

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS



www.stpaturbana.org

March 2025

Saying Yes!

Toward the end of this month, on March 25, we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, when Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of the savior. Mary's "Yes!" to the angel rings down

through the centuries as a model of embracing what God is doing in us.

But the odd point about Mary's yes is that no one asked her a question. She simply responded to the situation

she was offered with generosity, putting her very life on the line. She responded with trust, not knowing where it would take her. She responded with faith, hope, and love, relying on the love of God to see her through.

One situation we all are being offered is the season of Lent. How will you respond? How will you say yes to God?

You might say yes to sharing or giving money or goods to those in need. You might say yes to generosity, giving more than you think you can give. You might say yes to reaching out, giving your time and abilities to someone in need.

You might say yes to time apart with God, who always delights in your presence. You might say yes to quietude, unplugging from social

media to make time for other things. You might say yes to our faith community, growing deeper into our common life of prayer and the sacraments.

You might say yes to peacemaking, speaking up for someone who is not being treated with love. You might say yes to humility, fasting from media that make you feel angry or self-righteous. You might say yes to

justice, finding ways to engage your faith in the public sphere.

You might say yes to reconciliation, coming to the Sacrament if you have been away from it for a while. You might say yes to forgiveness, reaching out to someone from whom you have been distant or estranged. You might say yes to friendship, repairing a relationship that has gone away. You might say yes to family, seeking ways to grow closer and to care for one another.

Say yes to these things as Mary did. Say yes with faith, trusting that God will guide you and be with you. Say yes with hope, relying on God to do more than you can imagine with your efforts. Say yes with generosity, knowing that the love that God has given you is the love you must share with others.



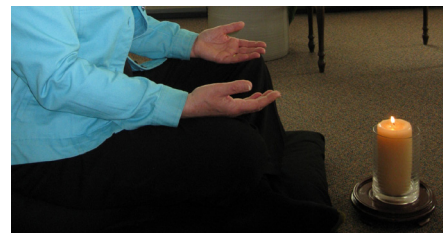
How do you pray?

By David Sandel

I pray the Rosary, and the Our Father, and ask God for what I think I need and, even more, what I think others need. I pray out loud and silently, and I pray with hope, often in desperate circumstances that seem to offer no hope otherwise. How do you find yourself praying?

Henri Nouwen offers another way of praying, simply sitting and saying, "Here I am, Lord." Anything else, he says, just gets in the way. He just sits with his Lord.

Along with my more directed prayers during which I mostly ask God to listen, I am learning to pray, along with Henri Nouwen, in silence. "Here I am, Lord." This type of prayer is called "Centering Prayer," a few minutes once or twice a day when I stop my busy-ness and settle into the practice of leaving my



thoughts and feelings on the altar, so to speak.

I am learning not to follow those thoughts, however, but to let them go instead. Otherwise, my thoughts tend to turn my awareness back toward myself rather than toward God. Father Thomas Keating, who helped familiarize this centuries-

see **How do you pray** on page 3

While we were away...

During two weekends in January, St. Patrick's parishioners worshipped at St. John on campus instead of in our own church. What was happening at St. Patrick that made this necessary?

It all began when some plaster fell from above the St. Patrick's choir loft area in the old section of the church. A needed small repair started a chain reaction that involved multiple contractors: plastering; painting; and carpentry, electrical, and plumbing work. St. Patrick's



Ceiling repaired

Facilities Coordinator Manager, Craig Goad, took bids and then stayed with the contractors daily and on weekends to complete the renovation on schedule.

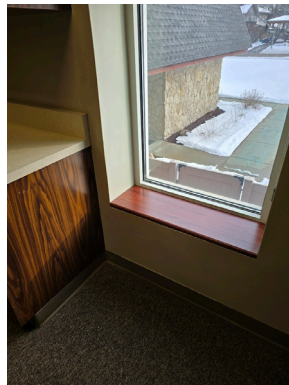
A crew erected scaffolding to allow the plaster crew to check the recessed sections above the choir loft from which plaster had fallen.

They found that twenty-six of those sections needed to be repaired and repainted.



