



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

Inside

2 Living According to God's Will *Forming a Conscience and Moral Code*

3 A Letter from Our Pastor

4 Meet the St. Joseph School Parent Club *Helping Our Parents Take an Active Role in Their Children's Education*

6 Honoring Our Class of 2023 High School and Collegiate Graduates

St. Joseph Parish
 200 Saint Joseph Drive
 Amherst, OH 44001
 (440) 988-2848
 stjosephamherst.com

Nativity of the BVM Parish
 333 South Lake Street
 South Amherst, OH 44001
 (440) 986-7011

AUGUST 2023

Parish School of Religion Guiding Our Youngest Learners in the Faith

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that parents have the “first responsibility for the education of their children” (2223). The document *Lumen Gentium*, or *Light of the Nations*, calls the home the “domestic church” (11). It’s the first place that children learn the faith.

At our parishes, the Parish School of Religion (PSR) program is here to support parents in their teaching of the faith. Children can learn much about the faith from Sunday Mass participation, PSR, and sacramental preparations.

Angela Eads, the PSR Principal, leads the program and oversees sacramental preparations for both parishes.

“One of the beautiful aspects of religious education is helping prepare students for the important Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation,” she says.

In non-sacramental years, students are provided with an opportunity to learn about their faith with their peers.

The goal of PSR is to “help develop the children as faith-filled, committed

continued on page 5



Fifth-grade PSR students share a lesson with the first-graders.

Living According to God's Will

Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid

fear, selfishness, and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. In turn, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

A Letter from Our Pastor

Reflections on St. Augustine and a Life of Stewardship



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

This month, I want to reflect with you on the profound importance of St. Augustine of Hippo — whose feast day is Aug. 28 — in the life of the Catholic Church and how his life serves as a remarkable example of living stewardship as a way of life. St. Augustine’s journey of conversion, his deep love for God, and his tireless dedication to the Church provide us with invaluable lessons on stewardship and discipleship.

Augustine’s early life was characterized by a relentless search for meaning and fulfillment. Despite his intellectual brilliance, he found himself entangled in worldly pleasures and philosophies that left him spiritually unfulfilled. However, it was through the patient prayers and guidance of his mother, St. Monica – whose feast day is Aug. 27, that Augustine encountered the transforming power of God’s grace.

Augustine’s conversion to Catholicism was not a mere change of affiliation, but a radical transformation of his entire being. His encounter with Christ touched the deepest recesses of his heart and compelled him to surrender his life completely to God. Augustine’s conversion was a turning point that shaped his understanding of stewardship and led him to a life of profound discipleship.

Stewardship, as lived by St. Augustine, was grounded in his understanding that everything he possessed was a gift from God. He recognized that his intellect, talents, and resources were entrusted to him for a greater purpose. Augustine embraced the call to be a faithful steward, using his God-given gifts to serve the Church and promote the Kingdom of God.

As a bishop, theologian, and writer, St. Augustine dedicated his life to nourishing the faith of the faithful and

defending the truths of the Catholic Church. His prolific writings, including “Confessions” and “City of God,” continue to inspire and guide Catholics across the ages. Augustine understood that his intellectual abilities were to be shared and employed for the glory of God.

As we reflect on the life of St. Augustine, we are reminded of the relevance and urgency of living stewardship in our own lives. Like Augustine, we are called to recognize that all we have is a gift from God, entrusted to us for a greater purpose. Our time, talent, and treasure are meant to be used wisely and selflessly for the service of others and the building up of the Church.

Stewardship invites us to discern how we can actively contribute to the mission of the Church. It encourages us to generously share our time and talents by engaging in prayer and ministries and supporting initiatives that promote the well-being of others. It also challenges us to make intentional choices in how we use our material resources, mindful of the needs of our parish community and those less fortunate.

During this month dedicated to St. Augustine, let us emulate his spirit of stewardship. May St. Augustine intercede for us and guide us as we deepen our commitment to living stewardship, and may his example inspire us to be faithful stewards of God’s gifts, using them generously for the service of others and the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor".

