same way. There's strength in numbers. They make me stronger and they make my faith stronger."

Bill and Sue encourage their fellow parishioners to find ways to become more involved to experience more deeply the sense of family, within the church.

"Jump in with both feet," Sue says. "If you don't want to decorate the church, you can be an EMHC, or you can help the Men's Club. There are so many

*"One of the things that I love about St. Cecilia's is that the sense of community and family. You sit in the same church, and the same pew, every Sunday, and it's like you're a little family."*

*– Sue Collins*

## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

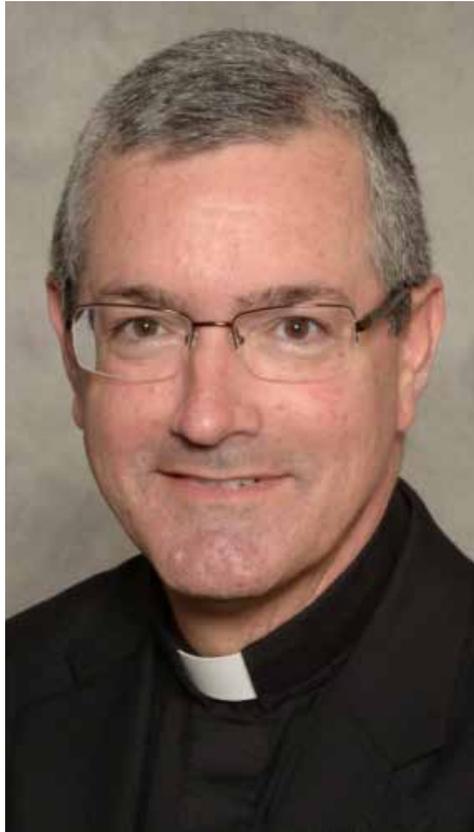
# *Here to Serve, Not Be Served*

Dear Parishioners,

I remember that, as a youngster, the adults around me were impressed and inspired by the words of John F. Kennedy when the young president said at his inauguration, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country!"

I'm sure that our country - and our Church - would be blessed if people were to think about that advice. They might then be better stewards of all that they have received. Jesus said something similar about Himself: "The Son of Man came to *serve*, not to be served."

One of my favorite movies is *Lilies of the Field*, which I saw at the Empire Theater with some of my siblings and friends when it came out in 1963. Sidney Poitier played the main character, Homer Smith, a Baptist, who had fallen under the influence of a Catholic nun who had been praying for "a big strong man" to build a chapel for the poor people in the Arizona desert. At first, he wants to do the work all by himself, so that it will be done to his satisfaction, and he refuses the help of any other workers, placing signs on the adobe bricks and the scaffold, saying, "Keep off!" and "Do not touch!" One man sarcastically says to him, "I came to see the one-man cathedral!" and then sits in the shade and laughs with the other men while Homer labors under the hot sun. Eventually, he realizes that they are good workers and are willing to have him be their foreman, and when all the poor people see that the proposed chapel is actually being built, they all join in the physical work of mixing mortar with their feet



for the adobe bricks, feeding the construction crew, and celebrating when their chapel is finished. One humble couple, for example, donates a chandelier, which Homer gratefully accepts, saying, "Well! We'll have to find a special place for *this!*" Even those who didn't regularly practice the faith wanted to be part of building their chapel.

The people had been used to having Mass said for them on the back of a travelling priest's Volkswagen van, and they didn't believe that the nun's idea of building a chapel was even a possibility. But when the construction began, and they saw that it was really happening, they all wanted to *serve* in that noble cause.

*Lilies of the Field* is a good lesson in stewardship. We have inherited a beautiful church and school and so

much else that people before us have labored in building up, and we want to serve in the noble cause of passing on the faith to future generations and assisting others who labor around us. We can ask ourselves, "What can I do for my Church, my parish, my country, my neighbors, my family?" If we want to be like our Lord who came to *serve*, not to be served, we'll be good stewards who can joyfully show the Lord what we have done with whatever He has given us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Rev. Mark V. Taheny*

Fr. Mark Taheny

## Helping Us Remain Connected: *The*

One of the oldest Christian relics in the Philippines, the image of the Santo Niño de Cebú continues to captivate the hearts of the Filipino people. There on the islands, it is celebrated through annual festivals and venerated in homes, churches, businesses, and even government offices. And when natives immigrate to the United States, that devotion only deepens as the Santo Niño de Cebú becomes not only an image of our Lord, but also a connection to home.

