



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH

## NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**APRIL 2025**

## MEET ST. JOSEPH'S Joy Rivera

### *Enjoying Every Opportunity to Serve God and Our Community*

Joy Rivera truly feels blessed to be a part of the St. Joseph community. Along with her husband and two children, she has enjoyed the vibrancy of the parish and the fact that there are so many children. Joy keeps busy in her paid roles at the parish, which includes serving as our assistant music director, funeral coordinator, and wedding coordinator. She is also a member of the Wonderful Women group. In addition, Joy and her daughter have participated in Christina Dupré's *The Answer* musical. This summer, Joy will coordinate Vacation Bible School and looks forward to this opportunity.

"Music has always played a huge role in my life, and I am so happy to get to make music as often as I do, especially music that praises God," Joy says. "Whether it is a weekend Mass, school Mass, funeral Mass, or wedding Mass, I genuinely love getting to use my God-given talents to help make those Masses special, personal, and beautiful."

Joy's musical talents were developed here at St. Joseph Parish, where she spent much of her childhood. She was very involved as a child and teen.

In addition, Joy is a certified music therapist and does that working at various places throughout the week.

"I have been practicing music therapy for 11 years now, and in those 11 years, more now than ever, my clients request to hear Christian music," Joy says. "I feel more than qualified to



*Joy Rivera truly feels blessed to be a part of the St. Joseph community.*

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## Meet St. Joseph's Joy Rivera *continued from front cover*

provide them with their preferred Christian music, and while I am providing them with therapy, I am also blessed to provide them with ministry.”

Another part of Joy's role she most enjoys is working with people.

“I truly love being around people, getting to know people, working with people, and especially making music with them,” she says.

Joy meets with those who have lost a loved one to help plan the funeral. She admits this can be emotionally difficult — but she has experienced losses and understands the importance of having people around to listen, and she feels blessed to offer that to people. Joy also helps people plan their wedding liturgies, and she most enjoys this part of her job.

“I have gotten to meet with many couples and helped them prepare their liturgies for their big day,” she says. “I also really enjoy the bonus of getting to witness so many weddings.”

Before coming to St. Joseph Parish, Joy was the music director at St. Francis Xavier Cabrini. She loved her time there but had a smaller group of musicians to work with. She enjoys the number of people she works with here at St. Joseph Parish.

“One person singing and playing a Mass can be wonderful,” she says. “But when a couple of musicians and vocalists come

together, you get such a rich sound and harmonies that one person simply can't achieve alone.”

The music ministers have become a family, and Joy appreciates this part of her role. Joy also loves working with the school students to prepare for their school Masses and helping with the youth choir.