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor

Meet the St. Joseph School Parent Club



The winner of "best trunk" at the 2022 Trunk-or-Treat event



One of the school kids demonstrating an experiment from STEM class, assisted by Mrs. Eads and Principal Amy Makruski

The St. Joseph School Parent Club is an organization open to all parents and staff at the school. It is led by the board members who are under the direction of the principal. At their monthly meetings, parents can find out about things that have been taking place and upcoming events. Kelly Hardwick has been the vice president for the last two years and will be stepping up as president in the fall.

“Our mission has been to bring back social things and activities that were lacking because of COVID,” Kelly says. “We do things that support the community, fundraisers that support the school, and we provide support to the teachers.”

Some of the events that the Parent Club has hosted in the past include the Welcome Back to School Picnic, Trunk-or-Treat, Pictures with Santa, the Spring Father-Daughter Dance, and a Mother-Son event. They also provide lunch for teachers during Catholic Schools Week, and staff dinners twice a year during parent-teacher conferences.

“This is a group of parents with extremely similar interests — our children,” Kelly says. “The people who participate want their children to get a Catholic education and that starts with us, the parents. We pray at the beginning of meetings, asking God to help us guide our children to have a good Catholic education and to help us make prudent decisions to use our finances toward a better good.”

The Parent Club is a wonderful opportunity for parents to get involved at the school. Many people can offer different talents and backgrounds that are necessary for the events that are hosted.

“Some people are good with money, so they can help the treasurer with finances,” Kelly says. “Some people are good at making and decorating or planning, so they could volunteer to help with our events. You can give as little or as much time as you want. Subcommittees are formed for the different events, so there is always plenty of opportunities to help and get involved.”

The Parent Club Board changes each fall and is very excited to welcome its new members for the 2023-2024 school

continued on page 5

Helping Parents Take Active Role in Their Children's Education

year — Kelly Hardwick as president, Rachel Heinowski as vice president, Jennifer Kesterke as secretary, Lindsey McCarthy as treasurer, Sara Linnell as hospitality, and Art Jaskiewicz as sunshine.

“We strive to provide the information that parents need about all the activities and upcoming events,” Kelly says. “We offer an opportunity to get involved in your child's education and to help support the staff, and we have the chance to make friendships with other parents at the school. It is an important group and we want all parents to be involved.”

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Kelly Hardwick at jkhardwich80@gmail.com.



Students having fun around the 2022 Christmas float for the Amherst Christmas Parade

Parish School of Religion *continued from front cover*

Catholics ready to serve our church and our world by instructing them in the ways of the Gospel.”

PSR is for students in kindergarten to eighth grade from St. Joseph and Nativity parishes. Registration for the upcoming school year will be open through late August. Classes will begin Oct. 4 and are held on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish School. Second-grade students receive First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and eighth-graders receive Confirmation.

One of the changes Angela is making this year is to add more service projects and prayer to the curriculum for all ages. Also, seventh and eighth-grade students will have a change to programming. Seventh grade will now be called Confirmation One, and eighth grade will be called Confirmation Two. The seventh-grade program will change

from prior years in that it will include service projects and youth group, just like the eighth-grade program.

All of the dedicated catechists from our parishes enjoy teaching the students and the benefits it has in their faith lives. Angela would love to see more parishioners step forward to serve in this vital ministry. Catechists use provided materials to teach students.

“They also share their faith with their students and set an example,” Angela says.

Angela enjoys it when she can go into classrooms and just be with the students.

“I always tell the kids each year they are not allowed to do anything fun without me during PSR,” she says. “I very much enjoy getting to know the students and forming relationships with them.”

