

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

May 2025

The gift you have been given...

When Jesus first sent out his disciples to spread the word about his teaching, he gave them detailed instructions (Matthew 10:5–15). They were to travel light:



no money, no baggage, no walking stick. He told them where to stay, who to talk to, and what to say. He also told them why they needed to do this. “The gift that you have been given, give as a gift.”

What gift do you think Jesus was talking about? The disciples had the gift of knowing Jesus. They had been with him for a while and absorbed his teaching. Did they know Jesus completely? Well, no. They didn’t know him as the Risen Lord. Did they know his teaching completely? Well, no. They got parts of it, but some things would begin to make sense to them only after the resurrection. This disciples also had a gift of faith in Jesus.

Their faith was heartfelt, but was it wholehearted? Well, no. They bickered. They abandoned Jesus when he was arrested. Clearly, they weren’t wholly committed to their faith. Was their faith complete?

Well, no. They were often perplexed by what Jesus said and did.

And yet, Jesus sent them out. We can assume that they served their purpose and helped to stir up interest in Jesus and his message. But being sent out must also have had an effect on them. As they struggled to tell people who Jesus was, they discovered who he had become for them, and learned to love him more deeply. As they tried to communicate his message, they began to understand the message better and became more committed to its importance. As they dealt with misunderstanding and rejection,

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The first Millennial saint

On July 1, 2024, Pope Francis and the Consistory of Cardinals approved the canonization of Carlo Acutis and fourteen other Blesseds. The canonization will take place on April 27, 2025, in Rome, during the Jubilee of Teenagers. Carlo is a Millennial (also sometimes called “Generation Y”) because he was born between the years 1981 and 1996.

If Carlo Acutis’ name sounds familiar to you, you may have attended Fr. Luke Spannagel’s addresses to our parish during the Eucharistic Revival from April 23 to May 2, 2023. Father Luke’s first talk in this revival was on Blessed



Carlo Acutis and miracles. Father Luke, St. Patrick’s pastor from 2017 to 2019, was on the team of National Eucharistic Preachers who traveled the country to lead revivals.

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they found out what it was like to be Jesus – and it wasn't easy! As they saw the light of faith being kindled in their listeners, they grew in gratitude for the faith they had been given.

How do we know that these things happened? The gospels don't give us a lot of details about what was going on in the hearts of Jesus' disciples. But we, too, have been sent to prepare the way for Jesus. The gift we have been given, we are to give as a gift. When we reflect on our own experience of sharing our faith, we see these effects. Parents and godparents know that trying to express their faith to their children helps them to grow in their own faith. Catechists know that communicating their faith in an orderly way and answering lots of questions challenges and clarifies what they believe.

We don't all have the responsibilities of a parent or teacher, but we are all sent by Jesus to prepare the way for him. When co-workers see us living lives of compassion, they hear the message of Jesus. When classmates see us defending fairness and justice, they hear the message of Jesus. When someone in a store or gym sees us acting for the common good, they hear the message of Jesus. They may not know it's his voice, but it may prepare the way of faith for them. And if they ask us why we choose to live as we do, we've been given another opportunity to share our faith.

When Jesus sent out his disciples, their knowledge of Jesus was incomplete and their faith was incomplete. The same could be said of us. But Jesus sends us out anyway. The gift you have been given, give as a gift.

Millennial Saint

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Carlo Acutis was born in London, England, on May 3, 1991, to parents Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano, both from wealthy Italian families. They moved to Milan, Italy, shortly after Carlo was born, to work in the family businesses. Carlo was baptized soon afterward, although his parents were not practicing Catholics.

As a young child Carlo was

cared for first by an Irish and then by a Polish nanny, both Catholic. He made his First Communion on June 16, 1998, at seven, and was confirmed five years later on May 24, 2003. After his First Communion, Carlo became a frequent communicant and attended Eucharistic adorations.

Carlo's faith affected everyone around him. His mother said his insistent questions brought her back to her Catholic faith. Carlo made friends with a Brahmin immigrant who worked in the household, who eventually asked to be baptized, as did a friend and the mother of the Brahmin. At twelve years old, Carlo became a catechist in his parish church to teach religious education to his peers. Carlo was interested in the lives of the saints, especially St. Francis of Assisi, and had a special devotion to Archangel Michael.

