

Beacons Update: Love In Action

This year, we are celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America's Declaration of Independence. The U.S. bishops remind us that within America's independence resides a continual and necessary dependence upon God and each other. I am hoping this will be a time of renewed commitment to the kind of freedom God calls us to. This year, the bishops consecrated our nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a heart that strives to unite us with God and with one another. I think this can be an opportunity to restore our country to greatness through living, loving, and surrendering to God all that we are, all that we have, and all that we could be.

We celebrate freedom and liberty, not as the world defines it, but as God defines it. Saint Pope John Paul II said, "True freedom is achieved in the total gift of self to God and to others."

What would America look like if each of us allowed the love God showers on us to spill over into love of our neighbor? Love means willing the good of the other. Love builds upon love. We, in the Stella Maris Family, can reach out beyond our own homes and churches to change neighborhoods and villages in Southern Clermont County. When we love others, they, in turn, can begin to change also. Every interaction can cause a reaction of love, both in them and in ourselves.

Our family of parishes has many Love in Action groups that offer those opportunities to interact with our neighbors. Most of these were in existence before we joined together into a new family, but have grown through sharing ideas within the Parish Family.

- The St. Vincent de Paul Conferences may be contacted by those who are in desperate need of money for food, rent, utility bills, clothing, furniture, medicine, etc. The Vincentians, led by the Spirit, help in anyway they can.

- The Men and Women Action groups offer the opportunity to participate in work within the parishes at the fish fries, rummage sales, festivals, parish picnics, etc., and offer the money gained to help with parish financial needs.
- The Respect Life committee answers the call for us to find ways to protect those who are defenseless against the continual lack of respect for human life by providing opportunities for us to stand up and take action.
- The Care for God's Creation committee has provided guest speakers on recycling, proper planting, composting, and Laudato Si' and has worked with our grade school students in planting flower beds to help preserve and enrich the environment we share.

The Holy Spirit has given each one of us specific gifts to share with our brothers and sisters so the Body of Christ functions well.

As we celebrate freedom, let us determine to do what God asks of us so that the love God has for each of us can begin to transform God's world according to His desire.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Tim Ralston".

Fr. Tim Ralston
Pastor of Stella Maris