



Meet Our St. John Catholic Preschool Board

Upholding the Essential Mission of Forming Young Hearts and Minds in the Faith

Behind the scenes at St. John Catholic Preschool is a dedicated board made up of parents, grandparents, and parish members who share a deep belief in the value of Catholic education, even for our youngest learners. The Preschool Board's commitment goes beyond meetings and planning — it's rooted in a shared desire to ensure that the preschool remains a place where children are nurtured academically, socially, and spiritually from the very start. Through their guidance and support, the board helps uphold the mission of forming young hearts and minds in faith while strengthening the connection between the school, families, and the parish community.

Margaret Higa serves as chair of the Preschool Board and feels blessed to serve in a leadership role that supports the preschool's mission.

"The board primarily assists the pastor and the director in setting the vision of the preschool, with the ongoing goal of ensuring the success of the preschool," Margaret says.

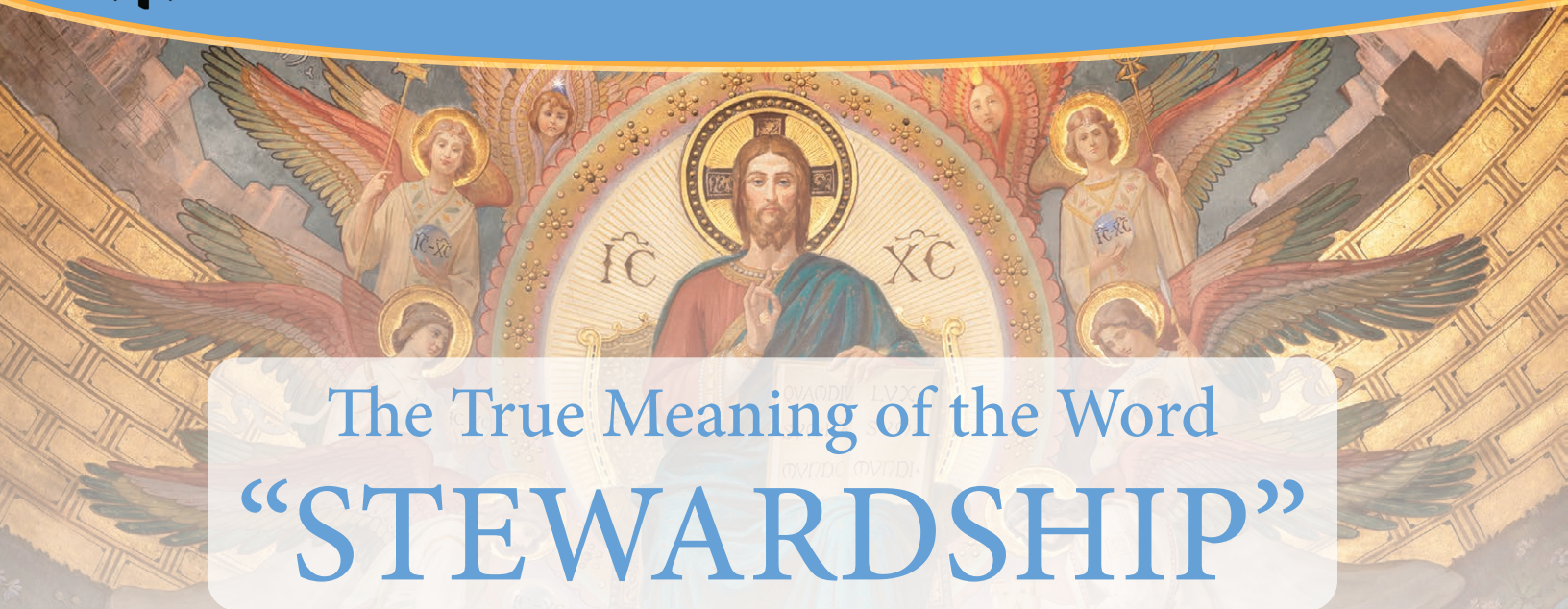
The Preschool Board meets quarterly for updates,



Members of the Preschool Board

to review financials, and to provide thoughtful input on school initiatives and fundraising efforts. Board members

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The True Meaning of the Word “STEWARDSHIP”

There is a stigma attached to the word “stewardship” in some Catholic parishes, likely because many pastors and parish leaders mistakenly equate stewardship with money. But a true steward knows that couldn’t be further from the truth.

