

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

December 2010

Dear Members of St. Patrick's Parish,

I'd like to thank each and every one of you who helped make the sign possible. I could not have done this project without your support. I would like to give special thanks to Father Joe for all his help. I met with him about a year ago to see if he had a project I could do to fulfill my Eagle Scout requirement.



He asked me to build a sign for St. Patrick's and has guided me through the entire process, from the blueprint to completion. I learned a lot from this project, much beyond how to build a sign. I learned many important communication skills and how to deal with the government. This project has definitely affected my life in a very positive way.

I would like to thank all of St. Patrick's for being so incredibly supportive. When I first started selling bricks to fund the sign I hoped that I'd get a pretty good amount in donations, but nothing like what was actually received. The donations that came in totally surprised me. I was completely overwhelmed

at how generous parishioners are. It truly warms my heart to see just how supportive the members of St. Patrick's are.

I would also like to thank Parish Council for all their help and support. I went to them to get approval for my project, and I was thrilled to have a unanimous endorsement. All the members encouraged me and had my back the entire time.



Lastly, I would like to thank the staff of St. Patrick's for being so helpful and supportive. I always felt welcomed whenever I needed to come in to talk to somebody. The staff was one step ahead of me, had what I needed, and always greeted me with a smile.

I chose St. Patrick's for my Eagle Scout project because it has been my second home for as long as I can remember. I've been going to St. Pat's since I was a baby and have participated in Religious Ed, children's choir, and now CREW. I also have received all my sacraments here. Because St. Patrick's has been so

St. Patrick's on pilgrimage in the Holy Land

For ten unforgettable days parishioners walked in the footsteps of Jesus and Mary, pilgrims in the Holy Land, led by Fr. Joe Hogan. For many, the experience was too over-



Jerusalem - View of the old city from the Mt. of Olives, with the Muslim Dome of the Rock on the site of the old Jewish Temple Mount.

whelming to be encapsulated into words. We are pleased to present reflections from two parishioners, Pam Donze De Ley and Stan Yanchus, to help give us all at least a glimmer of what the pilgrimage meant for them. Their reflections and those of a few other parishioners, can soon be accessed on the parish Web site, along with glorious full-color photographs taken by Mary Long. We present a few of those here, just to whet your appetite.

Reflections shared by Pam Donze De Ley

As we left Urbana on our way to the adventure of a life time I shared a prayer with the group sent to me by a dear friend. I don't think any of



in our parish library

The parish library is located in the classroom wing off the main hall—it is the room on the west side of the corridor, next to the outside doors.

You may browse the collection and check out materials during the hours that the parish center is open, and during coffee shop hours on fourth and fifth Sundays. (On other Sunday mornings the room is used for religious education.) Because the room is now kept locked, during office hours you will have to obtain a key from the parish office.

To check out a book, follow the instructions that are on a table by the window. Materials can be checked out for one month and can be returned to the library mailbox or the parish office.

We appreciate donations and suggestions for obtaining new books for the library. Each month a few books in the library are featured in In Focus.

The parish library includes

- General collection, in a wide range of subjects to support Bible studies, meditations, spirituality
- Small collection of Catholic/Christian fiction
- Reference books
- Catholic newsletters and magazines
- Small children's collection, focusing on Bible stories and books about the saints
- A small collection of second-hand Catholic periodicals and newspapers, free for the taking, displayed on a circular file near the windows.

Books are arranged by Dewey call numbers, which help to group materials on the same subjects. The shelves have labels on them to help guide you to specific areas, such as: prayer, Advent, spirituality.

Unfortunately, this past summer the library computer, which contained all of the records for all the library's holdings, was stolen. Until that time we were able to search the computer to see if we owned a book and to find the call number. The theft has been a huge setback for the library.

Fortunately, with the time, talent, and generosity of some of our parishioners, we are close to having a replacement computer. Thank you to Andy Loftus and Jose Schutt-Aine for their work in rebuilding an existing computer, and to Eileen Unander, who is donating a flat screen monitor.

We are in the process of evaluating different library cataloging software and will eventually need to reenter data for the thousands of books in the library. This process will take hundreds of hours to complete, and we will be putting out a call for volunteers to assist in this process.

If you have any suggestions or questions or would like to volunteer, please contact library coordinator Lori Mestre (lorimestre@gmail.com). Library Web Page: www.stpaturbana.org/library/index.php

Did you know?

- "The Rising Christ" in the sanctuary represents the suffering Christ victorious over sin and death. It was designed and crafted by parishioner Nicholas Britsky, Professor Emeritus of Art at the U of I, who died just a few years ago.
- Divorced Catholics who have not remarried are not automatically excommunicated and can continue to consider themselves Catholic. They may serve as sponsors at Baptism or Confirmation and may receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.



Q: Why don't we sing "Glory to God in the Highest" during Advent?

A: The first line of the "Glory to God" is familiar to us as the song the angels used to announce the coming of the Messiah in the Gospel of St. Luke (2:14). It may be that Luke is quoting a hymn of praise that came from the first century Christian community. It may be that the Christian community built up a longer hymn of praise from Luke's verse. Either way, by early in the second century, the text was complete, pretty much in the form we know it today.

It's interesting to note that there is nothing inherently "Christmas-y" about the "Glory to God." During the first millennium, the Church used it at any Mass when extra festivity was called for, but only when the bishop was presiding. One 6th-century source says that the only Mass when the "Glory to God" is used without a bishop is Easter, the most festive day on our calendar.

But over time, it came to be used at most Sunday Masses, with the exception of Lent and Advent. It's easy to see Lent as a season that is austere, rather than festive, but Advent has such a sparkle of hope that perhaps that "Glory to God" would not seem out of place.

