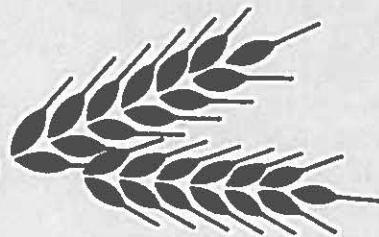


ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

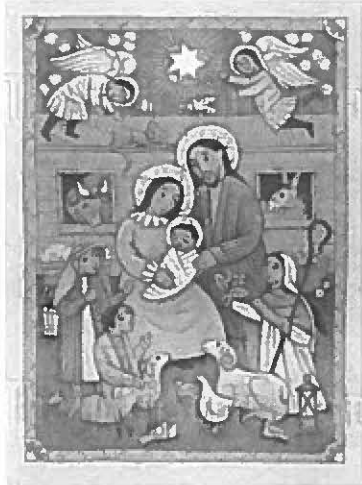
In Focus



www.stpaturbana.org

Why "Merry Christmas" in these times?

Little children know by heart the story of Jesus' birth in the manger at Bethlehem, and they never tire of hearing it retold. In their drawings of it, they leave out no one: rather they add figures, certainly the result of inspiration and holy imagination. It seems to them quite natural to introduce into the scene people, animals, and objects from their own world. In fact, they often put themselves center stage.



Childlike naïveté? Maybe. But it is also undeniably a spontaneous understanding of the mystery. For the story of the nativity is not a Christmas fairy tale.

Luke stresses that this child is born into the royal house of Da-

vid, and we can imagine ourselves coming along with the shepherds to pay homage. We imagine ourselves singing God's glory along with the angels. The story is filled with all the imagery that feeds what we hope for out of Christmas: good feelings, warmth and security, nearness of family and friends, a sense that everything in our world is right.

But what is Luke telling us? Mary and Joseph set out from Galilee to Bethlehem, a distance of about 90 miles.

Imagine what it must have been like to ride that donkey for that long while nine months pregnant. The messiah-king was hardly born in luxury and comfort. Our

Christmas crèche statues show the shepherds in nice clothes and colors, but we have to believe that in reality they were a scruffy lot, out in the fields in all kinds of weather for long periods of time.

So why do we wish one another a "Merry Christmas"? Not because Jesus was born into a perfect world, or because we live in a perfect world. But because of Jesus, all of us can celebrate a Christmas that is joyful and blessed, for the Savior of the world was born during the night of the year when darkness seems overlong. If we know anything, we know that there are many people who are experiencing life in places where seemingly impenetrable darkness prevails, especially this year. The real, lasting, and deep joy of Christmas is that the Light shines there. And this is why we can say to one another "Merry Christmas!"

What does Our Lady look like?

After Mary's apparitions to Bernadette Soubirous, the young peasant girl entered the convent of the Sisters of Charity in Nevers, France. The young nun received many pictures and statues of Jesus' mother from believers throughout the world, but she put them all in a closet, out of sight. Astounded, her mother superior asked why she would do such a thing. Bernadette replied that none of them looked like the Lady

who appeared to her and she could not bear to pray with them.

The mother superior wrote to the bishop, who brought to the convent several large picture books containing images of Mary and her son in masterpieces that Bernadette had never before seen. He showed them to her, page by page, asking whether any of them resembled Our Lady. Page by page, Bernadette said "no"—until they turned to the image reproduced here. "That one,"

she said, and pointed to the picture called "Our Lady of Cambria," which is attributed to St. Luke.



Our Lady of Cambria



Q: Why do we sometimes have Christmas decorations in the church well after the Epiphany? I thought the Christmas season ended on Epiphany, the twelfth day of Christmas.

A: The Christmas season actually ends a week after Epiphany, with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. You could think of this season as a string of feasts, like pearls on a necklace: Christmas, Holy Family, Mary Mother of God, Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord. The Baptism of the Lord might seem like the odd one out because it tells a story of an adult Jesus, not an infant. But the Christmas season isn't about Jesus' infancy.

The most ancient of the Christmas feasts is not Christmas, but Epiphany. "Epiphany" means "manifestation." The feast ponders how the world came to recognize that Jesus is the presence of God among us. This is the common thread of the feasts of the Christmas season: they give us a chance to recognize and celebrate God with us in Jesus. Viewed in this light, the Baptism of the Lord fits right in: when Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit was seen to descend on him and the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son."



Deadline for submission of information, articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* is January 18.



in our parish library

This month's column provides Web sites related to Epiphany, as well as selected books recently received that focus on healing. With the New Year comes the hope of healing the soul to begin anew.

Web Sites

- *Epiphany*. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Includes a definition, history, origins, and links to related information throughout. (www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view)
- *Epiphany Suggestions*. From *Catholic Culture: Living the Catholic Life*. This site provides suggestions on celebrating Epiphany, including links to children's activities. (www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgically-ear/activities)
- *The Season of Epiphany*, by Dennis Bratcher. From *The Voice: Biblical and Theological Resources for Growing Christians*. Provides background information and an Epiphany prayer. (www.cresourcei.org/cyepiph.html)

Books Recently Received (Look for these on the shelf labeled "New Books.")

