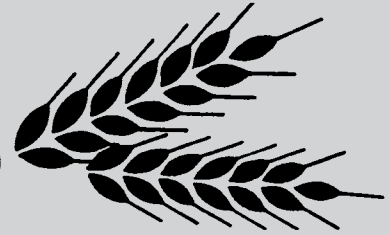


ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

# In Focus



www.stpaturbana.org

## Advent is the Season of Prophets

The Advent readings from the prophets are familiar, comforting, and yet challenging. They dare us to see God at work in the world.

In his great book on the liturgical seasons, Pius

Parsch says, "Every liturgical celebration has three dimensions: it recalls the past, in the present, for the sake of what is to come." The

prophets spoke to their own time, they speak to us now, and they tell us of the fulfillment of God's work.

Jeremiah wrote after Jerusalem had fallen to Babylon and many of

its people had been exiled. Imagine being homeless, your society torn to shreds (true enough for many peoples of today's world). To these he said, "The days are coming, says

the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made. I will raise up for David a just shoot, and Jerusalem shall dwell secure."

These words must have

sounded absurd at first. How can God bring us back? There is a note of warning: Israel saw the Exile as punishment for its idolatry and other sins, so when God promised

justice, they knew they would have to change. But there was also comfort in accepting the promise of God's fidelity. So too, in our days of economic and political disparity, we know we will have to change, but there is also comfort in the surety of God's faithfulness.

Baruch also wrote at the time of the Exile. He called on the people to rejoice that God is leading Israel home in joy, by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company. The people of the Exile knew that they needed God's mercy. Their society had strayed far from God's ways. While recognizing that their sinfulness was hard for them, as it is for us, Baruch turned their attention to the glory

*Continued on page 2*



## Advent – Preparing the church and the assembly

As with all special seasons of the Church Year, the Liturgical Arts Team creates an environment in the church space that alerts the assembly to the meaning of the season.

Advent is the beginning of the Church Year. The Church calls us to be aware of the great mystery of the Redemption, which begins its fulfillment with the birth of the Redeemer.

As we wait and turn inward to prepare ourselves we are helped by the team's visual displays in the church:

- The Advent wreath, placed in front of the altar, will help us count down the four weeks of Advent represented by its four candles.
- The banner, with its deep purple gradually lightening in color as it reaches the top, is overlaid by a vine that does not cower in the darkness but rises to seek the light.
- The church lighting will remain low until the

Mass is ready to begin, allowing us time to reflect how we will conduct holy lives by following the instructions proclaimed in the Advent readings.

- The music before Mass will keep us focused as we enter into the spirit of our celebration as one community of people, preparing to welcome our Savior and King. During the Mass, the readings will reflect the theme of the season:

Be vigilant and find strength.

His name is justice and peace.

Our common prayer is that we all may discover anew our Savior, who is justice for all peoples, and peace for all who seek it.



## The Season of Prophets

from page 1

of living in harmony with God.

Most of the writings of Zephania condemn Israel for taking on the ways of pagans. But he promises that God will purify not only Israel, but all nations. And then comes the surprising passage that we hear on the Third Sunday of Advent, when the prophet tells how this affects God himself: He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you with his love. He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.

Micah promises a ruler from Bethlehem, who will stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord. We are preparing to remember the birth of this ruler.

The teaching of Jesus and his death and resurrection bring us much closer to the fulfillment of these prophecies. But even for us, they are not complete, and we have more goodness from God's hand to look forward to. Just as the liturgy "recalls the past, in the present, for the sake of what is to come," so too our lives, for we proclaim, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!"



God said: I do not laugh at my enemies, because I wish to make it impossible for anyone to be my enemy. Therefore I identify myself with my enemy's own secret self.

—Thomas Merton,  
New Seeds of Contemplation

## Serra Club of Champaign-Urbana receives diocesan award

The Serra Club of Champaign-Urbana received the Pere Marquette Award during a Diocesan Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday, Nov. 15, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Peoria.

The Pere Marquette Award recognizes "outstanding contribution to the spread of the Gospel and the building up of the Kingdom of God in our local church." Bishop Daniel Jenky conferred this top diocesan recognition to the Serra Club along with the Peoria Area Religious Vocations Support Group. This marks the first time the honor has gone to an entire group rather than to an individual.

Members of the Serra Club work to encourage vocations to the priesthood and to support seminarians. Bishop Jenky said its efforts were "examples of how to build up a culture of vocation." Receiving the award this year is especially noteworthy in that Pope Benedict XVI has decreed that this year should be observed as a Year for Priests.

