Fall, 2026

THE MESSENGER

Newsletter of Saint Francis de Sales Parish, Manhattan



(Pixabay/Dimitris Vetsikas)

"God sustains this great world through continual change:
day gives way to night, spring to summer, summer to autumn,
autumn to winter, and winter again to spring.
No day is ever completely like another.
Some are cloudy, others rainy, dry, or windy.
It is precisely this variety that gives
such great beauty to the universe."

—St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life, Part IV, Chapter 13

Enough! Ça suffit! ¡Basta ya!

Ana María González Puente

Let's eliminate indifference to human suffering
Let's eliminate prejudices toward another country, race
Let's eliminate poverty
Let's eliminate intolerance
Let's eliminate resentments, hatred
Let's eliminate all nonsense and get back to our senses.
Let's start with inner peace
Let's start with our neighbors
Let's start with our colleagues
And then let's move to our enemies
Let's get into our souls and change ourselves
There is no waiting. There is no tomorrow.
Let's show true compassion to the newcomer.
Let's get very real now about peace.
Peace means letting everybody have a voice
Peace means tolerance
Peace means compassion
Peace means eliminating our own emotional baggage
Peace means caring for our fellow human beings
Peace means respecting diversity.
Let's get very real now about peace.
There is a loud cry for acceptance,
For being treated with dignity and respect,

For a sense of belonging to a community, an organization, a nation.
Let's not pretend we are deaf.
Let's hear and listen to the loud cry.
Let's be part of the peace process.
Let's start today. What about yesterday?
Enough! Ça suffit! ¡Basta ya!

This poem was posted on the United Nations Headquarters Intranet (UNHQ) New York on 16 March 2017.

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IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL

Thoughts from the Pastor

Rev. Philip J. Kelly

Recently Pope Leo came out with an encyclical entitled "Magnifica Humanitas" or in English, "Magnificent Humanity, On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence." The Pope has prophetically seized the moment by drawing attention to the grave dangers inherent in the unrestricted use of artificial intelligence. Drawing from the riches of Scripture and Tradition, the Pope outlines the importance of not allowing the use of technology to replace the gift of our humanity. The encyclical has earned much praise for its defense of the dignity of the human person. We, like the Pope, recognize and celebrate the advances won by technology in terms of improving the quality of our lives. Equally so, we have witnessed the dangers present in an overreliance upon technology. We have seen social skills erode, community weaken, and depression increase as we rely increasingly upon technology to attend to our needs.



At the heart of the human person is a profound need for community. The God we worship is one contained within a trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If we speak of a Christian anthropology, it is based on this paradigm of unity within the diversity of human relationships. The Church at its center is rooted in the understanding that we have been called uniquely by God to belong to God and one another. As we gather each Sunday, we continue to be formed as this community and to give praise to God and witness to the world of God's presence and love. Considering this, we recognize the need not only to physically show up but to be present to one another in away that transcends superficiality.

We as a parish want to deepen the ties that bind us in a significant way this year. We have asked our Parish Council to launch a campaign called Count Me In. Its purpose is to encourage each member of the parish to find a way to become more integrated in the life of the parish. For each person that will vary in terms of time and ability,

But the call is the same for each baptized Christian, to live the call to service in a way that makes sense for them. Week one will concentrate on registration, making sure that each person is registered as a part of the family that is St.Francis de Sales. The second week will address how we support the mission of the Church, and the third week concentrates on how we share our talents in building up the Body of Christ here on 96th Street. While we will do this over the course of a few weeks, we expect that it will be an ongoing process throughout the year as we encourage one another in discipleship.



As we begin this campaign, I would ask each of us to pray for the success of our project. Secondly, I would ask that you bring to prayer the intention of discernment in terms of how best you can be of service to God through this, your parish family. I hear regularly from new and current parishioners alike of how warm and welcoming they find our parish to be. We know that we have something very special here that nurtures each of us in our spiritual journey. Let us practice gratitude by not only thanking God but putting into action our baptismal call to be of joyful service as we say at the conclusion of every Mass,

PONDERINGS ON AUTUMN

Jayne Porcelli



A few weeks ago, I finally had to give in and put on warm clothes. Jeans, long sleeve flannel shirt, socks and sneakers have finally replaced shorts, t-shirts, sandals and sundresses. For those of you who love fall, your time is here. I'm a summer baby and I'm going to miss the warm weather and beach days. How can I move gracefully into these days of autumnal colors and scents?

My personality is usually more of a 'glass half full' person I hope. I'm not a fan of sad endings and, while I grew up in the land of 'Italian goodbyes', I've gotten really good at practicing the "Irish goodbye". So it's no surprise to me that I find autumn, at first glance, a bit sad. Everything about our natural world around us is getting colder and, dare I say, dying. Oftentimes our behavior reflects the reality we're living in. As we walk the city streets bundled up against the cold and the wind we move along quickly without taking the time to look into the faces of the folks we're traveling with.

