



ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 2026

EMBRACING THE GIFTS OF *Eucharistic Adoration*

How We Can Set Aside Time to Truly Be with Jesus

St. Faustina deeply understood the beauty and power of Eucharistic Adoration, and she is among the many saints who helped share this devotion with the world.

"A Holy Hour before the Most Blessed Sacrament so pleases the Heart of Jesus, that every man, woman, and child on earth receives a new effect from God's goodness and love, all because of a single hour of adoration in His Presence," St. Faustina said.

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary offers Eucharistic Adoration in the chapel at the front of the church each weekday, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Because the monstrance has doors that can be closed to secure the host, an adorer is not required to always be present. For this reason, the adoration hours are unscheduled.

"This has been a good way to do this—having Jesus secured," says Josie Tornabene, who has overseen Eucharistic Adoration for about 23 years. "It makes adoration more flexible."

With the current adoration arrangement, people are not committed to an hour and can

come and go as they please. The doors on the monstrance need to be closed if no one is there. Josie encourages people to see Jesus for any range of time — from five minutes to several hours.

Fr. Denny St. Marie helped bring Eucharistic Adoration to Nativity about 23 years ago.

"It was the best thing that happened to us," Josie says.

"This beautiful little thing has been going on for a long time. Many places struggle to attract people, but the way we have it set up, it always works out. It's wonderful."

Eucharistic Adoration allows a person to sit with Jesus, truly present in the space. There are no rules — sign in, genuflect on both knees if you are able, and come pray. You can pray the Rosary, read, listen to religious music, or simply listen to Jesus. There are many books for adorers to use.

Josie goes to adoration every weekday. Seeing Jesus is a big part of her life.

"There's such a peacefulness when you go there," she says. "You can go in with a lot of

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..... *Stewardship of Time*

Giving Back to God During the “Golden Years”

Ask any newly married Catholic couple what they remember most about the marriage preparation process, and they are bound to tell you one particular thing — communication.

As with any relationship, communication is a key element of the equation. Poor or nonexistent communication leads to bitterness and confusion, separating individuals from their spouses. Good communication allows husbands and wives to grow closer together, deeper in love, while reinforcing their union as man and wife.

Prayer is a particularly fruitful form of communication between spouses and God. When one prays on behalf of his or her spouse, graces are bestowed on both individuals. Prayer is also a sign of love — the man who prays for his wife indirectly communicates that he wishes the best for her, and that he is putting her first in his communication with God. Prayer can also be a wonderful expression of stewardship, especially for senior couples who can no longer participate in parish ministries.

As one of the “three Ts” of stewardship, prayer is time spent with God. During prayer, one builds a relationship with the Lord, sharing with Him one’s deepest desires, cares, hurts, fears, and thanksgivings. Prayer is something we all should do, regardless of our place in life. But for many senior couples, it becomes their primary form of stewardship during the “golden years.”

Prayer is unique in that it benefits the individual who is offering the prayer, as well as those being prayed for and those in the surrounding community. Consider this — a parish offers its parishioners Perpetual Adoration. This means that, for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, someone in the parish is praying. While the prayers being offered will most certainly



not be focused on every individual in the parish, the whole parish benefits because someone is communicating with God, and God is at work in the community. Adoration is also a wonderful way to spend time with one’s spouse before Our Lord, present in the Eucharist.

There are many other ways in which senior couples can participate in prayer. First and foremost is the holy Mass. As the principal prayer of the Catholic faith, Mass attendance not only allows us to communicate with God, but also physically receive Him through the Eucharist. When God took on the form of man, He entered into the human life. We can complete the circle and enter into the divine life by receiving God during Communion. And Mass doesn’t have to be a once-a-week type of activity. Daily Mass is available for those whose schedules permit, and it often becomes

the steppingstone toward a greater prayer life and, ultimately, a deeper relationship with God.

In addition to Mass, the seniors of our parish — particularly those who are homebound — can participate in prayer ministries, such as prayer lines, the Legion of Mary, Rosary groups and more. These ministries offer members the opportunity to participate without ever leaving home. They also connect these parishioners with the rest of the parish, which is a true blessing for the sick and homebound.