Although Carlo was an average student, he excelled in computers and internet applications. When he was fourteen, his parish priest asked him to create a website for his parish, Santa Maria Segreta, in Milan. After seeing this new website, a priest from his high school asked Carlo to create a website to promote volunteering. For this Carlo won a national composition award. Later he created a website dedicated to cataloging every reported Eucharistic miracle in the world and maintaining a list of the Marian apparitions recognized by the Catholic Church. After Carlo had worked on this website for two and a half years, it was unveiled on October 4, 2006, on the feast of St. Francis, just a few days before Carlo's death.

Carlo's life was shortened by cancer. On October 1, 2006, he developed an inflammation of his throat. A few days later his pain increased and he had blood in his urine. By October 8, he was too weak to get out of bed. Carlo was taken to a clinic that specialized in blood diseases, and he was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia. He offered up his suffering for Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic Church. His last words to his mother were, "Mom, don't be afraid. Since Jesus became a man, death has become the passage towards life, and we don't need to flee it. Let us prepare ourselves to experience something extraordinary in the eternal life."

Carlo fell into a coma and underwent blood-cleansing treatments. He was pronounced brain dead on October 11. He died the next day, October 12, at 6:45 p.m. His parents brought his body home, where people came for four days to pay their last respects. Many strangers attended his funeral, including young people who were inspired to return to their faith.

Carlo's body is at Santa Maria Maggiore, Assisi, which has become his major shrine. Carlo's feast day is October 12, the anniversary of his death. He is the patron saint of youth, computer programmers, and influencers.

Teen Movie Nights

This year, it was announced that there would not be an available CREW Youth Ministry leader due to scheduling conflicts. Seeking to continue the youth ministry in at least some capacity, teen parishioner Maddie Logsdon asked fellow parishioner Andrea Childers if she would be interested in helping her start “Teen Movie Nights” during Lent.

Andrea agreed, and now they facilitate a small group of teens who are growing their faith in common. The group is currently watching season 2 of *The Chosen* TV series, a drama about the life of Christ and the calling of his initial disciples.



This group of teens spend their time together in prayer and fellowship (and there are always snacks, of course). They read the applicable parts of the Bible before watching that night’s episode and have a brief discussion about the episode afterwards. On some occasions, the group will spend time in the church in guided and silent prayer while they reflect on the Bible verses that correspond to that evening’s show. Occasionally they will do open group prayer. One night, for example, each group member voiced what they would like their fellow group members to pray for.

Maddie said, “It really makes me feel at peace that I have a support system in peers at my church.” She added that these Teen Movie Nights have taught her and her peers more about Jesus’ story, related it to what is in the Bible, and wanted to learn more.

This group of young people started meeting during Lent and will continue until they complete their viewing of *The Chosen*. You can find them in the parish center lounge on Sunday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. At press time, they plan to meet April 27 and May 4, and will likely have an end-of-the-school-year gathering as well, date to be announced.

Any 8th- through 12th-grader is welcome to join them group. For more information, contact Andrea Childers (andrea.childers@gmail.com).

Young adults sharing the Word

Every Saturday evening after the 4 o’clock Mass, a small group of people (usually between 5 and 10) meet in St. Brigid Hall to study the Bible.

Currently, they are studying the letter of St. Paul to the Romans, which discusses at length the relationship between sin, the law, and the grace of



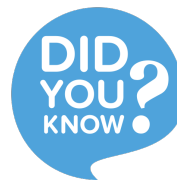
God, and how we depend on the grace of God. The study proceeds chapter by chapter, one chapter per week.

The study starts with a brief opening prayer. Members then divide the current chapter being studied into sections for each participant to read.

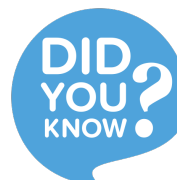
After the reading, each person shares what speaks to them from the reading. The sharing is open to anything related to the chapter studied and usually proceeds from a section of the chapter. The sharing is usually practical, very rich, very deep, and very cordial.

