

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

December 2017

Light in the darkness

The days are getting shorter and the night is coming earlier.

For our ancestors who had nothing brighter than a candle or an oil lamp, this had a big impact on daily life. The darkness was dangerous and limited what they could do for work or play. Better to lock the door and go to bed early.

In our day there is still plenty of darkness: illness, addiction, depression, and death; our public life toxic with distrust, dishonesty, and selfishness; violence that never seems to end. Sometimes locking the door and going to bed early still sounds like a good idea.

Into the darkness shines the first candle of Advent. It acknowledges the darkness around us, but it also reminds us that God has chosen to be with us. Even in the long centu-



ries before the coming of Jesus, God was with us. The stories of Advent tell us that God freed us from the slavery of Egypt, that God gave us the law as a guide, that God raised up good, though imperfect, leaders like Moses and David, and that God sent many prophets to call us to live lives of faithfulness and justice.

The light grows slowly, as the candles shine a bit brighter from week to week. If we are faithful and just, if we are truthful and trustworthy, if our lives are obviously different because of our faith, others will be drawn to the light and learn to live in God's goodness.

After the fourth candle, a new light shines forth, the light of a star and an oil lamp in a stable. No matter how dark the night, God is with us!

Preparing our hearts for Christmas

An excellent way to prepare for the celebration of Christmas would be to attend a Communal Reconciliation Service. The service includes Scripture readings, hymns, a homily, and a brief examination of conscience, followed by an opportunity for private confession and absolution. Come to any of these churches at 7:00 p.m.:

- Monday, Dec. 18: Holy Cross
- Tuesday, Dec. 19: St. Patrick
- Wednesday, Dec. 20: St. Matthew
- Thursday, Dec. 21: Our Lady of the Lake, Mahomet

Cookie monsters take note!

The annual Women of St. Patrick Christmas Cookie & Basket Sale has been set for Sunday, Dec. 3, in the main hall of the parish center.

The perennial favorite "cookies by the dozen" will once again be available for your eating or gifting pleasure. Grab a plastic glove and choose your favorite dozen from a wide variety of delectable delights. Our wonderful parish bakers will do their best to present irresistible choices! Be sure to pick up a dozen for yourself and at least one more dozen to freeze.



Cookies make great gifts and really fit the bill when unexpected holiday company drops by! Holiday tins will also be available for a great

see **Cookies** on page 11

Trunk or Treat provides Halloween Fun

Families enjoyed trick-or-treating, snacks, and games at the parish's annual Trunk or Treat event on October 29.



One night in Trinity Hall...

What are these men (boys?) doing? Why are all those women waving their arms? And who is that man with the long gray beard? Learn the answers to these questions (and more) in the January issue of In Focus!



Help provide a mug of Christmas cheer

Like many things in life, the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry Christmas Mug Giveaway is something that began small, gradually evolved into something wonderful but unwieldy, and has now settled into something smaller but still bringing Christmas cheer.

Some years ago, a gentleman donated some Christmas village houses and train pieces to the SVDP Food Pantry to be given away to food pantry guests before Christmas. In the next couple years, other people donated new and gently used items to be given away to pantry guests. Eventually the Christmas Giveaway grew until there were enough items, including winter coats and toys, to fill almost half the parish center main hall. The large size of the Giveaway was good for allowing food pantry guests to choose more gifts for their families but it also created a number of problems that became untenable.

Not wanting to end the Christmas Giveaway completely, organizers had the idea of scaling it back to a Christmas Mug Giveaway. As part of the larger Giveaway, each visitor had been given a prettily wrapped Christmas mug filled with candy. These were already a prized gift and they became more so with other small gifts added to the candy. According to Chris Whippo, who has helped organize this effort for a number of years, "The Christmas Mug Giveaway never fails to bring



a smile to both the givers and the receivers."

It also requires lots of help and lots of donated items! Perhaps when you are shopping or pulling out your Christmas decorations, you might find some small items to donate. New or gently used Christmas mugs are always needed, as well as rolls of cellophane and ribbon. Items to fill the mugs include individually wrapped candies, cheese/cracker snack packets, single serving packs of hot cocoa or coffee, small tissue packets, travel-size toiletries, gloves, socks, lip balm, small Christmas ornaments, and assorted other small gifts.