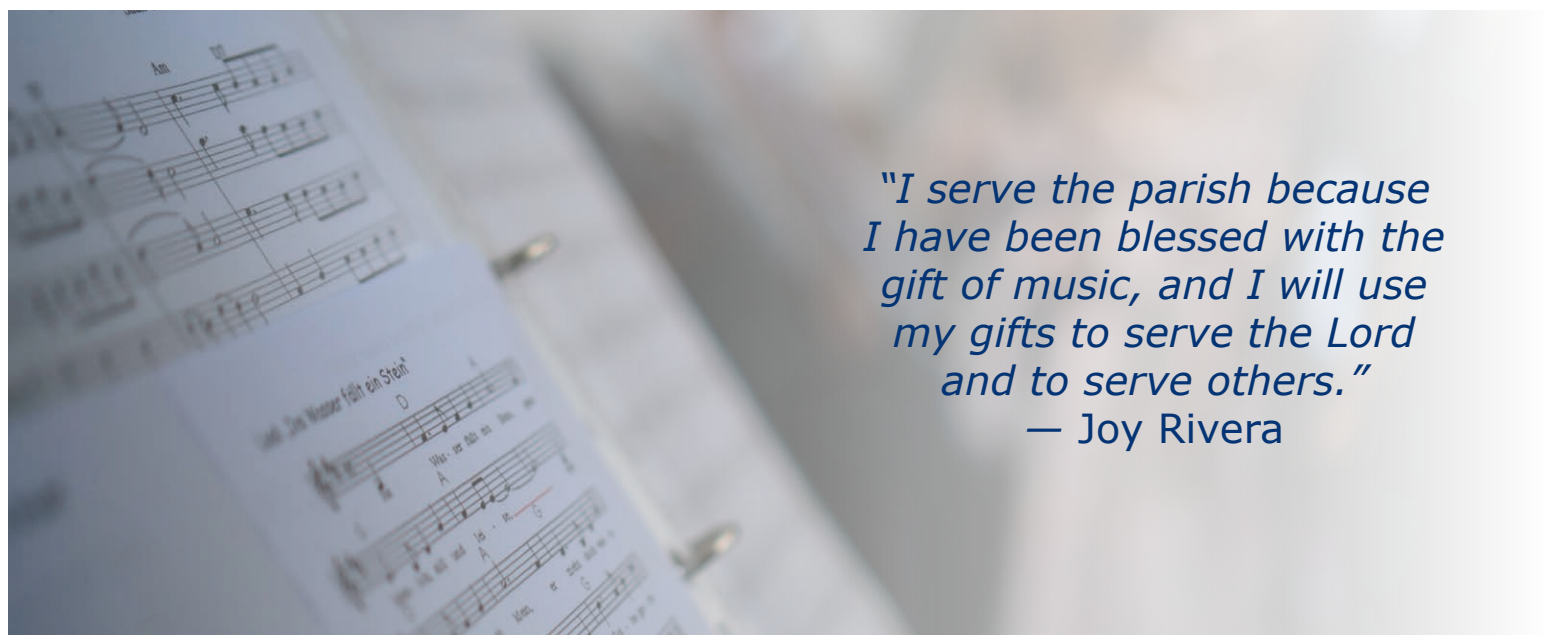
Joy looks forward to many more years of serving here at St. Joseph. She feels blessed by her gifts and wants to share them.

“I serve the parish because I have been blessed with the gift of music, and I will use my gifts to serve the Lord and to serve others,” Joy says. “As our stewardship prayer mentions, ‘it is from Your hand that we have received all that we have and are and will be... You call us to be stewards of Your abundance... Help us to use our gifts wisely and teach us to share them.’ I feel that this is the best way for me to be a steward of God's grace.”

This role has been such a blessing to Joy.

“I am very thankful to Fr. Tim and Christina Dupré for giving me the opportunity to come back to my home and do what I love, making music for the Lord in my home parish,” she says. “It's a full-circle moment for me because this is where I got my foundation for music ministry.”

In her free time, Joy enjoys reading, gardening, and bowling. She and her family also love the Cleveland sports teams.



*“I serve the parish because I have been blessed with the gift of music, and I will use my gifts to serve the Lord and to serve others.”*  
— Joy Rivera

A Letter from Our Pastor

## *Celebrating Easter* with Gratitude



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

**E**aster Sunday falls on April 20 this year, a date determined centuries ago using a fascinating formula tied to the spring equinox and the phases of the moon. While the specifics can be complex, most of us simply check the liturgical calendar! What matters most is the joy we feel as we gather to celebrate Christ's Resurrection.

This Easter also brings a noticeable change from the winter months: the days are longer, and the world feels brighter. Interestingly, the word "Lent" is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to lengthen," referring to the lengthening of daylight during spring. Even though most of us no longer live in agricultural settings, we share the joy of creation coming back to life after the stillness of winter.

But make no mistake. Easter is not merely a celebration of spring. It is first and foremost a proclamation of the event that changed the course of history: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Almost 2,000 years ago, during the Jewish Passover, Jesus offered His life on the cross and rose on the third day, conquering sin and death for all time. This is the heart of our faith and the reason we rejoice.

At the same time, Easter reminds us of the blessings God pours into our lives, both spiritual and material. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, teaches that a Christian steward is someone who "receives God's gifts gratefully." These gifts include not only our faith and hope of eternal life but also the beauty of creation, the relationships we cherish, and the talents and resources entrusted to us.

