

# Perfecost

THE SPIRIT OF RENEWAL

SAINT ANNE - SAINT CATHERINE FAITH COMMUNITY

## Reunited - Stronger - Together

*by Debbie Rhodes*

WHO KNEW??? At the beginning of March, we were in the Season of Lent, planning ahead for Holy Week and Easter being celebrated in our churches. Well, we all know that things didn't turn out the way we planned... Not for our Faith Community and certainly not for each of us individually.

But some amazing things have happened during this time apart. Through the gift of technology, we have been recording weekly Masses, messages from our clergy, praying the Rosary together and we even were able to experience Eucharistic Adoration together. We have been together – but physically distanced.

On Monday May 18th Governor Baker announced that all houses of worship could resume services with limited capacity – and many restrictions. The Archdiocese of Boston also created a set of guidelines for all parishes. Those include when public Masses can resume, cleaning requirements, distancing and traffic flow inside churches, numbers of congregants permitted to be in attendance and a series of preparations that must be met before services can take place.

Earlier this month, in anticipation of the reopening of our churches to public Mass, Father Peter and the staff decided to create a Reopening Committee with representatives from the Pastoral, Finance and Stewardship Councils, the Safety Committee and the staff. The focus of this newly formed committee is to help guide our Faith Community through the restart process, and to ensure that all of the criteria, including the checklist from the 'Places of Worship – MA Safety Department,' are met.

At the time of this writing, the Reopening Committee is working diligently reviewing the State and Archdiocesan guidelines to create a phased reopening plan for our Faith Community. The announcement that we could reopen was joyful – but came much sooner than we expected!

## Witness Talk: Selina Gibbons



*For those who don't know me, my name is Selina Gibbons. Today I am going to talk to you about my faith and the talents that God led me to discover. I have grown up in a Catholic family and have been coming to this church my entire life. God has blessed me with an amazing family. I have role models from all directions. First from my Nana, then my parents, and, most importantly, my sister.*

*I have followed the steps of my sister my entire life. My sister Sara is the one that has guided me not only in my Catholic faith but in many other aspects in life as well. That's why when it came to picking a sponsor for Confirmation, I didn't have to think twice about her being my guidance for the rest of my life. Sure, I came to church every week and prayed with my dad every night before bed, but I didn't really have a relationship with God. I started really learning about my faith and loving my faith around my adolescent years. I am going to focus on a few important people or events that have helped me strengthen my faith: my experiences as a CCD teacher and as a Eucharistic minister, my experiences at college, and my time at Steubenville East.*

*One of my first opportunities to develop my talents was in sixth or seventh grade when I started helping my sister teach a religious education class. A couple years later I started teaching my own class. Learning through the children was an amazing experience that I will never forget. Not only was I teaching them how to pray, how to exchange with God, and what our religion was all about, but they were teaching me things as well. Even my little kindergarten classes, they were asking spectacular questions, some of which I had to look up and answer*

*the next week. As a student that went through the whole religious education process, I wanted to start my students with experiences of fun so they wanted to come and learn with me. So, not only did I read passages from children Bibles, we also colored and played games - we made CCD fun. One of our favorite games is when we learn about the lost sheep. In the parable, a shepherd has 100 sheep and one day one sheep goes missing, but the shepherd doesn't overlook it and continue with the other 99 sheep, he searches for that lost sheep and brings it back home. The game is very similar to hide and seek but the shepherd is looking for his lost sheep. I like to spend a lot of time on this lesson so we play the game many times throughout the CCD year. It shows them that each of them is important to God and none of them are overlooked. Even when you are lost or off of the path that He prepared for you, He will find you and help guide you back to Him. No matter how many times or how far off the path you are, God will find you.*