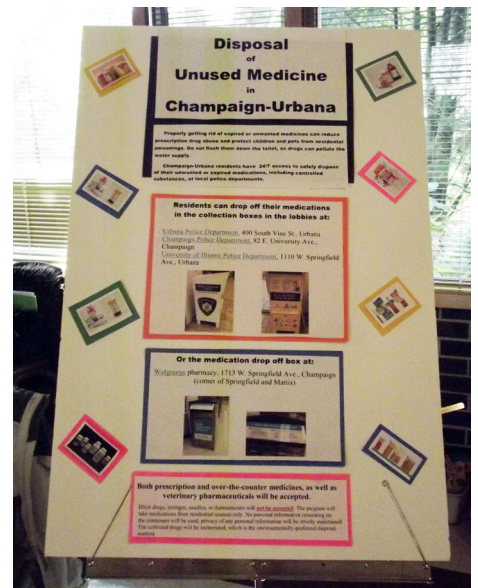
If you have ever dreamed of being a Christmas elf, here's your chance—come help fill and wrap the mugs on Thursday, Dec. 14 at 9:00 a.m. in the parish center. "It is really fun to see all the wonderful items donated by parishioners," says Chris, as well as to see the "assembly line" put it all together to produce these lovely gifts. She adds that, "The mugs make a nice display and the friends have fun selecting the one they want."

Will you be a "Christmas elf" and help brighten someone's Christmas? Donations will be accepted until the morning of Dec. 14, when assembly begins. Check the bulletin for more information about when, where, and what to donate, and how to volunteer.

Parish nurses hold their annual Health Fair

Thanks to our wonderful parish nurses and several local healthcare providers, parishioners were able to receive blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol screenings, as well as flu shots, chair massages, hear-

ing tests, answers to medication questions, and information on many health topics at the annual Health Fair on October 29.



Disposal of Unused Medicine in Champaign-Urbana
Properly getting rid of expired or unwanted medications can reduce prescription drug abuse and protect children and pets from accidental poisonings. Do not flush them down the toilet, or simply toss them in the trash can.
Champaign-Urbana residents have 24/7 access to safety disposal of their unwanted or expired medications, including controlled substances, at local police departments.
Residents can drop off their medications in the collection boxes in the lobbies at:
Urbana Police Department, 406 South Vine St., Urbana
Champaign Police Department, 82 E. University Ave., Champaign
University of Illinois Police Department, 1110 W. Springfield Ave., Urbana
Or the medication drop-off box at:
Walgreens pharmacy, 1713 W. Springfield Ave., Champaign (corner of Springfield and Main)
Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines, as well as veterinary pharmaceuticals will be accepted.
Do not drop sharps, needles, or syringes off at any disposal. The program will also accept broken household contact lens. No personal information or money on the containers will be kept. Copies of drug personal information will be strictly destroyed. Unlabeled drugs will be incinerated, which is the environmentally preferred disposal.

Seniors enjoy All Saints Day pilgrimage

On All Saints Day, some members of the St. Jeanne Jugan senior group visited the Shrine of St. Mother Theodore Guerin and the home of the Sisters of Providence at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, near Terre Haute.

In 1840, St. Mother Theodore and five other sisters came from France at the request of the Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana, and arrived to find, in the middle of a forest, a four-room farm house where they would lodge with a family of 12 and a small one-room log cabin chapel. Within nine months they had established the first Academy for Girls, now known as Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

St. Mother Theodore founded the Sisters of Providence, who serve throughout the world. She was declared a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in 2006, the eighth saint from the United States and the first from Indiana.

The Seniors group viewed a video of the life and history of St. Mother Theodore; examined dioramas and a history time-line hallway; and visited museum rooms in the shrine, a chapel housing the remains and relics of St. Mother Theodore, and a beautiful Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

They attended Mass in the magnificent Church of the Immaculate Conception, then visited the National Shrine of Our Lady of Providence, established by the Sister in 1925 to encourage families to make Mary the queen of their homes.