Yet, because Luke placed it in the story of the birth of Christ, there is a connection between it and Christmas. By holding back this hymn of praise during Advent, we allow it to ring out fresh in our hearts on Christmas.

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



Deadline for submission of information, articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* is December 5.

Women of St. Patrick plan sale of Christmas goodies

The annual Christmas Cookie Sale and Basket Bonanza will be Sunday, Dec. 5, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Leslie Risatti and Ceil Weir have put together 122 beautifully wrapped baskets to be sold in the main hall, along with cookies and other sweet treats. Each basket has a theme, such as Sports, Illini, Candles, Wine, and Coke, making make great gifts for family, friends, and teachers.

There will also be a silent auction of holiday items and Department 56



Villages, donated by Donna Skaggs. The villages contain numerous porcelain houses and shops, with accessories. Village themes such as Dickens or New England add charm.

The cookies and other baked goods can be frozen and given as gifts closer to Christmas. Just bake and bring your favorites, such as cookies, fudge, stollens (German Christmas cake), or fruitcake. International treats are very welcome. Be sure to provide any special heating or freezing instructions. Cookie co-chairs Jolene McGrogan and Kathy Sarnecki will package what you bring and set prices. Drop off your goodies at the parish center kitchen on Friday, Dec. 3, or Saturday, Dec. 4, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Donating treats is one way you can

help with the sale. You are also invited to offer your help with setting up on Saturday morning or cleaning up on Sunday afternoon. Call Kathy McKenzie (328-2241) to volunteer.

More news and future possibilities

WSP is committed to helping keep the St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) food pantry stocked. Items most needed now are cooking oil, family-size toothpaste, and dishwashing liquid. Leave these in the basket in the church vestibule, or bring them to any WSP event. A check made out to St. Vincent de Paul Society can always be placed in the Sunday collection.

Jan. 2011: More later on WSP's hope to welcome Father Dom, the Baking Priest!

Retreat, anyone? Would you be interested in a retreat away from town at a distance of about 1-1.5 hours' drive? If so, what days would you prefer, Friday, Saturday, Sunday? Call Kathy McKenzie (328-2241) with your ideas and suggestions for places.

The Jesse Tree – Jesus' heritage and ours

One of the special images of the Advent season is the Jesse Tree. It has its origins in Isaiah 11:1, which says of the coming Messiah, "A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom." Jesse was the father of King David and, since Jesus was descended from David, he counted Jesse in his lineage as well.

A Jesse Tree is decorated with images from the Scriptures. The gospels give us two family trees of David. Some Jesse Trees focus on the people mentioned in those lists: an ark or rainbow for Noah, a ladder for Jacob, a star for King David, a pure lily for Mary, and carpenter's tools for Joseph, her husband. These people are part of Jesus' heritage, his ancestors.

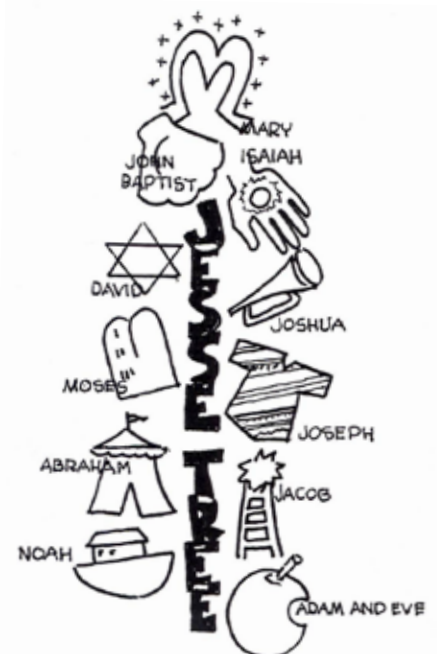
Some Jesse Trees recall other important people and events from the Old Testament: the sun and moon created by God, Joseph's colorful

coat, and Moses the lawgiver. These people are also part of Jesus' heritage, the heritage of his people and his faith tradition, the heritage of his heavenly Father's work to prepare humanity for the coming of his Son.

Advent is a good time to remember the origins of our faith. We remember the patient way in which God revealed himself to humanity and taught us how to live in his ways. Thus he prepared us for Jesus, whose life was a perfect lesson of the love and mercy of God and how to live a life of goodness and justice.

Besides Jesus and his ancestors, who else is part of your heritage of faith? Who are the people who taught you about God, taught you to pray, encouraged you to trust in God's love and mercy, and showed you how to live life justly? Advent is a time to remember them too. What stories can you tell about them? Pass them on to your children,

grandchildren, and godchildren. And give thanks to God for the many ways that he has led his people – and you – to grow in faith!



Santa's Elves will help you get ready for Christmas

By special arrangement with Santa, his elves (a.k.a. the CREW youth group) will offer babysitting and gift wrapping to aid your Christmas shopping—and to raise money for

CREW's summer mission trip to Chicago.

At Santa's Elves' Holiday Party, babysitting will be available for children 6 months to 12 years old, by advance reservation only. The fee is \$3.00 per hour per child. Choose

a time slot between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., or the entire six-hour time period. Babysitting disguised as a holiday party will take place in the main hall and in religious education classrooms.

You can go about your shopping while the children enjoy activities such as face painting, Christmas games and crafts, and movies for young and older age groups. There will be prizes, a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, and photos. Children who are present between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. can have lunch for a fee of \$5.00. Lunch will consist of a peanut butter and jelly or grilled cheese sandwich, chips, fruit salad of bananas, apples, and grapes, and a glass of milk or juice. Each will also have a cookie to decorate for Christmas.

