



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH & NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

## Inside

- 2 Drawing Souls to the Heart of Our Lady Through the Cenacle
- 3 Continuing to Draw Closer to God and Our Parish Families This Fall
- 4 A Look Back at This Summer's Nativity Parish Picnic and Vacation Bible School
- 6 Sr. Stefana Osredkar Spending Her Life Joyfully for Jesus

**St. Joseph Parish**  
 200 Saint Joseph Drive  
 Amherst, OH 44001  
 (440) 988-2848  
[stjosephamherst.com](http://stjosephamherst.com)

**Nativity of the BVM Parish**  
 333 South Lake Street  
 South Amherst, OH 44001  
 (440) 986-7011  
[nativitysouthamherst.com](http://nativitysouthamherst.com)

**September 2017**

## Meet Sue Underwood

### *A Joyful Life of Giving*

For lifelong St. Joseph parishioner Sue Underwood, the single word that describes her church community is “home.” Over the years, this parish has played an important role in nearly every major event of her life. It’s where she learned about the faith and received her first sacraments. The place where she was married, becoming a young bride and later became a young mother. It’s where her own children were catechized and received their sacraments. And it’s where her beloved husband Jerry’s funeral Mass was held.

“My church community just feels like family,” says Sue. “I’ve known them for much of my life. There are still people in the parish that I knew as a child growing up and there are new people I’ve come to know over the years. St. Joseph’s is truly my home.”

Just as a mother leaves her mark on her home, filling it with her own personal touch and care, Sue has worked hard to do her part for her church family over the years. In fact, it’s difficult to find a parish ministry that Sue hasn’t been part of at some point. She’s been a PSR teacher, a Cub Scout den leader,



a presenter for Pre-Cana, a member of the Finance and Parish Pastoral Councils, and a member of the Vincentians. Sue worked for a number of years as St. Joseph’s office secretary, using her communication skills and love for people to serve countless parishioners. She and her husband helped write a grant for money to support the St. Joseph Shelter in Lorain. The grant allowed for the purchase of beds and bedding to accommodate 40

*continued on page 8*

# Drawing Souls to the Heart of Our Lady Through the Cenacle

*"Cling to Our Lady as the creeper clings to the tree, for without Our Lady, we cannot stand." – St. Teresa of Calcutta*

When Sr. Therese, SBS (Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament) was visiting her sister, Anne Dancik, about 15 years ago, she planted a seed of inspiration in her heart. And from it, a beautiful prayer group has bloomed.

"When she asked me if we had a Cenacle group at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Parish, I had never even heard of the Marian Movement Cenacle of Priests," Anne says. "But I began to consider having one when I read about an apparition in which Our Lady says, 'I see my sons falling into hell like snowflakes.' Her words upset me so much I felt I had to do something about it. I wanted to help people get to heaven by praying for our priests, and that's why I brought a Cenacle group to our parish."

Impressively, this same Cenacle prayer group is still going strong, storming heaven with the fervent "incense" of their prayers, and bringing soul after soul to the heart of Our Lady. Its eight faithful members meet on the third Wednesday of every month at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish at 10 a.m. before exposition of the Blessed Sacrament begins at 11 a.m. Together, they pray the Rosary for priests, and read a portion from Fr. Stefano Gobbi's spiritual diary, *To the Priests, Our Lady's Beloved Sons*, which describes the interior locutions from the Blessed Virgin Mary that he reportedly received over a period of 20 years. Next, they discuss what they have read, and reflect on it.

"It is wonderful to be part of a prayer group like ours, because we are unified when we pray," Anne says. "I believe that the Cenacle is something truly worthwhile to have because of the direction our world is going. We just have to keep praying and begging Our Lady to open people's hearts."



The Marian Movement Cenacle of Priests is a private association of Catholic clergy and lay associate members founded by Italian priest Fr. Stefano Gobbi in 1972. The main thrust of the association is to encourage Consecration, especially of priests, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and wholehearted fidelity to the Magisterium of the Church. Since its foundation,

many tens of thousands of deacons, priests and bishops, including Cardinals, and millions of religious and laity, have consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin and pledged fidelity to the Magisterium. Cenacle groups now meet at parish churches throughout the world, as well as in private homes.

