

# St. Ann WATCH News

Spring Edition—2013

Piety/Study/Action

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. (1 Peter 3:12)

## President's Message - Communication

By Denise Henderson

I just finished talking to our youngest daughter, who is at school in Iowa. Every once in a while, though, a phone call isn't enough for this mom and I need to see her. That means we Skype! Have you ever given some thought to the many different ways we communicate today? There is face-to-face conversation, body language, and various intonations when we are in the company of others. Then there are telephones, whether land lines (if you still have one) or cell phones. There is instant messaging and texting. With social media, there are things like Facebook, Twitter, Linked In or Google+. With computers and the internet, we also have blogs and email. I'm sure I've probably left out a few, but I am certain you get the point – exchanging and sharing information is the easiest it's ever been.

I can't help but reflect on how different it is now versus in Jesus' time. There was always the personal connection using the spoken word and touch. Then there were written forms of communication using parchment, rocks, or animal skins. Just think how long it would have taken to reproduce those writings to share. There are also many accounts in scripture of mass communication when one would stand on a rock or something higher than the crowd and shout in order to reach those further away.

The way I communicate with God is through prayer. Prayer helps me to know Him better and in a very personal way. The way we get to know someone is through conversation. The way we get to know God personally is through prayer, because prayer is our conversation with God.

Earlier this year, our family faced a medical emergency. I won't go into the details as that isn't important. What is important is that God was present to hear our prayers. These prayers were not eloquent that Sunday afternoon and I'm not even sure they were entirely verbal. In the days that followed, there were many people who continued to pray for our family, which gave us great comfort.

There are so many needs in our local community, our country, and our world. Please remember to pray for each other in your conversations with God. Also, remember how awesome to have the various tools we have today to be able to communicate with each other. So, take the time today to reach out to someone and share His love!

Peace & Joy,  
Denise



**If Prayer  
were your  
job, would  
you still be  
employed?**

## Watch 16 Reflection



By Kris Joseph

For several years, I have sat in the pews at St. Ann's listening to the announcements inviting people to WATCH. For several years, individual people have invited me to attend a WATCH. Each year, I had a good reason to not participate. This year as I heard the announcement the first week, I instantly tried to figure out what conflicts would prevent me from attending. The second week, a friend who previously made a WATCH asked me to attend. I told her I would pray about it. I also started creating conflicts. The third week, another friend asked me to attend. I responded the same way. Over the three week period, I came up with a list of obstacles that could prevent me from attending. Each obstacle I came up with miraculously disappeared. So, I signed up.

With the obstacles out of the way, I was left to my own thoughts and feelings about attending. In reality, I did not want to give up a whole weekend to spend time with people I did not know. I did not want to spend a weekend listening to people give talks that really did not relate to me. I did not want to spend time in reflection for fear I might learn that there are some things that I need to change. You see, I thought my relationship with God was going well. I was spending time with Him on a daily basis by reading scripture and meditations. I was attending Mass weekly. I was even receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. In my mind, I was spending plenty of time with God.

For me, there was not one moment or singular event during the WATCH weekend that was so earth shattering that will forever change my life. It was more subtle. It was so subtle that I did not truly realize the transformation that was happening inside of me. I started figuring it out when I went back to my every day routine. The contrast or gap between my day to day life and those three short days of the WATCH weekend was ridiculously large.

The talks were all given by ordinary people, who by the grace of God, were made extraordinary and given the courage and strength to share their spiritual journey. Through listening to the talks, I gained knowledge of God's word. But what made the talks even more extraordinary were the individuals' desire and ability to share their experience of the reality of God in their lives. It was their personal stories, their trials and tribulations that everyone in the room could somehow relate. It was their personal stories that allowed me to see their faith and allowed me to share my mine. It was the music, the skits, the meals, the chapel visits, the whole physical environment that was orchestrated by people through God's grace. It was through this fellowship that I learned I am not alone. It was through the fellowship that I felt allowed me to be real. I could talk or I could be silent. I could laugh or I could cry. I could make a joke or I could be serious. I could be the giver or the receiver.

It went beyond the 25 people that sat at the tables at WATCH 16. It was also all the people in the background assisting with the weekend that took care of our day to day needs to allow those at the tables to focus strictly on the events and activities of the weekend. It was the kitchen crew who prepared and shared meals. There were the people in the prayer chapel, the people doing agape, and the people who gave their time setting up the physical environment. There were people who I may never meet that were praying for the success of the weekend. They were praying for me to come closer to God.

So as I said, there was not one singular moment or event. It was subtle. It was the culmination of the weekend that has proven to be life altering. It brought to the forefront that the God of the entire universe wants to have a personal relationship with each and every one of us, including me. The fellowship shared that weekend, I later realized, was not just fellowship with other individuals striving to put God in the center of their lives. It was fellowship with the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and their Holy Spirit. I still spend time with God by attending Mass weekly. I am still involved by reading the daily scripture and spending time with the meditations. I am still involved through prayer. But after the WATCH weekend, it is no longer 'I'. It is "WE". It is the community that allows me to spend time in the fellowship of the Trinity. Every time I pick up my bible to spend time with the scripture, every time I pray, every time I attend Mass, every time I share the gifts God has graced me with, and every time I receive a gift God has graced another with, I am spending time in the fellowship of the Triune God. **We Are The Church**. It is not just a weekend; it is a way to choose life. It is a way to live life. It is a way to close the gap.