Meanwhile, in the multipurpose room, Santa's Elves' Workshop will offer gift wrapping using the wrapping paper, ribbon, and bows that you provide. The elves have gift tags, scissors, and tape, but they brought only a small supply of paper from the North Pole in their sleigh. Please mark the gifts so the tags can be addressed. Wrapping can be done lickety-split while you wait, or you can pick up wrapped gifts when you return. Just remember to return

before the workshop closes at 3:00 p.m.! There is no charge for the gift wrapping, but CREW hopes for free-will donations to put toward next summer's mission trip expenses.

The next day (Sunday, Dec. 19) CREW members will enjoy their own Christmas party, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. All parish teenagers are invited to the parish center to hang out, play some Christmas games, eat pizza, and enjoy

holiday desserts. As a service project for the St. Vincent de Paul Society food pantry, teens are asked to bring bags of Christmas candy. They will make up small bags of candy to be given out during Christmas week to the clients of our food pantry.



Share the joy of the music of Christmas

Our parish choirs are preparing for Christmas. If you've ever thought about joining a choir, or if you'd like to return to singing but can't make a long-term commitment, why not join them between now and Christmas?

The 9:00 choir rehearses on Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., and will sing the 6:30 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve. The 10:30 choir rehearses on Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m., and will sing the 10:30 p.m. Mass on Christmas Eve. Members of both choirs will sing at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas Day as well.

Interested? Just come to the choir loft a few minutes before rehearsal this week and introduce yourself to our Music Director, Laura Theby. She and the choir members will be happy to welcome you!



Mass Times to Note

Dec. 7, Tuesday, Vigil, Feast of the Immaculate Conception
5:15 p.m.

Dec. 8, Wednesday, Feast of the Immaculate Conception
7 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 5:15 p.m.

Dec. 24, Friday, Christmas Eve
4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 25, Saturday, Christmas Day
10:30 a.m.; **Vietnamese Mass: 1:00 p.m.**

Dec. 31, Friday, New Year's Eve; Vigil, Mary Mother of God
5:15 p.m.

Jan. 1, Saturday, New Year's Day; Mary Mother of God
8:00 a.m.

Jan. 1, Saturday, Vigil, Feast of the Epiphany
5:00 p.m.

Jan. 2, Sunday, Feast of the Epiphany
7:30, 9:00, 10:30 a.m., and 12 noon

St Patrick's Parish Missions, 2010:

But what *was* THE MAIN THING?

Fr. Bob Gielow, a priest of the Congregation of the Mission, came to St. Patrick's to lead us in a Parish Mission, Oct. 23-28. He had been here



several years ago to lead a parish mission. So what would be different this time? Would we hear the same stories, the same talks, another time around? Far from it! The following accounts may enable you to relive some elements that particularly touched you during the Mission. If you were unable to participate in the Mission, you may find that these reflections even now give you much to ponder.

* * *

During celebration of the 10:00 a.m. liturgy on Monday, Father Bob (assisted by Fr. Luong) administered the Sacrament of Anointing to those who wished to receive it. In the homily before the anointing Father said that Jesus always heals, but he does not always cure. Sin will be forgiven and the spirit will be fortified. Physical, mental, or emotional burdens may be lifted miraculously, or slowly, or may remain.

He told us that after Jesus died to give us eternal life and then rose from the dead, he ascended to the Father, where he continues to intercede for all the world. We are privileged to join Jesus in that intercession by offering him our prayers and sacrifices. The willing offering of these burdens to Jesus are united

with his own prayers and sufferings. They can gain great graces of conversion for individuals and for the needs of the world. He left us with the thought that to be thus chosen is a great gift.

* * *

Monday evening's talk was about walking with Jesus. Over many years of reflecting on this subject, Fr. Bob and his twin brother, Fr. Richard Gielow, realized that the greatest walk ever taken by a human being is portrayed on the walls of every Catholic church. From these 14 Stations of the Cross, the two priests discovered a number of lessons that Jesus teaches us on this walk. It is not, they think, the desire of Jesus to have us walk that same painful walk as he did. Rather he wants to teach us how to walk life to the fullest, following his example. Following are some of the lessons they learned on their journey with Jesus.

No more judging. Evaluate the performance of those for whom you are responsible, but do not judge the worthiness of anyone in God's eyes.

No more complaining. Complaining can lead to self-pity. Jesus focused on others, not self.

Never give up. The Stations show Jesus falling three times; he got up and went on, in obedience to the Father and for love of us.

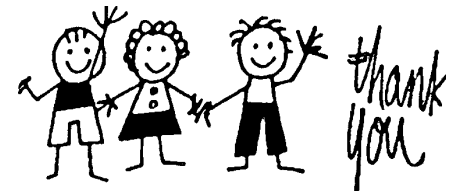
Accept help, so that receivers can also have the joy of giving. Deep inside, everyone has a need for the joy of giving, as well as of receiving. If the givers refuse to receive and appreciate gifts, how can the receivers feel the joy of giving? Jesus received so that Simon might feel the joy of giving.

Experience joy in suffering by focusing on others instead of self. In Stations 4, 6, and 8, Jesus shares a tender moment with his mother, leaves his picture on the veil that Veronica used to wipe his face, and turns the focus of a group of weeping women from himself to their children.

