

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

February 2025

Godparents

On February 2, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This recalls the events recorded in St Luke's gospel (2:22–38). Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, in accordance with Jewish law. While there, they met Simeon, “a just and pious man,” and Anna the prophetess, who “was constantly in the temple, worshipping day and night.” Perhaps when you hear this story you think of what these two people tell you about Jesus, that he would be a light to all nations and the deliverance of Israel.

Have you ever considered what impact Anna and Simeon had on Mary and Joseph? Luke says that the child's father and mother were marveling at what was being said about him. Being a parent is always challenging. Being the parents of Jesus gave them many additional fears and dangers, along with the joys and blessings. When the days were hard, Mary and Joseph could remember what Anna and Simeon had said, and would have been encouraged by their words.

Being a godparent is a lot like the role of Anna and Simeon. It's

helpful to the parents to have a faithful Catholic friend who can be a part of the child's life of faith. It's helpful to the child, as he or she grows in the faith, to have someone else they can ask questions about their faith and prayer. There are many ways to live out one's faith in daily life, and it's good for the child

to see more than one way to do so.

This is at the heart of being a godparent. The rite says, “You have come to present this child for baptism. You must make it your constant care to bring her up in the practice of the faith. See that

the divine life which God gives her is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in her heart.” With these words in mind, it's clear why the Church requires that the godparents be practicing Catholics. It does not require that they be theologians or superheroes, just good, faithful people.

If you are asked to be a godparent, congratulations! This

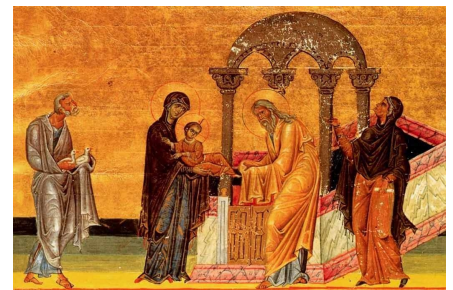
See **Godparents** on page 2



Thanks be to God for consecrated individuals

Forty days after Christmas, on February 2, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This feast is called, in the Christian East, the Feast of Encounter – the encounter between God, who became a child to bring newness to our world, and an expectant humanity, represented by the elderly man and woman in the Temple.

The celebration of this feast is also marked as Candlemas Day, the day on which candles are blessed, symbolizing Christ the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Christ to all people.



In 1997, Pope St. John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women

See **Consecrated** on page 2

Godparents

from page 1

shows that the parents recognize you as a person of faith, someone they hope will be part of their child's life for many years.

But how might you go about it? Here are some ideas:

Keep your godchild and the family in your prayers. This is a blessing for the child. It's also a blessing for you, helping you to be a model of faithfulness.

Try to remain connected with your godchild and the parents through the years. Sometimes people move away or friendships fade. But do what you can to be a resource of faith for them.

Help your godchild to remember his or her "baptism birthday," the anniversary of the day they were baptized. This gives you an opportunity to talk about growing as a child of God. For young children, a small gift that involves water might be appropriate. Soap crayons maybe? For an older child, how about a storybook about Jesus or one of the saints? For a young adult, how about an outing that will give you time together?

Try to celebrate milestones in their faith life. Can you be there for their First Communion and Confirmation?

A godchild is never too old for a godparent, not even when the child is fully grown. In fact, the days of young adulthood may be the time when they can most benefit from having you as a person who can give them perspective on the faith.

Anna and Simeon were a blessing to the Holy Family, just as the family was a blessing to them. When we accompany a young person on the journey of faith, be sure that God will send blessings on both of you!

Consecrated

from page 1

and men in consecrated life. It is attached to the Feast of the Presentation on February 2, but moved to the following Sunday in parishes to highlight the gift of consecrated persons for the whole Church.

The primary purpose of this day is to encourage prayer for all who have made commitments to consecrated life, that they may continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and to respond generously to God's gift of

their vocation, and also to thank them on this special day for their response to this gift.

