

#### PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**OCT 2025** 

#### MEET PARISHIONER

## **Deb Vermillion**

# Blessed to Serve and Share in a Relationship With Christ



Deb and John Vermillion

or some, the idea of sharing their time and talent sounds like a chore. After all, modern society tells us that we should be paid for our work. But, as good stewards, we know that isn't true — we all have talents that we should give back to the parish. Deb and John Vermillion believe any opportunity to serve is a blessing, and as they would be the first to tell you, there is no shortage of ministries to get involved with at Nativity and St. Joseph. Take your pick — there's something for everyone.

The couple has belonged to St. Joseph's for about five years. Deb serves as a lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the homebound. She is also a member of the Wonderful Women. John serves as a greeter and usher.

It's tough for Deb to choose a favorite ministry, but she definitely loves having the chance to bring the Eucharist to the homebound.

"I don't have a lot of people on my route, just about three, but it's so nice to sit and talk," she says. "I love to give them the Eucharist and pray with them. It's wonderful."

Deb also volunteers at Mercy Hospital, doing Alzheimer's education. She has experience as a trained nurse.

"I don't want to just sit in a chair and watch TV," she says. "I like to stay active and involved." The first role Deb took on at St. Joseph's was as a lector. It's a particularly good fit with her skills in public speaking.

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"I love Christ. I love Jesus, my Savior. He's my best friend, and I would do anything for the Church." — Deb Vermillion

# The Joy of Stewardship of Treasure: Giving in Thanksgiving for Gods Gifts

tewardship is a foundational concept, encompassing the responsible management of our time, talent, and treasure. When it comes to stewardship of treasure, many Catholics might associate it primarily with supporting the financial needs of the Church. While this is true, the deeper essence of stewardship lies in giving out of thanksgiving for the abundant gifts God has bestowed upon us. Furthermore, stewardship of treasure, including the practice of tithing, is firmly rooted in Scripture.

#### **Gratitude and Generosity**

Stewardship of treasure is not solely about fulfilling a financial obligation to the Church. It is a profound expression of gratitude for the blessings we receive from God. As Catholics, we recognize that all we have, whether it's our income, material possessions, or financial resources, ultimately belongs to God. In gratitude, we share a portion of these blessings as a way of giving back to God.

#### **Tithing as a Scriptural Principle**

The practice of tithing, giving a tenth of one's income, has a strong Scriptural foundation. In the Old Testament, tithing was established to support the work of the temple and the needs of the Levites, who served the religious community. In the book of Malachi, we read, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house" (Malachi 3:10).

In the New Testament, Jesus reaffirms the importance of giving. He praises the widow who gave her two small coins, emphasizing that her gift, though small in quantity, was great in significance because it represented her willingness to give everything (Mark 12:41-44).

#### The Joy of Giving

Stewardship of treasure should be a joyful act. When we give with a cheerful heart, we mirror God's generosity and love for us. St. Paul reminds us of this in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Moreover, our contributions to the Church enable it to carry out its vital mission – from supporting the parish to funding various ministries, charity work, and community outreach. By participating in stewardship of treasure, we play a direct role in spreading the message of Christ and helping those in need.

#### **Challenges and Growth**

For some, stewardship of treasure may be challenging, especially in times of financial strain. However, it's important to remember that it's not about the amount we give, but the disposition of our hearts. Even small offerings, when given with love and thanksgiving, carry great spiritual value.

As Catholics, we are called to embrace stewardship of treasure as a way to grow in our faith and deepen our relationship with God. Giving from our resources reflects our trust in God's providence and our desire to share His love with others.

Stewardship of treasure is a powerful and transformative practice for Catholics. It transcends the idea of meeting financial needs and is fundamentally rooted in gratitude and the Scriptural principle of giving. Through this practice, we express our love for God, support the Church's mission, and find joy in sharing our blessings with others, allowing stewardship to be a cornerstone of our faith journey.

# ST. JOSEPH

A Letter from Our Pastor

## May All Members of Our Saint Joseph and Nativity Parishes Know the fords fore



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

n this column, I would like to offer special recognition to our beloved parishioners who are in nursing homes, are homebound, ill, or elderly. In the name of everyone at St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes, I thank you for your prayerful support for the people, needs, and intentions of our parish families. Your faithfulness to prayer is a powerful and essential ministry in the Church. And please know that we remember you in our prayers with our love and our appreciation.