Special calls for volunteers

- With the loss of the parish library computer, all or most of the library records stored there have also been lost. Lori Mestre, parish library coordinator, faces a mammoth task of re-entering data for the books and other materials available in the library so they can once again be accessed. Can you help in any way?
Lori Mestre, 365-9004

- At a recent Mass the good sound provided by the 10:30 choir was made up of the blended voices of just four parishioners. Think how much your own voice would lend to that! The choir is already learning pieces for Advent and Christmas. Come along and enjoy singing in good company!
Laura Theby, 531-7003



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). Provide your name and telephone number or e-mail address with a brief description of the kind of help being sought.

Vocation Prayer



Father, we are your people, called by your son, Jesus, to heal the brokenhearted, to dry the tears of those who mourn, to give hope to those who despair, and to rejoice in your steadfast love. Father, help us to serve! And call forth from among us priests, deacons, men and women religious, and lay ministers to share in this compassionate ministry.

Continued on Next Page

Parish Mission from page 5

Let go and accept the Father's will. In Station 10, Jesus is stripped of the last material things of this world. He lets go and chooses only his Father's will.

Surrender and forgive. Stations 12 and 13 focus on Jesus' total surrender and forgiveness for our sakes. Forgiveness is a decision to love as Jesus loves, unconditionally. Forgiveness loves to the degree of praying for the offender, letting go of revenge, and wanting for the offender to have the same happiness in heaven that we desire for ourselves.

Monday's message: Jesus invites us to follow him and learn how to live, not how to die.

* * *

"What moves you to be a follower of Christ?" Fr. Bob asked on Tuesday evening. Answering his own question he said, "Everyone wants to stay in touch." Everyone needs friendship, love, to touch and be touched. The work of Mother Teresa and the nuns of Calcutta portrays this so clearly, he said. "The tender loving care of those sisters brings light, joy, and peace to those dying under the most horrendous circumstances."

He spoke of the way that Jesus is always there for us in his humanity as well as in his divinity. Jesus wants to share with us a personal relationship that grows through prayer. Father shared something that his first-grade teacher gave the class as a reminder of how to pray. Prayer is a celebration of your friendship with God. Ask for needs for yourself and others. Thank him for his gifts. Be sorry for your sins, tell him. He also mentioned other spiritual aids, such as a Bible, spiritual books, the rosary, nature walks, quiet time.

Before he returned to the Father, Jesus provided the greatest miracle and most precious gift possible: his own body, blood, soul, and divinity. Catholics can receive weekly, even daily, the miracle by which Jesus touches us, enters us, becomes one

with us. We call it Eucharist or Holy Communion. As we become one with Jesus, we are formed into one body with Jesus and with one another. We also become one with those in heaven who have gone before us.

The finest way to celebrate our best friend, Jesus, is Eucharist. Everything we believe is in the Eucharist. When we go to Mass, we receive first God's word. Then we receive Jesus, truly the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus. There is no greater miracle greater than that. That is the MAIN THING! Our call is to share with the world the joy of the MAIN THING.

* * *

Wednesday evening Father spoke about potholes of the soul. Potholes in streets and highways can wreck cars; potholes in immortal souls can wreck lives. According to Fr. Bob, potholes of the soul are habits of sin that are not dealt with.

Today's culture discourages serious use of the word "sin." It has many no-blame names for disobedience to God's commandments—names like unwise decision, habit, choice, fiscally irresponsible, etc. This denial leads to uneasy guilt feelings with no solution.

Jesus gave us a healing sacrament to fix the spiritual potholes and erase the guilt. Formerly referred to as confession, today it is known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Three things are needed for this sacrament of spiritual healing: (1) examination of conscience in light of God's commandments, (2) admit the guilt to oneself, (3) confess to a priest. When we ask for forgiveness for our sins, we must forgive others. Often this is not easy, and it takes time, but it is possible with God's grace.

* * *

Thursday evening's homily dealt with why so many people live unhappy lives today. Fr. Bob suggested that this may be because we pursue happiness in fame, fortune, and

pleasure, which always disappoint. If we develop a personal relationship with Jesus, his joy will find us. Father challenged the congregation to live in such a way that those around us can see that God is alive and present in our lives, and available to all people.

He told the story of how one woman brought the love of Jesus to those around her. At 82 years of age, she embarked on her life-long dream of going to college. Her joy, enthusiasm, and the eager sharing of her time and wisdom won the hearts of the younger students. As graduation approached, the students asked her to speak at commencement. She worked on her speech for a couple of months, but on the way to the podium she tripped and her note cards went flying in all directions. She apologized for her nervousness, and then just spoke from her heart. This was her advice: (1) Grow up. Growing older is obligatory; growing up is optional. (2) Laugh every day. (3) Live out your dream. If you don't have a dream, live out Jesus' dream. Soon after graduation she died, and three thousand students came to her funeral.

In a nutshell, Thursday's homily message was, "If you allow Jesus to live in you, you will have joy and you will make a difference in the lives of others."

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At each of the Mission Masses, one of the parish choirs (9:00 Adult, 10:30 Adult, Teen Praise Band, and Funeral Schola) led the congregation in lifting joyful song to the Lord. At the end of the mission, Fr. Bob praised the choirs and the enthusiasm with which St. Patrick's people sing. And following each Mass, parishioners gathered in the parish center for refreshments, provided each night by one of the parish's ministry clusters. The room buzzed with conversation as they shared their thoughts on Father's homily of the evening and relaxed in one another's company.

Online Giving: Bringing our parish up-to-date

One of the most frequently asked questions in the parish office is, "Can I pay with my credit card?" Do you know that many European countries don't even use checks anymore? It's either cash or credit. So now at St. Patrick's you can use credit cards for anything.

What a relief! How many times, in the rush to get to Mass, have you forgotten your check book, or you find no money in your purse or wallet? Now, with Online Giving, you can set up an account on line that either uses your credit/debit card or has money transferred from your checking account.

