



[RETURN TO CAMPAIGN HOMEPAGE](#)

## Campaign Presentations

*(The following talk was presented by Mrs. Diana Palumbo at the 5:00 P.M. and 7:30 A.M. Masses the weekend of May 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015.)*

Thank you Fr Brian, Fr Kevin, Fr Candreva.

Happy Mother's Day to all of you. As many of you are probably aware we are in the middle of an important Parish Growth Campaign. And in order to have any significant growth there must be some suffering, no pain no gain. So here it comes, it's the money talk. I know it's not a comfortable topic. I know that whatever your income is and how you choose to spend it is your personal choice. I am here to share why my choice includes financial support of St. Lawrence.

My name is Diana Palumbo and my husband and I used to have money... then we had children. We have 3 .Our oldest daughter is 20 years old and attends college in the city. Tuition, restaurants, taxis, nightlife and all the wonderful things that NYC has to offer a young woman have helped hone my online balance transfer skills to Olympic gold medal proportions. We also have a 16 year old son. He's a typical 16year old boy, very communicative. We have many wonderful discussions that almost involve the following phrases... "What's for dinner?" or "I am hungry" His growing appetite has helped us reach platinum level status at Stop & Shop. And then our youngest... our soccer player, the easy one with seemingly small and simple needs. There she was lulling us into a



false sense of hope for our financial future and then it happened! She discovered Abercrombie and Fitch! And now expects us to purchase shorts for \$44.95 that are made with barely enough material to cover a baby and that appear to have been eaten and spit out by our dog. These are the fun things that I wouldn't change one bit. We also have the not so fun expenses ... the mortgage, taxes, oil, cablevision etc. We all have these bills. We all live on Long Island where the cost of living is one of the highest in the country. For some of us it's a struggle for others maybe not so much. In my family it depends on the week but we still make the choice to add our part to the collection basket. So why?

Firstly, it is needed. Thinking about our bills can you just imagine the bills that must be paid to just maintain St. Lawrence? Those of you who blanch upon opening your PSEG bill pity the person who has to do it here. I don't know the exact amounts it takes to run St. Lawrence at a minimum level, never mind the amount it would take to have that extra cushion we all would appreciate in our own lives. I'm sure Chris Koch, Fr. Brian and Pat Spiegel know them. The money collected isn't going to wallpaper the rectory will dollar bills and I haven't noticed any Ferraris sitting in the driveway over there. It's used to provide for this church and for all of us. And I know it's never enough. There is always a need and always more we could do. This church does good things, we do good things, we help people. This is my second reason. I am one of those people. I have sat in these pews over the almost 20 years I have been a part of this parish and have experienced every human emotion possible. I have sat here



broken-hearted on one of the worst days of my life and I have sat here and experienced great joy watching my children celebrate the sacraments. I have been moved, humbled, enlightened and inspired. I have been comforted and supported. I remember coming to Mass after that horrible tragedy in Newtown, CT with the question “where was God?” My faith was shaken but thankfully Fr. Brian’s homily addressed where he believed God was on that day and helped me to see where he always is, right by our side. So as a person so blessed by being part of this parish I give and only wish I had more to give. I give because it is important to me, because I care about all of you, those I know and those I don’t know. I know you all have your own personal stories that have taken place here and I support all of those as well. This past December I turned 50 (yay me!) and began the process of evaluating my life. Am I using all the gifts I have been given to the best of my ability? Are my priorities where they should be? What do I want my life to have been about? I came across a passage in the gospel of Luke that says “where your treasure is, there shall your heart also be” This helped me to change my focus... At the end of the day all the material things that I want or have are not going to make one bit of difference. It is the love and the true essence of me that I have shared that will be important. And here in St Lawrence I am guided always in that direction, surrounded by those who have the same vision. And so I give. I have realized that it’s not just what can the church do for me, but really what can I bring to the table? What am I help making happen?



And lastly I give as a Mom to support and celebrate this spiritual home. I was at a meeting once where the wise and wonderful Maria Davidson, spoke about what we do as parents, as good parents. We all love our children and would do anything for them. We give them music lessons, braces. We take them to the doctor when they are sick, freeze at their soccer games... you name it, and we do it. But then she said the single most important thing we do for our children is helping with the development of their soul. Wow! I still can remember the affect those words had upon me and still have upon me. With a world that seems to have gone crazy and turned upside down, our children absolutely need to be a part of a faith-filled community. How else will they be able to cope with the senseless violence of our world? What else will help them to truly experience the beauty of life?