LED light fixtures

About four years ago, the west side of the church had been tuck-pointed and sealed. The contractors found and repaired new damage from water down to the wood lathe. During the 2015 expansion, latex was painted over the old oil-based paint. Contractors scraped layers of paint back through gold and even red. This repair was not structural, but needed to be done since the old oil-based paint was breaking away. After scraping down to the plaster, a layering product was put in along with bonding agents for the new paint to adhere. Ninety percent



New window sills

of the old church was painted, except behind the new altar because of its beautiful texture.

The ten lights above the old altar, which is now the Marian alcove, were replaced with LED light fixtures, which are brighter, last longer,



Organ extension

and are more energy efficient. The electricians went behind the walls, climbed to the top and walked on



New chair rail

the 2-by-4 inch frames after having secured themselves by using safety harnesses. The lights in the gathering space were also updated with LED light fixtures.

Smaller details were taken care of while the contractors were here. New oak window sills were installed in the vesting sacristy, family room, and confessional. The stand for the organ was extended 19 inches to allow for more space for those using the south entrance. The existing chair rail was continued along the back wall for a finished look.

When parishioners returned to St. Patrick on the last weekend in January, they walked in to find a beautifully refreshed interior worship space.

Unsung Heroes

A project as extensive as the recent church renovation was accomplished by the efforts of dedicated employees and parishioners who gave it their all to have the work well done and on time.

St. Patrick's Facilities Coordinator Manager, Craig Goad, volunteered many extra hours to coordinate the

plastering, painting, carpenter work, electrical work, and plumbing. Craig is employed for 20 hours a week at St. Patrick's and works elsewhere for 40 hours a week. During the three weekends and two weeks of St. Patrick's renovation, he reached into his own pockets to bring breakfast and many treats for the work crews. Craig has worked in trades and realizes that when work crews are happy, morale is higher and the quality of their work improves. The renovation at St. Patrick's benefited from his dedication to the tasks at hand. Is it any wonder that Craig took the week off following renovation to decompress?

Mick Harmon works a 40-hour week from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. as St. Patrick's custodian. During the renovation the parish center was open, so Mick's regular work continued. Renovation during the blustery winter weather added to Mick's work. He spread products to reduce danger



Craig Goad and Mick Harmon

of slipping on the ice leading to St. Patrick's doors. Then he spent extra time cleaning the gunk that was tracked into the church and parish center by workmen and parishioners.

The construction crews also cleaned on a daily basis.

Ultimately, St. Patrick's hired a separate cleaning crew. They hired Mick outside of his regular work hours since he knew the needs of the buildings.

Mick has been previously recognized by Fr. Chase Hilgenbrink. The letter on the wall in the hallway leading to the classrooms reads, "From Fr. Chase, Catholic Diocese of Peoria. I write to you today as the Vocation Director of the Diocese of Peoria...to inform and congratulate you on the cleanest restrooms in the diocese."

Praise God and congratulations on this most honorable and charitable achievement." Fr. Chase had also mentioned this twice during Mass.

Volunteers came to do various work. Final cleaning was done by: Stacey Goad, Joseph Youakim, Chuck Shaw, Mick Harmon, Diane Wilhelm, Jon McCoy, Donald Kapp, Anna Conner, Sharon Lawhead, and Craig Goad. Craig bought breakfast and pizza for the volunteers. Mark Gerhart did the carpentry work to extend the organ stand. Most of Craig's family came with him on a weekend before the renovation began, taking down the Stations of the Cross and the heavy sound panels that the stations were mounted on. John Shiels and Donald Kaap helped with different small projects throughout the renovation. Artwork and banners were taken down by the Arts Committee. Other volunteers wish to be anonymous, but please do accept the thanks of the entire parish for your dedication!



Volunteers enjoy some well-earned pizza.

How do you pray? from page 1

old method of praying in this way, suggests that instead of following our thoughts, we choose a simple word, like "Jesus," or "Holy," or even something with less religious connotation, like "Purple." The idea is to let our thoughts come into our minds and then, ever so gently, let them leave again.