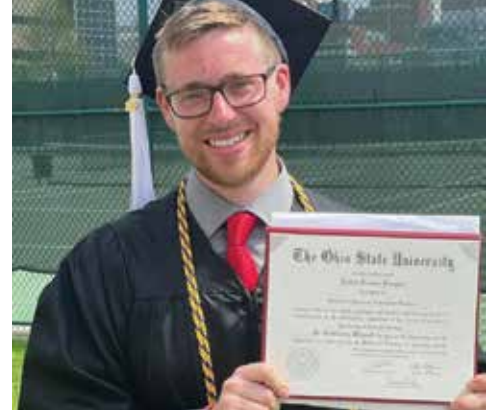
Catechists or substitute catechists are always needed. To get involved, contact Angela Eads 440-988-4244, ext. 247. To register your children for PSR, visit forms.gle/sorHfhmobu9PtDcm8.

Honoring Our Class of 2023



Abigail Bertke

Abigail has attended St. Joseph Parish School since preschool and is now an Honors graduate of Amherst Steele High School. Throughout her high school years, Abigail has participated in girls softball, basketball, National Honor Society as well as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Abigail has taken multiple College Credit Plus Courses and carries a 4.37 GPA. She is employed at the Sugar Buzz in downtown Amherst. Abigail's future plans are to attend Bowling Green State University to major in Secondary Math Education!



David Burgett

In 2020, David graduated from Kent State University with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and a Minor in Business. In 2023, David graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science in Atmospheric Sciences and is now a meteorologist. He interned at The Weather Channel in Atlanta, Ga., as well as WKBN 27 in Youngstown and Channel 19 in Cleveland. His career goal is to be a TV meteorologist.



Andrew Csanady

Andrew is a 2019 graduate of St. Joseph Parish School, and now a 2023 Honors Graduate from Elyria Catholic High School. Andrew received Honor Cords, the Presidential Award and is a National Honor Society Member. Andrew received First Honors all four years while attending EC, he also participated on the track and field team all four years, as well as the academic team all four years and held the position of Team Captain his senior year. Andrew was Co-President of the Environmental Club and also a member of the Socratic Club. Andrew will be attending Case Western Reserve University in the Fall to study Aerospace Engineering and Physics.



Braden Carpenter

Braden is a 2023 graduate of Amherst Steele High School. He completed the Auto Tech program at Lorain County Joint Vocational School and several college classes. Braden is attending the Community College of Beaver County in Beaver Falls, Pa. for Air Traffic Control.



Blake Kubasak

Blake is a 2023 graduate from Steele High School and will be attending Hiram College in the Fall. Blake is playing on the Hiram men's soccer team and he will be majoring in Sports Medicine and minoring in Business. Blake was awarded several awards for soccer and is excited to play at the collegiate level. Blake played three years on the varsity soccer team, he received the Upper 90 Soccer Club, 1st Team all Lorain County Men's Soccer, and 1st Team SWC Men's Soccer Honorable Mention. He also received the All Greater Cleveland Men's Soccer award.

High School and Collegiate Graduates



Christian McClintock

Christian is a 2023 graduate of Firelands High School. He is very smart, loves to cook and is really awesome at it! Christian's goal is to go into the Air Force in two years and work as a firefighter.

Braden Hunker

Braden is a 2023 graduate of St. Edward High School and will be attending Ohio University in the Fall to major in Finance. Braden started school in Pre-K at St. Joseph and attended Amherst schools from first through eighth grade. Braden played varsity soccer for St. Ed's all four years and was Team Captain his senior year. Braden took AP and IB classes while at St. Ed's and he was awarded Senior Finance Student of the Year.



Cameron Gendics

Cameron graduated from Amherst Steele High School with Honors. He won the SWC Scholar Athlete award in football, basketball and baseball and was Captain of both the football and baseball teams. In baseball, Cam won 1st Team All Lorain County, 1st Team All SWC, and Honorable Mention All-District. Cam is a member of the National Honor Society. This Fall, Cameron will be attending Ohio Northern University majoring in Business Sports Management and Finance, and playing baseball for the ONU Polar Bears.



Braden Pluta

Braden Pluta is a 2023 graduate of Amherst Steele High School and will be heading to the University of Cincinnati this Fall to work towards a career in accounting. Braden enjoys playing golf, basketball and lifting weights, and is employed and keeping busy working at Target.

