

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

October 2020

“When things get back to normal....”

How many times have we heard this phrase in the past months?

How many times have we said it ourselves? It’s natural. We long for the familiarity of our lives before the

pandemic. We miss our regular routines. We want nothing more than to be able to go out “normally” to work, school, or Mass, We want to eat

out, go to movies or sporting events, spend time with friends, and, perhaps especially, be able to shake hands or hug people we care about without fear.

Yet even if the pandemic were to end tomorrow, we could never “get back to normal.” The “normal” that existed in February would be different now in even the most ordinary year. Couples have married. Babies have been born. Children have grown, grown up, perhaps left home for college or work. People have died. Relationships have begun, strengthened, weakened, ended. We have (we hope!) grown and developed in our faith and as

humans. We have all undeniably aged.

We might instead seize the opportunity this disruption has given us to break old habits and



ways of thinking and re-examine ourselves and our priorities. Pope Francis has said that this is a “propitious time” to be open to the Spirit. The

Holy Spirit can “inspire us with a new imagination of what is possible.”

Pope Francis has also expressed the hope that the pandemic can inspire us to bring about changes in our social and economic structures. He points out that it “exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities.” We see this beginning to happen in our wider society with the openness of many to renewed cries for racial justice.

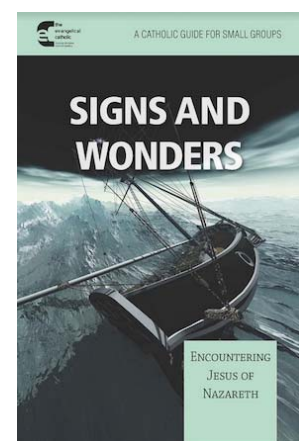
See **Back to Normal** on P. 2

Small groups to learn more about Jesus

If we want to know who Jesus is, then we have to discover what his friends said and wrote about him.

This is the theme of *Signs and Wonders*, the small-group study that will begin this October at St. Patrick.

Beginning the week of October 11 and continuing through the week of November 16, small groups will meet virtually to study and reflect on some of the most dramatic episodes in the Gospels, including the wedding at Cana, Jesus walking on water, and the little girl who died. Reading and discussing these episodes can bring us to a deeper understanding of Jesus and why people choose to follow him.



Due to the pandemic restrictions all groups will meet virtually, but you have a variety of

See **Small Groups** on P. 3

WSP: Virtually doing great things!

Many optimistic people live by the adage “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” For the Women of St. Patrick when life gave us COVID19, we made masks! When a call went out from local health care providers that non-surgical masks were needed, the seamstresses of the Women of St. Patrick swung into high gear. More recently the OSF hospital system discovered that masks that had been in storage had suffered a deterioration of the elastic and needed to have them replaced. Once again, the Women of St. Patrick stepped up to fill the need.

This is the true measure of the group, that whether engaged in social activities and fundraisers, or answering a need in the community, their spirit shines through!

Early in the pandemic lock-down, the board members met via email and decided to cancel the annual Cellar-to-Garret Sale (we were about to begin organizational meetings). The reasons were many, not the least of which were the age of many of our volunteers, the ability to keep people safely separated, and the daunting thought of wiping down hundreds of items continuously. The decision to hold the annual Christmas Cookie and Basket sale has not yet been made. The Diocese of Peoria will continue to issue guidelines for safe gathering, which we will strictly adhere to.

Also early in the pandemic, a decision was made to suspend the ministry of providing funeral luncheons. Several factors informed this decision, including the age of most of the volunteers, the issue of a great deal of food being cooked and carried in from home kitchens, the risks of a buffet-style service, and the ability to seat people at tables while maintaining safe physical distancing.

Meanwhile, in June several women attended a Zoom retreat with Amy Penne, our Lent retreat speaker. The theme for the week was seeing time as a gift by praying the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office. Participants learned about the Divine Office and prayed the various liturgical hours together through the week.

Also in June, we were able to respond to an immediate need in the broader community for household items. An immigrant family needed to move from communal housing where someone was ill with the virus to protect themselves from contagion. A call went out via the Women of St. Patrick’s email list, and within one day the family had everything needed, with items left over!

If you would like to know about the activities of the group and are not yet on the email list, please send your email address to womenofstpatrick@gmail.com and it

will be added. For now, our group will remain virtual, but we are virtually doing great things!