We are all so blessed to live in this community and to be part of all that is happening in St Lawrence. This is such a generous place. I look at all we have already done and I am so happy. But I am still going to challenge myself to do more because I believe that as awesome as we are now we can always be more. We can do anything if we do it together.

*(The following Witness Talk was given at all the Masses on the weekend of March 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> by Mrs. Sheila Routh.)*



It gives me great joy to speak to you this evening about my experiences with parish ministries; I am honored that Fr. Brian thought that what I have to share would be of interest to you today. We all know that participating in parish ministries isn't a requirement for attending Mass, nor is it a prerequisite to become a member of the St. Lawrence parish.

No, the seat you are sitting in has equal value, for everyone. Whether you currently assist with a ministry, or you never do, you are free to celebrate Mass and receive the Eucharist. Second Timothy tells us "we are saved not according to our good works, but according to His own purpose and grace". We know our redemption is not earned by our own good works, it was indeed paid for, in full, by Jesus Christ. So why get involved? I can assure you that Fr. Brian doesn't have a big chart, recording what we do; we don't get extra credit or a card punched every time we put ourselves into service for parish and others. So why add responsibility to our already busy lives?

For some, it is simply the desire to be involved, others may enjoy shepherding children in their faith formation, or assisting parishioners through outreach, or the joyful experience of the music for liturgy. These tasks can lead to a profound sense of belonging and fellowship with folks you may not have otherwise met.

It is imperative that as members of the Catholic faith, we consider how our gifts and talents can be used care for our parish family. This is our home, and we are responsible for each other. With an enormous amount of love and respect for Fr. Brian and his loving



leadership, I suggest that work you choose is not in service to him, but to your parish family.

In the coming weeks, we will take time to examine what ministries interest us, and better yet, how our gifts could benefit a parish need. I encourage you to not glaze over this task, but to carefully consider how you can add to your own life's work to build up and support your family at St. Lawrence.

My personal involvement with parish ministries started when I decided to be a catechist for my kids as they prepared for first Eucharist. And at some point I also responded to the annual invite from Sr. Elaine to join festival choir. The bonus outcome has been the relationships with my fellow catechists and my music buddies. When both of my parents passed away last fall, my parish family was beautifully supportive and present for me and my family. These friendships are a treasure in my life.

Once our children reached the appropriate age, my husband and I told them that they needed to join the children's choir or train to be altar servers. They both chose the choir, which was a perfect opportunity learn the journey of the Mass through music, with the added benefit of making friends while serving the parish. Jackie, now 23, would eventually grow into the role of cantor and Thomas now 19, would later also take the path to become an altar server, both doing so, well into high school. Thomas also answered the call to be commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister when he was a senior in high school.



I have a cherished memory of a Mass when I served as leader of song, and my kids were still young, and Thomas, said to me on the way home “Mom when you were up there singing, my heart was bursting with happy”. A lovely moment of parenting that allowed me to think that perhaps, I was doing something right.

At about the same time I learned that there was a group gathering on Holy Saturday morning to decorate the church for Easter, and so I asked if I could help, and could I bring my son? The answer was, of course, we were more than welcome to participate! Everyone is welcome to assist with the tasks of operating a parish! So Thomas and I spent the next morning hauling dozens of lily plants around the church and hanging the Easter banners. The well-oiled team was glad to have his youthful energy as they completed this task, that quite frankly, until that day, I had never wondered how it got accomplished. When we arrived for the vigil mass that evening, Thomas knew he was invested in the outcome, and a joyful connection was made.

When my kids were middle school/high school age, a well-known parent passed away quite suddenly; creating searing anguish within the community. As we prepared to attend the funeral, my kids were troubled by how they could properly support their friends in this unspeakable pain. I reminded them that they each had gifts to offer from within their ministries. When we arrived to the funeral, Thomas asked Father John Heinlein if he could serve on the altar for him, and Jackie would step in to sing the Psalm. They each used their gifts to be present for the family.



And being present for each other should be our goal, giving our time and talent out of love and fellowship, is obviously our greatest task in this life.

It is of course to important to stay humble, and strive to not put yourself on a pedestal while you serve, or seek praise for your efforts.