If you are a senior parishioner and are searching for a way to live out stewardship with your spouse, consider joining a prayer ministry, attending adoration or daily Mass, or simply set aside time during the day to pray with your spouse. If none of these opportunities exist, take the initiative to start one. God will surely bless your efforts!

A Letter from Our Pastor

Celebrating the Gift of Catholic Education in the New Year

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

As we begin another new year, I would like to focus on the annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week at the end of January. At the heart of our Catholic tradition lies the belief that education is a powerful means of shaping the future, nurturing young minds, and instilling values that will guide them throughout their lives. Catholic Schools Week reminds us of the significant contribution Catholic education makes to the holistic development of our children and the importance of our continued support.

We are so blessed to have our St. Joseph Parish School, and its faculty and staff, under the leadership of Mrs. Amy Makruski, our principal. Our school is here to offer an excellent Catholic education to families in our communities who would like to enroll their children here.

This week is not just a time for festivities and recognition. It is also a moment to deepen our understanding of the profound impact Catholic education has on our youth. Here are some reflections on why Catholic education matters:

- **Prayer and Faith Formation:** Mass, Confessions, daily prayer, religious studies, and faith formation are integral parts of a Catholic school's curriculum. Our children are given the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God and their understanding of the Catholic faith.
- **Values-Based Education:** Catholic schools provide an environment where

faith and moral values are woven into the curriculum. Our children are taught not only the academics, but also the timeless virtues of love, compassion, and respect, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

- **Community Building:** Catholic schools foster a sense of belonging and community. The relationships formed within these institutions extend beyond the classroom, creating a supportive and nurturing environment for our children to grow.
- **Academic Excellence:** Catholic schools have a strong tradition of academic excellence. They equip our children with the knowledge and skills necessary for their future while emphasizing critical thinking, creativity, and a commitment to lifelong learning.
- **Character Formation:** In addition to academic achievements, Catholic education focuses on character formation. Students are encouraged to become responsible, compassionate, and socially aware individuals who contribute positively to society.
- **Service and Outreach:** Catholic schools encourage a spirit of service and outreach. Students are taught the importance of giving back to their communities, making a difference in the lives of those in need, and being responsible stewards of God's gifts.



During Catholic Schools Week, we have the chance to acknowledge the exceptional work of our dedicated educators and school staff. They are committed to nurturing the spiritual and intellectual growth of our children. Let us express our gratitude and support for their tireless efforts.

Through our prayers, volunteering, financial contributions, and active involvement, we ensure that our schools continue to provide a nurturing environment where our children can thrive both academically and spiritually.

In the spirit of Catholic Schools Week, let us recommit ourselves to the mission of Catholic education. By doing so, we strengthen the foundation of our faith, nurture the next generation of disciples, and contribute to a brighter future for our children.

I am proud of and grateful for our St. Joseph Parish School. And I am thankful for all who have prayed for and supported our school in the past and in our own times. Happy Catholic Schools Week, everyone!

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor

Making the Most of Every Sunday and Putting God First



In today's fast-paced world, Sundays often serve as a welcome respite — a day for relaxation, recreation, and family time. Whether it's enjoying a cookout, spending the afternoon at the pool, or watching a favorite sports game, many Americans cherish their Sundays. Yet amid these activities, it is vital to remember the spiritual significance of the Lord's Day and the unique opportunity it offers to center our lives on God.

Each Sunday, over 18,000 Catholic parishes across the United States celebrate Mass. Yet, according to Pew Research Center's 2025 data, only 28 percent of U.S. Catholics attend Mass weekly. This statistic highlights a troubling trend of disengagement from regular worship and calls us to recommit ourselves to honoring God with our time and presence.

Many Catholics struggle to prioritize Sunday Mass because of other activities. Youth sports, community events, and professional or college football games — sometimes requiring travel — can make it tempting to skip Mass. While leisure and recreation are important, they should not replace the worship of God.

Fortunately, technology can help. Online resources such as MassTimes.org allow Catholics to locate nearby parishes, check Mass schedules, and plan ahead when traveling. Whether attending an away game or visiting another city, these tools make it possible to fulfill our Sunday obligation and stay rooted in the Eucharist, even on the go.

