

March/April 2016



the

connecting the community of st. francis xavier parish

Navigator

How will St. Francis Xavier Parish celebrate the Year of Mercy?

The question was posed in the days leading up to Dec. 8, when the Jubilee Year of Mercy invoked by Pope Francis began. While our parish has many ways in which we carry out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy every day through our ministries, it seemed an ideal time to draw more attention to the need and opportunities to be the hands and feet of Christ as we extend His grace and mercy in our community.



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grace and mercy in our community.

A subcommittee of the Stewardship Committee began studying this question, and is in the process of identifying ways our parishioners can mark the Year of Mercy with intentional acts of service. The group includes Joanne Weiler, Terry Tusim, Judy Mayiras and Jennifer Webb.

The first such organized event took place Jan. 30, when a group of 10 parishioners served at Akron's Peter

Maurin Center, a volunteer-led drop-in center founded on Catholic principles that feeds the hungry, shelters the homeless and much more. The SFX group, which included several middle-schoolers and adults, sorted clothing donations, packed lunches and distributed food to those living on the streets.

"It was incredibly moving," says Annie Brunkholz, who volunteered with her husband, Herb, and sons, Luke and Alex. "It was almost like a renewal experience. We were so glad to be of service. We can't wait to do it again."

While they knew the need was significant in Akron, the experience was very eye-opening, Annie says, and she was grateful for this day to volunteer with fellow parishioners. "I've always wanted to do something like that," she adds, "but I probably never would have if not for this opportunity with the parish."

Throughout the year, we will explore the works of mercy and identify ways you may become involved. There will be things to go and do, such as the group did at the Maurin Center, as well as things you may contribute, such as the small toiletry and personal care items needed by a number of organizations. There will be simpler things done right at our parish.

And on May 28, we'll hold our second Parish Day of Service, when dozens of opportunities like this will be scheduled here in Medina and you are invited to come together to take part in these dynamic good works. Last year, 275 people were involved in an incredible grace-filled day of service, and the goodness was palpable. We look forward to an even bigger day this year.

In the months ahead, watch the bulletin, the Navigator, our parish website and our Facebook page for details throughout the year on how you can bring Christ's mercy to those in need.

MERCY continued on page 2



St. Francis Xavier parishioners sorted clothing at the Peter Maurin Center in Akron.



Saturday Vigil – 5 p.m., Sunday – 8 & 10 a.m., noon & 5:30 p.m.
Weekdays – 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday; 7 p.m. Monday, Thursday & First Friday of the month



Mercy

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MARCH

Instruct the Uninformed Counsel the Doubtful

During the month of March we have an opportunity to focus on two spiritual works of mercy: Instruct the Uninformed and Counsel the Doubtful. We have numerous ways to do that right here at the parish:

- **Lenten Soup & Scripture** – March 2, 9 and 16. Bring a pot of soup or bread and share a simple meal prior to a 30-minute evening prayer service.
- **Symbolon** adult education with Fr. Thom – March 7 or 8 and 14 or 15
- **Faith Sharing Groups** are studying “The Creed” by Stephen Binz – More than 100 people are studying this book in Lenten faith-sharing groups to learn more about our faith.
- **Women of Grace** study group sessions began in February
- **Christ Renews His Parish men’s renewal** – March 5-6
- **Knowledge is Power Homework Club** – started by parishioners Sarah and

Jason Horrigan, the club meets at Liberty Plaza apartments to help children with homework once a week for two hours. Liberty Plaza, at 253 Abbeyville Road in Medina, is an affordable apartment community with 106 rental units. Adults and children are welcome to provide assistance with homework questions. Visit www.sfxmedina.org/parish/mercy for more information.

APRIL

Visit the Sick Comfort the Sorrowful

In April, we focus on the Corporal Work of Mercy “Visit the Sick” and the Spiritual Work of Mercy “Comfort the Sorrowful.”