Although this is called Young Adults Bible study, it is open to people of all age groups and non-Catholics. Participants include students, professionals, and parents, including the elderly. It is a good place to learn about our faith, to share burdens and fears on living the Christian life. And to learn from others. It is a sharing in which participants come to bless others and come to receive blessings from each other.

The Bible study lasts about one hour, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. If you wish to join the study or find out more, you can contact elio.jabra@hotmail.com.



May 24 is the anniversary of the Dedication of St. Patrick Church in 1903. It’s a good day to remember with gratitude the many people who have been part of our parish life.



Parishioner Susan Nagele was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Champaign Urbana Schools Foundation on April 11.

Exciting news from the Food Pantry

The St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry coordinator, Sally Czapar, and the food pantry volunteers are excited to share news of an important and long-awaited change! Our food pantry is now a “choice pantry.”

Previously, we did as many pantries do, pre-packed the food we gave out to our guests in bags or boxes, hoping it would fit their needs and wants. Of course, different households have different family sizes, nutritional needs, restrictions, or allergies, as well as different likes and dislikes. Sometimes guests without cars simply could not carry a full bag or didn't have storage at home for a frozen item.



Inevitably, guests would sort through their bags and return what they couldn't use. It became burdensome for volunteers to restock returned items and repack enough bags for everyone. We also saw it as one more indignity in the lives of our guests, not to be able to choose the foods they were going to eat.

But now the SVDP food pantry is a “choice pantry.” We recently set up a display of all the items in the bag and encouraged guests to come through the line and choose the foods that they want, then bag or otherwise package those foods themselves. This was very well received by the guests, who no longer needed to take food they cannot use or have to sort it outside the pantry in the cold, heat, or rain. There is a sense of pride in choosing for yourself, too.

Volunteers find that they have more contact with food pantry guests as they make their choices and ask questions about the foods presented.

Sally reports that she and her volunteers have been pleasantly surprised with the success of this new process. Guests still have the option of choosing a pre-packed bag, but it is not as popular as expected. On one recent day, only 8 of 72 guests chose a pre-packed bag.

Of course, there is still the popular “Pick 2” area, where guests may pick two special items, such as

cleaning and self-care supplies, sodas and drinks, milk, sweets, ready-made meals, and baking supplies.

The St. Patrick SVDP Food Pantry continues to serve a growing number of guests from many backgrounds. These are our neighbors from Champaign-Urbana and surrounding towns: retired people, those with jobs who cannot make ends meet, and those who are unemployed. We also serve graduate and undergraduate college students who originate from many states as well as many countries around the world. Depending on the time of the month, 120–155 families are served each week.

We are so grateful for the continued support from St. Patrick's parish. Whether you bring items to put in the basket in the gathering space of the church, put money in our bronze collector next to the basket, include us in your online giving or drop us a check, or include our guests and volunteers in your prayers, please know how much we appreciate the support!

* * * * *

Bless the work of our hands, O Lord; bless the work of our hands. —Psalm 90:17

Calling all parishioners!

By Kathryn Guy, President of the Parish Council

A few years ago, I was looking for a new way to serve the St. Patrick community and decided to sign up for Parish Council during a Time and Talent weekend. At the time, I didn't know what to expect. However, I was excited to be a part of some of the behind-the-scenes work at St. Patrick.

Since that first meeting, I've been privileged to serve alongside a great group of people. We've met to discuss concerns of the parish, including proposals from Father Anthony and the parish staff. Additionally, we've worked together to accomplish a variety of projects, including a parish photo directory, a movie night, and Time and Talent weekends. It's our goal to live up to the responsibilities of a Parish Council member as outlined in our by-laws: “The overall responsibility of a Parish Council member is to act on behalf of the members of the parish. The Parish Council, through its members, serves as an advisory body to the pastor.”



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Calling all parishioners!

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In May, the Parish Council will be soliciting nominations for new members. Note, this is a change from sign-ups during Time and Talent. We are looking to fill up to four spots on the Council this year with new members willing to share their gifts. Membership is open to anyone registered as a St. Patrick parishioner who is at least 16 years of age. Please prayerfully consider if you might be called to serve St. Patrick in this role. Nomination instructions and forms will be in the bulletin during the month of May.

