

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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MARCH 2024

Meet St. Joseph Parishioner Marybeth Hicks

Offering Boundless Love and Gratitude by Serving Jesus and His People

hen Marybeth Hicks first joined the Vincentians, she couldn't think of a better way to serve God than by helping those in need. But a few months into serving in the ministry, she recalls feeling very unfulfilled.

"After packing orders of food, I walked by the church on the way to the office," she says. "I felt I needed to discuss my discontent with Jesus. I knelt down and just laid it all out there. Now that I look back, it was all about me, me, me. I ended up with my final thought, 'Lord this just isn't doing anything for me.' Well, He came back loud and clear, 'You are not doing it for yourself, you are doing it for me!"



(From left) Rita Hiser, Marybeth Hicks, Tootie Tsacoumangos

For Marybeth, stewardship is about

the Gospel passage in Matthew 25:40, "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

A parishioner of St. Joseph for 20 years, Marybeth is involved in a number of ways around our parish community. In addition to her active service with the Vincentians, Marybeth volunteers in the parish office, helps out as sacristan for weekday Masses, cooks for the homeless shelter, and serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion both at Mass and for the homebound.

When Marybeth wakes up in the morning, she asks God, "What can I do for You today?" Being involved in several different parish ministries and activities helps guide her and keeps her centered on God's will throughout her daily life.

Caster Stewardship:

Sharing Hope of the Resurrection with Those in Need

hat hope Jesus' Resurrection offers to us! Indeed, had He not risen from the dead, our faith would be in vain, as St. Paul says. And yet, this hope is for every human being, even those who do not know Him.

Jesus calls us as Catholic Christians to rejoice in the hope He gave us through His Resurrection, but He calls us to share the joy of His Resurrection with the world, particularly with those whose condition in life makes it difficult for them to be joyful.

As we celebrate Easter in the comfort of our homes and churches, let us do our part to reach out to those, who at this time, still find themselves amid great suffering. So many are still experiencing Christ's death, as it were — the victims of war-torn areas around the world, the unwanted and abused, the homeless and the starving — many of whom cannot find a reason or meaning for the tragedy in their lives.

If there is anything worse than suffering, it is the horror of feeling alone in one's suffering. When we devote our lives to sharing the Gospel and the love of Jesus with others, we undertake a truly awesome and meaningful task — to show those in pain that they are not alone, to assure them of the compassion of Jesus, who experienced all the physical pain, all the effects of sin, the very same sufferings endured by every person who has ever lived or will live on this earth. Who of all people is more ready to show compassion to the suffering than our Precious Lord?

As St. Paul says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15).

But the great triumph in the tragedy of the Cross is that Jesus did not merely experience suffering; He sanctified it, redeemed it, and ultimately conquered it through His resurrection, thereby bringing hope to every person who suffers.

Jesus calls us to put our faith in His Resurrection into action, to show by the way we live our lives that we really believe it makes a difference even in the darkest places of the world. How can we shine the healing light of the Resurrection on those still in the shadow of the Cross?

We do not have to travel abroad to find a soul in suffering. Perhaps there is someone in our parish to whom we can minister this Easter season, or someone in our local community. We are all called to pray for our brothers and sisters who suffer, but perhaps we can do even more than that. Even if some of us may not have the freedom to devote our time or talent to serve the suffering, through our means, we can minister even to the furthest reaches of the globe. This is one reason why supporting Catholic outreaches and charities is so vital to the Church and our own faith lives. The Scriptures even say, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:15-17).

Is our faith still buried in the tomb, or is it alive and bearing fruit in our lives and in the lives of others this Easter season? Let's not shrink back from the awesome task Jesus has bestowed on us.



ST. JOSEPH NATIVITY

A Letter from Our Pastor

Honoring the **Feast of St. Patrick** with a Spirit of Stewardship

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

hile March means we are in the middle of our Lenten journeys, it also brings the festive holiday of St. Patrick's Day, a time for us to reflect on the Catholic teachings and spiritual significance of this celebration.

St. Patrick's Day is not merely about revelry and merriment; it is rooted in the life and teachings of St. Patrick, who was a devout Catholic bishop and patron saint of Ireland.