Audrey Dinger

Audrey is a 2023 High Honors graduate of St. Joseph Academy, where she has accomplished many things. To begin, she received High Honors all eight semesters of high school and received various academic excellence awards while competing in three sports — volleyball, diving and crew. Audrey was on the varsity crew team for three years where she received the Jaguar Pride Award, which is given to the Most Spirited Teammate. During her senior year, Audrey was varsity crew Team Captain. Audrey completed over 100 hours of service, became a Eucharistic Minister her senior year and headed two donation drives throughout her high school career. Audrey was an Academy Ambassador for four years, a Class Representative for two years, Student Council President her senior year, as well as a member of the National Honor Society. Audrey is committed to the University of Dayton for Rowing where she plans to major in Political Science with hopes to later attend law school.



continued on page 8



Drew Pieschalski

Drew Pieschalski is a 2023 graduate of St. Ignatius High School. During his time at St. Ignatius, he has been an active member of the St. Ignatius Broadcasting Network (SIBN), broadcasting football, basketball, baseball and hockey games. He has also been involved in the Rini Christmas Food Drive, Spring Into Action, Pallbearers Society and the Christian Action Team (CAT). Drew previously served as an altar server at St. Joseph Parish. Drew will be attending Butler University in the Fall studying Sports Media.



Lia Morrison

Lia is a dedicated AP student, graduating with honors from Amherst Steele High School and enjoys bringing educational opportunities to her peers. As her school's environmental club, Eco League's president, Lia advocates for more sustainable practices and mental health awareness within her community. Lia is part of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Team, encouraging a safe learning environment and social culture. In her spare time, she is an active member of the National Honor Society, Letters for Destiny, and Sources of Strength. Lia has grown up studying piano at the Oberlin Conservatory and hopes to continue improving. She volunteers her time with the Special Olympics group, especially enjoying mentoring the elementary group. Lia will be attending Middlebury College in Vermont and pursuing an Environmental Studies and Chemistry degree. For her Fall and Winter term, she will be studying abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark, focusing on urban ecology and Danish. Lia is beyond grateful for her support system and her amazing friends!



Rose Fedan

Rose is a 2023 Honors Graduate of Amherst Steele High School. Rose has volunteered as a violinist at St. Joseph Parish for the past couple years. She is enrolled to attend Bowling Green State University's Honors Learning Community and will continue her endeavors as a violinist by participating in BGSU's Philharmonic Orchestra. Rose plans to major in Visual Media Technology and minor in Art with a concentration in ceramics. Rose has received an Academic Scholarship from BGSU as well as a Music Scholarship. In addition to volunteering at our parish, Rose has been heavily involved in her school orchestra as a violinist and an active participant in the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra. Her love for ceramics has blossomed this year with her discovery of the pottery wheel, and she will be attending a workshop this Summer in Pennsylvania with acclaimed potter Simon Leach!



Gabbi Dury

Gabbi is a 2023 graduate of Midview High School. While at Midview, Gabbi was a member of the Volleyball, Golf and Track teams. She also participated in Student Government, Link Crew, and Best Buddies. Gabbi coached sixth-grade CYO volleyball for St. Joseph's. She swam for various swim clubs and the Amherst Summer Swim Team for several years. Gabbi received the Academic Achievement Award for Fall and Winter sports, as well as the Lorain County Athletic Administrators Association Merit Award. Gabbi will be attending The Ohio State University in the Fall and major in Nutrition with plans to pursue a degree in Athletic Training.

ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY



Sammy George

Sammy George attended St. Joseph Parish School beginning with Pre-K and is now a 2023 graduate of Marion L. Steele High School. He participated in several CYO sports while attending St. Joseph's. In high school he played three years of football, participated all four years in track and field, making it to the state meet in weight throw his senior year. He also participated in Steele News Live his junior and senior years. Sam will be attending LCCC in the Fall, studying in the culinary program. He presently works as a cook at his family's restaurant, Sal & Al's Diner. Sam hopes to own his own pizza parlor one day.