I'd like share my own humbling moment -

For the past 20 years my husband and I have hosted a neighborhood Easter egg hunt, and as part of the invitation we ask that everyone to bring non-perishable food for the parish outreach, also extending the invitation to donate to our neighbors. We place boxes out front for the day, and it is joyful to witness people's generosity. *Which by the way is a great activity I invite you to consider. I'll gladly share how we did this if you are interested, the food drive not the egg hunt.* So last year our collection was particularly fruitful and after everyone had gone home, I was out front admiring the collection, and I'll admit I started to feel a little arrogant about what I felt I had accomplished, and as I was packing up the goods, I lost sight of the house number plaque that is staked in the ground, and I promptly tripped over it, landing squarely on my hands and knees. I laughed at myself, and thought- message received, this isn't about me!

So we must do all things with humility and great love, and in our action we become the eyes and hands of Christ... and in these acts, our reward is to see His face in the people we serve and the people we serve with.



Currently, I assist with the youth choir, sharing Mass with the kids as they faithfully shuffle in early on Sunday mornings, ready to sing. My heart is nourished with God's grace through their joyful participation. Last year I decided to take the training to become an Extraordinary Minister, and I am humbled by this service each week as we share the Eucharist.

I'll suggest that it does get easier to participate in new acts of service as your life journey changes... you become open to God's purpose for your talents.

Today, I challenge you to consider your gifts. And as you wonder where your time and talent would benefit not only the people who you serve, but your own family *and* the friends that you haven't met; invite the Holy Spirit to settle in your heart to guide you. There are countless opportunities that don't require large commitments of time, and there areas of need that can be life changing, if you allow it.

I'll repeat what I said earlier, service is not mandatory for your membership in this family. However when you do decide to take a chance and invest yourself, I dare to predict you will have moments when your heart will suddenly be "bursting with happy".

*(The following Witness Talk was given at all the Masses on the weekend of February 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> by Susanne Fullam.)*

*"The Value and Importance of Parish Membership in My Life"*



It is hard for me to believe that I am standing at the pulpit speaking to you. Frankly, I loathe anything that draws attention to me and public speaking tops the list. So why on earth am I standing here? In Matthew Kelly's book *Rediscover Catholicism*, we are called to be bold! This is my being bold moment!

As a member of the committee focused on the Parish Growth Campaign, a unique opportunity presented itself for me to share with you the value and importance parish membership has in my life. The value of being a member of St. Lawrence is having a place where I hear God's message. This clear message helps me navigate my life journey. The importance of this membership is surrounding me with a faith community to help me fulfill God's purpose for my life.

It was never more clear to me than 7 years ago how a simple message heard at Mass can have an impact on your life.

It was a late Saturday afternoon in May 2008 when my family status abruptly changed from being in a family of 5 to a single mother of 3.

Now, everyone responds differently to a life event. In my case, I was anxious to get to church. I had a lot to talk to God about and needed a quiet place to do so. After a sleepless night, I arrived early for the Sunday 7:30a.m. Mass. The lector welcomes us and announces that a visiting priest will be celebrating Mass. I think to myself, "ok great, I came to hear the Word and have a deep conversation with God about ME and now I am going to hear about a mission where people



are truly suffering far greater than ME.” We rise, the visiting priest walks down the center aisle, turns around and with outstretched arms, the first words spoken are:

“God is Good” (spoken by visiting priest)

“All the time” (response by the congregation)

“All the time” (response by the congregation)

“God is Good” (response by the visiting priest)

Now, I was struggling with the “God is good all the time” message at that exact moment. Doesn’t He remember the conversation I heard just yesterday? Admittedly, the God is good message sat with me the entire Mass. The following week I attend my usual Mass (10:30 a.m. at that time) and it is the visiting priest again. But this time I am ready. Months passed and often I attend the Mass celebrated by the visiting priest and by the end of the summer he departed but his message did not. Sometimes, the most simple words spoken can have the greatest impact!

During my healing period, I was surprised at how insensitive some individuals can be. I was approached at a social gathering by an acquaintance who said to me, “Susanne, I don’t think you can continue as a Catechist or receive Communion if your marital status has changed”. Honestly, I did not know what to say. The truth is I had never been in this situation before.



I had not thought of contacting the parish before this time but I was eager to know where I stood with the Church. So, around June 2009, I called the parish office to schedule an appointment. As my luck would have it, both Fr. Rowan and Fr. Heinlein were leaving the parish, the only priests with whom I was familiar. Thankfully, the parish secretary suggested scheduling an appointment with the new arriving Associate Pastor. I think, “ok great, I am going to meet the ‘new guy’ on one of his first days in his new assignment.” I arrive for my evening appointment with questions in hand and meet Fr. Brian.