An international organization—with the C-U Club being the only one in the diocese—the Serra Club of Champaign-Urbana has promoted vocations to the priesthood and religious life for 35 years. Bishop O'Rourke was one of its earliest members. Meetings are held the second and fourth Mondays of the month at St. John's Catholic Newman Center on the University of Illinois campus. The club hosts a summer picnic for priests, deacons, and women religious as well as a banquet at the end of November. Members "adopt" priests to support with prayer and encouragement throughout the year, with one function of each member being to pray for 2-3 priests each day. The club's purpose is prayer and support; there is no fundraising.

Parishioner John Smith is currently club president and Msgr. Albert Hallin is chaplain. Smith invites anyone interested in learning more about the Serra Club to contact him (367-7336 or 485-5341) or to attend a Serra meeting at the Newman Center; meetings include a meal and a program. Currently the club has 23 members; membership is open to both males and females.

President Smith said, "It is a tremendous honor for the Serra Club of Champaign-Urbana to receive this award. We could not believe it when we were notified of our selection. Our Club has always operated in a fairly low-keyed manner. We see our purpose as prayer and support. To be recognized for this is indeed an honor."



### *Welcome to new parishioners*

Martha Olayo, Melissa Salrin, Rachel and Tom Jefvert, Argelia Simon, Oscar Vazquez, Yost Smith, Brian Barker, and Bonnie and Keith Henry.

### *Welcome to the following, baptized into our faith community in the last few months:*

Zhou Russell Barbee, Jackson Robert Glasa, Miles Timothy Allen Hamby, Landon Michael Hosier, Brenna Rosaline Murphy, Claire Adina Niebur, Eilla Grace Pearson Pope, Eric Puffer, and Alondra Ulbaldo.

### *Please pray for deceased parishioner* Ardsley Yanchus.

Also remember in your prayers the many seriously and chronically ill members of our parish, whom the "Privacy Act" prevents us from naming here.

## “Through this holy anointing...”

The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be celebrated at all Masses on the first weekend of Advent, Nov. 29. Those wishing to celebrate this sacrament will be called forward during Mass. The rest of us will be encouraged to spend time in prayer for those being anointed. This sacrament will also be offered after Mass.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “It is very fitting to celebrate within the Eucharist, the memorial of the Lord’s Passover.”[1517] Further, “The Anointing of the Sick is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death.”[1514] Anyone who is suffering in body, mind, or spirit, chronically ill, suffering from a major illness, facing surgery, or suffering any of the infirmities of age may celebrate the sacrament. When in doubt, a person should err on the side of receiving rather than abstaining from it.

It is also fitting that the communal celebration of the sacrament should take place as we begin the liturgical season of Advent. During Advent we wait expectantly for the coming of Christ as Word of God and call out with names from Scripture and our human experience,

“Come Emmanuel, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Sun, Dayspring, Wisdom, Ruler of Nations.” In the Anointing of the Sick we call out to Jesus as Healer to be present and fill us with the grace that leads to spiritual and perhaps physical healing. As we long for the coming of Christ at Christmas, we wait expectantly for the peace this sacrament brings.

*Through this holy anointing  
may the Lord in his love and mercy  
help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit;  
may the Lord who frees you from sin  
save you and raise you up.*



## Save your pennies for St. Patrick’s annual Christmas Bazaar!

You won’t want to miss this event on Dec. 6, from 8:00 a.m. to noon in the parish hall. Many parishioners contribute their time, talent, and gifts to make this an exciting morning, a “three-ring circus” of Christmas shopping.

There will be coffee and doughnuts for sale as usual that morning. Across the hall there will be tables of wrapped and beribboned Christmas baskets. Leslie Risatti and Ceil Weir have created more than 70 gift baskets, each with a special theme. There are cooking baskets, cosmetic baskets, wine baskets, children’s baskets, and grandma and grandpa baskets, plus many, many more!

The parish has received donations of an eight-piece serving set of Japanese porcelain dishes and an Irish dessert set of five cups and saucers, five small plates, and one serving plate. These will be sold by silent auction.



There will be a cookie table, where you can select a dozen cookies for \$4. Here’s your chance to support the parish by baking your grandmother’s favorite cookies or other baked goods and donating them on Friday (Dec. 4) or Saturday (Dec. 5) for the Christmas Bazaar.

There will also be a CREW table in the hall, where you can pick up your pre-ordered Christmas evergreens. If you forgot to order evergreens, CREW will have a few extras available for purchase.

Completing this “three-ring circus” is a sale of homemade crafts in the multipurpose room. Nothing makes holiday giving more traditional than homemade gifts. You’ll find such treasures as American Doll clothes,

fabric bags, quilted placemats, crocheted and knitted items, quilts, handmade greeting cards and jewelry, limited edition prints, cards and bookmarks, pine cone wreaths and candle rings, Christmas angels, tote bags, Christmas tree decorations, Christmas “spiders,” potato covers for microwaving—and much, much more.