“We desire to have a Council that reflects the parish’s diversity as well as the variety of gifts of the Holy Spirit. Members should be servant-leaders and live out their faith. Members should be willing to share their expertise and desire to grow in order to deepen their faith and strengthen the parish and our community.” (St. Patrick Parish Council By-laws)

The music of Lent and Easter

The solemn penitential season of Lent and the joyful celebration of the resurrection of Jesus are both clearly reflected in the music throughout this holy season. From Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday, through the Easter Triduum, and on to the sacred celebrations leading to Pentecost, many changes occur in the seasonal music, some through the direction of the Roman Missal and others through the prayerful choices of the pastor and music director of each parish.

During Lent, we pause and reflect on our human nature, repent our sins, and abide by the teachings of the church for fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. We seek silence and remember the forty days Jesus spent in the desert. The music of the Lenten liturgies is simpler, more spare, quieter. The teachings of the Roman Missal direct us to omit the Gloria and the Alleluia; instead, we focus on the penitential words of the Kyrie and a simple Gospel acclamation.

To maintain the solemnity of the season, the pastor and music director also make choices, such as the use of chant, some in Latin, for the service parts of the Mass, and a closing without music. While some parishes may

choose complete silence at the end of each Mass, St. Patrick’s is using a closing prayer that is a litany for Lent that reminds us of what we avoid and what we embrace in keeping with this season of fasting and prayer. It may be considered a brief examination of conscience, reminding us to fast from negative thoughts and actions.

While the use of Latin in music is flexible throughout the year, the ancient chants used during Lent are a reminder of church history and are an unembellished form of music to fit the season. In addition, hymns chosen for Lent are specific to the season, such as “Return to God,” “Hosea,” and “Forty Days and Forty Nights.” Sections of the hymnal organize the seasonal music, and the music director makes choices based on the season and the specific readings for each Mass.

Some of the music currently used, such as the entry chant “This is the time of fulfillment,” provides specific verses for the annual cycles of A, B, and C and the specific week of Lent. In addition, during the weekly Stations of the Cross, a verse sung to the “*Stabat Mater*” hymn accompanies each station.

The Easter Triduum has its own specific liturgies and music, beginning with Holy Thursday, which recalls the Last Supper and the washing of the feet. The pastor embodies the humility of Jesus in reenacting this event, and hymns accompany this action. A procession for the reposing of the Blessed Sacrament and time for adoration conclude the Holy Thursday Mass.

Good Friday is the most solemn and quiet day of the Triduum, with almost no music.

The Easter Vigil is a long, joyful celebration that includes the welcoming of new Catholics, who receive Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation, with accompanying hymns.

Finally, we arrive at the long-awaited celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning! The Gloria and Alleluia return, entrance and recessional hymns are filled with excitement, and the church itself is filled with happy parishioners. To emphasize the holiness and sacredness of this day,

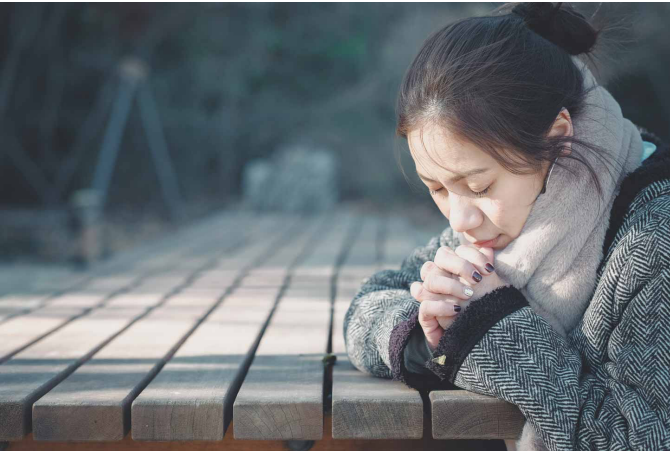
many instrumentalists, as well as singers, lead the congregation in classic hymns, such as “Jesus Christ Has Risen Today,” and special seasonal pieces, such as “*Jubilate Deo*” and “*Veni Creator Spiritus*.”