Although I was searching for answers, I was dreading the meeting. I did not know what the “new guy” was going to think or say. Was I going to get a lecture rather than have a discussion? Was he going to give me a disappointing look? After I tell Fr. Brian the purpose of the meeting, the first words he says to me are: “I am sorry. I am sorry that the Catholic Church does not do a better job making Catholics more aware of their relationship with the Church in the event of a separation or divorce. Please know you are welcome here”!

A week later Fr. Brian posts the questions I asked in the bulletin with his thoughtful response for others to read.

So, when asked, why membership in St. Lawrence is important to me? I reflect back to these moments in my parish life and am grateful for the genuine support. The support of being fed a clear message at Mass, a welcoming pastor and a parish community who make a



difference. 25 years ago, I joined St. Lawrence, but 7 years ago I became a more engaged member of the parish. Today, I participate in the Mass more deeply, look for ways to share the Word with others, and my eyes are open to all the opportunities of service and fellowship that St. Lawrence has to offer.

In closing, I feel as though I won the Mega-Millions Lottery. With the help from my membership at St. Lawrence, I am focused on living a life of passion and purpose. So, I challenge you..... Go.....and be bold!

Keep warm and thank you for your kind attention.

*(The following reflection was given by Donna Cliff, the co-chair of our Campaign Leadership Team, at the first Parish Gathering on Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015.)*

Hello, my name is Donna Cliff. I've been a member of the St. Lawrence Parish since moving to Sayville in August of 1997. I've only become "active" for the last 6 years or so – 6 years that changed my life.

I, along with others, was asked by Father Brian to participate in the Committee that oversees and assists with this very worthwhile and necessary *Parish Growth Campaign*.

"Necessary" because like any "business" or activity, it requires resources like manpower and money to sustain itself.



“Worthwhile” because your participation in this parish will help to maintain it, but more importantly, it will also change your life. With the able assistance of other faithful parishioners, this “Benefits Statement” was developed. Our intention was to grab your attention, in hopes that one or more of the points would resonate with you, gently touch a nerve, spark an interest. And, hopefully, to answer any questions that you and many others may have – Why should I become involved in the Parish? Why should I to go to Church? What does the Parish intend to do with more money? What’s in it for me? We say, “A lot”!

This Benefits Statement is our attempt to put into just a few words what benefits we hope St. Lawrence will receive if our fellow parishioners choose to become more engaged, more active in service, and . . . more generous in their financial support.

I am here to tell you that our mission is to bring all parishioners the pure joy and promised peace that having a relationship with our awesome God and this wonderful parish will bring you. Jesus promised us that if we walk in His path, we will experience the Kingdom of God – right here – heaven on earth! But, we are called to act as He taught by his own example – to serve others. That includes your parish.

First thing we ask is that you open your hearts real wide and let the love in – a love that is without limit or condition; expectation or demand. A love freely given by our Lord and God. Know how deeply



loved and special you are – and how so essential to this parish you are.

Next, we ask you to approach this Campaign with that open heart. One of the focuses of the Benefits Statement is to bring to you the message of our Savior – that when we have a relationship with God, whether through prayer, mass, ministry or other means of service to others, we bring the heavenly Kingdom of God to the here and now . . . to each other. After all, which one of us here tonight thinks that things just couldn't get any better in this world today . . . in this community? I doubt that any of us feel that way – things can be A LOT better – and need to be. We deeply believe that embracing the benefits of belonging to this Parish, of giving to it and of engaging with it, our community can begin, right here, right now, to make it the world a better place.

I learned a new word yesterday – TARRY. I thought from what century or country does that word come!? But, then when I heard the definition I thought, “How delightful”! It means *to linger in expectation; to wait in expectation of somebody or something*. Isn't that what Faith is all about – “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For in this hope we were saved.” And don't we live each day in expectation of joining our Lord in heaven; in paradise?

Some synonyms for “tarry” are to “remain, stay, visit, linger, wait.” Isn't that exactly what we are doing here on this earth, during our very temporary stay here? Waiting for the completion of our journey for when we spend eternity at the dwelling place of our Lord in



eternal happiness. Isn't that the basis for our Faith? But how prepared are you for when our Lord asks you, at the Gates of Heaven, what did you do during your stay on my earth?