Back to normal

Continued from P. 1

We can begin to open ourselves by seeking solidarity with others. When we are lonely and isolated in quarantine, we might see ourselves in solidarity with those who are lonely and isolated even in “normal” times. When we feel crowded by too many family or household members at home all the time, it might open our hearts to people who regularly live in crowded conditions in shared housing, refugee camps, shelters, or detention centers. The inability to attend in-person Mass is something we share with Catholics in remote locations who may be able to attend Mass only a few times a year. Likewise, when we are not able to receive the Eucharist, we experience the reality that many faithful Catholics, denied this sacrament for various reasons, must live with.



Although we tend to focus on what we have lost due to the pandemic and restrictions surrounding it, we have already made gains. People who were unable to get to Mass at St. Patrick’s can now attend virtually and feel they are still a part of our community. Several parish ministries are exploring new way for parishioners to take part in activities: the music ministry is expanding the Bell Choir, the Peace and Justice ministry is planning virtual book studies, and the Women of St. Patrick keeps busy planning safe spiritual, service, and social activities.

Come, Holy Spirit! Help us to see beyond “getting back to normal” and find our way to new possibilities!

Sally Czapar/SVDP interviewed for Illinois Newsroom

It's rare for SVDP to make headlines, and even more rare for an interview to be aired on WILL's NPR station. To share the news report with you, we have received permission from the interviewer, Dana Cronin, reporter for Illinois Newsroom. Here is her report in its entirety.

More Demand, Fewer Volunteers Leave Food Pantries Scrambling During Pandemic

Before the pandemic, the food pantry at St. Patrick Church in Urbana, Ill. served meals to more than 100 families per week. They operated with the help of about 60 volunteers, most of whom are retirees.

Since the pandemic, nearly 20 of them have stopped volunteering. "Many of our volunteers are over 65 and several of them over 75," says Sally Czapar, the pantry's volunteer coordinator. "Due to the pandemic, they felt safer staying home. Their families urged them to stay home, they have some pre-existing conditions."

Like many food pantries, Czapar's team has had to change the way they operate to meet health and safety standards. They've converted to a drive-through system and now only serve food two days per week instead of four.

Czapar says the drop in volunteers happened almost immediately. "Nobody really knew how bad COVID would be and how easily it was transmitted. We were all kind of working on zero knowledge. Each week when my husband and I would go, we kind of felt like we were marching to our deaths," she says.

According to hunger relief organization Feeding America, two-thirds of food banks are currently in need of volunteers. "The entire pandemic has created this perfect storm of circumstances that is impacting food banks in a variety of ways," says Feeding America



spokesperson Zuani Villarreal. "There's increased demand. There's a lot more people that are out of work that are struggling, and they're looking for food at food banks."

According to Census Bureau data, as of July 21st approximately one in four households with children struggled to afford food. The increased demand at food pantries has left them scrambling to keep up, and approximately 20% of them had to close down at the start of the pandemic.

"Some of our partner agencies in our network [had to] temporarily shut down operations because they did not have the volunteer support. [Either] they're run by volunteers or they just didn't have the volunteers to help them with the distributions," says Villarreal.

However, Villarreal says food banks are adapting to the loss of volunteers. Some, for example, are setting up mobile distributions to provide access to food in communities that have lost pantries since the start of the pandemic. Some also hired temporary workers to make up for the loss of help.

At St. Patrick Church's food pantry, Czapar says she's proud of what her team has accomplished. "We're just really happy that we're healthy and we've been able to continue our work," she says.

Small Groups

Continued from Page 1

options: your group might choose to meet on Zoom or another online meeting platform, create a private Facebook group, or share via an email list. You might even talk over the phone. You can find suggestions for virtual study groups as well as instructions for setting up and attending Zoom meetings at littlerockscripture.org/SpecialResources.

If you would like to participate in a small group, facilitate or host a small group, or use the study in an existing small group, please register by Tuesday, October 6. You can use the link on the parish website (www.stpaturbana.org) or email Jim Urban (jim.urban@stpaturbana.org) with your information, how you would like to participate, and what days and times you are available.

Everyone who participates will need to purchase a print or digital version of the *Signs and Wonders* book. Go to evangelicalcatholic.org/materials, where you can see a preview of the study and purchase the book.

Questions? Contact Jim Urban (531-7014, jim.urban@stpaturbana.org).