- At **Hospitality Sunday** on April 3, we will have supplies in the church basement and invite parishioners to make cards or notes for residents of 11 nursing homes in Medina. Individuals and families are invited to sign up to bring the cards to the nursing homes.
- **Mercy Visitors** spend time with our homebound parishioners. Training is available, and visits are arranged at a

mutually agreeable time for simple things like reading the newspaper, playing a game or just checking in.

- The **SFX Employment Network** extends hope and advice to those looking for work, by connecting those who know about job openings with those who need them.
 - Students in our **Edge** Parish School of Religion program have an opportunity for a service night at Medina Meadows nursing home once each month during the school year.
 - A small corps of our parishioners visit the dying at **Hospice of Medina County**, bringing them the Eucharist, praying with them and extending Christ’s mercy. Other extraordinary ministers of holy Communion bring the Eucharist to each weekend to nursing homes.
 - Parishioners in the **Rosary Leaders** ministry pray the rosary at nursing homes once or twice each month.
- For more details about all of these opportunities, and to sign up, visit www.sfxmedina.com/parish/mercy.



The Mercy of God Graciously Flows

My Heart overflows with great mercy for souls, and especially for poor sinners. It is for them that the Blood and Water flowed from My Heart as from a fount overflowing with mercy. For them I dwell in the tabernacle as King of Mercy. (Diary, 367)

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, we have the opportunity to reflect on the truth of God’s gracious mercy. God offers us mercy, not condemnation. The face of Jesus is the face of mercy! The blood and water that flowed from Christ’s side as He hung upon the cross is constantly flowing. Respecting our free will, God does not force anyone to be enveloped in mercy; however, open hearts can experience a flood of His mercy.

The gift of mercy is not limited to the season of Lent, as it is the first Sunday after Easter that the Church celebrates Divine

Mercy Sunday. Through the life, death and the Father raising His Son from the dead, the depths of mercy are revealed. The risen Christ greets his disciples, breathing His spirit within them stating: “...If you forgive men’s sins, they are forgiven them.” (John 20:22)

The message found in Divine Mercy is that God loves us – all of us. And, he wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.



The Divine Mercy message is one we can call to mind simply by remembering **ABC**:

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

Though the Divine Mercy message is not new to the teachings of the Church, devotion to Jesus as The Divine Mercy has experienced growth through the writings of St. Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who wrote a diary of about

600 pages recording the revelations she received about God's mercy. St. John Paul II canonized Sr. Faustina in 2000, making her the "first saint of the new millennium." Speaking of Sr. Faustina and the importance of the message contained in her Diary, the pope call her "the great apostle of Divine Mercy in our time."

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is a devotion of the Catholic Church with a focus on welcoming God's transformative mercy in one's life and into the world. The chaplet is customarily prayed at the 3 o'clock hour of Christ's death. As the Church celebrates Divine Mercy Sunday this year on April 3, St. Francis Xavier Parish will host a prayer service beginning at 2:30 p.m. that will include the Chaplet, Reconciliation, Exposition and Benediction.

"Let God's Mercy flow in you!"

The How to Recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy

The Chaplet of Mercy is recited using ordinary rosary beads of five decades.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross

2. Optional Opening Prayers

a) You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelope the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

b) O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in You! (Repeat three times)