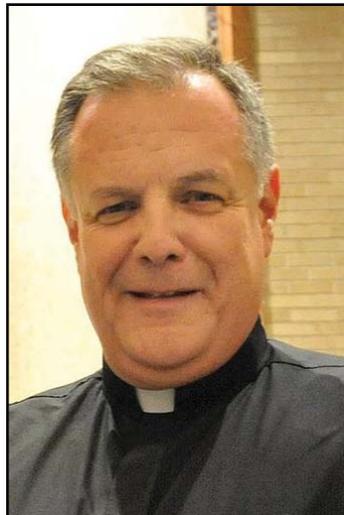
*As soon as I was confirmed, I signed up to become a Eucharistic minister. I had learned from being an altar server and being a CCD teacher that being involved in the church felt so good and made me feel so close to God. As a Eucharistic minister, not only was I serving during church, but I also joined the homebound ministry, so I served after church as well. It is a great blessing to be able to bring Jesus' body to people that are sick or just unable to leave their home. I have worked at a nursing home for years so I figured the homebound ministry wasn't too different, so I signed myself up. But this experience was different; I got to pray with people that have been praying all their lives and who have followed God all their lives. Here as well, I learned so much from these women. All three of them had all lived and ended their lives at different points, but it was an honor to get to know them and help them continue to receive Jesus and have a church experience that they had known all their lives. Just because they were unable to leave their house did not mean they should end a tradition that they had done for so many years. Through them, my relationship with God has grown so much. Each time I help offer Jesus' body at church or at homes, I feel my relationship with God strengthen.*

*At school, I have been blessed to help people continue to grow their faith or really jump into the community. I go to Mass every week with three of my school friends. Two had grown up in a religious family but didn't really go*

## A LETTER FROM FATHER JOE

# Pentecost 2020

They were a small group of followers feeling a mixture of joy, awe, shock, confusion, doubt, wonder, and fear. Sound vaguely familiar? But the power of the Holy Spirit had come upon them – and nothing would ever be the same again!!!



The Church was born when this small, frightened, traumatized group left the safety and security of the upper room, poured out into the streets, and literally risked their lives to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The beauty of God’s gift today is that it comes to us as we are. The people who listened did not need to learn a new language. Each of them spoke in his own native tongue of the mighty acts of God. The one Spirit does not obliterate the amazing diversity of the Body of Christ. To each person, the manifestation of the Spirit is given in a unique and personal way for the common good.

In the 20th chapter of John’s Gospel we see how Jesus goes right through locked doors, stands in the middle of a huddled circle of fear and breathes out peace – not just once but many times! Simply put, this means that God can help us even when we cannot help ourselves. Simply put, the means that Christ does not need a doorknob to get in. He can and does enter through locked doors; He can enter a heart that is frozen with fear, loneliness, woundedness, anger, and helplessness. He can enter our heart because there are no locked doors that can separate us from Him.

On this Pentecost 2020, we pray for the courage to let Christ into our brokenness so that he can breathe on us Peace, freedom, healing, and newness of life. Who among us does not stand in need of these amazing gifts?

This year will be one like no other for all our graduates! In the Spirit of Pentecost, we offer this Scripture and Prayer for them, their families, their teachers, and their friends:

*“I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for good and not evil, to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11*

**PRAYER FOR OUR GRADUATES**  
**May you have WISDOM in heart and mind,**  
**SUCCESS in every challenge you find,**  
**COURAGE to see life’s purpose for you,**  
**BELIEF in yourself to make it come true,**  
**STRENGTH to do your best and endure,**  
**and the guiding light of FAITH to ensure,**  
**that wherever you go, whatever you do,**  
**God’s LOVE will always see you through.**  
**AMEN! ALLELUIA!!!**

# Love in the Time of Corona: *Adrienne Cullen*



*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "PEACE BE WITH YOU." John 20: 19*

If you are like me, you've had it with coronavirus. You are tired of the social distancing, the fear, the pain and loss. We can probably each name a few specific events in our lives that have been impacted by the pandemic. For my family, it is my daughter's wedding that had to be postponed until next spring, as well as a hands-off "Welcome Home" to my son who was living in New Zealand for a year. Of course these inconveniences pale in comparison to those dealing with unemployment, homelessness, sickness and death. But we all have our own "stuff" we are dealing with amidst this crisis.

The disciples had their "stuff" as well. After Jesus' crucifixion they were terrified that they too would be killed. They basically "self-quarantined" and hid in the upper room. In John 20, we read that while they are behind locked doors, sad and afraid, Jesus comes to

them offering his peace. The walls don't prevent Jesus from coming to them. The lock can't stop him from coming to them. Their fear doesn't keep him away. Amazing! Because that means that Jesus will come to us in the same way. There are no walls we can put up or locks that can separate us from the love of Christ. We are offered that same gift of peace that the disciples were offered.

