

CATHEDRAL
OF THE

Blessed SACRAMENT

GETTING TO KNOW FR. MICHAEL O'REILLY "I REALLY LOVE CHRIST AND MY LIFE AS A PRIEST"

We have been blessed to have Fr. O'Reilly with us here at the Cathedral for about 10 years. We value his sense of humor and love for people — but there may be a few things you don't know about Fr. O'Reilly, like the fact that he's an introvert or that he loves to cook!



"Most of all, I just want people to know that I really love Christ and my life as a priest," he says.

The youngest of seven children, Fr. O'Reilly grew up outside of Sacramento on a 10-acre farm — he describes his childhood as "picturesque." Fr. O'Reilly's siblings all still live in Northern California. Their parents lived into their 90s and passed away in the last three years. Fr. O'Reilly is blessed with 10 nieces and nephews.

As his fifth parish assignment, Fr. O'Reilly enjoys the

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MASS TIMES: Sunday: English - 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Livestream) & 4:00 p.m.; Spanish - 12:00 p.m. (Livestream) & 6:00 p.m.; Chinese - 2:00 p.m. (Livestream);
Daily Mass: Monday-Friday: 12:10 p.m.

RECONCILIATION: Monday-Friday: 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,
Saturday: 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Stewards of God's Gifts

“AMERICA, AMERICA, GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE”

By MARIA BALAKSHIN

When celebrating the Fourth of July, we think of our country, the United States of America — its spacious skies, its amber waves of grain, the purple mountains majesties, and the freedom of living in America. As a daughter of immigrant parents, my parents constantly taught my siblings and me the value of living in a free country and our responsibility to maintain that freedom — not take it for granted or abuse it.

Fourth of July was always an important holiday in our family. We would start the day by attending Mass at our local parish giving thanks to God for the privilege of living in America that provides opportunities and freedom to go about our daily living. My father, a reserved and conservative man, would proudly don a Fourth of July hat and wave the American flag as we watched our city's Fourth of July parade and the fireworks that followed. We would end the day by singing “God Bless America,” his favorite song, which he taught to us. In my family, God and country were entwined.

Our nation was founded under God. Our nation's motto is “*In God We Trust*.” What does this mean to us as Catholics — to us as parishioners of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity” (2239). As a parish community, we are called by God to respond to this duty to the best of our ability.

Cathedral parishioners may fulfill this duty by living our lay vocation and permeating the secular

world with Catholic values as we genuinely honor God and neighbor. We may also commit to a Catholic patriotism by strengthening our commitment to the formation of a Christian conscience by enriching ourselves with the Church's teachings.

Another means we, as members of the Cathedral, may fulfill this duty is by living out our Catholic faith in our nation today by trusting God to guide us to be good Christian citizens. Let us give our hearts to carrying out this mission of an authentic Catholic patriotism under God.

We can all agree that currently our nation is struggling with many crises and needing desperately God's assistance to correct our many ills. As St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “Today, more than ever, we need to pray for the light to know the will of God, for the love to accept the will of God, for the way to do the will of God.” Let us devote prayer time asking Jesus Christ “*to shed His grace on thee*,” our United States.

Since our nation was founded under God, let us not allow this precious heritage, this source of true life and liberty, to be lost. Its preservation relies on each one of us.

*“God Bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God Bless America, my home sweet home
God Bless America, my home sweet home”.*

By Irving Berlin

STEWARDSHIP: *THE FOUR PILLARS*

You've heard about the three Ts of stewardship, but what about the four Ps?

The three Ts – Time, Talent, and Treasure – describe the personal gifts we offer to the Church. The four Ps are the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship described by the renowned pastor Msgr. Thomas McGread. They are the hallmark of a stewardship parish – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Let's take a look at each of them to understand how we can improve in each area.

Hospitality *Christian Kindness*

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Gospel teaches that whenever we welcome the least of our brothers or sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. That is why the first mark of a stewardship parish is hospitality. Being friendly is one of the first ways we can be Christ-like toward others.

Modern Catholic parishes are often so large and have so many Masses that many parishioners don't know one another. To create a sense of community, be sure to smile and greet others

as you enter and exit the Church. Let's try harder than ever to be a welcoming community.

Prayer *Heart-to-Heart with God*

“Do not become so involved in the work of the Lord that you forget the Lord of the work,” a seminary professor once taught. In other words, don't get so caught up with parish projects and outreach efforts that you forget to draw aside to spend time with God in prayer. Every great saint has taught that prayer is the most essential component in the life of the Christian. Through prayer, we nurture our most important relationship – the one that will last for all eternity.

A healthy prayer life should include communal prayer such as Mass, as well as personal prayer and family prayer. The two biggest obstacles to prayer are lack of time and lack of understanding of how to pray. We have to schedule time for prayer just as we would for an important appointment. And we have to learn how to pray from other people. Many saints have written spiritual books that describe different methods of prayer.

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THE FOUR PILLARS *continued from page 5*

Formation

Continuous Conversion

Pope John Paul II always emphasized ongoing conversion. From childhood through adulthood, our whole life must be a process of drawing closer to God. He never stops calling us forward to learn more and to examine ourselves more deeply.

Very often our society values material things more than interior virtues. But as personal experience shows, when we finally acquire the car or house or “toy” that we wanted so badly, it doesn’t really satisfy. On the other hand, we don’t tend to desire spiritual virtues with the same kind of longing, but when we actually have them, we find them far more rewarding than material things.

Service

Love in Action

“Amen I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). This Scripture was one of St. Teresa of Calcutta’s favorites. Each time she picked up a poor and hungry child, she knew she was ministering to Christ. While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “To be a saint is not the privilege of a few, but the duty of everyone.”

We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you’ll find that there is no end to the families and individuals who truly need help. How can you reach out to them in love?

GETTING TO KNOW FR. MICHAEL O’REILLY

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“chaos” of Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. He was ordained into the priesthood on May 27, 1996.

“I most enjoy presiding at Mass,” he says. “I also enjoy talking about God and answering questions. I could talk for many, many hours about the Catholic faith. I also enjoy chatting with people from other faith traditions when they come to the Cathedral.”

Describing himself as an introvert, Fr. O’Reilly enjoys spending time with people and being invited to meals with families, but also values his alone time.

“It’s such a blessing to be invited into people’s homes,” he says.

Fr. O’Reilly shares his birthday with the feast day of St. Therese of Lisieux, and she has always been a special companion to him. An interesting fact is that Fr. O’Reilly never went to faith formation classes. He received his First Communion in first grade and was not confirmed in high school. When Fr. O’Reilly was in his late teens and early

20s, he knew he wanted to stay close to his faith and decided he better find a job that would force him to be with God.

In addition, Fr. O’Reilly enjoys dogs. He had a Siberian husky and recently was given a chihuahua. He owns his own home and loves to do projects there. He also loves to garden, play piano and be outside. Recently, he has been doing more cooking — especially steak — to feed the volunteers who livestream the Masses. He loves to make pasta and Italian and Mexican food.

Fr. O’Reilly admits that although the vocation of priesthood provides many beautiful opportunities for prayer and time for silent reflection and creativity, it is the everyday ministry of priesthood with the people that allows him to connect more clearly with Christ’s priesthood. Walking with the faithful, in their joys and struggles, is what reveals to him most clearly God’s love.