3. Our Father

4. Hail Mary

5. The Apostle's Creed

6. The Eternal Father

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

7. On the Ten Small Beads of Each Decade

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

8. Repeat for the remaining decades

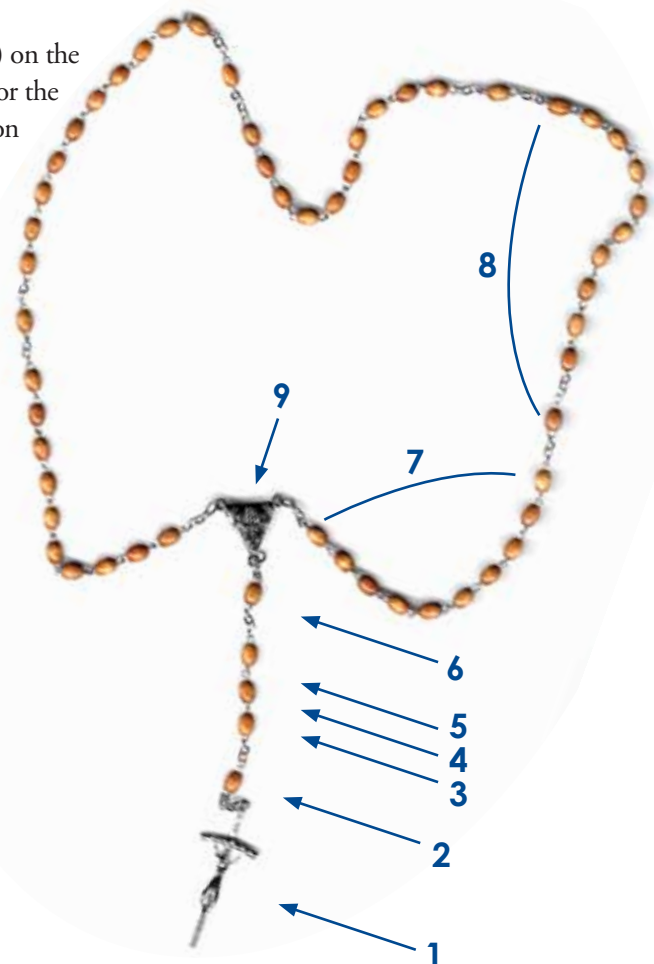
Saying the "Eternal Father" (6) on the "Our Father" bead and then 10 "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion" (7) on the following "Hail Mary" beads.

9. Conclude with Holy God

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. (Repeat three times)

10. Optional Closing Prayer

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.



Spending Time with Jesus

Eucharistic Adoration: An Ancient Tradition Soothes the Modern Soul

By Vicky Nann

Busy schedules mean sleep is precious. And yet, how often have you sacrificed sleep to squeeze in more work -- or more entertainment? Would you sacrifice sleep to spend time with Jesus?

Eucharistic adoration, also known as holy hours, is a centuries-old religious tradition of praying before the exposed Blessed Sacrament. We Catholics believe Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. The host becomes the Body of Christ. It's not a symbol for us. It's the real deal. Adoration allows us quite literally to spend time with Jesus – and at St. Francis Xavier, at night.

While some parishes have instituted perpetual or continuous adoration lasting around the clock, sometimes for several days, at St. Francis Xavier, the first Friday night of every month is dedicated to nocturnal adoration. Beginning around 7:30 p.m., after the 7 p.m. Mass, the faithful gather throughout the night until the early morning in the church to pray before the exposed Blessed Sacrament.

“Our lives are so busy,” says Donna Haney, a mother of nine and a parishioner of SFX. “Coming to adoration gives me a much-needed break. Praying – and sometimes just

sitting – in church, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, leaves me feeling calm and at peace.”

Donna participates in silent adoration, the first 90 minutes of St. Francis Xavier's nocturnal adoration. After the first ninety minutes of silent adoration, the remainder of the night is divided into hour-long blocks of oral adoration.

At least three participants are required during oral adoration: a leader, a right reader and a left reader. Each of the

participants reads aloud from a booklet for his or her role. Others attending read from the booklet. The hour includes two periods of silent reflection, each five to seven minutes long.