- *Awakenings*, by Thomas Keating. This is a collection of 30 homilies by a Trappist monk best known for his centering prayer teachings. Call Number: 252 KEA.
- *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*, by Thomas Moore. An internationally renowned theologian offers a philosophy for living that involves accepting our humanity rather than struggling to transcend it. By nurturing the soul in everyday life, Moore shows how to cultivate dignity, peace, and depth of character. Call Number: 158 MOO.
- *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul 2: Stories of Faith, Hope and Healing*, by Jack Canfield. These stories are reminders of the daily miracles that can be discovered when you've welcomed Christ into your life. Call Number: 242 CAN.
- *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*, by Thomas Keating. This is the third of Father Keating's books that deal with Christian contemplation, centering prayer, and developing a deeper understanding of our relationship to God. Keating is especially good at addressing the "why" of spiritual practice, although he also discusses the "how" and the stages of spiritual development. Call Number: 248.3 KEA.
- *Return of the Prodigal Son: A Meditation on Fathers, Brothers, and Sons*, by Henri Nouwen. The author shares the deeply personal and resonant meditation that led him to discover the place within where God has chosen to dwell. The themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. Call Number: 248.8.

- *Twelve Gifts for Healing*, by Charlene Costanzo. In addition to describing the journey of a sick young woman and the spiritual guide that helps her find the "healing place" within herself, this self-help book offers mantras and soothing words and pictures to give encouragement to someone going through troubled times. Call Number: 158.1

* * *

If you would like to donate books on the parish library's wish list, please contact Lori Mestre (365-9994), 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.

St. Patrick's Guild Holiday Boutique a popular event

St. Patrick's Guild held its second annual Holiday Boutique on Nov. 15-16.

Along with the bake sale and café, there were displays of handmade and other items provided by 31 vendors. The products ranged from Tupperware to handmade jewelry, totes, towels, and "Christmas spiders" (you'd have to be there to understand!).

The Guild raffled off two gift boxes, which included donated items from all of the vendors.

This year's event raised \$2,075 for the Guild.

There were mixed reviews about continuing the sale on Sunday. Many of the vendors that stayed for Sunday were pleased with the extra sales.

The Guild would like to thank all the volunteers that helped with the event. A special thanks to Katie Hinrichs (parish secretary) and Dianne Husby-Gordon (parish bookkeeper) who helped with many behind-the-scenes tasks such as preparing cash boxes, advertising, helping communicate with vendors, and cooking chili. Kristi Turner (event chair) was in constant contact with Katie all during

the planning process.

Thanks to Nancy Olsen who helped Carole Rebeiz set up and run the Café and Bake Sale, and to all the great bakers in our parish. Without you there would have been no Bake Sale!

A special thank you to Katie's husband, Kent, who helped tear down the sale and set up the hall for Coffee Shop and the Second Century meeting on Sunday afternoon.

The Guild has already started planning next year's Holiday Boutique.



"Honoring our past, building our future"

Joseph Consulting reported that the St. Patrick's community participated at a high level during the feasibility study process conducted during the month of November. During this period, the Second Century Advisory Committee (SCAC) presented the proposed master plan for renovation of the church and parish center. A total of 380 parishioners attended informational meetings to learn about the proposal and view master plan renderings and drawings. At each of the 26 informational meetings that took place, members of SCAC presented an overview of



the proposed plan, answered questions, and recorded parishioner feedback.

All 380 parishioners who attended an informational meeting had the opportunity to provide individual feedback through a confidential questionnaire or interview directed by Joseph Consulting representatives. A total of 117 questionnaires were submitted and 70 personal interviews conducted. Erika Mildred of Joseph Consulting commented, "Only one scheduled interview was not attended (which is exceptional compared to other parish

studies); throughout, there was great participation from the parishioners of St. Patrick's."

At a mid-December meeting, Joseph Consulting presented its final report to Fr. Joe Hogan and SCAC. The feasibility study report summarized parishioners' responses to the proposed master plan based on the informational meetings, questionnaires, and interviews. In early 2009, the committee intends to update the parish community on the results of the feasibility study.

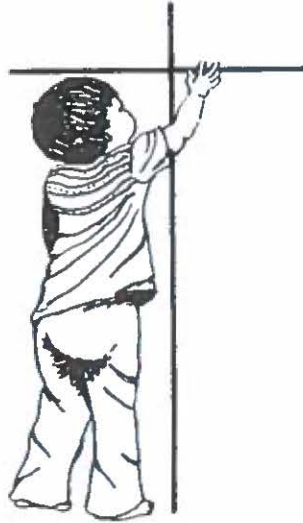
The Second Century Advisory Committee is grateful to all who participated in the feasibility study. The thoughtful feedback and prayerful support of our parishioners are vital as we continue to plan for the future of St. Patrick's.

St. Patrick's Religious Education

Children's Religious Education: Just the facts, ma'am

St. Patrick's Religious Education Program serves children from age 3 to sixth grade. On Sunday mornings, approximately 148 children meet at the parish center. They come from Urbana, Champaign, St. Joseph, Mahomet, and Sidney. On Wednesday evenings, about 81 children meet for class in St. Joseph.

The foundation of the curriculum is the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, which focus on the Sunday scripture readings each week. Through weekly fliers and exercises, the children learn about scripture and Catholic doctrine.

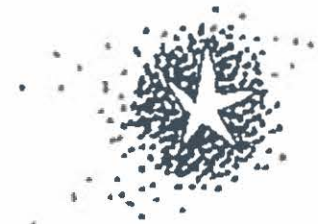


Twice a month the children participate in the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. They sit near the altar so they can see and experience everything that is happening, and they participate in readings and prayers as they are able.

An important part of religious education, service projects put faith into practice. This year, for example, the children made Thanksgiving cards to be put into the baskets of food distributed by our St. Vincent de Paul Society.

To help cover the cost of materials, families pay \$30 per child, up to \$90 per family. Second-graders receive preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. There is an additional fee of \$30 for this. This year about 27 children are preparing for these sacraments.