“Angel of God, my guardian dear . . .”

Few aspects of Catholic piety are as comforting to parents as the belief that an angel protects their children from dangers, both real and imagined. Yet guardian angels are not just for our little ones. Their role is to represent individuals before God, to watch over them always, to aid their prayer, and to present their souls to God at death.



The concept of an angel assigned to guide and nurture each human being is a development of Catholic doctrine and piety based on Scripture, though not directly

drawn from it. Jesus’ words (Matt. 18:10) support this belief: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.”

As children, many of us were taught to include the following invocation in our bedtime prayers. It was a reassuring reminder of God’s loving care in giving each of us an angel to look after us:

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom God’s love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side
to light, to guard, to rule and guide.

The concept of an unseen companion has given rise to many a child’s joke about leaving room for an angel on a crowded seat. But devotion to the angels is an expression of faith in God’s enduring love and providential care extended to each person, day in and day out until life’s end.

May the angels lead you into paradise;
may the martyrs come to welcome you
and take you to the holy city,
the new and eternal Jerusalem.

—*Rite for Christian Burial*

The Church celebrates our guardian angels on October 2.

Back to school

Our religious education program resumed in September with a mix of virtual and in-person classes.

The children’s program, for ages 4 through 5th grade, began virtually for everyone on September 16th. Classes are on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. In October, Jon hopes to have a mix of virtual and in-person classes, with a couple of grades taking a turn each week to come to the parish center. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there will not be in-person classes at St. Joseph Middle School for now because the schools can’t accommodate outside groups.

Our middle school group and our high school group started on September 20th with our middle schoolers doing online classes and our high school youth group starting the year with virtual classes. The high school virtual classes will meet on Sunday evenings at 6:30 PM. Soon though, small groups will meet on Sundays at the parish center for some of their sessions.

Lastly, a new group of Confirmation students will begin preparing for Confirmation. The students will meet one Sunday a month at 6:30 PM starting on October 4th. This group of students will be confirmed in the spring of 2022.

Please keep our young people and their catechists in your prayers, so that they can receive our faith as the treasure that it is.

Vocation Prayer

Holy Mother of Jesus and our mother, intercede for us to the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to the harvest in this land dedicated to your honor. Be with us as we discern our life’s work and guide us in the way we are called to follow in the footsteps of your son.



Q: I'm ready to start attending Mass at St. Patrick's in person. What do I need to know?

A: It will be great to see you! There's a lot that we can do to make our gathering for worship feel safe for everyone. Please come only if you're feeling well, and wear a face mask at all times. On your way into church, be conscious of your distance from others, and pick up a bulletin. There's a collection basket in the gathering space where you can leave your tithe. An usher will spray your hands with sanitizer and show you to a seat.

If you don't feel safe around people who are singing, ask to go to Trinity Hall, where there's a video screen. There's also a screen

in St. Brigid Hall (the main hall), which we use when the church itself reaches capacity.

During Mass, stay in your pew unless absolutely necessary, and keep your mask on. At Communion time, a Eucharistic minister will come to you. Communion is offered only in the hand. Sit, stand, or kneel as you wish. After you respond, "Amen," to the Eucharistic minister, remove your mask, receive Communion, and put your mask back on.

At the end of Mass, the ushers will try to keep people spaced out, so stay in your pew until one of them indicates that it is time for you to go. Leave your kneeler down as a signal to the sanitizing crew that your seat has been used and needs to be sanitized. And, of course, check to see if there's a new issue of *In Focus* to read!

It may feel a little strange for the first week or two, but it's really good to see and pray with people again!



Congratulations to Music Director, Frank Gallo, and his wife Donna. Their first child, Dominic Joseph Gallo, was born September 8, 2020. Welcome to the St. Patrick's family, Dominic!

Maryknoll Lay Missioners need your support!

Parishioner Susan Nagele is a long-time Maryknoll Lay Missioner. Her current ministry of mission education, recruitment, and outreach provides for the needs of missioners in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Your generous contributions will continue to support this ministry.

Maryknoll Lay Missioners is 100% supported by the generosity of benefactors. You can make a tax-deductible donation to support Susan's work by visiting www.mkmlm.org/SNagele. If you prefer, you may send the form below along with a check made payable to Maryknoll Lay Missioners, PO Box, 307, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0307. In the memo line, be sure to write "Susan Nagele." Instead you may choose to fill out the credit card section of the form. For more information, please visit www.mkmlm.org/SNagele.