Parishioners who already make their donations automatically from their bank account on the 20th of each month may keep that process or choose a different date or dates in the month or a different method of payment. All the transactions will be fully secure; no one in the office will know your credit card number or other banking information.

Giving your donations online has many benefits both for you and for our parish. You don't need to

remember checks and envelopes. You can create your own schedule of payments. You can take advantage of your credit card benefits, such as airline miles or cash bonuses. You can see your donation history and create your own end-of-year tax statements.

Our parish benefits by sending out fewer envelopes, with lower mailing costs and a decrease in the amount of paper going through the mailing system. Our parish benefits by reducing the amount of time our staff has to spend counting and recording Sunday collections, and increasing the amount of time they can now spend on ministry programs and activities. Our parish benefits by receiving your donations even when you are away from home, insuring a more accurate revenue stream and forecast.

You might wonder how your contributions can be automatically deducted from your account. Once you create your account online, the amount you specify will automatically be transferred from your bank account or credit/debit card to St. Patrick's bank account, on the date

you specify. There will be no problem if you change bank accounts or credit/debit cards; simply log in to Online Giving and update your account information.

If you don't like Online Giving after you try it, you can easily log in and cancel the authorization by deleting your credit/debit card or bank account information along with your donation dates. The parish will also provide handy pew cards you can put in the collection basket showing that you give online.

So here's how you sign up for Online Giving: (1) Visit the parish Web site, www.stpaturbana.org; (2) click on the "Online Giving" link at the bottom right of the home page; (3) click on the "Create New Account" link and fill in the blanks. It is super easy, according to our bookkeeper, Dianne Gordon. If you have any difficulties, call her (531-7012); she is in the office Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

So now, in addition to your weekly offerings, if you want to pay for CREW evergreens or purchase a Thanksgiving basket for St. Vincent de Paul or a ticket to a parish event, simply go to Online Giving. It's just that easy!



Seniors to tour the Holy Land vicariously

St. Patrick's Seniors will meet for their Christmas potluck Thursday, Dec. 9, at 12:00 noon in the parish center. Please bring a potluck dish to share, \$1.00 per person to help defray costs, and an item for the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry.

The Holy Land tour will begin directly after lunch. Mary Long and other pilgrims will give a 45-minute slideshow of highlights of the recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land that was led by Fr. Hogan in September/October.

This is the land where Jesus walked, talked, prayed, lived, and died. Sites visited include The Church of the Annunciation and the

town in the Judean hills that was the site of the Visitation, Mary's visit with her cousin Elizabeth during their pregnancies.

Our pilgrims saw The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, the place of Christ's birth. They walked the Via Dolorosa and prayed the Stations of the Cross along the way and ended at The Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This is the site of Christ's crucifixion, death, and burial.

All parishioners are welcome. If you have not reached Senior status but would like to come to this event, bring a potluck dish to share and you will be given honorary senior status for the day.



Holy Cross Happenings



Fall has been an exciting time for Holy Cross: For the third year in a row, the boys varsity baseball team won their sectional championship game and advanced to the Class 1 IESA State Baseball Championship Tournament. Congratulations to our varsity players: Justin Bristow, Jordan Buhs, Sean Coffey, Alexandro Griffin, Spencer Hays, Aaron Helm, Mason Joop, Shane Kelton, Braxton Parisi, Kyle Rasmussery, Alex Summers, Preston Summitt, Chris Tate, Zach Twohey, Adam Walker, and Martin Walwik.

Congratulations to Cathie Seebauer, selected for the I.M.E.A. District 3 Festival Band. She will perform in this festival on Nov. 20 at Illinois State University.

Congratulations also to Jack Reeder and Julia Welle. Their performance during the cross country season qualified them to run in the IESA State Cross Country Meet on Saturday, Oct. 26.

We are proud of all of these students for representing themselves and Holy Cross School in such an outstanding way!

Everyone enjoyed the warm weather, hospitality, and camaraderie of Hot Dog Day, Friday, Oct. 15. Students and their families, including parents, grandparents, and siblings as well as alumni and the fantastic group of St. Thomas More High School Ambassadors, devoured nearly 1000 hotdogs during this annual event, which included visits from the Champaign Fire Department and Reynolds Towing, who brought trucks for the kids to climb on and learn about. Special thanks to Town and Country Catering and the Boatright family for the hot dogs!

Fourth-graders celebrated All Saints Day, November 1, with a costume procession during Mass representing their chosen saints. And several of these saints joined Fr. Joe at the Children's Liturgy on Sunday, Nov. 7: St. Patrick (Nick Twohey), St. Michael the Archangel (Saanbe Some), St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Hannah Niccum), and St. Raphael the Archangel, St. Nicholas, and St. Martin of Tours (Luke, Nate, and Chad Kelton, respectively).



Jimmy Fitzgerald, 8th grade, enjoys a tasty bite of hot dog.



The Academic Letter Awards ceremony was hosted by the STM Administration and the National Honor Society on Nov. 3. Academic Letters are presented to upper-classmen maintaining a cumulative GPA above 3 to 3.5 (depending on years in school). Recipients included 14 St. Patrick's parishioners: Mary Cimasky, Claire Drone-Silvers, Alicia Drook, Gracie Mayer, Kaleigh Niccum, Shelby Simmering, Matthew Tate, Michael Wagner, Patrick Wagner, Sarah Johnson, William Justice, Madeline Kangas, Matthew Ramaly, and Theresa Welle.