At St. Joseph Parish, every second and fourth Sunday mornings, following the 8:30 a.m. Mass, Extraordinary Ministers bring Holy Communion to people who are unable to come to Mass on the weekend. And at Nativity Parish, Extraordinary Ministers respond as requested. I am very grateful for our teams of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at both parishes who so faithfully and lovingly exercise this ministry. I invite our homebound St. Joseph parishioners who would like to receive Holy Communion where they live to call our St. Joseph Parish office at 440-988-2848, and for our homebound Nativity parishioners to call Wendy Rosso at 440-986-0304 or to call Lynn Johnson at 440-752-6519. I am happy to offer the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to people at home as well.

ordinarily celebrate Mass at 10:30 a.m. on the third Monday of each month, and at Amherst Manor Retirement Community, I ordinarily celebrate Mass at 10:30 a.m. on the fourth Monday of each month. And I am always happy to offer the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to those Catholic residents who wish to receive them.

St. Joseph Extraordinary Ministers also take Holy Communion to the Catholic residents of Lorain Estates and Amherst Manor after the 8:30 a.m. Mass on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. We have all been received so graciously and warmly by the staff and residents of both senior residences. To have a resident's name on the Holy Communion list, please let Lorain Estates or Amherst Manor know to have their name placed on "the list of Catholic residents."

I also want you to know that if someone is facing serious surgery, I am very happy to offer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick beforehand. You are welcome to give me a call to arrange this. I often celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick with people either before or after the Mass they are planning to attend, so that they are spiritually well-prepared before going to the hospital.

Because of the privacy laws that affect health care institutions, most often At Lorain Estates Senior Living, I the only way that I know that a person is in a hospital is that someone has told me. Clergy do not have access to health care patient lists as we formerly did. If you or someone you love will be in a health care facility, we welcome this information at the parish office, and we certainly promise you our prayerful support.

So many of us are so grateful that the Sunday 11 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph, with our instrumentalists and choristers. under the direction of Christina Dupre, is livestreamed each week. To view, simply enter our St. Joseph Parish website at stjosephamherst.com and click on "Livestream Liturgies" on the home page.

I would like to add a special word of thanks to all of the members of the livestreaming production team at St. Joseph Parish, under the leadership of Christina Dupre. This does so much good for so many by bringing what we do in church to the homes in our communities.

May all the members of our St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes know the Lord's love and feel the support of His people, always. I wish you a blessed fall season.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Twinesay & O' Commo

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor, **Pastor** 



s the autumn leaves fall and the air turns crisp, the familiar sights of pumpkins, costumes, and spooky decorations signal the arrival of Halloween. For many, Halloween is a time of fun, candy, and creative costumes, but few may realize the deep and rich connections between this festive occasion and the Catholic faith. Let's explore the Catholic origins of Halloween and how Catholic families can authentically celebrate this beloved holiday while staying true to their faith.

Contrary to popular belief, Halloween has its roots deeply embedded in Catholic tradition. The word "Halloween" itself is a contraction of "All Hallows' Eve," the evening before the Catholic feast of All Saints' Day, celebrated on Nov. 1. All Saints' Day is a solemn occasion dedicated to honoring all the saints, known and unknown, who have attained the beatific vision in Heaven.

Halloween's connection to All Saints' Day is more than mere coincidence. The origins of Halloween can be traced back to ancient Christian traditions. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III established All Saints' Day as a way to honor the saints who had dedicated their lives to the Christian faith. The evening before, All Hallows' Eve, became a time for preparation and reflection, laying the foundation for the Halloween we know today.

At the heart of Halloween lies the profound Catholic belief in the Communion of Saints. During this time, Catholics reflect on the spiritual bond between the Church Militant (those on Earth), the Church Suffering (those in Purgatory), and the Church Triumphant (those in Heaven). Halloween becomes an opportunity to celebrate this interconnectedness and to remember and honor loved ones who have passed away.

Catholic families can infuse Halloween celebrations with a deeper meaning by incorporating their faith into the festivities. Here are some ways to celebrate Halloween authentically:

All Saints' Day Costumes: Instead of traditional spooky costumes, encourage children to dress up as their favorite saints. This not only aligns with the theme of All Saints' Day but also educates children about the lives of these holy men and women.

**Family Prayers:** Take a moment to gather as a family and offer prayers for the departed. Reflect on the lives of saints and loved ones who have passed away, fostering a sense of connection with the Communion of Saints.

**Create a Home Altar:** Designate a small space in your home as a Halloween altar. Decorate it with images of saints, candles, and symbols of the season, creating a sacred space for reflection and remembrance.

**Attend All Saints' Day Mass:** Participate in the liturgical celebration of All Saints' Day by attending this holy day Mass as a family. It's an opportunity to receive spiritual nourishment and reinforce the significance of this feast day.