On Pentecost Sunday (May 31) we recall when the disciples are once again gathered in the upper room. But this time the Holy Spirit descends upon them filling them with courage to go forth and continue Jesus' mission. That same Spirit is active today as well. We only need to be open to receiving it. And it's powerful. So, rather than focus on what this pandemic is taking away from us, I would like to share a few things that coronavirus can't do:

## What Coronavirus Can't Do...

It can't prevent us from greeting those around us with a wave or simple "hello."

It can't stop flowers from blooming; or someone from sharing a bouquet with a neighbor.

It can't keep the sun from rising each morning; or its magnificent setting every evening.

It can't take away our free will and ability to choose life and joy.

It can't make time stand still; nor does it have the power to control how we use our time each day.

It can't take away our HOPE in Christ and the power of His resurrection.

It can't stop the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

It can't keep LOVE from permeating the most hopeless of situations.

It can't prevent us from living out our Mission.

It can't take away the peace that Jesus offers.

# Faith Community

**GOOD NEWS**
**CORNER**

On March 13th an email went out to all parishioners letting them know that Cardinal O'Malley had suspended all Masses due to the declared State of Emergency and Governor Baker's Emergency Orders resulting from the Coronavirus. Since then, in our efforts to maintain a sense of community, we had to quickly come up with ways to stay connected. In addition to regular emails, we've been working to post on our Facebook pages and Instagram, tweet on Twitter, and keep our websites updated. We also began taping masses, messages from our clergy and many other videos that we posted to our YouTube Channel.

Between March 13 – May 22, we shared:

- ▶ 11 Masses with over 13,900 views
- ▶ 10 Video Messages with over 14,710 views
- ▶ A Zoom Video by our Music Ministry with 2,100+ views
- ▶ 4 Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy Videos
- ▶ An Hour of Eucharistic Adoration on Facebook Live

In addition:

- ▶ Rita Rand received the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation on Easter Vigil.
- ▶ Father Peter celebrated his 75th birthday on May 5<sup>th</sup> with photos of parishioners pasted onto pews.

Through our email service (Flocknote) we have hosted small groups utilizing Bishop Barron's *Word on Fire* such as *Lenten Challenge*, *Unlocking Your Lent* and *He Is Risen*.

Flocknote: <https://stannestcatherinefaithco.flocknote.com/>  
 Facebook: St. Anne: <https://www.facebook.com/stannechurchlittleton>  
 St. Catherine: <https://www.facebook.com/StCatherineofAlexandriaChurch/>  
 Websites: St. Anne: [www.LittletonCatholic.org](http://www.LittletonCatholic.org)  
 St. Catherine: [www.stcatherineparish.org](http://www.stcatherineparish.org)  
 YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwDfoys8Bcp1KcldK-pvkw/about?view\\_as=public](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwDfoys8Bcp1KcldK-pvkw/about?view_as=public)  
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/StAstCFaith>  
 Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wecultivatekindness/>



For updates, visit the URLs above.

## Witness Talk: *continued from page 2*

*to church faithfully. The third friend had been baptized but couldn't remember the last time she had gone to Mass. So, when I mentioned her coming with me for a couple of weeks, she loved the idea. I am so proud of her because she has developed her faith in so many ways. When she went home for thanksgiving she even had her mom go with her to Mass in their town.*

*The last experience I am going to talk about is Steubenville. It isn't a talent but it definitely strengthened my relationship with God. Steubenville East is a conference for Catholic teenagers to talk, and learn more about God. I went my sophomore year and senior year of high school. There is music, games, and talks that make you feel empowered. I also had three great chaperones when I went. My first year I had Jeff and Julie who were our main chaperones but also had Mr. Panek since he volunteered at the whole Steubenville conference. All three of them helped*

*guide us to interpret the meaning of the conference talks, assisted us at Confession, and comforted us at Adoration. They helped guide us to empower our faith a little more that weekend.*

*I am grateful for my family and parish helping me to recognize my gifts and using them to prioritize God in my life. I felt and still feel a connection with God with everything I do. I still pray every night in my dorm, I still help offer communion when I come home, and I still go to Mass every week with three of my friends from school. My faith has been so important to me and I will continue to grow my faith.*