Stewardship is a biblical principle that has nothing to do with money. Nineteen of the main parables of Christ relate directly to stewardship. And, in those parables when Christ speaks of stewardship, He never mentions raising money. Surprised?

Stewardship simply means being grateful for all of God’s blessings. Everything we have — each breath we take on earth, the tremendous talents we possess, and our ability to earn income to sustain ourselves — all stem from God. We come into the world with nothing, and we leave with nothing.

Recognizing this and being grateful for our bountiful blessings is the first step of stewardship. Once these realizations fall into place, we are then eager to find a way to respond to God’s generosity and embark upon a stewardship way of life.

And stewardship is just that, a way of life. It is not like a TV show to which you can tune in whenever the mood strikes and shut off when you are no longer interested. It is truly a way of living.

Yet the mere word “stewardship” has gotten a bad rap over the years — and not just by us laypeople.

According to the late stewardship pioneer Msgr. Thomas McGread, when a pastor speaks about money during his homily, 75 percent of the congregation immediately stops listening. However, did you know that tithing is mentioned

in the Old Testament 39 times, and in the New Testament 11 times? Tithing is biblically based, and it simply means to give a portion of our gifts back to God.

In 1992, when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was forming the Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, they originally didn’t want to title it *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*.

“Instead, they wanted to just call it *A Disciple’s Response*, with the reason being that they felt ‘stewardship’ meant money,” said Msgr. McGread before his passing in April 2013. “I convinced them at the time that ‘stewardship’ is a biblical term, and it is our job to explain what a steward is. Before the Pastoral Letter, most of us didn’t understand the spiritual dimension of stewardship.”

So, how do we go about sharing the spiritual dimensions of stewardship with fellow parishioners and lay leaders?

First, Msgr. McGread cited the importance of being hospitable and discovering the needs of parishioners. He felt that when parishioners were welcomed and their needs were met, they were fulfilled and felt a sense of belonging to their parish. This, in turn, creates ownership. Once parishioners felt like they were part of the parish, they wanted to respond by sharing their time, talent, and treasure to help make it the best parish community possible.

And, as parishioners support their parish with all of their resources out of gratitude, the entire parish blossoms. Prayers increase, ministries grow, and yes, the offertory increases. These blessings are natural outcomes of living a stewardship way of life and they are why we must always remember the true meaning of the word “stewardship.”

Growing Together as Disciples

Dear Parishioners,

The month of May invites us to reflect on growth — not only the growth we see around us in the natural world, but the growth God desires in our lives as disciples. In parish life, growth often happens quietly and steadily as people pray together, serve together, and remain committed to the life of the Church. This season offers a good opportunity to pause and consider how we are growing in faith and how we are responding to God's call in our parish community.

Discipleship is not something we complete or outgrow. It is a lifelong journey of learning to listen more closely to the Lord and to live the Gospel more faithfully. Growth as a disciple requires intention. It means making space for prayer, remaining faithful to worship, and allowing our faith to shape how we treat others. Over time, these

practices form a foundation that sustains both individual believers and the parish as a whole.

In a parish community, growth happens when people choose to stay connected. Parishes thrive when parishioners see themselves not simply as attendees, but as participants who share responsibility for the Church's mission. Each act of involvement — whether visible or unseen — contributes to the strength and vitality of parish life.

Stewardship plays an important role in this shared growth. When we recognize that our time, talents, and resources are gifts from God, we begin to see them as opportunities to serve rather than possessions to hold onto. Stewardship invites us to offer our gifts generously and consistently, supporting the ministries and outreach that help our parish remain a place of welcome, prayer, and service.