St. Patrick, known for his missionary work in Ireland, brought the Catholic faith to the Irish people. His dedication, faith, and tireless efforts in spreading Christianity serve as an inspiring example for us all. In celebrating St. Patrick's Day, we can embrace this Catholic heritage and faithfully observe the holiday through acts of Catholic stewardship, particularly during the Lenten season. Here are some ways to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in a spiritually meaningful and stewardship-focused manner:

Attend Mass: On St. Patrick's Day, which is the Fifth Sunday of Lent this year, make attending Mass a central part of your celebration. St. Patrick's commitment to the Catholic faith should inspire us to come together in worship and prayer, reaffirming our own faith.

Learn About St. Patrick: Take some time to learn about the life and work of St. Patrick, his dedication to God, and his missionary efforts. Reflect on how his example can guide your own faith journey.

Share Your Faith: Just as St. Patrick shared his faith with the people of Ireland, take this opportunity to share your faith with others. Engage in conversations about Catholicism and encourage open dialogue about your beliefs.

Embrace the Lenten Spirit: St. Patrick's Day often involves indulgence, but as it falls within the season of Lent, consider refraining from excessive feasting and drinking. Use

this day to practice moderation and self-discipline, aligning your actions with the spirit of Lent.

Acts of Charity: St. Patrick's Day can be a time for acts of charity. Donate to a Catholic charity, support a local food bank, or participate in community service to help those in need. These acts of love and generosity reflect St. Patrick's dedication to serving others.

Celebrate Irish Culture and Tradition:

While celebrating Irish culture is an integral part of the day, do so in a manner that respects your faith. Enjoy traditional Irish music, dance, and cuisine, but do not lose sight of the spiritual significance of the holiday.

Stewardship Commitments: Use St. Patrick's Day to renew your commitment to Catholic stewardship. Reflect on how you can contribute your time, talents, and financial resources to support your parish and the broader Catholic community.

By celebrating St. Patrick's Day in a way that aligns with Catholic teachings and focuses on stewardship, we can honor the legacy of St. Patrick and his dedication to spreading the Catholic faith. Let us remember that the core of St. Patrick's work was to bring the light of Christ to the people of Ireland, and we too can continue to share the love and teachings of Christ with those around us.

May this St. Patrick's Day be a time of faith, reflection, and service as we navigate this special day during the season of Lent. Let us use this opportunity to deepen our relationship with God and one another.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Twinky & O' Commo

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor, Pastor

Lent and Holy Week Schedule

Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent at 7 p.m.

March 1 — Nativity Church

March 8 — St. Joseph Church

March 15 — St. Joseph Church

March 22 — Nativity Church

Good Friday March 29 — Taizé Stations of the Cross at

St. Joseph Church

Diocesan-Wide "Evening of Confession"

Wednesday, Feb. 28, from 5-8 p.m. at St. Joseph Church Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, from 5-8 p.m. St. Joseph Church

First Friday and First Saturday Rosary

11 a.m. on Friday, March 1, at Nativity Church 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 2, at St. Joseph Church

"The Answer"

Friday, March 8, and Saturday, March 9 — 7:30 p.m. at St. Ladislas in Westlake

Thursday, March 14, and Friday, March 15 — 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's in Lorain

Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23 — 7:30 p.m. at St. Albert the Great in North Royalton

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity of the B.V.M. Parish

Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Reconciliation (Confession) at St. Joseph Parish

Saturdays of Lent from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Thursdays following the 7 p.m. Mass until 8:30 p.m. — exception Holy Thursday

Good Friday following the Noon Liturgy until 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Holy Thursday following the 7 p.m. Mass until 9 p.m.

Reconciliation (Confession) at Nativity B.V.M. Parish

Holy Thursday following the 7 p.m. Mass until 9 p.m.

EASTER TRIDUUM

Thursday, March 28 — Holy Thursday at Nativity B.V.M. Church

7 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper (with Foot Washing)

Adoration and Confession to follow — Adoration Closing at 9 p.m.

Friday, March 29 — Good Friday at St. Joseph Church

12 Noon Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at St. Joseph Confessions to follow until 3 p.m.

Saturday, March 30 — Holy Saturday at St. Joseph Church

10:45 a.m. Blessing of Easter Food Confessions to follow, 11 a.m. to 12 Noon 8:30 p.m. Easter Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection at St. Joseph

Sunday, March 31 — Easter Sunday 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses of Easter Sunday at St. Joseph 10 a.m. Mass of Easter Sunday at Nativity B.V.M. No 5 p.m. Mass

Funeral Lunch Ministry Serves the Grieving with Great Care and Love

n the Beatitudes, Christ calls our attention to all of the ways that Our Lord sees us in our littleness, our suffering, and our path to holiness — "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). The ladies of the Funeral Lunch Ministry at St. Joseph seek to bring this comfort to parish families who are mourning the loss of a loved one.