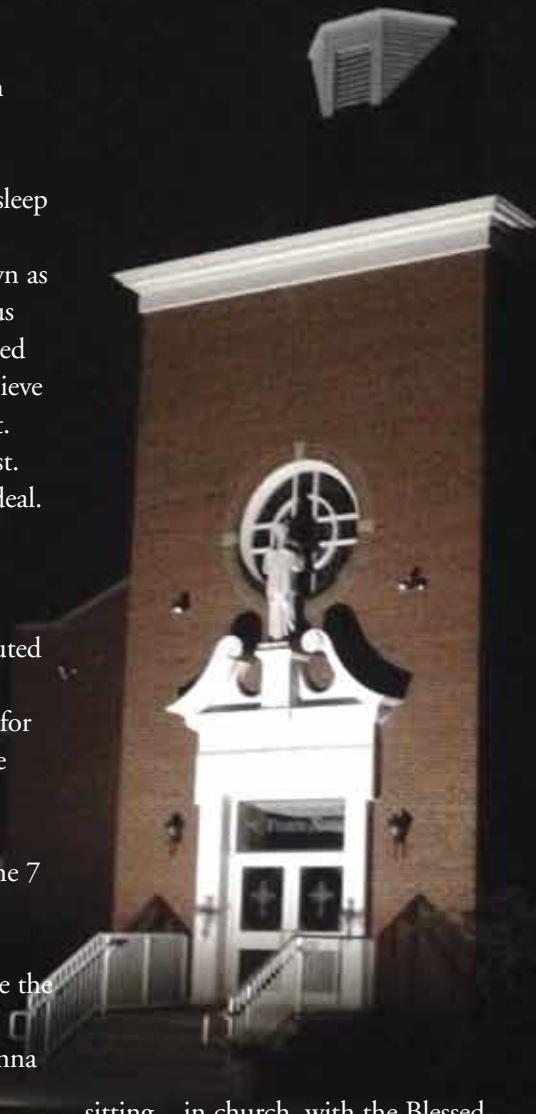
Volunteers sign up to participate actively as an adoration leader or reader for a particular hour. Those who are unable to commit to an hour can drop in and stay as long as they like.

“Most people come for less than an hour,” says Deacon Joe Loutzenhiser, who recalls going to adoration from the time he was in grade school. “Nocturnal adoration often fits better with people's schedules. It can be hard to come during the day. Friday night into Saturday seems to work well for most people.”

Meg Benninger has been participating in adoration for over 20 years at St. Francis Xavier. She and her husband, Ric, have committed to the 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. hour. When asked why she would choose to go in the middle of the night, Meg replies: “It's where we were needed.”

She admits it's not always easy to pull herself out of bed. “When the alarm goes off in the middle of the night, I groan,” says Meg. “But after the hour of adoration is over, I feel refreshed. It's a sacrifice, but it's one that makes me feel amazing.” The ritual of oral adoration appeals to Meg. Typically, her husband takes the Leader position while she and another parishioner fill the first and second Reader roles. “I think I might fall asleep if our hour were strictly silent adoration,” Meg says with a laugh.

Adoration is not an adults-only devotion. Children can also appreciate the



IN THE MORNING

The Blessed Sacrament also is exposed for 30 minutes of adoration the third Saturday of each month at 8 a.m.



Three adorers say prayers during the 1 a.m. hour.

benefits of quiet reflection and prayer in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. Tess Haney, Donna Haney's 12-year-old daughter, admits that sometimes she'd rather be doing something besides going to church for adoration. Encouraged by her mother, she attends – and acknowledges that the experience transforms her. "I might think I want to be somewhere else at first," she says. "But afterwards I'm always glad I went. I definitely feel that Jesus is there. Adoration is a time for you to hang out with Him!"

Her brother, Christopher, 8, agrees. "It's easy to focus on Jesus," he says. Mostly he sits quietly and prays. His brother Anthony, 11, adds, "I really feel good talking to Jesus. It's easier to hear God talking when He's right there."

And that's the beauty of adoration. With the Blessed Sacrament exposed, God is right there. "Jesus is always with you," points out Deacon Joe. "But when you're present during Eucharistic adoration, it's different. It's a very special time with God."

Discover the restorative benefits of the ancient Catholic tradition of adoration. Drop by church the first Friday of the month between 7:30 p.m. and 7:30 a.m. to spend time with Jesus.

Have you experienced Tenebrae?

The word Tenebrae comes from the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows." In another age, monks changed the ancient psalms and lamentations in the darkness of the night or the very early morning. These early offices of the Sacred Triduum began to be anticipated the evenings before Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. In modern liturgical practice, Tenebrae is sung only on Wednesday evening.

A singular feature of this service is the fact that, as the chants and readings progress, candles are gradually extinguished. Here, in the darkened church, we will extinguish all the lights until only one candle remains.

