For Joyce Mendoza, music is truly an expression of joy, encouragement and inspiration. “Music has a power to engage emotions, strengthen and deepen a spiritual experience,” she says.

Joyce, who has been part of the St. Augustine Chorale since 2006, believes that music ministry at the parish serves to draw parishioners deeper into prayer and their experience of the Mass. “Through music, we can provide the whole congregation with a means to truly encounter God,” she says. “The purpose of music ministry is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through song, which the congregation can listen to, meditate on and respond to worshipfully in their hearts.”

A number of choirs serve our parish, including the St. Augustine Chorale, Knights of Columbus, St. Augustine Men’s Choir, St. Augustine Choir, the Children’s Choir, St. Augustine Youth Ministry Choir, Praise and Glorify, St. Therese Choir, and individual cantors.

The choirs, which seek to enhance the beauty of the liturgy, are an opportunity for parishioners to use their gifts to worship God. “I love to sing and have always loved music,” Joyce says. “I want to share these gifts and talents that God has given me. As long as I have a voice, I will use it to praise God. “It brings me peace, joy and fulfillment knowing that I am using the spiritual gifts that God has given me to serve Him and be vitally involved in church life,” she continues.

The St. Augustine Chorale, which sings at the 9:30 a.m. Mass every second and fourth Sunday of the month is, for Joyce, not only a chance to use her talents to glorify God, but also an opportunity to build friendships with other parishioners.

Joyce Mendoza has shared her talents in the St. Augustine Chorale for the past 10 years.

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The family that prays together stays together.” This famous slogan was coined in 1947 by writer Al Scalpone, and has been frequently referenced ever since. The phrase pinpoints the true power of prayer, and the importance of making family prayer a consistent practice in our lives.

As Christian disciples, we are striving to follow Jesus – to grow in our love of Him and to serve Him through the use of our time, talent and treasure. If we desire to follow in His footsteps, we must first begin by getting to know Him. Spending time with the Lord in prayer forms a foundation on which we can build our lives as Christian disciples, much in the same way that spending time with a girlfriend or boyfriend forms the foundation of a strong relationship.

The Christian family is the first place where children learn to pray. The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the family unit “Ecclesia domestica,” or “the Domestic Church” (1656). Thus, parents have a responsibility to set an example by taking time for personal prayer every day, and making family prayer a regular practice. This not only sets an example for the children, but also provides them with a faith-filled foundation and brings them closer to the Lord – forming them as grateful stewards of their time.

There are many ways in which a family can pray together. One of the most important times for prayer is before meals, where we thank God for His blessings, and for the food on our family table. Families may also share in the formal prayers of the Church, or perhaps pray a Rosary together every night. We can also thank the Lord aloud, asking Him to answer our prayers and offering Him our daily petitions. One often-suggested method of family prayer is ACTS, where we offer Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Families may also go to their church and kneel together before the Blessed Sacrament, offering prayers in Christ’s Presence.

These are just several of the many opportunities for families to pray together. Of course, prayer will be influenced by each family’s dynamics and personalities. But no matter how we pray, it is important that we make the time to do so. This will deepen the family’s relationship with the Lord, our commitment as His disciples will be stronger, and we may continually renew and foster our families’ bonds.

PRAYER OF PARENTS:

God, our Father, I thank you for the gift of my children and for the privilege and responsibility of being a parent, for this is my way of holiness. May I regard each of my children as a sacred pledge of Your love and a beautiful sign of Your confidence in me. Help me to pass on to my children our greatest treasures — faith in Your truths, hope in Your goodness, love in Your name for all. I entrust my children to Your loving care. Banish from our home any bitterness or lack of forgiveness. Let us have time, deep concern, and a sense of sacrifice for one another. Teach us never to be ashamed that we are, in name and in fact, a Catholic family striving to live in the way of Jesus, Who is head of our home. Give us Your Holy Spirit to unite us throughout this life and let the circle of our family be unbroken in the Kingdom of Your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.
Stewardship: “This Is the Day the Lord Has Made; Let Us Rejoice in It and Be Glad”

Dear Parishioners,

Sometimes, we spend much time looking at, analyzing and speaking about the meaning of various passages and readings from Holy Scripture. Of course, we need to do that – it is important to our spiritual well-being, and to have a complete understanding of the messages revealed to us in the Word of God. As you are aware, most weeks we have four readings as part of our Liturgy of the Word – a First Reading, then a Responsorial Psalm, a Second Reading, and the Holy Gospel.

The one reading that sometimes is ignored is that Psalm. Yet, there are truths and wisdom in the Psalms that are worthy of our comments and our recognition. Psalm 24 (a song of David) strikes me in particular as one rich in meaning for us, especially from the perspective of stewardship. It opens, “The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds, the world and those who dwell in it.” For me, that says everything we believe and provides us with all the motivation we need to pursue stewardship as a way of life.