Sundays are a gift from God — a chance to pause from our work and responsibilities, refresh our minds and hearts, and place Him at the center

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Each Sunday invites us to pause, reflect, and renew our commitment to discipleship and stewardship. It is a day to intentionally give God the best of our time and energy, celebrate the sacraments, and share our gifts generously with others. By doing so, we not only grow in holiness but also model for our families and communities what it means to live a stewardship-centered life.

Making the Most of Every Sunday and Putting God First

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of our lives. Attending Mass is not simply an obligation; it is a privilege and a source of grace. When we participate in the Eucharist, we receive spiritual nourishment that strengthens us to live as faithful disciples throughout the week.

But stewardship is about more than attendance. Catholic stewardship is a holistic way of life that calls us to use all that God has given us — our time, talents, and treasures — for His glory and the good of others. Sundays offer a perfect opportunity to practice this stewardship. By volunteering in parish ministries, assisting in community outreach, or simply helping those in need, we make concrete acts of service part of our discipleship.

Prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation further enrich our spiritual lives. These practices allow us to deepen our relationship with Christ, seek His guidance, and receive the grace to live out our vocation as stewards in our families, workplaces, and communities. Every act of service, no

matter how small, is a way to place God first and align our hearts with His will.

Each Sunday invites us to pause, reflect, and renew our commitment to discipleship and stewardship. It is a day to intentionally give God the best of our time and energy, celebrate the sacraments, and share our gifts generously with others. By doing so, we not only grow in holiness but also model for our families and communities what it means to live a stewardship-centered life.

As we approach each Lord's Day, let us ask ourselves: How can I use this Sunday to honor God more fully? How can I offer my time, talents, and treasure in service to Him and His people? And if life takes me away from home, how can I ensure I still prioritize Mass, using tools like MassTimes.org to stay connected to the Eucharist? In making these choices, we transform every Sunday into an opportunity to put God first and live as faithful stewards of all He has entrusted to us.

Embracing the Gifts of Eucharistic Adoration

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weight on your shoulders, and when you leave, it's not like He takes it away, but He helps you carry that cross."

In turn, Josie encourages others to spend time with Jesus in adoration. It's different than praying at home.

"Jesus is right there — our chapel is small, and He is literally four feet in front of you," she says. "If we could see Him, the King of Kings, right in front of you, not to take that opportunity to be there — that is crazy."

The chapel has room for about three people. If it's full, a person can always sit in the church.

"Attending regular adoration has helped me grow strong in my faith — a lot stronger," Josie says. "You trust God more — not that you didn't trust Him before, but now you really trust that His Word is true."

Stop in and check out adoration. If you already attend regularly, try to increase your attendance.

"When you're troubled, and you have nowhere to go, you need God, and He's right there," Josie says. "A lot of people pray at home, which I do, too. But being right before God, there's such an awesome reverence."

For Josie, her "why" for adoring every day is simple — "to be with God."

**All are welcome to attend
Eucharistic Adoration from 11 a.m.
to 10 p.m. each weekday at Nativity.**

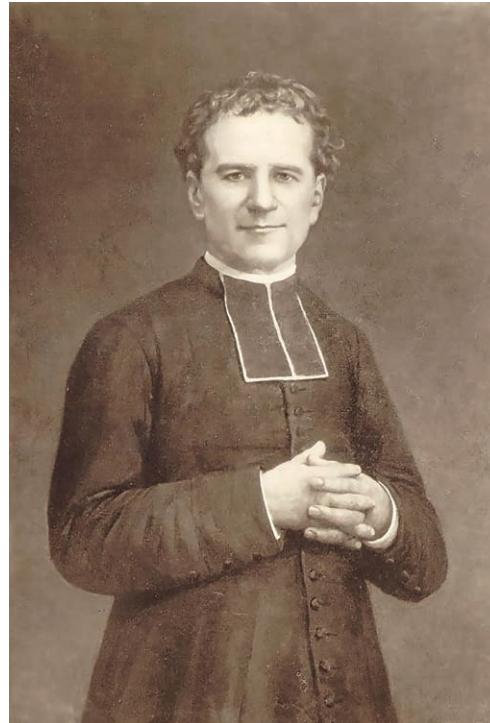
St. John Bosco: A Steward of Youth and Hope

Many saints have modeled faithful Catholic discipleship and stewardship, and St. John Bosco is a shining example for January, as we celebrate his feast day on Jan. 31.