After lunch, Seniors enjoyed a bus tour of the campus. They learned about the building history, and saw a replica of the log cabin chapel St. Mother Theodore found when she arrived at the site, as well as the St. Anne Shell Chapel, a stone replica of a small log cabin St. Mother Theodore built in thanksgiving to St. Anne. The replica chapel was built in stone after her death with an interior covered in mussel shells from the Wabash River, with

designs depicting her trust in Divine Providence.

The group also saw a walkway of bronze statues from Italy depicting the Stations of the Cross, a labyrinth walkway for quiet meditation, a replica of the Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto built in thanksgiving for the end of World War I, the cemetery of the Sisters of Providence, and a bronze statue of St. Mother Theodore.

The tour included a drive through the White Violet Center for Eco-Justice, a part of the campus dedicated to the teaching of organic agricultural practices. It is home to a herd of alpacas, a flock of chickens, a USDA-certified organic cropland, gardens and orchards, classified forest, and beehives. The Center also offers workshops, classes, retreats, and an internship program.

The Seniors found this a fascinating and inspiring place, an easy driving distance from Urbana, and a good day trip for anyone interested.



The Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Did You Know?

St. Patrick's has 5 trained lay spiritual directors who provide support to our parish. Contact the Parish Office for more information: 367-2665.



Festival of Lessons and Carols returns for Advent 2017

Since its inception at the close of World War I in England, a Festival of Lessons and Carols has become a popular Advent service across the world. There are nine readings of Scripture, recounting the Fall, the promise of a Messiah, the Incarnation, and the Great Commission to preach the Good News. Each reading is followed by a carol or song reflecting the lesson's message and a brief prayer. Although the original service was Anglican, the Catholic community has organized a version with slight variations; many other denominations annually host their own versions as well.

St. Patrick music director, Frank Gallo, organized the Festival of Lessons and Carols service in our parish last year. Choirs were drawn from both the St. Patrick's and St. Mary's communities, as well as other local churches. The event was received with such warmth and enthusiasm that there was no question that this would become an annual tradition!

For this second Festival, the German community, the St. Patrick's Youth

Orchestra, and the St. Patrick Bell Choir will join a returning lineup that includes our Adult Choir, the deaf community, the Congolese, Vietnamese, Hispanic, and Mayan communities, and the choir from St. Luke's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Frank says that every year he is looking to expand the scope of the Festival and increase participation.

What makes St. Patrick's Festival of Lessons and Carols unique is that in our service the traditional nine readings are read in the many languages that are spoken within our

communities. This year, the languages featured are English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Lingala, German, Q'anjob'al, and American Sign Language. Interspersed are carols from both the Old and New Worlds.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols will take place Sunday, Dec. 10, at 7:00 p.m. in the church. There is no admission charge. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit the music ministries of the participating churches.

You won't want to miss St. Patrick's beautiful new Advent tradition!



Younger and older pitched in together for Fall cleanup

On a windy Saturday, Nov. 4, volunteers worked to clean up the parish grounds.



Vocation Prayer

I heard the voice of the Lord saying
 "Whom shall I send," and
 "Who will go for us?"
 And I said, "Here I am; send me!"

Isaiah believed his call,
 unworthy though he knew himself
 to be,
 was willing to be sent
 to live and to speak for God.

Do I believe my call,
 unworthy though I know myself to
 be,
 to live and to speak for God?

Holy One, as you called Isaiah,
 you call me.
 Like Isaiah let me respond,
 "Here I am; send me!"



in our parish library

As we approach the fall and winter seasons, the weather begins to become more and more bleak. Skies are gray, the sun is often in hiding, and it is frequently windy. This nasty Midwest fall and winter weather can really put a damper on one's spirits. To help bring yourself back to life, you might read a very uplifting book entitled *Humor Me*, by Barbara Johnson. This book contains several short, humorous stories intended to lift your spirits.

A book that might motivate you on your spiritual journey is titled *Surprised by Truth*, by Patrick Madrid. This book follows the stories of eleven personal conversions of those who have discovered (or rediscovered) the wonder of the Catholic faith and made the decision to come closer to God.

Christmas Jars, very appropriate for this time of year, tells the story of Hope Jensen, a young aspiring author, and her search for an unknown benefactor who gave her a much needed gift at a low point in her life. Her search leads her to a family's unusual and long-standing Christmas tradition. She desperately wants to inform the media about this family's tradition but realizes that, in doing so, she will violate the family's trust in a big way. Her decision will forever change her life.