When I stop to reflect on these months I am reminded that all of life is a process that can't be stopped and dying is a part of that process. Then God reminds me that I don't need to be afraid of endings. Sometimes they can be filled with beauty and the promise of something new to come.

There's no denying the beauty in our autumn season here in the Northeast. The vivid colors, the warm smells of fireplaces, cinnamon and pumpkin spice (there's a whole other debate on this I know, but that's not for this reflection) The tastes of crisp new apples and warm casseroles, all are gifts to be celebrated and grateful for.

The last few weeks our scriptures reminded us that we can stand solidly in faith at the banquet or in the vineyard and be thankful for what we have lived here, as we look forward to paradise. We know that resurrection is our hope and God's promise to us. Oftentimes when I hear these readings I want to believe that I'm the wedding guest ready to enter, well prepared for the King's party, or the humble servant who doesn't mind that others receive the same reward as me. Honestly though, I'm not that good at all. Are you?

The next few weeks our readings will speak about the Pharisees and Sadducees and their quest to trick Jesus into saying something against their civil and religious authorities. How odd that these readings appear in our cycle while our city and country get ready to go to the voting booths once again. Jesus makes it abundantly clear that as citizens of both heaven and earth we have a duty to be informed on the issues that confront us (give Ceasar what belongs to Ceasar), as well as an obligation to care for those who need extra help (the greatest commandment-Love God, love your neighbor as yourself). How do we choose our leaders? Jesus says no one should be called Rabbi/teacher or Master-rather the greatest leader among us should be a humble servant to all. Can we find a humble leader in the midst of all those television ads? Do we use the tenets of Catholic social teachings to help guide our choices?



PONDERINGS ON AUTUMN

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As the calendar progresses I can see how autumn and the way the church helps us move through the 'end times' is God's way of trying to help me make peace with the reality that I am not the one in charge of the universe. I'm always surprised how difficult a lesson this is for me to learn and live out of.

I know I'm not the only one because anxiety is such an enormous concern for many of us, young and old. Society and global concerns do nothing to alleviate this anxiousness.

If you are familiar with the Broadway show "Come From Away" you will understand this example. In the story, folks from different cultures with different languages are trying to communicate. One notices the other has a Bible on her lap. He borrows it and finds the scripture passage from Philippians 4, to paraphrase "be anxious for nothing". He uses this as a way to help her relax and they begin to help one another.

St Paul says:
"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and by petition, with thanksgiving make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus... keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you. (Phil 4:6-9)

If we can take St Paul at his word then even when chaos swirls around us, if we can keep our hearts centered on Jesus, we can find peace.

Consider this your invitation from the Divine Master to lean into all the mysteries that our NYC Fall days offer you. Enjoy every moment of these brisk, delicious days and put aside some time to reflect upon what endings mean to you in your heart, in your life. Look for those servant leaders who may be among us, hoping to make our world better for the many. Make peace with the unknown. Give up the illusion of control and let God surprise you these next few months!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What season of life am I experiencing right now? Autumn reminds us that change is inevitable. What changes, transitions, or endings am I experiencing? Am I resisting them, or am I discovering something new that God may be inviting me to embrace?

2. What am I holding on to that I need to place in God's hands? We often want to control what happens in our lives, our families, our Church, and our world. Where is my need for control keeping me from trusting God? What might letting go look like?

3. Where do I find peace when life becomes uncertain? St. Paul reminds us to bring our concerns to God through prayer and thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6–9). What causes me anxiety or worry? What helps me recognize God's presence and find peace, even when circumstances haven't changed?

4. What does it mean to be a servant of others in today's world? Jesus reminds us that true leadership is found in humility and service. Where do I see examples of servant leadership in my community? How can my faith and Catholic social teaching shape the way I participate in society and respond to the needs of others?



Photos-Jayne Porcelli

MUSIC THAT LEADS THE PEOPLE TO GOD

An interview with *Noelle Wilmott, Cantor*

When Noelle Wilmott stands before the congregation at St. Francis de Sales, she is not simply singing. She is watching the people in front of her.

“I see people hungry for God,” she says. “They are touched. They are burdened. They want to do more. I see it with my own eyes.”

Music has been part of Noelle’s life since childhood. She began singing in the third grade and was soloing by the time she was about eighteen. Over the years, that gift took her from church choirs and school productions into professional recording and international performance.

Noelle has sung with gospel ensembles, toured in Europe and other parts of the world, and performed with or alongside artists including Josh Groban, Alicia Keys and CeCe Winans. Her professional work has also included vocal sessions connected with performers such as Lena Horne and Aretha Franklin. Those experiences sharpened her voice and gave her a deep understanding of how music can reach people in very different settings.