"We are little pods of people praying for the same thing," Anne says. "We pray the Rosary for our priests because it is so vital. We pray to Our Lady for priests in all kinds of situations – such as our current pope, priests in jeopardy or with addictions, priests in purgatory, and priests who are newly ordained. Every time I meet a priest, I put his name on my prayer list. Also, we are formally part of the "Blue Army," which means a lot to me because I have heard about it ever since I was just a young child, and I am 85 years old!"

Members like Anne also find that being part of the Cenacle gives them an enriching source of support and fellowship – something no Catholic should go without.

"We feel the same way about spiritual things – we share a great spiritual camaraderie with one another," Anne says. "We can relax with one another, and hopefully help one another become saints."

All are welcome to come, join hands with Our Lady and fight for the triumph of the Church in today's world! Our priests need prayer warriors at their side.

***If you would like more information about the Cenacle, please contact Anne Dancik at 440-988-2652.***

*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## Continuing to Draw Closer to God and Our Parish Families This Fall

Dear Members of St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes,

**F**or many people, when Labor Day rolls around, it signals time “to get back to normal again.” And there is truth to this, as the opening of school calls for “getting back to a solid routine.”

In June, our parishes marked our one-year anniversary of truly becoming “one family in Christ with two addresses/locations and one priest.” The planning that we have done is already bearing fruit and paving the way for a promising future together.

Our St. Joseph Day School serves both of our parishes and our communities. Our new principal is Mrs. Amy Makruski, and we look forward to an exciting year of Catholic education as we prepare for a STEM School designation by the State of Ohio. “STEM” stands for “Science, Technology, Engineering and Math,” helping our students be prepared for this 21st century and its opportunities.

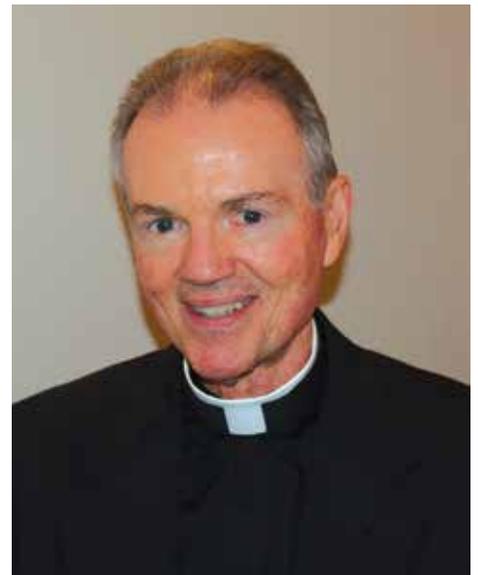
Our beloved St. Joseph Day School is a real gem and adds so much value to our lives. It has a splendid history and a promising future – and is ever fresh in its newness of life. Please check out what is going on in our school through its website ([sjsamherst.org](http://sjsamherst.org)) or by calling the school office (440-988-4244) for a tour and for more information.

We welcome your inquiries and new school families.

In June of last year, we began our Sunday Mass schedule with vigil Masses on Saturday at 4 p.m. at St. Joseph and 5:30 p.m. at Nativity, as well as Masses on Sunday at St. Joseph at 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. I have heard so many favorable and appreciative comments about this new schedule. I thank you for the adjustments that you have made so joyfully and “adventuresomely” in your personal schedules and routines. The increase in weekend Mass attendance is showing.

Our joint Parish School of Religion (PSR) program for our children in public schools takes place on Sunday mornings. It is under the leadership of our Director of Religious Education, Miss Carol Wallington. On Sunday mornings, our families can come for the 8:30 a.m. Mass and then stay for PSR, or to come for PSR and then attend the 11 a.m. Mass.

We look forward to welcoming new candidates to our Catholic family in the Rite of the Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.), which begins this fall. Anyone who is interested in examining our Catholic faith and life is welcome to participate. Please stay tuned to the Sunday bulletin for dates and times.



This fall also brings opportunities for spiritual renewal as disciples of Jesus. You will be hearing more about our upcoming annual Stewardship Renewal. And the Women’s Renewal will take place on Oct. 21-22.

