

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

[www.stpaturbana.org](http://www.stpaturbana.org)

February 2024

## What shall we do?

This time of year, we often ask ourselves: What shall I do for Lent? Here's an alternative question: What shall *we* do for Lent? God made us for community. God made us to love and support one another. So maybe this year, as you think about fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, you should think about Lent as something that you do with others.

Consider prayer. If your family isn't yet praying together, maybe this is the time to start. Or



perhaps you have a friend with whom you could pray on a regular basis. Maybe you need to revive your commitment to coming to Mass every Sunday. Maybe you would like to try coming to Mass on weekdays.

Or maybe your intercessory prayer needs a communal focus. You could join the prayer tree at St. Patrick and pray for the sick and the dying. You could pray for one of the troubled places in the world and, perhaps, as your thoughts are shaped by prayer, you will feel called to write to a government official about the needs of that place. Or maybe you could pray for our nation and its officials during the stresses of this election year.

How might you give your fasting a communal aspect? You could offer your fasting to God for the intentions of someone in need. You might fast from some activity that you enjoy to make time to be with someone or help someone. Or you could try out some new volunteer activity to see if it's a way that you can contribute to the good of others.

Almsgiving, too, can be more communal. If you usually just write a check and drop it in the mail, maybe you could offer to serve in some way, or write a letter to

advocate for the cause, or write a note to thank the people who do the work on the ground. If you usually give a few bucks to a street person, maybe you could sit down and talk with them, or share a meal at an inexpensive restaurant.

Jesus said that what we do for others, we do for him. What we do for love of him draws us closer to him. What we do in community builds up our community. When someone is relying on us, that can deepen our commitment to the work at hand. For all these reasons, doing Lenten activities with others can deepen our faith and touch the faith of others. So what shall *we* do this Lent?

## Have you seen our new fence?



As you've probably noticed, St. Patrick has a fence on the east side and a portion of the south side of the parish center. It was fully funded through generous donations. The fence was installed to provide a safe place for our children to play outdoors and to increase our usable space for parish events. Soft grass and shade trees offer a nice alternative to using the concrete parking lot. The door on the south side is convenient for those with mobility issues and is close to the bathrooms. While we wait for the weather to warm up, we have time to imagine possibilities for the area.

- A safe, secure space for children to play
- Optional outdoor seating for Coffee Shop
- Increased space for parish festivals and parties
- Group cookouts or picnics

What possibilities can you imagine?

## Join in the discussion

*Beautiful Eucharist* discussion groups will be held on Thursdays: February 15, February 22, February 29, and March 7. You will need the book *Beautiful Eucharist* that was distributed in December and can be picked up at the office. Watch St. Patrick's weekend bulletin for registration and other details.

St. Patrick's Eucharistic Revival began in April 2023 at sessions led by Fr. Luke Spannagel. The Eucharistic Revival will conclude with the National Eucharistic Conference being held July 17-21, 2024 in Indianapolis.



When Walter was accepted as a Ph.D. candidate at Purdue, we knew it was time either to part or to make a faith decision and marry. He decided to become a Catholic. He did not share his decision with his parents; he knew his dad's belief was "All Catholics are going to hell." His parents came to the wedding, his dad carrying their two-year old grandson. He intended to leave with the child if the service was too objectionable; however, the family stayed through Mass and attended the reception. We settled in to friendly interactions with Walter's family.

I return to my opening statement, "The Eucharist grew to mean more to me as I saw it through the eyes of my husband." Walter had no objection to our children being baptized and taking part in religious activities. He participated in most activities while retaining some personal faith reservations. We would occasionally discuss religious beliefs, especially on the drive home from Mass. On one such drive, he said emphatically, "You know; the Catholic Church has it right when it comes to communion." This was after about 50 years of marriage. As a cradle Catholic, I had always accepted the Church's teaching on the Eucharist, but sensing Walter's struggles over the years and hearing his strong statement prompted me to a deeper appreciation of Jesus' gift and connection to me in the Eucharist.



Parishioners are invited to send in their story on the topic, "What does the Eucharist mean to me Personally?" Send stories to Mary Tate (mary.tate@stpaturbana.org). Include your name. The first of these stories follows.

## What does the Eucharist mean to me personally?

By Shirley Splittstoesser

The Eucharist grew to mean more to me as I saw it through the eyes of my husband, Walter, who was raised in the Missouri Synod Lutheran faith. I am a cradle Catholic. When we met as high school seniors, Walter was familiar with receiving communion once a month. Their small Lutheran church of about 50 families prepared individual cups of wine for those who had signed their intent to receive communion.