In the midst of grief, planning a funeral can be overwhelming. The Funeral Lunch Ministry is here to carry some of that burden.

"It's a labor of love," says Cathie Jacobs, one of the team leaders who helps to set up and clean up for funeral lunches. "It's just one thing we can do to help alleviate the stress of the moment."

Families have the lunches catered, but a team of three or four parishioners takes care of the set-up and clean-up. Set-up is more than just preparing beverages and setting tables. The volunteers put a great deal of thought and heart into the centerpieces that they prepare for the tables. They create a small touch of beauty for each table that often matches the season. For the funeral of someone she knew, Cathie cut holly from her own garden to use in the centerpieces.

By handling all of the work, the volunteers ensure that the family is able to spend quality time with their family and friends, comforting one another and sharing memories of their loved one. The ladies of the parish provide baked goods and the volunteers prepare coffee, tea, iced tea, and lemonade. The family and friends are able to just relax and share fellowship.

"It shows people that the parish cares a lot about them," Cathie says. "There are people who are willing to do this for them."

It's a simple job that makes a big difference. With several teams available to cover funerals as they come up, it takes just a little flexibility on the part of the volunteers. Helen Coughlin coordinates the teams and works with the team leaders to ensure that everything is taken care of.

Cathie has been part of the Funeral Lunch Ministry for about four years. She is retired and is grateful that she is able to use her time to help in some way.

Just as Christ accompanies us through our sufferings, so do the ladies of the Funeral Lunch Ministry. They represent the care of the entire parish.

"Come and join us," Cathie says. "Feel the gratitude and the warm feeling you get for doing this for someone else."

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Vailable part of the team leaders.

(From left) Cathie Jacobs and Lynne Anthony

If you're interested in serving on the Funeral Lunch Ministry at St. Joseph, contact Helen Coughlin at 440-984-8758 or markandhelenc@gmail.com.

Extraordinary Ministers Reverently Serve His Precious Body Beyond Our Parish Walls

here are many ways to get involved in the Catholic Mass, from singing in the choir to serving as a lector. As the oft-heard saying goes, "many hands make light work." We need every parishioner to make our Masses what they are. One ministry requires stewards who take extra care for their work — the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Homebound at St. Joseph's, and Communion to the Shut-in at Nativity.

The most important part of the Catholic Mass is when our faith community receives Jesus' Body and Blood. However, not everyone can attend Mass — by bringing the Eucharist to them, we extend Mass past the walls of our parishes. Our dedicated stewards carry this important sacrament to those in need.

Tootie Tscaoumangos has been leading this ministry at St. Joseph's for about two years. There was a long break due to the pandemic, but the ministers at St. Joseph are back to bringing Communion one Sunday per month after the 8:30 a.m. Mass. The ministers visit homes and various care centers.

"So many people say, 'I don't know what God's plan is for me, and I don't know what He wants me to do," Tootie says. "I have to say this is exactly what God wants me to do now. Maybe many other people would say that if they took part in this too."

This ministry means so much to Tootie because she witnesses its impact firsthand. If more parishioners would get involved, the ministry could bring forth the Eucharist more often, which would be a blessing to those who receive.

"These people are still part of our parish," Tootie says. "They are at a place where they can't come to Mass, but they love receiving the Eucharist. We take them the very best gift we can give."

Many of those who receive have already watched Mass when the minister arrives. There's also a social aspect to this ministry. Some of the receivers don't get a lot of visitors.

"The people are all so grateful to receive the Eucharist," Tootie says. "You get back so much more than what you give."

Some of the volunteers got involved because they saw the impact this ministry had on a parent before their passing.

"I had no idea how rewarding this was," Tootie says. "It's the most special thing that I could do. It just warms your heart to do this ministry."

To be added to the list to receive the Eucharist, contact the parish office at 440-988-2848. To get involved at St. Joseph, contact Tootie Tscaoumangos at 440-864-5438 or johnandtootie@gmail.com; at Nativity, contact Joe Siekeres at 440-965-4001 or jsiekeres@zoominternet.net.