*Thank you for this opportunity to share my experiences with you. I hope that my talk may help you reflect on your own talents and how you may be able to share them with others and grow your faith.*

## Safety Committee



It's difficult to remember when the issue of safety in public places was not forefront in everybody's mind. We hardly remember a time when 'Safety' wasn't solely defined by the COVID-19 situation but rather responding to an incident or setting procedures to avoid incidents. Incidents such as 'crosswalk' protection, medical or fire emergencies, etc. These were and are the foci of your Safety Committee.

We are a small group made up of both Parishioners and staff that meet on a regular basis in order to discuss, identify and advise the Pastor on matters specific to the safety of our Faith Community during the activities of Mass, Prayer Services and Faith Formation. This also covers staffing times and other Parish related activities.

Specifically, our charter is:

"To advise the Pastor on how our facilities can be made safer in this ever-changing world. The focus of the Safety Committee will be on making the weekend experience as safe as possible while maintaining a level of reverence for the Holy Mass. The Safety Committee will also examine ways to make each parish facility safe and secure for staff, the Faith Formation programs and other 'Faith Community' activities."

The members of our Committee are John Boroski, Lee and Sal Deluca, Randy Fisher, Tom Kinch, Dave LeBleu and Tom Welham. To date we have advised the Pastor on matters such as:

1. Crosswalk protection at St. Catherine's.
2. Improved safety during Christmas and Thanksgiving Masses.
3. Possible improvements in discouraging 'intruders' during Weekend Masses.
4. Better identification of safety equipment (fire extinguishers, emergency telephones, emergency exits, AED devices, etc.)

With the recent slight relaxation of restrictions due to our current situation, a committee has been formed to study and recommend the safest re-opening of the activities of our Faith Community. Although the timing of this re-opening is still not determined, and is a long way away from being fulfilled, we must begin the planning process now! The Safety Committee will be members of this activity.

Once returned to 'somewhat normal' the Safety Committee will continue its efforts to accomplish the charter of the group and 'look' for and recommend continued and improved safety to our Faith Community.

*God is our refuge  
and our strength,  
an ever-present  
help in distress.  
Psalm 46:2*

# Stewardship Renewal 2020

## *Stewardship at Home*

Developing a culture of stewardship in your home is not always easy. It may take time, dedication, and hard work. But ultimately, it aligns with God's desire for you and your family. So how do you begin walking down this path?

Here are a few suggestions to get started.

### **1. POINT TO GOD AS THE OWNER.**

Try to use language around the house that reflects your understanding of God's ownership of everything. Talk about and thank God for the things He has given you.

### **2. DON'T BE WASTEFUL.**

And teach your children to do the same. Certainly, this saves money, but it also shows that you value the things God provides.

### **3. TALK ABOUT LIVING GENEROUSLY.**

Have conversations with your spouse and children about what you can do and wish you could do for others. Talk about the needs around you and how the family might be able to help.

### **4. HOLD EVERYTHING LOOSELY.**

Be ready and willing to use your resources for others. Have the family earmark time or things to give to others. Make "giving day" a family event.