Known affectionately as Don Bosco, he dedicated his life to the care, education, and spiritual formation of poor and neglected youth in 19th-century Italy. His legacy continues to inspire the Church today, particularly those who work with young people or seek to serve with generous hearts.

Born in 1815 near Turin, Italy, John Bosco was raised in poverty by his widowed mother. Even in his youth, he demonstrated a deep devotion to the Eucharist, a love for the poor, and an extraordinary ability to engage and teach his peers. These qualities became the foundation for his lifelong mission of stewardship and discipleship.

Ordained a priest in 1841, Don Bosco began ministering to the street children and working-class boys of Turin. Many were orphaned, imprisoned, or left to fend for themselves. Rather than ignoring their suffering, he saw them as precious gifts



from God and responded with a heart full of compassion. He opened a youth center that provided food, shelter, education, and spiritual guidance — planting the seeds of lifelong faith and purpose in the lives of countless young people.

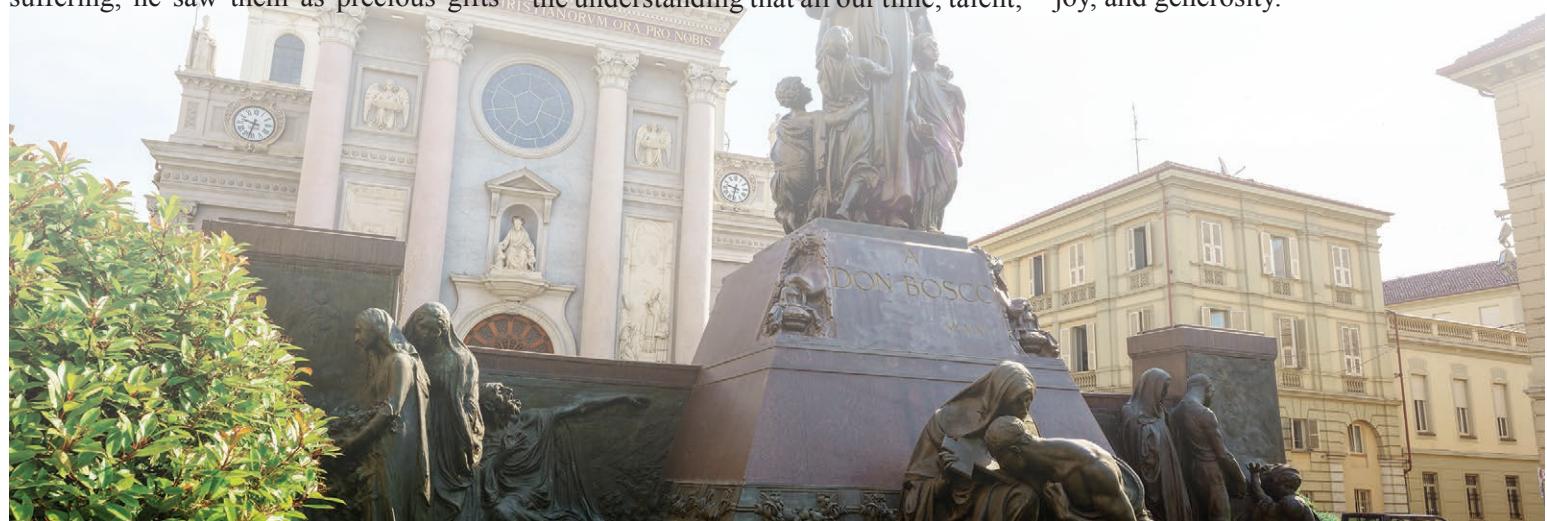
Central to Don Bosco's mission was the understanding that all our time, talent,

and treasure are gifts from God to be used in loving service to others. He saw himself not just as a priest or educator, but as a steward of souls entrusted to his care. His joyful, approachable spirit and tireless work for the good of others reflect the very essence of a stewardship way of life.

