



St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Get to Know Ben and Suzy Cuaresma

Building a Shared Life of Faith and Stewardship

When Ben Cuaresma was a child, his mother instilled in him that he should always find a way to help people, and he was encouraged to be an altar server. Now, Ben helps the parish community by serving with our Maintenance Ministry. He is a carpenter by trade, so it's a good fit. All these years later, Ben tries to instill a heart for service in his grown children. It's a way to pass on a heart of stewardship, and we all must pass on that legacy.

Suzy went through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults at St. Michael the Archangel. She received First Holy Communion and Confirmation in 1997. Having spent much of her life in the Episcopal faith, she feels she always has more to learn about the Catholic faith.



Ben and Suzy Cuaresma have been blessed through their involvement in the parish.

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Get to Know Ben and Suzy Cuaresma *continued from front cover*

One ministry that has helped her learn more about the faith is the Sacristan Ministry, in which she has been serving for about two years.

"They were looking for people to serve as sacristans, and someone asked Ben," Suzy says. "My heart told me that I wanted to do it. So, I raised my hand and got involved.

"I've learned a lot about the process of the Mass, worshiping, and the sacraments," she adds. "I learn more each time. You get to work closely with the priests and ask them questions. It deepened my faith for sure!"

Suzy also helps out with many other Mass ministries, including as an altar server and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. During weekday Mass, she often serves as a lector. When the couple's son, Hunter, was younger, Suzy taught Religious Education.

Both Ben and Suzy feel so blessed to be part of the St. Michael's community. There is so much they love about this parish.

"It's so welcoming," Suzy says. "It's not the same as other churches. We welcome people with open arms."

"We get so many tourists and snowbirds," Ben adds. "It's fun to have them here. We've become friends, and like family, with many of them over the years."

Suzy recalls that while she was in Arizona, she never really felt welcome at the Catholic Church — it was all a bit cold. This caused her to be even more thankful for her St. Michael's community.

"I also love our music," Suzy says. "The music directors do such a great job of mixing up the music and adding to the beauty of the Mass."

The couple enjoys attending the 7 a.m. daily

Mass, especially with the responses in the native Hawai'i language.

Ben and Suzy also appreciate Fr. Lio's commitment to stewardship.

"I just love it here," Suzy says. "It's that stewardship way of life. It encourages people to volunteer and use their gifts. We are encouraged to use our time, talent, and treasure. There is something for everyone. We encourage volunteering."

Being involved in the parish has helped Ben and Suzy get to know more people and grow in faith.

"For me, it's about praising and thanking Jesus for all our blessings," Suzy says. "I really feel blessed, and it's something that's important. It's something I can do as a 'thank you.'"

"I've been blessed all my life," Ben adds. "It's the least I can do to help around the church."

The Catholic faith is truly so important to both Ben and Suzy.

"Without my faith, I don't know where I'd be," Ben says.

"The Eucharist adds to my life," Suzy adds. "It's very sacred to receive."

If you haven't found a way to get involved in our parish community, please pray about it, and find a way to jump in. You won't be disappointed!

"For me, it's about praising and thanking Jesus for all our blessings. I really feel blessed, and it's something that's important. It's something I can do as a 'thank you.'" — Suzy Cuaresma





Living Stewardship Through Parish Hospitality Ministries

A Gift of Time and Talents



Stewardship is not just a one-time act — it's a way of life for Catholics. It's about recognizing that everything we have comes from God and using our time, talents, and treasure to serve Him and others. One powerful way to live out this calling is by actively participating in parish hospitality ministries, serving as ushers, greeters, and lectors during the Mass. These roles not only enhance the Mass experience but also allow us to share our gifts with our parish community.

Ushers: The Guardians of Order

Ushers play a crucial role in maintaining a sense of order and reverence during the Mass. Their responsibilities go beyond seating parishioners — they are stewards of the worship space. By becoming an usher, you can live out stewardship in the following ways:

Creating a Welcoming Environment: Ushers ensure that parishioners feel welcome and comfortable. Their friendly demeanor sets the tone for the entire congregation and helps newcomers feel at home.

Supporting the Celebrants: Ushers assist the priest and other liturgical ministers, making sure that the Mass flows smoothly. Their dedication contributes to a seamless and uplifting worship experience.

Strengthening Community: Serving as an usher fosters a strong sense of community. It's an opportunity to connect with fellow parishioners and deepen your bonds with the Church.

Greeters: The Face of Hospitality

Greeters are often the first point of contact for parishioners and newcomers. Their warm and friendly welcome can make a significant impact. By taking on this role, you can live out stewardship by:

Sharing the Love of Christ: As a greeter, you

embody Christ's love through your warm greetings and friendly demeanor. Your actions can bring joy and comfort to those who enter the Church.

Nurturing a Sense of Belonging: A welcoming environment helps people feel they belong to a caring and loving community. This can lead to more active participation and involvement in parish life.

