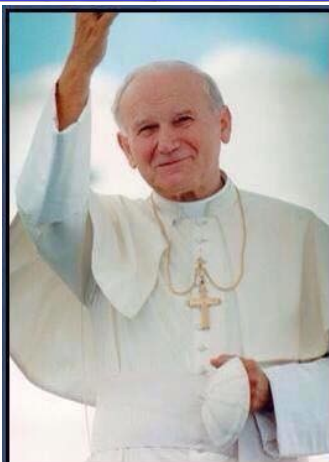
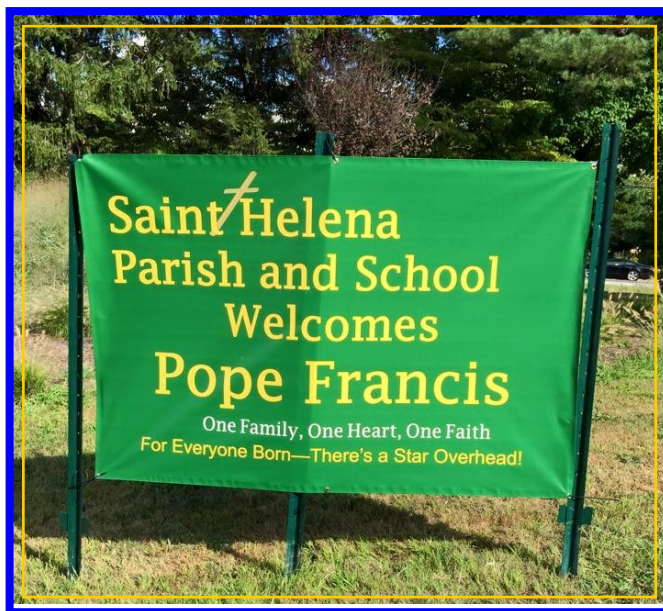


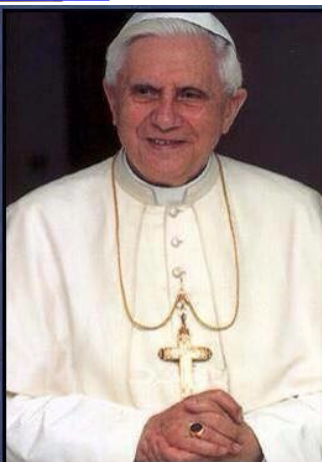
CROSS TALK

ALL THE LOVE GOD HAS IN HIMSELF, ALL THE BEAUTY GOD HAS IN HIMSELF, ALL THE TRUTH GOD HAS IN HIMSELF, HE ENTRUSTS TO THE FAMILY. A FAMILY IS TRULY A FAMILY WHEN IT IS CAPABLE OF OPENING ITS ARMS TO RECEIVE ALL THAT LOVE.

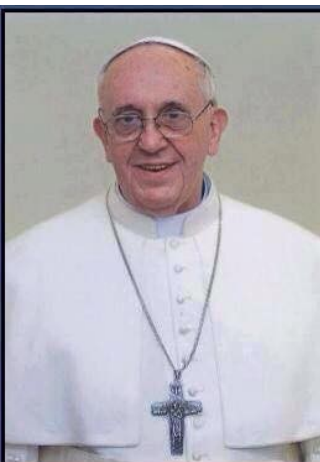
POPE FRANCIS- FESTIVAL OF FAMILIES—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY



Pope John Paul II:
"This is what we believe."



Pope Benedict XVI:
"This is why we believe it."



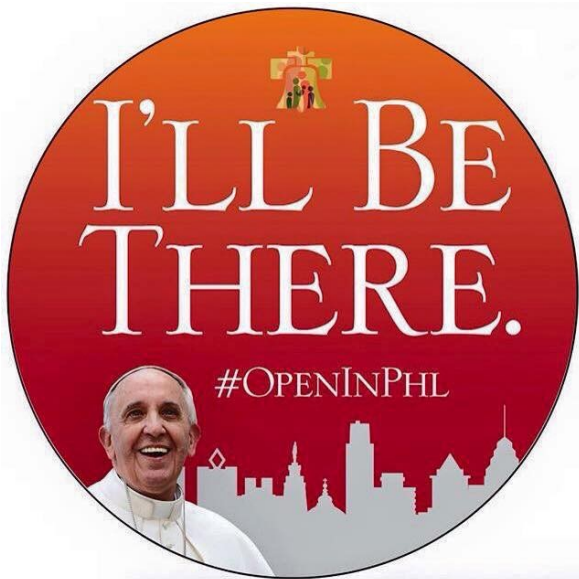
Pope Francis:
"Now go do it."