In a wonderful metaphor, Fr. Keating dons his virtual scuba gear and

settles down under the surface of a flowing stream. He finds a boulder and sits on it during his prayer time. When a thought rises in his mind, he invites the thought to rise up and float away with the current. If his thought won't go willingly, rather than try harder he remembers his "sacred word" and repeats it silently a few times. Always he continues his centering prayer. He does not seek to empty his mind, nor to direct his consciousness toward God, but simply to sit in God's presence and trust

God with himself.

Yes, once silence filters in through uninvited thoughts and feelings, like Henri Nouwen I can simply say, "I love you, Lord." And "I'm here." And then simply sit with him.

God forgives you.

Forgive others;

forgive yourself.

—New Zealand Prayer

Book

St. Thomas More marches for life

Forty-one STM students and 10 chaperones boarded a bus on a pilgrimage to support life in Washington, D.C. They were gone January 22-26, 2025. They had a full agenda. As recounted by Jessica McMahon who, together with Joanna Yallaly, led the group:

Thursday, Jan. 23: The day was filled with much walking, museums and monuments. The end of our time spent on the national mall was a tour of the Capitol Building. We arrived at our home away from home, Blessed Sacrament parish and school, unpacked the bus, went to Mass, ate pizza, and had a bit of free time, to shower, play games, and rest. The end of our evening was spent in small group discussion with Msgr. Brownsey's meditation from afar, on shame. It was a long, fun, and tiring day.

Friday, Jan. 24: March day! Today was filled with many emotions. After being treated to breakfast by our host school, we headed to the Life Fest rally at George Mason University. Beautiful testimonials were given by a woman who chose abortion and another woman who was very close to choosing abortion but ultimately chose life. Our homily at Mass was given by a priest whose young mother chose life and gave him up for adoption. Many of our students and chaperones took the opportunity to go to confession.

After grabbing a complimentary Chick-fil-A lunch, we were off to the National Mall for the national rally. Security

this year was very tight and there were so many marchers from around the country, that we were resigned to the fact that we wouldn't be able to get through the long lines of security to hear the speakers. After over an hour of waiting, we finally made it through, just in time to hear J.D. Vance. Then we marched...and sang...and marched...and cheered ...and marched some more.

So much joy filled the streets of Washington – it was a great reminder that we aren't alone in this fight for life. We prayed our daily rosary together in the church after the march. Our evening ended with a testimonial on adoption given by one of our chaperones, Jackie Grandone. Msgr. Brownsey led us in a meditation on greed, followed by small group discussion, and spiritual adoption of a baby in danger of abortion.

Saturday, Jan. 25: This morning we had some time to explore the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception before attending Mass in the Crypt and then we began our journey home.

It was a pilgrimage filled with so much joy! Thank you for your support!

Students from St. Patrick who attended the March for Life will be speaking at all of the Masses on March 1 and 2. They will also share their stories in the April issue of In Focus.



Baptisms at St. Patrick's

We welcome to our faith community **Ellie Frances Martin**, daughter of Andrew Martin and Alysa Baretta-Martin. **Ellie Frances** was baptized by Deacon Cliff Maduzia at St. Patrick's on December 21, 2024.

We welcome to our faith community **Hawana Kasweka**, daughter of Glody Pezo-Kasweka and Exauce Madienga Dienda. **Hawana** was baptized by Deacon Cliff Maduzia at St. Patrick's on December 29, 2024.

We celebrate their baptism with **Ellie Frances** and **Ha-**

wana. 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 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. Parents, godparents, and all are welcome.

Attending the preparation class in December 2024 were Evauce Dienda whose daughter **Hawana** was born in September and baptized on December 29, 2024, and Nathalic Gondola, **Hawana's** grandmother.

Holy Cross celebrates Catholic Schools Week

National Catholic Schools Week (CSW) has celebrated Catholic education annually since 1974. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week. This year, it was observed from January 26 through February 1 and the theme was “Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community.”



Many of our school-age parishioners attend Holy Cross Catholic School, where they spent the week celebrating with various activities.