As we celebrate this Easter season, let us take time to reflect on all that God has given us. Gratitude is the first step toward living as faithful stewards. When we acknowledge our blessings and use them for God's glory and the good of others, we participate in building His Kingdom here on earth.

May this Easter season be a time of joy, gratitude, and renewal for you and your families and all those you love. Together, let us give thanks for Christ's victory over death and for the beauty of new life, both in nature and in our hearts.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,  
Pastor



# Celebrating the Triduum as a Family

## *Parishioners Tom and Margie Januzzi Reflect on the Joys of Honoring the Summit of Our Faith*

**I**t's one of the most significant seasons for Christians worldwide — the celebration of Our Lord's victory over death itself. The Triduum marks the three days leading up to Easter, and each day has special liturgical celebrations that focus on Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. Tom and Margie Januzzi, married for 43 years and longtime devotees to the Mass, share their experience honoring this most sacred time.

Tom and Margie try to attend as many of the special liturgies as they can, noting that some seasons of life have been more challenging than others.

"We had four daughters in less than six years," Margie says. "When you have young kids, it's certainly harder to concentrate on the Mass! But now we can concentrate a bit more."

Tom recalls how their children eventually grew into appreciating the Triduum liturgies and even showed interest in participating.

"Around the ages of 7 through 9 they began to learn what it meant to be reverent," he says. "They might not have admitted it, but I think they liked it. Sometimes our kids even volunteered to have their feet washed



*Tom and Margie Januzzi have been married for 43 years and are longtime devotees to the Mass.*

on Holy Thursday."

Tom points out that making space for the Triduum has become more challenging for the faithful in general over the years as society has changed, but he says it is still possible to honor the sacred time individually.

"Good Friday isn't what it used to be

like when I was growing up," Tom says. "First of all, we didn't have school. Mom would call us in around noon, she would close the drapes, and we sat in silence and did nothing until 3 p.m. Now as an adult, I try to do something reverent on my own between noon and 3 p.m., if I have the opportunity. Margie and I almost always make the Mass on Holy Thursday and the Veneration on Good Friday, unless there is a family commitment."

One of the many aspects of the Triduum that Tom appreciates is how the sequence of the Triduum lines up beautifully with the Mysteries of the Rosary.

"We've prayed the Rosary daily for many years," he says. "I've noticed that the Luminous Mysteries on Thursday, which includes the Institution of the Eucharist, leads right into the Sorrowful Mysteries on Friday. And the Triduum expands that experience, so you feel like you are living and participating in it. The Rosary is coming alive — you're not just thinking about it."

Even though the special liturgies of the Triduum are not Holy Days of Obligation, Tom encourages others to attend if they are able, because it's a deeper and more tangible way to remember Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

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*"If you make the effort, God will make sure you will have the time to do everything you need to do. It truly is a wonderful time."*

*— Tom Januzzi*

## Celebrating the Triduum as a Family *continued from page 4*

“It’s relaxing to go to church on those days,” Tom says. “It’s different, but a good different. As an adult, I look forward to it because I understand the meaning. It’s not ‘I have to go,’ it’s ‘I get to go.’ It’s an opportunity to focus on Jesus’ last days, and what He did for us. Of course, we can do that in our daily prayers and in daily Mass, but the Triduum is specifically set aside to focus on these events. Once you participate, you may find that you like it, and then it becomes a tradition.”

Margie sums up the importance of these three days.

“It’s such a powerful part of our religion,” she says. “It’s the ‘meat’ behind everything.”

Tom also believes that God is pleased when His children set aside time to celebrate the Triduum, and in turn, He gives us peace.

“Consider it sort of like a family function,” Tom says. “The Church is our second family. I’ve never been to a parish function where I considered it a waste of time. If you make the effort, God will make sure you will have the time to do everything you need to do. It truly is a wonderful time.”