If you are an artisan who produces handmade crafts, you are welcome to reserve a display table for your crafts by calling the parish



*Leslie Risatti, left, and Ceil Weir had a great time assembling gift baskets for the bazaar. According to Leslie, Ceil kept coming up with ideas for even more baskets—all for your gift-giving pleasure.*

## Who were the priests in my life?

In an October issue of *The Catholic Post*, we were invited to remember the priests in our lives at significant times: baptism, wedding, etc. In this Year for Priests it is good to remember and to pray for those who have been with us during those times and events that mark our life's journey.

I don't remember, of course, the priest who baptized me, and his name means nothing to me now. But he did a great thing for me—he made me a Child of God and a member of the Body of Christ! May he be blessed forever!

I do remember the bishop who confirmed me—he slapped me (gently) and told me I was now a soldier of Christ and must be prepared to suffer gladly for Christ. I walked away humble, but proud of my new status. How was he to know what sufferings or sacrifices would come my way in life? And yet he prepared me for anything and everything.

The priest who gave me my very first Communion said some words in Latin, placed the host on my tongue, and walked on without further comment. But what a gift that was! Little did I realize then what I know now, that I was to become what I eat—yes, Christ himself! On the days that I've been unable to receive Jesus in Holy Communion I suffer a real hunger that nothing else can satisfy, realizing what I've missed. Blessed be the priest who stirred that hunger in me so many years ago.

I remember well the priests I knew while in grade school—they handed out our report cards! But on the playground they could be good fun. Sometimes they came to my classes to test our knowledge of the catechism (or was it to test Sister to see how well she'd taught us?) and lavished praise on those who could repeat the answers we'd memorized. Gracious, how else would I have come to know that I was created to know, love, and serve God and to be happy with God forever in heaven?

In high school, I began to explore what I understood as a calling to religious life, and I confided this to one of our parish priests in what was my first experience of spiritual direction. He helped me to think this through, he spoke with my parents (who weren't at all sure this was a good thing for me to be thinking about), and years later he drove me to the monastery I was to enter. He eventually was consecrated bishop and became known for his kindnesses to the poor; he reserved one day each week to dine with the poor he'd come to know. Blessings on him forever!

When I was in college, the priests who drilled me, chapter and verse, on St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* knew what they wanted of me but they had a hard time getting it! Yet those teachings have helped me in innumerable situations when faced with having to make an instant decision on how I ought to act or react.

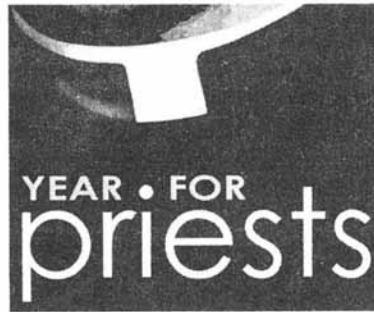
The priest who has been my spiritual director (patient and long-suffering is he!) over many years continues to be in my prayers in gratitude for the hours he's listened to my ramblings, the almost unobtrusive guidance he's given, his efforts to help me figure out how to help myself. May everyone have the great good fortune I've had!

The priests I've come to know at St. Patrick's and elsewhere have modeled for me a love of Scripture, prayerfulness, and kind attention to others, whom they serve so devotedly.

We are all blessed to have had such priests in our lives. Were all saints? Well, maybe saints in the making, like me—not yet whole, not yet perfect, but beloved by God. *Deo gratias* for each and every one!

Who were the priests in your life?

—*Mary Lou Menches*



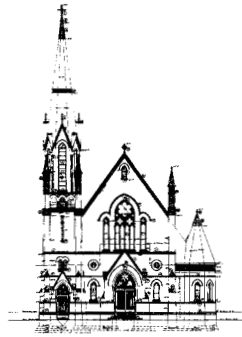
### Mass Times to Note

- **Dec. 7, Monday**  
Vigil, Feast of the Immaculate Conception:  
5:15 p.m.
- **Dec. 8, Tuesday**  
Feast of the Immaculate Conception:  
7:00 a.m., 12:10 and 5:15 p.m.
- **Dec. 24, Thursday**  
Vigil of Christmas:  
4:00, 6:30, and 10:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 25, Friday**  
Christmas: 10:30 a.m.;  
Vietnamese Mass at 5:00 p.m.
- **Dec. 31, Thursday**  
Vigil, Feast of Mary, Mother of God:  
5:15 p.m.
- **Jan. 1, Friday**  
Feast of Mary, Mother of God:  
9:00 a.m. and noon

## Update on Church expansion

The Second Century Advisory Committee (SCAC) met twice in October, discussing how to maximize what SCAC had learned and observed through the summer parish site visits of new or newly renovated churches. The group has also consulted further with Stauder Architecture on particular elements of the church expansion (for example, a second look at exterior entry ramps; possible reconfiguration of the staircase leading down to the lower-level rooms beneath the church addition; and the location and design of areas for the baptistry, tabernacle, choir, and nursery).

