



Who knows how often our words or deeds have already influenced another's direction in life.

## EVANGELIZATION: WALKING THE WALK

### IF NECESSARY, USE WORDS!

An interesting quote is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel always; if necessary, use words." This quote touches on a reluctance by some Catholics to evangelize—to speak out by proclaiming the good news of Jesus. In actuality, the Church does not ask us to proselytize (manipulate or pressure) anyone on matters of faith. Instead, we are encouraged to be a good example to others by living out our faith. And, if the opportunity presents itself, we pray we are given the words to express our beliefs openly and authentically.

Last year, a young man commented to Pat Schnee, Pastoral Minister and head of our RCIA program: "You Catholics don't talk about your faith much, do you? Until I told people at work that I was becoming a Catholic, I never knew that five guys at work are Catholic too." Are we missing opportunities to let others know about our own faith life?

#### Subtle and natural

To evangelize—to share your faith with another—does not require aggressiveness or knocking on doors. Evangelizing can be as subtle and natural as allowing others to get close enough to hear your truth or see how you live your life.

Several candidates or catechumens from this year's RCIA program (the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) share with us how they were evangelized—how they were influenced to join the Catholic Church.

#### Walking the walk

Jerry Fiume was never directly approached by anyone to invite him to join the Catholic Church. "I have been a Methodist, but I was influenced by how the Catholics I met were walking the walk, not just talking the talk. My daughter has been a student at the Elms, and my son is at St. Hilary School. After being around these two schools, I was moved by the sense of community you feel there. About the same time, I became involved with Father Norm Douglas and Larry Vuillemin at Heart-to-Heart Communications, meeting with Larry every week to study the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. (Heart-to-Heart works as a catalyst for developing spiritual values in the workplace. [www.h2h.org](http://www.h2h.org).)

"I was humbled by how those people are practicing their Christian faith—by the way they were focused on living the way God wants you to live. That made me want to emulate what they've done. For me, it's been a process, an evolution, and I think that process is never done. No one ever pushed me down this path, nothing hit me over the head. I just felt a calling by seeing them live out their faith—by their example." Jerry will be received into the Catholic Church this Easter.

#### I waited

When Linda Barnes was a young girl, she had her first encounter with the Catholic Church. "When I went to a Catholic church with my young friend, I was overwhelmed by it. From then on, over the years, I felt that something

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# Let your voice be heard on abortion

## Leaders call the Church to action



Despite the divisive cultural debate on abortion, most people of faith agree that abortion is morally wrong or feel morally uncomfortable with it. As a new Congress and administration transition into office, there is growing concern that current restraints on abortion and embryonic stem cell research will be removed and that the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) will be passed and signed into law. FOCA is a sweeping bill that would revoke all existing state and federal laws on abortion and place pro-life issues in the hands of the federal government alone.

### Our voices heard

Fr. Steven Brunovsky, Pastor of St. Hilary, states: "It is important that we let our voices be heard on abortion and other pro-life issues as a new administration takes office. It is also vital that we oppose the use of embryonic stem cells from aborted fetuses. Because the current executive order that has prevented embryonic stem cell research could be revoked soon, this life issue is also in the forefront of life issues."

Contrary to popular opinion, scientific research has found that adult stem cells are highly effective in medical research and that embryonic stem cells are not. A new document released by the Vatican deals with this and other bioethical life issues ("The Dignity of a Person," or *Dignitas Personae*).

### Fight FOCA

Calling this potential expansion of abortion rights "a moment of crisis," the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched a massive national "Fight FOCA" postcard campaign this month so that our voices can be heard now by the US Congress. The postcards express opposition to the passage of the FOCA law. To read the language of the postcard, see the "Fight FOCA" sidebar to this article. It provides details on why the bill is opposed.

At all Masses on the weekend of January 17 and 18, you will be given the opportunity to sign postcards that will be sent to your representatives in the US House and Senate, expressing opposition to the passage of the FOCA bill. The postcards will be available

in the pews, and the signed cards will be mailed by the parish. All parishes in every Catholic diocese in the US are being asked to participate in this campaign. An email campaign will also accompany this initiative.

### Letter to the President-elect

In an open letter to the President-elect, the US Bishops expressed their hope to work together for "the common good of all." The letter also issues a strong warning on the potential signing of the FOCA bill, which they assert would have "lethal consequences for prenatal human life":

"...the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve.... Aggressive pro-abortion policies, legislation, and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion."