**Share the Faith Through Treats:** When handing out treats, consider attaching small cards with brief descriptions of saints or prayers. This not only adds a personal touch to your Halloween treats but also shares the beauty of the Catholic faith with others.

In celebrating Halloween, Catholics have the chance to embrace their rich heritage and deepen their connection to the Communion of Saints. By infusing this festive occasion with the teachings of the Church, families can create traditions that are both fun and spiritually meaningful. Halloween becomes more than just a night for costumes and candy; it becomes a celebration of faith, community, and the enduring bond that unites the living and the departed in the embrace of God's love.

# The Bakers Ministry

## Stewards Joyfully Sharing Fresh-Baked Treats With Our Parish Community

ew things are better than a fresh-baked treat made in someone's home. The love and care that are added to it make it even better — a store-bought item just isn't the same. Here at St. Joseph's and Nativity, we are blessed to have a group of people who give their time to ensure parish events and funerals have a nice sampling of treats.

Evelyn Caffarel leads this group of nearly 100 bakers. About half of them help with funerals, and the other half pitch in for special events. Evelyn arranges the list so that the same people aren't baking for each event — she tells new volunteers they will end up baking items three or four times a year.

"This is an easy way to get involved in the parish, and it's flexible," Evelyn says. "It's a good way to help if you can't easily leave home. Plus, it's perfect if you enjoy baking."

When Evelyn came to our faith community in 1989, she got involved right away. She knew it would be a good way to get to know people. Evelyn moved to the area partially because her late sister, Joanne Palun, lived here. Joanne used to run the Bakers Ministry, and Evelyn took over when she got sick.

When the bakers provide sweets for a funeral, they always receive many lovely comments.

"The families are so grateful," Evelyn says. "They always comment on how nice it is to have a whole table of baked goods."

When Evelyn calls people to ask them to bring baked goods, they typically pick up and say, "Hi, Evelyn!" She appreciates that they are all so friendly and willing to help.

"They are generous and welcoming," Evelyn says. "This is

an easy but important ministry. Our parish wouldn't be the same without it. I say, 'God bless all those who are involved.'"

Having taught for 40-plus years, Evelyn has used that experience as a catechist for sixth-graders at the Parish School of Religion for decades.

"I love working with the kids at PSR," she says. "They keep me on my toes. I've taught a lot of kids over the years."

In addition, Evelyn serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion for Mass and the homebound. She also sings in the funeral choir and coordinates the Giving Tree at Christmas, through which truckloads of gifts are taken to six organizations each year.

"God asks us to take care of one another like family, and that's why I do this," Evelyn says. "Our parish is so generous in supporting the Giving Tree."

Evelyn values our parishes and is proud to be involved in helping keep our community strong.

"This is a generous and supportive community," she says. "God is here"

To get involved in the Bakers Ministry, contact Evelyn Caffarel at 440-452-4361.

# The Men's Group:

A Valuable Place to Share in Brotherhood and Catholic Spirituality

aving a community of like-minded people helps to strengthen our faith lives as we encourage one another in fellowship. The Men's Group has become that kind of community — a place where men gather to pray, learn, and walk together in faith. Tony Alessandro and Nick Toney lead this ministry.

"I think as men in our parish and households, we set an example for the next generation," Nick says. "It's important that we help each other become the best versions of ourselves so we can be role models for others in the parish and our families."

Created as a response to our parish community renewal more than seven years ago, the Men's Group was formed to build a supportive community of men who are striving to grow as disciples of Christ. Uniting men from both St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes, they meet twice per month on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the St. Joseph Social Hall.

Nick says the mission is both to help men become the best version of themselves and to encourage one another as men while gathering in fellowship.

"The group helps us uplift each other to be the best we can be, and also for the relationships with the other members of the group," he says. "Having that fellowship is so important."

For Tony, sharing in the faith journey with others is essential to his own spiritual life.

"Even if it's one night, you never know what might be shared that could make a difference in your life. All are welcome, wherever you're at in your faith journey." — Nick Toney "I cannot be on this faith journey alone," he says. "I need others to help me grow closer to God and keep me on track. Just going to Mass once a week on the weekend isn't enough. The men in our group help me to fulfill the words of Joshua, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord' (Joshua 24:15)."

The men have studied different books, video series, and Scripture passages in their time together over the years. Typically, they open with prayer, read and discuss the upcoming Gospel reading for Sunday, and then have a video or book study. The evenings encourage them to grow in faith together while enjoying camaraderie with each other.

Joe Perez participates in the Men's Group and is a member of the Knights of Columbus. He agrees with Nick — men need to lean on one another in fellowship and faith.