In 1859, he founded the Salesians of Don Bosco, a religious congregation committed to the education and evangelization of youth, especially the poor. Today, the Salesians serve in more than 130 countries, continuing his vision of loving and forming young people in a Christ-centered environment.

St. John Bosco's feast day offers us a time to reflect on how we, too, are called to serve others with the same devotion and purpose. He is the patron saint of apprentices, schoolchildren, boys, young people, and juvenile delinquents — a fitting tribute to his life's mission.

As we grow in our own journey of stewardship, may we look to St. John Bosco as a model of faith in action, and respond to God's call with the same love, joy, and generosity.



The Promised Land

By DEACON NATHAN FRANKART

Peace of Christ to you! I want to let you in on a little secret. It's not anything dramatic or crazy or anything like that. Rather, it's a bit of an inside joke that we seminarians share with each other. And you've been reading these articles long enough to also join in our joke.

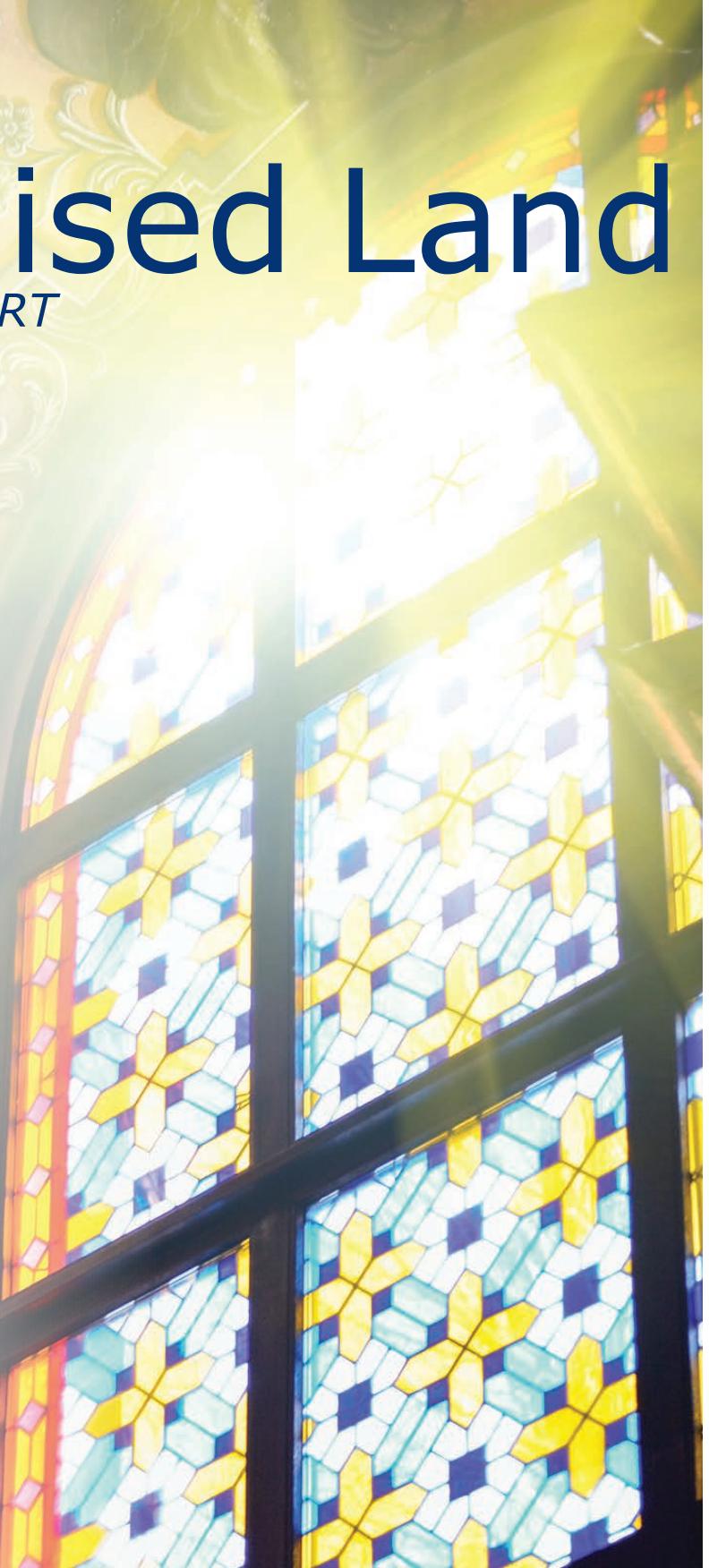
Basically, there's a mythical, magical place that the seminarians talk about in conversations at the dinner table, the campfire, the lounge, basically anywhere where we meet as a group. It's called "the Promised Land." It's spoken about with hopeful anticipation, knowing that one day we will all make it there once we've completed our academic work and allowed the process of formation to move and change our hearts. It gives us the inspiration and desire to keep pushing forward through the many years of meetings, conversations, work, and student lifestyle that gets outgrown in a short