Thank you for your generosity!

Yes, I wish to support Susan Nagele's ministry!

I wish to make a gift of \$ _____

I wish to make this a recurring gift: monthly, quarterly, annually.

Enclosed is my check, payable to **Maryknoll Lay Missioners**, with **Susan Nagele** on the memo line.

Please charge my credit card: Visa, MasterCard, Discover, AMEX

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What's going on in the Peace and Justice Ministry? Lots!

The personal is political is a common social justice cry from the 1960s and 1970s. For several members of the Peace and Justice ministry this saying has hit home in recent months and has emboldened efforts to step up and speak out for marginalized members of our society and the world at large. For some of us, the plights of those we love fuel our conversations. We are learning that at times, it is best to put planning aside and be present for one another.



Although we are limited by age, health challenges, and new protocols for ministries in our parish, Peace and Justice members have been hard at work creating opportunities for dialogue and community action:

Our LGBTQ+ ministry is reviewing a stack of books that are informative but not formational in nature, and about the lives and struggles of people of faith who identify as queer. It is hoped that the ministry might discern one book to recommend to the staff for a church-wide study.

A group on race relations has begun to take form. Many have asked how our parish can be a voice against racism and the acts of violence highlighted by recent events. Members of Peace and Justice have attended training sessions and discussion panels on this topic, with the hope of gaining a sense of direction.

Excited about the new energy in our diocese from the presence of Bishop Lou, coalition members have met with a parish organizer from Bloomington to share ideas for how to create a greater emphasis on social justice.

Two members attended a training session on church reform and will report back at our November meeting.

We continue to look for opportunities to find housing for individual families in our Latinx and Mayan community who are exposed to COVID and are in boarding houses.

We are assisting with translations for French-speaking Africans.

We are finding creative ways to encourage participation in the voting process this November.

Our garden is producing its last fruits of the season; we will prepare the land and construct garden boxes for next spring.

SVDP continues to distribute food and is encouraging guests to register to vote.

Coalition members are monitoring the COVID situation in area prisons with the hope of continuing outreach efforts in the next few months.

We look forward to exploring ways to study and address gender inequality through our Peace and Justice Education ministry.

This season has been a time of personal reflection for many of us. One member asked recently, *If all the Catholic parishes in our community disappeared one day, would it make an ounce of difference in the social justice work being done? If not, why not? Why are we not more present? We have looked at the politically divisive climate in our nation and examined the language we use that might contribute to division. We have asked about the difference between being bold and speaking truth to power and being divisive and hurtful. We examined our personal triggers and unhealthy patterns of communication to assure that we are, as a ministry, a part of the solution and not a part of the problem in building and maintaining healthy parish life.*

If you are interested in any of the topics covered by Peace and Justice at St. Patrick's and would like to get involved, contact Eileen Mathy (emaryu@gmail.com); she will direct you to the appropriate ministry leader. We would love to have you with us.

St. Patrick's Youth Orchestra goes virtual

Classical music lovers can still enjoy the latest performances of St. Patrick's Youth Orchestra. Outgoing conductor Lisa Altaner introduces the solos and duets recorded by musicians themselves. Lisa also edited the performances for the 41-minute video concert. New conductors Norah and Grace are beginning their SPYO leadership year now.

Listen to violin, flute, saxophone, clarinet, and trumpet music, often with piano accompaniment. You can access the performance on the parish website (www.stpaturbana.org), via a link on the SPYO webpage (www.spyo.org), or go to www.youtube.com and search for "Virtual SPYO concert."

Remembering Father

By an octogenarian of St. Patrick's

Especially in October we are encouraged to reflect upon the ways our priests have encouraged, advised, and guided us in our growth in the Faith, and to express our appreciation to them in some meaningful way. I would like to share with you my own reflections on this journey in hopes of spurring on your own.

I don't remember, of course, the priest who baptized me, but he did a great thing for me – he made me a child of God and a member of the Body of Christ! May he be blessed forever!

I do remember the bishop who confirmed me – he tapped me on my cheek and told me I was now a soldier of Christ and must be prepared to suffer gladly for Christ. How was he to know what sufferings or sacrifices would come my way in life? And yet he prepared me for anything and everything.