Living on the islands reminds us that community matters. We depend on one another, and parish life reflects that same spirit of shared responsibility and care. When we support one another through generosity, service, and prayer, we strengthen the bonds that make our parish a true spiritual home.

As we move through the month of May, let us reflect on how we are growing as disciples and how we are contributing to the life of our parish. May we ask the Lord to guide us, strengthen our commitment, and help us offer our gifts with grateful and willing hearts as we continue this journey together.

Sincerely,
Fr. Anthony Rapozo
Fr. Anthony Rapozo
Pastor



The Marriage and Family Life Ministry

Building Up the Family, Evangelization, and Outreach

Marriage is a key foundation upon which our church and community are built. The Sacrament of Marriage between a man and woman leads to new life in the form of a family, as well as growth at the level of parish evangelization and outreach.

Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic, Regan Ramos was asked to help re-establish the Marriage and Family Life (MFL) Ministry. For the first year, Regan and the other ministry members spent time internally building the ministry before leading the parish's first post-pandemic event when things opened back up.

“We look at the basic building block of the Church, which starts with marriage and grows into the family, kind of like how we want to be not just a maintenance parish but a growing and an evangelization parish.” — Regan Ramos

“Our focus was on the marriage sacrament,” Regan says. “We had only married couples. As soon as we were able to build our core team, we started going to the parish and having MFL events. The first event we had focused on the entire parish.”

While the ministry started out with a focus on marriage, it wasn't long before the family and life aspects of the ministry began taking shape. While “marriage” is the first part of the ministry name and where it started taking root, the ministry encompasses everyone in our parish family, regardless of age, demographic, or other qualifications.

“Marriage, family, life — it covers everything,” Regan says. “We are kind of the umbrella ministry, so many things that fall under us.”

The mission of the MFL Ministry is “to celebrate and promote the foundational building blocks of the Church that begins with the blessed sacrament of Holy Matrimony, which naturally leads to new life and the family. From conception to natural death, the ministry holds sacred the various stages of life.”

The ministry seeks to connect all parishioners — individuals and families alike — to join in gathering, celebrating life, and going out to reach others in the community and beyond. It has organized events and activities specific to families, married couples, widows, pro-life causes, and more. When the MFL Ministry isn't leading the events, the ministry members also co-sponsor alongside other ministries, such as the Youth Ministry, Religious Education program, Knights of Columbus, or others.

“We have requests not just for marriage and family events, but also for widows, single people, people who are divorced, diverse families, mixed families, and others asking us,” Regan says. “We have routine events like for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, or the deacons and pastor reach out to us when a certain event comes up, either for us to spearhead or help coordinate or co-sponsor with another ministry.”

The ministry recognizes marriage as the starting point of family and parish life. From marriage, we have growth through new life, and new life in the building of the church.



Family Life Ministry

and Outreach Beyond Our Parish Walls

This, Regan says, is a way in which we might be able to reach outside the bounds of our parish, inviting those to come to encounter the faith through these events.

“We look at the basic building block of the Church, which starts with marriage and grows into the family, kind of like how we want to be not just a maintenance parish but a growing and an evangelization parish,” Regan says. “The primary goal is to have a welcoming and growing environment within our parish, but we also want to go outside the doors, outside the walls of our parish.”

While the team started off with 12 married couples, it has since expanded to include widows, single members, and others. Essentially, anyone who wishes to get involved can do so, and the hope is to have events and initiatives for everyone. Many of the MFL Ministry members are involved in other ministries, which helps with networking and creating new experiences for all our parishioners to enjoy.

“I just want to make an expression of gratitude to the people who are in the ministry — they are dynamic Catholics,” Regan says. “Every person in MFL is in multiple ministries. It’s very admirable, and I’m humbled by them.”

One of the objectives for the ministry is to increase the presence of stewardship in our parish by offering many different opportunities and activities, with a welcoming environment for all. The hope is to touch the hearts and minds of those present — even if just one or two people

per event — who can in turn bring the faith to their family, community, workplaces, and beyond.