## *Holy Week Schedule*

### **Sunday, April 13**

#### **Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion**

4 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass, at St. Joseph Church  
5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass, at Nativity BVM Church  
8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 5 p.m., at St. Joseph Church

### **Monday, April 14**

9 a.m. Mass of Holy Week, at St. Joseph Church

### **Tuesday, April 15**

8 a.m. Mass of Holy Week, at Nativity BVM Church  
7 p.m. Chrism Mass, at St. John Cathedral Church

### **EASTER TRIDUUM**

### **Thursday, April 17**

#### **Holy Thursday at Nativity BVM 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, April 18**

#### **Good Friday at St. Joseph Church**

12 Noon Solemn Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion — Confessions to follow until 3 p.m.  
7 p.m. Taizé Stations of the Cross

### **Saturday, April 19**

#### **Holy Saturday at St. Joseph Church**

10:45 a.m. Blessing of Easter Food — Confessions from 11 a.m. to 12 Noon  
9 p.m. Easter Vigil of the Lord’s Resurrection

### **Sunday, April 20 Easter Sunday**

8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses of Easter Sunday at St. Joseph Church. Note: There will be no 5 p.m. Mass.  
10 a.m. Mass of Easter Sunday at Nativity BVM Church



## *Gardeners Ministry* Shares Beauty of God's Creation in Our Parish Communities

**T**he beauty of nature is, for many people, a place where they can go to encounter God. Here in our parish communities, we have the blessing of well-maintained landscaping and gardens, providing valuable opportunities for appreciation of the beauty of God's creations. The grounds at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary didn't always have the appeal they do now. Around 25 years ago, Carol Zellmer took notice of what was lacking in the exterior landscape of the parish — and the seeds were planted for the Gardeners Ministry at Nativity.

"It looked like a factory, with no trees or shrubs," Carol says. "And I love gardening. So I worked out a three-phase plan."

Carol planned to take care of the area in front of the church first, then the trees, followed by the installation of a sitting area. Having encouraged fellow parishioners to donate by purchasing a tree or shrub, she quickly had enough funds for the entire project.

"I kept maintaining from there," Carol says.

While she has always enjoyed flowers and gardening, over the last 25 years, Carol has learned a lot through her efforts in maintaining the grounds and taking on new projects. Among the Gardeners Ministry's responsibilities are mowing, trimming, weeding, and planting annual flowers and baskets. There is also lighting and a watering system that must be monitored. The ministry also hires and supervises a lawn service to trim shrubs and spread mulch once a year.

The Gardeners Ministry members keep busy year-round.

"There is always something to do!" Carol says. "We currently have three of us that are there most weeks and a few that I can call when I need more help. It would not succeed without the volunteers!"

While it takes time and effort to maintain the church grounds, Carol appreciates the opportunity to serve her parish community so that others may enjoy it.

"I don't mind hard work," she says. "But I enjoy it when I step back and see how beautiful the church looks. I think parishioners are proud when they come to church and they have complimented the grounds. That's all I'm really looking for."

Carol is most proud of the Reflection Garden she planned and installed at the back side of the church. Around 10 years ago, she decided she wanted to have a place for people to come and sit, pray, and reflect. She worked with a local landscaping designer to plan out shrubs and trees, as well as flowers for the garden. These plans also ensured there would be flowers for every season of the year, so there is always something in bloom.

The garden was truly a parish effort — one parishioner paid for the entire shrubs and trees, while other parishioners also did the concrete work for the garden.

"It really is beautiful," Carol says. "People will sit there and pray the Rosary."

At St. Joseph Parish, Sherryl and Jim Saccardi focus on beautifying the parish grounds, which includes planting flowers, cleaning up church grounds, and weeding. The ministry holds

# ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY

two clean-up sessions per year — one in the fall and one in the springtime. Anyone is welcome to come help out, regardless if they are a ministry member or not. Last fall, for example, the Men's Group came and helped with the clean-up while enjoying coffee and donuts as they worked. The Saccardis are grateful to anyone who can lend a helping hand to the ministry, and they post the clean-ups in the bulletins during those seasons, with a few options for parishioners to choose from.