Here at St. Cecilia, this unique image of the Divine Child is honored through the Santo Niño Filipino Community. Started many years ago within our parish, this ministry was created to help Fili-

pino parishioners remain connected with the traditions and devotions of their homeland while also integrating them more fully into the parish family.

“In the Philippines, so many people are devoted to the Santo Niño,” says ministry Co-Chair Gina Arenas. “Though I wasn’t a member back then, I believe the Santo Niño Filipino Community was organized or created at St. Cecilia’s because the Filipinos would often get homesick. This was a way to help them continue to live out Filipino culture while also meeting new friends.”

Though members aren’t necessarily “homesick” today, the Filipino Community continues to foster support amongst its mem-

bers and to honor Filipino culture. Each week, the image of the Santo Niño is transported to a new parish home, where ministry members pray a Rosary together. Afterwards, the hosting family frequently hosts a dinner with plenty of laughter and fellowship.

The Santo Niño is further honored by the annual novena hosted each year by the Filipino Community. Typically beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving, the nine days of prayer culminate the following Saturday with the parish-wide Dinner Dance fundraiser. This helps build awareness of the devotion while also financially supporting St. Cecilia’s.

Gina feels that, over the years, the Filipino Community has be-



*Members of St. Cecilia’s Santo Niño Filipino Community*

# Santo Niño Filipino Community

come a great source of strength and support in her life. It's comforting to gather regularly with other faith-oriented people – to know that when troubles beset us, we are not alone.

"Sometimes, we have trials, and it's a blessing to be able to share them with others and be supported," Gina says. "There is always laughter and food, and then we become lifetime friends. When we pray the Rosary or the novena, we always include past members who have passed away, family members who are sick or ill, or any other special intentions."

Gina personally experienced the power of those intercessory prayer 20 years ago when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Too sick to attend the weekly prayers, Gina's sister and fellow Co-Chair Veronica "Ronnie" Enriquez continued to attend and seek out prayers for Gina's healing. Gina firmly believes that those prayers helped get her through, and are part of the reason she remains alive and well today.

"I'm very grateful for that experience, because it has enriched my faith and deepened my spirituality tremendously," Gina says. "It's also made me realize the power of being surrounded by people who are

also very prayerful. It ensures that there is always a connection between us – always something familiar."

Like her sister, Ronnie also feels that her devotion to the Santo Niño and participation in the Filipino Community has gotten her through the difficult moments of life. It helped heal her sister, got Ronnie

herself through two major surgeries, and supported the sisters during the loss of their mother.

"My devotion has helped me tremendously, strengthening me and my family all of these years," Ronnie says. "That's why we want to help spread the devotion to the entire parish of St. Cecilia and beyond. It also helps keep us Filipinos stay connected to our culture and to each other."

For Ronnie, the ministry has also become a form of evangelization as she seeks to share about the Filipino Community

and their devotion to the Santo Niño with others. She feels that it is especially important to share the ministry with the young church, particularly as the current membership grows older.

"We invite anyone to join us," Ronnie says. "We are really a great group to be involved with. Our gatherings are filled with laughter and we're basically like family. We welcome any new members."

*"Sometimes, we have trials, and it's a blessing to be able to share them with others and be supported. There is always laughter and food, and then we become lifetime friends. When we pray the Rosary or the novena, we always include past members who have passed away, family members who are sick or ill, or any other special intentions."*

*– Gina Arenas*

*If you would like learn more about the Santo Niño Filipino Community and how to get involved, please contact either Gina Arenas 415-412-4805 or Ronnie Enriquez at [ronnieenriquez@gmail.com](mailto:ronnieenriquez@gmail.com).*

## Stewardship

### Hannah, the Good Steward

What should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells

us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, bar-

ren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.

Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God – an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward – with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us – at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”



# The St. Cecilia Stewardship Committee

## *Cultivating the Stewardship Way of Life in Our Parish Family*

About a year and a half ago, St. Cecilia Catholic Parish – through meetings and discussions among parishioners and parish groups and leadership – chose to embrace stewardship and the pursuit of stewardship as a way of life. Everything we have done in the time since is based upon this stewardship commitment.

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops has stated three convictions about stewardship, all of which we are pursuing here:

1. We must cultivate disciples and discipleship. Mature disciples make a conscious decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ
2. Beginning with conversion, this discipleship is not expressed in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life
3. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, and the source of all they have and are and will be.