For a brief time we will remain in darkness, meditating on the mystery of Christ's death and the apparent victory of darkness and evil in our lives, only to be startled by a loud noise symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection. The candle then reappears and, by its light, we pray and leave quietly.

Join us at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 23, for this very special Tenebrae service.

Seniors Club invites new members

About 55 members of the St. Francis Xavier Parish Seniors Club attended the group's annual Christmas party/luncheon at Weymouth Country Club. A delicious lunch was served, followed by some fun games, prizes and a Christmas carol sing-a-long. A good time was had by all!

The club's goal for 2016 is to reach out to parish members who consider themselves "seniors" (age is not a factor) to join this parish activity, to get involved and get to know your fellow parishioners – especially if you are new to the area and our parish. Everyone is most welcome!!

One of the club's newest members is Lily Stewart, who moved to Medina in October from Pennsylvania. Lily says she was impressed with the friendliness of the people here. People were very warm and welcoming, she says. "Two different women, at two different Masses, both said to me, 'we have a wonderful seniors club here, you should look into it.' I thought, this is probably a really nice club."

Lily says she has enjoyed making new friends through the club. "My church is like a parish family to me, and that's what I was looking for. People are always very friendly," she says. "I always meet someone (after Mass) who talks to me."

Seniors Club meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Xavier Room, with recitation of the rosary before the meeting. Often, there's a speaker at the meetings, along with a hot dog luncheon in July, a bus trip, and the Christmas party. Club members hope you will consider joining this wonderful activity, and become an active member of St. Francis Xavier.

For more information, please contact membership chairwoman Dorothy Sayer at 330-723-1950; president Pete Danszczak at 330-241-2200 or pnpdan@zoominternet.net, or Mary Grace Zirola at 330-289-4221.





Fr. Larry Richards selects St. Francis Xavier for Parish Mission

We are delighted that Fr. Larry Richards, a popular national conference speaker and pastor from Erie, Pennsylvania, has chosen St. Francis Xavier Parish as the site of a parish mission here in our church May 9-12.

The purpose of a mission is to help people grow in their love for God and give them hope and direction in their daily lives.

Fr. Larry has conducted hundreds of parish missions, conferences and retreats around the country, and hosts EWTN radio and TV shows. He is known to make the love of God real in his presentations. Fr. Larry is a former high school chaplain and the founder of The Reason for Our Hope Foundation.

Each night of the parish mission will have a different theme:

Monday: God's Love and practical information on how to pray

Tuesday: Gift of the Mass and the importance of family

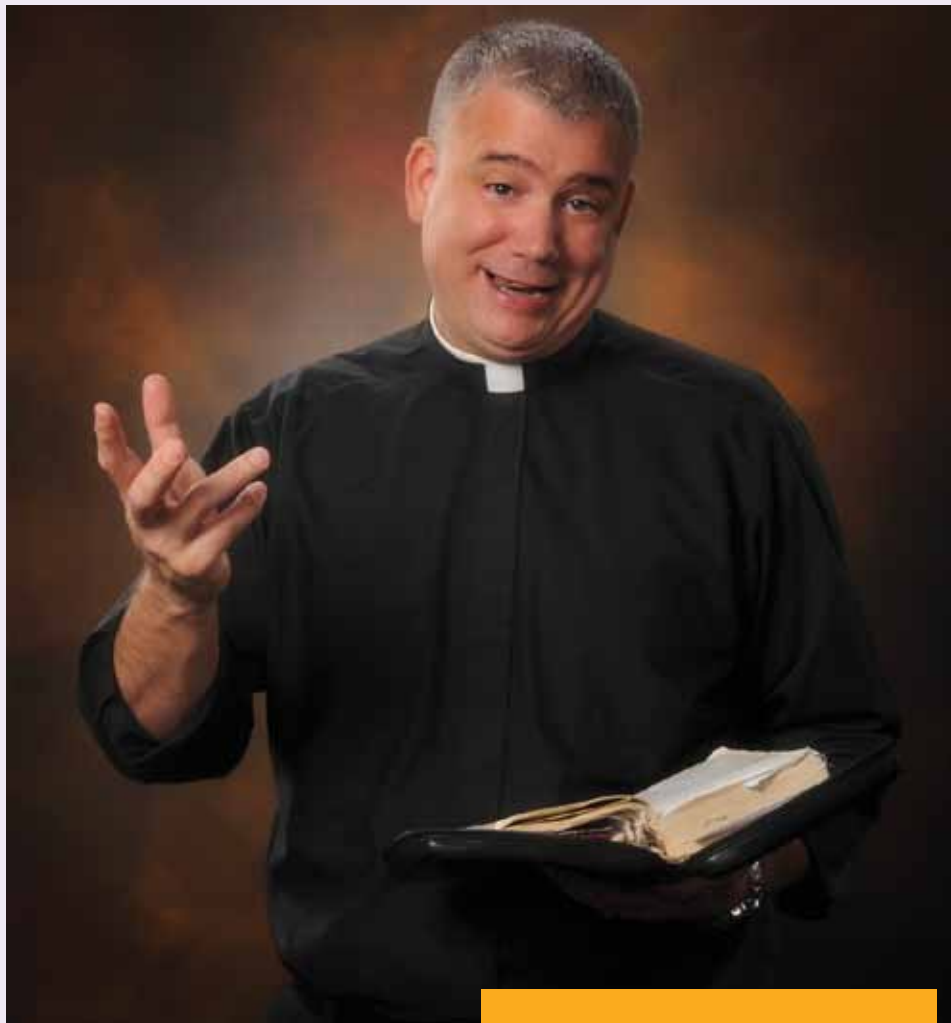
Wednesday: Passion of Jesus Christ and forgiveness of our sins