Garrett Pugh

Garrett is a 2023 graduate of Amherst Steele High School and is enlisted in the United States Marine Corp. and left for Boot Camp on May 30. In his free time, his hobbies include video gaming. His family members are Mom Nicole Matthews, Dad Tom Pugh, Sister Isabella Pugh and Grandmother Sharon Matthews, member with us here at St. Joseph's.

Dr. Margaret (Maggie) Manges

Dr. Manges is a 2010 graduate of St. Joseph's School, a 2014 graduate of Edison High School and has recently earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. She received her Bachelor of Arts (Summa Cum Laude) at the University of Akron in May 2017, her master's degree in Education Studies in May 2020, and her Ph.D. from the University of Buffalo in May 2023. Dr. Manges was the recipient of the first Doctoral Award of Excellence for her works in research, clinical practice and professional commitment during her graduate program. She will be completing her postdoctoral fellowship at The Ohio State University.



Meghan Glahn

Meghan is a 2023 High Honors graduate of Amherst Steele High School. Meghan was very involved during her high school years, participating in Leo Club, Student Council, National Honor Society, and also in the band playing flute for the wind ensemble. She joined the track and field team and was Captain her senior year. Meghan assisted with the Special Olympics program, preparing individuals ranging in age from elementary to high school to compete in competitions. Meghan received a variety of school, local and county scholarships while also achieving High Honors every year of high school. Her future plans are to attend Bowling Green State University's Honors College to obtain a Special Education degree and pursue a career as an intervention specialist.



Maren Rhoads

Maren is a 2023 graduate of Amherst Steele High School. During her high school years, Maren was President of the MLS Theatre Company, President of Student Council, and a section leader in the Concert Choir. Along with these leadership positions, she was a member of the Leo Club, Madrigals, and was Steele's mascot. Maren also participated in outside of school activities such as voice lessons and dance classes. Additionally, she was part of the All-Ohio Theatre during her junior and senior years. This Fall, Maren will be attending Otterbein University to study Musical Theatre. Maren is so thankful for all of the love and support of her family and friends.



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.

Upcoming Activities and Events

Hospitality Tuesday

Tuesday, Aug. 1 — Following the 8 a.m. Mass, Nativity Church and Hall

Altar and Rosary Society Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 1 — 6:30 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

Vincentian Meeting

Thursday, Aug. 3 — 9 a.m., Office Conference Room

First Friday Rosary

Friday, Aug. 4 — 11 a.m., Nativity Parish Church and Hall

First Saturday Rosary

Saturday, Aug. 5 — 9 a.m., St. Joseph Church

Wonderful Women

Tuesday, Aug. 8 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

Ice Cream Social in celebration of NBVM 90th Anniversary

Saturday, Aug. 12 — Following the 5:30 p.m. Mass, Parish Hall/outside weather permitting

Feast of the Assumption Holy

Day Mass Times

Monday, Aug. 14 — 7 p.m.,

St. Joseph Parish

Tuesday, Aug. 15 — 9 a.m.,

St. Joseph Parish

12 p.m., Nativity Parish

7 p.m., St. Joseph Parish

Catholic Golden Agers

Wednesday, August 16 —

11:30 a.m., Nativity Parish Hall

Preschool Orientation

Monday, Aug. 21 — 7 p.m.,

Preschool Orientation (School)

Kindergarten Orientation

Wednesday, Aug. 23 — 7 p.m. (School)

SJS School Walkthrough

Sunday, Aug. 27 — Following the 11 a.m. Mass

First Day of School, Grades 1-8 and Kindergarten with last names A-L

Monday, Aug. 28

First Day of School for Kindergarten with last names M-Z

Tuesday, Aug. 29

First day of School for all Kindergarten students

Wednesday, Aug. 30

Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays in August — 9:30 a.m., Mill Hollow