Msgr. Harriman and representatives of the parish attended a meeting with the archbishop at which other parishes were also represented and in attendance. One of the

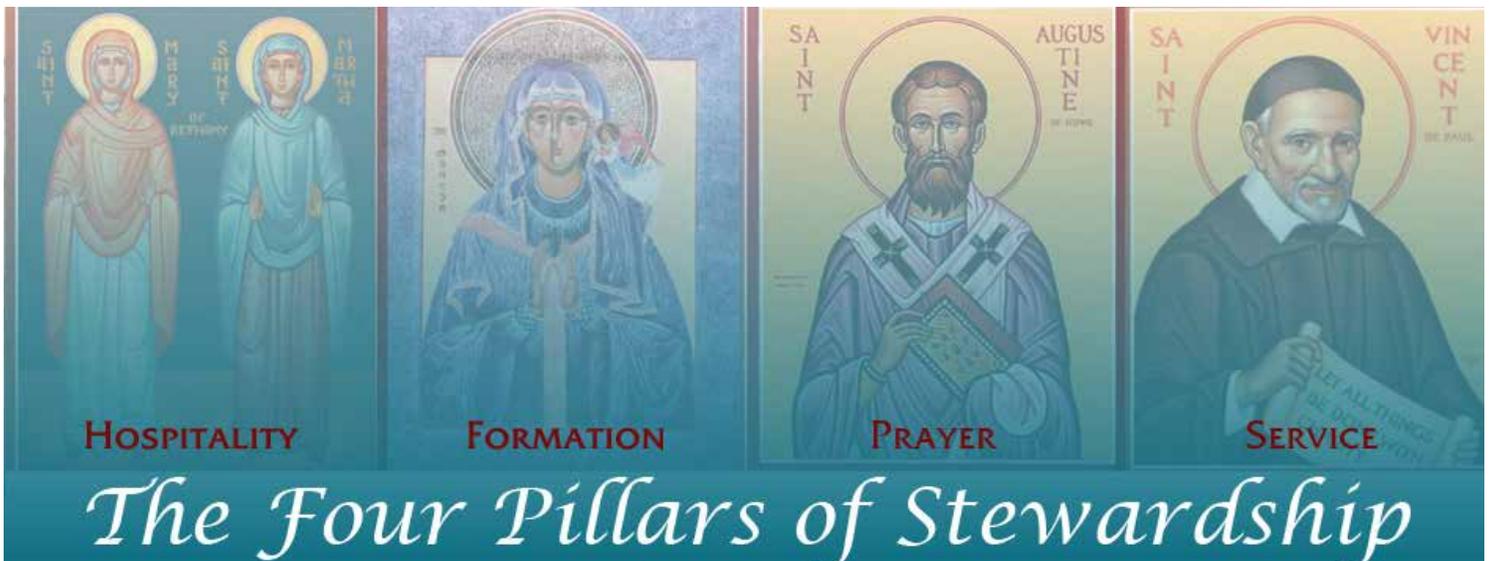
members of the St. Cecilia contingent was Kathy Atkinson.

“The more I heard about it, the more I felt that this would be an excellent path for our parish,” Kathy says. “It is so important in today’s society to get people’s attention and to bring them back to what we need to be doing as Catholics. The idea that all things come from God is so true. I have realized for many years that I am blessed, and I have tried to focus on all those blessings, even in the midst of difficulties.”

One of the first acts after we made the stewardship commitment was the formation of a Stewardship Committee to oversee the effort.

“From the beginning, we have been advisory in nature,” Kathy says. “We recognize that we are all interconnected and dependent upon each other to ultimately get to heaven.” Disciples are formed in an atmosphere that follows the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Formation, Prayer, and Service. The Committee’s primary role is to help create and maintain this atmosphere, but with the understanding that Christ links discipleship with action. Thus, its secondary role is to invite each parishioner to live stewardship as a way of life as they respond with their gifts of time, talent and treasure to St. Cecilia and the com-

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# St. Cecilia Catholic Church

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## The St. Cecilia Stewardship Committee

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munity at large.

Currently, there are nine members on the Stewardship Committee, including the pastor. Kathy serves as Chair, but as she notes, that is more in title than in responsibility.

"We meet monthly to discuss our overall stewardship effort and to review what we have accomplished, and plan for what we hope to undertake in the future," Kathy says. "Our planning includes preparing for retreats and workshops and, of course, our annual renewal. We held our first stewardship renewal last fall. The response to our stewardship initiative has been truly fantastic. The sense of stewardship and the commitment which comes with that has awakened many of our people. It has stimulated the already good

members of our parish to do even more."

St. Peter explained what the call to stewardship is when he said, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10). As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated in Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, "What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means much more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord" (42).

*If you would like more information on stewardship or the parish Stewardship Committee, please contact the parish office at 415-664-8481.*

### 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.