The first day of CSW was celebrated with student-created prayer cards distributed at Masses at Holy Cross Church. The middle-school choir sang at the morning Masses, and that afternoon the High School of St. Thomas More hosted an art exhibition, featuring student art from all Holy Cross grades.

On Monday, dubbed the “Souper Bowl,” students donated a can of soup to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in exchange

for being able to wear a football team jersey of their choice to school.

Tuesday, the school celebrated its students with an open house and an all-school recitation of the rosary.

Wednesday’s theme was a celebration of our nation, and Thursday focused on vocations, with Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck speaking to students on the topic.

The last day celebrated faculty, staff, and volunteers with a luncheon sponsored by the Parent Teacher Club (PTC) and children’s parents. Teachers and staff dined on fried chicken and various homemade side dishes prepared by parents. The week concluded with a talent show in the school gym, where students showcased their

skills in areas like gymnastics, dancing, and piano. It was an enriching and successful week for all!



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 files 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.



Q: What is a “Jubilee Year”?
How is it special, or different from any other year?

A: The Jubilee Holy Year celebrates the 2025th anniversary of the incarnation of Our Lord, an event of great ecclesial and social significance in the life

of the Church. The concept of “jubilee” has roots in the Jewish practice of Sabbath rest every seven days, which is connected to the creation story in which God created the world in six days and rested on the next. In the Book of Leviticus, this practice was extended to every seventh (sabbatical) year.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus sums up his mission with verses about the Jubilee from the Book of Isaiah: “He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

The Jubilee Year extends the concept of the Sabbatical. Held every 50 years, the Holy Year follows a Sabbath of Sabbaths. The last Jubilee was held in the year 2000, with an emphasis on the forgiveness of debt, even on a national level, and on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (as well as to locally selected churches and shrines) to obtain special indulgences.

On December 24 Pope Francis designated 2025 a “Jubilee Holy Year” (ending on January 1, 2026), a time to renew ourselves as “pilgrims of hope.” Hope can be understood as an insistence on seeing difficulties clearly, yet to pursue action rather than despair. He urges peace-making, a spirit of welcoming to migrants, the forgiveness of debts by affluent nations, and a general call for repentance and mercy.

In tune with the long tradition of Jubilees, Pope Francis emphasizes that the more we see the world as God sees it, the more we will act against injustice.

Vocations our responsibility too?

Vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life are the work of the Holy Spirit, right? And responding to such a call is the responsibility of the one who is called. Or do we also have a responsibility in this matter of vocations?

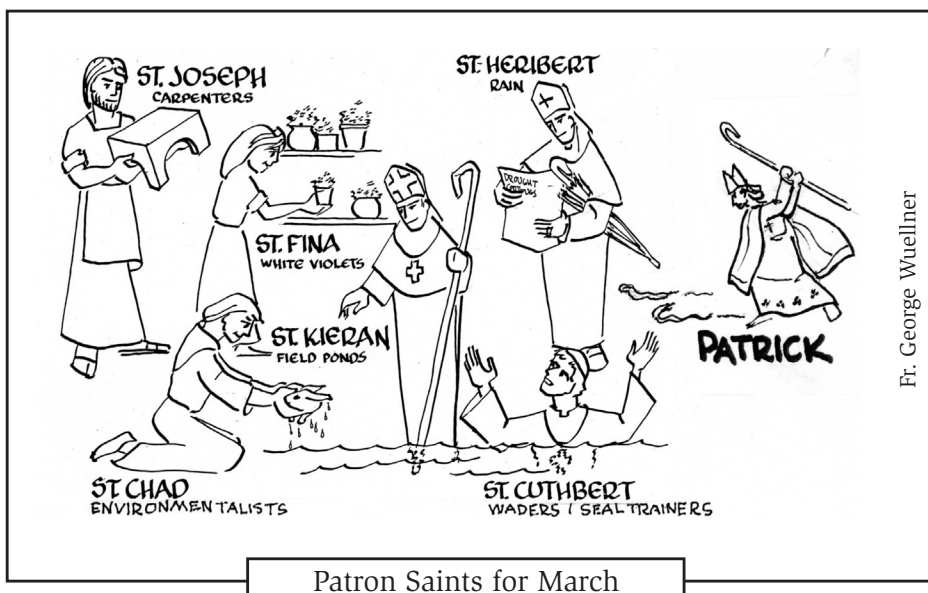
Pope St. John Paul II thought we do. “My wish,” he wrote, “is that the annual celebration of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations raise up in the hearts of the faithful a more intense prayer to obtain new vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life and reawaken the responsibility of all, especially parents and those who educate in the faith, to promote vocations.”