Teachers include stay-at-home mothers, professional teachers, a veterinarian, and a U of I student, among others. There are several mother-daughter teaching teams, and many teens also help with the program.



Vivo! a new identity for Junior High Religious Education

The Junior High group includes about twenty seventh- and eighth-graders. Some of them receive most of their religious education at St. Patrick's. Others attend parochial school but still participate in Vivo because of service and social activities.

The group chose the name "Vivo" because to live the faith is to be fully alive. The students' statement of purpose reads, "In choosing this name, we hoped to emphasize the need to embrace the call to be holy by simply living out what God has called us to be—completely ourselves. Through service to others, community events, and weekly religious education meetings, we hope to inspire in ourselves and others a deep love of life by being vibrantly alive and, therefore, glorifying our Lord. In doing so we will discover what it means to be a great sister, brother, friend, classmate, student,

athlete, musician, citizen, human, and Catholic."

The religious education curriculum is the diocesan guide for eighth grade. The catechists and aides include Amy Schuele, Elizabeth Keane, Joe Brown, Ryan Fleck, and students from St. John's Catholic Chapel on the U of I campus.

To get the year started, Vivo traveled to Allerton Park for a teamwork course. The students come from eight different schools, so the day gave them an opportunity to get to know one another and to learn to work together.

Service Projects: Vivo members helped the St. Vincent de Paul Society to assemble the Thanksgiving food baskets for needy people in the local community. The food had already been sorted and laid out in the parish hall, and nine students filled 250 baskets in record time. Afterward they enjoyed a treat of cookies, cocoa, and games.

Save Your Spare Luggage! In January, Vivo is going to accept donations of luggage. They will fill these with hygiene items and goodies, and make them available to foster children. Watch the bulletin for more details.



is a many-faceted program

A lively CREW

About 45 high school students participate in CREW (Christ Re-news Everyone's World). They meet at the parish center on Sunday evenings and on other days throughout the year, as their activities dictate. As with Vivo, some attend Catholic school, but they still come to CREW for faith enrichment, social time, and service activities.

The curriculum is *Total Catechesis*, published by St. Mary's Press. The first two years of this program focused on the Creed and on Liturgy and the Sacraments. This year's focus is on "Christian Morality." Coordinator Peggy Loftus brings in additional content from Youth Ministry Access, and online youth ministry resource.

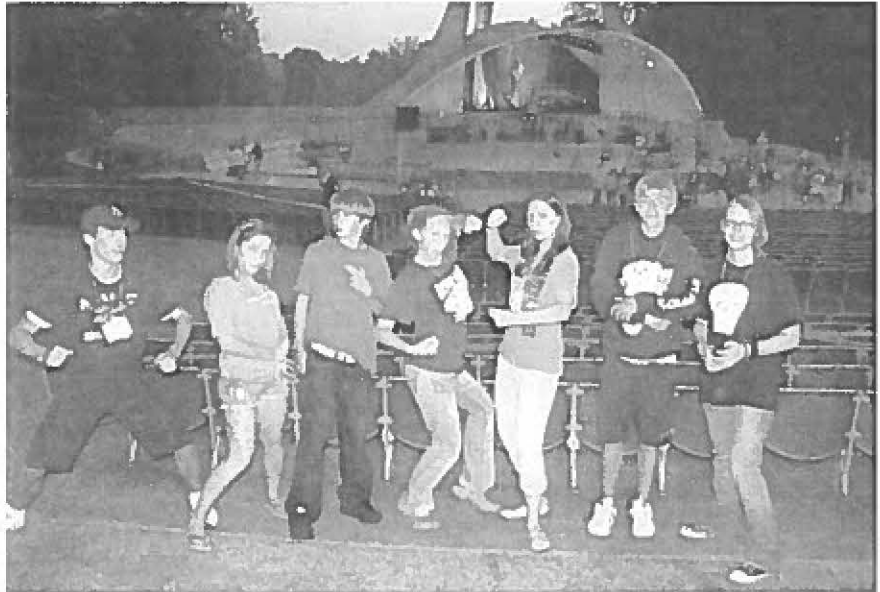
Much of the planning for CREW events is provided by SALT (Student Action Leadership Team). This team of students commits to attending a retreat and monthly meetings throughout the year. They help plan and organize events, set the theme for the year, and (drum roll...) design their own t-shirt.

Members of SALT and their parents have been invited to join the CREW Vision Team. This group met weekly during November to talk about Core Values and Core Purposes for CREW. Core Values are timeless guiding principles, the beliefs that really form the identity of the group. Core Purposes are a statement of what the group hopes to accomplish. Core Purposes are

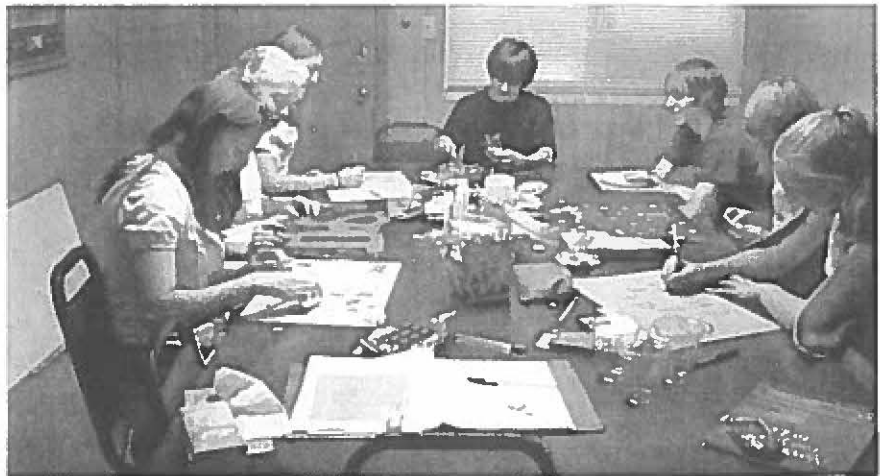
ideals that are never completely fulfilled but serve to inspire and guide all that CREW does.