Madrigal Dinner The High School of St. Thomas More is hosting its annual Madrigals Dinner on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 3 and 4. This is an evening of entertainment with a medieval flair. Travel back in time 500 years to enjoy food and frivolity with kings and queens, lords and ladies. St. Patrick's parishioners performing include Gracie Mayer and Shelby Simmering. Contact the High School of St. Thomas More for tickets.

Coming Attractions

- First Annual Madrigal Dinner – Dec. 3 and 4
- Music Department Christmas Concert – Dec. 10
- Christmas Break Begins – Dec. 17
- Preview Night (for prospective students) – Jan. 26
- Battle of the Bands – Feb. 11
- Solo and Ensemble Contest – Feb. 26
- Annual Spring Gala – Apr. 16
- Graduation – May 22



Fr. George Wuellner

Patron Saints for December

From the Parish Nurses:

Know your family health history

How familiar are you with your family health history? As you gather with your family over the holidays and give thanks for your blessings, taking a good look at your family health history will also be time well spent. An accurate family health history can help your health care provider assess your risk for certain diseases and better advise you on steps you can take to improve your health.

Every year since 2004, the Surgeon General has declared Thanksgiving to be "National Family History Day." The Surgeon General's office



has created a free Internet-based tool that makes it easy for you to record and organize your family health information. This tool does

not keep a record of the information you fill in, nor is your information accessible to anyone but you. It only provides the software for organizing the information. After you fill it out, it is available only to you for downloading. You can then print it out and share it with your health care provider and other family members as you choose. You can access this tool at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory.

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

St. Patrick's Parish In Focus is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by 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. By-lines are generally omitted.

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Articles and information for this issue were provided by Mary Grace Bowen, Pam Donze De Ley, Judy Fierke, Mary Fonner, Elizabeth Hendricks, Pat Justice, Will Justice, Mary Lou Menches, Lori Mestre, Nancy Roth, Cathy Salika, Stephanie Smith, Shirley Splittstoesser, Laura Theby, Mary Welle, Peggy Whelan, and Stan Yanchus. December saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Mary Lou Menches and paged by John Colombo. Photos were received from Pat Justice, Mary Long, Stephanie Smith, and Shirley Splittstoesser.

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Mary Grace Bowen

Butterscotch Rolls

- 1 bag (24 Rhodes) frozen rolls
- 1 pkg (3-3/4 oz) butterscotch pudding (not instant)
- 1/2 c butter or oleo
- 3/4 c brown sugar
- 3/4 t cinnamon
- 1/2 c chopped nuts



Arrange rolls in fluted pan. Sprinkle dry pudding mix over rolls. Melt oleo with remaining ingredients over low heat until sugar is dissolved and mixture bubbles. Pour over rolls. Cover tightly with foil. Let stand overnight on counter (not in the refrigerator). Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes, then turn onto serving tray or platter.

* * *

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!

Pilgrimage from page 1

us knew what to expect or how we would feel after these beautiful 10 days of spiritual growth. Here are a few thoughts I would like to share.

To be in the land that Jesus walked, talked, prayed, lived, and died in is very hard to describe. We



Empty Tomb - In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Kathy Sarnecki and Bob and Kathy Hogan enter the empty tomb; very near is the site of Calvary.

visited the site of the Annunciation, announcing Christ's impending birth, the Visitation, Mary's visit with her cousin Elizabeth during their pregnancy, and Bethlehem, the place of Christ's birth. We walked the path Christ rode upon a donkey as palms were waved the week before his death. We walked the Via Dolorosa and prayed the Stations of the Cross knowing Christ carried his cross along this very path, seeing his own mother weep for him. As a mother I found that deeply moving. We ended at the site of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. All of these were unbelievable memories.

I was personally touched most by the places where I felt closest to Christ. On the Mt. of Temptation, I sat on the sand that Christ sat on for 40 days and 40 nights. I felt the sun that he felt, the thirst that he felt. I was living and breathing the air Christ breathed. Incredible!

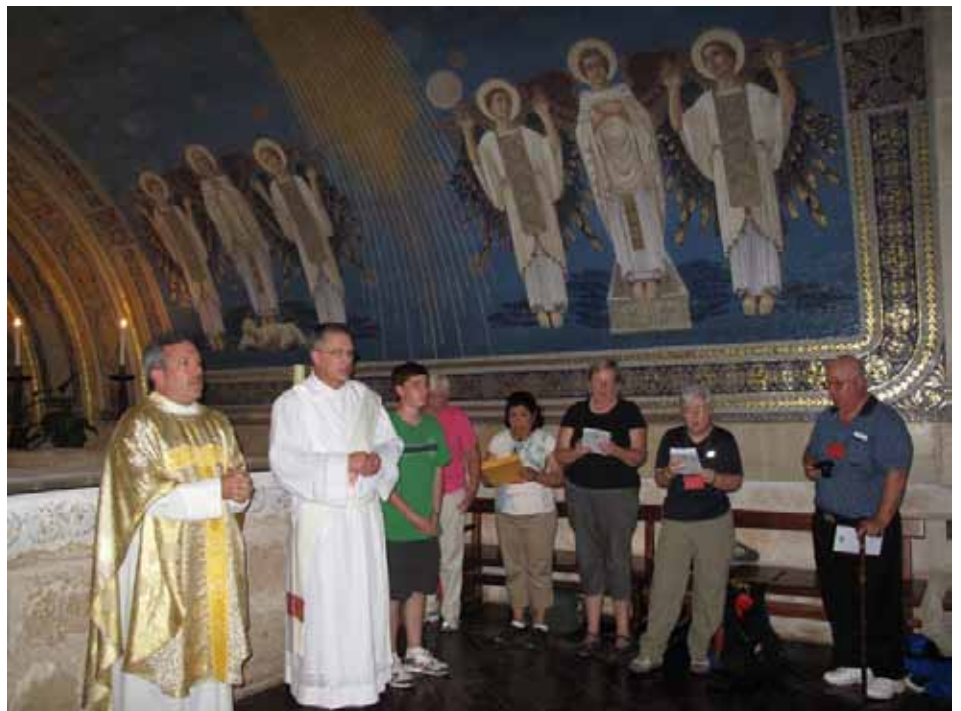
Renewing my baptismal promises in the River Jordan gave me the feeling of renewing my soul and dedication to Christ in my life. Christ himself was baptized in this very river by John the Baptist, and now I