We might also remember those who helped to build Catholicism in America into what it is today. *American Catholic* recounts the historic events that led to the spread of Catholicism in the United States. The book describes the Church's ever-present struggle to come to terms with secularism and pluralism in America.

The approach of the new year may lead us to think about how we are living our lives. Are we doing all that we can to be the person God created us to be? Steven Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* detail the virtues and characteristics needed in order to become more compassionate, caring, and empathetic to those around us.

* * *

If you have questions, contact our parish librarian, Megan Raab (raab41987@gmail.com); she will be happy to assist you. The door to the parish library is always open: come in and browse to your heart's content!



Q: Why is Advent only three weeks long this year? I thought it was always four weeks.

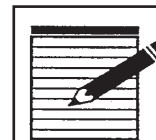
A: This is just a quirk of the calendar. The four Sundays of Advent precede Christmas Day, and the length of the fourth week depends on which day of the week Christmas falls on. This year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent also happens to be Christmas Eve, so the fourth week of Advent is only one day long!

You may have to plan ahead to get to Mass that weekend. The Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent will be celebrated on the usual Sunday schedule: Dec. 23 at 5 p.m., Dec. 24 at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon. Masses for Christmas will be on Dec. 24 at 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 10:30 p.m., and Dec. 25 at 10 a.m. (This has been designated "Be Kind to Priests and Musicians weekend"—they'll be working hard for us all!)

The following weekend gives less of a challenge. The Sunday Masses (for the Feast of the Holy Family) will be on the usual schedule: Dec. 30 at 5 p.m., Dec. 31 at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon. Because the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God falls on a Monday this year, it is not observed as a holy day of obligation. There will be a Mass on Jan. 1 at 9 a.m.

* * *

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



Deadline for submission of information, articles and news items for the next issue of In Focus is **December 3**.



Patron Saints for December

Returning Catholics discussion panel

One of the Returning Catholics group facilitators, Eileen Mathy,

shares her story of returning to the church. "I was 16 when I joined others from our parish in attending a Protestant church with a large and popular teen ministry. They introduced me to the bible and taught me about prayer and reflection in

a way that I hadn't been exposed to before. I married in that church and raised my children in the Protestant tradition for many years until one day when I wandered back through the doors of St. Patrick's and began to explore what it would be like to come home."



Eileen says that her story is more complicated than that but it is not unusual. Statistics tell us that there are more people leaving the Catholic church than joining. Some leave because of grave offenses while others feel bored and desire a church experience that better meets their spiritual needs.

When this happens with our friends or family, it can often create an uncomfortable tension. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our loved ones could capture a sacramental moment and rekindle the call of their baptisms? Yet sometimes we are at a loss in how to help them do that.

If this resonates with you, you're invited to attend a panel discussion on "Returning Catholics: The Art of Conversation" on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 2:00 p.m. in Trinity Hall. The panelists will include parishioners who have returned to the church; our pastor, Fr. Luke Spannagel; spiritual director Sr. Anna Phiri, Christian counselor Dave Sandel, and social worker and St. Matthew's parishioner Chris Washo. Come learn more about the needs of returning Catholics: dynamics in relationships that can impact how those conversations go, ways to meet someone where they are, the church's position on members who desire to return, ways to listen to and direct someone who is struggling with the church, reasons why people left, and much more.

Peace and Justice education classes explore what it means to love our neighbors

Be attentive to the needs of the poor, the suffering, the lonely, for whoever has chosen to love Jesus cannot but love his neighbor.

--Pope Francis

Who are the poor, the suffering, the lonely among us? And what does it mean to love them, to fight injustices and to change those institutions that oppress? These are themes that can be drawn from our theology and from the catechism of our faith. But sometimes they remain ethereal and lofty in concept. What do we do when our paths cross those of a homeless person outside a downtown restaurant, or when there is a need for housing for a refugee family moving to our community, or when a child in our classroom identifies as transgendered or a colleague is discriminated against because of race or gender? How do we respond? What does the church call us to do in these very real and up-close situations?

