



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH

## NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**April 2017**

## Hospitality for New Parishioners Giving Parish More Than Just Coffee and Donuts

**H**elen Coughlin is the first to admit that coffee and donuts are small things. But like so many small things in life, coffee and donuts can sometimes make all the difference.

As coordinator of the Hospitality Ministry, Helen and a small army of volunteers welcome parishioners with gatherings in the social hall after the morning Masses on the first Sunday of each month. These informal receptions are meant to give new parishioners a chance to mingle, but Helen says they sometimes have an impact on fostering fellowship among our entire community.

Helen recalls one such parishioner who had recently lost her husband. Mass had always been something they did together, and coming to Mass alone after his death had been especially difficult. A simple invitation to coffee and donuts helped change all that.

“It was that social time and that fellowship that helped bring her back – it is just a real joy to know that this little social time helped to heal some of her wounds,” Helen says. “That’s when you realize sometimes what a gift these events can be. You never know how something simple like a donut and coffee can help others and make them feel more wanted.”

*continued on back cover*



*The Hospitality Committee recently hosted a game night with the help of the MOMS Ministry. According to Committee Coordinator Helen Coughlin, the Hospitality Committee is “truly a family affair” for many who get involved.*

## The St. Joseph Parish School Graduate at Graduation

St. Joseph Parish School, 175 St. Joseph Dr., Amherst, OH 44001  
440-988-4244

After nine years of Catholic education at St. Joseph Parish School in Amherst, Ohio, it is important to see the education and formation that your son or daughter has received.

### Objective

To be prepared for excellence in high school and beyond by becoming a well formed person and leader in my community.

### Qualifications

Graduate of rigorous Catholic education at St. Joseph Parish School,  
Amherst, Ohio

### Work History

300 Hours of Service

1600 Hours of Faith Formation

3 Sacraments of Initiation Completed

Upper Quartile Score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

### Education

9 Years of Formal Instruction in Math, Science and English

9 Years of Formal Foreign Language Instruction

9 Years of Formal Computer Instruction

9 Years of Art, Sport, and Technology

11th Grade Equivalent or Higher on Standardized Testing



**St. Joseph,**  
**Pray for us!**

A Letter from Our Pastor

## Be Prayerful and Present During Holy Week

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

With a later Easter this year on April 16, we have so many graced opportunities before us this month. Please check the bulletin each week for what is on hand.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord on April 9 opens that special time of the year that we call Holy Week. I truly encourage you to make the most of this wonderful time of blessing. Please plan to join us at St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes for the sacred events that will take place during this Holy Week.

On Holy Thursday at Nativity Church, we celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7 p.m., which includes the washing of feet, as Jesus did at the Last Supper. We celebrate His gift to us of the Eucharist, the Priesthood, and His command that we serve each other as He did. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions follow the Mass at Nativity Church until 9:45 p.m.

Good Friday, the day Christ died for us, is the only day in the Church year that Mass is not celebrated. The Liturgy of the Lord's Passion begins at noon at St. Joseph Church and includes a Liturgy of the Word with the proclamation of the Passion from the Gospel of St. John, an opportunity for everyone to venerate the cross, and it concludes with a Communion

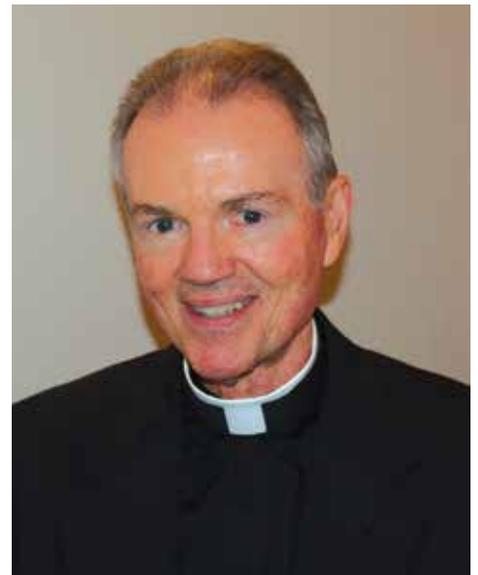
service. Confessions will follow this service until 3 p.m.

*Were You There*, a dramatic presentation of the Stations of the Cross of St. Pope John Paul II, will be presented by the "St. Joseph Players" in St. Joseph Church on Good Friday evening at 7 p.m. Stations of the Cross will also be prayed in Nativity Church at 7 p.m. on Good Friday.

On Holy Saturday in St. Joseph Church, the blessing of Easter foods will take place at 10:45 a.m., and Confessions will follow from 11 a.m. until noon.

