



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH

## NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**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

**OCTOBER 2024**

## MEET ST. JOSEPH'S PARISHIONER **Brenda Yovan** *Stepping Forth to Serve With a Steward's Heart*



*Brenda Yovan enjoys being involved with parish life in a host of ways.*

**B**renda Yovan joined St. Joseph Parish about two years ago and it didn't take her long to jump in and get involved. She picked up a copy of the parish ministry catalog and considered ministries that matched her skills and interest. She is involved in several ministries.

"I thought getting involved would be a good way to get to know more people," Brenda says.

Brenda serves as a sacristan, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for Mass and the homebound, helps with parish mailings, and is a member of the Altar Rosary Society and Mary's Way of the Cross. In addition, she teaches Parish School of Religion for second grade.

"I love teaching the kids and sharing my faith with them," she says. "I really missed working with the kids since retiring from teaching. PSR is a blessing from God, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve Him."

Since joining St. Joseph Parish and being involved her life has been transformed. She believes it happened through God and her fellow parishioners at St. Joseph Parish and Nativity of the BVM Parish. She found that people always greeted you as you entered and left the church and everyone was so friendly.

"Suddenly going to Mass took on a new meaning," she says. "I found Jesus! I began to embrace God's love and wanted to be at Mass all the time. Now I participate in Mass and no longer just go through the motions but have become more attentive at Mass."

*continued on page 5*



# LIVING STEWARDSHIP THROUGH PARISH HOSPITALITY MINISTRIES: *A Gift of Time and Talents*

**S**tewardship is not just a one-time act—it's a way of life for Catholics. It's about recognizing that everything we have comes from God and using our time, talents, and treasure to serve Him and others. One powerful way to live out this calling is by actively participating in parish hospitality ministries, serving as ushers, greeters, and lectors during the Mass. These roles not only enhance the Mass experience but also allow us to share our gifts with our parish community.

## **Ushers: The Guardians of Order**

Ushers play a crucial role in maintaining a sense of order and reverence during the Mass. Their responsibilities go beyond seating parishioners—they are stewards of the worship space. By becoming an usher, you can live out stewardship in the following ways:

**Creating a Welcoming Environment:** Ushers ensure that parishioners feel welcome and comfortable. Their friendly demeanor sets the tone for the entire congregation and helps newcomers feel at home.

**Supporting the Celebrants:** Ushers assist the priest and other liturgical ministers, making sure that the Mass flows smoothly. Their dedication contributes to a seamless and uplifting worship experience.

**Strengthening Community:** Serving as an usher fosters a strong sense of community. It's an opportunity to connect with fellow parishioners and deepen your bonds with the Church.

## **Greeters: The Face of Hospitality**

Greeters are often the first point of contact for parishioners and newcomers. Their warm and friendly welcome can make a significant impact. By taking on this role, you can live out stewardship by:

**Sharing the Love of Christ:** As a greeter, you embody Christ's love through your warm greetings and friendly demeanor. Your actions can bring joy and comfort to those who enter the Church.

**Nurturing a Sense of Belonging:** A welcoming environment helps people feel they belong to a caring and loving community. This can lead to more active participation and involvement in parish life.

## **Lectors: The Proclaimers of the Word**

Lectors have a unique and profound responsibility in the Mass. They bring the Word of God to life through their readings. Becoming a lector allows you to live out stewardship by:

**Sharing the Scriptures:** Proclaiming the Word is a sacred duty, and lectors have the privilege of bringing the teachings of Christ to life. This act of service inspires reflection and deepens understanding among the congregation.

**Enhancing Spiritual Growth:** Lectors deepen their own understanding of Scripture and spiritual growth as they prepare and share God's message. It is a personal journey that enriches the lives of others as well.

Engaging in parish hospitality ministries is a fulfilling way to live out stewardship as a way of life. By sharing your time and talents as ushers, greeters, and lectors, you enhance the Mass experience for yourself, your family, and your fellow parishioners. Your welcoming presence, organizational skills, and passionate proclamation of the Word contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive parish community, fostering spiritual growth and a stronger sense of belonging. Through these ministries, you demonstrate your commitment to living a life of stewardship, embracing the call to serve God and His people.

