

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

January 2020

Beginnings

There's something very appealing about beginnings. Do you ever pay attention to your car's odometer when a bunch of nines come up, and try to catch it when they all roll over to zeroes? Do you enjoy

the passage of time by watching a sunrise or sunset? Do you stay up to greet the new year on December 31? There's just something pleasurable, or maybe satisfying, about it.



Beginnings are a time to look back. Perhaps there's a sense of accomplishment: I got a lot done today! There's an urge to pause: We can relax and savor the sunset. There's an opportunity for reflection: How has life changed in the past year? There's a chance to note changes that have been happening gradually: What? I'm 40 already?? You might respond with gratitude, thanking God for what he has done in your life today. It's good to look back to see where you've been, and to see that God has been with you.

Beginnings are also a time to look forward. There's an opportunity for hope: I wonder what God will have in store for me this year? There is potential for growth: I think I can do better than I did yesterday. Perhaps you're seeking a fresh start: Well, today is a new day. You might respond with trust, relying on God to be with you as you begin.

So it's natural that we'd greet the beginning of a new year as we greet other beginnings, by pausing, looking back, and looking forward in hope. But the hullabaloo about New Year's resolutions is maybe a little

excessive. Life is full of beginnings and January 1 is only one of many. Any dawn, any birthday, any sunset, any old Tuesday can be a beginning for us. Besides, sometimes the

changes that stick are the ones that we make incrementally, gradually over time.

So, when you decide to make a beginning in your life, you don't have to wait for an odometer to roll over or a calendar page to flip. Just pause, look back, and then look forward. Do it in dialog with God. Ask him to fix things that are broken. Tell him you need his companionship and guidance going forward. Be grateful for his help in the past and rely on his presence in the future.

One day, you will arrive at the beginning that has no end. You'll be able to look back to see where you have been and the many ways that God has been with you. And you'll be able to look forward in hope, knowing that God will be with you forever. Perhaps, after all, this is why God made beginnings so appealing: He wants us to use them to practice for that day!

What is your migration story?

How did you come to be here at St. Patrick, in Champaign-Urbana? Where did you come from: the surrounding area, another city or town, out of state, or another country? What brought you here: a job, education, family, quality of life; or an effort to get away from a bad relationship, a dangerous situation, violence, or oppression? Even if you were born here, your parents, grandparents, or ancestors came from somewhere else, for many of the same reasons people come here today.

The Catholic Church in the United States celebrates National Migration



week from January 5 through 11. It reminds us that whether it is recent or in the distant past, each of our families has a migration story. This year's theme, "Promoting a Church and a World for All," emphasizes that we are all part of the same human family, no matter where we

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Parish gets to know First Followers

On November 16, the second Know Your Neighbor Dinner at St. Patrick's introduced our parish to the First Followers, a local group that helps people released from prison to re-enter the community.

Dinner organizers Ryan Hughes and Luis Cuza worked hard to plan an event that combined fellowship, education, and fundraising, and all three goals were accomplished in one joyful evening.

The St. Patrick Congolese Choir provided beautiful music. Fr. Anthony offered a blessing, then parishioners and guests got acquainted as they shared a delicious Italian-themed meal, with entrees donated by Timpone's Restaurant and the Oliver Garden.

A video presentation and speakers from the group described First Followers' programs and shared some of their own experiences. First Fol-

lowers peer mentors are all people who themselves were formerly incarcerated, so they know first-hand what challenges the 400-500 people being released from prison to our community every year are facing. Finding housing can be a substantial obstacle. People are released from prison with \$10 and a bus ticket,

could live in a transitional house while she rebuilt her life.

First Followers has been working to establish the first transitional house in our area. FirstSteps will provide safe and reliable shelter for four men recently released from prison as well as a full-time staff member devoted to working directly with each resident. Although the house and major renovations were provided at no cost by the Champaign County Housing Authority, the group has been raising funds to cover smaller renovations, the cost of a live-in house manager, and other expenses.