In a recent open letter, Bishop Lennon of the Cleveland Diocese described abortion and euthanasia as "intrinsically evil" and reaffirmed the Catholic Doctrine that life begins at conception. He also noted: "God's teachings are not always easy nor popular to embrace."

### The Pope's voice

Pope Benedict XVI has repeatedly referred to the "intrinsic evil of the crime of abortion," urging the Church to make all people aware of its evil, calling attacks on the unborn "today's gravest injustice." A senior Vatican official told Time magazine in November that the removal of all restraints on abortion would be "the equivalent of a war.... It would be like saying: 'We've heard the Catholic Church, and we have no interest in their concerns.'"

## What you can do

There is much that a concerned parishioner can do to confront this potential removal of constraints against abortion and embryonic stem cell research and to address other pressing life issues, such as euthanasia:

- Sign the three postcards that will be offered at all Masses the weekend of January 17 and 18.
- Offer postcards to family, friends and neighbors so their voices can be heard.
- Call your Senators, House Representatives, and other leaders in the Congress to let them know you oppose the passage of the FOCA bill.
- Contact the President-elect's office to express your opposition to the removal of restraints against abortion and the use of embryonic stem cells for research.
- Attend St. Hilary's Respect Life Prayer Vigil and Adoration, which will begin Friday evening, January 16, and run through Saturday afternoon, January 17. You can sign up for an hour of adoration during that period.
- Become a part of the Cloud of Witness movement at local abortion clinics, standing in silent prayer and witness to the sanctity of life (sponsored by the Summit Right to Life Committee and the St. Hilary Respect Life Committee.)
- Join a pro-life group.
- Keep informed of all pro-life issues by joining the St. Hilary Respect Life Committee, which forwards updates and information to its members and sponsors pro-life activities.
- Pray for women who are considering abortion, those who are suffering as a result of abortion, and those who are working to help women find alternative options.
- Support pro-life causes through your time, talent and treasure, as a good steward of life.

## Keeping you informed

Marcy Katcher, Chair of the St. Hilary Respect Life Committee, explains the mission of the parish committee: "Because pro-life news and issues are not often covered in the mainstream media, our non-partisan committee is dedicated to raising awareness among parishioners on abortion issues. So, I hope parishioners will watch the bulletin for news to keep up on right-to-life issues and will consider joining our



committee to receive regular updates on pro-life issues," Marcy continued.

"We encourage all parishioners to participate in our pro-life activities. Our committee is growing, and we enthusiastically welcome new members to support us in this vital work! The only requirement for membership is that you value all life from the moment of conception to natural death. We are the Church, and I believe the pro-life message needs to come from the people, who should not be afraid to let their voices be heard." Marcy Katcher can be reached at 330-659-0374 or by email at [andyaudrey@windstream.net](mailto:andyaudrey@windstream.net).

## More information

For more information on the opposition to abortion, here are some excellent resources:

**Internet:** National Committee for a Human Life Amendment at <http://www.nchla.org/>; Cleveland Catholic Charities at [www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife); American Life League at [www.all.org](http://www.all.org); National Right to Life at [www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org); Right to Life of Summit Country at [www.summitrtl.com](http://www.summitrtl.com); Life News at [www.lifenews.com](http://www.lifenews.com); US Conference of Catholic Bishops Pro-Life Activities at [www.usccb.org/prolife/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/index.shtml); Knights of Columbus at [www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org); Catholic Vote at [www.catholicvote.com](http://www.catholicvote.com). **Print and Radio:** *The Universe Bulletin*; *Our Sunday Visitor*; *Celebrate Life* magazine; EWTN's *Living Bread* Radio at AM 1060.

# National "Fight FOCA Postcard Campaign"

**January 17-18 at all Masses**

Those who wish to oppose the potential passage of the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) in Congress can send postcards to their Congressional representatives to oppose this controversial bill. This national campaign is being implemented in January by the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment on behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Additional postcards will be available for parishioners to share with friends, neighbors and family.

## What the postcard says:

"At this time of serious national challenges, Americans should unite to serve the good of all, born and unborn. The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), the most radical and divisive pro-abortion bill ever introduced in Congress, would create a 'fundamental right' to abortion that government could not limit but would have to support. FOCA would overturn many existing widely-supported policies, including laws protecting parental involvement and conscience rights and those preventing partial-birth abortion and taxpayer funding of abortion.

Please oppose FOCA or any similar measure, and retain laws against federal funding and promotion of abortion.

As your constituent, I would appreciate a written response telling me how you would vote on these matters."