Yet when Noelle talks about cantoring, she talks less about performance and more about ministry.

She began serving as a cantor more than twenty years ago at St. Joseph Church, first singing in the gospel choir and eventually cantoring regularly. At St. Francis de Sales, she sees music as a way of helping people enter more deeply into prayer.

“I’m reaching people through music,” she says. “My voice, my music, can lead others to God.”
Noelle wants the congregation to be more than an audience. She wants people to sing, clap, respond and feel comfortable expressing their faith.



“I want them to feel free,” she says, “to get lost in the words of the psalms and the Scriptures.”

Sometimes people approach her after Mass and tell her they were surprised by what they experienced. Some visitors say they did not expect to find this kind of energy in a Catholic church. Others speak about returning with family members. For Noelle, those conversations matter because they show that music can open a door for someone who may have come to church carrying questions, burdens or even a little hesitation.

For Noelle, those moments show what music can do.

“Music is presence,” she says. It creates an atmosphere that can help people become more aware of God and more connected to one another.

And although Noelle has spent much of her life developing her own voice, her hope for the parish is larger than that.

“Everyone’s gifts are important,” she says. “We have to get everyone’s voice heard and appreciate everyone’s talents and gifts.”

That may be the best description of her ministry. Noelle may begin the song, but what she really wants is for the whole church to join in.

WITH FULL HEARTS AND FULL VOICES

An interview with *Edward Washington II, Cantor*

If you have heard Edward Washington II cantor at St. Francis de Sales, you already know that he does not approach music timidly. He sings with energy, conviction, and a clear sense that worship is meant to involve everyone in the room.

That confidence came by a winding road.

Edward was born in England while his father served in the U.S. Air Force and spent much of his childhood in Saudi Arabia. As a Christian there, public worship was limited, and singing had to be quiet. Music was still very much part of family life. His mother is a gospel singer, his grandfather was a Baptist preacher, and other relatives sang as well.

Edward, though, did not picture himself becoming a singer. He was more interested in sports and in playing clarinet. That changed during his senior year at Niceville High School in Florida, when a chorus teacher took an interest in him and pushed him to develop his voice. A professor from Stetson University later heard him perform and encouraged him to audition. Edward did, was accepted, and found himself studying classical voice.

It became his profession.

His path into church music came later. During college he encountered a more formal style of liturgical worship and began to understand the role of the cantor. He eventually served at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore and continued singing in churches as he moved through Arizona and, later, New York.

St. Francis de Sales was not originally supposed to become his regular church home. He came because of the music, the beauty of the church, and a growing interest in Catholic worship. He was especially impressed by Travis Bloom and his ability, as Edward puts it, to "usher the spirit in on a dime."

Then he began listening to the homilies. "The first couple of sermons, I was like, yeah, this is where I want to be."

Edward first joined the choir and watched before stepping forward as a cantor. From the front of the church, he says, he can see that people want to participate, even when they are hesitant. That is why he often urges the congregation to sing "with full hearts and full voices."

"There is just nothing like the sound of a bunch of Christians worshiping God at the same time."

That line captures Edward's approach well. He wants worship to be real, not cautious or self-conscious. He describes his own ministry as "fervent."

The Celebration of the Eucharist has also become central to his faith. Communion, he says, is the part of the liturgy that speaks most deeply to him and strengthens his sense of connection to God and to the people around him.

That sense of community became especially important while his fiancée was experienced a serious illness. Edward continued to cantor, and simple gestures from parishioners — a smile, a word of encouragement, a conversation after Mass — stayed with him.

His challenge to himself, and perhaps to the rest of us, is simple: "God before my comfort."

For Edward, that means showing up fully, worshiping boldly, and not being afraid to mean what we sing.



HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY?

THE HOPE WALK

Patricia Latona, Social Justice Ministry



"Everyone in the whole world carries an indivisible bucket. You have a bucket; each member of your family has a bucket; your friends and neighbors have buckets. You feel happy when your bucket is full, but sad when it is not. Other people can fill your bucket and you can fill theirs. So how do you fill a bucket? You fill a bucket when you show love to someone whom you say or do something kind. But guess what? When you fill someone's bucket, you fill your own bucket, too! It doesn't matter how young or old you are. It doesn't cost money. It doesn't take much time! So why not decide to be a bucket filler today...and every day! Have You Filled a Bucket Today (McCloud, 2016).

So now you muse: why begin an article with quotes from a children's book? I believed reminding you, with a simple yet profound story, of the saying "it's better to give than receive" your curiosity would be peaked. Yes? Yet research shows when we are compassionate and show kindness, filling others buckets, there are definite benefits to our emotional well-being, our own happiness, filling our own buckets. And now the story of our Hope Walk.