**To be a part of the Gardeners Ministry,  
contact Jim Saccardi (St. Joseph) at  
614-929-6044 or [jrsaccardi@yahoo.com](mailto:jrsaccardi@yahoo.com);  
contact Carol Zellmer (Nativity) at  
440-984-2970 or [dmk0259@centurytel.net](mailto:dmk0259@centurytel.net).**



*The Schuster family helping out on a spring clean-up day*



*The parish grounds of Nativity are maintained with great care.*



# CELEBRATING THE *2025 Jubilee Year*

## in the Catholic Church

*Pope Francis Declares Theme, "Pilgrims of Hope"*

The Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee Year, themed "Pilgrims of Hope," offers Catholics worldwide a profound opportunity to deepen their faith and rekindle their relationship with Christ. A Jubilee Year, rooted in the biblical tradition of restoration and renewal, is a special time set aside by the Church to foster spiritual growth, encourage reconciliation, and celebrate God's abundant mercy. Declared by Pope Francis, this Holy Year is an invitation for all Catholics to embrace hope as a guiding light in their spiritual journey.

At the heart of the Jubilee Year are pilgrimages, particularly to Rome, where the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica will be opened as a symbol of God's grace. Walking through the Holy Door signifies a passage into a renewed life with Christ. In his apostolic letter introducing the Jubilee, Pope Francis emphasizes the need for hope in a world marked by challenges, encouraging the faithful to rediscover their role as witnesses of Christ's love and mercy.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) echoes this sentiment, urging American Catholics to see the Jubilee Year as an opportunity for renewal and a deeper commitment to discipleship. The bishops have outlined several ways for Catholics to participate in the Jubilee, including pilgrimages to designated shrines across the United States, special liturgical celebrations, and communal acts of prayer and service. The USCCB also encourages parishes to focus on

Eucharistic devotion, as the Jubilee aligns with the National Eucharistic Revival, emphasizing the transformative power of the Eucharist in Catholic life.

Special events and devotions will highlight the year. Many dioceses will host local pilgrimages, mission retreats, and reconciliation services to inspire spiritual renewal. Parishes are encouraged to organize events fostering community and prayer, such as Eucharistic processions, adoration, and acts of charity. These activities aim to remind the faithful of their call to stewardship and their role in building up the Body of Christ.

Catholics across the United States can celebrate the Jubilee Year in their daily lives by embracing discipleship and stewardship. Engaging in regular prayer, receiving the sacraments, and participating in acts of service and charity can deepen their connection to Christ. Families might consider creating home altars, praying the rosary together, or reading Scripture to mark this holy time. Small groups or parish ministries can focus on themes of hope and renewal through study and discussion.

Ultimately, the 2025 Jubilee Year is a call for all Catholics to walk as "Pilgrims of Hope" — to rediscover the joy of the Gospel, renew their faith, and strengthen their commitment to Christ. By participating in the Jubilee's spiritual and communal opportunities, the faithful can grow closer to God and embrace their mission as stewards of His hope in the world.

**For more information on Jubilee 2025, visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Jubilee page at [www.usccb.org/jubilee2025](http://www.usccb.org/jubilee2025)**





## *Our Stewardship Response to the Eucharist,*



## *God's Ultimate Gift*

The Eucharist, often referred to as the “Source and Summit of the Christian life” in Catholic theology, stands as the ultimate gift from God to His people. It is in this sacred sacrament that Catholics partake in the Real Presence of Christ, an encounter that nourishes our souls and strengthens our faith. In light of this profound gift, stewardship emerges as the natural response to God’s boundless love.

Stewardship is not merely a call to manage our resources wisely; it is a way of life, a spiritual path that reflects our gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist and our commitment to live in accordance with its transformative power.