The SCAC working group charged with researching parish building fund drives and fundraising firms has contacted the four parishes visited in August as well as local parishes that have recently undertaken major renovation projects (St. Matthew in Champaign and St. Malachy in Rantoul). In addition,



the group has consulted the Diocese of Peoria about recommended fundraising firms—those used with success by other parishes in the diocese.

Work is proceeding on the Request for Proposal (RFP) that St. Patrick Parish will send out, invitations to well-recommended and researched professional fundraising firms that have particularly strong expertise in church fundraising. The RFP will outline St. Patrick's project, provide background on our parish's history, the master planning process, and the feasibility study conducted during the past few years. The RFP will invite fundraising firms to submit a proposal for a capital campaign plan for St. Patrick's. From proposals submitted, SCAC will select several firms to interview and then determine a firm to recommend to the parish for contracting for the parish capital campaign.

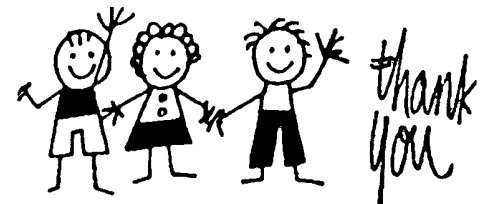
The diocesan office recommends fall as a good time of year to launch a capital campaign. With this in mind, the Second Century Advisory Committee will likely recommend that the parish launch a capital campaign in fall 2010 if this timeline seems feasible.

Members of the Second Century Advisory Committee are Ellen Amberg (chair), Mike Andrejashich, Steve Beckett, Carol Bosley, Claude Cole, Pat Dill, Pat Justice, Chris Niebur, Jerry Pijanowski, Joe Rasmussen, Virginia Timpone, and Mort Weir.

## Special calls for volunteers

**Good Samaritans**, a group of parishioners helping other parishioners with small acts of kindness, is looking for volunteers to help with grocery shopping for a parish couple, and for someone to stay with an ailing parishioner while her husband goes to 5:00 p.m. Mass. Carla Simmering, 328-4841

Some **wheelchair residents at Champaign County Nursing Home need help getting to and from their chapel for Mass on Friday mornings**. The need is great; one helper must stay at the chapel so early arrivals don't wander off, while other helpers collect Catholic residents for Mass. There simply aren't enough helpers at present. Can you help even once a month if weekly isn't possible? Sandy Anderson, 469-2416



Parish groups or individuals can submit entries for this column to the Communications Committee or contact Mary Lou Menches (344-1125 or [mmenches@illinois.edu](mailto:mmenches@illinois.edu)). Provide your name and telephone number or e-mail address with a brief description of the kind of help being sought.

### Vocation Prayer



Blessed are you, O God, creator of all things!  
 In your loving care for us,  
 you give each of us a piece of your saving work to do.  
 Call from among us people who will  
 preach your Word,  
 seek out the lost and lonely,  
 bring healing and reconciliation to those who are crushed in spirit,  
 provide food for those who hunger in body or soul,  
 and bear witness to your love.  
 Bless those who serve in these ministries.  
 Give them gifts of love, faith, prayer, and friendship,  
 that they may persevere in the life you have given them  
 until you call them home to you.

## St. Barbara, one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers

Legends about Barbara say that she was a beautiful and bright young pagan woman who lived in 3rd or 4th century during a time of persecution by the Roman emperor. Her father, who did not want her to marry, shut her up in a tower. She used her time of imprisonment there to read works of philosophy, eventually coming to the conclusion that there must be only one true God.

In time, Barbara was baptized by a Christian who disguised himself as her doctor to gain entrance to the tower. Her father, when he found out about this, was furious and had her killed—and was consequently himself struck dead by lightning.

These stories about Barbara became popular centuries later when the fatal disease called the Black Death was epidemic, killing more than a quarter of the people of Europe. Those who survived turned to the saints for help. Among them was Barbara, one of a group of favored saints called the Fourteen

Holy Helpers—their number included St. Blase (Feb. 3) and St. George (Apr. 23)—whose intercession was considered especially powerful at the hour of death.

Barbara is the patron saint of those in danger of sudden death by lightning and of architects and builders, but she is especially invoked as the patron saint of a happy death. Her feast day, Dec. 4, is commemorated in Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches and by all who carry her name.