Lectors: The Proclaimers of the Word


Lectors have a unique and profound responsibility in the Mass. They bring the Word of God to life through their readings. Becoming a lector allows you to live out stewardship by:

Sharing the Scriptures: Proclaiming the Word is a sacred duty, and lectors have the privilege of bringing the teachings of Christ to life. This act of service inspires reflection and deepens understanding among the congregation.

Enhancing Spiritual Growth: Lectors deepen their own understanding of Scripture and spiritual growth as they prepare and share God's message. It is a personal journey that enriches the lives of others as well.

Engaging in parish hospitality ministries is a fulfilling way to live out stewardship as a way of life. By sharing your time and talents as ushers, greeters, and lectors, you enhance the Mass experience for yourself, your family, and your fellow parishioners. Your welcoming presence, organizational skills, and passionate proclamation of the Word contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive parish community, fostering spiritual growth and a stronger sense of belonging. Through these ministries, you demonstrate your commitment to living a life of stewardship, embracing the call to serve God and His people.

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 ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH



2024 Commitment Card
 My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

 First & Last Name

 Phone

 Email

 Spouse: First & Last Name

 Spouse: Phone

 Spouse: Email

 Address

 City State ZIP

Please bring this card to Mass on
 December 7/8 or mail using the
 envelope provided.
 Thanks and God bless you!

Our Annual Stewardship

Thanking God for the Blessings He Has

You have to take care of yourself before you can take care of those you love. This rationale is difficult for many of us to accept. Mothers and fathers routinely place the needs of their children before their own; soldiers at war often throw their own safety to the wind in the interest of protecting their fellow soldiers. The story of Jesus also focuses on giving to others. If Christ calls us to imitate Him – to become completely selfless – then it would seem that focusing on ourselves might counteract our efforts as Christians.

Nevertheless, as we enter into our annual Stewardship Renewal, Fr. Lio is asking us all to focus a bit more on ourselves. No, he’s not encouraging self-centeredness; he’s asking us to examine our own lives and determine the areas that are in need of growth. Before the stewardship way of life can totally transform our parish, it must begin in each of our hearts. As each individual’s spiritual life blossoms and grows, so will our parish as a whole. Will you plant the seed of stewardship in your own heart?

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your commitment card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check “Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.” Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish.

Is your prayer life in need of a tune-up?

Honestly ask yourself, “How much time do I spend in prayer each week?” The answer is probably a bit embarrassing. Everyone wants to spend more time in prayer, but there’s just never enough time to do everything we want to do.

*Commitment Weekend is
December 7/8.*

*Don't forget to bring your
Commitment Card to Mass!*



Renewal Gifts Bestowed on Us

Good intentions are just that: intentions. This year, as you're discerning how you will offer your time to God, resolve to follow through with your commitments. Consider each moment you spend in prayer as nourishment for your soul. The spiritual health of our parish is only as strong as the sum of its parts (individual parishioners).

Does your level of parish involvement need a boost?

We give our talents back to God when we get involved in ministries at St. Michael the Archangel. And, with a host of ministries to choose from, there's something for everyone. Sure, ministries give parishioners opportunities to serve others in the community, but they also benefit those in the ministry itself. Ask anyone who actively participates in a ministry at St. Michael the Archangel, "Why do you enjoy serving in this way?" They'll probably say, "I get more out of the ministry than the people I serve." This year, as you're discerning how you will offer your talents to God, consider signing up for a ministry that may benefit you, like a Bible study, prayer group, or retreat. Or contribute to an outreach ministry where your good deeds not only help others in the community, but also give you feelings of satisfaction and thankfulness.

Do you give a percentage of your income to the offertory?

It may be hard to see offertory giving as a way to "help yourself," but when we approach the subject from a spiritual viewpoint, it can lead to individual spiritual growth and an increase in faith. Even the savviest businessperson worries about his or her personal finances from time to time. Adding a weekly offertory check to the list of monthly bills may seem crazy but, ultimately, sacrificial giving forces us to cut unnecessary spending, create a budget and have faith that God will help us make it through the month. All of these are good things for each of us, individually. After faithfully giving to the offertory for a few months, many Catholics find that it's not only possible to give a weekly offering, but that the fruits of their gift far outweigh the expense.

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2024 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL PARISH

Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your commitment card.

The Feast of the Guardian Angels: Our Protectors in Faith

On Oct. 2, the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Guardian Angels, a day dedicated to recognizing and honoring these celestial companions who watch over us. Guardian angels hold a special place in Catholic belief, providing comfort, protection, and guidance. But who are these ethereal beings, and why are they so significant in the Catholic Church?

Guardian angels are considered to be heavenly spirits, assigned by God to protect, guide, and watch over individuals from birth to death. The belief in guardian angels dates to biblical times, with references in both the Old and New Testaments. In the book of Psalms, it is written, "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).