On this day remember all those in consecrated life, the men and women religious you've known as teachers and friends, perhaps as spiritual directors. Offer your prayers for them and express your appreciation for their life of service.

The U.S. bishops offer us this prayer:

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as sisters, brothers, religious priests, consecrated virgins, hermits, and members of Secular Institutes. Renew their knowledge and love of you, and send your Holy Spirit to help them respond generously and courageously to your will. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Baptism at St. Patrick's

We welcome to our faith community **Brianna Lapepe**, daughter of Didier Lapepe and Pierette Kapinga. Brianna was baptized by Fr. Julien Esse at St. Patrick's on November 24, 2024. Let us celebrate Baptism with Brianna. Baptism is the first sacrament. It is the sacrament by which we become sons and daughters of Christ.

Baptism preparation class is offered at St. Patrick at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. Parents, godparents, and all are welcome.

Also attending baptism preparation class in

November were Armondo Jose Torres, who will be godfather for a baby boy to be baptized in Mexico, and Reed and Jessica Miyrne, whose baby daughter will be baptized in North Carolina.



The new saints of Notre Dame Cathedral

In April 2019, people all over the world watched in dismay as fire engulfed the roof of the famed medieval cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Many wondered if it could be saved and if it would ever be used as a place of worship again.

On December 7, 2024, those questions were answered. The beautifully restored and refurbished Notre Dame cathedral was reopened. On Sunday, December 8, the inaugural Mass was celebrated. Among the many rituals undertaken in that Mass was the consecration of the new altar. An important part of that ritual is the placement of a sealed reliquary in the altar, containing the relics of a saint or saints.

The new Notre Dame altar now contains the relics of five saints, each with a connection to Paris. Each of these saints represents the different ways in which extraordinary women and men of faith have responded to God's call.



Saint Marie Eugénie (1817-1898)

is perhaps the most fitting of saints to have a presence in Notre Dame because it was in that very cathedral that she was struck by the call of her vocation. As she wrote in a letter years later, "The first signs of my vocation appeared under the arches of Notre-Dame during the conferences of 1836...

the desire to consecrate myself to God's cause and to the Church, without knowing where or how..." Within a few years, she helped found the Religious of the Assumption and dedicated herself to the education of the poor.

Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat

(1779-1865) was 16 when she came to Paris. It was 1796, in the midst of the French Revolution. She wished to become a Carmelite but that and other orders had been abolished under the revolutionary authority. Having been given an extensive education by her older brother, Sophie knew the importance and value of education for women. When she founded the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1800, she made its mission education for girls and women, establishing schools for daughters of both the poor and the rich.



When she founded the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1800, she made its mission education for girls and women, establishing schools for daughters of both the poor and the rich.

Saint Catherine Labouré (1806-1876) came to Paris to work as a servant. Seeing much poverty and misery there, she joined the Sisters of Charity, an order founded by St. Vincent de Paul, when she was 24. In

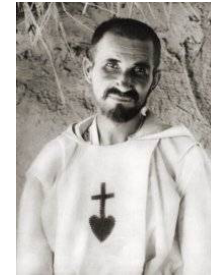


1830, she had several visions of Mary, including one in which the Blessed Mother instructed her to have the now famous Miraculous Medal made. Catherine told only her confessor about her visions. It was only after her 45 years of service to the poor, shortly before she died, that she made an account of her visions to anyone else.

Saint Charles de Foucauld

(1858-1916) was born of an aristocratic French family who traced their lineage back to the Crusades.

grandparents in sent to Paris in Jesuit school, school; he was to Algeria. studies in Morocco serious. A

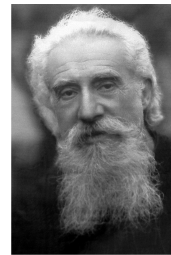


Raised by his Strasbourgs, he was 1874 to attend a then to cavalry eventually posted Meanwhile, his Algeria and became more "thunderous

confession" to a priest in the Church of Augustin in Paris ended his profligate lifestyle, and he entered the Trappist monastery of Notre-Dame des Neiges in 1890. Seven years later he started a journey that led to his ordination as a priest at age 43. He settled among the Tuareg people of Algeria and spent the rest of his life in Tamanghasset, a village in a mountainous part of the Sahara desert, sharing their hardships and studying their language and culture. In 1916, he was murdered by bandits who were trying to kidnap him.