What can today's Barbara learn from the legendary Bar-

bara of the fourth century? Not all can look to physical beauty or high intelligence, after all. But today's Barbara can open her mind and heart to the inspiration of Scripture and teachers, be steadfast in faith even in trying times, respond with forgiveness when grievously harmed, and help those in need. And she has a special patron to call on in dangerous situations and at the hour of death!



Patron Saints for December

ST. PATRICK'S 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 mid-month for the next issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to a Communications Committee member, leave them in the committee's mailbox in the parish center, or call a committee member. All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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**Articles and information** for this issue were provided by Carol Bosley, Jan Callahan, Judy Fierke, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Karten, Mary Lou Menches, Lori Mestri, Ellen Noonan, Nancy Olson, Tyra Quinones, Monica Ritten, Cathy Salika, Sue Schreiber, Shirley Splittstoesser, Laura Theby, Peggy Whelan, and David Zola. December saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Rick Partin and paged by John Colombo.



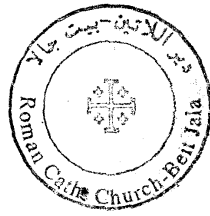
Deadline for submission of information, articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* is December 6.

Dear Fr. Ibrahim,

Attached, please find a copy of our Youth group letter to their counterparts at your church. These are High School age students, between 15 and 18 years old. They will receive their confirmation next year. Hope this will be a start to a much wider participation and communication between our church families and your church families.

May GOD bless you and the Peace of our Risen Lord Jesus the Christ be with you always.

In Christ love,  
Joseph Youakim



## Seniors are looking for bridge players (even learners!)

St. Patrick's Seniors met for their annual fall hamburger and hot dog cookout, with a few brats added to the mix (Fr. Joe snagged one). Ray Wait served as chef for the occasion.

The speaker was John Maloney, a long-time bridge player who is active in the local bridge scene as well as nationally. John is willing to help any parishioners interested in learning more about bridge, from beginner to expert. Interested parishioners should contact John (351-4097), Chris Whippo (352-7263), or Shirley Splittstoesser (367-3330). Once they see the level of parishioners' interest in bridge, they can decide how to proceed.

The 30 parishioners who attended the fall cookout enjoyed Irma Wait's scary Halloween skeletons—and the talking ghosts! They welcomed new member Ronald Eagan, who also serves as an usher at Mass, and after lunch they played Bingo, competing for the "white elephant" gifts.

Chris Whippo, Leo Wood, and Shirley and Walter Splittstoesser served on the planning committee for this event. The next Seniors event will be the Christmas party at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 9.



### A child's thanksgiving prayer

We thank you God  
for all you have made,  
For earth and sky,  
wind and water,  
plants and animals,  
For stoves and phones,  
cards and roads,  
radios and computers,  
and especially  
for family and friends  
and people everywhere.

Youngsters from third, fourth, and fifth grades at Holy Cross school assembled on stage to sing such songs as "American Dreams," "The American Way," "I Love America," "If You Love Your Country, Thank a Vet," and "If You Love Your Freedom, Thank a Vet." Ms. McCullough is the Holy Cross music teacher; she put together the entire Veterans Day celebration.





## in our parish library

This column features books for Advent and Christmas, for children and adults. Those for children include many illustrated storybooks. Only a few are included here—you'll find many more in the library!

### From the Children's Collection

- *The Christmas Book*, by Moira Eastman and Wendy Poussard, includes the history, Christmas stories, songs, and crafts. Call Number: C 232.9 EAS
- *Christmas Customs around the World*, by Herbert H. Wernecke. Call Number: C 783 WER
- *Christmas Songs and Prayers for Children*, illustrated by R. Bishop. Call Number: C 783 CHR

### From the regular collection

- *Biblical Meditations for Advent and the Christmas Season*, by Carroll Stuhlmuller, C.P. Call Number 263.1 STU
- *A Child in Winter: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany with Caryll Houselander*, edited with

Scripture sections and comments by Thomas Hoffman. Call Number: 263 HOF

- *Let It Be: Advent and Christmas Meditations for Women*, by Therese Johnson Borchard. Call Number 263.1 BOR
- *Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year*, by John Shea. Call Number: 263.1 SHE
- *Stations of the Nativity: Meditations on the Incarnations of Christ*, by Raymond Chapman. Call Number: 263.1 CHA

\* \* \*

If you would like to donate books on the parish library's wish list, please contact Lori Mestre (365-9004), library team coordinator. If you need help locating materials in the library, Lori or one of the other team members will be happy to help. The parish library is open weekdays during office hours and on the fourth and fifth Sundays of the month from 8:30 to 10:45 a.m.