Check out the CREW Web site (www.stpaturbana.org/crew/). It's loaded with information for

teens and their parents: prayers, coping strategies, news of upcoming events, permission forms, and lots more. And be sure to note *The CREW's Gazette*, the group's own newsletter.



Showing some spirit: teens at Youth Day celebration, Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, Ill.



Some SALT teens at the Summer Retreat

Volunteers, volunteers, and more volunteers

You can tell from these pages how vital and active our religious education program is. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a whole parish to pass on our faith to our young people. Please do what you can to help. Come to events that our young people plan for the par-

ish. Pray for them. Contribute to their fund-raising activities. Pray for them. Say "Good job!" when you see someone hard at work. Pray for them. If you'd like to help, contact the parish office.

And pray for our young people: They need and deserve it!



Holy Cross Happenings

Hot Dog Day, an annual October lunch hosted by the PTC for current students, families, and friends of Holy Cross students, was a huge success—more than 800 hot dogs were served! A dancing hot dog and Holy Cross alumni were there, along with the STM Ambassadors who helped kids put toppings on their dogs.

Fall is also the season of Holy Confirmation at HC, an event this year celebrated on Nov. 1. The following students were confirmed: Thomas Atchley, Madeleine Baillon, Patrick Bolliger, Paul Burton, Amy Crull, Briana Davisson, Kelsey Greene, Kristin Hammel, Alexa Hardy, Katherine Hausladen, Kevin Hodge, Justin Jerkovitz, Sarah Johnson, Madeline Kangas, Anna Kapolnek, Cynthia Lubamba, Jonathan Lukusa, Lauren MacKichan, Rachel Manzella, Kaitlyn Maurer, Hadley Murray, Ashley Nussel, Chloe Pankau, Vanessa Pratt, Matthew Ramaly, Janie Skulborstad, Zack Smith, John Strauser, Faith Taylor, Nathaniel Thomas, Robert Twohey, Gretchen Walker, Samuel Walters, Theresa Welle, Breanna Wickert, Stacie York, and Zachary Zielinski. May God's grace and peace fill their lives.

At the end of the first-quarter grading period in November, HC was proud to announce that 79 students in grades 5-8 qualified for the FIRST QUARTER HONOR ROLL. This means they received all As and Bs.

Generosity is December's virtue, and each class has a special Advent project in addition to their regular service. The kids are collecting supplies and donations, as well as having raffles, for Catholic Worker House, TIMES Center, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, the Salvation Army's Angel Tree, the Champaign County Humane Society, and St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry—just to name a few.

The all-school Christmas programs were held Dec. 10 and 11, with kindergartners through second-graders performing the musical "Christmas at the OK Corral." The third- through eighth-graders performed holiday music, both vocal and instrumental.

COMING IN JANUARY... Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 26-30. A special Mass, a talent show, and an Open House are all highlights of this special week celebrating Catholic Education. Although the dates of these events and other events for Catholic Schools Week are not yet finalized, you will want to be sure to make time to visit Holy Cross on Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 9 a.m. to noon, for the Open House. It's a wonderful opportunity to tour classrooms and to visit with students and teachers.

ALSO IN JANUARY... An invitation to visit Holy Cross School. Are you considering Catholic education for your child? Meet with Principal Costello on Thursday, Jan. 8, at 10 a.m., or Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 1 p.m., to tour the school and answer questions about enrollment. Kindergarten Information Night will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 7 p.m. in the Holy Cross Parish Center.



Volunteer Opportunities

The St. Vincent de Paul Society needs help filling food bags for the next day's applicants. (The number of bags of food given out on any given day continues to climb; the last-heard record was 54 bags of food given to the needy on a single day.) Volunteers are especially welcome on Mondays and Wednesdays, and can come even after work at, say, 5 p.m., to work for an hour or so. *Ellen Abell, 367-5648*

Good Samaritans are needed to provide daytime transportation for parishioners to keep appointments with a doctor or for treatments. And Sunday drivers who can pick up a neighbor on the way to Mass are a special gift to parishioners who would otherwise be unable to join our faith community for worship. Are you willing to be placed on an on-call list for one or both of these opportunities for service? *Carla Simmering, 328-4841*

Can you be available on a fairly regular basis to set out the bread and wine for Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning? For 5 p.m., 7:30 a.m., and noon Masses somewhat more is required, and it is for these Masses that help is needed. If you regularly go to Mass at one of these times, you'd need to arrive about 20 minutes beforehand to have all in readiness—and you'd still have some quiet time before Mass begins. Even learning what to do so you could serve as a substitute occasionally would help. *Mary Lou Menches, 344-1125*



Parish groups can submit entries for this column to the Communications Committee or by contacting Mary Lou Menches (344-1125 or mmenches@illinois.edu). Provide your name and telephone number or e-mail address, and the name of your group.



Parish Council News

The Parish Council discussed the recent informational meetings about the expansion plan during their meeting November 20.

Fr. Joe Hogan had asked Parish Council members to give their reaction to the meetings, which were attended by approximately 430 parishioners. Many of the Parish Council members said people were enthusiastic and the plans were favorably received; some said there were concerns expressed, including both worry that the projected cost of the project was too low and that the cost was too high for what the parish would be getting.