Let us consider how profound that statement – “The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds” – really is. If we do embrace stewardship as a way of life, we admit and accept that everything comes from God and everything is God’s. Stewardship is not complicated, although we try to make everything complex and complicated, it seems. It is, as stated, merely the realization that our very existence, our lives, our goods all come from and in finality belong to God. We are the stewards of all of this. If we do accept that and try to live that way, we then tend to administer well God’s gifts on behalf of God. That is all stewardship is.

At the heart of all of this is our relationship with the Lord. We can also say that stewardship is all about getting that relationship right. Jesus certainly makes reference to stewards and stewardship in the Gospels. The Gospels were all written in Greek, and the English words for “steward” and “stewardship” are translations from a Greek word that means “to administer what belongs to someone else.”

That is what we do in this life. We receive gifts – we are granted the stewardship of time, talent and treasure from God. But all of this and all we may be are only gifts. Our use of them to serve one another and all those around us in our community, our parish and the Church Universal is the measure of our stewardship.

In the northern hemisphere, autumn begins on Thursday, Sept. 22. This time of year in the Church is when everything seems to begin or resume. There is another wonderful Psalm that states, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad” (Psalm 118:24). Let us do that together, and let us be good stewards together.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Rene Ramoso
Pastor
Stewardship can be lived simply by performing small acts of service. One example of this occurs after we celebrate the Mass, when a member of the Altar Society unobtrusively gathers the linens used in this holy celebration and cleans them in preparation for the next liturgy.

“The linens are treated with special care and respect during the washing, since they are used during the Mass celebration,” says Lucy Atanacio, who coordinates the members of the Altar Society. “We are reverent, for we know that the particles on these linens are the Body and Blood of Christ.”

The seven members of the Altar Society delicately care for the linens used on the altar at each and every Mass. This includes the corporals, purificators and lavabo towels.

“Sacred vessels containing the Body and Blood of the Lord are always placed on top of a corporal,” Lucy says. “A purificator is used to wipe the Precious Blood from the lip of the chalice and to purify sacred vessels. The priest uses the lavabo towel to dry his hands after washing them during the Mass.”

The members gather the linens and begin cleaning them by letting them soak for a few minutes in a designated container. This loosens any particles that might have become ingrained in the cloths.

“They are handled very carefully,” Lucy says. “This water does not go into an ordinary sink. The water from the rinsed linens and towels is reverently poured onto the ground.”

Then, the linens are washed in the washing machine and dried before being ironed or starched, as necessary. Afterwards, they are returned to the sacristy to be used in the Mass.

Lucy trains new members of the Altar Society by meeting with them in the sacristy and explaining the delicate process of caring for the linens. Each member is assigned to a specific month during which he or she is responsible for caring for the linens.

Lucy herself has been serving as a member of this
of Thanking God”

Ministry for over 15 years. She also washes and irons the clergy’s vestments and the Communion tablecloths that are used during the Mass.

“I wanted to participate more in the church, and this was one way to serve,” Lucy says. “This is my way of thanking God.”

Anyone seeking a quiet way to become a vital part of the liturgy is welcome to join the Altar Society.

“The Altar Society has an integral role in the Mass and the support of our clergy,” Lucy says. “This particular role can be very rewarding to people because they know that their services provide clean altar linens that are used in the Holy Eucharistic celebration.” – Lucy Atanacio

For more information about the Altar Society, please reach out to St. Augustine’s parish office at 650-873-2282.

Harmony in Voice and Spirit

“I love the camaraderie,” she says. “It has allowed me to get to know so many wonderful people who love the Lord and have a heart of service.

“Our bonding is incredible,” she continues. “We worship, cry, smile, laugh, work, learn, and pray together. No matter the ups and downs, we all know that we are there to serve, pray and care for one another. We love each other as brothers and sisters, and we’ve become one big, happy family.”

Their unity, often reflected through music, often goes deeper than just harmonious vocals.

“We are singing in harmony of voice and spirit for God’s praise,” Joyce says. “We just don’t sing notes together, but we are also doing life, prayer, devotion and ministry.”

Singing in the choir has also helped Joyce grow deeper in prayer and her appreciation of the Mass.

“The Altar Society has an integral role in the Mass and the support of our clergy. This particular role can be very rewarding to people because they know that their services provide clean altar linens that are used in the Holy Eucharistic celebration.” – Lucy Atanacio

“Singing is a form of prayer,” Joyce says. “There is so many ways that you can connect and grow your relationship with God, singing is just an extension of our relationship with Christ. There is a message in the songs that we are singing, they are full of meaning and insights. [The songs] touch my heart and soul and can have an impact to my worship.”