**Q:** Fr. Joe announced that he is going to make an Ignatian retreat in February. What is an Ignatian retreat?

**A:** This 30-day retreat is based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the 16th-century founder of the Jesuit order. All Jesuits make this retreat as part of their novitiate, but it is available to anyone. The Spiritual Exercises can also be done without going on a retreat.

The purpose of the Exercises is to help the soul to free itself of all inordinate attachments so that one can honestly and humbly seek God's will and live it out. This is done with a series of meditations, mostly drawn from the Gospels, on four major themes: sin, the life of Jesus, the Passion of Jesus, and the Resurrection of Jesus.

The meditations encourage the use of the imagination—visualizing Jesus in some setting and hearing what he says. This leads to making a prayerful response to Jesus. These prayers are shared with a spiritual director, who helps the person to understand what the experience of prayer may mean in his or her life.

The Exercises are intended to be an intense and formative experience. Fr. Joe will surely welcome our prayers during this time!

\* \* \*

Questions about Catholic practice or Catholic teaching may be sent to the Communications Committee in care of the parish office.

### Did you know?

- How many people does it take to change a light bulb in the church? At least two. For this adventurous task, two men first place a sheet of plywood over the backs of pews under the light fixture; next, they carry the super-heavy 12-foot steel ladder to the spot and open it on top of the plywood. Then intrepid Bob Miller (or another member of the Building and Grounds Committee) ascends the ladder—very carefully, one assumes!—and replaces the burned-out bulb. So when you see a light burned out, pray for those who restore light for our worship services!

- The spaces once occupied by the “confessional box” on each side at the rear of the church now attract parishioners for prayer of a different sort. The one on the east side is now the Marian shrine, and the one on the west side contains the Last Supper sculpture that once graced the front of the original altar. The doors from the confessionals now provide access from the sanctuary to the sacristy on each side.

- Banners and special arrangements displayed in the church are meant to be open to interpretation by individual parishioners gathering for worship. They are intended to reflect themes of the season or special feasts (the current display of harvested bounty near Thanksgiving, for instance), themes in the Scriptures we hear, the hymns we sing, the homilies prepared for us, the Prayers of the Faithful—the totality of our worship experience at Mass.



## The adult spiritual journey: What's it all about?

Sr. Rachel Bergschneider, a member of the Benedictine Sisters at St. Mary Monastery in Rock Island, opened her presentation on the adult spiritual journey by asking the question that she says everyone asks; "What's it all about?" She then proceeded to explore just that.

In making our spiritual journey, she said, we need community to help us move from the periphery to the center of ourselves. We need the Spirit to help us move into Mystery. We need prayer. We need to move beyond "God and me" to find God "out there," in and with other people.

We need suffering to become who we are, she said, as Jesus did—for out of death comes life. Our center is Jesus Christ's death and resurrection; we are joined to Christ in his death and resurrection through the suffering we experience in our everyday lives, dying and rising continuously, many times a day. Married couples die a bit every day, many times a day perhaps, as they give up a bit of themselves, each for the other, in love. Parents die, over and over again, as they give themselves for their children, in love.

In suffering we come to know ourselves. We let go of control and give over to God. We let go so God can come in, she said, and then we go out of ourselves in compassion to others.

What helps? Prayer, daily prayer, listening to God. "There is nothing so much like God as silence," according to Meister Eckhart. In silence we gaze, we consider, we come to understand.

Ultimately, we come to recognize the Divine in ourselves, and in others.

Sr. Rachel, pastoral associate for many years at St. Thomas Parish in East Peoria, subtitled her presentation "Path of Wisdom and Happiness"—may it be so.



*Sr. Rachel Bergschneider, OSB*

## Radio personality and author provides an entertaining evening with a message

The Women of St. Patrick brought a nationally known speaker to St. Patrick's on Oct. 29. Kendra Smiley is heard daily on fifty radio stations, including The Moody Broadcasting Network, The New Life Radio Network, and others.

She also has a regular column in *The Prairie Farmer*. She has written eight books, including *The Journey of a Strong-Willed Child* and, her latest, *Be the Parent*. She was chosen the Illinois Mother of the Year in 2001. She and her husband, John, a pilot in the Reserves for thirty years, have raised three sons on a 240-acre farm in East Lynn, near Danville.



*Kendra Smiley*

The first forty minutes of the evening was a casual get-together so Kendra could meet the women of St. Patrick's and learn what her audience would like her to talk about. While they mingled, participants dined on delicious hot and cold appetizers, desserts, and drinks. They also perused Kendra's books and other products displayed.