As part of the



lowers peer mentors are all people who themselves were formerly incarcerated, so they know first-hand

so if they don't have a place to go, they may have to serve out their parole by remaining in prison. Peer mentor Casandis Hunt spoke about how the ways someone has had to change to survive in prison and the way their family members have changed can make returning to live with family difficult. She credits her own successful re-entry---she is now celebrating five years as a University of Illinois employee---to her choice to move to Springfield, where she

dinner's fundraising effort, three special desserts were auctioned. Ryan Hughes revealed a hidden talent as an auctioneer as he cajoled and prodded bidding to amazing heights: one of parishioner Shirley Splittstoesser's famous lemon meringue pies sold for \$150! Including donations from the Urbana Knights of Columbus, the Women of St. Patrick, Catholic Charities, and others,

see **First Followers** on page 6

Parishioners receive Community Impact Award

Paul and Wanpen Anderson, long-time members of St. Patrick Parish, were recently honored by the Junior League of Champaign-Urbana. On November 23 they received the League's Community Impact Award for 2019 for their advocacy of raising awareness and fundraising for Stevens Johnson Syndrome/Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (SJS/TEN), the disease that took their daughter Angela's life. SJS/TEN is an adverse reaction to medication, both prescribed and over the counter. It causes one's immune system to shut down, the patient's skin sloughs off, and internal organs burn from the inside out.

At the time of Angela's death on December 28, 2015, there was no research specifically dedicated to SJS/TEN in the United States. Because of the Andersons' relentless search for an institution to begin such work, they were able to reach out to a team of research doctors at Vander-

bilt University Medical Center who were willing to begin a dedicated research program to find a cure to prevent anyone else from dying from this horrific disease.

In December of 2016, Paul and Wanpen donated \$22,000 from donations they had received from friends and family, and thus the SJS/TEN Research Fund in Memory of Angela Anderson began. So far the program has received over \$50,000 in donations and thanks to the Andersons' advocacy, VUMC recently received a grant from the National Institutes of Health specifically targeting SJS/TEN research.

In 2019, the Andersons raised over \$15,000 at a chicken dinner/silent auction fundraiser at St. Patrick's parish center. If you would like to learn more about Angela, the disease SJS/TEN, and the Andersons' advocacy for awareness and research, visit www.AngelaWanpenAnderson.com.

Paul and Wanpen's passionate advocacy is truly bringing hope to what has been hopeless. We are blessed to have them as part of our parish family!



St. Patrick and Holy Cross are co-hosting the "Cluckin' for Catholic Education" smoked chicken dinner fundraiser at St. Patrick's parish center on Saturday, January 25 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12 and are on sale from January 2 through 19. Check the weekly bulletin for details.



The Grounds Committee finally got a lucky break with the weather and had a busy morning on December 7 cleaning up the grounds and the gutters. Volunteers included Fred Stavins, Mark Palermo, Phil Davis, Bill Besdon, and others. Let them know you appreciate their hard work!

St. Marianne Cope

January 23 is both the birthday and feast day of St. Marianne Cope. She was born in Germany in 1838 and christened Maria Anna Barbara Koob. Her family soon immigrated to the U.S., settling in Utica, NY and grew to



ten children. They struggled with illness and poverty and Maria Anna left school after eighth grade for factory work. The family anglicized their name to “Cope” and became United States citizens.

Maria Anna joined the Franciscans in 1862 taking the name “Sister Marianne.” She was a born leader, progressing rapidly from a teaching sister to school principal to novice mistress. Then she earned roles as nurse and hospital administrator before election twice as the provincial director of her order.

Meanwhile the Hawaiian king Kalakaua and Catholic

priests had asked over 50 religious congregations for nurses to care for lepers. Only Mother Marianne with 6 other sisters from Syracuse bravely answered the call. They arrived in Honolulu on November 8, 1883.

The sisters cared for their patients despite the social stigma and poor resources allocated to their cause. At the time leprosy or Hansen’s disease was considered highly contagious and a death sentence. Most patients were exiled to the isolated Kalaupapa colony on the island of Molokai. Mother Marianne met Father Damien de Veuster in January 1884. He was one of the very few willing to live with and care for the patients of Kalaupapa.