Dormition Abbey - On Mt. Zion, near the Upper Room, this church commemorates the life and death of the Blessed Mother. Right outside the old city gates of Jerusalem, note the narrow passageways characteristic of the old city area.

was in that same body of water. I have been truly blessed!

The closest I felt to Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane. I sat



Mt. Tabor - On the site of the Transfiguration of Jesus, Fr. Joe celebrated Mass for the pilgrims, assisted by his nephew John as server and Gene Triplett as deacon.

at the base of a 2000-year-old olive tree. As I prayed, I touched the ground and the trees that were there with Christ during his agonizing hours of prayer. Christ was with me as I gave thanks and prayed for all



Cana - Fr. Joe renews the marriage vows of St. Patrick's parishioners and also his parents, Bob and Kathy Hogan, in the place where Jesus' first miracle took place at the wedding feast.

of my loved ones, both here and in heaven. I prayed to Christ about my life and all that I have gone through and prayed for what is to come, something only he knows about. I felt him there with me throughout the most beautiful hour of my life. Christ has touched me and I have grown.

I hope and pray you, too, can be touched by this beautiful Holy Land and all that it has to offer.

... and by Stan Yanchus

When I am asked, "How was your recent trip to Israel?" my short response is simply, "Overwhelm-

Continued on Next Page

ing.” It is also overwhelming to try to say in a few words something that creates an accurate picture of the incredible cultural, historical, and spiritual experiences that I shared



Visitation - Statue of Mary and Elisabeth greeting each other; at the Church of the Visitation in En Karem.

with those on our recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Culturally, I was shocked and chilled by the harsh reality faced by the parishioners in our sister church in Beit Jala. Surrounded by an imposing Berlin Wall-type barrier that prevents free movement, many of them must rise at 4 a.m. in order to be at work by 8 o'clock in the morning. This hardship is only one of the many with which they struggle daily.

Historically, I was awed many times to stand and look at structures whose parts were constructed over two thousand years by many cultures. I often felt as though I was being transported through time as a kaleidoscope of images flashed through my mind when I imagined all those who had stood where I was standing and those lives that had been spent building these structures.

Spiritually, there were so many blessed moments, some private and many others shared with my fellow pilgrims. A few really resonate in mind and spirit. Ris-

ing early on our first morning on the Mount of Beatitudes, I walked the land where Jesus spoke to the multitudes and watched the sun rise above the Sea of Galilee. Standing there alone, I experienced both a great sense of peace and at the same time a powerful feeling of awe over the magnitude of the Lord's love for us.



Sister Church - Pilgrims visit Annunciation Parish, our sister church in Beit Jala near Bethlehem.

One day in Jerusalem, I wandered away from our group and ended up walking into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by myself. Standing behind a large crowd that surrounded the stone of unction, I



St. Pat's Gang - St. Pat's pilgrims enjoy lunch near the Sea of Galilee.

felt troubled by the cacophony of conversations and shouting and disturbed by the constant flashing of cameras. I turned away and stared at

large mural on the wall behind the stone. A short while later I turned back and was surprised to discover that no one was standing around the stone. I walked over, knelt, kissed the stone, thanked the Lord for the gift of eternal life, and told him that I loved him. When I rose, I again felt peaceful and awed in his presence. Although I am sure the noise level and camera attacks were as intense as before, I felt at peace when another group soon swooped in on the stone.

As powerful as these private moments were, I felt the strongest presence of the Lord when I worshipped with our community of pilgrims under the guidance of our spiritual leader, Father Joe. During our daily



Meeting Fr. Ibrahim - Fr. Joe meets Fr. Ibrahim, pastor of Annunciation Parish in Beit Jala.

Masses at some of the most sacred places of Christian worship, I often closed my eyes in prayer and could see in my mind's eye and feel in my spirit so many brothers and sisters in Christ from St. Patrick's, present and past: my wife and children, my mother and father, Ann and Nick Britsky, Jim and Barb Peckham, Father Kane, Father Remm, and so many others. I felt the strongest sense of belonging that I have ever experienced, and I returned home with an intense desire to follow Father Joe's urging "to surrender myself to Christ's love."

I hope that all of you at St. Patrick's know that each of you was with us in spirit and in prayer.

Reconciliation: A private or communal affair? One mother's experience

Bless me Father, for I have brought my children to a communal reconciliation service.

It doesn't look like anyone else has done so. I struggle not to feel self-conscious. All three children are annoyed to be in church on a week-night and don't bother to hide it. While I join in singing the hymns and psalm response, and try to listen attentively to the Scripture reading, Gospel, and homily, my four-year-old flips restlessly between her books, stacks hymnals, falls off the pew, asks when we can go home. My younger son spends part of his time hunched over the sheet of paper on which he has listed his sins and laboriously writes another he has remembered. My older son starts out scowling but is quiet, paying attention. Soon, though, both boys are poking one another and provoking their little sister into making more noise. I struggle to keep order, though I'd settle for them being quieter.