... And They Chose Philadelphia

At the close of the 7th World Meeting of Families in Milan in 2011, Pope Benedict XVI designated Philadelphia as host for the 8th World Meeting of Families Congress to be held September 22-25, 2015 with the Papal visit on September 26-27, 2015. As the local Church, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we were preparing ourselves through prayers, meetings and assemblies for the great events that took place last September in Philadelphia. The first part was held at the Convention Center where thousands of people heard dynamic speakers like Bishop Barron, Scott Hahn and others. The culmination of the event was the Festival of Families on Saturday evening with testimonies from designated families from all over the world with Pope Francis. The closing moment was Holy Eucharist on the Parkway on Sunday afternoon. Under the guidance of the Holy Father, all Cardinals, Bishops, Priests and a great number of families were united with Jesus, who as a member of the Holy Family (Mary & Joseph) is a model for all families.

+ Jesus, bless all our Families. Mary and Joseph, pray for our Families. +

By Father Tadeusz Gorka



In this issue of Cross Talk we reminisce about the World Meeting of Families and the Papal visit. We recall the special experiences and heartfelt messages of the events and the many ways the people of Saint Helena parish participated in this great occasion. We thank God for all the blessings He showered upon us during the week. We thank the Holy Father for showing us his love and assure him of our prayers.

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WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO ... PLAN THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES?

May our days together bear fruit that will last, generosity and care for others that will endure.

Pope Francis - Atlantic Aviation -Departure Ceremony

Lizanne Magarity Pando, the Director of Marketing and Communications for the World Meeting of Families - Philadelphia 2015 (WMOF), is one of Saint Helena's parishioners. Lizanne shared her insights with Mary Ann Christ on what it was like being a key player in the planning for this amazing event.

How did you get involved in the WMOF?

The Holy Spirit truly had me at the right place at the right time. That is the only way I can describe it!

What did your role entail?

As Director of Marketing and Communications my responsibilities included directing our website (www.WorldMeeting2015.org), magazines, mailings, television and newspaper advertising, merchandising, marketing, public relations and social media.



What was involved in the planning process?

I was involved for 15 months and organized a team to handle all of the media, website, printed materials, retail and all types of promotion of the event components. Much of the coordination came through committees in the community.

How did you interact with the many agencies and interests involved?

My interaction was with the agencies via the public relations, security, transportation, clergy and media relations groups. Much of this happened in meetings run by the City or ourselves.

How did you organize the myriad of tasks involved in planning the meeting and keeping it on track?

The Holy Spirit and a whole lot of help and coffee. We hired many talented people to head departments that were needed and then gave them staff where possible. The rest was offered help from volunteers and committees.

What were the unique challenges of your position?

Building a team so quickly that can work together cohesively to reach a huge goal line is tricky. Everyone is used to working with different environments, so getting them all on the same page for our operating procedures had to happen quickly. I am not kidding when I say the Holy Spirit was with us the whole way.



What got you through the good/not as good days?

Prayer. And terrific people that worked alongside me every day. Having people there from each walk of life that had such a vast array of experience was a wonderful resource. I never felt alone.

What were your feelings/impressions as you fulfilled your responsibilities?

Peace and Happiness. This was a blessed and exciting experience from the beginning and it never stopped being an honor to be a part of everyday.

What was day-to-day life like during this time?

I couldn't even describe it. Just say – busier than I have ever seen in my life or will again.

How did you balance your personal life during this time?

My husband was such a huge help! He took over all of the home duties and we did this whole event as a family. My whole family attended the Congress and Papal events. And by God's Grace we met the Holy Father as a family as well. God is Good, all of the time.

How has the overall experience touched you?

I have made some of the most amazing friends, been challenged and learned things that I would never have. I met the Holy Father twice; it is everything you think it is. I am so blessed.

What does the future hold for you?

I am sure the Lord is the only one who knows what comes next. But I have trusted Him this far and look where it has gotten me.



Offering Shelter To folks On A Pilgrimage - St. Helena's Style

FAITH GROWS WHEN IT IS LIVED AND SHAPED BY LOVE.

POPE FRANCIS - PARKWAY MASS

St. Helena's parishioners were very busy before, during and after the recent World Meeting of Families and the Pope's visit to Philadelphia. The following articles tell the stories of two of our members who opened their homes and their hearts to international and national visitors for the whole week. Both women had different experiences with people who were once completely unknown to them, who now are part of their lives, and shareholders of memories of a time of joy, and laughter, and hope.

Irma Rizzi had five people staying at her house. They included three sons of Italian parents who work in Vatican City. Their mother is the secretary to the Vatican Monsignor and the team of priests who were responsible for the overall planning of the Meeting. Their father is an official Vatican chauffeur. They stayed in the city and their sons caught the Norristown train each morning to go in to help them in the Vatican Gift Shoppe in the Exhibit Hall. Also, there was a couple from Buenos Aires, Argentina. The husband works at the Pontifical College in Argentina.

Irma and her husband, Giuseppe, speak Italian, some Spanish and English. Dinners were a trilingual affair with all kinds of delicious homemade pasta and a sharing of the activities of the day. The young men were so kind and respectful. Irma enjoyed all her company very much.