For further information on FOCA legislation, go to [www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife](http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife).

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

**St. Hilary Respect Life's  
Prayer Vigil and Adoration**

**Friday, January 16 to  
Saturday, January 17**

**to mark the anniversary of  
Roe v. Wade and to pray for the  
right to life for unborn children**

Stewardship is a lifestyle that reflects who we are and what we believe. It's not a program. It's not about the money. It's not about the number of parishioners who are involved in ministry. It's not about obligation. It's about a conversion of heart and mind. It's about being grateful for God's many gifts, about cultivating those gifts out of love for God and one another.



# Stewardship A Way of

That said, the Stewardship Committee does look at the numbers as one measure of whether we are successfully communicating the message of stewardship. This year's stewardship materials were certainly visually appealing, thanks to the giftedness of a parishioner. They received wide praise throughout the diocese. We decreased our costs by having materials and services donated and by locating less expensive printing. We are sensitive to the issue of cost weighed against how to grab people's attention when they are bombarded daily with secular advertisements vying for their time and treasure. But, visually appealing materials don't necessarily equate to reaching the hearts of parishioners and generating increased commitments.

Last year we had significant increases in commitments over 2006. But what a shock we had this year when we discovered that our numbers had decreased over last year. Although the decrease was small, after five years of encouraging parishioners to make a commitment of time, talent and treasure, we had hoped for continued growth.

What does the decrease in commitments mean? The Stewardship Committee surmises it is because of the election and the economic crises. As I was stuffing the envelopes for the stewardship mailing, I listened to the radio and the discussion of the collapse of Wall Street and wondered, "Is this the time to send this mailing?"

YES, now more than ever, it is important to remind ourselves that it is reliance on God that will see us through tough times. Reflecting on the inspirational messages of every parishioner we have interviewed since beginning this newsletter in November of 2005, it is God's Love that supported them, particularly in times of crisis. God's love is constant, continual and never failing. We only have to open our hearts, souls and minds to see and feel His Love.



Despite the decrease in commitment cards, the numbers DO show that we are a vibrant and active parish. A stewardship consulting company, Catholic Stewardship Consulting, calculates active parishioners as Mass attendance divided by 2.5. If we used that calculation, only 14% of parishioners would be considered active. At St. Hilary we far exceed that number, looking at parishioners active in ministry and active in giving.



## Adult Time, Talent & Treasure Commitments

- 1,296 commitment cards were completed by adult parishioners.
- 20% of the families completed at least one commitment card.
- 250, or 10%, of Parish Families completed all three commitment cards.

## Youth Time, Talent & Treasure Commitments

- 729 youth in grades K to 12 completed commitment cards.
- 40% of the youth completed commitment cards.
- 50% of PSR students made commitments.
- 80% of parish school students made commitments.

# Life at St. Hilary

## Time

- 603, or 15%, of adult parishioners made a commitment of Time.
- 2% is the decrease from 2007.
- 87% made a commitment to attend Mass every Sunday.
- 66% made a commitment to pray with their loved ones.
- 38% of Catholic parishioners attended Mass in 2008 based on Mass Counts in October. 914 of registered parishioners are not Catholic.
- 2% is the increase from 2007.
- 29% is the Cleveland Diocese average Mass attendance in 2008 as reported by Bishop Lennon at the First Friday Club on December 5, 2008.

## Talent

- 602, or 15%, of adult parishioners made a commitment of Talent.
- 7% is the decrease from last year.
- 659 adult and high school youth were interested in a new ministry
- 464 parish families had at least one member indicate an interest in a new ministry.
- 2,090, or 33%, of parishioners are active in St. Hilary Ministries. This number is low, as it does not include the school parents volunteering at the school.
- 880 parish individuals became involved in new ministries in 2008.
- 17% is the increase in parishioners involved in ministry from 2007.
- 46% of Parish Families have at least one member active in a ministry.
- 14% is the increase in Parish Families involved in ministry from 2007.

## Treasure

- 378, or 15%, of Parish Families made a commitment of treasure for 2009.
- 7% is the decrease in the number of pledges from last year.
- 5% is the decrease in the dollar amount of pledges from last year.
- \$1,961.86 is the average amount of yearly pledge.
- 64% of Parish Families contribute to the offertory.
- \$972.70 is the average yearly contribution from those who contribute.
- 162 Parish Families contribute by automatic withdrawal.
- \$23,308.52 is the total monthly amount of automatic withdrawal contributions.

Note that these numbers for giving were calculated as of December 18th and will likely increase when measured by year end figures.