Council members discussed the design of the "gathering space," and Fr. Hogan noted that the details on that space are still to be worked out. Others in attendance had wanted to know whether the new addition addresses any potential growth, since, while the church will be larger, there will be fewer Masses offered. Fr. Hogan

replied that significant growth is not expected, but potential growth was taken into consideration in the plans.

Fr. Hogan noted that the presentations motivated some parishioners to come forward and offer to work on the Church.

In other business:

- The Parish Council heard a report on high school CREW activities from sophomore Gracie Mayer, who noted that "Christian Morality" is the theme for CREW religious education classes this year. She also highlighted several ongoing or upcoming CREW activities, including the Christmas wreath sale and area-wide teen retreat.

- Jack Collins, Parish Council president, gave an update on recycling efforts at the parish. A recycling container for paper and cardboard is available by the

dumpster, while a recycling container for cans, which used to be located next to the soda machine, has been placed near the kitchen door. In addition, those using the kitchen are being encouraged to use washable dishes or paper products instead of plastic or Styrofoam products



whenever practical.

- Council members were told that each ministry group is going to be asked to create a vision for their work, and the ministry leadership will be asked to present their vision at a Parish Council meeting.

* * *

The next meeting will begin at 6:45 p.m. on Thursday, January 15, in the parish center, following a 6:30 p.m. gathering in the church for prayer. All parishioners are welcome to attend these open meetings.

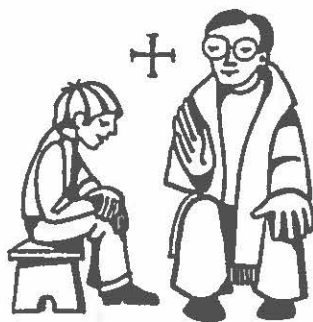
Second-graders receive Sacrament of Reconciliation

On Nov. 18, accompanied by their families and friends, 23 of our second-graders received the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- Hannah Beddow
- Brenna Berns
- Erin Beyers
- Allie Boyd
- Bethany Flassig
- Nicole Gremer
- Maxx Hernandez
- Liliana Hernandez
- Lauren McArthur
- Keely McCorkle
- Erinn Miller
- Johnson Nguyen
- Hannah Niccum
- Michael Ostoja-Starzewski
- Eve Owens
- Joey Rajlich
- Rachel Schreiber
- Michael Schumacher
- Kamryn Smith
- Nathan Walden
- Jack Ward

Jacob Welbes
Grace Yopez

Suzanne D'Andria, our Children's Religious Education Coordinator, and second-grade catechists Angie Monk and Carla Simmering, mentored these youngsters.



The ceremony was a lovely combination of songs and prayers, as well as an examination of conscience. Fr. Joe Hogan, Fr. Stanislaus Mutajwaha, visiting priests, and each family helped guide the second graders through the ceremony. Then each family presented their child to the priest for his or her individual Rite of Reconciliation.

Afterwards all were invited to the parish hall for cookies and drinks. Each child received a certificate

and a small gift.

You, too, can participate in each child's deepening life in the Church. Please pray for them.

Vocation Prayer



O Lord, you know my heart, help me to know the path I am to walk. I seek your vision, your wisdom, your guidance on the path to a life of service. I trust you. If you call me to be a priest or deacon, a Sister or Brother, married or single, a lay minister, with your help I will follow. O Lord, guide me as I walk life's journey. Help me to know the path I am to walk.

Called to be companions in grief

There are times—such as holidays, birthdays and anniversaries—that we look forward to experiencing and enjoy planning for. When someone is grieving the death of a loved one or friend, these otherwise happy occasions can be very stressful. Often we don't quite know how to deal with their grief at these times, yet at such times it is more important than ever for us to honor and support them and their grieving process.

It is helpful to remember that the persons who have died were unique individuals who brought their own gifts to the lives of their loved ones. It is also important to remember that those who are left behind grieve in a unique way. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, of course, just as there is no right or wrong length of time for the grieving process to last. The best gift that we can give is to offer loving and nonjudgmental support.

Persons who are grieving during the holidays or at other times that were special in the lives of their deceased loved ones have many options for celebrating—or not celebrating—those occasions. Some may choose to continue time-honored and cherished traditions. Some may choose to celebrate in an entirely new way or not to celebrate at all. Whatever choice they make is the right one for them at that time. We should be ready to support whatever they decide and to take part in the celebrations in whatever way is appropriate.

Offering a place at our own table, a ride to Mass, or a companionable visit is often welcome. However, if the person who is grieving turns down your invitation, don't be offended—and don't stop offering! Being a companion on the journey of grief is a great gift.



Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—The Book of Common Prayer

Marking 35 years of opposition to legalized abortion

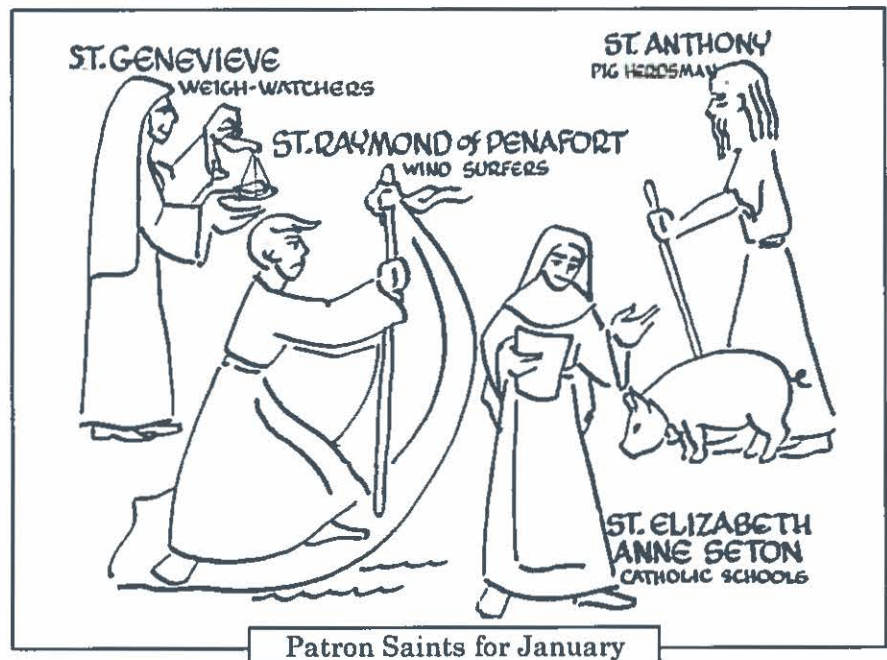
On Jan. 22, the United States will have reached 35 years of legalized abortion. For many years now an ecumenical prayer vigil has been held on this date to pray for an end to abortion. The prayer is not for aborted babies, because they are assuredly with God. But prayer is offered for pregnant women considering abortion, for mothers, fathers, grandparents, friends, and other family members who have promoted abortion. All these people are victims—victims of the lie that abortion isn't the taking of a human life. And victims of the lie that if a child isn't perfect or may not have the expected "quality of life," that life isn't worth living!

A candlelight vigil is scheduled to take place on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 6-6:30 p.m., at Women's Health Practice, 2125 S. Neil Street, Champaign. The half-hour outdoor vigil is a prayerful way of demonstrating opposition to the practice of abortion.

Because of its location, the vigil often attracts the news media—the more people who show up, the more interested the media will be. Candles will be provided to all who come to endure the cold in prayer for an end to abortion in our community!

An hour-long ecumenical prayer vigil will also be held at Holy Cross Church on Jan. 22, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The guest speaker is Kim Padan, Executive Director of the Women's Care Clinic in Danville and an individual with a physical disability. She will speak about her own life experience as well as the work with which she is involved. Her view of the value of life should be interesting and informative. Refreshments will be served in the parish center afterward.

You are urged to participate in these vigils if you can. However, if the weather holds you back or for some other reason you are unable to attend, please simply join in prayer wherever you may be.



Patron Saints for January

Parish nurses offer monthly blood pressure screening and more!

The Parish Nurses will offer their monthly blood pressure screening on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

The group will also provide another Healthy Lifestyles event that will include information related to weight management, exercise, healthy smiles, spiritual enrichment, and much more.

Vials of Life and pillboxes will also be available.

Thoughts for the month

The beginning of a New Year provides an opportunity for a fresh start and developing new habits. God calls on us to begin anew: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now all is new!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

- Begin or end your day with a five-minute meditation
- List three things you would like to do to simplify your life
- Take part in your community's volunteer work—it can enrich your life.

From our Sister Church

Dear friends,

Greetings from Beit Jala. I hope you are fine and in good health! We are preparing for the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. The third week (Joy Week) will be on behalf of all our friends.

We have many activities for this occasion. We opened yesterday the Christmas Bazaar. All the parish groups participated in preparing and organizing this bazaar. The revenues from it will be for the poor and needy families in order to help them feel the Christmas spirit.

We will have a big party for the children of the parish on 21 December, when Santa will give them toys and gifts. And on 27 December we will have a party for all the parish groups. They need to feel that they are appreciated, after all their help and commitment during this month.

We are finishing the project for the elderly people, a big hall for their activities. Another project will be the renovation of the church seats. We will do maintenance and painting.

Thank you for your help and continuous support. We remember you in our prayers and are sure you do the same.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. May Jesus fill your hearts with joy and peace!

Fr. Nidal Qanzou'a
Parish Priest



Prayer Shawl Ministry offers unique way to help people in need

Prayer Shawl Ministry monthly gatherings will resume on Friday, Jan. 23, at 10 a.m. in the parish center. If you knit, crochet, or weave and would like to join this ministry, please feel free to attend. If you prefer to work on your own, materials and a pattern can be supplied.

The gift of a prayer shawl can be a welcome comfort to someone

who is facing a difficult time in life due to illness, stress, or emotional distress. The shawl maker prays while knitting or crocheting the shawl, symbolically and, in a way, actually wrapping the recipient in prayer. Some shawls are crafted with a specific person in mind; some are simply added to the ready supply



Welcome to new parishioners Michael and Kathy Anderson-Conner, David and Grace Boehm, Jane Keeler, Amy Kellermann, David Madden, Audrey Payne, Tom Schumacher, Alta Tarter, and Anghard Valdivia.

Farewell to these parishioners: Erin and Jeff Chambers, Brandon and Kathleen Field, Donna Guzy, Michelle Hymer, Jeffrey and Katherine Moore, Kate and Michael Pedrotty, Amy and John Reinhart, Gale Stafford, Sara Steele, Andrew and Karen Stutes, and James and Mary Weisiger.

Congratulations to these couples, married at St. Patrick's: Ellen Archer and Eric Puffer, and Laura Eldridge and Kevin Connolly.

Welcome to the following, baptized into our faith community: Henry Eugene Amberg, Sarah Shadid Amberg, Rylee Elizabeth Ann Boyer-Killion, Kara Margaret Ficek, Daniel Leo Ikuku, and Henry Philip Ramey.

