

St. Ann WATCH News

Fall Edition—2013

Piety/Study/Action

President's Message



By Denise
Henderson

An attitude of
gratitude sums it up
best as I sit here
reflecting on many
different blessings

for which I am grateful.

The “vision” still on my mind is the mountain of generosity – more commonly known as bags of shoes! Yes, this year’s Shoes for Water project has come to a close. In September, we turned over 13,119 pairs of shoes (plus nine bags of singles) to WaterStep! WaterStep has shared with us that a typical collection by a group outside of their area averages anywhere from 200 – 8,000 pairs of shoes. In our first two years, we have exceeded their expectations. Our spirits were buoyed by the stories people shared with us and the creativity that they displayed in their collection efforts. This project has been a tremendous group effort to help others. We will never meet the people we are helping. However, we are thankful all the same for the chance to help others.

I am grateful for this program called WATCH that continues to help me grow in my faith journey and has given me the opportunity to meet and learn from many of you as you share your personal journey of faith. While I personally was not able to attend September’s Fanning the Flame, I was encouraged by the feedback. Some of the comments were “It

helped me in my journey to refocus” or “I needed this time to reflect – please continue” and “The feeling of community that we get by being together outside of weekly Mass.” Later this fall, the WATCH community will reunite so we can continue to grow and encourage each other. As soon as a date is set, the information will be in the bulletin.

This summer, I had the honor of being the board advisor for JAM. I was touched and renewed when listening to the talks (given mostly by teens), but most importantly, by witnessing their actions from where I sat at the back table. This event was an incredible, high energy, faith-filled weekend and as I know everyone there can attest to, the Holy Spirit was present. I learned so much from these teens and am grateful for their openness and willingness to share.

It was a very busy summer for WATCH, so I am grateful for a dedicated board. Many of them have managed multiple tasks in recent times, especially in August, and have done so selflessly. In the near future, our board will be changing. We will be saying farewell to friends who have shared their time and their talents and welcoming new faces who will bring new ideas.

Take the time to reflect on the good things in your life every day. One of the songs from the JAM weekend that continues to resonate with me was “Love, Love, Love” by Sidewalk Prophets. I think in each of these blessings, that love shines brightly. Let yourself feel the goodness and love surrounding you!



2013 Summary

The WATCH Board would like to thank everyone who made this year's shoe drive a success. With our co-sponsor, The Iona Group, we collected 13,119 pairs of shoes of which 2,600 came from St. Ann. This accomplishment was truly a community effort.

Our parishioners displayed generosity and creativity throughout the drive. Many people brought in shoes and prayed for our success. The shoes came in shoe boxes, large boxes, garbage bags, laundry baskets, car and truck loads, and in carts. Other people inspired us with their ingenuity in collecting and getting shoes to us. Annie's Attic donated their leftover shoes. A young man went to garage sales in his neighborhood, leaving his contact information, and then collected leftover shoes. One of our parishioners used his neighborhood association's website to collect shoes. Another parishioner collected shoes at her high school class reunion. A family put up a sign in their local library and the donations poured in. We received a large box of shoes in the mail from a woman in Moline. A woman from Champaign delivered leftover shoes from her parish's garage sale to The Iona Group in Morton. Fr. Terry's friend, Fr. Mizeur from Henry, made a substantial donation. We even saw a person driving, see a shoe from the middle of the parking lot, stop, and retrieve it. We received everything from new shoes with tags, to old shoes with holes and no soles.

Volunteers came from St. Ann, The Iona Group, Teens Encounter Christ, Morton Boy Scout Troop #309, Limestone High School's Key Club and other individuals from the community who heard about the project and wanted to help. They took all the collected shoes and paired them by tying or rubber banding the shoes together. The shoes were then counted, put into bags, and delivered to a storage unit in Morton.

On September 11th, the shoes were picked up by a semi-trailer and delivered to WaterStep in Louisville, Kentucky. WaterStep then shipped the shoes to its exporter in Florida. The usable shoes will be sold to microbusinesses in poor nations. These microbusinesses then sell the shoes at extremely low prices to those people who have no shoes. These shoes will prevent foot injuries from roads or thorns, which in turn prevents infections and the spreading of germs that cause disease. The unusable and single shoes are sold to a recycler who will shred them, using this product for soft blacktops and ground covering for playgrounds. WaterStep uses the money earned from these shoes to purchase water treatment systems that will provide clean drinking water for people who currently do not have it, to offer health and hygiene education as well as to train people who are going into areas with unclean water. Additionally, in just two years, this local drive has kept over 22,000 pairs of shoes from entering the local landfills.

Again, the WATCH Board would like to thank everyone who helped make this drive a success. It truly was a group effort to help others we will never meet.