Welcome to September and all that this fall season has to offer. And may your routines, established and newly-established, bring you closer to God and to our St. Joseph and Nativity Parish Families.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Timothy J. O’Connor,  
*Pastor*

# A Look Back at This Summer's Nativity Parish Picnic and Vacation Bible School



# ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY

*It has been a busy summer at St. Joseph and Nativity with a litany of events at our parishes. We would especially like to thank all the attendees and volunteers for the Nativity Parish Picnic and Vacation Bible School!*



# Sr. Stefana Osredkar



It's hard to believe that it's been 53 years since Sr. Stefana entered the Sisters of Notre Dame. It has been 50 years since Sr. Mary Stefana Osredkar took her first vows - 50 remarkable years of charitable service to the Church and the poor; 50 years of happily sacrificing her life for the sake of the Gospel; 50 years of the joy of *just loving Jesus*.

On July 9th, Sr. Stefana, along with 19 other religious sisters celebrated their Golden Jubilee at the Notre Dame Education Center in Chardon, Ohio. Beginning in the chapel, Mass was celebrated with the principal celebrant, the Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak, Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. During the Mass, the jubilarians renewed their vows, exemplifying what it means to be truly generous stewards of their God-given gifts. A reception followed in the educational center.

St. Joseph parishioners were honored to host another celebration of sister's golden jubilee with a Mass on The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15th) with Fr. Tim O'Connor presiding. Sister along with two other jubilarians again renewed their vows in front of the congregation. Approximately 400 people attended this very special Mass and about 250 people attended a reception given in her honor, which followed in the social hall.

Sister's faith journey began so simply and so beautifully, and continues to this day.

"I didn't experience the calling to follow Christ as a religious sister in a dramatic way like St. Paul did when he heard his call," Sr. Stefana says. "Sometimes, the Lord whispers things to us. My vocation just came quietly to me. The Sisters of Notre Dame taught at my high school. I was inspired by their family spirit, and it attracted me to their community. I didn't want to go to college, so I decided to enter the convent right away."

Sister was born in Yugoslavia – now Slovenia – to devout Catholic parents who raised five daughters and two sons.

"My family nurtured my vocation and my faith," Sr. Stefana says. "They didn't think I was going to make it as a sister, but I showed 'em! They were very supportive though, and they still are. We have always been a close family."

Throughout her years as a religious sister, she has given of her time, talent, and treasure with a sincere spirit of generosity. She is loved dearly by our parish family, and by many far beyond. "Sr. Stefana is a devout, kind, gentle, sincere woman, and is a joy to know," says Pam Belskis. "She is a good listener and offers a shoulder upon which to lean or cry when needed."

For a combined 37 years, Sister Stefana provided food service and cooked regularly for her fellow religious sisters, as well as for one of her community's boarding schools in Virginia. For nearly 18 years, sister has been a staff member at St. Joseph Parish - fifteen working in the extended day care program and St. Joseph Parish School and the last three serving exclusively in Pastoral Ministry, through which she helps with funeral planning, and consoling those who are grieving. She also plans on leading a four-session "Journeying with Loss" workshop (twice a year).



## Spending Her Life Joyfully for Jesus

“I like to help grieving families however I can, because it is so hard for them to lose their loved ones,” she says. “The time of grief is such a sacred and special time, both for them and for me. I am always encouraged by their faith.”

Sr. Stefana also visits the homebound, the sick in hospitals and those in nursing homes. “I enjoy visiting all of them,” she says. “They are just such wonderful people. They are so happy to see me, and are truly grateful for my visit and for the opportunity to bring them Communion.” Sister also schedules Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to meet their needs.

Looking back, Sr. Stefana is profoundly grateful for all the support she has received from everyone and that God called her to be a religious sister, that He has given her the grace to persevere in her vocation all these years.

“I love the joy of being in a community with other religious sisters,” she says. “I have made many good friends, and that keeps me going. Through tough times, I have had the support and prayers of those around me. My spiritual directors, the other sisters and my friends pulled me through.”

To those who are considering entering the priesthood or religious life, Sr. Stefana has some words of wisdom to share.