Please pray for deceased parishioner Harry Eugene Stoner II.

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

that can be taken by parish nurses, staff members, or members of the parish to someone they know who is in need.

If you would like to know more about the ministry, please contact Nancy Olson (359-6424 or nancyolson@yahoo.com). You can also read more about it at www.shawlministry.com.

African night of praise, food, fellowship, and entertainment

By Jackie Gitonga

After several weeks of planning, the day of the gathering dawned: Saturday, Nov. 29. The purpose of the gathering was to bring together African Catholics and their friends for an evening of worship and praise, food, fellowship, and entertainment.

Those who participated came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Jamaica, America, and many other places.

The evening began with Mass at about 6:30 p.m. Fr. Joe Hogan was the main celebrant, with two priests from Tanzania, Frs. Stanislaus Mutajwaha and Johndamasi Zilimu, concelebrating.

The liturgy was representative of the group's diversity in language and culture. The vibrant choir led all in worship with songs from various parts of Africa, such as the opening song in Kiswahili, a language widely spoken in Eastern and Central Africa and parts of Southern Africa: Tumaini letu ni kwa Bwana, kwa maana ana uwezo wa milele ("Our hope is in the Lord, for he has everlasting power").

The first and second readings were proclaimed in Kiswahili and French, respectively, followed by translations in English. French is spoken in many Francophone countries in Northern, Central, and Western Africa.

The singing was accompanied by drums, shakers, and ululations, characteristic of Masses in Africa.

After Mass the celebration continued at the parish center with African foods, music, and dance. People brought various dishes representative of African cuisine, including maandazi (fried donut), tilapia, roasted beef, chicken, cassava leaves, spiced or fried rice, chapatti (fried tortilla), fried plantain, and more.

The parish hall was enlivened by people meeting and greeting other Africans and their friends while enjoying the food—all against a background of African music. Children of all ages mingled joyfully as they danced and played with new and old friends. More people joined in the celebration throughout the evening—about 70 in all—until the event came to an end at about 10:30 p.m.

Thanks to Fr. Joe Hogan and other staff for making this event possible. We give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings bestowed upon our African com-

munity and for calling us from all the nations of the world to work for him, as expressed in the concluding song from the liturgy in Lingala, a language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Nzambe aponiyo osalelaye, na nzoto mpe na motema nayo mobimba, nzambe aponiyo ("God chooses you, come work for him, with your whole body, work for him, God chooses you").

May we more readily respond to God's call to serve him and our brothers and sisters this Advent and Christmas.



From Dr. Susan Nagele

Box 2406, Kitale, Kenya 30200
 nagele@wananchi.com
 susannagele@yahoo.com
 November 2008



Dear family and friends,

Grandmothers...I woke up this morning thinking about grandmothers. I heard that Obama's grandmother died just before the election but never heard anything else about her life, death, or funeral. So many children in our clinic are brought in by their grandmothers. The mothers are absent for many reasons, often death, and most recently many have disappeared because of the post-election violence. I look at these children being raised by grandmothers and wonder which one of them might grow up to be a future president of the country.

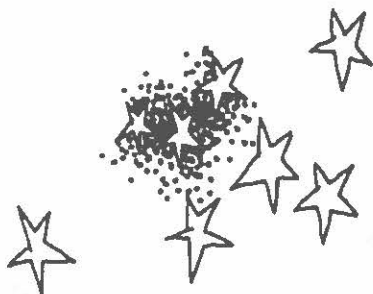
In contrast to the lack of information on Madelyn Dunham (Obama's American grandmother), there is page after page written about his Kenyan "grandmother," who was the co-wife of his actual grandmother, since deceased. The Kenyan population is ecstatic with Obama's election. On the Wednesday after the election President Kibaki announced that Thursday would be a national holiday! However, this all needs to be put in perspective.

Kenya held its presidential elections in December 2007 and is still suffering from the post-election violence that occurred in January through March. There are still thousands of people displaced from their homes who are living in tents and unable to go back home or to a safe place to live. The economy is badly off, with 26% inflation. The Kenyan shilling has devalued from 61/\$ in May to 80/\$ in November, and many educated young people have no jobs and no hope of finding a job. The change that everyone had hoped for here has not happened. People are desperate and looking for something to give them hope. Obama, whom they claim as their son, is giving them something to hope for in the future.

With this letter I have some good pictures* with stories to tell about children being raised by grandmothers. Maureen, the little girl on thyroid hormone replacement, can now walk with assistance. Shaline, an 8-year-old girl with seizure disorder and intellectual and developmental delays, now has a wheelchair. The grandmother was greatly assisted by Christina Cahalan, our lay missionary who was working at the hospital until April. Christina organized the wheelchair on her last trip through Nairobi. The picture of me is taken with two hospital employees—Eunice works as the cashier and Mary is the social worker. These two women will sacrifice anything to give their children and grandchildren a good home and education. And the last picture was taken in Kolongolo, where I hold a clinic once a month. Little Joyce has a hemangioma on her face. There is no connection to grandmothers in this picture. But all the smiles were so beautiful I wanted to include them to bring to you the joy of this Christmas season and blessings for the New Year!

Susan

**In a cover note to her e-mailed letter, Susan remarked: "I can't send the pictures as they clog up the system. I'm sending them via post. Merry Christmas!" Until the photos arrive, we can let our imaginations provide those smiling faces!*



To preach to the powerful without denouncing oppression is to promise Easter without Calvary, forgiveness without conversion, and healing without cleansing the wound.