A Letter from Our Pastor



## HOW CAN I GIVE TODAY?

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

**I**n these challenging times, starting each day with the question, “How can I give today?” can make a big difference. Here are ten ways to share your Time, Talent, and Treasure with family, parish, community, and even yourself:

1. **Give Encouragement:** Many are struggling with the ever-changing “new normal.” Encouragement helps everyone stay positive and make good decisions.
2. **Give Gratitude:** Be grateful to God, family, friends, and those helping us through the unsettling times that we live in. Express your gratitude, perhaps with a hand-written note.
3. **Forgive Others:** Let go of hurt and resentment. Pray for those who have wronged you and seek to mend relationships.
4. **Forgive Yourself:** Release guilt from past mistakes. If God and others forgive you, you should forgive yourself too.
5. **Give Volunteer Time:** Many need help, and volunteering can make life better for others and help you make new friends.
6. **Give Financial Support:** Charities and our Church need help managing budgets during these uncertain

times. Trust in God’s provision and see the good your generosity brings.

7. **Give Self-Care:** Balance exercise, healthy meals, rest, and social connections. Enjoy nature and stay safe to be your best self for others.
8. **Listen to God:** Trust that God has words of encouragement and direction for you. Pray not just by speaking, but also by listening.
9. **Offer Petitionary Prayer:** Pray for others, trusting in God’s plan. Prayer connects us with those we pray for and those who join us in prayer.
10. **Desire to Give:** Start each day with the question, “How can I give today?” Build a spirit of dedication and joy in giving.

Let us trust in the joy of giving as we move forward by embracing each day and its opportunities together.

Gratefully in Christ,

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

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,  
Pastor



# Parish School Students Share in Heartfelt Tribute to **Blessed Carlo Acutis**

## *School Chapel Dedicated to This Patron of Youth and Computers*

**O**n April 14, 2023, our Saint Joseph Parish School paid a heartfelt tribute to Blessed Carlo Acutis by dedicating the school chapel to him. The students, after delving into his inspiring life story, adorned the chapel with artwork depicting Carlo and other religious items. Their intention was to create a sacred space for adoration, fostering a serene environment where students could devoutly adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This thoughtful preparation reflected the school community's deep reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and their admiration for the young role model found in Blessed Carlo Acutis.

Carlo Acutis, a remarkable source of inspiration, passed away at the age of 15 after a battle with leukemia. Before his illness, he enjoyed playing video games, soccer, spending time with friends, and demonstrated exceptional dedication to the Blessed Sacrament. His profound love for the Eucharist motivated him to create a website that showcased numerous Eucharistic miracles from around the world.

Following the dedication ceremony, the students actively engaged in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, maintaining this practice throughout the school year.

Subsequently, they had the unique opportunity to contribute to the Parish Eucharistic Revival, hosting the Eucharistic miracles cataloged by Carlo Acutis on his website. The parish revival proved to be an inspiring event, leaving a lasting impact on both organizers and attendees.

During the Miracles Exhibition, St. Joseph Social Hall was transformed with the addition of posters and displays showcasing the miracles of the Eucharist, creating a captivating atmosphere for a two-week duration. This event offered visitors a valuable opportunity to explore and strengthen their connection to the Eucharist.

As an integral part of the parish revival, two days of adoration took place — one at Nativity Church and another at St. Joseph Church. These days of adoration were meaningful and spiritually enriching, providing attendees with a chance for deep reflection and connection with the Blessed Sacrament. Each day of adoration concluded on a serene note with an evening dedicated to prayer and music.

Additionally, St. Joseph Church featured guest speaker Trapper Jack, who delivered a presentation entitled “The Eucharist, A Challenging Truth to Swallow.” His presentation left a lasting impression, resonating powerfully with everyone in attendance.



*After delving into Carlo Acutis' inspiring life story, students adorned the chapel with artwork depicting Carlo and other religious items. Their intention was to create a sacred space for adoration, fostering a serene environment where students could devoutly adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.*

**For more information about these miracles, visit the Carlo Acutis website at [www.miracolieucaaristici.org/en/Liste/list.html](http://www.miracolieucaaristici.org/en/Liste/list.html).**

## Questions and Answers About Our *Annual Stewardship Renewal*

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

### How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

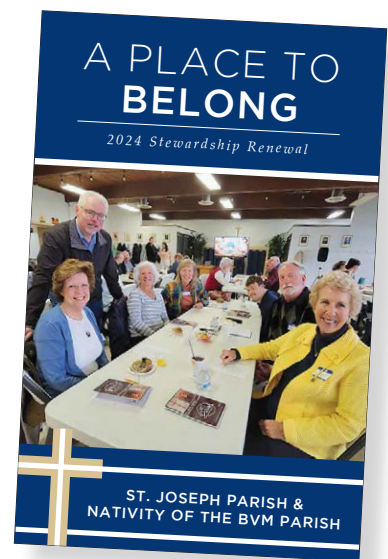
**Time Section:** Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to

check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

**Talent Section:** You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

**Treasure Section:** Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to your parish.

*Be sure to participate in the Stewardship Renewal and return your Commitment Card to the parish!*



*Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.*

## Meet St. Joseph's Parishioner Brenda Yovan *continued from front cover*

As Brenda continues to grow in her faith through the special people that God has placed in her life, she feels gratitude that God is watching over her throughout the day.