time. Eventually, we arrive there, and our wildest dreams finally come true.

So, what is "the Promised Land?" Why, it's the parish of course! And no, I don't mean a specific parish — I mean it is any parish. It's all the parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland.

"The Promised Land" is the assignment parish that we receive as pastoral interns, transitional deacons, and finally, ordained priests, in which the things that we train for finally become a reality.

So, in short, that is where I am writing to you, from "the Promised Land" of Ohio at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. And let me tell you, this place is really living up to its name! You should come down to visit me sometime. I'm on for most of the liturgies, and if I'm not on for the Mass, then I am with the parochial vicar and pastor at the end of Mass, greeting people as they head out. Don't be afraid to stop by!



Students and Faculty Look Forward to Catholic Schools Week 2026

*United in **Faith** and **Community** at St. Joseph Parish School*



In late January, St. Joseph Parish School will join Catholic schools across the United States in celebrating Catholic Schools Week, an annual tradition that highlights the mission and gifts of Catholic education. While most schools move through a typical week, Catholic schools pause to honor the values that set them apart — faith-filled learning, service to others, strong community, and a commitment to forming the whole child.

This year's theme is "United in Faith and Community." Throughout the week, students, families, and staff at St. Joseph will participate in activities that showcase the heart of their school and the blessings of a Catholic education. Principal Amy Makruski can't wait to celebrate and looks forward to Catholic Schools Week every year.

"The spirit behind Catholic Schools Week is the idea that although we are each our own entity, we are part of a bigger picture of Catholic schools all around our nation," she says. "We all have our own individual missions, but the same goal to develop a faith community that knows, loves, and follows Jesus Christ."

The week will include opportunities to celebrate members of our community. On Sunday, celebrations will focus on the parish, with students participating in many of the liturgical roles at the 11 a.m. Mass. Following this, there will be an open house for current and prospective families and parishioners from noon to 1:30 p.m.

On Monday, the students will give back

"In our schools, children don't just learn about faith, they learn how to live it. They are surrounded each day by a community that reinforces the same values families work so hard to instill at home."

— Amy Makruski,
Principal



to the community with a service project. On Tuesday, the students take center stage with some fun activities planned. On Wednesday, students will focus on our nation by writing letters and coloring pictures to support Operation Gratitude's mission of expressing gratitude to those serving in the military and as first responders. The students turn their attention to vocations on Thursday. Then on Friday, the focus is on faculty and staff, with fun activities planned to celebrate.

"This week allows us to reflect on the progress we have made so far this year and to spend some time together as a school community," Mrs. Makruski says. "It is also a time that we remember to be grateful for the opportunities we have as a Catholic school community."

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ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY

Mrs. Makruski especially appreciates that the school is small enough that the classrooms feel like a family.

"You see teachers who know the names of all of the students in the school, not just their class or the students they teach," she says. "You see older grade teachers supporting students in the lower hall and vice versa."

The school gathers each Friday morning as a school community for the Morning Meeting to worship together at Mass.

"All of these things and so much more of what we do each day reflect being united in faith and community," Mrs. Makruski says.