Irma went in to the Meeting on Wednesday and participated in a huge Mass in honor of St. Padre Pio. There were over thirty-five Cardinals and Bishops concelebrating the Mass. She was awed at the sight of the thousands of people there! It was a very special event for her because, as a child of six, she saw Padre Pio IN PERSON during a visit to his home town in Italy. While at the Meeting, she was also introduced to several Cardinals and Bishops by her Argentinian house guests who knew these gentlemen on a first name basis from their prior visits to his college.

Irma and Giuseppe are planning to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary next year in Italy, in the same Church where they were married. They hope their new Italian friends from the Meeting will be able to be there to celebrate with them.

By Hilda Carr



Hilda's Story

Hilda Carr, one of our parish Stephen Ministers, hosted four women from parishes in St. Petersburg, Florida. These ladies have been friends for over thirty years. They are active in their parishes and two are very supportive and involved in the Church's work in Guatemala. All of their (13) children are grown. Their experience as walkers and hikers was VERY helpful during their visit. Hilda didn't know them before, but she met one woman via phone after a referral from Father Ken Breen, a Mercedarian priest, who knows Monsignor Nicolo. Hilda said that the minute she spotted the ladies at the airport pickup area, standing and talking with an orange shirted Papal volunteer, she knew that everything was going to be OK!



The first night they went right into the city to make an early pick-up of their registration documents, etc. Then on to an Italian dinner in Blue Bell where everyone laughed so hard trying to order dinner from the Italian menu. After that, straight to Hilda's house. They were so tired from the long day of travelling that they went upstairs and changed into their PJs. That set the pattern for the next six nights! Each day Hilda was the "bus" driver hustling them to the Norristown Transportation Center at 7:00 or 7:15 in the morning with pickup between 9 PM and 12:15 AM. Then back to Hilda's to relax in their PJs and talk and share the day's events, and LAUGH, and LAUGH

and LAUGH until the early AM! Breakfasts were fast, but healthy; so coffee, juices, cereals, doughnuts, Danish, yogurt, and toast. At night, soda, water and wine and hot & cold hors d'oeuvres, sandwiches and some Philly favorites like Tasty Cakes and Philly soft pretzels were waiting for the hungry Pilgrims. It all worked out fine.

Each day they went to Mass, heard one or two keynote speakers, attended different sessions on a wide variety of topics, visited the Exhibit Hall or went to see a Philadelphia shrine. One day, instead of taking the hour lunch time, they, along with 800 other people (Bishops, priests, nuns, lay people and their children), worked for CRS (Catholic Relief Services). Their job was to prepare 40,000 meals of oats and rice to be shipped to the poor. And they did it. They showed pictures they had taken of all the folks wearing head nets and surgical gloves working in assembly line style to accomplish this amazing job. Everyone there looked so happy and joyful!



On another day, this same lady attended a session on divorce. When the speaker invited questions from the floor she got up and asked hers. Not satisfied with the answer, she asked for more clarification. After the session a man came up to her, commented on her point of view and asked if she read the New York Times. He told her he was the TIMES reporter, assigned to cover the World Meeting, and that he would be quoting HER in Saturday's paper. Sure enough, on Saturday evening via email, three Florida readers contacted her and sent a copy of the article to her. She was so surprised. Another reason for laughter! (Hilda's house still echoes with it.)



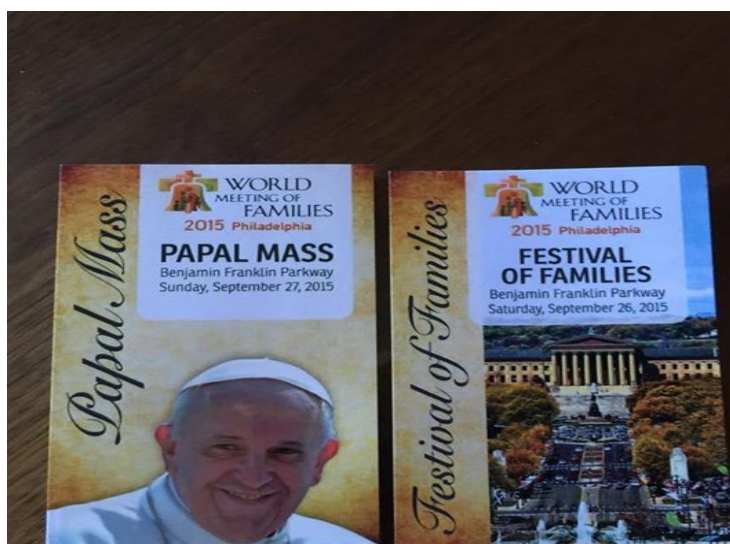
On Sunday, they went down for the Mass with Pope Francis on the Parkway. They got there in plenty of time but were held up at the security gate. They were standing there for 4 ½ hours, in one spot, hardly able to move much, but they did get into the Red Ticket area. They were truly inspired by the Pope's talk and his humble request for their prayers for his intentions. It was a joyful experience for them.