We are all given many gifts by God. But, sometimes we overlook them in the craziness of our days. We are not supposed to do nothing while "visiting" this life. We are called to serve – our God, our neighbor and ourselves. We believe that the Benefits of belonging and participating in this Parish will bring you all you need for that service to be fulfilling – to you and your neighbors. We believe that your giving and serving and partaking in St. Lawrence and all it has to offer, including Mass, will enrich your lives, just as Jesus promised – you will be filled; you will find peace and worthiness beyond measure - because it is only through service to others, in relationship with God, does true peace and joy reside.

That's what we want for all of the parishioners of St. Lawrence, young and old. But it can only be accomplished together, as a Church. We need your help to achieve that lofty goal – for the parish's sake . . . and for yours.

And please, check out the website and the link devoted to this Campaign. The Benefits Statement is there – please reflect on it; maybe even "tarry" a bit over its message!

*(The following Witness Talk was given at all the Masses on the weekend of January 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> by Mrs. Patrice Beach.)*



As Father said, my name is Pat Beach and my husband Kevin and I have been parishioners in the parish for 38 years. We moved to Sayville as a young married couple, after having been raised in Catholic Parishes in Queens and New Jersey. We were raised at a time when the church was the center of our lives and everything revolved around the activities of the church. We moved to Sayville because we valued the sense of community we found here, both in the parish and the town. Fittingly, as newlyweds, we lived on Easy St., just north of the train station. It was a time when Masses were packed with people of all ages. We chose St. Lawrence because we found the parish community to be engaging and the church vibrant. We wanted to raise a family where the church and community values matched our own. We made friends, developed relationships within the community and strengthened our faith through our church. St. Lawrence is where we shared the most incredible joy at the baptisms of our children and now grandchildren, as well as, a place where we were embraced with love, in our times of grief, when we were unable to feel.

During the years to follow, the church evolved and we too grew. We had our family, became involved in the broader community and struggled with the everyday challenges of life. There were times when quite honestly, things within the framework of the parish changed and we questioned if St. Lawrence was the place where we would continue to practice our faith. If it had not been for my husband, we probably would have looked beyond St. Lawrence to another parish, as many people did. Kevin said to me, "Pat,



remember, it is not always what you take from it, but what you bring to it.” I really needed to look deep within myself to remember why we had chosen St. Lawrence. The reasons for the choice are very much the same today as they were 38 years ago.

St. Lawrence, under Fr. Brian’s leadership and along with his staff, is once again, a vibrant community of faith filled people. It is a place for people of all ages. It is a place where faith grows and creativity is fostered. St. Lawrence is a place where you can feel the spirit of God working in the quiet moments of the morning Mass or in the enthusiastic energy of a Family Life meeting.

The parish ministries are many and I am sure that I don’t even know all of them. You can see many of the ministries at work... the beautiful choirs, the Eucharistic ministers, the altar servers, ushers and lectors. I like to say that “behind the scenes” is what I love best about the parish.

Behind the scenes are the worker bee volunteers, helping to sort food, driving parishioners to the doctor, giving comfort to those who are grieving, providing religious instruction, cleaning and ironing the altar linens and planning activities for the parish. I love being a part of the camaraderie, knowing that in some small way, I may be helping to make our parish family stronger. When I think of St. Lawrence I think of my family. We are all one unit, working together but bound by our faith and love for each other. Our parish family is the same. We are, each of us, a part of the greater St. Lawrence family. Our love of God and our love for the parish is what brings us here and keeps us here. Each of us plays a very important part in the



parish. If we were not here, there would be no parish. I love seeing families in church. I know it took our young families great effort to prepare their little ones, getting dressed and out the door, to get to church on time. I love seeing familiar faces whose names I do not even know. We are all bound together by this love for our church and if we did not have all of the worker bees, along with Fr. Brian and the staff, striving so diligently, we would not have this incredible faith community. In recent months I have seen familiar faces who may have left us, returning, and that is a wonderful thing! We have great things going on here! We are blessed with a faith and love of God that through our lives gets even stronger, if we embrace it.

As I grow personally I continue to learn that I gain both inspiration and spiritual fulfillment from my attention and participation during the Mass. In turn, those gifts I am able to take with me to use in my home and in my work.

Each of us has the ability to look within ourselves to see if there is something that we can do either now or in the future to become an even more integral part of this family of faith. St. Lawrence is an amazing parish! It continues to grow and evolve. Kevin and I feel truly blessed to be a part of this very special faith community.