"Brotherhoods that are made up of Christ-centered friendships are necessary for men to grow in holiness, be strong leaders in their families and in their parish, and become responsible missionary disciples for Christ," Joe says.

As a result of his participation in the group, Joe says he's learned to be more forgiving and compassionate to others, and he is encouraged to give of his time, talent, and treasure for the glory of God.

"My participation helped me to enhance my knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith so I can share it with others," Joe says.

For Keith Gutierrez, the Men's Group holds a special place in his heart, thanks to the friendships he has formed over the last few years. He feels honored to call the other men of the group his brothers in Christ.

"Together, we support one another as we grow closer to God and deepen our bonds of friendship through the meaningful time and experiences we share," Keith says. "This group has become a source of love, encouragement, and spiritual growth

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# ST. JOSEPH NATIVITY

that enriches my life in countless ways."

Keith appreciates how the group has led him to learn more about the faith and discover what it means to be a man of God. He appreciates having a support system that he can lean on.

"This mutual support has helped me grow not just in faith, but in compassion and brotherhood," Keith says.

Chuck Hobor agrees — the group has given him a deeper understanding of his faith and a sense of belonging.

"I have grown not only in my faith from our Bible study, but also in a willingness to share my faith, which I hesitated to do before joining the Men's Group," he says. "I have grown in my role as a husband because the Men's Group has shown me that sharing my faith and Jesus Christ with my wife has opened up a new perspective on marriage for us."

Nick and Tony work hard to help lead this ministry for the men of our two parishes. They encourage any men of our community to consider dropping in for an evening — no commitment or registration is required. If you miss a night, you can still join at any time.

"Someone once told me that no time with God is ever wasted," Nick says. "Even if you haven't been before, we try

to do our best so they're not sequential — you can just drop in. Many of our men have evening obligations. Even if it's one night, you never know what might be shared that could make a difference in your life. All are welcome, wherever you're at in your faith journey."

Tony notes that he has truly seen a powerful impact on the men who participate.

"The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are at work in our group," he says. "I've seen some grow in wisdom, others in knowledge, and yet others in fortitude. That's what makes me so committed to this ministry. One of the videos we saw reminded us that 'steel sharpens steel' — we need each other."

For more information about the Men's Group, contact Nick Toney at 440-452-6021 or Tony Alessandro at 440-452-3727.







espect Life Month, observed throughout October, holds special significance in the Catholic Church. It is a time when Catholics reflect on the teachings of the Church regarding the sanctity of life from conception and the importance of preserving it.

The Catholic Church has long upheld the belief that human life is sacred from the moment of conception until natural death. This core teaching is rooted in the Church's rich tradition and the conviction that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) clearly states, "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception" (2270).

This belief is not a mere theological abstraction but a profound moral imperative that guides the conscience of Catholics. It underscores the Church's commitment to valuing and preserving every life, regardless of its stage of development.

Respect Life Month serves as an opportunity for Catholics to actively engage in pro-life activities and advocacy. Many parishes organize events, discussions, and prayer services dedicated to upholding the sanctity of life. It is a time to raise awareness about the value of human life and the importance of protecting it at all stages, including conception.

In October, Catholics are called to foster a culture of life in society. This means actively promoting respect for life in all its forms, from conception to natural death. It includes advocating for the protection of the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, and all vulnerable populations. Catholics are encouraged to engage in

pro-life activities, volunteer for organizations that support life, and educate themselves and others about the Church's teachings.

Respect Life Month in October is a poignant reminder for Catholics of the Church's teachings on the sanctity of life from conception. It is a time to honor the lives of saints and departed loved ones, celebrate the gift of adoption, and actively engage in pro-life advocacy. Embracing the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding the sanctity of life at conception is not only a religious duty but a moral imperative. By doing so, Catholics contribute to a culture of life that respects and values every individual, affirming the preciousness of human life as a gift from God.



## Don't Look It

### By DEACON NATHAN FRANKART

eace of Christ to you! There's been plenty of activity at St. Mary in Wooster, my transitional diaconate parish. For example, we hosted an ice cream social in our school gym to kick off the summer vacation. One of our parishioners walked from table to table to socialize and see everyone, and eventually, he came to my table. I noticed how he wore a towel on his shoulder, which he was using to bust down tables. So, making the intuitive jump in my mind, I told him, "I'll tell you what, Tim, you've always been a hard worker," gesturing towards his towel. He started to laugh... laugh way more than that joke merited, and he replied, "You mean all I had to do was wear a towel and I'd look like a hard worker? I would have started wearing a towel 52 years ago when I got married!"