(From left) Carol Shinsky, Dan Bullock, Dave Wohlever, Kim Frankart, Laureen Suspenski, Colleen Wyszynski, Tootie Tsacoumangos



(From left) Tootie Tsacoumangos, Dodie Kollhoff, Rita Hiser, Evelyn Caffarel

Celebrating the

Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary: March 19

evotion to St. Joseph began relatively late in Church history, primarily because his role of husband to Mary and head of the Holy Family was underplayed in early Christianity by many unauthenticated legends of Christ's childhood. These legends almost always portrayed Joseph as an old man, a simple guardian of Mary and Jesus.

Modern theology places Joseph in a much more important position. Because of his valid marriage to Mary, Joseph shared in Mary's parenthood — Joseph was a father to Jesus in every way except biological. Joseph appeared publicly as the natural father of Jesus, thus shielding the virginity of Mary and the reputation of Jesus. Joseph's fatherly love, authority, and watchful service were all necessary circumstances in God's plan for the Incarnation.

Joseph was born in Judea or Galilee in the first century B.C. Little is stated in the Bible about the influence Joseph had on Jesus. History tells us that he brought Mary and Jesus

to the temple each Passover and taught Jesus the carpentry trade. He seems to be the silent family man who shows his love for his family by providing them with security. The very safety of Mary and Jesus was guarded by Joseph when he took his family into Egypt to avoid the massacre of male babies ordered by King Herod.

In the history of the Church, Western veneration of Joseph began with the introduction of the Feast of St. Joseph in the late 15th century.

In 1870, at the end of the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph to be the patron of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of carpenters, workers, fathers, and a happy death given that he died in the presence of Mary and Jesus. The title of Joseph's March 19 feast day is "Husband of Mary." Pope Pius XII later declared May 1 to be the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, to counteract the Communist May Day holiday.

A traditional prayer to St. Joseph

O Blessed St. Joseph, faithful guardian and protector of virgins, to whom God entrusted Jesus and Mary, I implore you by the love which you did bear them, to preserve me from every defilement of soul and body, that I may always serve them in holiness and purity of love. Amen.

Meet St. Joseph Parishioner Marybeth Hicks

continued from front cover

"Ultimately, the only thing that truly matters is the present moment and how we respond to the grace we are given in that present moment," Marybeth says. "I will never forget that one particular moment of grace God gave me. It changed my whole perspective."

Giving her time and talent to our parish provides Marybeth with an opportunity to show her love of Jesus through service. She says the parish feels like home, and fellow parishioners are like family to her.

"I want everyone to discover the love of Jesus," she says. "By serving, what better way to do that? I want to show my love and gratitude for Him by being His hands and His example of love and kindness. Often what runs in my mind is 'What would Jesus do?' In my own selfish way, it helps me to feel worthy of His love and grace."

The Healing Power of Confession:

A Guide to Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

he Sacrament of Penance, often known as Reconciliation or Confession, is a cornerstone of the Catholic faith. It provides us with an opportunity to seek forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God. This essential sacrament is a powerful way to renew our spiritual journey, and proper preparation is key to making a good confession.

Confession is more than just admitting our sins; it is a sacred encounter with God's mercy and love. Through this sacrament, we acknowledge our human frailty and seek God's forgiveness, allowing us to start anew with a clean slate. It's a moment to rekindle our relationship with Christ and grow spiritually.

Preparing for Confession

- Examination of Conscience: Before confession, take time for self-examination. Reflect on your actions, thoughts, and words since your last confession. A thorough examination of conscience helps identify the sins that need to be confessed.
- Sorrow for Sins: Genuine contrition is essential. Sorrow for sins should come from the heart and a desire for true repentance. Recognize the harm your sins may have caused and your intention to avoid them in the future.
- Make a List: Consider making a list of your sins to guide you during the confession. This list can help you remember all the sins you wish to confess, ensuring a thorough examination.

Approaching the Confessional

Entering the confessional can be intimidating but remember that the priest is there to guide you through the process with compassion and understanding.

• **Begin with the Sign of the Cross:** When you enter the confessional, start with the sign of the cross, invoking

- the Holy Trinity. This gesture signifies your intention to confess your sins.
- Confession: Begin your confession by stating your sins. Start with the most serious ones and then proceed to the others. Be honest, straightforward, and specific. For example, instead of saying, "I was mean to someone," specify the incident, such as, "I spoke hurtful words to a family member."
- Listen to the Priest: After you've confessed your sins, the priest may offer guidance or ask questions for clarification. Listen attentively and respond honestly.
- Accepting the Penance: The priest will assign a penance, which may involve prayers, acts of kindness, or other spiritual exercises. Accept this penance with a willing heart and a commitment to complete it.
- Act of Contrition: The priest will then ask you to recite an act of contrition, expressing your sorrow and commitment to avoid sin. You can use a traditional act of contrition or speak from your heart.