The concept of guardian angels is deeply rooted in Catholic theology. St. Augustine, one of the early Church Fathers, wrote about their existence and role in guiding and protecting individuals. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also affirms the belief in guardian angels, stating that "From infancy to death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession" (CCC 336).

Guardian angels serve several vital functions in the Catholic faith:

Protection: They protect us from physical and spiritual harm, guarding against accidents, illness, and temptations.

Guidance: Guardian angels provide spiritual guidance, inspiring us to make virtuous choices and leading us on the path of righteousness.

Comfort: These celestial companions offer solace in times of trouble, consoling us in moments of sadness, anxiety, or despair.

Intercession: Guardian angels intercede on our behalf, praying for our well-being and offering our petitions to God.

The Feast of the Guardian Angels is an occasion for Catholics to acknowledge and express gratitude

for these divine protectors. It serves as a reminder of the intimate relationship between heaven and earth, emphasizing God's loving care and concern for everyone.

On this day, Catholics may attend Mass, where the role of guardian angels is often highlighted in homilies and prayers. Families can take the opportunity to teach children about the significance of guardian angels and encourage them to develop a personal relationship with their heavenly protectors.

In addition to attending Mass, individuals can reflect on their own experiences of divine guidance and protection. It's a moment to express gratitude for the times when guardian angels may have intervened in one's life, whether in averting danger, providing comfort, or offering wisdom in challenging situations.

The Feast of the Guardian Angels underscores the belief that God's love and care extend beyond the earthly realm. Guardian angels remind us that we are never alone on our spiritual journey, and their presence is a source of comfort and assurance. As we celebrate this feast day, let us be mindful of the guidance and protection provided by our guardian angels and express our gratitude for their unwavering companionship on our path of faith.





The Respect Life Ministry

Upholding the Sanctity of All Human Life, From Conception to Natural Death

Life is the central element of the entire Gospel message. As Christ tells us in John 10:10, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” So, as Christian disciples it is our responsibility to defend and champion life — from conception to natural death.

“All human life is precious in God’s eyes, and we want to praise and worship God,” says Ed Smialek, coordinator of our parish’s Respect Life Ministry.

Ed got involved in Respect Life efforts 20 years ago when his then-pastor invited him to actively participate.

“We would get in his pickup truck and go to the state capital to pray and show our support for the mothers, fathers, and, most of all, the babies,” Ed says.

As the years have progressed, Ed’s involvement has increased, and today he helps coordinate the efforts of our Respect Life Ministry.

“We work to raise awareness of innocent, vulnerable, and precious life not being respected from womb to tomb,” Ed says.

The ministry does this throughout the year by

hosting and participating in a number of events. In January, the group joins hundreds of thousands from across the nation in Washington D.C. for the annual March for Life. In the fall and then again in the spring, they host a 40 Days for Life campaign. Participants stand along the street holding signs that proclaim the dignity of life and denounce abortion.

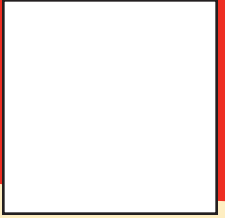
This month, as we recognize October as Respect Life Month, the group will continue participating in the 40 Days for Life, which began on Sept. 28 and will run through Nov. 5. They will also commemorate the first Sunday of the month as Respect Life Sunday, and they will spend time throughout the month praying for families.

“It is a wonderful journey,” Ed says of his commitment to this important cause. “I try to be joyful. I find people react to a smile very positively, and I hope that God has helped someone through me.”

Additionally, Ed encourages all of us to get involved in the efforts of our Respect Life Ministry.

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— Ed Smialek



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The Respect Life Ministry

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“All are invited,” he says. “Please feel free to join us. You can come sit with us in front of the church during the 40 Days for Life. We will have signs available for people to hold. And if you want, you can simply sit in a chair in the shade alongside us.”

The important thing is that we all join in the fight for life, through both our prayers and our actions, even if we do just one simple thing.

Abortion is arguably the greatest travesty of our time. And beyond abortion, we are now facing the rise of end-of-life issues like euthanasia. We need to join forces with one another to bolster a society that respects the right to life.

“All that evil needs to flourish is for good men to do nothing,” Ed says. “Come talk to me if you see me. Join us.”

If you are interested in joining the efforts of our Respect Life Ministry, contact Ed Smialek at webfoot2008@hotmail.com or 503-572-1114.



Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4 p.m. • Sunday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. (English), 11:30 a.m. (Spanish) • Confessions: Saturday 9 a.m.
Daily: Mon-Sat 7 a.m. (St. Michael) • Mon-Tues-Thurs-Fri 5 p.m. (Immaculate Conception) • Wed 6 p.m. (Immaculate Conception in Spanish)
Adoration: Wednesdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.