Blessed Vladimir Ghika (1873-

1954) was a Romanian, the grandson of the last prince sovereign of Moldavia. Raised Eastern Orthodox, Vladimir converted to Catholicism at age 29. He wanted to become a priest but Pope Pius X strongly urged him to dedicate himself instead to the lay apostolate.



Vladimir dedicated himself to Catholic charity work, opening a free clinic and founding a free hospital and ambulance. He took part in health services during the Balkan War of 1913. During World War I, he worked as a diplomat. Finally, in 1923 at the age of 50, he was ordained a priest and served in Paris, where he was friends with famous intellectuals such as Jacques Maritain and Paul Claudel but lived among the poor in a shantytown in Villejuif. In 1939, he returned to Romania. Caught in the Second World War, he refused to leave Romania because he wished to stay with the poor and sick. When the Communists came to power in 1947, he refused to leave for the same reason. He was arrested by the Communists in 1952, imprisoned, and tortured. He died in prison in 1954.

A central and essential element of our faith

Are you familiar with Catholic Social Teaching, which the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has called “a central and essential element of our faith”? If not, you are not alone. In 1998, the USCCB found that many Catholics were not familiar with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and, further, that “many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith.” This, they believe, “weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel.”

There are seven core principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person** Every human is created in the image of God. The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.
2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation** How we organize our society – in economics, politics, law, and policy – directly affects human dignity. People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good.
3. **Rights and Responsibilities** Catholic tradition teaches that we can protect human dignity and achieve healthy communities only if human rights are protected and both personal and social responsibilities are met.
4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** In a society deeply divided between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers** Work is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.
6. **Solidarity** We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Pope John Paul II described this as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, no. 38).

7. **Care for God’s Creation** We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. As we live out our faith in relationship to God’s creation, we are called to protect people and the planet. Care for the earth is a requirement of our faith.



To learn more about this important part of our faith, you could start with this video series used at St. Patrick several years ago, “Catholic Social Teaching 101” (www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101) or look at the many Catholic Social Teaching resources available from the USCCB.

Our task is to seek and find Christ in our world as it is, not as it might be. ... We must be willing to see him and acclaim him, even at the very moment when our whole life’s work and all its meaning seem to collapse.

—Thomas Merton

*We belong to music
and to him
who is
the Song of Songs.*

—Ruth R. Rains

Our sick and their caregivers need our prayers

The World Day of the Sick is observed, appropriately enough, on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is a special occasion to reflect on redemptive suffering, pastoral care, love of neighbor, and respect for human life.

On this day especially, remember to pray for all our sick and their caregivers. Try to find ways you can involve yourself in that care, even if only for brief periods of time. Perhaps you might volunteer as one of the Extraordinary Ministers who brings Communion to hospital patients or the homebound. You might send a card, arrange to bring an occasional meal, make a friendly visit, or offer respite or other support to a caregiver.



Many of our parishioners are chronically or terminally ill, recovering from surgery or disabled, homebound by age or frailty. Many of them are lonely and suffer from the lack of connectedness to our parish community. Pray for them especially on this World Day of the Sick, but do pray for them often, even daily, for prayer is a great healer of body and spirit.

Here are two prayers to help you get started.

Prayer for 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.

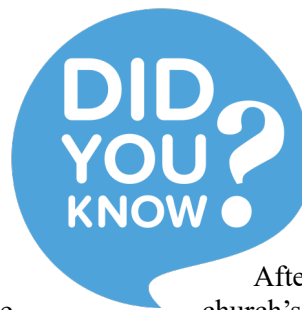
As you hold me tenderly in the palm of your hand,
I ask for healing of all my afflictions.
Amen.