I hope that the facetiousness of Tim's line is not the point you take away. I actually used this story as an example of what it means to be a public person as a seminarian, priest, and by extension, all Christians. We have already defined ourselves insofar as we follow Christ, and therefore communicate to the world at all times what we represent. There is no dual self here, as for example, "Tim on Sunday" versus "Tim at home after a long day at work." Tim, through the virtue of Baptism, now always communicates his identity as Christ's faithful. To put it another way, he always has the "towel on his shoulder."



For us, brothers and sisters, we share in this responsibility and perception. The question becomes, "How will it affect you?" Certainly, if you just act the part and are a fan of Jesus, then perhaps no one will call you to task or notice the difference. You can pass off your appearances alone. But if you take the discipleship called out to you by a Father who desperately loves and yearns to grow close to you seriously, then can you fully respond in love and in service to Him by just looking the part? Put the towel on your shoulder to work, and work out there in the world with the Good Shepherd.

### Meet Parishioner Deb Vermillion continued from front cover

"I read the Bible all the time, and I pray before I lector that the message will touch people's hearts and souls," she says. "God gives me the grace to do it."

For Deb, the faith has been of utmost importance since she was growing up. When John was battling cancer, Fr. Timothy O'Connor was really there for him, stepping in to give him the Anointing of the Sick.

"Since his illness and with Fr. Tim's influence, he's become much more prayerful," Deb says. "His faith has really deepened."

Deb and John truly love Fr. Tim. He's made a difference in their lives.

"Fr. Tim is a kind, loving man," Deb says. "When my sister passed away, St. Joseph's was amazing with her funeral and planning. It was a beautiful service." For those who don't spend time on their faith or get to know God, Deb says, work on your relationship with Him — you won't regret it.

"There's no way to survive in this world without Jesus," she says. "People try to handle stress with medications, but if they also just went to church, prayed, and talked to Him, they'd be so much better off. That's the base of everything I do — without Him, I wouldn't be doing any of it."

Deb loves to stay involved. She feels it's the least she can do for all God has done in her life.

"I love Christ," she says. "I love Jesus, my Savior. He's my best friend, and I would do anything for the Church."

In their free time, John and Deb enjoy boating in the summer and skiing in the winter. They also enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren.

**AD SPACE** 

## **AD SPACE**

#### This newsletter brought to you by the Catholic Communities of:

# ST. JOSEPH PARISH NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

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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 Activities and Events**

#### NOTE: ALL ST. JOSEPH SOCIAL HALL ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO REPAIR WORK.

#### First Friday Rosary

Friday, Oct. 3 at 11 a.m. at Nativity Church Luncheon to follow in the Parish Hall

#### **First Saturday Rosary**

Saturday, Oct. 4, at 9 a.m. at St. Joseph Church

#### Stewardship Renewal Weekend

Saturday, Oct. 4 and Sunday, Oct. 5 at all Masses

#### **Confirmation Parent Meeting**

Sunday, Oct. 5, at 6 p.m. in St. Joseph Church (following the 5 p.m. Mass)

#### **Hospitality Tuesday**

Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 8:30 a.m. at Nativity Church (following the 8 a.m. Mass)

#### **Altar and Rosary Society Meeting**

Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 6:30 p.m. at Nativity Parish Hall

#### **Wonderful Women**

Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m. at School Gym

#### **Candlelight Rosary Service**

Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. at Nativity Church — Refreshments and desserts to follow in the Parish Hall

#### **No School**

Friday, Oct. 10 and Friday, Oct. 24

#### "Dinners on the Go" pick-up

Tuesday, Oct. 14 and 28 at 5 p.m. at Nativity Parish Hall (drive-thru service only)

#### **Parent Club**

Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 p.m. at School MPR

#### **Knights of Columbus**

Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 7 p.m. at School MPR

#### P.S.R.

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, at 5:30 p.m. at St. Joseph School

#### Sacred Sisters Prayer and Study Group

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 6:30 p.m. at O.S.E. Community Center

#### Vincentians Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 2, 16, and 30 at 9 a.m. in St. Joseph Conference Room

#### **Holy Ground Youth Group**

Sunday, Oct. 5, 19, and 26 at 6 p.m. in St. Joseph School Gym (Event begins with 5 p.m. Mass. Meet near the Choir prior to Mass.)

#### O.C.I.A. (formerly R.C.I.A.)

Monday, Oct. 6, 13, 20, and 27, at 7 p.m. at Nativity Parish Hall

#### Men's Group Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 7 and 21 at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Social Hall Lobby

#### Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesday and Thursdays in Oct. at 9:30 a.m. at Nativity Parish Hall