"By being involved, I feel I'm giving back to God for the gifts He has given me," Brenda says. "He has blessed me in so many ways."

Choosing a favorite ministry is hard for her because she truly loves them all, but if she had to choose one, she feels being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion — sharing Christ with others — is closest to her heart.

She feels that as people come forward to receive Holy Communion, she can look into their eyes and smile saying, "the Body of Christ," it brings her great joy knowing that she is giving the best gift of all times — Jesus.

In her free time, Brenda enjoys yoga, walking, and going to the gym. She also likes to read and spend time with friends and family.

She hopes others will search their heart to see how God is calling them to use their time, talent, and treasure to help others.

*"Suddenly going to Mass took on a new meaning. I found Jesus! I began to embrace God's love and wanted to be at Mass all the time. Now I participate in Mass and no longer just go through the motions but have become more attentive at Mass." — Brenda Yovan*



## *Church Environment Ministry* Joyfully Brings the Liturgical Seasons to Life in Our Parishes

**T**he architecture of a church is intended to draw our hearts and minds towards Christ in the Eucharist and heavenward in prayer. As the liturgical year cycles from Advent and Christmas, through Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter, and the great feasts and solemnities throughout the year, we can enter even more deeply into prayer when our senses draw us into the prayer experience. The Church Environment Ministry takes the inspiring architecture and trims it with beauty and a reminder of each season.

Sue Cotton leads the Church Environment Ministry at St. Joseph and with the help of volunteers, designs and decorates the church for each changing season, both natural and liturgical.

“I enjoy being part of this creative side of parish life because I feel the Holy Spirit working through my heart and hands,” Sue says. “I was involved in making altar cloths and banners way back in high school. And I LOVE working with others to share this joy. It renews my spirit.”

The Church Environment Ministry adds beauty throughout the year, but Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter are the seasons when their work has the most impact. By bringing in the beautiful purples, they help us enter into the meditative and penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. The greenery during the winter is a beautiful reminder of the gifts God gives us through nature. Sue says that while they often return to the tried and true, they also try to incorporate new and fresh ideas each year.

“We try to have a group meeting for Advent and Christmas and then for Lent and Easter, to share ideas or visions from travels that we have liked when visiting other churches,” Sue says.

When Sue sends out the call for help, she usually has about eight or 10 volunteers show up to help decorate. Volunteers arrange plants and flowers in the church, put hangings on the sconces, and change out the altar cloth. The work requires some light lifting. The ministry also

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# ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY

decorates with some items that have been gifted over the years, such as manger figures, outdoor Christmas statues, and autumn decorations.

“Our goal is to create an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting for parishioners throughout the liturgical seasons,” Sue says. “We complete this work behind the scenes and welcome new ideas.”

For those of us in the pew, entering the freshly decorated church can have a big impact and help us to set aside our daily cares while we enter into prayer.

“We pray that the church decor will enhance everyone’s spiritual experience in God’s house and bring us closer to our Lord,” Sue says.

The Church Environment Ministry relies on volunteers for inspiration and manpower. Sue is looking for a co-leader for the St. Joseph ministry.

*“Our goal is to create an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting for parishioners throughout the liturgical seasons. We complete this work behind the scenes and welcome new ideas.”*

— Sue Cotton

**To get involved, St. Joseph parishioners can contact Sue Cotton at 440-986-1725 or [sue.cotton.44001@gmail.com](mailto:sue.cotton.44001@gmail.com). Nativity parishioners can contact Marrienne Pellittieri at 440-984-2875 or [mpellittieri@yahoo.com](mailto:mpellittieri@yahoo.com).**



*Nativity Parish, decorated with great care*



*(From left) Sue Cotton, Laurie Pelusi, Laura Bromagen, Suzanne Strader, Cathy Sekletar, Kathy Bennett, and Mary Lou Nowak*

## The Stewardship of

# ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

**H**e was born as Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone in Assisi, Italy, in 1181 or 1182 and died at the age of 44 in 1226. In spite of his given name, his father was traveling in France at the time of his birth, so he opted to call him Francesco, which means “the Frenchman.”

We, of course, know him as St. Francis of Assisi, whose feast day we celebrate on Oct. 4. To say that he is among the most revered of our Catholic saints would be an understatement. Our Catholic saints provide us examples of what it means to be a steward, but perhaps none more than St. Francis of Assisi.

