



ST. BARTHOLOMEW
CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY

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Reflections

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IGNITE YOUR FAITH



OUR JOURNEY HAS BEGUN

On September 17 & 18 the St. Bartholomew Catholic Faith Community kicked off what Fr. Mike Van Sloun calls “our most important campaign ever”...*Ignite Your Faith*. The purpose of this spiritual campaign is for each of us to deepen our relationship with Jesus.

Using Matthew Kelly’s book *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* as a guide, the two-year campaign will follow four simple, yet powerful phases: Prayer, Study, Generosity and Evangelization. Look inside for an insightful article by parishioner Tod Worner, more photos from the enlightening kick off weekend and upcoming events not to be missed.

By Tod Worner



Seventy years ago, a promising young Catholic writer named Mary Flannery O'Connor opened up an inexpensive lined notebook and privately penned a prayer to God.

Dear God,

I cannot love Thee the way I want to. You are the slim crescent of a moon that I see and my self is the earth's shadow that keeps me from seeing all the moon. The crescent is very beautiful and perhaps that is all one like I am should or could see; but what I am afraid of, dear God, is that my self shadow will grow so large that it blocks the whole moon, and that I will judge myself by the shadow that is nothing. I do not know you God because I am in the way. Please help me to push myself aside.

"Please help me to push myself aside."

This prayer jarred me...because it was exactly what I needed to hear. Somehow this twenty-year-old woman had the honesty and insight to articulate what at times ails my spiritual life: I do not know God as well as I could because I am in the way.

What exactly does that mean?

It means that I get too busy, too distracted, too selfish and too proud for God. Sometimes it is too easy for me to have

a relationship with God on *my terms*. When I sin, I can cut myself too much slack. When I worry, I often forget to pray. When I am called to a higher standard, I can search for the easy route. When I need to trust, I clamber for control. God is often waiting...and too often I leave him there.

I am in the way.

But I want to do better.

Thankfully, I am in good company. As followers of Christ, we are assured of two truths: we are fallen, but we are redeemable. Thus, we could do a bit better to push ourselves aside and come closer to God. We could draw ever deeper from the bottomless well of Living Water and grasp the greater purpose God intends for our daily lives.

But how do we do this?

We do so with the help of family, friends and fellow parishioners here at St. Bartholomew. In addition to Mass, the Sacraments and the robust programs for youth and adults, the *Ignite Your Faith* initiative has begun.

Ignite Your Faith is a two-year endeavor to revitalize your faith. The focus of faith building will be rooted in the pillars of *Prayer, Study, Generosity* and *Evangelization*.



Pat Knight, a parish council member, welcomes parishioners to the kick off Masses.



At left: Fr. Mike Van Sloun lights the fire to symbolize the start of the initiative. Above: Ignite Your Faith volunteers.

To begin, we distributed an approachable book, *Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* by Matthew Kelly to parishioners at the kick-off weekend. And, you will have opportunities to partake in small group book discussions, Bible studies, an evening of *Prayer Through Word and Song* with Fr. Michael Joncas, and a parishwide retreat. And this is just in the first four months.

The subtitle of Matthew Kelly's book reads, "How engaging 1% of Catholics could change the world." *Ignite Your Faith* is a call to engagement, a call to rich communion, a call to be all that God wants us to be.

C.S. Lewis once observed, "*Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important.*"

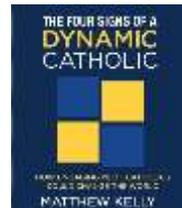
This season let's start anew. Let's ignite our faith. Let us push ourselves aside and embrace the infinite importance of God.

God is calling.

How will we answer?

Prayer

From October 2016 through January 2017 we will explore ways to talk to God and how to fit prayer into our daily life. Events will include:



OCT. 17
6:45 p.m.
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:
The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic

This will be a one-hour facilitated program to discuss the Introduction and Prayer chapters (pages 9 - 71).



OCT. 25
7:00 p.m.
Fr. Michael Joncas presents an evening of *Prayer Through Word and Song*



JAN. 28, 2017
8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Parishwide Retreat

Fr. Mike Van Sloun will lead the adults, Connor Flanagan, the youth and Andrew Allen, the children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- INITIATIVE OVERVIEW
- EVENTS
- RESOURCES
- KICK-OFF VIDEO

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