

**St. Francis Ministry Serves up a Little Italiano**  
**St. Paul's Mardi Gras Festival**  
**February 2023**



The first annual St. Paul's Mardi Gras Festival took place February 21<sup>st</sup> on the St. Paul's campus. Members served a taste of Italy with homemade pasta, Italian cookies and Gambino's famous King Cake.



Julie Molten in full Mardi Gras regalia.

**Annual Retreat with Fr. Tamil**  
**March 11, 2023**

The St. Francis Ministry held its annual Lenten day of retreat and reflection on the topic "Paradigm Shift".

The day began with morning Mass and then the Stations of the Cross on the St. Paul peace path. We continued our reflection with Fr. Tamil at Lettuce Lake Park.

**Our Regular Events**

- ◆ *Weekly Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction*  
8 PM Monday evenings
- ◆ *Monthly Meeting – Second Saturday at 9 AM –*  
*St. Michael Building @St. Paul's*

**Upcoming Calendar of Events**

- ◆ Pet Photos with the Easter Bunny, Mar. 25<sup>th</sup>,  
10 AM – 1 PM, Shelter 7, Carrollwood Village  
Park
- ◆ Prayer Service – May 20, Shelter 6,  
Carrollwood Village Park



Fr. Tamil's message focused on "Paradigm Shift", which means a complete change in view or pattern or a different way of life. A radical change of personal perspective has been coined "a paradigm shift." Deepening of awareness and profoundly having a different point of view, Shift of mind, change of



consciousness, a new way of thinking, seeing, acting, etc.

There are many examples of real-world shifts, but what about your view of the Christian life? Have you made a change? If your perspective has been distorted by



tradition, rejection, or legalism, you're in need of a biblical "paradigm shift." A grace awakening would include these changes of perspective, for example, St. Francis of Assisi who gave up material possessions to dedicate his life to the Church and all God's creatures.

Maybe you have had a spiritual "paradigm shift", too?

## Following in the Steps of St. Francis

### 68 Hours of Hunger

By Karen Probst

In following in the steps of St. Francis of compassion, the St. Francis Ministry has been collecting food, monetary donations, shopping, and time to Ending 68 Hours of Hunger.



St. Francis Ministry Donations

68 Hours helps to provide disadvantaged school children with nutrition from Friday afternoon to Monday morning when they do not receive the meals they normally receive from their school. The number of "weekend food-deprived" children has steadily been increasing and as a ministry, we are playing a part in a small way to help this cause. For more information, go to [end68hoursofhunger.org/find-your-community/florida/tampa/](http://end68hoursofhunger.org/find-your-community/florida/tampa/).

## Created Women Survivors of Human Trafficking

If St. Francis were alive today, he would have been on the front lines of reaching out and helping others, especially those who have been trafficked. As part of our

St. Francis Ministry mission, we support Created Women as one of our causes - helping women who have survived human trafficking.

Did you know? According to the Human Trafficking Hotline, Florida continues to rank **third** in the U.S. in human trafficking cases behind California and Texas. In 2021, the state had 781 cases which is 7.54% of the U.S. total. January 11 is recognized as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the U.S., according to a Jan. 12, 2023 wptv.com article.

Created Women is an outreach organization that helps survivors get back into the real-world. They help them expunge prison records, get their identification back (their identity and all records are taken from them when trafficked), clothe them, provide safe housing and skills building to help find jobs. As a ministry, we have provided blankets and clothing to help with their cause.

But there is more to be done and more ways we can help as a ministry. For more information, go to [createdwomen.com](http://createdwomen.com) and discover how you can help. Maybe you have a skill you can teach, possibly help with an event. There are all kinds of opportunities to show compassion.

## St. Francis Outreach Ideas Following in the footsteps of St. Francis

As we all know, St. Francis is the patron saint of animals, thus the reason for this ministry. However, many are not aware that he is also the patron saint of the poor and the environment. That said, the St. Francis Ministry is reaching out to provide our help in these areas. As a ministry, we are offering an opportunity to volunteer our services as either a group or an individual. If you are interested in volunteering or have other outreach ideas for the ministry, please send an email to [st-francis-ministry@stpaulchurch.com](mailto:st-francis-ministry@stpaulchurch.com).

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### February Birthdays

4 – Pat Hayes

5 – Anthony Valancius

### February Anniversaries

23 – Rosanne and Jack Stone

### March Birthdays

1 – Fr. Bob Romaine

3 – Tina Bubb

9 – Dawn Ellis and Linda Tarrago

18 – Becca Petrilak  
23 – Fr. Tamil Selvam  
24 – Fr. Bill Swengros  
**March Anniversaries:**  
3 – Jan and John Hoyt  
17 – Jackie and Jim Dremsek

#### **April Birthdays**

8 – Patti Cash  
14 – Karen Probst  
20 – Alex Petrilak  
25 – Rosanne Stone

#### **April Anniversaries**

16 – Liza and Michael Valancius

#### **May Birthdays**

2 – Marlene Barletta  
6 – Chuck Glass  
14 – Fr. Peter Okojie

#### **May Anniversaries**

1 – Fr. Tamil Ordination  
12 – Tina and Sam Bubb  
15 – Fr. Bob Ordination  
18 – Fr. Bill Ordination  
22 – Karen and John Probst

## **Kids and Canines** **kidsandcanines.org**

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity that involves kids and dogs, look no further, just like Julie Molten, a St. Francis Ministry member does. Our mission is to serve disadvantaged youth by giving them the support, tools, and opportunities to empower themselves and improve their lives.

### **Empowering Kids ... Changing Lives**

Kids and Canines believe all children, and especially the disadvantaged youth in their programs, can become high achievers in their own unique way and overcome challenges through care and support. Their goal is to empower kids by teaching them important life skills while receiving the therapeutic value of caring for and training a dog.