Many of us have pledged prayers for vocations in some special way, such as through the Serra Club’s “Club 31,” offering one weekday Mass with that intention. Countless others pray privately, sometimes publicly, for a generous response from those whom the Spirit calls to the priesthood and consecrated life.

Those called by the Spirit are the boys and girls growing up in our families, our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters. They are the young men and women in our schools or religious education classes, the single men and women we greet at Sunday Mass, perhaps even widowed fathers whom all of us could one day call “Father.”

Many reasons have been suggested for the shortage of vocations – or perhaps the shortage of responses to the call to serve God’s people as priest or religious or missionary. Those who know young people invariably speak of their genuine and deep-seated altruism, their sometimes astonishing generosity in giving of themselves when challenged to respond to those in need,

Perhaps what is lacking is our own readiness to encourage and support this generosity, to keep open the channels of communication so that people are comfortable in talking about a perceived call, to pray often and with perseverance for the Spirit to move the minds and hearts of the faithful and for a generous response to that movement.



Patron Saints for March

Vocation Prayer

Is what I do my calling? To whom do I listen? In the end, what brings peace to my heart? Lord, dearest Lord, let my life speak. I pray that I will hear the task called love – a life of total self-giving, my true vocation.

The Reluctant Archbishop

You never know where you will end up in life, where God wants to use you. That is especially true with many saints. They often fight God's calling, but God always wins.

Toribio Alfonso de Mogrovejo was born November 16, 1538, in the Valladolid province of northern Spain. He was the second son of aristocratic parents. As a pious child, he developed a strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He fasted one day a week and often recited the rosary, but he never considered becoming a priest.

His education befitted a wealthy aristocrat. In 1550, he studied humanities at the College of Valladolid, followed by law at the University of Salamanca, where he later joined the faculty.

In 1571, King Phillip II heard of Turibius' learning and virtuous reputation, so he appointed him Grand Inquisitor on the Inquisition Court in Granada. Soon King Phillip II nominated him for the vacant Archbishopric in Lima, Peru. Since Turibius had studied Canon Law, he refused the nomination – he knew that only priests could become archbishops.

The Holy See would not be thwarted. After four weeks of successively ascending the minor orders, he was ordained a priest in 1578, in Granada. On May 16, 1579, Pope Gregory XIII named him Archbishop of Lima. He was consecrated in August 1580 by the Archbishop of Seville.

On May 12, 1581, Archbishop Turibius arrived in Paita, Peru, on the coast of northern Peru 600 miles north of Lima. He traveled on foot all the way, baptizing or teaching local people.

There were many obstacles to overcome when serving this huge diocese with its mountains, jungles, and coastline. The natives spoke five other languages besides Spanish. Traveling on foot he faced tropical heat, ferocious beasts, fever, and hostile tribes. Still, Turibius baptized and confirmed half a million people in his 25 years and three visitations throughout the diocese. His first visitation took seven years to complete. Among those he converted were Rose of Lima, Martin de Porres, Juan Masías, and Francis Solano, who became a Franciscan missionary and traveled with Turibius.

One of his most difficult tasks was to stop the exploitation of the indigenous peoples. The natives were forcibly relocated to labor in silver mines and other Spanish enterprises. He had to confront the Spanish Viceroy's power, which often led to persecution by civil authorities. Finally, the Eighth Viceroy succumbed to Turibius' persistent efforts and cracked down on the oppression of the natives.