On Monday, their last day here, they went to Sts. Peter and Paul's Cathedral to see the church and to visit the

shrine of Our Lady, Undoer of Knots. Each of them had several white strips of cloth they had brought from parishioners in Florida who had written their petitions on them. They tied the strips onto the structure, along with the 150,000 other ones, and prayed for Mary's intervention.

The Pope's visit was exciting and energizing. The whole time was spiritually and emotionally stimulating and gave them a feeling of HOPE. The World Meeting of Families goal was a call to preserve the family and to LOVE and to care for each other, every day, in lots of little ways. The people of St. Helena's parish will strive to bring this message to everyone they meet.

By Hilda Carr



Volunteering at the Youth Congress

Maryann Schieve from our own Parish family served as a volunteer for the Youth Congress at the World Meeting of Families (WMOF). Maryann shares her experiences from this special event with Mary Ann Christ.



What inspired you to volunteer for the WMOF?

Maria Richardson, Chair of the Youth Congress, invited all Archdiocesan youth ministers/helpers to volunteer. I was planning a trip to Italy to visit family around the same time as the World Meeting of Families, but I didn't have enough vacation time for both. I finally realized, with help from the Holy Spirit, that the World Meeting of Families was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity that I knew I just could not pass up. I decided to take the entire week. I learned if I give God time, He gives it back to me.

What was your role at the WMOF?

I was one of 733 Youth Congress volunteers to assist 1600 youth between the ages of six to seventeen. Parents dropped their children off at the Youth Congress so they could attend the Adult Congress. I was in charge of thirteen six to twelve years olds, during a morning session and an afternoon session. I had a different group each time. I brought the children to one of the 16 activities plus a 'snack shack' for approximately 30 minutes per activity. Some of the activities included, Swinging with the Sisters, Wii Bowling with the Bishops, Gospel Drama, Saints Dress Up, Founding Fathers w/Mother Katherine Drexel, Catholic Relief Services dried food packing for Burkina Faso in West Africa, Pope Puppets, Saints Dress Up, World Missionary Rosaries, Praying with Paint and Shooting Hoops with the Seminarians.

During one morning session there were plenty of volunteers for the children so I went to an activity to help. I found myself at Catholic Relief Services packing rice bags. During one afternoon session I helped at the Adolescent Activity Trivia: Catechism Quest. Adolescents did not need adult leaders. They had Ascension Café (on site) and many teens could be found Shooting Hoops with the Seminarians. Every morning and every afternoon everyone, all children, teens and volunteers went to the Main Stage in center of the Youth Congress for prayer, praise, worship and entertainment for a half hour.

What were your feelings/impressions as you fulfilled your responsibilities?

Joyful! Enthusiastic! Energized! Comfortable! Refreshed! Grateful for the opportunity to be at the World Meeting of Families everyday! I reunited with many of my Youth Ministry friends from ten years ago. I met many people from the Tri-County area who are involved with Youth and Ministry including our own Sr. Cathe, Mrs. Cissone and Mrs. Rene Ryan at Youth Congress.



Do you have personal stories or stories others may have shared with you while you volunteered?

During one Main Stage activity, while sitting on the rug with my group, a curious young girl in the group next to me began to gently touch her leader's Rosary. Her leader was a Dominican religious. A Dominican Religious Rosary seems like three Rosaries in one. Ironically at this exact time it was three o'clock and the MC introduced everyone to the Missionary Chaplet. Sister gently shared her Rosaries with two other little girls and she showed the three girls how to move their fingers down the Rosary beads with each Chaplet. By the fifth Chaplet Sister removed her fingers and let the little girls complete the Chaplet. I was mesmerized by this interaction by these four strangers, all from different parts of the Country. I will always wonder how this beautiful lesson will affect the girls during their life.

It was exciting for me to watch strangers bond during activities especially packing bags of rice, soy dehydrated vegetables and vitamin supplements to send to hungry people in West Africa. My 15 youth on the last day told me that this was their favorite activity. Personally, it was refreshing to be with thousands of people everyday who preferred God's Word over the secular word of moral relativism and/or opposition.

I experienced many God incidences. One woman was praying for guidance on where she could help at the Congress. The Volunteer Website overwhelmed her. She didn't know where she could help in the evening. One day after Mass, at her Parish, a Parishioner approached her and said a friend of hers said, "You are a Florist. The Youth Congress is looking for a Florist to decorate the Jesus statue where the youth enter. Can you help us?" Her prayers were answered. She bought the plants and flowers on her own time and decorated on Monday evening.