Since the spring of 2022, when the Hope Walk was initiated at SFDS, parishioners, students and parents, neighbors have walked the streets of our neighborhood offering food, sharing simple stories and praying with those in need. For the past 44 months we have filled 1,056 bags with sandwiches, drinks, snacks. During the winter months we offer hats, gloves, scarves. On the second Saturday of every month, except in the summer, we meet in the church hall at 10am. Working as a team we make 24 sandwiches and assemble 24 bags. And every month we give out all 24 bags!

Some months it takes longer to assemble and distribute the food because we have too few helpers. This past September there were only 4 assembling and 3 parishioners who walked offering food and praying. Yet they distributed all 24 bags. So think of it.....in the past 4 years we have staved off a bit of hunger and prayed with 1056 people in our neighborhood. We have filled a lot of buckets! Agree?



The Hope Walks do not just change the lives of the people we meet—they profoundly impact our volunteers as well. Here is what a few of our volunteers had to say about their experiences, sharing the moments that touched their hearts:

"Near the end of our Hope Walk this past September, we met a man who looked deeply downcast. His face lit up when we offered him food, and he accepted two of our prepared bags. When we offered a prayer, he gave us a quiet nod. As he walked away, I saw a tear in his eye. Though he spoke few words, his silent gratitude spoke volumes—you could simply feel how much that brief moment meant to him."



HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY?
THE HOPE WALK

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"While handing out brown-bagged lunches on the southbound FDR off-ramp, I met Jeff. After welcoming a prayer of hope, he pointed across the busy highway and asked, "Hey, don't forget about John over there—can you bring him a sandwich too?"
When I approached John and called him by name, he was initially defensive, asking how I knew who he was. As soon as I mentioned that Jeff had sent me, his face softened. "Aw, yeah, we watch out for each other," he said gratefully. Mentioning to him that we represented St. Francis de Sales Church just up the block; I offered him a prayer. What deeply touched my heart was witnessing two people on the streets of NYC with no worldly possessions looking out for one another. They were a true gift to me that day, and a reminder that compassion thrives in the most unexpected places."



"I am often reminded of a mother we met sitting on a stoop. She appeared to be experiencing a difficult time. We stopped and offered her food and prayer. She then revealed that earlier that day she had decided to give up on her faith. But went on to say that soon thereafter she found a medallion of the cross in the street, which she believed to be a profound sign.
And, then we came along which I believed was the validation she needed to stay strong and remain in her faith. As we said our goodbyes, her eyes filled with tears of gratitude; a beautiful reminder of how timing and faith work together."

"While walking through East Harlem our team encountered a homeless man in dire straits and in much need of attention. I offered him a sandwich, which he gladly accepted. The team joined me in praying with him, during which his eyes filled with tears, revealing his gratitude. We had never walked as far as 106 St, but I firmly believe our Lord guided us toward that young man."



"During one of our Hope Walks, we met a man in very poor condition, listless. His clothes were tattered, and he had wounds on his swollen face and elbows. We gave him food and water, asking if we could pray with him. He agreed. Immediately after the prayer, it was like a light-bulb moment. Filled with an unexpected burst of energy he took off suddenly remembering somewhere he needed to be. For us it was a remarkable transformation—moving from a state of total exhaustion on the ground to being energized and on his feet with a newfound purpose. Was it the prayers, the food?"

Now that you have a glimpse into our monthly Hope Walk sojourns through East Harlem and the UES, won't you please consider volunteering with us whenever you can. Remember, the Hope Walk takes place every month on the second Saturday. And to those who are reading this and have volunteered...THANK YOU!

WHY I BECAME CATHOLIC?

Alejandro Colas



There was once a time where I described my coming to the faith as me “falling in love” with Jesus. Over time however, I have come to the realization that I did not initiate the contact between us. Rather, I was given eyes to see a love that had permeated my soul since my birth, and without my knowing. Since as long as I could remember, I had not believed in a God. For most of my teenage and adult life, I actively scorned religion as something that, perhaps at one time, had a place in society, but had run its course by permitting lapses in rationality and outright evil in many cases.

As a result, like many young men, I was taken in by the ways of the world. Surely I had a conscience that could tell me when things were just and unjust. But justice is only one part of the picture; Mercy comes from Christ, and it was something that I, much like the world, lacked. A world with such wealth disparity, warmongering politicians and widespread hatred was a world that I had believed could not be as a result of a god. With no obvious role models to look up to in my personal life or in the media I consumed, I had built the foundation of my life on nothing but sand.