### **5. MAKE GENEROSITY FUN.**

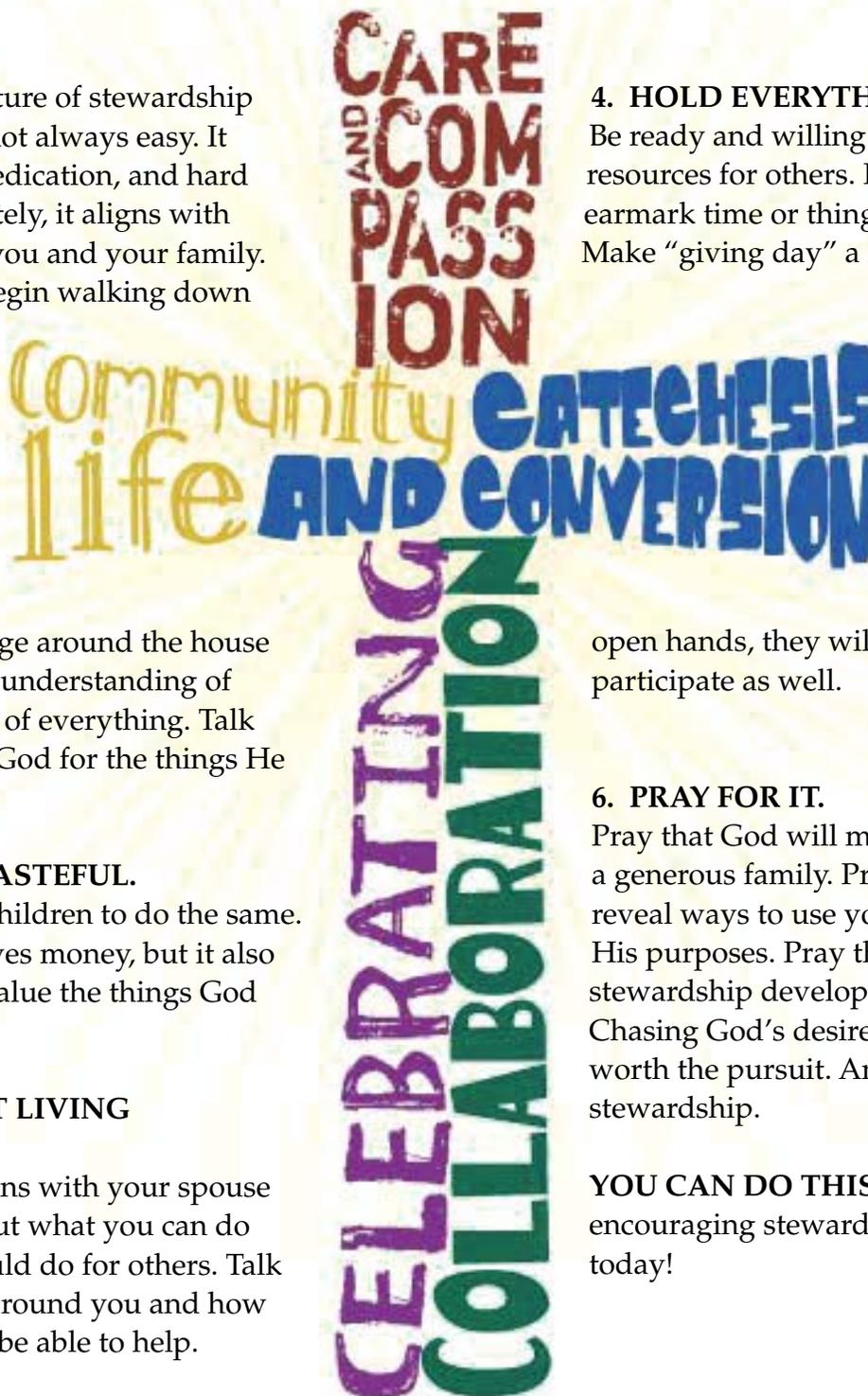
Because it is! And when your children see you having fun, living with

open hands, they will want to participate as well.

### **6. PRAY FOR IT.**

Pray that God will make your family a generous family. Pray that He will reveal ways to use your resources for His purposes. Pray that a culture of stewardship develops in your home. Chasing God's desire is always worth the pursuit. And so it is with stewardship.

**YOU CAN DO THIS.** Start encouraging stewardship at home today!



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The Summer Worship Schedule is still being reviewed in light of Governor Baker's and the Archdiocese recent announcements. As soon as the Reopening Committee has a viable plan in place, we will communicate that in every way possible.

## Reunited - Stronger - Together *continued from page 1*

We have been advised by the Archdiocese not to feel obligated or pressured to begin the celebration of Masses until we are fully prepared to do so. Additionally, the Cardinal reminded us that the emergency dispensation from the Sunday obligation for the faithful is extended for the foreseeable future. Keeping all of that in mind, and due to the size of our Faith Community, it may take some additional time to come up with an approach that ensures the health, safety and well-being of all parishioners.

We are as anxious as you are to get back into our churches! We ask for your understanding and patience. We will keep you informed as we move forward. Soon we will be



# REUNITED - STRONGER - TOGETHER