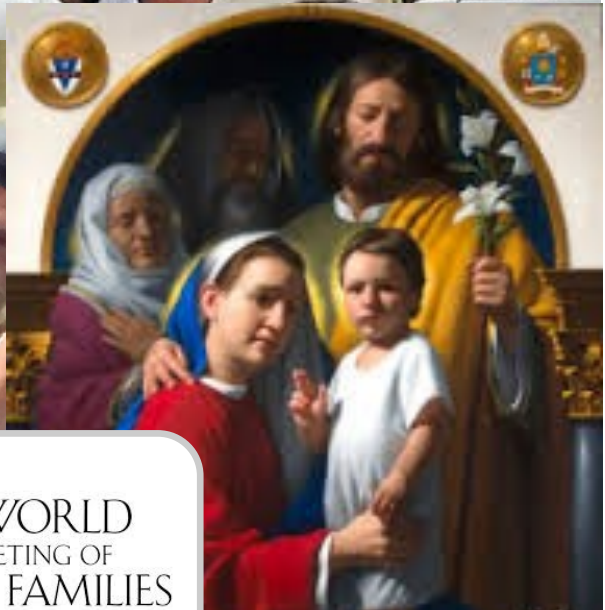
How have your volunteer efforts touched you?

I want to share my experiences with every one forever! I pray I will be able to stay joyful, enthusiastic, energized and refreshed in God especially in trying times.

The experience boosts my desire to let everyone know how wonderful and good God is to us. On the Main Stage the MC would say, "God is good", and 1600 youth would shout, "All the time!" Then the MC would say, "All the time," youth would shout, "God is good!" Our faith in God brings joy, enthusiasm, peace and unity. I experienced brief encounters in the Convention Center, and while walking to the Convention Center, with WMOF attendees from Nigeria, Australia, Canada and Philippines. I was touched by the (faith) connection everyone in the Convention Center had to each other yet we were from different parts of the country and world. We were free to speak about our faith comfortably.

God Bless you!

By Maryann Schieve



 WORLD
MEETING OF
FAMILIES
2015 Philadelphia





A Special Day at the World Meeting of Families

The history of the Church in this city and state is really a story not about building walls, but about breaking them down. It is a story about generation after generation of committed Catholics going out to the peripheries, and building communities of worship, education, charity and service to a larger society.

Pope Francis– Mass at the Cathedral

Several members of our Saint Helena School family volunteered at the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) and happily shared their experiences



“On Wednesday, September 23, I travelled to Philadelphia to volunteer at The World Meeting of Families. From the train ride in, where I met a woman from Argentina attending the meeting, to the train ride home where fellow volunteers happily chatted about their day, it was an uplifting experience. There was excitement and anticipation in the air, awaiting the arrival of Pope Francis. It was wonderful to see so many people from so many counties and cultures coming together to celebrate families.”

Rene Ryan, 8th Grade Teacher

“I was truly grateful to have the opportunity to be a volunteer for The World Meeting of Families! It was such a wonderful and rewarding experience to see so many from all parts of the world to gather together for family, heart and faith!”

Phyllis Cissone, School Secretary

“Wow! Truly a feeling of being part of something global and larger than myself!! Just knowing that the Holy Father was in town was exciting enough but to hear his words was truly inspirational. I was so proud of Philadelphia...and sooo relieved that nothing negative/dangerous happened during his visit.”

Steve Smith, Pre K 4 Teacher



“What a great experience I had as a volunteer for the World Meeting of Families Convention! My assignment was to work with children whose families were participating in various meetings. Twelve children of various ages from Philadelphia and the suburbs travelled through various activity sites with me. Their favorites, which touched my heart, were opportunities to help the poor. We packed bags for the homeless with basic life necessities and then weighed grains to package for communities in Africa. It was a full and wonderful day for me and the children – hugs abounded!

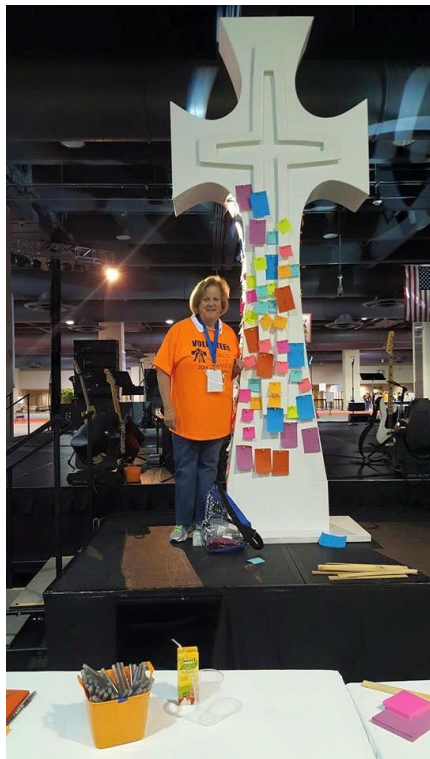
Janet Smith, Fifth Grade Teacher

“The feeling amongst the crowd was warm and kind, despite large numbers, four hour waits for security clearances – and what did people do? We sang and enjoyed each other’s company! Truly an experience never to be forgotten!”