After graduating high school, I had found myself disassociating from any and all friends I had made throughout my life. I spent years isolated, accomplishing nothing I could be proud of as I grumbled about the hideous state of the world. All the while my mother, who was diagnosed with breast cancer when I was quite young, was now steadily approaching the end of her life. Despite that, the love she poured out onto me while in the emergency room will haunt me. It haunts me because it is a love I never showed her, or anyone in my life to that point. I can barely remember the amount of
times I have said “I love you” to my mother, my father, or any other person up until that point. Needless to say, I couldn’t stop uttering those words when she was gone. Prior to her passing however, I had a brief panic attack about the state of my life. I anxiously tried to reconnect to old friends I had known, apologizing for falling off the map suddenly. The response was simple: They forgave me and were never mad at me. They loved me.

And so I learned to say that word to my friends in earnest as I do to this day, and I learned that love is what transforms the world and makes existence have meaning. It was at this moment that God decided that I was ready know him by name, and so I read the scriptures. As I read the gospels I got to see the picture of a role model who lived with a purpose, healing the sick and standing up for justice, while teaching mercy to those who would use the law to condemn others. I heard a tale of a man who rebuked false prophets and greedy money lenders who looked to deceive others for gain, completely destroying my preconceived notions about Christianity that had come about as a result of prosperity gospel preachers and Americanized evangelicalism. I saw a complete and cohesive narrative that had been prophesied for generations. Beyond all however, I felt the impeachable love the Father has for us. It must have been half way through the book of John (which mentions love more than any other gospel), that I was willing to confess that Jesus is Lord.





WHY I BECAME CATHOLIC?

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It was at this time, after some research into the Catholic faith in particular that I was called to Saint Francis de Sales Church. The timing God chose was not random either, given the fact that it was at this point that my father was withering away in front of my eyes from cancer. It was not a shock to me – I had seen this all before just a year prior with my mother. Beyond that, I was unemployed and living off of a budget of $7 - $10 a day. I did not despair however, because I had something I never possessed: Faith, and love for my creator. The RCIA process I experienced was perfectly tailored to what I needed: a place where I could ask any question without fear of judgment. Beyond that I could, for once in my prideful life, humbly sit and recognize that I have much to learn. I was, as I still am, a Christian with training wheels on, because the faith is not something you read about. It is to be experienced. My faith lived through me stumbling through the rosary as a novice beside my father up until his death. It lives through the members of this parish who come to worship in Jesus' name, and take his love out into the world when the mass ends. It is felt through the beauty and architecture of the church, and the feeling of reverence for the holy sacrament we have. We gather at the feast of the Eucharist and acknowledge that communion is a renewal of the commitment to mercy, love and peace we have to each other and the world. We have life in us because of the body and blood of Christ; Who, after learning the truth, could reject a gift such as that?

And so, while eagerly awaiting my baptism and experiencing Lent for the first time, I had the matter of a confirmation saint to choose. Frankly, the idea of being called a name other than my own was rather strange at first. I had pondered Michael, or else Mary given my love for our holy queen, but my pick was actually rather unexpected, at least for me. Fr. Kelly, the pastor at Saint Francis de Sales, recommended I read "Confessions" by Saint Augustine after it was mentioned that Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian. After having read it, I could not help but be enamoured by the story of a man who, after struggling with the same sins I have experienced my whole life, could not help but ponder the nature of God in ways that gave a voice to my thoughts and questions. I have a true role model, who has experienced the same fears, thoughts and pains that I have and persevered through the power of God. Coupled with the fact that I have lamented the war that has been started with Iran, which, according to just war theory, of which Augustine was one of the founders, is completely and totally unjust within a Catholic framework, I decided that Augustine was far too formative to not be the name I should decide on. Any doubts I may have had were immediately vanquished the moment the oil was placed on my forehead and the name was said. It is a name that I identify with, and a name that I am even called by others in my personal life. It is me. I am Catholic. I love God. I love my family, my parish community, my friends, and anyone who might be reading this. I say this with joy because I believe this is what it means to be Catholic.



What Do You Have That You Have Not Received?

A Fall Reflection on Stewardship

By the middle of October, fall is definitely here. The mornings are cooler, the light is changing, the sidewalks are beginning to fill with leaves, and most of us are back into the full pace of work, school, appointments, errands, and everything else that fills our days.

It is also a good time to stop for a minute and think about stewardship.

That word can sound a little formal, and sometimes when people hear 'stewardship' they immediately think, 'They are going to ask me for money.' Financial giving is certainly part of stewardship, but it is only part of it.

St. Paul asks a very simple question: "What do you possess that you have not received?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)

That gets pretty close to the heart of it.

So much of what we have has been given to us: our life, our faith, our abilities, our relationships, our experience, our time, and yes, our financial resources. Stewardship is simply the way we respond to those gifts. It asks us to look at what God has placed in our hands and decide how we are going to use it.

Many people in our parish are already doing this, often without ever calling it stewardship.