Kendra must have learned from meeting her audience that they want not only to be educated, but to smile. She began with humorous stories about her husband and sons. She spoke about the many people in her life who inspired her. She explained ways to deal with life's experiences and relationships, and expressed her happiness in growing old with someone she loves. Her engaging humor was just what was needed. The evening's presentation was light-hearted, but carried a message.

What better way to start our Thanksgiving Day than by giving thanks to God for all the blessings we've enjoyed both individually and as a parish family? Come for a Thanksgiving Mass at 8:00 a.m.—and bring a nonperishable food item to carry up in the offertory procession. These will be given to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry to feed the hungry who look to us for help.

Also plan to stay after Mass for the potluck breakfast in the parish hall. Bring a breakfast item to share, and enjoy good food and conversation with other parishioners before going off for the rest of the day's celebration. Yes, a great way to start a thank-filled day!



## Vietnamese prepare feast for countries old and new

Thirty years ago St. Patrick's welcomed our first Vietnamese parishioners. They came with fear and uncertainty, fleeing a hostile government in their beloved homeland. Our parish helped them find housing and jobs and, most important to them, provided a place to practice their faith. And they, too, welcomed us—to their homes and in friendship. Now they continue to give back, guided by their chosen leader, Mr. Mai Ton.

November has been busy! A successful demonstration of how to make egg rolls was followed by a sale of egg rolls to raise funds for the relief of

people in their homeland who lost their homes to a tsunami. The sale raised \$3000, which will go to the aid of Vietnamese in the area where our former priest, Fr. Hoa Pham, now serves.

The gratitude of the Vietnamese community demands its own Thanksgiving dinner on Friday, Nov. 27. Two roast pigs are on order from Chicago. The pigs will arrive cut and ready to warm up in our parish kitchen and will be served in the hall with noodles (and perhaps sweet-and-sour vegetables). A home-grown band will play during dinner and socializing in the hall. Vietnamese in town and in surrounding cities are invited, as are St. Patrick's parishioners.

The event begins at 4:00 p.m. with greetings and welcoming. Adults are asked for \$5 each; chil-

dren under 12, \$3 each.

No RSVP is needed. "Just come," said Mr. Thang Nguyen. "We want to give thanks to God for what God has done for us, and for the American people and St. Patrick's, who opened their hearts and arms to welcome us."



*Ut Ha demonstrated preparation of Vietnamese egg rolls for the Women of St. Patrick in August.*

## What's special about "fifth Sundays"? Pancakes!

On Nov. 29, the Knights of Columbus will provide a pancake breakfast in the parish center. Pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit, and coffee will be served after the 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. Masses. There is no charge for the breakfast, but a free-will offering in support of this fundraiser is encouraged: the proceeds are intended to be donated to Dr. Susan Nagele's ministry with the Maryknoll mission.

According to spokesperson Bob Glazier, the Knights plan to hold a pancake breakfast instead of the usual donuts every time a month has a fifth Sunday. Fifth Sundays provide a perfect opportunity for fundraising in support of the Knights' many projects—and a hearty breakfast enhanced by fellowship for all of us.

Other projects to which the Knights have recently contributed or plan to contribute include Empty Tomb, the Safe Haven Ministry, and the St. Patrick's Parish Building Fund.

### *Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Monica Ritten*

#### **Southern Sweet Potatoes**

- 7 c mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 c sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c softened butter
- 1/2 c milk
- 1 T vanilla

#### *Topping*

- 1 c brown sugar
- 1/3 c softened butter
- 1/3 c flour
- 1 c chopped nuts



Mix together sweet potatoes, sugar, eggs, butter, milk, and vanilla and put in buttered casserole. Mix topping ingredients together and spread over sweet potato mixture. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes

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*If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Ellen Noonan (403-0979 or eknoon@comcast.net). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!*