Celebrating the end of the Shoes for Water Project

People Who Make a Difference

By Ed Tallon

The months of August and September were busy for WATCH. The Shoe Drive, JAM and Fanning the Flames all required tremendous efforts from a variety of people. As I reflected on these events, I realized that without the support and prayers of the St. Ann Parish Community WATCH could have never made any one of these undertakings a winner. However, because of the actions of the St. Ann family, all three of these activities were successful. Therefore, the people who make a difference for this newsletter are the St. Ann Parish community.

The past months confirmed what I already knew – St. Ann is a great parish because of its people. The people are always ready to lend a hand, use their talents whenever possible, and lift each other up. I was heavily involved with the Shoes for Water Project. The generosity and creativity of our community was overwhelming. People brought in shoes each mass with good cheer. Your contribution to the Shoes for Water Project went beyond the shoes you placed in the box at the Narthex. Personally, what helped raise my spirit were the smiles and words of encouragement that I received as I was pairing and counting shoes

before and after masses. Your kindness and support kept me going at times when to be honest, I did not care to see another shoe.

The young people of the parish stepped up for JAM. They took leadership roles, delivered outstanding talks, and gave of themselves to help younger teens along their faith journey. Additionally, we were blessed to have many adults who helped in numerous ways. Some adults gave up an entire weekend to serve on the JAM team. Others helped prepare meals for the group and clean the kitchen. We had adults who gave up at least an hour to pray in the chapel for the team and candidates.

Finally, we had a great morning of spiritual renewal at Fanning the Flames. The speakers and kitchen crew freely gave of their talents. We had an audience who actively participated in discussion, sharing their faith and insights with each other. The morning brought people closer to God and each other.

The common theme in all of these activities was that they were times when the community came together to share its faith and talents in order to create a successful event. The efforts of the WATCH board would be for naught without the support, participation, prayers, and encouragement of our faith community. The people of St. Ann Parish are truly people who make a difference.

SAVE THE DATE!

November 2013 – Nuts Sale
March 21-23, 2014 – WATCH #17



Fanning the Flames Review



Fanning the Flames was held on Saturday, September the 7th. It was a morning of faith, fellowship, fun, and food for about 40 people. The day began with mass in the church. The group then went to the Parish Hall for a light breakfast. The program began with three speakers. Rick Moon, Lourdes Delgado-Serrano, and Fr. Terry all shared their thoughts on ways to improve one's prayer life and help keep God at the center of our lives. The talks led to fruitful table discussions. After the talks, Sr. Judith led the group in prayer. The day ended with lunch. It was a morning of spiritual renewal and community building. Thanks to the speakers, kitchen crew, and participants for making Fanning the Flames a success.

Book Review - *Heaven is for Real* by Todd Burpo

By Paul Henderson

All Christians have the goal to enter heaven after they die. But what is heaven like? We believe that God lives in heaven. Genesis 14:19 states, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth." So God created heaven and earth, but what is heaven really like? The apostle John writes in the book of Revelation (Rev 4) that he saw God's "Throne in Heaven" as he looked through heaven's open door. In Chapter 21 of Revelation, John describes the new heaven and new earth. John says there will be "no more death or mourning or crying or pain". Verses 11-14 says, "It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like

that of a very precious jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

But again, what is heaven really like? Will our family members be there? Will we recognize them? How will they recognize me? What about my favorite pet? What does Jesus look like? Are we old in heaven? What about children who die, are they in heaven too? What about the Angels and Satan? We all have questions about heaven. Over the years, several books have been written about "near-death" experiences. One of those books is *Heaven is for Real* by Todd Burpo. This book was a #1 New York Times Best Seller, selling over 3 million copies. I learned of this book when it was mentioned in a Cursillo talk that I heard a couple of years ago. It explains Colton Burpo's trip to heaven and back. He explains what he saw, who he saw, and what he did in heaven as he recounted his experience in heaven. The book is written over several years as Burpo explains what he saw in bits and pieces over this time period. I've read a couple of books and articles recounting the "near-death" experience. I feel this book is one of the best in this area. It is an easy read, and you will probably not put it down once you start reading it. There is also a children's version, *Heaven is for Real for Kids* written by a child for a child. I hope you enjoy this book as I have. Happy reading.



YOUR AMERICAN RED CROSS

By Sherry Killian

With a mission that began on Civil War battlefields, The American Red Cross has evolved into a 21st century organization, embracing new technology and infrastructure, while relying on the compassion that has fueled its work for more than 130 years. Through decades of service, The American Red Cross has developed disaster relief, service to the military, blood collection and distribution, preparedness, and health and safety training. Its mission at the international, national, and local levels remains the same: to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Every day of the year, The American Red Cross is preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies. Because emergencies occur all the time in many places, The American Red Cross never takes a break. This continuous effort is necessary because the work it does is vital, at times meaning the difference between life and death.