At St. Patrick's there is a long established history of social action. Many of our members are involved in outreach to the community, some serve on boards or councils addressing social justice issues and some run not-for-

profits that provide direct services to individuals with a variety of needs. In the Peace and Justice Ministry's education class, parishioners try to take the conversation to a new level. Participants seek to enlighten themselves about real people and real pain. Often in churches we are afraid to offend or polarize the conversation by addressing specific social issues. The Peace and Justice Ministry's challenge is to put those fears aside and to take an honest look at things like racism in the justice system, the impact of pending immigration reform, food scarcity, the experience of coming out in a church community, and other issues. Those involved in this ministry want to be informed. They want to challenge themselves and one another. They want to refuse to turn a blind eye. They want to follow the gospel of Jesus who says "when you did this to the least of these, you did it unto me."

The Peace and Justice Ministry's education class meets on the fourth Sunday of each month at 9 a.m. Ministry members also meet every other month to organize outreach activities and to select materials for the class. The input and participation of all parishioners is most welcome! For more information, contact pastoral associate Jim Urban (jim.urban@stpaturbana.org or 367-2665).

Peace and Justice class explores Catholic responses to the LGBT community

In October, St. Patrick's Peace and Justice Ministry used its monthly education class to address this question: because the statutes of our diocese call Catholic people to stand against any institution or structure that oppresses, exploits, or promotes injustices towards our neighbors, denying them dignity as people created in the image of God, what does that mean in regard to our Catholic brothers and sisters in the LGBT community?

First the class looked at the marginalization and injustices experienced by the LGBT community in the areas of housing, economic security, health care, and education. Then they considered the varying tones of teachings we have received from our Church.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in *Some Considerations Concerning the Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination of Homosexual Persons*, states "[Rights] can be legitimately limited for objectively disordered external conduct.... This would obtain moreover not only in the case of culpable behavior but even in the case of actions of the physically or mentally ill. Thus it is accepted that the state may restrict the exercise of rights, for example, in the case of contagious or mentally ill persons, in order to protect the common good."

The class found this wording to be in contrast to the US Council of Catholic Bishops' *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*, which states that "the Church teaches that persons with a homosexual inclination must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. We recognize that these persons have been, and often continue to be, objects of scorn, hatred, and even violence in some sectors of our society.... Such treatment deserves condemnation from



the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. Those who would minister in the name of the Church must in no way contribute to such injustice. They should prayerfully examine their own hearts in order to discern any thoughts or feelings that might stand in need of purification."

Individual class members shared about family and loved ones who have been wounded by the Catholic Church over issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity. They wondered how we can affirm a person's dignity as someone made in the image of God yet suggest at the same time that their basic human rights could be denied for the common good.

Participants looked to the writings of Fr. James Martin, SJ, who has written a book called *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*. Fr. Martin suggests that we follow the example of Jesus, who always extended inclusion and love to those marginalized by society. The class wondered whether our Catholic LGBT brothers and sisters would find St. Patrick parish to be "gay friendly" and if not, why not.

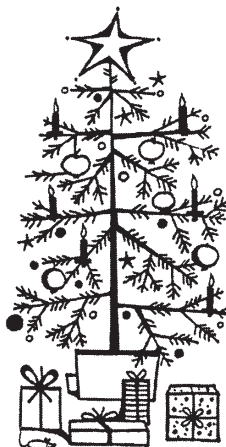
Discussion moved on to behaviors that help to form healthy alliances, including listening, being open-minded and willing to talk, being inclusive and inviting to LGBT friends, and calling out anti-LGBT comments and jokes. Class attendees challenged themselves to confront their own prejudices and bias, as well as to defend LGBT people against discrimination and mistreatment.

The group concluded with the hope that this conversation will continue and that our parish might be a safe haven for our LGBT brothers and sisters to worship and work among us.

What to do with all those Christmas cards!

Are you the recipient of unsolicited Christmas cards from worthy charitable organizations hoping for a donation to support their good works? And do you feel kind of helpless to respond to all of them? Do you then feel a little guilty about using the cards? But if you don't use them, what's to be done with them?