We went together "off and on" for six years. He went to a university while I attended another college. He studied for his master's while I started teaching. What kept us together was our growing love for each other; what kept us apart were our religious beliefs. During holidays, we would go to dances, movies, card parties, etc., and "talk religion" for hours. We realized the strength of our individual commitments to our faith.

## Calling fish lovers and bakers!

The Knights of Columbus will be hosting meatless dinners on the Fridays of Lent again this year. Dinners, either dine-in or carry-out, will be ready and waiting for you! Bakers are needed to provide desserts for the dinners. Cookies or brownies would be great because they can easily be packed in the carry-out meals. Watch the bulletin for more details. Come for Stations of the Cross at 5:30 and stay for dinner!

I am not asking you tonight, Lord, for time to do this and then that,  
but your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give me,  
what you want me to do.

—Michael Quoist





**Q: Isn't the RCIA just a class for people who want to become Catholics? What does it have to do with me?**

**A:** During the year we hear several

announcements involving RCIA, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The assumption is that everyone knows the what, why, and wherefor of RCIA. But maybe not, so here's a brief explanation intended to help you understand why we ask you to pray for initiates, most especially during Lent.

There are, broadly speaking, two kinds of people who participate in the RCIA program, those who have never been baptized and those who are already validly baptized in another Christian denomination. Both groups want to be in full communion with the Catholic Church.

The first group is called "catechumens" from the Greek, meaning "being instructed." They are being instructed in Jesus, sacred scripture, sacraments, liturgy, and more – all the things that are part of the traditions of the Catholic Church.

The latter group is called "candidates." While they cover many of the same things, it is more "this is the Catholic understanding" of the Bible, liturgy, ministry, and more. It is our way of inviting our fellow Christian brothers and sisters to be in "full communion" with us.

Lent is a special time for those in RCIA. It begins on the Sunday after Ash Wednesday, when the catechumens participate in the Rite of Sending, a moment in time when we as a community affirm and commend the catechumens to the bishop. The bishop will formally receive them in the Rite of Election, saying, "You are ready to participate in the Easter Vigil and become one with us."

During the weeks of Lent, depending on the Mass you attend, you might witness several rites of blessing

for the candidates and the catechumens (who are now called "the elect").

On the second Sunday of Lent the candidates celebrate the Penitential Rite, which serves to mark the Lenten blessing of baptized adults who are preparing to receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist and thus be in full communion with the Catholic Church.

On the third through fifth Sundays of Lent, the elect celebrate the "scrutinies," ancient rites profoundly rooted in our human experience. The elect are asked to examine (scrutinize) how they are, the areas of their lives where they are tempted, or seriously sin — in what they do and what they fail to do. The people of the witnessing community are called to do the same, for we all need healing and the strength that can come from the support of our sisters and brothers in



prayer and blessing.

Each scrutiny is accompanied by prayers and the laying on of hands upon the elect. The goal is that their spirit be filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (gospel of the Samaritan woman in the first scrutiny), the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), the resurrection and the life (gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny).

The elect celebrate their conversion and full communion during the Easter Vigil, when they will be baptized, confirmed, and participate in Holy Eucharist.

In the weeks to come, you may or may not see these ancient rituals celebrated at Mass. In any event, please pray for all the candidates, the elect, their sponsors and families —

and give thanks to God for the growth in our community of faith.



## Celebrate the gift of consecrated life

St. John Paul II established the World Day for Consecrated Life in 1997 to help the entire Church “to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of the practice of the evangelical counsels and, at the same time, it is intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.”

The pope chose February 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, when Mary and Joseph presented their infant son to God in the temple, as the date for this observance.

This feast is also known as Candlemas Day, the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to “reflect the light and love of Jesus Christ to all peoples through their unique witness of selfless service, such as caring for the poor, the contemplative work of prayer, or through their professional careers.”

The World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated globally on February 2, and in parishes on February 4–5 to highlight the gift of consecrated persons for the whole Church. A few persons from St. Patrick’s have made this commitment; among them Fr. Anthony Co, Deacon Cliff Maduzia, Minette Sternke, Fr. Alex Millar, and Paulist Sr. Jackie. (You will know of others who have made this gift of themselves.) Remember them in a special way as you pray for all consecrated women and men for their renewed commitment.

There are several ways for us to celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life. The consecrated might be invited to publicly renew their vows at Mass, for

instance. We might send cards of support to newer entrants, or ask to visit a motherhouse to meet and pray with sisters, brothers, and priests. Organizations might invite a vocation director to visit their classroom, meeting, or faith group to learn more about consecrated life. We may send flowers or make a donation to a

religious community. The consecrated may invite others to discern their vocation to consecrated life.