## St. Patrick's Church December 2009

| Sunday  | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday   |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Because this calendar is prepared in advance, be sure to check the bulletin to confirm actual dates and times of specific events.</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p><b>The deadline for the next issue of In Focus is December 6.</b></p>                           |  | <p><b>1</b><br/>7:00 PM Baptism Preparation<br/>7:00 PM Mystagogia<br/>7:00 PM Respect Life</p>  | <p><b>2</b><br/>9:00 AM Moms Meeting<br/>11:30 AM Widows Lunch<br/>5:15 PM Children's Choir<br/>6:00 PM Women's Faith Sharing<br/>6:30 PM Peace and Justice Ministry<br/>6:30 PM Religious Ed, St Joe<br/>7:00 PM Choir<br/>7:00 PM Web Site</p> | <p><b>3</b><br/>7:00 AM Men's Prayer Group<br/>5:30 PM Building and Grounds<br/>7:00 PM Choir<br/>7:00 PM Divorce Care<br/>7:00 PM RCIA</p>  | <p><b>4</b><br/>10:45 AM Mass, CCNH</p>   | <p><b>5</b></p>  |
| <p><b>6</b><br/>Second Sunday of Advent<br/>8:00 AM Blood Pressure Screening<br/>8:00 AM WSP Christmas Bazaar<br/>8:00 AM CREW Evergreens Distrib.<br/>9:15 AM Rel Ed<br/>10:30 AM Children's Mass<br/>6:00-9:00 PM CTC: St. Thomas, Philo<br/>6:30 PM Vivo</p> | <p><b>7</b><br/>Immaculate Conception,<br/>5:15 PM Mass<br/>5:30 PM Web Site<br/>7:00 PM Centering Prayer<br/>7:00-9:00 PM Advent Taizé Prayer Service</p> | <p><b>8</b><br/>Immaculate Conception,<br/>7:00 AM, 12:10 &amp;<br/>5:15 PM Masses<br/>5:30 PM Financial Affairs<br/>7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry</p> | <p><b>9</b><br/>9:30 AM Funeral Schola<br/>12:00 PM Seniors Luncheon<br/>5:15 PM Children's Choir<br/>6:30 PM Religious Ed, St Joe<br/>7:00 PM Choir</p>   | <p><b>10</b><br/>7:00 AM Men's Prayer Group<br/>1:00 PM Cards, Coffee &amp; Conversation<br/>7:00 PM Choir<br/>7:00 PM CREW Prep Meeting<br/>7:00 PM Divorce Care<br/>7:00 PM RCIA</p> | <p><b>11</b><br/>10:30 AM Mass, Canterbury Ridge<br/>10:45 AM Communion Service, CCNH</p>   | <p><b>12</b><br/>4:00 PM Reconciliation<br/>6:00 PM Reconciliation<br/>6:00 PM Great Dates<br/>[TBA] Divorce Care: Karaoke Potluck</p> |
| <p><b>13</b><br/>Third Sunday of Advent<br/>9:15 AM Rel Ed<br/>10:30 AM Children's Mass<br/>6:30 PM CREW Confirmation Prep<br/>6:30 PM Vivo Christmas Party</p>   | <p><b>14</b><br/>6:00 PM SALT Leadership Training<br/>7:00 PM Centering Prayer</p>   | <p><b>15</b><br/>7:00 PM Communal Reconciliation<br/>7:00 PM Mystagogia</p>  | <p><b>16</b><br/>9:00 AM Moms Meeting<br/>5:15 PM Children's Choir<br/>6:00 PM Women's Faith Sharing<br/>7:00 PM Choir</p>   | <p><b>17</b><br/>7:00 AM Men's Prayer Group<br/>6:30 PM Parish Council<br/>7:00 PM Choir<br/>7:00 PM Divorce Care</p>  | <p><b>18</b><br/>10:30 AM Mass, Clark-Lindsey<br/>10:45 AM Mass, CCNH</p>   | <p><b>19</b><br/>4:00 PM Reconciliation<br/>6:00 PM Reconciliation</p>   |
| <p><b>20</b><br/>Fourth Sunday of Advent<br/>8:30 AM Blood Pressure Screening<br/>9:15 AM Religious Ed<br/>10:15 AM Knights of Columbus<br/>4:00-8:00 PM CREW Service Event</p>   | <p><b>21</b><br/>First Day of Winter<br/>7:00 PM Centering Prayer</p>  | <p><b>22</b></p>   | <p><b>23</b><br/>9:30 AM Funeral Schola<br/>5:15 PM Children's Choir<br/>7:00 PM Choir</p>   | <p><b>24</b><br/>Vigil of Christmas<br/>4:00 PM Children's Mass<br/>6:30 PM Family Mass<br/>10:30 PM Traditional Mass<br/><br/>SVDP Food Pantry Closed</p>                             | <p><b>25</b><br/><br/>Christmas Day<br/>10:30 AM Mass<br/>5:00 PM Vietnamese Mass<br/><br/>SVDP Closed</p> | <p><b>26</b></p>   |
| <p><b>27</b><br/>8:30 AM Library Open</p>   | <p><b>28</b><br/>7:00 PM Centering Prayer<br/><br/>Parish Office Closed<br/>SVDP Closed</p>  | <p><b>29</b></p>   | <p><b>30</b><br/>6:00 PM Women's Faith Sharing</p>   | <p><b>31</b><br/><br/>SVDP Closed</p>  |   |  |

CCNH: Champaign County Nursing Home    RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults    WSP: Women of St. Patrick  
 CREW: Senior High Class    Vivo: Junior High Class    SALT: Student Action Leadership Team    K of C: Knights of Columbus  
 SVDP: St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry    CTC: Catholic Teen Connection