Well, one good use would be to make them available



to shut-ins at home or in nursing homes, who might be grateful to have Christmas cards to send. Perhaps this year you could address and mail them to shut-ins—our parishioners who carry the Blessed Sacrament to them could provide you with their names, or you could ask Mary Karten (mlkarten@hotmail.com) or Kevin Martindale (rewirek@sbcglobal.net)

for this information. The Seniors group (Chuck Milewski, cmil2150@msn.com or 480-0203) will address the cards again this year at their Dec. 6 gathering at Olive Garden; you could offer your Christmas cards and/or your help in mailing them.

You can bring joy to the world of shut-ins!

Parish Council News

The Parish Council's October meeting was packed with discussion items. First, in our efforts to make the parish more welcoming to new members, the Welcome Committee announced that it is compiling welcome packets for new members and that it will host



welcome meetings three to four times per year. Second, in our efforts to get to know the needs of our parishioners better, the Council created a suggestion box that is now available on the desk in the gathering space, and Council members continue to meet with parishioners

after Mass. The questions/comments from those meetings are below.

In addition, the Council developed a survey for parishioners to complete (look for it in late November) that will allow us to have a better idea of the needs of the members of our parish. Other items included the decisions to create an emergency procedures manual and to examine the Parish Council by-laws.

Pew ponderings by Gary Wszalek

Q: Can you remind us why the Parish Council nomination process changed a while back and why we don't have parish-wide voting anymore?

A: There's a history behind the change to the current nomination process. It all came down to supply and demand. The Council at the time was continually faced with a shrinking pool of candidates. It finally came to a head when four vacant Council positions needed to be filled but only one candidate came forward. Our current Parish Council extends an invitation to any parishioner who wants to get involved. Who knows, maybe if we have an overwhelming response, we can reconsider the nomination/voting process.

Q: Can we change the way the baskets are done for second collections? The two baskets are clumsy and confusing.

A: This is a frequently asked question and the Council, the ushers, and Fr. Luke are keenly aware of the situation. As we work toward addressing some of the concerns, Fr. Luke and the Council suggest utilizing on-line donations. (Only 20% of parish families are enrolled for on-line giving; you can enroll by accessing www.osvonlinegiving.com/241.)

Q: As an older member of the parish, I miss some of the children-oriented aspects of the children's Mass. Why have the changes been made?

A: As with most parish decisions, there are a number of reasons for the changes to the children's liturgy: Church rules; the desire to have more standardized Masses week to week; parental wishes to have children sit with family; and encouraging families to attend every week, not just for children's Masses.

Q: I miss seeing the Blessed Mary statue in church. I know that it is in storage in the basement, but is there an update on when/if she will return to the church?

A: This was one of the first things that Fr. Luke noticed when he took his first tour of St. Patrick's. Fear not, while many are missing Mary, plans are in the works. For example, the Knights of Columbus has volunteered to purchase a base for the statue. Stay tuned.

Q: When I enter the Main Street door, I often see the restroom door open. Is there any chance of installing an automatic door closure?

A: The upgrades to the restrooms included a weighted hinge that "encourages" the doors to close. That seems to work on the restroom doors in the gathering area off the main parking lot. We asked Bob Miller, our maintenance man, to take a look at it. For the time being if you see the door open, please pull it closed. Thank you!

Q: Does the St. Mary's Cemetery need more volunteers to maintain the grounds? My husband's gravesite was not handled properly.

A: St. Patrick's Parish, a parishioner, and the youth group have been assisting in the upkeep of St. Mary's Cemetery for a number of years. The actual ownership and responsibility belongs to St. Mary's Parish. Plans are being made to shift the full custodial responsibilities back to St. Mary's Parish.

Q: Is it possible to make an appointment with Fr. Luke outside of the 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. office hours?

A: As you can imagine, our pastor is pulled in many directions on a daily basis. Pastoral duties have increased, now that our pastor has no assistant. Fr. Luke celebrates all daily Masses and makes all hospital visits. He allocates multiple hours for daily appointments, including four evenings per week, and those appointment times are often taken up by parish activities, including the Parish Council, RCIA, marriage preparation, and the Young Professionals group. We are so lucky that he seems to have boundless energy, but we don't want him to burn out. For an appointment, please call the office.

Mary, the Mother of God;
Mary, the unwed Mother,
the political refugee;
Mary, the homeless one,
the disciple and prophet;
Mary, the Third World Woman,
Mary, full of grace.