\*

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GO FORTH!** Remember the beauty of your first call. Jesus continues to call you today with the same full love and untamed grace. **GO FORTH!** There is always more to do, to encounter, to be grateful for, to be astonished by. Begin and end with the joy of prayer—the marrow of consecrated life. **GO FORTH!** Each of us has a role to play in the Church. Witness and sow well each day, and look to tomorrow with hope. **GO FORTH!** Grow in love for God so that others will be attracted by the divine light in you. Welcome the new vocations the Lord sends to continue the

work of consecration. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of God and first disciple of her son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

— Pope Francis

We all have a vocation, and we’re all invited and encouraged to live it out as best we can. Pope Francis reminds us of this gift and tells us, “The world’s in crisis, and whoever you are, you can do something about it.”



Sr. Jackie (right) with her grandmother.



## A tale of three chalices

Have you ever noticed that there are different chalices used during Mass at St. Patrick's? Where did they all come from and who owned them originally?

Let's begin with that blue chalice, which, though modern in appearance, is the oldest. It



belonged to Msgr. Paul Kinder. The blue color is an enamel covering on a gold cup, with silhouettes of people etched into the enamel. The chalice was made for Msgr. Kinder by a community of cloistered nuns. The original paten and a later replacement both broke over time, so a gold paten was purchased for use in their place.

After Msgr. Kinder retired, he was asked by then-pastor Fr. Doug Hennessy to help out at St.

Patrick's with sacramental duties such as celebrating Mass and hearing confessions. While serving here, this compassionate man used his own money to bring two different people up from South America for medical treatment that was unavailable in their home countries. It was during the second outreach that Msgr. Kinder died from a heart attack. Parishioner Mary Lou Menches frequently has been heard to remark that she considers his chalice a second-class relic because it was used by such a saintly man.

One of the other chalices was dedicated to Deacon David Zola after his death on September 28, 2018. Dr. (Deacon) (Sir Knight) David Zola attained the fourth degree as a Knight of Columbus. After his death the Knights of Columbus, at their October 21, 2018, meeting, voted to purchase a chalice in his memory to be used



during Mass at St. Patrick's. The Knights had their symbol placed near the bottom of the chalice and

had the bottom of the chalice engraved "In Memory of Deacon Zola Urbana Council 5752." This is a fitting tribute to Deacon David Zola, who loved above all to assist the priest at the altar during Mass.

The third chalice is one that our pastor, Fr. Anthony Co, has



sometimes used. He once told our congregation that at his ordination he used his great uncle's chalice, which was engraved "Father William Anthony." Later, when cousin William Anthony was also ordained a priest, Father thought it appropriate to give his great uncle's chalice to his cousin to use for ten years. The ten years will soon end, so our pastor should then be using his great uncle's chalice again.

All of these chalices are beautiful, made more beautiful perhaps by what they are used for, to contain the consecrated wine, the precious blood of Christ. Which do you admire the most?



## Parish Council News

At their December meeting Council members laid plans for the proposed parish pictorial directory, deciding to go with the services of a business called “ucdir,” based on Holy Cross Parish’s positive experience with this company. Dates were set and arrangements made for parishioners to sign up for their photo shoot. The company gives a free photo directory and an 8 × 10 photo to each parishioner whose photo is taken; it will also offer photo packages for sale.

Plans were also made for their holiday party, held on January 5. The menu included barbecue provided by the parish and side dishes by Council members.

A new centering prayer group has been established; it meets at 11:00 a.m. on Thursdays in the church’s family room. Karen Jones has served as facilitator for the first few meetings, and Carl Nelson has agreed to assume this role. The centering prayer group that meets via Zoom on Monday evenings, 7:00–8:15 p.m., will continue to meet.

Fr. Anthony asked that Council members’ questions about “Four Ways Forward” be directed to Mary Tate. Discussion focused on where to begin with evangelization, how to get people in the door. It was noted that the Vineyard church finds more single parents

attending services, whereas St. Patrick’s seems to have had more young people at Mass in the last year or so.

It was suggested that delivery of Peace Meals be made a parish ministry. A flyer for the Coffee Shop might encourage interest and participation.

The fence around the parish grounds east of the church has drawn some adverse comments. Father Anthony explained that the fence was installed to protect children at play from street traffic and from people who might wish to do them harm.

## Second centering prayer group formed

Centering prayer is modeled after an ancient Christian contemplative prayer of silence. There is no right or wrong way to pray in silence but only to have the intention to *be present with God*. Jesus invites us to pray in silence: “*When you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father in secret*” (Matthew 6:6).

A centering prayer group is now meeting in person on Thursdays, 11:00-12 noon, in the family room at the back of the church. All are welcome and invited to join, whether experienced in centering prayer or new to it. Simply come to pray and be present with God.