The Easter season actually continues through Pentecost with special hymns and the continuation of celebratory music. The St. Patrick’s choirs sing throughout this festive season and then begin a summer break during the Ordinary Time that follows.



“Sitting with Jesus, in the quiet”: An introduction to centering prayer

Do you remember learning to pray as a child? Maybe your mom or dad knelt with you at bedtime and taught you the prayer to your guardian angel. Your religious education teacher may have taught you the Act of Contrition. Perhaps you prayed the rosary with your family. Many people first learned to pray with words.



At some point, though, you may have found that words didn't convey the deepest longings of your heart or wondered if God was really listening. Maybe you searched for God's presence in a way that words couldn't express. Perhaps even as a child you longed for something else: silence. Someone who has practiced centering prayer for many years said, "As a young child, I often spent long periods in church, waiting for Jesus to come out of the tabernacle to visit with me. Over time, this became the practice of 'sitting with Jesus' in the quiet and eventually transitioned to centering prayer."

In the 1950s Thomas Merton, a spiritual writer and Trappist monk, recognized that people were longing for deeper spirituality in silence. This, along with his interest in ancient monastic practices, inspired him to rekindle interest in contemplative prayer.

Fr. Thomas Keating, a Trappist monk and priest, is credited with developing the practice of centering prayer. Keating and his fellow monks sought to make contemplative prayer accessible to laypeople. In the 1970s, they combined elements from ancient traditions into a simple practice for daily life. Keating emphasized that centering prayer is not about spiritual perfection, but about deepening one's relationship with God. His teachings, through books like *Open Mind, Open Heart* and the organization Contemplative Outreach, have inspired countless individuals to explore silent prayer.

What does centering prayer look like? It follows four simple guidelines that help quiet the wanderings of our mind that inevitably occur when we sit in silence. Using the guidelines, it is suggested that we pray twice daily for 20 minutes. Letting go of expectations is part of centering prayer; there's no measure of "being good at it." Simply being in God's presence is all that's needed.

The experience of centering prayer is different for everyone. One person describes her experience as helping her reach out in service from a deeper understanding of oneness with others and God, deepening her faith and trust in God's unconditional love. Someone else explains his experience as similar to that of St. John of the Cross as expressed in his *Spiritual Canticle*: "the tranquil night at the time of the rising dawn, silent music sounding solitude, the supper that refreshes and deepens love."

To learn more, everyone is warmly invited to an introductory workshop on centering prayer at St. Patrick on **Saturday, May 3, 1:30–3:30 p.m. in St. Brigid Hall**. Participants will be introduced to the tradition of centering prayer and how to incorporate it into daily life, and participate in a period of centering prayer.

Please come; learn how centering prayer can deepen your awareness of God's presence in your life.

* * * * *

Quiet and rest are God's antidote when we feel he isn't there. —Colleen Dulle

Funeral Schola provides musical consolation

When the life of a loved one is celebrated with a funeral Mass, the Funeral Schola is there to provide the comfort of sacred music. The choir and cantor are volunteers who provide music selected by an individual or family members to enhance worship. If the family wishes to provide additional musicians, they are welcome to join the Schola for the Mass.

A family or individual can pre-select music for a funeral Mass through the St. Patrick's parish website (www.stpatrickparish.org/funerals). It is very easy to complete the form, and individuals can plan their own funeral Mass at any time. Their choices can be placed on file, or planning can take place just before the service.

Through this website, a substantial list of appropriate music selections is available, but other choices of sacred music may also be made. Since the Schola practices on the day of the Mass, new and

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Funeral Schola

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unfamiliar music may not be possible, but the musicians are experienced and willing to make every effort to abide by an individual's or family's wishes.

A space is available to name a specific cantor, and cantors are also prepared to sing solos such as "Ave Maria." The ability to sing music in languages other than English and Latin may be limited. If the music is selected to reflect a heritage, some hymns have melodies with origins in Irish, Italian, Spanish, and other ethnicities but are sung in English.