The Easter Vigil, "the mother of all vigils," begins on Holy Saturday evening at St. Joseph Church with the lighting of the new fire outdoors at 8:30 p.m., just after sunset. Please come early and gather for the lighting and the blessing of this great fire. From it the Easter candle is lighted – a symbol of Christ, the Light of the World, who banishes the darkness of sin and death. We light our candles from the Christ Candle and carry the light into the darkened church. What a beautiful scene this is as we stand in candlelight and listen to the Easter proclamation.

During this Easter Vigil liturgy, which is the first Mass of Easter, two adult members our RCIA class will be baptized and then will celebrate



the Sacrament of Confirmation and will receive the Eucharist for the first time.

At all of the Easter Sunday Masses, at St. Joseph and at Nativity, we will renew our baptismal promises as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.

Please be present for as many of the events of Holy Week as you can. I can promise you that you will be glad that you did. Let us support each other with our prayers and our presence.

Gratefully yours 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 Journey to Christ Through Parish Involvement

If we were to look through a list of the many ministries Linda Howell is involved in here at St. Joseph and in our surrounding community, many of us would get exhausted just reading through it. She does so much that it's a wonder she finds time to do it all! From singing and playing guitar for our Contemporary Mass, to cooking and collecting food for the homeless shelter, to serving on the Tea Committee, contributing as a member of the St. Joseph Players, and even going along with fellow parishioner, Elizabeth Hanson, as she distributes Communion to the homebound to play guitar and sing for them – Linda's involvement truly runs the gamut! And yet, when you speak with Linda about the "why" and "what" of her involvement, it is clear that she feels blessed to do it all.

"I feel, see, smell, and taste God in almost everything everywhere," Linda says. "I've never felt like that before. Being so involved allows me to feel like I'm a part of something bigger than I could have ever imagined."

What's more, Linda says that being involved connects her with others in a deep and spiritual way, drawing her closer to others and to God Himself.

"As I see fellow parishioners who have lived long lives with faith in God, even amidst their sufferings, and attend their funerals or funerals of their loved ones, I see how God has worked in their lives. I can see



*Linda with her guitar in her garden*

the peace in their eyes knowing they are wrapped in God's arms."

In many ways, Linda's involvement in the life of the Church has been, and continues to be a journey of growing closer to God through her interaction with others. She credits a confessor – who instructed her to attend the Women's Renewal as a penance – as the one who gave her the initial push to embark on this transformative journey. She says she is forever grateful.

"If he hadn't made me do that for myself, I wouldn't be doing this for God and for others," Linda says. "He jump-started my spiritual journey."

Linda encourages all of us to join her on this journey – growing closer to

Christ – and she assures us that we will get much more than we give. God is amazing that way!

"You learn to put God first in your life by trusting and surrendering to Him with everything you have so that He can do His work in you," Linda says. "And you connect with others – being held when you need to be held, seeing a tear cried for you when you can't cry, praying for each other when we are suffering, laughing together and enjoying God's world. It is all such a gift."

Linda, you are such a gift to us! May God bless you for the many ways you serve Him as He blesses us through your service.

## ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY BVM PARISHES

# Upcoming Activities and Events

## Month of April 2017

### **Coffee and Donuts at Nativity BVM Parish**

Tuesday, April 4, following the 8 a.m. Mass in Nativity  
BVM Parish Hall

### **Nativity BVM Altar Rosary Meeting**

Tuesday, April 4, at 7 p.m. at Nativity BVM Parish Hall

### **Palm Weaving**

Wednesday, April 5, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Social Hall

### **Immersion Youth Group**

#### **Presentation of the Stations of the Cross**

Friday, April 7, 7:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Social Hall

### **Women's Renewal Group presentation of "Mary's Way of the Cross"**

Friday, April 7, 7 p.m. at Nativity BVM Parish

### **Easter Egg Hunt**

Sunday, April 9, following the 11 a.m. Mass  
at St. Joseph Parish Grounds

### **Stations of the Cross during Lent**

7 p.m. every Friday at St. Joseph Church

7 p.m. every Friday at Nativity of the BVM Parish.

*\*except for 7 April when the Immersion Youth Group is presenting them at 7:30 PM in the St. Joseph Social Hall*

### **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph Parish Chapel**

Every Monday in Lent following the 9 a.m. Mass  
closing at 6:30 p.m. with Benediction.

### **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity of the BVM Parish**

Weekdays, Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

### **Fish Frys – Every Friday in Lent**

5-7 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Social Hall

### **Easter Triduum**

#### **Holy Thursday, April 13**

Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7 p.m. at Nativity BVM in  
South Amherst

Adoration to follow Mass and concludes with Night  
Prayer at 9:45 p.m.

Confessions after the 7 p.m. Mass until 9:30 p.m. at  
Nativity BVM Parish

#### **Good Friday, April 14**

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, noon, at St. Joseph Parish,  
Confessions to follow until 3 p.m.

St. Joseph Players presentation of "Were You There"

Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

Stations of the Cross, 7 p.m. at Nativity BVM, in South Amherst.