Jennifer Lau, SHS Music Teacher

I worked in the Youth Congress and did a session “Praying with Paint.” I taught the children how to listen with their hearts and use paint to express their inmost feelings! A wonderful experience, I met children from Alaska to Australia! Truly, it felt like a once-in-a-lifetime experience! One I would love to repeat!

Barbara FitzPatrick, Pre K 4 Teacher



“Oh, what a day ...! The experience was Wonder-filled! From catching the train to walking to our destination, there was an air of anticipation, joy, and excitement! The feeling that sprung forward in me was pure joy – I mused, all of the preparation, all of the excitement, publicity, security and wonder, to catch a glimpse of the man called Francis. A simple South American, whose message is Mercy and Love, who cares intensely for the Poor among us! A man who urges us not to make judgements, a man who asks again and again, please, remember to pray for me. I came away knowing that all of us, no matter our gender, our heritage, our doubts, our burdens and confusion, yearn to hear and seek our God who loves us abundantly and unconditionally! This memory will reign in my heart forever!”

Sister Cathe Shoulberg, RSM



SAINT HELENA SCHOOL AND POPE FRANCIS

SHS was ablaze with excitement as we anticipated the visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia! Our children discussed this visit in their classrooms; they spoke endlessly on the values of **Mercy, Faith, Loving One Another, Not Being Judgmental** which seem to be the core values Pope Francis embodies!

One of our students, **Landon Vargas**, had an exceptional experience with our beloved Pope! Landon, a third grade student, was blessed and hugged by Pope Francis near Independence Hall. Landon, who is in Mrs. Owsiany's class, was diagnosed with cancer at the age of four. He battled this disease with a light heart, courage well beyond his years and always with an endless smile! Through the generosity of Saint Joseph's Prep, this author was offered tickets to hear Pope Francis at Independence Hall. Jumping at that offer, tickets magically appeared in the office. The Vargas Family were happy to accept tickets, but not really sure if Landon would be able to make the trip on that Saturday! Landon's grandfather, Sandy D'Orazio, arrived at Independence Hall at 4:00 AM to save spots for his family! Landon, his Dad and Uncle Joe took the last train at 12:00 noon into Philadelphia! However, at this point, the areas at Independence Hall were blocked off – they were unable to get to Grandpop! Utter disappointment! However, Ariel, Landon's Dad, came across an incredible Police Officer! Upon hearing Landon's story, she ordered, "Stay with me, we'll see what we can do!" Thanks to this amazing officer, she was directly instrumental in getting Landon and his Dad as close as possible! As the pope-mobile approached, Ariel yelled out in Spanish to Pope Francis – the Pope caught Ariel's eyes – tapped his driver to stop and reached out, held, blessed, hugged and kissed Landon!

This moment will forever live on in the hearts of each and every one of us! Truly, Pope Francis is the **VISIBLE**, human, image of Jesus, who reigns here and now among us! Long live the Pope!

Post Script about Landon

On Saturday, December 5, 2015, our Landon went peacefully home to God! Landon was so very brave in every circumstance. His hallmark was his **"Miles of Smiles!"** There was never a moment, even as his time was growing short, that Landon wasn't smiling, happy to see you and thinking of another! Here is a picture of Landon this summer enjoying a game of golf with two of his Buddies, Big Al and Aiden!

The Song of Praise at the Liturgy to Celebrate Landon's life spoke so clearly of the gift Landon was, is and continues to be for all blessed to know him ...

This is my wish, my wish for the World, that peace would find its way, to every boy and girl ... lift your light, let it shine: Shine, Shine, Shine, Let there be peace on Earth, let there be Peace On Earth!

Enjoy the lasting peace that you share with the Community of Saints, Landon! We love you and thank you for the Gift you brought to each heart you have touched!

By Sr. Cathe Shoulberg, RSM



WHAT ABOUT YOU?

...in the end, every Christian man and woman, by virtue of baptism, has received a mission. Each one of us has to respond, as best we can, to the Lord's call to build up his Body, the Church.

Pope Francis -Mass at the Cathedral

Of all the profound and lasting images and stories shared by our beloved Pope Francis on his historic pilgrimage to Philadelphia, one of the ones which has touched me the most was that of our own local saint, Mother Katherine Drexel. Francis relayed the story of a young socialite who, in a meeting with Pope Leo XIII told him of the great need for missions in America, particularly for Native and African Americans. When Leo, touted by Francis as "a very wise Pope" asked her pointedly, "What About You? What are you going to do?" those words changed her life because they reminded her that in the end each of us, by virtue of our Baptism, has been given a mission. Each of us is called to respond in our own unique way to the Lord's call to serve.