Thursday: Healing service and discipleship

Parishioners Larry Hering and Dave Selby have traveled as far as Pittsburgh to hear Fr. Larry speak and say we should expect a large crowd at our church, so plan to arrive early each night. "He's a very vibrant speaker and he draws a lot of people," Larry says. "He pretty much tells you the way it is. And that's what makes him so interesting. He doesn't sidestep anything."

"I see him as a very holy man," he adds. "The reason is, he's very straightforward about what he talks about."

Dave says attendees should expect



animated and insightful talks that cut to the heart of what we believe as Catholics – and why.

"If you go and hear him," Larry says with a chuckle, "you will not fall asleep."

Seating will be on a first-come basis. Free childcare will be provided in the school. The mission is open to all, not just parishioners.

Fr. Larry promises two things: One, you will never be bored, and two, your life will be changed forever. Come and experience this truth for yourself!

HELP NEEDED

Many hands will be needed to make the mission a success, from baking cookies to parking cars.

To lend a hand, visit www.sfxmedina.org/parish.



Help children find their purpose in life, speaker says

At a suburban Catholic school where discipline and dress code set a tone for structure and mutual respect, a 43-year-old guy with a 7-inch brown Mohawk stands out.

Christopher Milo is used to that, and his hairstyle's shock value helps to break down barriers as he cracks jokes with students, bounces around the classrooms and expresses interest in what they're doing in school. It gives him an opportunity to talk about treating others with dignity, reaching out to the vulnerable and friendless, and doing something positive for others.

But it's when he sits quietly at the electric piano and expressively pours out his heart across the keyboard that he most gets the attention of his audience.

"Do you guys want me to play?" Milo teased three-quarters of the way through a presentation to about 300 parents and students at St. Francis Xavier School. "Yes!" came the enthusiastic response – mostly from the children, who had heard him at a school presentation a few days earlier.

Milo came to St. Francis Xavier School for three days at the end of January to provide character education in conjunction with Catholic Schools Week. In a presentation to students, he related the story of his "miraculous" healing when he was paralyzed from the waist down following a back injury. The Cleveland-area resident says he prayed to God, promising to do something good with his music to help people, and within three days he began regaining the ability to walk.

Years later, he reiterated that promise to God when his toddler son was tested for leukemia. Within days, his son's health returned and today he is a normal 12-year-old.