—Chaplain Daniel Doyon

Prayer for 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.
May that same peace be the joy
that shines forth to touch all I encounter.
Amen.

—Sarah Burman-Smith



The parish photo directory has arrived! During the maintenance work in the church, you can apply to the parish office for your copy.

Afterward, look for the copies in the church's gathering space and check out your copy. Lots of familiar and new faces – hundreds, in fact – that can be a great introduction to the members of our faith community you'll want to know!

Thank you, dear Jesus, for all you have given me, for Christ asks for a home in your soul...where you and he, alone together, can laugh and be silent and be delighted with one another.

—Caryll Houselander

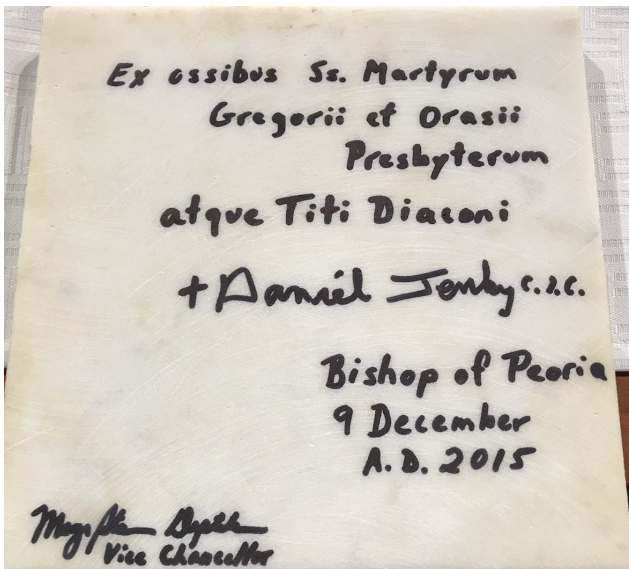
Relics? Here?

Did you know that the altar in St. Patrick's church is graced with the relics of two saints? Yes, indeed, these were placed under the altar that Bishop Daniel Jenky consecrated during the rededication of our expanded church.

In the early years of the Church when the followers of Christ were suffering persecution, they buried their deceased in what are now referred to as the Catacombs, and worship services took place over their tombs in recognition of their fidelity to Christ, even unto death.

In later centuries, relics of the saints were routinely placed on or under the altar in an altar stone, "a witness to the Church's belief that the Eucharist celebrated on the altar is the source of the grace that won sanctity for the saints" (USCCB, *Built of Living Stones*, #60). Following the Second Vatican Council, authenticated relics of martyrs or other saints are placed beneath the altar instead of on the altar or set into an altar stone.

The accompanying photograph shows the container (reliquary) in which two saints' relics, authenticated by Bishop Jenky, have been sealed and are kept under our altar. We see that they are relics of a presbyter (priest), St. Gregory of Oresii, and a deacon, St. Titus. Efforts to learn something about them have proved fruitless, but we can still thank God for their holiness and pray to them for our parish and for our own fidelity to Christ, hopefully also unto death.



Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him because he knows my name.

—Psalm 91

Help needed!

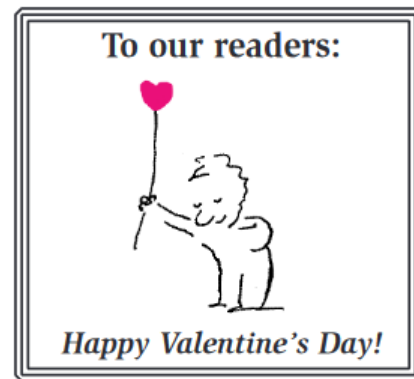
In Focus has been going strong for 43 years now, and we can do this because of the many people who pitch in. We have three special needs right now:

LAYOUT Two or three times a year, scheduled in advance, you'd receive a file of edited text, photos, and graphics. You'd have three days to do the layout and create a pdf using whatever publishing software you're already familiar with.

WRITERS Every couple of months, you'd receive a topic, knowledgeable contact people, and web resources. You'd have about 10 days to write 400–600 words on a topic.