Then the examination of conscience questions are read out. How many sins am I racking up just by sitting through this service? The more my children act up, the more I struggle with anger, bad words, and harsh thoughts. The strangers in front of us give us dirty looks. My unwritten list now contains the judgments I am making and mental stones I am throwing at them.

We all say an Act of Contrition, and that is a relief. After the closing hymn, the priests each go to a different area of the church: the confessional, the vestry, and several screened-off areas. As my family rises, the four-year-old throws herself to the floor, refusing to get up. My husband and I agree that he will go first and then take our daughter outside while I wait in line.

Eventually it becomes apparent that he and the boys have chosen

the slowest line—either this priest is talkative or all the people who chose him have an awful lot on their consciences tonight. I decide that I will try to drag my daughter into a shorter line with me. But now I have waited too long—there are only two lines. I don't know how to tell whether the other priests are with someone or waiting.

Fortunately my husband returns and takes our daughter outside. I join my sons, who now make up the last line. Good news, it's finally my older son's turn. I look around.

There goes a priest—we'll catch him. Or we won't. He's fast; before I can flag him down he has disappeared. Aha, I spot someone leaving the confessional. I grab my younger son, point him in that direction, give him a push: Go go go! While I'm watching to see that he makes it, another priest makes a break for it. I ask a woman walking by where she came from and whether that priest is now free. She says he is: I almost collide with him as he attempts to step around the screen. Not so fast, Father! One more soul requires you this night.

Afterward, I find my sons waiting for me. They report they have already done their penance, and I decide mine can wait until we are home. As we leave the church to find the rest of our family, I correct myself. I am blessed to be able to bring my children to communal reconciliation, and I look forward to doing it again this Advent!



"No one owes more to Christ than Mary"

The feast we know as the Immaculate Conception, celebrated on Dec. 8, commemorates the conception of Mary. It falls nine months before the celebration of her birth (Sept. 8), yet it is often confused with the conception of Jesus, which we observe on Mar. 25, the feast of the Annunciation.

The Church teaches that Mary was free from sin from the moment she was conceived, and that this special grace was to prepare her to be the mother of God. Mary did not earn this freedom in any way; it was simply a gift bestowed by God. In the seventh century, Mary's conception day became a feast observed on Dec. 8 in the universal Church.

The medieval scholar Duns Scotus once exclaimed that "no one owes more to Christ than Mary, the immaculate one!"



Three local churches offer communal reconciliation this year in an attempt to fit your schedule. Priests from the three parishes gather at each church in turn for the 7:00 p.m. service:

- Monday, Dec. 13, at Holy Cross
- Tuesday, Dec. 14, at St. Patrick's
- Wednesday, Dec. 15, at St. Matthew's

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helpful to me, I felt the need to give back as a way of saying thank you. I love my home parish and all the parishioners, and after this project, I feel an even stronger appreciation and gratitude for St. Patrick's Parish.

*Sincerely,
Will Justice*

Thanks to those who bought bricks...

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Deceased members of the Abell and Creekmur Families

*Diane Conerty
Yolanda Magrini; James Magrini
Arnold Anderson*

*Leonard and Clara Butler
Our families: Cross, Pisani, and Mikulich
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Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary (SSCMs)
Jim, Bridget and Ann Costello
Thomas Moran
Thomas Hoetger; Hershhal Gerhart; Mike Gerhart
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Family members
Elaine and Bill Rosso
George and Emily Dryer
Jim, Bridget, and Ann Costello
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Hilary T. Holbrook
Walter Hublein, Jr.; Lillian and Robert Dahlka

Barbara Lohr
Will Justice; Members of the Justice and Szymczak Families;
Members of St. Patrick's Parish

Mr. and Mrs. William Justice; Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Szymczak;
Mrs. Judy Algozin
Deceased members of the Costello and Kacich Families

Thomas, Lorraine, Peter, Louis, Caterina, and Joey Kim; Agatha Kim;
Grandpa Peter; Grandpa Louis; Grandma Bridget; Great-Grandpa Jasper;
Great-Grandmother Rose

The former Pastors and Priests of St. Patrick's Parish

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Jim, Bridget and Ann Costello
Ray and Joyce Vahling; Helen Niccum
Joan Tyler Noe
Sam, Hannah, Pat, and Ellen Noonan
Dr. Shig Yasunaga

Mr. Chris Niebur - *Donated the design, architectural drawings and specifications of the sign*

Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Shaw - *Donated the light fixture, electrical materials and electrical work*

Davis Electric - *Donated the digging of the electrical trench and securing of the electrical permit*

Mr. Tom Davis, Former President

Mr. Scot Davis, President

Duce Construction - *Donated the digging of the hole and removal of the dirt*

Mr. Michael Ducey, President

Prairie Materials - *Donated the cement*

Mr. William T. Acheson, Yard Manager

Pankau Masonry - *Did all the masonry work at a discounted rate*

Steve Pankau, President

American Dowell Signcrafters - *Provided the letters at cost*

Travis Eastin, President

Volunteers - *Sold bricks and helped clean up the grounds*

Mrs. Kathy Atchley, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Justice, Ms. Monica Lee, Mrs. Veronica Morton, Mr. Bob Plankenhorn,

Mr. Kyle Ritten, Mr. Mark Sandwick, Mrs. Juliann Seebauer

City of Urbana - *Provided guidance on applying for a variance, building permit and electrical permit*

Mr. Robert Myers, Manager, Planning Division

Mr. Jeff Engstrom, City Planner

Mr. Steven R. Cochran, Building Inspector

Mr. Tim Mecum, Electrical Inspector