Joyce encourages other parishioners with musical talents to consider serving with one of our choirs.

“First, believe in yourself, use the talent God had given you, and share it,” she says. “Don’t let it go into waste.”

Auditions for the St. Augustine Chorale are held during practices every second and fourth Friday of the month, at 7 p.m. in the parish hall.
Every Sept. 29, the Church celebrates the feast day of the Archangels – St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael. We are indeed blessed to be inspired by these “servants and messengers of God” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 329).

The term “archangels” has its Scriptural basis in the New Testament (1 Thes 4:16, Jude 1:9), indicating a chief or leading angel. “Archangel” generally refers to St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael, as they are the three angels most frequently mentioned throughout Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. The fact that these three angels are mentioned by name on multiple occasions indicates the significance of their roles in the history of salvation. It is because of these important roles that we take pause to celebrate on Sept. 29.

St. Michael is mentioned by name on several occasions in Sacred Scripture (Dn 10:13, Rev 12:7), and his role in the Tradition of the Church has been extensively documented. He has been widely referred to as the “great prince,” and is most often associated with the apocalypse – the final battle against Satan. Christian Tradition gives St. Michael four different roles, but he has primarily been regarded as the patron and protector of the Church.

St. Gabriel is mentioned by name in Scripture (Lk 1:19), and Tradition has also assigned him implicit roles within Scripture where he is not specifically mentioned. Most important, however, is St. Gabriel’s role as the messenger of God, delivering to Mary the announcement of the birth of Our Savior (Lk 1:26).

St. Raphael is mentioned by name only in the Book of Tobit, where he is responsible for healing Tobias. Raphael means “God has healed” and thus, he has also often been associated with the “angel of the Lord” (Jn 5:4).

The feast day on Sept. 29 gives each of us the opportunity to consider our own role in the Church, as we gratefully commemorate the Archangels responsible for carrying out their roles of defender, messenger and healer.
Ensuring Good Stewardship of Our Parish Finances

Our St. Augustine Finance Council

For more than 10 years, Rey Pimentel has served on the Parish Finance Council, and he is currently the President of that group.

“The role of our St. Augustine Finance Council is to assist and advise Fr. Rene Ramoso in overseeing and controlling the financial affairs of the parish,” Rey says. “We consist of a wonderfully diverse group of people who have an excellent grasp of finances and parish life.”

The Council has 10 lay members who are appointed by the pastor, and they meet monthly, with the exception of the summer months. Rey feels that the Council is well representative of the parish in general and is filled with people who are quite capable in the areas where necessary.

“We have a good mixture of people with backgrounds, skills, and knowledge that allow us as a group to really take an honest and well-informed look at parish finances,” Rey says. “For example, I am one of three CPAs on the Council, and we have insurance people, sales people, business owners, and others with good backgrounds in money and finances. Of course, we are completely advisory to Father in nature.”

Under the Code of Canon Law, a parish finance council is mandated – “In each parish there is to be a finance council that is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish without prejudice to the prescript of Canon 532” (537). In turn, section 532 states clearly that the pastor is the responsible party – decision-making is his, with the advice of lay boards like the Finance Council.

Although the entire council meets with Father once a month, Rey says that he and Father meet often.

“He and I are constantly discussing and reviewing financial items relating to both income and

“I know on my own part, it is a way for me to use my God-given talents and experience to serve God and the parish. There are so many ways people can share and give back, and that is what stewardship is all about.” – Rey Pimentel
Our St. Augustine Finance Council  continued from page 7

expenses,” Rey says. “Together we establish an agenda for the whole council meetings to make sure that we are reviewing and talking about everything that we should. Our responsibilities go beyond that, however.

“We may study sources of parish revenue and make recommendations for maintaining and advancing that,” he continues. “That also means being involved with developing programs and processes, and being involved in parish fundraising when necessary. We are also very engaged in the budget process and are continuously reviewing the budget. We may talk about ongoing maintenance and take a look at fund raising by parish organizations and ministries. With our parish efforts in the area of stewardship, we work with the Parish Council on that endeavor.”

One important aspect of the council’s function is that of transparency.

“We are responsible for reports to parishioners and the annual report to the archdiocese,” Rey says.

And for Rey, the council provides a great example of stewardship.

“I know on my own part, it is a way for me to use my God-given talents and experience to serve God and the parish,” he says. “There are so many ways people can share and give back, and that is what stewardship is all about.”

If you are interested in more information on the Finance Council, please contact Rey Pimentel at 650-754-0907 or reypim@sbcglobal.net. However, if you are interested in being part of the council, since members are appointed by Fr. Ramoso, Rey recommends that those people contact Fr. Ramoso at the parish office at 650-873-2282.