They serve at Mass. They teach our children. They sing. They welcome people. They help with events. They pray for others. They make phone calls. They cook. They give financially. They notice what needs to be done and quietly do it.

If you are one of those people, thank you.

The parish depends on those quiet acts of generosity more than most people realize. Much of what happens here happens because somebody was willing to give a little time, share a skill, make a contribution, or simply say, 'I can help.'

And if you have not really thought about stewardship before, this may be a good time to begin.

Maybe you come to Mass regularly but have never gotten involved in anything else. Maybe your schedule is packed. Maybe money is tight. Maybe you are fairly new to the parish or even to the neighborhood and are not sure how long you will be here.



That is okay. Stewardship is not about doing everything, and it is not about everyone giving the same thing.



The better question is simply: *What can I give?*

For one person, that may be an hour once a month. For someone else, it may be reading at Mass, helping with religious education, joining a parish ministry, helping with hospitality, or sharing a skill you already have.

For another person, it may mean beginning to give financially on a regular basis. The amount does not have to be large to matter. Regular giving helps the parish plan, pay the bills, care for the building, support ministries, provide religious education, and respond when needs arise.

Sometimes stewardship is even simpler than that.

It can mean registering in the parish.

It can mean introducing yourself to someone you see every Sunday.

It can mean staying for coffee, coming to an event, volunteering once, or deciding that this parish is not just the place where you go to Mass, but a community you are willing to be part of.

That matters in a parish like ours.

Some people have been here for many years. Others may only be here for a short time because of work, school, family, or a move. But you do not have to be here forever before you belong.

If this is where you worship now, then you are part of this parish now.

And your presence matters.

No parish can be carried by the priest, the staff, or a small group of volunteers. A parish becomes a real community when more people take some responsibility for its life.

That does not mean everyone has to do more and more. In fact, sometimes the best stewardship is knowing what you can realistically offer and doing that faithfully.

So maybe this fall, as routines settle in again, it is worth asking a few simple questions:

What has God given me?
What am I already sharing?
Is there something more I could offer?
Could I give a little time? Could I give regularly? Could I get involved? Could I simply become a little more present?

Stewardship is not really about keeping an institution going. It is about discipleship. It is about gratitude. It is about recognizing that the gifts we have received were never meant to stop with us.

'What do you possess that you have not received?'

Everything begins as gift.
And stewardship is what happens when we decide to share some of it.



Celebration of Confirmation, May 2026

PARISH LIFE



First Communion, May 2026



Jefferson and Nadia's Wedding



Social Justice Ministry, Mass for the Care of Creation, St. Francis of Assisi Church



Hope Walk

"The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather, 'the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit'."

Saint John Paul II
Christifideles Laici, 26 (1988).



A Music Moment



Renewal of Vows and 50 th Anniversary for Sister Annette, LSA, August 2026



9-11 Rembrance Prayer and Concert



Dominican Women celebrating Mother's Day



9-11 Rembrance Prayer and Concert

"The whole life of the parish and its groups exists for this reason: it is a service to light, a service to joy."

Pope Leo XIV

Homily, Parish of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, March 1, 2026., Vatican



Initiation Homecoming Dinner, September 2026









Catholic-Islam Conversation: Fr. Tony Ciorra, Imam Gazmend Aga and Emre Celik













A parish home for today and tomorrow.

COUNT ME IN! ¡Cuenta Conmigo!

Our parish. Our mission. Our part.

What if everyone who considers St. Francis de Sales their parish simply said, "Count me in"?

For four weeks this fall, COUNT ME IN invites every parishioner to take one simple step toward a stronger St. Francis de Sales: connect with the parish, support its mission, and find a way to take part. Some of us have been here for decades; others are just arriving. Some come every Sunday; others are finding their way back. However you arrived — and however long you may be here – your presence matters now.

FOUR WEEKS. FOUR SIMPLE STEPS. ONE STRONGER PARISH.

WEEK 1	**REGISTER** Make the connection.	If St. Francis de Sales is your parish home, make it official. Register — or update your information — so we know who makes up our community and can stay connected with you.	OCT 18–24
WEEK 2	**I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO GIVE** Give with purpose.	Regular giving helps the parish plan responsibly and sustain worship, formation, outreach and everyday parish life. Online giving also makes that support steady and simple.	OCT 25–31
WEEK 3	**I SUPPORT OUR MISSION** Get involved.	A parish cannot be built by a few people doing everything. Welcome. Sing. Read. Help with children. Serve. Organize. Offer a skill. Start small — willingness matters more than expertise.	NOV 1–7
WEEK 4	**IT TAKES ALL OF US** Take your place.	Church is not simply something we attend. It is something we become together. Our parish is stronger when each of us recognizes that we have a part to play.	NOV 8–14

SO... ARE YOU IN?