Box 84425-80100
Mombasa, Kenya
nagelesusan@gmail.com
<http://healthministryinkenya.blogspot.com/>
November 2017

Dear Friends at St. Patrick Parish,

I'm sure this picture will bring the thought of warm breezes to those of you in the middle of winter. Coralis and I are happy to welcome Heidi Cerneka who had worked in Brazil as a Maryknoll Lay Missioner for 18 years. She recently completed law

school at Loyola Chicago and passed her bar exam!!! She is now rejoining Maryknoll Lay Missioners in Kenya and arrived in September. She will be doing research on women in the criminal justice system and is learning Swahili with a Portuguese accent. We're thrilled to have her with us as her skills as a lawyer have been invaluable these days.

As I write this, October 26th, Kenya is holding the rerun of the presidential election which was first held on August 8th. The Supreme Court annulled that first election and we're going through it again today. There have been numerous court cases and suits which Heidi has tried to explain to us. She knows the Kenyan Constitution inside and out and it seems to be the cornerstone for all the legal activity. But the political problems are rooted in corruption and negative ethnicity (tribalism). The opposition has pulled out of the poll claiming that it is a sham and will be rigged against them. The supporters of the current president will vote and about half of the registered voters who support the opposition will boycott and not vote. The political problems will still need to be solved when the votes are all counted from today.

For health care, this whole year has been a struggle. The doctors began striking on December 5th, 2016 and continued for 100 days until the middle of March. The nurses began striking on June 5th and continue to the present. Next the clinical officers (physician assistants) and lab technologists also went on strike. When one cadre of health care workers goes on strike, all the others stop working because they say they can't do another's work. This has meant that our mission facilities are overstretched with work. Many people can't afford to go to private doctors and our units will not turn anyone away. For those who cannot afford to pay we must find charity funds or absorb the loss.

None of these problems with strikes will be solved until there is a functioning government. At the moment it is hard to imagine how that will come about. There is poor leadership and no discussion of issues that will solve these problems. Both sides have been rigidly declaring their bottom line and refusing to talk to one another.

It's easy for us to feel hopeless. So I look to Jesus. He was born into an empire governed by a single potentate, Augustus Caesar, who reigned over 100 million people. It was a scene of moral pollution and vice in every form. The Jews were divided into sects and had sunken into sensuality or superstition. From that came a little baby born into a loving family and nurtured by a supportive community to grow up and become the person he was meant to be. He had to suffer and pay a price for his faithfulness to God. That is the challenge for each of us too. His life can bring us peace in our hearts and hope for the future. But we must be faithful too.

Wishing you a joyful, holy Christmas and a peaceful heart in the New Year.

Susan Nagele

We are grateful for your prayers and financial support.

If you would like to know more about Maryknoll Lay Missioners log onto our website:

www.mklm.org or call toll free 1-800-867-2980

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/MaryknollLayMissioners/SNagele.html>

Receive the gift of healing

Twice each year, in Advent and again during Lent, the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is offered to the people of St. Patrick's. Prior to Vatican II this sacrament was called Extreme Unction, usually referred to as the Last Rites, and was given of life. Following this sacrament source of grace, for all who suffer at any age or

The Catholic the following ex- ing of the sick and imparts gifts Holy Spirit against anxiety or discouragement, and conveys peace and fortitude. These gifts flow from the atoning death of Jesus Christ, for this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.'



to Catholics at the end Vatican II, the focus of is rather on being a strength, and healing in mind, body, or spirit time of life.

Answers website offers planation: "The anoint- conveys several graces of strengthening in the

On Tuesday, Dec. 5, the anointing of the sick will be offered during a Mass at 11:00 a.m. in the church. The liturgy will include scripture readings and music provided by instrumentalists, cantor, and choir. Ushers will be available to assist as needed. Participants will be seated in every other pew so that priests can confer the sacrament where each person is seated. Ministers of Holy Communion will also go to each individual in the pews. In this way, people with mobility issues may remain where they are comfortable, with ministers coming to them.

Anyone is welcome to participate in the Mass and to receive the sacrament of anointing, which is made available to those with current or chronic physical or emotional illness, impending surgery, chronic pain, infirmities of age, or simply in need of emotional healing.