Katherine
Drexel
at 16

In his homily at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis continued to explain to the congregants consisting mostly of Clergy and Religious, the subtle reference of Katherine as a "young person and a young woman with high ideals" and just how and why those words "What About You?" were so life changing. They made her reflect on the immense work that had to be done and to realize that she was being called to stretch beyond her comfort zones to follow that call. Pope Francis went on to say that there are many young people in our own parishes and schools who have the same high ideals, generosity of spirit and love for Christ and the Church! He challenged those in leadership to find ways to invite our young people to share their gifts and enthusiasm with their communities especially in the practice of the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy. How blessed we are that here at St. Helena Parish the leadership already embraces that challenge and offer countless opportunities to encourage our young people to share their joy and enthusiasm in serving the Lord!

Pope Francis also noted that it was significant that the words of Pope Leo were addressed to a lay-woman. He told us that the future of the Church in a rapidly changing society will call and even now calls for a much more active engagement on the part of the laity. It also means valuing in a particular way the immense contributions which women, lay and religious, have made and continue to make to the life of our communities. He thanked those present for the way in which each of them answered Jesus' question, "What About You?" He encouraged them to be renewed in the joy of their first encounter with Jesus and to draw from that joy renewed fidelity and strength.

And so, to the powerful question "What About You?" How blessed we are to find ourselves members of a parish community which embraces all of these ideals and which invites and challenges each of us in countless ways to follow our own Baptismal call and to find our own path to service. Our Parish Motto, "One Family, One Heart, One Faith" and our Parish Mission Statement remind us to live out our mission in Faith, Hope, and Love in the many and diverse ministries which are alive and well at St. Helena Parish!

This call to serve may require us to stretch beyond our own comfort zones and to nurture in ourselves and those around us a generosity of spirit that moves us to prayerfully consider our own generous response to Pope Leo's powerful question, "What About You?"

By Dorothy Barry



Recalling our Experiences at the World Meeting of Families!

Our parish had the great fortune of receiving over 300 tickets for the Festival of Families on Saturday, September 26, and the Papal Mass on Sunday, September 27. Indeed, we distributed every single ticket! Rather than regale you with my experience alone, I sent an email to all those who requested tickets in the hopes of gaining a broader insight to the experiences of other parishioners. I received many wonderful responses to my “questionnaire,” and this article is a summary of just a handful of the responses I received. I only wish I could have included every response!



For my part, I was honored to be able to attend the Festival of Families on Saturday with my 18-year-old son, and the Papal Mass on Sunday with some fellow parishioners. I was touched by the thousands of prayer intentions printed on thin sheets of cloth tied beside the Cathedral and the knowledge that these intentions were offered during the Papal Mass. It was a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Some of my questions to parishioners included the following: Tell us about a particularly memorable moment or personal encounter? What was the most spiritual moment for you that weekend? Why was it important for you to attend?

A family with two teens from California asked us to pray the Rosary with them as we patiently waited for Pope Francis' arrival on the Parkway. They spoke Spanish and English.

We would say one decade in English and then they would do the next in Spanish. It was special and memorable.... *Anita Huber.*

Realizing I was part of a huge family of believers all there to grow closer in their personal relationship with God.... *Steve Iannello*

We waited 5 hours in line to go through security and got to the Mass during Communion. The hour before we arrived, we watched Mass on a woman's iPad. She and her family were from Mississippi, and another nearby family was from Alaska. Thinking of them coming so far made me feel sad that they were not making it to the Mass in time. As we were all discussing this fact, the woman from Mississippi said this was “our sacrifice” for the day. That made my whole day, despite the wait, the train ride, and even the sore feet. It felt very special to be a part of this wonderful amazing day...

Mary Agnes Klenk



I loved the way all of the priests gave out communion. Hundreds of us gathered and we all received Christ's blessed body as one.....

Ella Valencia (age 12)

I attended Mass when Pope John Paul came to Philadelphia in 1979 when I was quite young. Now as a senior, I felt it was important to bring my religious life full-

circle and experience Pope Francis' Mass. So much has happened in my life and the Church's life in all those years, and this was the renewal of faith and strength that was needed. It was important for me to see the deep reaction my daughter experienced. Our young people need this special man to bring them back into His fold..... *Jan Buggy*

It was important to us to attend this weekend because we have great admiration for Pope Francis as the Shepherd of the Church and a man of great faith, humility and understanding. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity..... *Ray & Pat Van Haute*



Waiting in line for 4 hours with thousands of people and not one person was angry or complaining. There seemed to be a sense of excitement building to get into the Mass..... *Patty & Mike Kurkowski*

It was so nice to see so many people there for the same reason, to appreciate our faith and to want to share it with others. I also appreciated the presence of the National Guard and the Secret Service. I felt very safe; they were so kind and friendly..... *the Cheeseman Family*



By Cathy Neugebauer

On Family

A few months have passed since Pope Francis' nine day visit to Cuba and the United States, which culminated in Philadelphia. There was much to digest and reflect upon from his many public appearances, speeches, and homilies. During the Saturday Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis mentioned Saint Katharine Drexel in his homily.