**WATCH #16**

By Ed Tallon

Faith, fellowship, food, and fun...those are the words that describe WATCH #16, which was held at St. Ann on March 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup>. I was blessed to be the board advisor for the weekend. I found the weekend to be inspiring for two reasons. First of all, I was in awe of the examples of faith that I felt. Starting with our leader, Mary Leitner, going through the team and candidates, I witnessed people sharing their experiences in order to help others and themselves become closer to Christ. The expressions of faith, though, were not limited to the participants. People in the chapel, kitchen, and set up crew gave freely of their time and talents in order to make the weekend possible. There were people in the St. Ann's community and other communities who were praying for us. These experiences helped me to grow in my faith and love of God. Secondly, it was a joy to watch the Holy Spirit work. People arrived Friday evening nervous and unsure. During the course of the weekend, participants talked, laughed, and sometimes cried. Throughout it all, I witnessed these people come together. By the conclusion of the weekend, these people had become friends. The bonds that developed go beyond the weekend. I see many of these people at church and talk to them. I also see others from the weekend sitting together at church, talking, and continuing to share their lives. Thank you to the candidates, team, and all the people behind the scenes who helped to make WATCH #16 a success.



Welcome the following to the St. Ann WATCH Community:

- Tara Frazee**
- Ed Gray**
- Colin Hawkinson**
- Christy Hines**
- Kris Joseph**
- Anna King**
- Josh Lepretre**
- Kathy Marsh**

**Deacon's Corner by Deacon Craig**

I hope that everyone had a Blessed Easter and all found some Easter Eggs that the Easter bunny left you. I want to give a big welcome to all the new people who attended WATCH #16. It was a great one. Thanks to everyone who helped behind the scenes, because it takes all of you to help make the weekend a success and one for all to remember.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" Phil 4: 13

**Emulating Jesus**

When we share our faith, Jesus is our model. He had compassion on the unbeliever. He met people on their own level, and he spoke their language—in parables and stories they could understand.

## **Book Review - *Athanasius: The Life of Antony of Egypt*** **By Lourdes Delgado-Serrano**

I dreaded reading this book. I was expecting it to be boring and difficult to follow, written using vocabulary that I would have to search or to google in order to have some understanding of what I was reading. I was mistaken. After reading few paragraphs of the introduction, I was hooked. It was very difficult to put the book down. I couldn't wait for the opportunity to be able to start reading it again. This book gives an excellent description of the journey that will take us closer to home and serves as a point of reference for those who want a more intimate relationship with God.

Antony's fights with demons reminded me of the fight that many of us encounter every day. There have been times in our lives that the false self has been the primary force behind our actions. We are blinded by our need for pleasure, position, prestige, possessions, and perfection. There are times that the outcome of our fight is not Antony's outcome, because we don't use his secret weapon...God. Those are the times that we think we are self-sufficient and don't trust Him. We don't surrender. Antony's life was an example of surrendering. He voluntarily gave himself up, including his thoughts and actions, to God. He knew that he didn't need or have to control things, as God was in charge.

Antony's life exemplifies what the journey of spiritual formation is. He spent every day of his life praying, being in total communion with God, and discerning what His will was. He gave up everything (material possessions, pleasures, even his sister) to accomplish the aforementioned, following Jesus' advice to his disciples and the rich

young man (Matthew 16:24, 19:16-31). His spiritual discipline and life style earned him the respect of others.

The devil decided that he wanted Antony to be part of "his army of followers". He used all that he had. Satan tried to entice him using some of the "empty p's. However, Antony's spiritual disciple, his persistence, religious persuasion, and constant prayers made him the winner. Many people followed his example, became monks, developed monasteries and asked his advice. He emphasized the importance of spiritual formation and discipline. He advised his followers to avoid spiritual "slack", not to get discouraged, renounce the false self, persevere, live each day as if you were to die that day, don't procrastinate, live virtuously, and most importantly, cultivate the gift of discernment of spirits.

Antony's relationship with God was an intimate one and he strengthened it through prayer, becoming aware of how God was present in his life. God was the center of his life. He was aware that the special relationship he had with God was a gift and that by nurturing it, God was going to fulfill His promise of eternal life. That was the "prize" Antony was after and he didn't mind the sufferings, material deprivations he endured as his eyes were set on the aforementioned.

This book was written by Fr. Albert Haase, O.F.M. He has a PhD from Fordham University. He is a preacher, retreat leader and spiritual director. He is the facilitator for the Spiritual Director Training, sponsored by the Diocese of Peoria. He has written 5 other books.