We were reminded of that fact when our Holy Father chose the name Francis. The pope explained his choice in this way: “For me he [Francis] is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and safeguards Creation. He is a man who gives us this spirit of peace.” From the time he was a boy, Francis recognized that he was gifted — he also understood that he needed to put his gifts at the service of God and others. One of his followers, Brother Leo, was fond of telling that he could hear Francis praying at night, and that St. Francis used the same prayer over and over. It was, “Oh God, Who are You, and who am I?”

Striving to come to an understanding of his relationship with God, and his role as a disciple of the Lord, St. Francis tried to rid himself of all the things that might prevent him from discovering his role in the Kingdom. Early on, he embraced poverty as a way of life. By eschewing possessions, Francis maintained that his voluntary poverty gave him freedom, freedom from owing anyone other than God, and thus giving him the complete freedom to serve God.

We speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship — Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. The life St. Francis embraced and lived can almost be defined by those pillars. Saint Francis and the community he founded were a “mendicant” order which comes from the Latin word *mendicare*, meaning to beg. They gave up the right to own any possessions, depending completely upon God’s providence and the alms of the faithful. His example



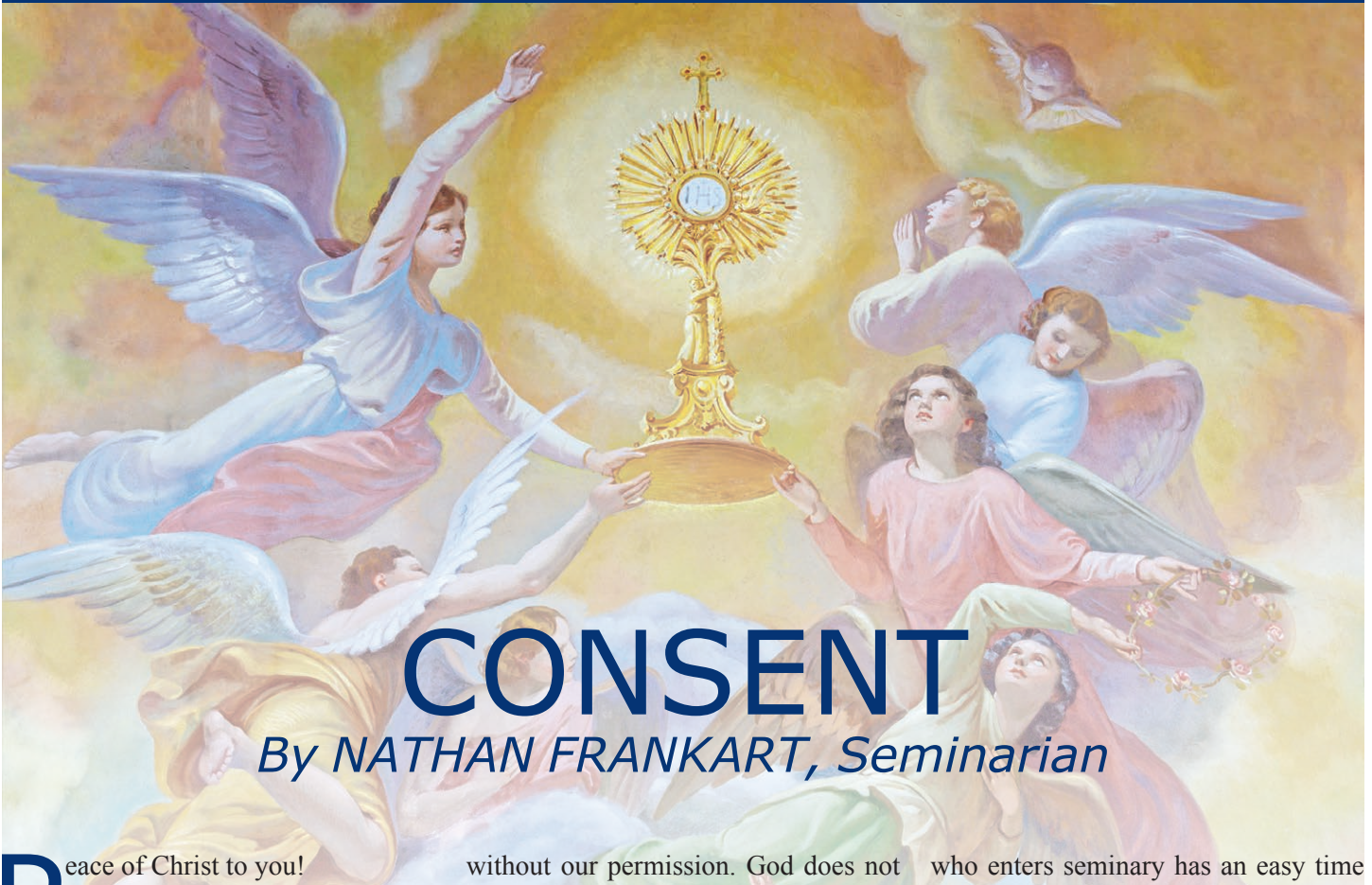
coerces us to ask, “Are there possessions that restrict us, that hinder our ability to be a disciple?”