When someone is selecting funeral music, popular favorites such as "Here I Am Lord," "Be Not Afraid," and the 23rd Psalm can be reassuring to those attending Mass because these hymns are familiar and comforting. St. Patrick's parish has a long tradition of active participation in singing, and participants are encouraged to sing, but singing is not required.

Classic hymns sung in many non-Catholic denominations, such as "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" and "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" can also be consoling when the congregation may not all be Catholic or may not be active participants in a faith community. The service music used at funerals is gentle and comforting and is not generally used at other Masses in order to set it apart. Selecting music should be a prayerful and reflective action based on the wishes of the departed and the family as well as the appropriateness of the music. As the website advises, secular music may be saved for use during visitation, the luncheon, or other times.

The Funeral Schola ministry touches the hearts and spirits of the participants as well as those gathered at the funeral Mass. Singing in this group is one of the most prayerful musical experiences for all the musicians.



Q: How did the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus come about?

A: The story behind the observance of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus begins on December 27, 1673, at a monastery belonging to the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary (Visitandines) in eastern France. There, a nun named Sister Margaret Mary Alacoque began experiencing visions of the Sacred Heart.

During her visions, which continued for 18 months, Sister Margaret Mary learned ways to venerate the Sacred Heart of Christ. They included the concept of a Holy Hour on Thursdays, the creation of the feast of the

Sacred Heart after Corpus Christi, and the reception of the Eucharist on the first Friday of every month.

Sister Margaret Mary died in 1690 and was canonized by Pope Benedict XV on May 13, 1920.

A feast of the Sacred Heart was not declared during Sister Margaret Mary's life, but over time devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus spread, and in 1856 Pope Pius IX designated the Friday following the feast of Corpus Christi as the feast of the Sacred Heart for the entire Latin Rite Church.

On May 25, 1899, Pope Leo XIII promulgated the encyclical *Annum Sacrum*, consecrating the entire world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He called this encyclical and the subsequent consecration the "great act" of his papacy.

These are the promises Jesus made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque for those who venerate his Sacred Heart:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of life.
2. I will give peace in their families.
3. I will console them in all their troubles.
4. I will be their refuge in life and especially in death.
5. I will abundantly bless all their undertakings.
6. Sinners shall find in my Heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall rise speedily to great perfection.
9. I will bless those places wherein the image of my Sacred Heart shall be exposed and venerated.
10. I will give to priests the power to touch the most hardened hearts.
11. Persons who propagate this devotion shall have their names eternally written in my Heart.
12. In the excess of the mercy of my Heart, I promise you that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who will receive Communion on the first Fridays, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance: They will not die in my displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments; and my Heart will be their secure refuge in that last hour.

The real problem in prayer is not the absence of God but the absence of us. We are all over the place, entertaining memories, fantasies, anxieties. God is simply there in unending patience, saying to us, "So when are you actually going to arrive? When are you going to sit and listen, to stop roaming about, and be present?"

—Rowan Williams

Come and see: Our Lady of Fatima!

Women of St. Patrick invites everyone to see the movie “The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima” on Sunday, May 18 from 1 to 3 in St. Brigid Hall. Movie popcorn will be served.

When Our Lady appeared to three children in Fatima, Portugal in 1917, the news of the apparition resounded around the world. Radio and secular newspapers carried with banner headlines the news of the sun dancing in the sky.



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 (see below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Catherine Nguyen



Bacon and Eggs Muffins

Softened butter
 10 large eggs
 1/2 c whole milk
 1/2 lb bacon, cooked and crumbled
 1-1/2 c shredded cheddar cheese, divided
 1/2 c green onions, chopped
 1/2 t onion powder
 1/2 t garlic powder
 1/4 t salt
 1/4 t pepper

Generously grease muffin tin with butter, and set aside. In a medium bowl whisk together eggs, milk, bacon, green onions, 1 cup cheese, onion powder, garlic powder, pepper, and salt. Pour the mixture into the muffin tin, filling each cavity 3/4 full. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top. Bake at 350° for 15–20 minutes. Leftover muffins can be kept in the refrigerator for up to five days in a plastic baggie, or frozen.

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!



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (June) is **Sunday, May 11.**