For Regan, being involved in the MFL Ministry helped to personally solidify and further clarify his discernment to join the diaconate. He began serving with the ministry in 2021, which ultimately led him to the permanent diaconate formation program.

“For me, MFL gave me a little extra nudge,” he says. “I talked it over with my wife, Mila — she’s also a co-chair of MFL. It’s a decision we made together, it’s really a family discernment. Being in MFL really gave us that encouragement and a little push for our family.”

Overall, MFL has received a lot of positive feedback from our parishioners and continues to thrive and grow. This, says Regan, has helped them to stay steadfast and motivated to continue their ministry.

“Parishioners have come up to us and thanked us for remembering the moms, the fathers, the widows, the single people,” Regan says. “We’re trying to expand and even the small sentiments of gratitude, that is the most important thing.

“We don’t know everybody in our parish, but we have people we don’t really know showing gratitude, that’s what truly motivates us,” he adds. “You celebrate Jesus in everything you do — in your family, in your marriage, in your lives.”



For more information about the MFL Ministry, visit the parish website or call the parish office at 808-623-3332.



Patron Saint of Holy Fun

The Faith Journey of St. Philip Neri

Can a saint have fun on the way to attaining holiness?

Many would say that St. Philip Neri definitely fits that bill.

Born in 1515 in Florence, Italy, St. Philip Neri showed his fun side from a young age. One such incident almost cost him his life. Seeing a donkey loaded with fruit for market, the impulsive and spontaneous little boy jumped on the donkey's back. Surprised, the donkey lost his footing and, along with the fruit and young Philip, tumbled into a cellar. Miraculously, Philip was unhurt.

Philip's father struggled financially, so 18-year-old Philip was sent to work with an older cousin who was a successful businessman. During this time, Philip found a favorite place to pray in a spot upon a mountain that had been turned into a chapel.

During these hours of prayer, Philip is said to have decided to leave worldly success behind and dedicate his life to God.

Eventually, Philip went to Rome. In 1548, Philip formed a confraternity with other laymen to minister to pilgrims who came to Rome without food or shelter. The spiritual director of the confraternity convinced Philip he could do even more work as a priest. After receiving instruction from this priest, Philip was ordained in 1551.

As a young priest, Philip learned to love hearing confessions. Young men especially found in him the wisdom and direction they needed to grow

spiritually. But Philip began to realize these young men needed something more than absolution — they needed guidance. So, Philip began asking the young men to come by in the early afternoon to discuss spiritual readings, and then to stay for prayer in the evening.

Philip understood it wasn't enough to tell young people not to do something — you had to give them something to do in its place. So, at Carnival time, when the worst excesses were encouraged, Philip organized a pilgrimage to the Seven Churches with a picnic, accompanied by instrumental music for the midday break. After walking 12 miles in one day, everyone was too tired to be tempted!

Philip was known to be spontaneous and unpredictable, charming and humorous. He seemed to sense the different ways to bring people to God. One man came to the Oratory just to make fun of it. Philip wouldn't let the others throw him out or speak against him. He told them to be patient, and eventually the man became a Dominican. On the other hand, when he met a condemned man who refused to listen to any pleas for repentance, Philip didn't try gentle words. Instead,

Philip grabbed the man by the collar and threw him to the ground. The move shocked the criminal into repentance, and he made a full confession.

Humility was the most important virtue he tried to teach others, as he continually worked to learn it himself. Some of his lessons in humility seem cruel, but they were tinged with humor — like practical jokes — and were related with gratitude by the people they helped. His lessons always seemed to be tailored directly to what the person needed.

Philip did not escape this spiritual mortification himself. As with others, his own humbling held humor. There are stories of him wearing ridiculous clothes or walking around with half his beard shaved off. The greater his reputation for holiness, the sillier he wanted to seem.

But Philip was very serious about prayer. He was so easily carried away that he refused to preach in public and could not celebrate Mass with others around. But when asked how to pray, his answer was, "Be humble and obedient and the Holy Spirit will teach you."

Philip died in 1595 after a long illness. His feast day is on May 26, just in time to kick off the season of summertime fun.