Turibius had other positive effects on Peru. He organized the building of roads, schools, chapels, and hos-

pitals, and he founded the first seminary in the Western Hemisphere. He made evangelization a core theme of his episcopate. He produced a trilingual catechism in Spanish/Quechuan/Aymara. He excommunicated clerics who engaged in business ventures that exploited indigenous people.



It was during a pastoral visit to Pacasmayo that Turibius contracted a fever. He continued working there but arrived at Saint Augustine convent in Zana in critical condition. He pulled himself up to receive the Viaticum and died shortly after at 3:30 p.m., on March 23, 1606. His final words were those of Christ on the Cross, "Lord, into your hands I commit my spirit." A year later, his body was found to be uncorrupted and now rests in the Cathedral in Lima.

Turibius was beatified by Pope Innocent XII in 1679. He was canonized a saint by Pope Benedict XIII on December 10, 1726. In 1983, Pope John Paul II proclaimed him patron saint of the Latin American episcopate. He also is the patron saint of Peru, Lima, Latin American bishops,

native rights, and Valladolid, Spain. His feast day is March 23.

In the beginning, Turibius used excuses to not follow God's will. He never expected to live his last twenty-five years in Peru, but God knew what Turibius could accomplish there.

If you've parted company with the Catholic Church over new changes, old rules, a marriage situation, hurt feelings, abuse of children by priests, or any other reason, promise yourself that this Lent you will seek out someone to talk with – a priest, a lay spiritual director, a close friend – in an effort to resolve this blockage in your relationship with the Catholic Church, and for peace of mind and heart.

The risks of Eucharist

After blessed water is poured, the Church tells the newly baptized something that is startling about the next step, the anointing: “You will be anointed so that, united with God’s people, you may remain forever a member of Christ.”

To be a member of Christ’s body is a little like being a member – an arm or a leg – of one’s own body; the arm or the leg can’t go away from the rest of my body. We’re a set.

Because we sometimes forget our union, managing somehow to be cut off from all that nourishes and directs us, we gather on Sunday to be “re-membered.” We take Christ into us by receiving him in empty, outstretched hands, into parched, hungry mouths. Body and blood, whole and entire, we are given and we receive.

It doesn’t end there, of course, because we go out from Mass and Christ – now in us – comes too. We’re a set. This is good news for us, perhaps less so for the King of the Universe, who can be dragged through neighborhoods of liars and cheats and people tending patches of ever-green grievances. But we’re a set, God and us.

We’re reminded of this each time we gather and declare, “Lord, I am not worthy to receive you.” But only God is worthy of God. This is the moment when we rejoice again that God’s love for us is not based on our small worth but on God’s great and overflowing love. It’s the promise of baptism: Wherever we’re going, God will go too. He will not leave us orphans. We’re a set.

This promise is renewed at every Eucharist, every time we eat Christ’s body and drink his blood.

Maybe God really ought to be more particular about the company he keeps. But our glimpse in Scripture of God and us is of the Almighty fashioning a body from dirt and then breathing into its open mouth, an act so intimate – and risky – that we reserve it to lovers and lifesavers.

Our last glimpse of Jesus and us in the Gospels shows the Savior cooking on the beach, issuing this motherly invitation: “Come, have breakfast.” With that, someone is bound to spill, drop crumbs. It is another risk of Eucharist – one that God is willing to take, so one we must take as well. Because we’re a set, God and us.



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 info-cusstpats@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. Bylines are generally omitted.

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

Quick fixin’s from the kitchen of . . . Barbara Burger

Irish Soda Bread

1 c whole wheat flour
1 c all-purpose flour
1-1/4 t sugar
1/2 t salt
1/2 t baking soda
1/2 t cream of tartar
1/4 c margarine
3/4 c + 1 t milk



Combine dry ingredients. With a fork, cut in the margarine to make a coarse crumb mixture. Stir in the milk, just enough to moisten the dry ingredients. Turn out the mixture and knead it on a floured surface until smooth, about three minutes. Place it on greased baking sheet and flatten it into a 7-inch circle about 1-1/2 inches thick. With a floured knife cut an X about 1/4 inch deep across the entire top. Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.