And as Mrs. Makruski says, Catholic Schools Week is one of her favorite points of the school year.

"It allows me to step back and see our school community with fresh eyes," she says. "I love watching our students shine,



whether they're joyfully taking part in service projects or simply celebrating the gift of learning together."

At St. Joseph Parish School, children come to learn but also to be formed, known and loved, says Mrs. Makruski. She believes that giving children a Catholic education is truly a gift.

"In our schools, children don't just learn about faith, they learn how to live it," Mrs. Makruski says. "They are surrounded each day by a community that reinforces the same values families work so hard to instill at home — kindness, respect, service, and a deep sense of purpose grounded in Christ."

"Catholic education offers something uniquely whole," she adds. "Students grow academically, but they also grow spiritually and morally. They learn to view the world through a lens of faith, to make decisions guided by Gospel values, and to recognize their responsibility to serve others."

Mrs. Makruski has some recommendations for those who want to get involved in Catholic Schools Week. One great way is to attend the open house. Or if you attended Catholic school, take a moment to reflect on your experiences and pray for those who were part of your education. You can also support the school by making a donation to the Angel Scholarship Fund and utilizing tax dollars to support tuition assistance through this scholarship-granting organization.



For more information, please refer to the bulletin or visit catholiccommunity.org.



AD SPACE

ST. JOSEPH & NATIVITY

AD SPACE

ST. JOSEPH PARISH & NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

Address Service Requested

Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes

Mass:

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*

Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*

Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Confession at St. Joseph:

Thursday - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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Upcoming Activities and Events

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

Parish Offices Closed

Wednesday, Dec. 31, and Thursday, Jan. 1.

No School — Christmas Break continues

Thursday, Jan. 1 through Monday, Jan. 5

Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God Mass Schedule

(A Holy Day of Obligation)

Wednesday, Dec. 31 — Vigil Mass, 4 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

Thursday, Jan. 1 — Masses

8:30 a.m. at Nativity Church

10:00 a.m. at St. Joseph Church

NOTE: There will be no evening Mass or Confessions on New Year's Day.

There will be no weekday Masses on Tuesday, Dec. 30, at Nativity Church.

There will be no weekday Mass on Friday, Jan. 2, at St. Joseph Church.

No First Friday Rosary

Friday, Jan. 2

First Saturday Rosary

Saturday, Jan. 3 — 9 a.m. at St. Joseph Church

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

Monday, Jan. 5, 12, 19, and 26 — 7 p.m. at Nativity Parish Hall

Hospitality Tuesday

Tuesday, Jan. 6 — 8:30 a.m. at Nativity Parish Hall (following the 8:00 a.m. Mass)

Men's Group

Tuesday, Jan. 6 — 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church in the Gathering Area

P.S.R.

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 14, 21, and 28 — 5:30 p.m. at St. Joseph School

Sacred Sisters Prayer and Study Group

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 14, 21, and 28 — 6:30 p.m. at O.S.E. Community Center

Vincentians Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 8 and 22 — 9 a.m. in St. Joseph Conference Room

A Study of the Sunday Readings

Thursdays, Jan. 8, 15, 22, and 29 — 6 p.m. in St. Joseph Church

Holy Ground Youth Group

Sunday, Jan. 11, 18, and 25 — 6 p.m. in St. Joseph School Gym.

(Holy Ground Youth Group Event begins with the 5 p.m. Mass. Meet near the Choir area before Mass.)

(Note: There will be no Holy Ground Youth Group on Jan. 4.)

No Parent Club Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 13

"Dinners on the Go" pick-up

Tuesday, Jan. 13 and 27 — 5 p.m. at Nativity Parish Hall (drive-thru service only)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

No School — Monday, Jan. 19

Catholic Schools Week — Jan. 25

through Feb. 1

St. Joseph Parish School Open House, Sunday, Jan. 25 — 12 to 1:30 p.m.

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 27 — 7 p.m. in St. Joseph School MPR

Chair Yoga Flow Classes

Tuesday and Thursdays in January at 9:30 a.m. at Nativity Parish Hall
(Note: There will be no class on New Year's Day.)