Start with one step:

REGISTER • GIVE • GET INVOLVED • INVITE SOMEONE

You do not have to do everything. Register. Give. Volunteer. Ask a question. Help once and see where it leads.

COUNT ME IN | OCTOBER 18 - NOVEMBER 14, 2026 | ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH

No matter how long you have been here, your presence is part of our story — and your participation can help shape what comes next.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

OPPORTUNITIES AND FEARS

A Conversation about Pope Leo's Encyclical on Artificial Intelligence

Magnifica Humanitas

On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence

Come to a parish discussion on your fears, hopes and questions about Artificial Intelligence.

Pope Leo wrote a timely document "Magnificent Humanity" that gives us guidelines on how to deal with this important issue.

We will explore ways in this session on how to use Spiritual Intelligence to understand Artificial Intelligence.



Fr. Tony Ciorra

Tuesday, October 20, 2026
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Read the Encyclical Online
https://bit.ly/4yDjpuf

Paper copies are also available by contacting Joe Long.

All are welcome!

LUX AETERNA

An Evening of Music, Memory and Hope

All Saints Evening and the Vigil of All Souls

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
6:00 PM

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH
135 EAST 96TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY

ALL ARE WELCOME



Christmas at St. Francis de Sales — There's a Place for You!

Christmas Eve
Mass – 5:00 PM

Christmas Day
Mass – 11:00 AM





A PLACE TO BELONG. GROW. BE PART OF.

Register in the Parish
and make it your spiritual home.

WHY REGISTER?
More than a form — it's a way to say "I'm home."

A SENSE OF BELONGING
You become part of a faith community that prays, serves, and supports one another.

FAITH FOR EVERY STAGE
Access to sacraments, faith formation, and ministries for all ages.

PASTORAL CARE
We can better walk with you in times of joy, need, and transition.

STAY CONNECTED
Receive parish news, opportunities to serve, and ways to get involved.

HELP US PLAN FOR THE FUTURE
Your registration helps us grow and respond to the needs of our community.

¿POR QUÉ REGISTRARSE?
Más que un formulario —
es una manera de decir "Aquí estoy en casa."

UN SENTIDO DE PERTENENCIA
Te conviertes en parte de una comunidad de fe que ora, sirve y se apoya mutuamente.

FE PARA TODAS LAS ETAPAS
Acceso a los sacramentos, formación en la fe y ministerios para todas las edades.

ACOMPAÑAMIENTO PASTORAL
Podemos caminar mejor contigo en los momentos de alegría, necesidad y transición.

MANTENTE CONECTADO
Recibe noticias de la parroquia, oportunidades de servir y formas de participar.

AYÚDANOS A PLANIFICAR EL FUTURO
Tu registro nos ayuda a crecer y responder a las necesidades de nuestra comunidad.

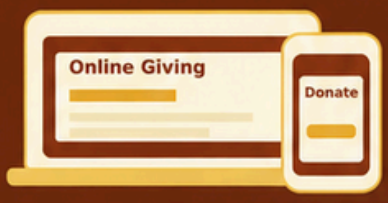


Register today
- Online at **stfrancis96.org**
- In person at the parish office
- Or contact us and we will help you.

Regístrate hoy
- En línea en **stfrancis96.org**
- En persona en la oficina parroquial
- O comuníquese con nosotros y le ayudaremos.

Support Your Parish Anytime, Anywhere

Give Online to St. Francis de Sales



Apoye a su parroquia en cualquier momento, en cualquier lugar

Done en línea a San Francisco de Sales

Your generosity makes our mission possible.

Every Mass, every sacrament, every act of service in our parish is sustained by the faithful support of our community. Today, we invite you to consider online giving - a simple, secure, and consistent way to support the life of the parish.

Why Give Online?

1 Consistency in Your Giving

Even when you're traveling or unable to attend Mass, your gift continues to support the parish.

2 Easy & Secure

Set up takes just a few minutes, and your information is protected with secure processing.

3 Flexible Options

Choose one-time gifts or recurring weekly/monthly donations that fit your budget.

4 Strengthens Our Mission

Reliable giving helps us plan ahead - supporting liturgy, faith formation, outreach, and the daily life of the parish.

How to Get Started

VISIT OUR PARISH WEBSITE (STFRANCIS96.ORG)

and click on "Donate"

You can also contact the parish office for assistance - we're happy to help you get set up.

A Spiritual Act of Stewardship

Giving is more than a transaction - it is an act of faith.

It is a way of saying:

"This is my parish. I belong here.
I support its mission."

As we continue to grow as a community of missionary disciples, your generosity makes a real difference.

Su generosidad hace posible nuestra misión.