Questions? Please contact Carl Nelson (chnelson@illinois.edu or 217/328-0764). He will be happy to hear from you.

STM students and chaperones prepare to leave to participate in the March for Life in Washington, D.C. 1/19/2024.





## Pray for the sick and their caregivers

How often in our daily lives do we think of people who are sick? If they are staying in hospitals, homebound, or living in nursing and care homes, they may be invisible to most of us. Those sitting next to us in the pews may be suffering quietly from chronic illnesses we are not aware of. We may likewise not know individuals who are caregivers, giving of themselves, often in sacrificial ways.

Pope John Paul II instituted the World Day of the Sick on May 13, 1992, to encourage Catholic Christians to pray for those who are sick and suffering, to give hope to them. He also encouraged us to remember and pray for the caregivers who look after the sick. The World Day of the Sick is now celebrated annually on February 11, the feast celebrated liturgically as the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Pope John Paul II had been diagnosed in 1991 with Parkinson's Disease, but it was kept a secret for nearly twelve years. He knew of what he spoke when he said, "Suffering seems to belong to man's transcendence: it is one of those points in which man is in a certain sense destined to go beyond himself, and he is called to this in a mysterious way."

There is a different theme for World Day of the Sick each year, focusing on specific aspects of healthcare and illness and those who care for the sick. Last year the theme focused on illness as part of the human condition, and if experienced alone it can become inhumane. The theme for 2024 is healing love, witnessing to compassion and service. Catholics can observe the day with prayer, care, and reflection on suffering's spiritual importance.

St. Patrick's Prayer Tree is made up of nearly 100 parishioners who respond to prayer requests, most often for those who are ill or dying, although requests include help for school finals, newly wedded couples, safe delivery of a baby, resolution of family problems, and the like – for themselves or others. In this way, we can be sure not to forget those of our faith community who need our prayerful support.

To join the Prayer Tree, please contact Mary Lou Menches ([mmenches@illinois.edu](mailto:mmenches@illinois.edu) or 217/344-1125). All requests are kept in confidence, no specific prayer or time for prayer is required, and a member may ask to be removed from the prayer tree at any time. To submit a prayer request, please send your request to our parish's Prayer Tree email ([prayertree@stpaturbana.org](mailto:prayertree@stpaturbana.org)) or call the parish office.



### Prayer of a caregiver

Dear Lord,  
 Please be within me today,  
 Calm my thoughts as I rest in you.  
 Prepare my heart to be open  
 To the pain and hurt of others.  
 Let your love be in my words,  
 As we walk the journey of healing.  
 Help me to be silent when words fail.  
 Let your healing voice be the balm  
 To comfort souls in need.  
 Comfort me, Lord, when my heart aches,  
 And let me bring compassion  
 To those who are suffering.  
 Guide my words and help me  
 To listen with my heart  
 So that others can hear your voice.  
 Use me as a vessel of your love  
 To bring peace to souls.  
 Send your Holy Spirit to strengthen me,  
 And let your presence bring me peace.  
 And may that same peace be the joy  
 That shines forth to touch all I encounter.  
 Amen.

—Sarah Burman-Smith

### Prayer of a sick person

I reach out to you, my God,  
 in this time of need.  
 Carry me on the difficult days  
 when I have no strength.  
 Wrap me in your love when I am discouraged.  
 May your grace wash over me and refresh me.  
 And as you hold me tenderly in the palm of your  
 hand,  
 I ask for healing of all my afflictions.  
 Amen.

—Chaplain Daniel Doyon



## Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Bryan Boyle

### Bryan's Make-Ahead Coffee Cake



- 3/4 c butter, softened
- 1 c sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 c all-purpose flour
- 1 t baking soda
- 1 t ground nutmeg
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 c sour cream
- 3/4 c packed brown sugar
- 1/2 c chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1 t ground cinnamon
- 1 c confectioners' sugar
- 1-2 T milk

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy; beat in 1 egg at a time. In another bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, nutmeg, and salt. Beat into creamed mixture alternately with sour cream. Spread into greased 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Mix brown sugar, nuts, and cinnamon; sprinkle over top. Refrigerate, covered, overnight. Next morning, remove coffee cake from refrigerator while oven heats to 350 degrees. Bake, uncovered, until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 35-40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack 10 minutes. Mix confectioners' sugar and milk; drizzle over warm coffee cake, and serve.

*If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (344-1125, mmenches@illinois.edu). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!*

**St. Patrick's Parish In Focus** is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by the first weekend of the month for an upcoming issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to infocusstpats@gmail.com. You may also send them to any Communications Committee member (listed with contact information below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. By-lines are generally omitted.

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February Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner



The deadline for submitting articles and news items for the next (**March**) issue is **Sunday, February 4.**