Receiving Absolution

After your act of contrition, the priest will absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. At this moment, your sins are forgiven, and you are reconciled with God.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a profound way to experience God's mercy and grace. Approach it with humility and a sincere desire for spiritual renewal. Through proper preparation and heartfelt confession, you can embrace this sacrament as a means of drawing closer to God and leading a life more in accordance with His teachings. Remember that the priest is there to assist you and be a conduit of God's mercy, and, due to the sacred seal of the sacrament, your confession will always remain absolutely confidential.



I'm Scared

By NATHAN FRANKART, Seminarian

eace of Christ to you!
Did I grab your attention with that headline above?
I promise this is not the literary version of clickbait
— this is an idea I've been thinking about for a while. I got some good feedback from my January edition and I want to try something new with these for this year. I want my titles to be based on emotions. Yes, my monthly contributions to the newsletter have now evolved to a point of yearly theming. Is this getting out of hand?

But anyway, back to the somewhat concerning title. Yes, I do find myself scared here in Lent. It has dawned on me over these last few months of internship at St. Ambrose, as well as my time in the military, to a rather blunt reality.

My life will never be normal. And that frightens me. No two days will be the same, no two interactions or relationships will be comparable. My life will be in flux and not within my real control, nowhere near as much as I ever thought or like it to be. Things outside of my control will dictate my decisions and force me into places and conversations I might not want to have. I am not my own master.

Sound familiar?

I'm learning a painful truth that has set in for many of us. We can't control our world. Try as we might, we often must surrender to the simple fact that we have little say in what takes place in our lives. Circumstance or other people's decision-making forces us into a response.

And yet even here is grace. Yet even here is a profound moment of encountering where our hearts lie. When we are scared or angry or frustrated, when we lose control, we fall back to our foundations. We go back to what we understand or feel comfortable in.

Do you return to Christ when you feel scared? When you're in a situation that you don't have control over, what do you fall back on? If you don't come back to rely on your relationship with God, perhaps that is something worth exploring for the rest of this season of Lent.

Do you return to Christ when you feel scared? When you're in a situation that you don't have control over, what do you fall back on? If you don't come back to rely on your relationship with God, perhaps that is something worth exploring for the rest of this season of Lent.



AD SPACE



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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 Events

First Friday Rosary

Friday, March 1 - 11 a.m., Nativity Church

First Saturday Rosary

Saturday, March 2 - 9 a.m., St. Joseph Church

Confirmation Rehearsal

Sunday, March 3-6 p.m. (following the 5 p.m. Mass), St. Joseph Church

Preschool Family Art Night

Monday, March 4 — 6 p.m., School MPR

Hospitality Tuesday

Tuesday, March 5 - 8:30 a.m. (following 8 a.m. Mass), Nativity Church and Hall

Altar and Rosary Society Meeting

Tuesday, March 5 - 6:30 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

Parent Club Meeting

Tuesday, March 5 − 7 p.m., School MPR

Men's Group

Tuesday, March 5-7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

Blood Drive

Thursday, March 7 - 4 p.m., St. Joseph Parking Lot

Confirmation

Saturday, March 9 - 10 a.m., St. Joseph Church

Pre-Baptism Class

Wednesday, March 13 - 7 p.m., St. Joseph School

No School

Friday, March 15

Palm Weaving

Friday, March 22 — 9:30 a.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, March 26 — 7 p.m., School MPR

No School- Spring Break

March 29-April 9

Holy Ground Youth Group

Sunday, March 3, 10, 17, 24 - 6 p.m., St. Joseph Church

RCIA meetings

Monday, March 4, 11, 18, 25 — 7 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

PSR classes

Wednesday, March 6, 13, 20 - 5:30 p.m., St. Joseph School (no class on March 27)

Vincentians Meeting

Thursday, March 7 and 21 - 9 a.m., St. Joseph Conference Room

Dinner on the Go

Tuesday, March 12 and 19 - 5 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays in March - 9:30 a.m., Nativity Parish Hall