Cada misa, cada sacramento y cada acto de servicio en nuestra parroquia se sostiene gracias al fiel apoyo de nuestra comunidad. Hoy lo invitamos a considerar las donaciones en línea: una manera sencilla, segura y constante de apoyar la vida de la parroquia.

¿Por qué dar en línea?

1 Constancia en su ofrenda

Aun cuando esté de viaje o no pueda asistir a Misa, su ofrenda sigue apoyando a la parroquia.

2 Fácil y seguro

Registrarse toma solo unos minutos, y su información está protegida con un procesamiento seguro.

3 Opciones flexibles

Elija donaciones únicas o donaciones recurrentes semanales o mensuales que se ajusten a su presupuesto.

4 Fortalece nuestra misión

Una donación confiable nos ayuda a planificar mejor, sosteniendo la liturgia, la formación en la fe, el servicio y la vida diaria de la parroquia.

Cómo comenzar

VISITE NUESTRO SITIO WEB PARROQUIAL (STFRANCIS96.ORG)

y haga clic en "Donar"

También puede comunicarse con la oficina parroquial para recibir ayuda; con gusto le ayudaremos a comenzar.

Un acto espiritual de corresponsabilidad

Dar es más que una transacción: es un acto de fe.

Es una manera de decir:

"Esta es mi parroquia. Aquí pertenezco.
Yo apoyo su misión."

Mientras seguimos creciendo como una comunidad de discípulos misioneros, su generosidad hace una verdadera diferencia.

Thank you for your faithful support of St. Francis de Sales Parish. / Gracias por su fiel apoyo a la parroquia de San Francisco de Sales.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Fr. Kelly



Alex Colas



Ana María González Puente



Pat Latona



Jayne Porcelli

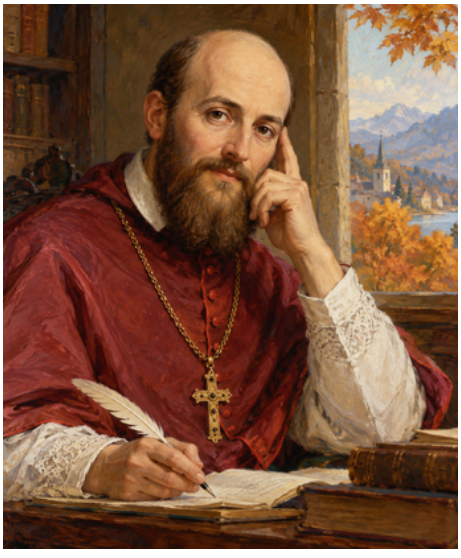
Fr. Philip Kelly is a priest of the Archdiocese of New York and has served as pastor of St. Francis de Sales since 2011.

Alejandro (Alex) Colas was born and raised in NYC to Cuban and Puerto Rican parents. He enjoys coding, playing guitar, and Dungeons and Dragons. He was intiated into the Catholic Church this past Easter. He is a member of the parish and a follower of Christ.

Ana María González Puente is a Dominican American former UN International Civil Servant.
She loves to read. In her spare time, she writes from her heart. She has been a parishioner at St. Francis de Sales since May this year.

Patricia (Pat) Latona has long promoted human dignity through her work as a nurse, educator, and parish leader rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. Since 2004, including 14 years with Zonta International at the United Nations, she has worked to advance gender equality and combat human trafficking.

Former Pastoral Associate at St. Francis de Sales, Jayne Porcelli is enjoying her retirement thoroughly. When she isn't traveling, she is reading and writing (some of her material has been published in the last few years!) and accompanying folks in their faith journeys through spiritual direction. She is proud to call St. Francis de Sales her parish community.



A THOUGHT FROM DE SALES

Just as even the finest clock needs to be wound regularly, and from time to time cleaned and repaired, so our hearts need renewal. As one season gives way to another, we are invited to look honestly at our lives, give thanks for the blessings we have received, and consider how faithfully we have used the gifts entrusted to us. Time may weaken our good intentions, and the demands of everyday life may distract us from what matters most. Yet God continually offers us the grace to begin again. Through prayer, reflection, and renewed commitment, we can set right what has gone astray, strengthen what has grown weak, and rediscover the joy of serving God and one another. What has been good can flourish again, and what has been neglected can find new life through God's grace.

Adapted from St. Francis de Sales, Introduction to the Devout Life

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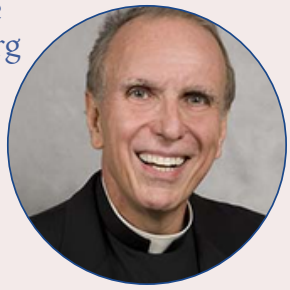
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Facebook: Church of St. Francis de Sales

Instagram @sfdsnyc

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www.stfrancis96.org

Finished reading *The Messenger*? Share it with someone else. Be a messenger.