—*"What We Have Seen and Heard,"*
Pastoral Letter of U.S. Catholic Black Bishops

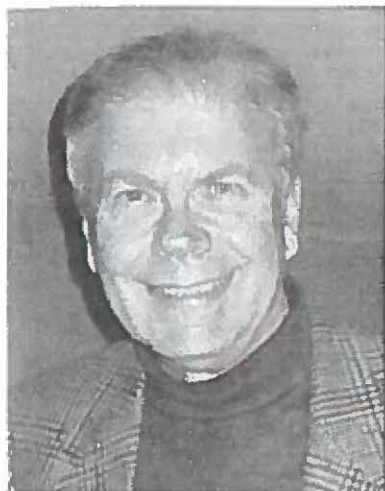
Professor Nilson to discuss Church's role in combating racism

Jon Nilson, Professor of Theology at Loyola University in Chicago, will give a presentation titled

"Towards the Beloved Community: the Church's Role in the Struggle against Racism." This event will be held in the main hall of the parish center on Friday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m.

Professor Nilson, author of *Hearing Past the Pain: Why White Catholic Theologians Need Black Theology*

(2007), will explore the history of Black Catholic relationships in the U.S., and how the U.S. Catholic Church can advance the cause of



racial justice today to build the "Beloved Community," a phrase used by Martin Luther King in describing his vision of what America could be if respect and love replaced racism, exploitation, oppression, and indifference.

Josiah Royce, a Harvard philosopher who delivered a series of lectures at Oxford University in 1913 on "The Problem of Christianity," was one of the early us-

ers of the term "Beloved Community." He insisted, "No individual human being can be saved except through ceasing to be a mere indi-

vidual," thereby forming loyalty to the Beloved Community. He added, "Christianity has always been a religion, not only of Love but of Loyalty," as expressed in the early Pauline communities.

The two scheduled responders to his talk are Rev. Claude Shelby, Pastor of Salem Baptist Church, and Professor Robert McKim, head of the Department of Religion at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The lecture, sponsored by the Peace and Justice Ministry of St. Patrick's, should appeal to all who desire to improve race relations.



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. Written materials must include the name and telephone number of the writer.

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. By-lines are generally omitted.

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Articles and information for this issue were provided by Carol Bosley, Mary Lee Brady, Pat Fettig, Judy Fierke, Jackie Gitonga, Katie Hinrichs, Peggy Loftus, Roxane Lowry, John Maloney, Mary Lou Menches, Lori Mestre, Susan Nagele, Ellen Noonan, Nancy Olson, Cathy Salika, Sue Schreiber, Stephanie Smith, Margaret Stewart, Kristi Turner, Peggy Whelan, Joseph Youakim. January saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Rick Partin and paged by John Colombo.

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Peggy Loftus

Quick and Easy Manicotti

- 1 box manicotti
- 1 pkg string cheese
- 1 jar spaghetti sauce
- 2 c mozzarella cheese



Cook manicotti according to package directions. In a 9 x 13 pan, spread half the spaghetti sauce (use meat sauce if you prefer). Stuff one piece of string cheese into each manicotti tube and place them in the 9 x 13 pan. Pour the remainder of the spaghetti sauce over the manicotti, and sprinkle the mozzarella cheese over all. Cover with aluminum foil and bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Remove the aluminum foil and bake for another 5 minutes. Serve with French bread and salad.

* * *

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!



Where did all the leaves go?

Did the wind blow them all across the alley, or maybe across the street? Would be nice, all right! But no, they nestled in the bushes and frozen flowers, tucked into crevices, gathered in sheltered corners, lay up against curbing in the parking lot. Waiting for intrepid parishioners, braving the cold wind, to gather them up and bag them for recycling. Some of those intrepid parishioners are pictured here on the fall workday sponsored by the Building and Grounds Committee. (Thanks to all of you!)



*Pictured above, from left to right:
Carm Walsh
Randy Pankau
Bonnie Ellis*

*Pictured at left:
Carm and Ed Walsh
Fred Stavins*



Cursillo: A short course in Christianity for men and women

The Cursillo movement, open to people of every faith, came to the Diocese of Peoria in 1964. A "short course" in Christianity, Cursillo consists of several short talks given by clergy and lay people over a period of four days. Its purpose is to help individual participants experience surrender to God's plan for them. This "short course" helps us realize God's power working within us, which can be summed up with one word: love—love of God and love of neighbor as oneself.

Its ultimate objective is to transform the world to Christ. Men and women who have attended a Cursillo transform their environments—family, place of work, and groups of friends—whenever and

wherever time is spent with others. This is not done by proclaiming Christ from a soapbox or by using strong-arm tactics, but by witnessing to our life, work, attitude, and love.

After the 72-hour short course, the work of Cursillo really begins in what is called the "fourth day." Numerous small groups meet weekly in group reunions and monthly at larger group meetings, called Ultreyas. Their specific purpose is to help the "Cursillistas" live out their vocation as Christians in the world by sharing their lives of "piety, study, and action."

The next men's Cursillo will take place Thursday through Monday, Feb. 12-16, at Our Lady of the

Lake, Mahomet. The next women's Cursillo will be held at St. Patrick's (Urbana), Thursday through Monday, March 5-9.

Deacon Robert Ulbrich of Holy Cross Parish is the Cursillo Spiritual Director for East Central Illinois and will be happy to answer your questions. He can be contacted by e-mail at bulbrich@parkland.edu. John Maloney can also answer your questions; he will be sharing the Knights of Columbus information table on Friday, Jan. 9, after all the Masses. Or you may call him at his office (384-7111) or contact him via e-mail (jmaloney@jtsmith.com). Mary Long, a parish associate at St. Patrick's, also has information about Cursillo.