The children in their programs are selected in collaboration by teachers, counselors and therapists. While in their program the students enjoy the companionship of the dog while gaining confidence and finding acceptance. Improving life skills truly makes a difference on a child's life. It gives youth a reason to dream bigger and to find the confidence to be more than their disability or environment.

### **One Dog at a Time**

Kids and Canines dogs come to them from animal rescue organizations. They are evaluated before entering into the program for many things including temperament, motivation, and drive.

The dogs used in their programs have been evaluated and trained, mainly by the teens, to serve in an emotional support role. Those in the reading program have learned to lie still for 30 minutes while a child reads to them in a non-judgmental role.

The dogs in the teen programs must have the temperament to work with a wide variety of teen "trainers". They train every dog in their program to pass the AKC Canine Good Citizen Certification.

## **7 Key Moments in the Life of St. Francis (1 - 3)** **Murray Bodo, OFM** **October 5, 2022**

Before looking at the first key moment in the life of St. Francis of Assisi, let's set the stage by focusing on his early life. Francis was born in 1182 in Assisi. He was the son of a prosperous cloth merchant, Peter Bernadone. His companions saw him as a carefree youth, calling him the "King of Revels."

Francis enjoyed partying with his friends and had dreams of becoming a knight and gaining glory on the battlefield. But shortly after riding off to fight against Perugia, a nearby town, he ended up in their prison, a broken and disillusioned young man. It was after his return from prison, and during the recovery that followed, that Francis' life was changed.

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**1) Francis Meets a Leper.** Like most of his contemporaries, Francis felt a disdain for lepers and avoided them at all costs. One day, before his conversion, Francis was riding his horse alone in the countryside. As he moved along the road, he caught sight of a leper walking toward him. Francis' instinct was to turn back or move off to the side to avoid contact with the poor wretch. But Francis instead rode directly toward this man with parts of his face and hands eaten away by this dreaded disease.

Francis dismounted his horse, and warmly embraced and kissed the leper tenderly on his lips. In his Testament, Francis writes, "When I was in sin, the sight of lepers

nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.” Francis eventually came to realize that he had actually embraced none other than his Lord, Jesus Christ.

Francis soon found himself living with lepers and caring for them. His meeting and embracing the leper was the best preparation Francis could have had for the founding of a new order in the Church, whose highest ideal was to serve the poorest of the poor.

Some time later, Francis was praying alone in front of a crucifix in the abandoned chapel of San Damiano, located down the hill from Assisi. Suddenly, Francis heard these words of Christ coming from the cross: “Francis, repair my house, which is falling into ruin.” Francis realized later that it was a much bigger house—the Christian Church itself—that Christ was asking him to rebuild.

**2) Francis Breaks with His Father.** Not long after this, Francis, dressed in rough clothing, took precious merchandise from his father’s store and sold it to his customers, in order to pay for the rebuilding of the fallen-down chapel. He also sold his father’s horse. Francis’ father, Peter, would have preferred to see Francis go back to wearing fancy attire and throwing parties for his old chums. He was aghast and embarrassed, moreover, to learn that Francis was often caring for the lepers, who were living in the valley below Assisi.

In response, his father, boiling with rage, dragged Francis before the bishop of Assisi and demanded the return of his property and goods. Francis readily agreed to this. In the hearing of all present, Francis said, “From now on I will no longer say, My Father Peter Bernadone, but Our Father who art in heaven.” Francis gave back to his father not only his property and goods, but the money and all his clothes as well. Francis carefully placed his clothing on the ground.

The bishop, admiring Francis’ fervor, drew him into his arms and covered him with his mantle. The bishop understood that Francis’ actions were inspired by God—and were part of God’s way of leading Francis into an amazingly new form of life. Francis’ heart was overflowing with joy. His heavenly Father had set him free of all attachment to earthly things.

Francis was now ready to serve the Lord simply and without fear.

**3) Francis, the Herald of the Great King.** Francis, who used to wear fine garments, now went about clad in the poorest of clothing. As he went through a nearby woods, singing praises to the Lord in French, robbers suddenly rushed out upon him. When they asked him gruffly who he was, Francis replied confidently in a loud voice, “I am the herald of the great King!” Then they struck him again and again, and threw him into a ditch filled with deep snow, saying, “Just lie there in the snow, ‘Herald of the great King!’”

But Francis simply brushed off the snow. And when they had gone away, he jumped out of the ditch, and with great joy began to call out the praises of God in a loud voice. Francis then walked along until he came to the steps of a monastery, where he hoped the monks might clothe him in exchange for work. They did so, but Francis only stayed with them for a short while.

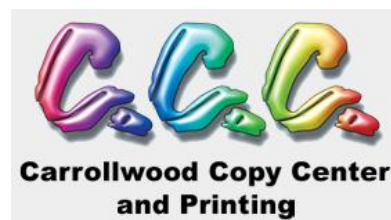
This whole episode seemed only to reinforce Francis’ sense of freedom and his trust in the providence of God. He would need to cultivate this spirit more and more because he would still face harsher challenges in the days ahead. True followers of St. Francis today remain conscious of their great mission: to be “Heralds of the great King.”

Article to be continued in the next newsletter.



For more information about the St. Francis of Assisi Ministry at St. Paul’s Catholic Church, email [st-francis-ministry@stpaulchurch.com](mailto:st-francis-ministry@stpaulchurch.com).

Also check out our web page at <https://stpaulchurch.com/345>.



Printing by  
Carrollwood Copy  
Center, 813-962-  
877011406 N Dale  
Mabry Hwy # 205,  
Tampa, FL 33618