#### **Holy Saturday, April 15**

Blessing of Food at 10:45 a.m. at St. Joseph Parish Church  
with the lighting of the new fire outdoors at 8:30 PM

Easter Vigil Mass at 9 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Church

### **Easter Sunday, April 16, Mass Schedule**

8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish

10 a.m. Mass at Nativity BVM Parish

11:30 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph Parish

### **Men's Renewal Weekend**

Starts Saturday morning, April 22, and concludes on  
Sunday afternoon, April 23

### **"Jesus Day" for First Communicants**

Saturday, April 22, 8:30 a.m. at Nativity BVM Parish

### **Divine Mercy Prayer Service**

Sunday, April 23, 3:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Church

### **First Communion**

Saturday, April 29, 10 a.m. at St. Joseph Parish Church

### **Knights of Columbus Family Rosary**

Sunday, April 30, 2 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish Chapel

# Reorganized Funeral Luncheon Committee Seeking Members

**O**ur Funeral Luncheon Committee has been recently reorganized, and is looking for new members who will help with this valued service for our grieving parish family members and friends.

“Our services are offered to families by our Pastoral Minister, Sr. Stefana, who helps them journey through the loss to the funeral and beyond,” says Evelyn Cafarel, committee Co-Chair. “A cover letter introduces our services and vendors. Alternate venues are listed on subsequent sheets to help secure catered meals or alternate locations, should the family prefer those, or should our own facilities be unavailable.”

The committee serves a simple luncheon of sandwiches, vegetable trays, and a choice of sides that are available through local vendors if the family desires. Helen Coughlin, Co-Chair, contacts the family after Sister notifies her.

“Right now we need a large group to offer this service,” Evelyn says. “We need people who are willing to make phone calls, help set up, serve, or clean up. We need those who can make homemade desserts or side dishes like salads, or soups – they will have a place on this committee. A compassionate, willing heart, combined with any of these skills, is all that is needed to provide comfort to grieving families.”

There currently are two teams in service, but more are needed to help ease the pressure on current teams. Teams are organized so one or two volunteers can make the phone calls, do some of the baking, handle some of the preparation, serving, and cleanup.

“This way, no one should be burdened by a longtime commitment,” Evelyn says. “Additional teams can ensure that no team will be over-burdened by serving two or more funerals in a row.”

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*Dodie and Dick Kollhoff*



*Sharon Angell and Helen Coughlin*

## Reorganized Funeral Luncheon Committee

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Evelyn also notes that members of the Nativity Parish Funeral Luncheon Committee shared their experience and knowledge with our core committee to help it get reorganized.

“We want to thank them for their help,” Evelyn says. “And as is the case with our committee, the Nativity Funeral Luncheon Committee can also use additional members.”

Those serving on the Funeral Luncheon Committee will find themselves growing in Christ.

“Christ gives back more than we could ever give,” Evelyn says. “He prompts us to give of ourselves to the ministry so we are His hands, His voice to others. Likewise, others – who are the committee members, the vendors, the caterers, as well as the grieving families themselves – introduce us to the love and caring of Jesus through our interactions. The warmth of the room has little to do with the furnace. The ministry brings joy through the grief to all who learn to appreciate that lives change – they never end. We learn to be and see Jesus through hospitality, and fulfillment follows.”

*“Christ gives back more than we could ever give. He prompts us to give of ourselves to the ministry so we are His hands, His voice to others. Likewise, others – who are the committee members, the vendors, the caterers, as well as the grieving families themselves – introduce us to the love and caring of Jesus through our interactions.”*

*– Evelyn Caffarel*



**Anyone interested in joining the Funeral Luncheon Committee may contact Helen Coughlin at 440-985-1569, or Evelyn Caffarel at 440-452-4361 or [ecaff543@yahoo.com](mailto:ecaff543@yahoo.com).**

# A Great History

## *Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Parish Twinned With St. Joseph Parish*

**I**n the winter of 1932, Fr. James Eischen, the pastor at St. Joseph in Amherst, went to South Amherst to celebrate the first Mass as a forerunner to what would eventually become Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish. At that time, the Mass was held in what was called Hungarian Hall, later to become the North Lake Street Missionary Baptist Church.