Immediately following the Mass, all are invited to enjoy a soup luncheon in the parish hall. Every effort will be made to accommodate special needs. Anyone needing transportation to the event should notify the parish office (367-2665) so arrangements can be made.

Cookies from page 1

way to present cookies as a gift.

If you need the perfect gift for a special someone, gorgeous gift baskets filled with a delightful array of items will be available. Food themes, relaxation and spa items, holiday magic, and wine lovers' selections, in baskets big and small, will be ready for purchase. The trick will be to pick just the right basket from the wonderful variety. Thanks to Leslie Risatti, Ceil Weir, and their helpers for hours of hard work that result in these wonderful creations.

The board of the Women of St. Patrick wish to thank everyone who makes this event a great success year after year: those who help plan, set up, bake, prepare, sell, and clean up—and everyone who makes a purchase. Proceeds from the sale will be used by the Women of St. Patrick for various projects and purchases throughout the year.

May the Bakerwoman God bless you. May God "yeast" in you a sense of your own goodness and an awareness of God's power in your life. May you be leaven for those to whom and with whom you minister and may your yield of peace, justice, and love be "many-fold." May the Bakerwoman God be with you.

Remember that time we . . .

At a St. Patrick's family dance, in a double long line reaching high, children and adults formed a dancing tunnel. Each couple took turns, stooped low, danced into the human tunnel, stumbled, laughed, to reappear at the far end over and over again. Some crouching low tickled those with their arms raised above. Some reached down and tickled the dancers passing under. At last, finally, we all got tired and the music stopped;



we sat down and the children said, "When can we do this again?" The next day smiling young eyes across Sunday Mass said, "Do you remember me?" Sidelong glances said, "I remember you!" One child passing an adult held his arms tight against his sides and grinned in pretended fear of tickling. Years later a smiling young person, much taller now, will say, "Remember that time we..." It was a building block of his being.

—*Quentin Kirk,*
former parishioner



There is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before. It is not possible to keep it from coming, because it will come. That's just how Advent works. What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past us. Only then do we begin to grasp what it was we missed.

So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for rushing, for worrying, for everything else that calls for our attention.

For now, stay. Wait. Watch.

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 infocusst-pats@gmail.com. You may also send them to a Communications Committee member, leave them in the committee's mailbox in the parish center, or call a committee member. All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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Articles, information, and photos for this issue were provided by Ellen Abell, Mardia Bishop, Susan Fowler, Frank Gallo, Denise Green, Elizabeth Hendricks, Rachael McMillan, Eileen Mathy, Mary Lou Menches, Chuck Milewski, Nancy Olson, Megan Raab, Cathy Salika, Tony Schutz, Chris Whippo, and Gary Wszalek. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Jerry Walsh, page layout by John Colombo.

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Clara Butler



Cardamom Cranberry Pear Crisp

For the topping:

1/2 c (1 stick) butter
1/2 c packed brown sugar
3/4 c all-purpose flour
3/4 c oats
1/2 t cinnamon
1/4 t salt

For the filling:

8 pears, peeled, cored, sliced
8-oz pkg fresh or frozen cranberries
1/2 c packed brown sugar
1/2 t ground cardamom
1/4 t salt
2 T cornstarch

Topping: In a medium bowl use an electric mixer to beat together the butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add flour, oats, cinnamon, and salt, and stir until mixture forms moistened crumbs and small clumps. Set aside.

Filling: In a medium bowl toss together pears, cranberries, brown sugar, cardamom, salt, and cornstarch. Spread mixture evenly into 9x9 inch pan coated with cooking spray, and sprinkle topping evenly over filling. Bake at 400 for about 1 hour, or until pears are tender and bubbling and topping is well browned.

* * *

If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (344-1125, mmenches@illinois.edu). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!



Thanks to all of you who have helped in any way in the preparation of *In Focus*, our parish newsletter, in the past year. We certainly couldn't do it without you!

Thanks to the many, many parishioners who have researched and written material for the newsletter, taken or shared photographs to lend interest, provided artwork, edited the thousands of words in an issue, laid out the pages with an eye to attractiveness and readability, offered suggestions for improvement or for topics to be pursued, reviewed or proofread drafts, patiently answered our questions—and so very much more.

Borrowing from Isaiah, we declare that “you are precious in our eyes!” God's blessings on you, one and all!