The priest who gave me my very first Communion placed the host on my tongue, saying something softly that I didn't understand, and walked on without further comment. But what a gift that was! Little did I realize then what I know now, what it is to become what I eat – yes, Christ himself! Blessed be that priest, and all those who others who have

continued to stir this hunger in me over so many years.

I remember well the priests I knew while in grade school – they could be great fun on the playground. Sometimes they tested our knowledge of the catechism we'd been studying and lavished praise on those who could repeat the answers we'd memorized. How else would I have come to know that I was created to know, love, and serve



God and to be happy with God forever in heaven?

In high school, I began to explore what I understood as a calling to religious life, and I confided this to one of our parish priests in what was my first experience of spiritual direction. He helped me to think this through, he spoke with my parents – who weren't at all sure that this was a good thing for me to be thinking about – and eventually drove me to the monastery I was to enter. Years later he returned to bring me home when I was too ill to remain there. (As a bishop, he was known for his kindnesses to the poor.)

In college, the priests who drilled me, chapter and verse, on St.

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

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

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

We are all blessed to have had such priests in our lives. Were all saints? Well, maybe saints in the making, like us – not yet whole, not yet perfect, but beloved by God. We may not be able to thank each of them for their guidance and nurturing on our journey of Faith, but we can surely still find some way to express our appreciation: maybe by a prayer for those who have long since passed away, by a special greeting or note of thanks to those who have moved on to distant places, or by words of gratitude to those still with us.

Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Connie Knake

Stuffed Zucchini

- 3 medium zucchini
- 2 T olive oil
- 4-oz can mushroom stems and pieces, drained and chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 plum tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 c Italian-flavored bread crumbs
- 1 T grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/4 t black pepper
- 1/2 c (2 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese



Slice zucchini in half lengthwise and scoop out the meat; set shells aside and finely chop zucchini meat. Heat oil in medium-sized skillet and saute chopped zucchini, mushrooms, onion, and tomatoes 6-8 minutes, until tender. Stir in bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper; mix well. Stuff zucchini shells evenly with vegetable mixture and place in 9 x 13-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake 35 minutes at 375°. Remove foil and top evenly with mozzarella cheese. Return to oven and bake 8-10 minutes, or until zucchini are tender and cheese is golden.

*

If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (344-1125, mmenches@illinois.edu).



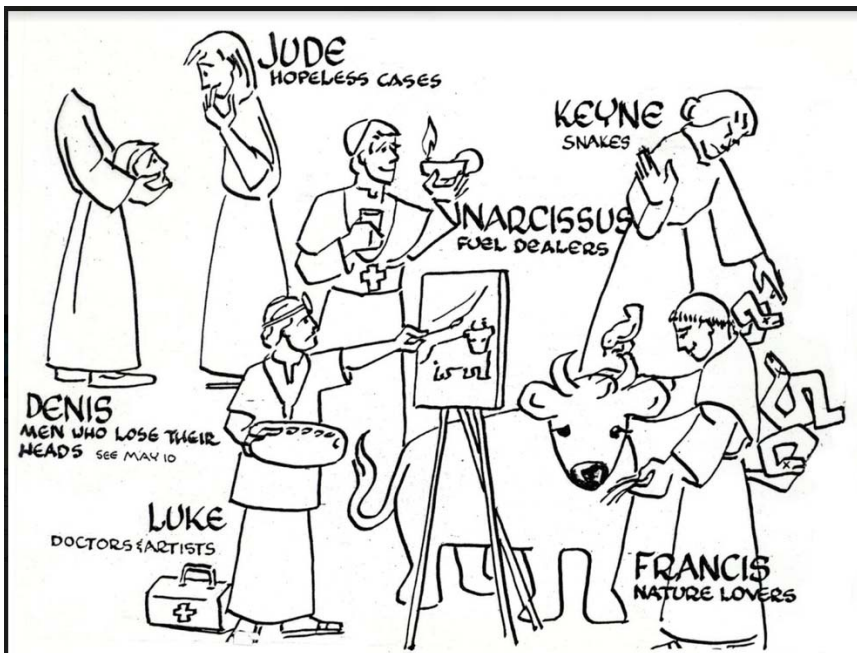
St. Patrick's Parish In Focus is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by mid-month for the next issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to infocusstpats@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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October saints by Fr. George Wuellner



The deadline for submitting articles and news items for the next (November) issue of *In Focus* is **Sunday, October 4.**