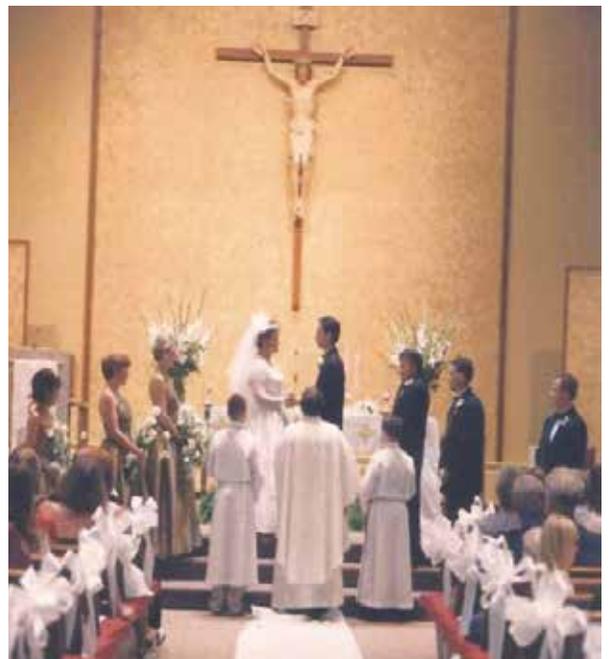
A 14-year-old girl born in 1918 attended that Mass with her family. Victoria Lupe, now Victoria (Vicki) Russo, is still a member of Nativity and attends Mass there every week. Of course, Victoria is now 99 years old – she is not sure if she is the only current parish member who was there at that initial Mass, but she is certain that she is the oldest and most longstanding member of Nativity in 2017. Initially, of course, she was a member of St. Joseph, which was established in 1864 – about the same time that Amherst became known as the “Sandstone Capital of the World.”

As things evolved, Nativity did not come into official being until the following year, 1933. A growing number of Catholics had moved to South Amherst and they joined together to form a new parish, appealing to the diocese for approval and assistance. A local couple, Lt. and Mrs. Gedeon Rabshaw, purchased an abandoned school and offered it to the diocese for the parish. In appreciation for the gift and with the blessing of Bishop Joseph Schrembs, the Rabshaws were offered the privilege of naming the new parish, and they selected the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the name.

Initially, the parish was a mission parish, and Fr. Bernard Klocker, an assistant at St. Peter in Lorain, was assigned to say Mass every Sunday, which he did for a year. The first pastor was named in 1934, Fr. Raymond Steiger.

Fr. Steiger oversaw the development of the parish, and saw that a rectory was built. Mass was held in what had been the auditorium of the school house at the corner of State Route 113 and Leonard Street.

Under Fr. Frederick Deitz, the pastor from 1952 until 1962, the parish purchased 20 acres of land on South Lake Street. Ground was broken for a new church in 1965. That “new” church was dedicated in September 1966, although the first Mass was held there in November 1965 and Christmas was celebrated there in 1965 also.



*continued on page 9*

## A Great History *continued from page 8*

Vicki Russo recalls all of the developments and changes through the years. Although initially a member of St. Joseph, she recalls attending Mass in the schoolhouse auditorium church. A newer church had been built on West Main Street, where she and her husband, Jim, were married on Feb. 7, 1942. (Jim died in 2013; at the time he and Vicki had been married 71 years.)

“I remember well our first pastor, Fr. Steiger,” she says. “It was a great joy to be part of Nativity as our local parish. I have fond memories of chicken dinners, parish picnics in the woods, and of working with others in the parish to build the rectory house. Since they instituted Saturday Masses many years ago, I have attended the Saturday Mass and still go every Saturday to the 5:30 Mass. For a long time, I was a daily communicant, but that is more difficult for me now.”

The Russos, along with many others with a long history at Nativity, remain very involved there, as well as now at St. Joseph with the new configuration of parishes under one

pastor. Nativity has a proud tradition that blends well with those at St. Joseph, St. Patrick and Sacred Heart. As a cluster of parishes, each has a similar proud past and looks forward to a present filled with faith and stewardship!



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# & ST. JOSEPH PARISH & NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

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200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

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## 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.

## Hospitality for New Parishioners

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For new parishioners, Helen or one of the other volunteers is often the first social contact with our parish. Hospitality members reach out to new members by phone and spend a little time getting to know them and invite them to come to coffee and donuts. Once there, the new parishioners receive a name tag so that established parishioners can approach them and introduce themselves.

"If we see that they're wearing a name tag, we know they're a new parishioner and we can go introduce ourselves," Helen says. "Then we can make that personal contact with them. I think that's really the best part of it."

In recent months, the ministry has made strides to extend the warm welcome to more parishioners by hosting

events after the evening weekend Masses with the help of various ministries. In January, Hospitality hosted a family game night in conjunction with the MOMS Ministry.

"We served pizza and snacks, and it was really cool," Helen says. "They brought board games in. Some grandparents were there and they got to play with the kids. The little kids had so much fun."

"That was our first attempt at having a Saturday evening one, but we're open to any ministry coming in and hosting an event that will help us reach the Saturday and Sunday evening population," she continues. "Anyone from another ministry that is interested in that can contact me. I'm hoping more will come forward and want to host."

**For more information on Hospitality Ministry, please contact Helen Coughlin  
at 440-985-1569 or [markecoughlin@centurytel.net](mailto:markecoughlin@centurytel.net).**