## People Who Make a Difference

By Ed Tallon

If there is a job behind the scenes at St. Ann, there is a good chance that it being done by or has previously been done by Billy Purcell. For example, Billy is an integral part of the WATCH community. He is responsible for setting up the lights and the candles in church on Saturday night, which establishes a wonderful setting for reconciliation. Billy is also the person who takes the photograph of all WATCH participants and prints copies for everyone. He also helps to set up and store the nuts during WATCH's annual nut sale. His service to St. Ann, however, goes well beyond WATCH. Billy helps set up for mass, helps clean up after mass, and does whatever Father or one of the deacons needs to help made mass run effortlessly. Billy locks and unlocks doors for mass. He helps count money from mass collections. He makes sure that the fonts are filled with Holy Water. Billy is involved with funerals at the church. He makes crosses and rosaries that are given out at events like WATCH and baptisms. Billy also volunteers at Neighborhood House. Billy does so many different things for St. Ann that I am sure I accidently excluded a few of his duties. I

have had the pleasure of working with Billy. His service emulates Christ's commitment and love for His people. Billy makes sure tasks are done correctly and completely. Billy is like a good watch dog. He oversees things, making sure people are safe and that nothing goes wrong. We are blessed to have Billy and people like him at St. Ann - those generous people who work behind the scenes with no fanfare, making sure things in our parish run smoothly. We are fortunate to have Billy as part of the St. Ann community. He is truly a person who makes a difference.

### Shoe Collection

By Ed Tallon

As you do your spring cleaning, WATCH is asking you to save your old shoes. We are once again collecting shoes to be used to help people living in third world nations. We take all types of shoes in any condition. These shoes are either given to people to wear or recycled, with the money earned being used for water projects in poor areas. These shoes make a difference in the lives of our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Last year the generosity of many churches and communities led to over 9000 pairs of shoes being donated. We appreciate your past support and ask for your prayers as we begin this year's shoe drive. Collection will be held throughout the month of August. Any shoes that you can donate will be greatly appreciated. Please help us make this year's drive a success by saving your old shoes and spreading the word to friends and family. Thank you.

## Listening to Life and Reflection by Mary Leitner

(taken from Everyday Encounters with God by Fr. Benedict Grochezel)



speaking to me during the gifts class that Fr. Terry gave. (Yes, I attended again and found I have more than one gift so I must get busy and use them- you see I'm not getting younger.)

If you want to hear what God is saying to you, you must learn to listen to life, that multifaceted flow of events that fills the passing of time. That is simple, but its not easy, because life comes at you fast. So many things are happening around you that you can pay attention only to the few that catch your attention. But as you master the act of listening to life, you will come to hear the Lord speaking in your mind and heart.

Listening to life involves a form of selective hearing. It is a matter of responding to what we hear. Listening to life in order to hear God's voice means responding with your mind and heart. As we listen to life we recognize the voice of the Lord in the material world in books, music, Scripture, and in the people we meet.

So God is communicating with us in the flow of events in our lives. He may be telling us to be patient, brave, courageous, kind, understanding, or forgiving. Whatever happens, even something sad or tragic, can send a message to us. If you want to hear what God is saying to us, we must keep on listening to life.

**Reflection:** In which recent event is God saying something to you?

I can think of many times that God was speaking to me during the WATCH #16 weekend- during the talks, sharing with others, and the actions of others like the smiles on their faces. I also heard God

Please consider attending the gift class. It is very uplifting. Be part of this experience and see what gifts you have and how we can use them while listening to God. Keep the Faith.

### JAM Update

By Jill Glenzinski

Hi WATCH members!! My name is Jill Glenzinski and I am the WATCH/JAM liaison. JAM is very similar to WATCH, but for teens ages 13 to 16. In February, St. Ann's held a one day event called JAM'n' with Jesus. It was a time to bring teens together for a day of worship, meditations, fun, and to strengthen their relationship with Jesus. It was a great afternoon. We had 11 teens attend. The event was a great bonding experience. All of the participants left wanting to be a part of JAM, along with a new found LOVE for JESUS. This summer, there will be another JAM event. Please look out for announcements and fliers for future events. All teens ages 13 to 16 are invited to attend JAM events. Keep in mind all of the teens you know and please invite them to upcoming JAM events. Also, if you have been a part of JAM before and would like to get involved again, please email me at [glenzinskijill@gmail.com](mailto:glenzinskijill@gmail.com) or call me at 309-256-7558. I look forward to sharing more information with you all about JAM in the near future!

### Keep Informed

In addition to the newsletter, WATCH would like to work to keep people informed of our activities. We will use email, so we ask that if you know anyone who should be receiving our newsletter or if your email address changes, please contact us at [newsletter\\_watch@yahoo.com](mailto:newsletter_watch@yahoo.com), so we can update the mailing list and keep you informed. We also have a Facebook page, St. Ann WATCH. You can check out that page or send us a friend request. Additionally, we are in the process of updating the St. Ann website, which contains WATCH information. Finally, we will continue to make announcements at masses and in the church bulletin. Our goal is to keep you informed of our activities and help you get involved in the St. Ann community.



Coming this summer on **July 27<sup>th</sup>**, WATCH will be hosting a Fanning the Flames event. It will be a half-day retreat to deepen your faith and to build community through sharing and fellowship.

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*Church Mice.*