## MAKING A COMMITMENT

So, why is it so hard to make a commitment? Some would say our culture shies away from making commitments. Others would say they have no time. Be Bold. Take a step. Make a commitment to God. Make God a priority in your life this year.

## Taking a look at our personal priorities and values: a self assessment

**Step 1)** How I spend the time entrusted to me: Not counting sleep or work, what were the five things you spent the most time on in 2008?

If "prayer" isn't on the list, how many more items would you have to add before "prayer" appeared?

**Step 2)** How I spend the financial resources entrusted to me:

Name six to ten things you probably spent the most **money** on in 2008.

**Step 3)** God as a priority during 2008 – a self evaluation:

Mark an "X" on the line below that you think represents how high a priority God was in your life in 2008 (using actual time and money spent as a partial indicator).

Low priority

High priority

**Step 4)** God as a priority during the coming year – a personal decision:

Draw a circle on the line above that represents how high a priority you would like God to be in your life during 2009.

**Step 5)** My concrete plan:

What are some things I could **start, stop or continue** that would help me toward making God a high priority in my life.

Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

Continue: \_\_\_\_\_

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33*



Linda Barnes

was missing in my life, and I kept toying with the idea of joining the Church. I was never baptized and never thrilled with my religion. My mother said I could decide which church to choose when I got older, so I just waited.

“So, I never did anything 'til this past year or so, after I became a resident of Wyant Woods. Once I got here, I noticed people from St. Hilary Parish [Eucharistic Ministers] coming to visit other residents and bringing them communion. They were so warm and welcoming to me when they came. You would have thought they knew me all my life! It was wonderful. Pat Long [a St. Hilary Eucharistic Minister to Wyant Woods] has been my right-hand person and is now my RCIA sponsor.

“I asked what I needed to do to join the Church, and Pat Schnee came and got me started in RCIA. The experience has been wonderful, beautiful. The openness, friendliness and warmth from everyone is great. And from reading articles in the newsletter, I get the feeling other people feel the same way—feel the family feeling from St. Hilary. I am so happy—very happy.” Linda will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil service in April.

### A strong connection

Lynnly Miller was evangelized by her fiancé. “When I met him in Miami, I was amazed by the strong connection he had to his parish there. He had found the Catholic Church in Cuba when he was 13. It was very difficult to practice his faith there. He made many friends in that community and was very active in the church. And he did it all on his own—not through his family. I was very inspired by the friends he made and the close community he had in his church.

“When I was growing up, I always admired families that prayed together and had a Holy Spirit connection. I never had that—never had a church foundation or a close connection to a church family. As an adult, I questioned many things, because religion was an unknown to me. Now my biggest inspiration is to pass my faith along to my own children—a strong connection to the church. I think praying at meals and at

night and going to church together brings a family together under the higher power—gives a family definition. The support and friendship you can get from church is part of the heart. That is what appeals to me.” Like Linda, Lynnly will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil service in April.

### Transfer of energy

“As a manager I work with college students where I try to lead by example,” comments parishioner Warren Husk. “But a few times a conversation has come up where I’ve been able to encourage some of them. When a time like that comes, you can only hope you will find the right words.

“About 10 years ago, I was brought to the Catholic Church by the woman I was dating, who is now my wife. I knew something was missing in my life, but I’m the kind of guy who needs to analyze everything before I make a decision. I bought the book *Christianity for Dummies*, to be sure I wasn’t missing something. When I saw my wife and her daughter going to communion, I wanted to be part of that—to share a religious experience with my family. I saw my wife living her faith daily, and I wanted to do the same.”

“After going through RCIA a few years ago—a life-altering experience for me—I decided I wanted to give back what was given to me there. So I decided to become a sponsor to someone interested in joining the Church. I wanted to somehow transfer that energy, excitement and newness I received. I think people tend to remember how they see people live rather than what somebody tells them to do. I think evangelizing is giving back.” Currently Warren is sponsoring an RCIA candidate for the second time since becoming a Catholic four years ago.

### Ready or not

Who knows how often our words or deeds have already influenced another’s direction in life. And can we ever know when we are being viewed as a role model of Catholicism, or when our voice is the one that needs to be heard? Evangelizing can be very subtle and very natural. Ready?

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20*



Jerry Fiume



Warren Husk



Lynnly Miller

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

### Ministry Leader:

Julie Slattery  
330- 668-1027

**WHO WE ARE:** We are a group of Christian people who knit and/or crochet prayer shawls for women and lap robes for men who need hope and healing. We meet twice a year with our neighbor, Faith Lutheran's prayer shawl ministry. Prayer shawl ministries are the fastest growing ministries in the United States.