Every day The Red Cross is focused on its mission activities. One example of its activities is helping families find a warm place to stay after a house fire. Collecting 40 percent of the nation's blood supply because almost every two seconds someone in our country needs it is another mission. Furthermore, The Red Cross provides support for military families with items such as emergency financial assistance, comfort items in the hospital, and information and courses on coping with deployment. Finally, the Red Cross is first up at the 70,000 disasters that range from floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes, wherever and whenever they occur.

Our Blood Services regions hold about 200,000 blood drives each year, supplying 9 million blood products. Approximately 20% of the Red Cross' blood supply comes from high school and college blood drives, Today, the American Red Cross has instituted pint size

hero drives, meaning grade school children are playing their part in blood collection.

I am passionate about The American Red Cross and blood donation because it is bringing to life the great commandment. "Love one another as I have loved you." To know that my blood can save a life, can help give another day to at least three other people - what a high, what joy. It is not an accident that there is no artificial blood. It is the plan, God's plan, that we must care for one another in all things.

November 4th will be our next blood drive, and as always, the St. Ann community will lead the way as a Christian Community in Action living out the gospel message.

See you there!!

Music Review – *Overcomer* by Mandisa By Katie Jackson



I will be doing a music review on Mandisa's new album. Her album is titled *Overcomer*. It has 11 tracks. The song that really spoke to me is called "Overcomer". I really love this song, because no matter what challenges that I will face in life, I will overcome them. The music video for the song is just as inspirational as the song. The video features U.S. Congresswoman Gabriel Giffords, Captain Mark Kelly, Olympic gold medalist skater Scott Hamilton, and Good Morning America's Robin Roberts. Each of these people has faced daunting challenges and persevered. They are all overcomers. The song goes hand in hand with 1 John 5:4-5, which says, "For whoever is begotten by God conquers the world. And the victory that conquers our world is faith. Who (indeed) is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" It reminds us that we all are Overcomers. With our faith and Jesus by our side, we can overcome anything. I am an Overcomer. You are an Overcomer. I highly recommend listening to this album. I love all of the songs on this album. I will end this review with a quote from Mandisa. She said through the M collective, "I recorded both the song and album to fuel faith, empower people, and remind those facing a battle, what all of our strength, power, and weapons of warfare that they need is readily available to them. We are all overcomers."



Struggle is Good! I Want to Fly!

Once a little boy was playing outdoors and found a fascinating caterpillar. He carefully picked it up and took it home to show his mother. He asked his mother if he could keep it, and she said he could if he would take good care of it. The little boy got a large jar from his mother. He put plants to eat and a stick to climb on in the jar. Every day he watched the caterpillar and brought it new plants to eat. One day the caterpillar climbed up the stick and started acting strangely. The boy worriedly called his mother who came and understood that the caterpillar was creating a cocoon. The mother explained to the boy how the caterpillar was going to go through a metamorphosis and become a butterfly. The little boy was thrilled to hear about the changes his caterpillar would go through.

He watched every day, waiting for the butterfly to emerge. One day it happened, a small hole appeared in the cocoon and the butterfly started to struggle to come out. At first the boy was excited, but soon he became concerned. The butterfly was struggling so hard to get out! It looked like it couldn't break free! It looked desperate! It looked like it was making no progress! The boy was so concerned he decided to help. He ran to get scissors, and then walked back (because he had learned not to run with scissors...). He snipped the cocoon to make the hole bigger and the butterfly quickly emerged! As the butterfly came out the boy was surprised. It had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. He continued to watch the butterfly expecting that, at any moment, the wings would dry out, enlarge and expand to support the swollen body. He knew that in time the body would shrink and the butterfly's wings would expand. But neither happened! The butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly...

As the boy tried to figure out what had gone wrong, his mother took him to talk to a scientist from a local college. He learned that the butterfly was **SUPPOSED** to struggle. In fact, the butterfly's struggle to push its way through the tiny opening of the cocoon pushes the fluid out of its body and into its wings. Without the struggle, the butterfly would never, ever fly. The boy's good intentions hurt the butterfly.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. Going through life with no obstacles would cripple us. We will not be as strong as we could have been and we would never fly. As you go through life, keep in mind that struggling is an important part of any growth experience. In fact, it is the struggle that causes you to develop your ability to fly. God's gift to you is stronger wings...



Nuts Sale Returns

WATCH will once again be selling nuts for the holiday season. Sales will begin in the middle of November. These nuts make great gifts or the main ingredients in your holiday treats. Details will be provided in upcoming church bulletins.