In 1886, Fr. Damien began to suffer leprosy himself and Sr. Marianne and her team cared for him in Honolulu. In 1888 she went with two sisters to live and work in Kalaupapa. They cared for Fr. Damien in his last months of life. He is now a saint known as the “Apostle to the Lepers.”

Mother Marianne and the sisters operated clinics, schools, and a group home for the women of the colony. After Damien’s death they officially cared for the boys and men as well. Sr. Marianne was a kind, accepting and optimistic teacher and nurse. She insisted on music, flowers, playgrounds, and pretty clothes for the patients despite their harsh circumstances. In May 1889, the writer Robert Lewis Stevenson visited Molokai, joining the sisters for meals and conversation. He wrote a poem in Mother Marianne’s honor as well as donating a croquet set and a grand piano.

Many decades passed until Hansen’s disease was better researched and cured with antibiotics. Mother Marianne Cope died on August 9, 1918, at Kalaupapa. She was canonized on October 21, 2012. Let us pray for her intercession for all so-called “incurable outcasts” of our world.

Respect Life vigil

The St. Patrick Respect Life committee invites all to the Community Ecumenical Memorial Pro-Life Prayer Vigil on



Wednesday, January 22, at 7 p.m. The vigil will be held at Meadowbrook Community Church, 1902 S. Duncan Road in Champaign.

The event is a prayer vigil to bring the community together to remember and mourn for all of those lost to abortion, as well as to hear scripture, testimony, and a speaker about this issue.

This year’s theme is “Now Is the Time.” The speaker will be Dolores SoFranko of Rachel’s Vineyard. There will also be a testimony from Megan Farkas.

One of the highlights of the event is the Candlelight Rose Procession, which is a somber time to pray and think about all of the babies whose lives have been taken, as well as all others who have been affected by abortion.

Migration Story

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have come from or how we got here. As Catholics, we are called to stand up in defense of the life and human dignity of people, regardless of their immigration status. We are called to stand in solidarity with one another.

Scripture speaks repeatedly of the migration experience. When we hear the story of the Holy Family fleeing into Egypt to protect the life of the newborn Jesus, do we think of present-day migrants who flee their home countries to try to save their children from war, violence, or life-threatening poverty? What might we do in the same situation?

Pope Francis has said, “Each migrant has a name, a face, and a story.” He invites us to be part of a culture of encounter as we welcome, protect, integrate, and promote immigrants and refugees in our midst. We are blessed at St. Patrick to have the opportunity to do so within our church family. Look around at Mass. Everyone you see has a migration story, some much more recent than others. Will you learn their names and their stories?



***LEFT:** Once again, the Women of St. Patrick collected gifts to put together Baskets for Fathers for empty tomb. Thanks to your generous donations, volunteers were able to put together 23 huge baskets stuffed with car care, handyman, and Christmas goodies for children to give to their fathers for Christmas. Thanks to all who helped!*

***Right:** On Saturday, November 23, volunteers gathered to pack up the “baskets” for the SVDP Food Pantry’s annual Thanksgiving Basket distribution. Baskets were received by 150 families that day. On the following Tuesday, another 100 baskets were picked up by employees of Rosecrance to be delivered to the people they serve. Thanks to all who contributed with their time and donations!*



Want to receive *In Focus* by email?

Want to receive *In Focus* by email? Join our email list to receive a monthly notification when a new issue of *In Focus* is published, with a link to it on the parish website (stpaturbana.org). Go to <http://eepurl.com/duJdY1> and sign up—it’s that easy!

You can also find on the parish website all issues of the newsletter that have been published during the current year, as well as access to all previously published issues of *In Focus*.



Q: Why do we keep singing Christmas hymns after Christmas?

A: At sunset on Christmas Eve, the Advent season ends and the Christmas season begins. The length of the Christmas season varies depending on what day of the week Christmas falls, but it ends on the third Sunday after Christmas.