### WHO RECEIVES A PRAYER SHAWL?

Prayer shawls and lap robes are made for anyone in need of hope or healing, parishioner or non-parishioner, near or far. We have made shawls for those in nursing homes, those suffering from chronic illness, those in need of prayers, and those served by our missionaries. Over 150 shawls and lap robes have been distributed in the 2 1/2 years since the ministry began. We have sent them throughout the United States and even as far as Germany.

**WHEN WE MEET:** We meet the first and third Tuesday from 10:00 am to noon in the lower level of the Spiritual Center. You can knit or crochet from home if the meeting time is not convenient for you.

**WHY WE EXIST:** To provide comfort to those in need of hope, healing and prayer.

**WHAT WE DO:** We begin with a prayer. Then, we enjoy each other's company while we work on our projects. Many of the members pray as they knit. Each week one of the priests comes to bless the shawls, robes and hats. We then deliver each with a blessing card.

**GIFTS REQUIRED:** A desire to create shawls or lap robes for someone in need. You do not need to know how to knit or crochet. We would be happy to teach you.

Prayer of Blessing: May the one who receives this shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace and wrapped in love. Blessed be.

**Virginia Olson** and **Rose McShannic** have been involved with the Prayer Shawl Ministry since its inception in May of 2006.

**Why Rose began volunteering:** In the spring of 2006 I was in a sewing group at Catholic Social Services when a fellow member brought me a book about prayer shawl ministries. I thought, 'This would be such a wonderful ministry to have at St. Hilary! How can I get it started?' About 4 or 5 weeks later, I saw a notice in the bulletin that St. Hilary was starting a Prayer Shawl Ministry. This was God saying, 'Knock, knock, here you go!'

**Why Virginia began volunteering:** I am passionate about knitting and crocheting. I had been knitting hats for the Knitting Ministry. I loved the idea of bringing hope and joy to people through my knitting.

**What Virginia does:** We pray, sip coffee, knit and crochet, discuss techniques, talk and have a wonderful time in community with the others in the group.

**Why Rose continues:** It is such a meaningful ministry. Those who receive the gifts of prayer shawls or lap robes are so appreciative.

**Why Virginia continues:** I love the camaraderie of the group. If there is a concern from a member, we talk about it then pray about it. We combine craft with spirituality.

**Rose's favorite moment:** I delivered a prayer shawl to a woman who was having her third go-around with chemotherapy. As I walked to the door I thought, 'What will we possibly talk about.' The grace of the Lord and the blessings from the prayer shawl took care of my fears. The woman was so thankful, and we had an enjoyable visit.

**Virginia's favorite moment:** When the group gets a thank you card from a person who has received a shawl and relates that they can feel the power of the prayers, I know I am in the right ministry.

**SIMILAR MINISTRIES:** Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? The Knitting Ministry knits hats year round for the homeless, with the goal of completing at least 200 hats by early in December. We provide the patterns. This ministry can be done from the comfort of your home. For information, contact Cathy Kenny at 330-666-5718.

THIS PAGE SPOTLIGHTS A MINISTRY THAT NEEDS VOLUNTEERS.

By sharing more information about their activities, it is our hope that you will be encouraged to participate.

January 2009

St HILARY



St. Hilary Catholic Parish  
2750 West Market Street  
Fairlawn, OH 44333-4236

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE

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## LOOK INSIDE!

Evangelizing  
Abortion  
Stewardship results  
Prayer shawl ministry

This Newsletter is brought to you  
by the Stewardship Committee at  
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Have feedback on this newsletter?  
Contact Lyn Schott at 330-867-1055

Karen Moran, Writer/Editor

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## MINISTRY APPRECIATION CELEBRATION

Saturday, January 10th  
5:00 to 9:00 pm Horning Hall

Help us celebrate the giving and  
loving ministry leaders who make  
St. Hilary a dynamic and vibrant  
parish. All Adults Are Welcome.  
Musical Entertainment by the  
High Schools of Archbishop Hoban,  
Our Lady of the Elms &  
St. Vincent-St. Mary.

RSVP requested by  
January 5th  
to parish office 867-1055 or  
[church@sthilarychurch.org](mailto:church@sthilarychurch.org)

## *Characteristics of a Christian Steward*



We must have  
the courage to  
talk about our  
faith to others.