PHOTO EDITOR Photos give vibrancy to *In Focus*, but it takes time to select them each month. You'd read the draft of *In Focus* and select photos to help tell the story of our parish life.

Can you help? Contact Cathy Salika at csalika@illinois.edu.



Vocation Prayer

Father, Jesus told us the harvest is great but the workers are few. Few and even fewer today, we hear. We can teach our children about you and about your church, we can visit the sick and the dying, we can share our faith with those who respond to your call to become Catholics, we can encourage those who are drawn to return to your Church, we can nurture a sense of community in our parishes — there is much we can do as lay men and women.

But we need our priests, not only for Mass, Eucharist, and the sacraments, but also for their wisdom, counsel, prayerfulness, and so much else on our journey of faith. Hear our plea, Father: call many young men and women to a life consecrated to your service. Stir their hearts and wills to follow your call. Give them courage and steadfastness in their loving care for us, to see us all safely home with you at the last!

St. Patrick's annual cookie and craft sale

On a Sunday morning drive to St. Patrick on December 15, the streets were quiet and empty of cars. Though the church parking lot was full of cars, it was devoid of people. Then, on entering the door to St.



Brigid Hall, you suddenly heard the joyful sounds of the choir practicing, and the voices of many

parishioners enjoying coffee and sweet rolls. Added to this chatter that day was the vocalized delight of many parishioners discovering all the delicious baked goods and homemade craft items in the Women of St. Patrick's annual Christmas Cookie and Craft Sale.

There were trays and trays of sweets displayed,



rivaling Willie Wonka's chocolate factory. The cookies were so beautiful and delicious-looking that even a savory foods lover could not resist their sweet call. Cookie tins were cheaply provided to fill, since a dozen cookies were only \$5. There were also homemade breads and pretzels to buy.

Then there were the homemade crafts to purchase for last-minute Christmas presents or for yourself. We have so many talented parishioners who made quilts, wreaths, pillows, dolls, dish towels, pot holders, and

crocheted hats and scarves. There was even a table full of Hallmark ornaments and cards.



The sale raised \$1454.75, according to its organizer, Roxanne Munch. The funds raised will be put to use in subsidizing a variety of needs, with priority given to the needs of the parish. What fun! What a great way to deepen the Christmas spirit!



Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Evelyn Boastick



Cherry Cobbler Pie

1 can unsweetened cherries
 1-2/3 c sugar (divided)
 1 stick margarine
 1 c flour
 1/2 c milk
 1-1/2 t baking powder
 1/8 t salt

Heat cherries and 2/3 cup sugar. Melt margarine in 9×9-inch baking dish or pan. Mix remaining sugar, flour, milk, baking powder, and salt. Pour batter on top of melted margarine. Pour cherries and juice on top of batter. *Do not stir.* Bake at 350° until golden brown. Other fruits may be substituted for cherries. Serve with cream or ice cream.

If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (217-344-1125, mmenches@illinois.edu). The only Requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!

St. Patrick Parish
IN FOCUS

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 submitter.

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

Editorial board:

Judy Fierke, 217-352-7670,
j-fierke@comcast.net
 Elizabeth Hendricks, 217-328-2184,
elizabethwhend@gmail.com
 Mary Lou Menches, 217-344-1125,
mmenches@illinois.edu
 Alia Rdissi, 281-382-1623,
aliardissi@yahoo.com
 Cathy Salika, 217-367-7861,
csalika@illinois.edu

Associates: John Colombo, Rachael McMillan, Rick Partin, Shirley Splittstoesser, Jerry Walsh, and recent volunteers: Alex Bautista, Charlotte Kiesel, Stephen Odara, Laura Wright, Lena Wright, and Stan Yanchus.

Articles, information, and photos for this issue were provided by Judy Fierke, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Lou Menches, Alia Rdissi, Cathy Salika, and Shirley Splittstoesser. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Jerry Walsh; page layout was prepared by Shirley Splittstoesser.



February saints by Fr. George Wuellner



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of **In Focus (March)** is **Sunday, February 9.**