There are many wonderful celebrations during the Christmas season. The Sunday after Christmas is the feast of the Holy Family. The eighth day is January 1, the solemnity of Mary as Mother of God. This feast affirms that Jesus is human as well as divine and acknowledges Mary's unique role in God's saving work. The traditional "twelfth day," which we celebrate on the Sunday after January 1, is the solemnity of Epiphany or the Three Kings. This feast, which is even more ancient than Christmas, recalls how Jesus gradually revealed his mission to the people of his day. The following Sunday is the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, marking the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and the end of the Christmas season. After this day, we'll be back in Ordinary Time and the Sunday gospels will relate the early days of Jesus' ministry.

In among these great feasts of the Church are a series of saints' days, known as the "companions of Christ," because their feasts fall near his nativity. December 26 is the feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. His story is in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7. (And remember the carol about good king Wenceslaus who went out on the feast of Stephen, the day after Christmas?) December 28 is the feast of the Holy Innocents, the children slaughtered by Herod in an attempt to kill Jesus. Their story is in Matthew's gospel, chapter 2. If we're ever tempted to be overly sentimental about the birth of Jesus, these two feasts will set us right! It's appropriate that St. John's feast is December 27, since we read both his gospel and his letters during the Christmas season. The saints on January 3 and 4 are interesting because of their connections to the United States: Elizabeth Ann Seton and John Neumann.

So the Church gives us a season of several weeks to allow us to savor and reflect on the presence of Jesus in the world, and we reflect the whole season in the hymns, music, and prayers. What a Christmas gift it is for us!

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

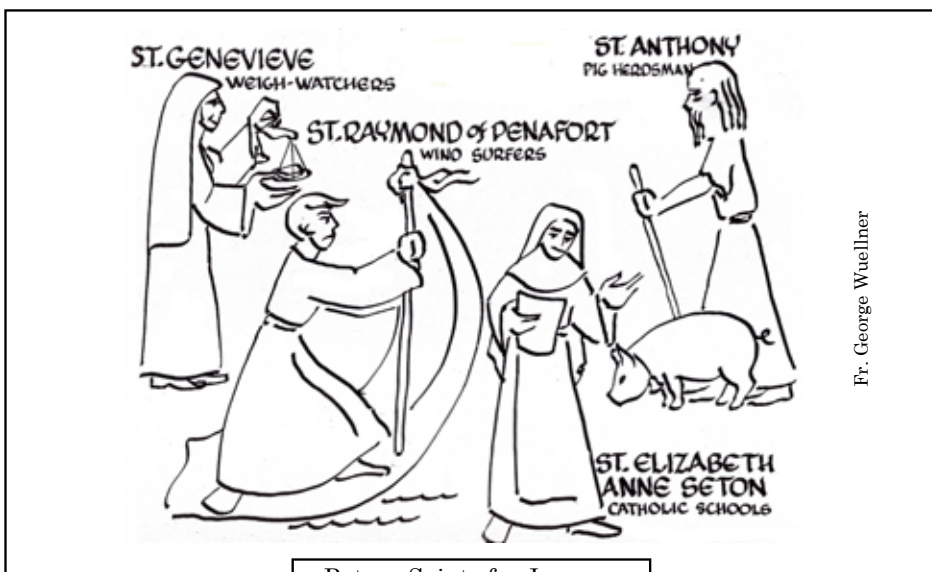
First Followers from page 2

the dinner raised just over \$5000 for the FirstSteps house. In appreciation, First Followers has dedicated one room in the house to St. Patrick's and it will contain a plaque with our name.

"My eyes now have been opened to the needs of those who are newly released from prison," one parishioner said of the dinner. Another remarked, "I left thinking, what's next? We met our neighbors and now what do we do to continue the conversation and friendship?"