The Eucharist, at its core, is a divine act of selflessness. In the Last Supper, Jesus took ordinary bread and wine and offered them as His Body and Blood to His disciples. This selfless act, which is mirrored in His ultimate sacrifice on the cross, serves as an enduring reminder of the depth of God’s love for humanity. In response, stewardship compels us to emulate this selflessness. By recognizing that all we have ultimately belongs to God, we are called to use our resources, time, and talents to serve others selflessly. Stewardship, then, is a living testament to the selfless love embodied in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist fosters a deep sense of community among Catholics. As we partake in the Body and Blood of Christ, we become part of a global and timeless family of believers. This sense of community, born in the Eucharist, parallels the essence of stewardship. Stewardship is not a solitary endeavor, but a collective one. It calls us to work together, to join hands with our fellow Catholics and, indeed, all people of goodwill, to address the needs of our communities. In this spirit of

togetherness, we seek to build God’s kingdom on earth, just as we share in the divine communion of the Eucharist.

Moreover, the Eucharist teaches us to be grateful. When we approach the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we do so in an attitude of profound thanksgiving. Stewardship, as an expression of gratitude, is our way of giving back to God for the countless blessings we have received. We recognize that all we have, whether it’s material wealth, skills, or time, are gifts from God. In gratitude, we commit to using these gifts wisely and for the betterment of others.

The Eucharist is a celebration of transformation. As Catholics, we believe that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, ordinary bread and wine are transformed into the divine. Similarly, our response to the Eucharist should lead to a personal transformation. Stewardship is a means by which we become more Christ-like, more selfless, and more compassionate. It is through stewardship that we, as individuals and as a faith community, seek to live out the teachings of Christ, becoming beacons of love, justice, and hope in a world that often hungers for such transformation.

As the Eucharist is the ultimate gift from God, stewardship is our heartfelt response to that gift. By embracing stewardship, we acknowledge the selflessness, community, gratitude, and transformation inherent in the Eucharist. Stewardship is not a burden, but a joyous calling — an opportunity to reflect God’s love and to bring Christ’s message to life. In the spirit of the Eucharist, let us strive to be faithful stewards, sharing our blessings and transforming the world with God’s love.

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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

### No School — Spring Break

March 31 through April 5

### Hospitality Tuesday, Nativity Church

Tuesday, April 1 — 8:30 a.m.

### Altar and Rosary Society Meeting

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

### First Friday Rosary

Friday, April 4 — 11 a.m., Nativity Church  
(No luncheon this month)

### Stations of the Cross

Friday, April 4 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Church

### First Saturday Rosary

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

### Dinners on the Go pick-up

Tuesday, April 8 and 29 — 5 p.m.,  
Nativity Parish Hall (drive-thru service only)

### Parent Club Meeting

Tuesday, April 8 — 7 p.m., School MPR

### Wonderful Women

Wednesday, April 9 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

### Soup Supper

Thursday, April 10 — 5:30 p.m.,  
St. Joseph Social Hall

### Stations of the Cross

Friday, April 11 — 7 p.m., Nativity Church

### Taizé Stations of the Cross

Friday, April 18 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Church

### No School — Easter Break

Friday, April 18 and Monday, April 21

### Knights of Columbus meeting

Tuesday, April 22 — 7 p.m.,  
St. Joseph School MPR

### Jesus Day for all second-grade students

Wednesday, April 23 — 5:30 p.m.,  
St. Joseph Church and Social Hall

### First Holy Communion

Saturday, April 26 — 10 a.m., St. Joseph Church

### Confirmation

Monday, April 28 — 6:30 p.m.,  
Sacred Heart Chapel in Lorain

### Men's Group

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

### Sacred Sisters Prayer and Study Group

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

### Vincenzians Meeting

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

### Holy Ground Youth Group

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

### OCIA (formerly RCIA)

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

### PSR

Wednesday, April 9, 16 and 23, and 30 — 5:30 p.m.,  
St. Joseph School (Note — no classes on April 2)

### Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesday and Thursdays in April — 9:30 a.m.,  
Nativity Parish Hall