“Be faithful to the Lord and to the Church,” she says. “Be active in the ministries you are doing, and God will show you the way, and be with you in both good and bad times.”



## Meet Sue Underwood: *A Joyful Life of Giving* *continued from front cover*

men. Sue continues to serve the parish garden team, and as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. She also cooks for the shelter, sings in the Resurrection Choir, and is the coordinator of the St. Joseph Prayer Chain.

Sue manages all of these charitable endeavors while caring for her elderly mother and remaining an active part in the lives of her four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Yet, when asked about her impressive list of giving, Sue says with her characteristic humility that this is just what it means to be a steward: her own personal way of “doing her part” and living out the Catholic faith.

“All my life I have tried to help people just because that’s me,” says Sue. “I don’t mind giving; I don’t mind sharing. I just try to follow the stewardship rules, trying to always give my time, talent and treasure. And I’ve always been happier when I’m giving.”

Sue describes her faith as the bedrock that has gotten her through the difficult moments of life. It’s an integral part of who she is and something she could never do without.

“The thing I feel about my faith is, if you don’t ‘let go and let God’ in your life, you can spend an awful lot of time fighting against things that aren’t the way that you wish they are, wasting an awful lot of time,” says Sue. “But when you trust God, things just always work out for the better somehow. That’s been our way of living and my life is filled with such a peace because of my faith.”



Throughout her life God has been faithful, blessing her tenfold for her stewardship lifestyle. He’s given Sue comfort during times of sorrow, blessed her family with personal miracles, and shown her the true joy that comes from giving. Sue feels blessed to continue calling St. Joseph’s home and to be able to keep giving all that she can to her parish family.

“I’ve given what I can throughout my life and it makes life so much richer,” says Sue. “I think if you hold back and do not participate, do not share, then after a while you become a lonesome, closed person. And that’s just not me. I feel very fortunate and blessed to be in a parish that is so vibrant, so alive, and has so many interests for people to partake in. I thank God every day for my good health and that I can still continue giving of myself; that I still know who I am.”

---

*“My church community just feels like family. I’ve known them for much of my life. There are still people in the parish that I knew as a child growing up and there are new people who I’ve come to know over the years. St. Joseph’s is truly my home.” — Parishioner Sue Underwood*

---

AD SPACE

AD SPACE

AD SPACE

This newsletter brought to you by the Catholic Communities of:

# & ST. JOSEPH PARISH NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

NON PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID

PERMIT 58  
AMHERST OH

200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

Address Service Requested

**Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes**

**Mass:**

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

**Confession at St. Joseph:**

*Thursday* - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

*Saturday* - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

**Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:**

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

## ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY of the BVM PARISHES Upcoming Activities and Events

**First Saturday Rosary**

Sept. 2, at 9:00 a.m. in St. Joseph's Parish Chapel.

**Hospitality Sunday - Coffee and Donuts**

Sunday, Sept. 3, following the 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Masses in St. Joseph Parish Social Hall. All are welcome.

**Labor Day Mass**

Monday, Sept. 4, at 9:00 a.m. in St. Joseph Parish Pavilion, weather permitting. Refreshments to follow Mass.

**Coffee and Donuts at Nativity BVM Parish**

Tuesday, Sept. 5, following the 8:00 a.m. Mass in Nativity BVM Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome.

**Nativity BVM Altar Rosary Meeting**

Tuesday, Sept. 5, at 7:00 p.m. at Nativity BVM Parish Hall.

**Confirmation Parent and Candidate Meeting**

Saturday, Sept. 9, following the 5:30 p.m. Mass in Nativity BVM Parish Hall.

**Blood Drive**

Sunday, Sept. 10, from 8:30 a.m. to Noon in St. Joseph Parish Social Hall.

**Pre Baptism Class**

Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 7:15 p.m. in St. Joseph School Multipurpose Room

**Knights of Columbus Annual Clam Bake**

Sunday, Sept. 17, at 6:00 p.m. in St. Joseph Parish Social Hall.

**The Second Greatest Story**

5 week series, on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. in St. Joseph Social Hall starting Sept. 18.

**R.C.I.A. Information Night**

Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 7:00 p.m. in St. Joseph Parish Social Hall.