What immediately came next is that several parishioners participated in a work day at the FirstSteps house, preparing for its opening in early December. Some parishioners who heard Fr. Anthony mention the dinner at Mass were moved to come forward with their own stories of incarceration or those of family members. Stan Yanchus joined the St. Patrick Peace and Justice coalition as the representative of a ministry devoted to concerns of those currently or formerly incarcerated. Hopefully we can find ways as a parish and as individuals to continue these important conversations and support our brothers and sisters as they find their way back into the community.

You can find out more about First Followers or make a donation at www.firstfollowersreentry.com.



Patron Saints for January

Vocation Prayer

God of new beginnings,
you call us in strange ways,
often disrupting our customary life
to make pilgrimages of faith.
When we hear that call and obey,
sustain and strengthen us
for what lies ahead.

Exhibit of art and prayers helps to promote hope and healing

The weekend of December 8, St. Patrick’s was home to an extraordinary exhibit of art and writing. The exhibit displayed both works of visual art and written prayers created by parishioners addressing the clergy sexual abuse crisis in the Church. Some of the works were created in a retreat held in early November, in which Mary Long facilitated participants’ creation of art and Frank Modica provided guidance on the writing of prayers. Other



“Brokenness, confusion, illusion, misdirection, mistrust of what we see, who we are, and what we know about ourselves and our faith.”

artworks and prayers were contributed by parishioners working on their own. Some of the prayers that were collected were also included in the Prayers of the Faithful at the Masses that weekend. Lisa Herzog, who participated both in the creation of the “Hear Our Prayers, Heal Our Hearts” booklet and had work included in the art exhibit, says, “I can tell you that the process of creating art is very cathartic. My piece, which I wanted to mirror the stages from grief to healing for survivors as well as the church community as a whole, moved me from anger to sadness and hurt to eventual hope and trust in God’s restorative justice and His renewal of His church.” Referring to works created at the retreat, she adds, “Although the finished work was irrelevant since the process is what is important, some of the work led to impactful visual pieces or further creative exploration and expression.”



“Unpacking the Catholic life: Memories often reach us in a flood of images and symbols. This piece represents the complicated memories of a victim of priest abuse.”

“I can’t tell you how many people cried in my arms,” says Eileen Mathy of the exhibit. Eileen has been instrumental to this project, beginning even before last spring’s parish town hall on the clergy sexual abuse crisis. Other parishioners spoke of the deep emotions they felt as they moved through the gallery, set up in the parish center’s office area.

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“Our Lady of Mending and Alterations,” an interactive quilt has many details and symbols.



A detail from the quilt: People were invited to write prayers and pin them onto the edges of the quilt.

Art and Prayers from page 7

Sr. Michelle Fernandez, the director of Catholic Charities for the Peoria Diocese came to view the exhibit. "I was so moved, so touched," she said. "All of you are witnesses of forgiveness and triumph of love."

It is hoped that photographs and writings from and about the exhibit will be archived so they can be shared more widely, just as the "Hear Our Prayers, Heal Our Church" booklet, published in October, has been. The booklet of reflections and prayers has been much praised and sent around the country and around the world. The USCCB is sending it to all victim assistance coordinators in the United States.

At the town hall held last spring, one of the questions participants struggled with was, What can we do within our parish to meet the needs of abuse survivors and church members feeling angry and saddened by this crisis? These prayers and accompanying artwork have proven to be a good place to start.



Bridget McGill shows her work, a history of a survivor's experience

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

St. Patrick's Parish In Focus is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, IL. 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. By-lines are generally omitted.

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Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Elizabeth Hendricks

Crock pot curried cauliflower and sweet potato

- 2 c cubed sweet potato
- 2 c cauliflower flowerets
- 1 c chopped onion
- 1 T curry powder
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 T brown sugar
- 1 t salt
- 1 14-oz can diced tomatoes, including juice
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed, or
- ½ c dry red lentils, rinsed

Combine everything in a crock pot. Cover and set dial to High for 5-6 hours (or Low for longer). When the vegetables are tender, serve over rice (brown rice is especially good), with sautéed tofu cubes or leftover cooked chicken. This dish freezes well.

* * *

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!



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