St. Francis dedicated his entire life to imitating the life of Christ and to carrying out the work of the Lord as he, Francis, perceived Christ would do it. Of course, St. Francis had ultimate love of the Eucharist, and great respect for the priests who carried out this sacrament.

Francis was a steward of all Creation. He believed that nature and what it represented was the “mirror of God.” Most representations we see of Francis depict him with animals. He called all creatures his “sisters” and “brothers.” As a steward and a disciple of Christ, St. Francis viewed all people with love and respect. He said, “How can I be a friend of Christ if I do not cherish those for whom Christ died?”

It is difficult to assess all the ways that St. Francis has influenced our faith and our practice of it. His desire to be Christ-like provides a stewardship example to us that makes clear to us how to move toward holiness. As he once humbly said, “If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.”





## CONSENT

*By NATHAN FRANKART, Seminarian*

**P**ease of Christ to you!  
Following the Homily at the Ordination Mass, the bishop moves to the front of the sanctuary as those to be ordained to the office of deacon stand. The bishop questions them with these words: “Dear sons, before you enter the order of the diaconate, you must declare before the people your intention to undertake this office. Do you resolve to be consecrated for the Church’s ministry by the laying on of my hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit?”

“I do.”

This is the beginning of the promises made towards the diaconate, a question of consent. It may appear performative or superficial, but it highlights a key spiritual reality. Nothing is done

without our permission. God does not desire us to be controlled, manipulated, or compelled into service without our constant, willingness, and expressed desire. This is one of the many reasons why liturgies, such as the Mass, include so many calls and responses — it is preparing our hearts and minds to receive what we are already giving God permission to do, transform us.

In many ways, I have expressed a desire to seek ordination throughout my many years here at seminary. Some of you have been witnesses to the ways that calling has manifested itself. Most of the time, it came with hopeful expectation, great enthusiasm, and joy. At other moments, there are struggles and grappling to do with the reality of this decision. No person

who enters seminary has an easy time moving forward in it, and no one who moves into ordination does not feel the stress and anxiety of the change they are undergoing. Without Christ’s sustaining love and grace, there is no way that I can do this.

This is why the consecration to the Church’s ministry comes through the gift of the Holy Spirit. For it is the Spirit that convicts all of us in our mission of discipleship and witness. My consent is not based solely on what I want, but where the Spirit guides me too. And in my years of praying and seeking, I have found the Spirit guides me on to the hopeful end of my formation, ending at the altar of the Lamb in the ordained ministries of the Church.

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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.

## Upcoming Activities and Events

### Hospitality Tuesday

Tuesday, Oct. 1 — 8:30 a.m., Nativity Church (following 8 a.m. Mass)

### Altar and Rosary Meeting

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

### First Friday Rosary

Friday, Oct. 4 — 11 a.m., Nativity Church, refreshments to follow in the hall

### First Saturday Rosary

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

### Stewardship Renewal Weekend

Saturday, Oct. 5 and Sunday Oct. 6, at All Masses

### Wonderful Women

Tuesday, Oct. 8 — 7 p.m.

### No School

Friday, Oct. 11 — Teacher Personal Development Day

### Candlelight Rosary

Tuesday, Oct. 15 — 7 p.m., Nativity Parish

### Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 22 — 7 p.m., School MPR

### AM1260 the Rock Pray for Priesthood

Friday, Oct. 25 — 1 p.m., St. Joseph Church

### Men's Group

Tuesday, Oct. 1 and 15 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

### Sacred Sisters Prayer and Study Group

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 — 6:30 p.m., O.S.E. Community Center

### Vincentians Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 3, 17, and 31 — 9 a.m., St. Joseph Conference Room

### OCIA (formerly RCIA)

Monday, Oct. 7, 14, 21, and 28 — 7 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

### Grief Recovery Program

Monday, Oct. 7, 14, 21, and 28 — 3:30 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

### Holy Ground Youth Group

Sunday, Oct. 13 and 27 — 6 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall (Event begins with 5 p.m. Mass — meet near the choir prior to Mass)

### Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays in October — 9:30 a.m., Nativity Parish Hall