Pope Francis recalled Saint Katharine Drexel's audience with Pope Leo XIII, in particular, when they discussed the needs of the missions. Pope Leo asked her pointedly, "What about you? What are you going to do?" As the story goes, these words changed Katharine's life because they reminded her that, in the end, every Christian man and woman, by virtue of baptism, has received a mission. Our mission is to respond to the Lord's call and to build up His body, the Church.

For all of us, this body – the Church – begins with our family, the domestic Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church highlights this very notion: "In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith." For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are "by word and example...the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children." (CCC 1656)

Not to be glossed over is the fact that Jesus was born into and grew up in the Holy Family of Joseph and Mary. God could have brought Jesus into the world in a multitude of other settings, but chose the setting of the family, highlighting its importance. It is within the family that we learn what being Catholic is and what a Catholic is called to be in our world: truth, goodness, beauty, mercy, forgiveness, strength, supportive, and loving.

Pope Francis spoke candidly about the importance of the

family while in Philadelphia; here are a few quotes I'd like to highlight:

"The family is beautiful, but there's effort involved and there are problems."

"God sent Him [Jesus] amid a family. He could do this because it was a family with a truly open heart."

"You know what [God] likes most? To knock on the doors of families and to find the families who love each other, families who bring up their children to grow and help move forward to create, develop a society of truth, goodness and beauty."

"Families have the difficulties, families fight, sometimes plates can fly. Children bring headaches. I won't speak about mothers-in-law. With families, there is always light. ...The family is like a factory of hope, a factory of Resurrection."

"Love is celebration. Love is joy. Love is moving forward."

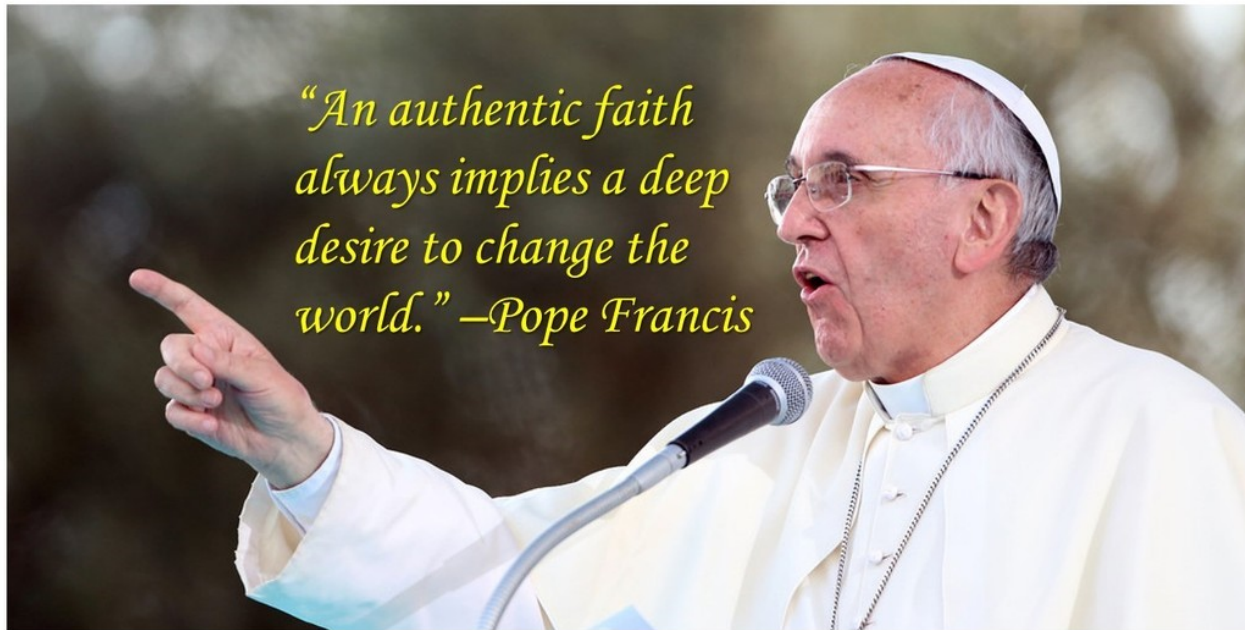
That's just it, we must move forward with love at the center of our families. We need to make peace before ending the day.

The family is the place where everything sticks – what is learned within the context of family life is engraved in our minds and hearts. We must make sure that our faith is the center of our family's heart-beat. We can be reminded of this endeavor regularly by our Parish motto, "**One Family, One Heart, One Faith**".

Let us pray that our families be rooted in compassion among each family member. Seeking what is good for the other, no matter how challenging at times because a family that prays together, not only stays together, but radiates the fullness of life.

By Kurt Zampier





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