In gratitude, Milo started playing the piano at children's hospitals around the country, meeting children coping with cancer and praying with families. He compiled a list of "13 Messages from Milo" – common advice that ranges from "be positive" and "love one another" to "communicate" and "be genuine" – and began taking his music and his message to schools.

He urged students to be kind and use their talents to do something good for others. "Each and every one of you was born with a gift," Milo said. "Go use it for the benefit of someone else. It's not about us. It's about putting a smile on someone else's face."

His Mohawk, he says, is the result of that smile. Milo says a 4-year-old girl with a brain tumor startled him one day by cutting his hair with construction paper scissors. "I never



Christopher Milo talks with third-grade twins Robert and John Filippou about what makes each unique.

forgot that smile on her face," he says.

He urged the older students to be leaders in the school, and be kind to the younger ones.

"You don't know what the people sitting next to you are going through," he said. "Offer a helping hand. Offer a solution that might put a smile on someone's face. ... If you see a friend being down, sit with them at lunch. Or, if you don't know them, play with them on the playground. Older guys, say, 'Dude! What's up?'"

St. Francis Xavier School principal Bibiana Seislove said the school plans to focus on each message by speaking about them in the classroom, weaving them into class discussions across the curriculum, including them in morning broadcast announcements and integrating them into discipline. "We also are going to work the messages into our current student-organized X-Out Bullying program," she said.

Milo praised the school's inclusive atmosphere and leadership, and informed parents that the middle-schoolers told him they most want more time with their parents, an increased sense of community and boundaries. He said they want to feel that their opinion matters. He encouraged parents to engage with their children, to learn what they're thinking.

"God's given you gifts," he told listeners. "Use those gifts in a positive way to help someone else."

St. Francis Xavier

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Find us online at facebook.com/St.FrancisXavierCatholicChurchMedina

March 2, 9 & 16

Lenten Soup & Scripture
6 p.m. soup supper;
7 p.m. prayer service
Church Basement & Church

March 11 & 18

Mass & Stations
of the Cross
7 p.m., Church

March 12

Boy Scouts St. Patrick's Day
Dinner/Dance
6:30 p.m., Church
Basement
For tickets, call
330-725-4968

March 13

Hospitality Sunday
(moved for this month only)
After 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and
12 p.m. Masses,
Church Basement

March 19

Easter Egg Hunt
1 to 3 p.m., School & Gym

March 21-25

Spring Break
(no school or PSR)

March 23

Tenebrae Service
7 p.m., Church

April 3

Hospitality Sunday
Church Basement

Divine Mercy Sunday
2:30 p.m. prayer service,
Church

April 22

Catholic Commission of
Wayne, Ashland & Medina
Pope St. John Paul II,
Proclaimer of Justice
Gala Dinner & Silent Auction
6 p.m., Xavier Room
Help honor organizers of
the Meadows Turkey Bowl,
who will receive a
Faithful Servant award.
For tickets, call
330-725-4968.

May 7 & 8

Parish Day of Service
Sign-Up Weekend
After all Masses,
Church Basement

May 14

First Communion
10 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Also May 21 at 5 p.m.
and
May 22 at 12 p.m.

May 28

Parish Day of Service

Looking ahead...

Vacation Bible School

Mark your calendars for
June 13 to 17.
Our theme is
"Jesus Gathers Us
Together."
Registrations open May 1.

The Edge Camp

Edge Summer Camps are open to
all seventh- and eighth-graders
of our parish!
Camp 1: June 20-24
Camp 2: June 24, and June 27-30
Registrations begin May 1.

Holy Week liturgies

Holy Thursday (March 24):

7 p.m. Mass; Adoration of the
Blessed Sacrament, 9 p.m. to midnight
(Xavier Room)

Good Friday (March 25):

9 a.m. Morning Prayer; Liturgy of the Lord's
Passion, 3 and 7 p.m., (Church)

Holy Saturday (March 26):

9 a.m. Morning Prayer;
Blessing of the Food Baskets, 3 p.m., (Church)

Easter (March 26 & 27)

Vigil: 8:30 p.m., (Church)

Sunday:

8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 12 noon, (Church)
8:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
(Medina High School Performing Arts Center)