PRAYER TO ST. PHILIP NERI:

St. Philip Neri, we take ourselves far too seriously most of the time. Help us to add humor to our perspective — remembering always that humor is a gift from God. AMEN.

Service and Charitable Work Important for Parishioner Dennis Tulang

Parishioner Dennis Tulang is a familiar face at St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, quietly serving in multiple ministries — but for him, stewardship begins with a simple offering: his time.

As his children have grown older, Dennis recognized he had more time to give — and he has embraced that opportunity.

“I can give time to my Lord and Church,” he says. “I find it so gratifying to have work to do. I wish I could do more because it’s gratifying work for me.”

Earlier in his stewardship journey, Dennis served in the Hospital Ministry for 15 years, visiting patients in two facilities, bringing Communion, and offering prayer. He also sang in the parish choir until it disbanded during COVID-related restrictions.

“Then I decided to take on the Usher Ministry,” he says. “A lot of ushers were afraid of coming in. We didn’t have enough ushers — more were needed during COVID because we had to space people out. Ushers had to seat people and keep them properly distanced. We also had to register people for Mass because of limited capacity and check them in when they arrived.”

Despite those challenges, Dennis found an unexpected blessing.

“I got to know the names of a lot of parishioners,” he says. “I would see them at Mass, but I didn’t know their names. As an usher, I got to know them. That was a real plus for me.”

Today, he encourages fellow ushers to do the same.

“One of the most important things is to welcome people and make them feel wanted — that we’re happy they are there,” Dennis says. “We should try to know parishioners



Dennis Tulang enjoys sharing his stewardship gifts in numerous ways.

by name. We have five Masses, so at least one usher at each Mass should recognize people as they come in. Our goal is to welcome them. For me, that is very gratifying.”

In addition to serving as an usher, Dennis ministers to the homebound, belongs to the Knights of Columbus, and serves on the parish Planning and Building Committee.

“We take care of maintenance and new projects for our parish,” Dennis says. “It’s not an easy job. We have four buildings on campus, and there’s always something — air conditioning, lights, plumbing, electrical, roofing, security systems. It keeps us busy.”

As director of the Knights’ community outreach efforts, Dennis also helps coordinate charitable initiatives, including

the drive-up food distribution held during COVID. The Knights also assist with maintenance at local monasteries, providing landscaping and repairs.

Dennis’ example of service has influenced his family as well. A daughter and granddaughter serve as lectors, and another family member helps with Human Services dinners.

“I say I’m more like a model to them,” he says.

For those considering getting involved, Dennis sees the value of a simple invitation — something he regularly extends when recruiting for the Usher Ministry, especially during busy seasons like Christmas and Easter.

Dennis welcomes anyone interested in serving and can be reached at 808-497-4360.



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Meet Our St. John Catholic Preschool Board *continued from front cover*

have also collaborated with staff by manning the preschool information table at parish and community events and by donating supplies, books, and other educational materials that directly benefit students' learning experiences.

A few other responsibilities of the board include maintaining high levels of integrity and confidentiality, while considering and addressing situations as they relate to the entire preschool community. They must also be a credible witness to the Catholic faith — or their own religion — in the preschool.

Margaret appreciates that, over the years, board members have come from many backgrounds — education, nonprofit work, health care, small business, civic service, and more. In the spirit of the Catholic faith, all

board meetings begin and end with prayer.

"It is particularly helpful to have a mixture of board members with backgrounds working in educational settings as well as business and finance experience," Margaret says.

Over her years on the board, Margaret has gotten to know people that she wouldn't have otherwise met — she has made bonds over a shared commitment to Catholic education.

"It is an honor to serve on the Preschool Board," Margaret says. "Board members share their time, talent, and treasure in support of the preschool by attending board meetings and preschool events, helping to update preschool documents, and purchasing fundraiser items or making cash donations."

"It is an honor to serve on the Preschool Board. Board members share their time, talent, and treasure in support of the preschool." — Margaret Higa

To learn more about the Preschool Board, contact Margaret Higa at mjloghiga808@gmail.com.