

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS



www.stpaturbana.org

February 2022

Let us pray

Have you ever noticed how often during the Mass we hear the words “Let us pray”? It seems odd sometimes. After all, what does the presider think we’ve been doing? We’ve been singing prayerfully, listening prayerfully, and praising God together. Why do we need to be invited to pray some more?

Actually, there is a good reason. The words “Let us pray” always come before prayers that the presider speaks on our behalf, and he’s asking us to be a part of it. Those prayers change from week to week, so they’re not as familiar as some parts of the Mass. You may walk out of the church pondering the scriptures or listening to the echo of one of the hymns. But it’s rare to walk out with one of those presiders’ prayers in your heart and mind. So it’s probably a good thing that the liturgy asks us to focus, to be involved, and to say a resounding “Amen!”

Of all the prayers that the presider speaks for us, the most important (and the longest) is the Eucharistic Prayer. For this one, he doesn’t just say “Let us pray.” We have a conversation about what we are about to do together. “Lift up your hearts.” “We lift them up to the Lord.” “Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.” “It is right and just.” Having agreed that we are a part of this prayer, we do our best to be atten-



tive, and when the prayer ends, we sing out the Great Amen.

What does it mean to lift up our hearts? It’s not just about our emotions. It’s about bringing our whole selves to the prayer. We are present physically, standing and kneeling together. We are present mentally, giving our full attention to what we are doing. We are present with our voices, speaking and singing

the responses. We are present with hearts open to the touch of God. We are present to each other, as God forms us more closely into community.

Do we do this perfectly every time we go to Mass? Probably not. We are all still learning how to pray, how to give ourselves over to God, and how to receive the wonderful gifts that he gives us. But the Church reminds us that our goal is “full, active, and conscious participation” in the liturgy, so we keep trying. And day by day, with God’s help and with the support of our fellow believers, we’ll get closer to the ideal. Let us pray!

To our readers:



Happy Valentine’s Day!

February speaker will address racism and trauma

If you haven’t attended a session of the parish anti-racism program, *Sharing Stories around the Table: an Educational and Spiritual Series about the Sin (Soul Sickness) of Racism*, it’s not too late to start. You can attend sessions at your convenience.

The subject of the February session is Trauma. Guest speaker Karen Simms is an experienced counselor



and facilitator who is the founder of the CU Trauma and Resilience Initiative, a not-for-profit that trains, educates, advocates for, and promotes resilience and justice for individuals, families, organizations, and communities. TRI works to reduce the impact of adverse community experiences by healing and repairing

see **February Speaker** on page 2

Resolving to pray more this year?

At the beginning of the new year did you promise yourself that this year you're going to pray more? Making a resolution at the start of the new year is a noble goal. But if we make a resolution that seems unattainable and then fail in our resolve, it can make us feel bad – or, in this case, we may also feel guilty before God. With that in mind, here are five tips from James Martin, S.J., that may help you put your prayerful resolution into practice.



Tip 1: Pray less. This sounds counterintuitive, but it's a way of guarding against making a resolution you may not be able to keep. You may resolve to pray for an hour each day, but the first cry you hear while caring for young children may lead you to halt prayer and eventually give up prayer entirely. You might begin with modest goals. Start with 15 minutes a day, or

even 30 minutes, instead of an hour. This may seem so doable that you relax and enjoy it more, maybe praying longer than planned. So to pray more, try to pray less. At least at first.

Tip 2: Mix it up. If you find yourself stuck, especially if you've been praying for a while, you might try some new ways of prayer. If you're in a rut with centering prayer, try some Ignatian contemplation. If you feel tired of this, try lectio divina for a while. If you become bored with this, try centering prayer. It helps sometimes to shake things up.

Tip 3: Let it go if it's not working. If praying for other people becomes burdensome and leads you to abandon prayer, it may be time for you to forgo the list of names for a while. (You can still pray for all of them with a single intention.) Of course, simply because parts of your prayer seem difficult does not mean that you need to let go of something, but if it makes you dread, avoid, or even fear prayer, it's time to review what's on your "prayer plate."

Tip 4: Get a spiritual director. Few things are as encouraging to a life of prayer as a spiritual director, someone who helps you notice where God is active in your prayer and daily life. This ministry used to be reserved for clergy or members of religious orders, but today many laypeople have also received training as spiritual directors. To find one, you could inquire at a local retreat house, or ask someone you know who sees a spiritual director to make a recommendation. (St. Patrick's is blessed with lay people who have been trained and now serve as spiritual directors. Ask the parish secretary for names and contact information.)

Tip 5: Trust in God. When we make resolutions about our spiritual life, we are tempted to think the results are up to us. But it is God who invites us to pray, God who helps us to pray, and God who gives us the fruits of prayer. It's not you just white-knuckling it; God is on your side. In fact, the very desire to pray more is coming from God. See this desire, and your resolution, as a call. And trust that God will be with you and will help you.

Adapted from an article by James Martin, S.J.
Used with permission.

February Speaker from page 1

those who have been impacted by trauma and equipping organizations and providers to be trauma- and justice-informed.

Karen will talk about trauma related to racism and marginalization, as well as share stories from her own life. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask Karen questions.

Because of the COVID-19 surge, this session will be held on Zoom, on Thursday, February 3 from 6:30-8:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. The session will be recorded for later viewing by those who can't make it that night.

If you are already on the email list for "Sharing Stories," you will receive the Zoom link in your reminder email. If you aren't on the email list, contact stpatpeaceandjustice1901@gmail.com to receive the Zoom link.

Can you help *In Focus* happen?

Many people contribute their time and talents to help *In Focus* come out each month. We're happy to have all kinds of help, but we have two special needs right now.

Page Layout: Three or four times a year, you would receive files of edited articles and photos, lay them out using whatever software you prefer, and create a PDF.

Committee Member: We meet monthly (virtually, for now) to brainstorm articles for the next issue. Meetings are usually held on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

Interested? Contact Cathy Salika at 367-78761 or csalika@illinois.edu.

Hello, welcome! Good-bye, thank you!

It seems there is always something new at St. Patrick Church, and this month we welcome two new staff members. In September, Collin Reymann was added to the staff as a part-time administrative assistant. Currently, Collin works Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. His duties are to assist Fr. Anthony and the staff with some of the more time-consuming aspects of office life. He helps out with everything from maintenance to secretarial tasks.



Collin Reymann

Collin is originally from Ohio and attended Hillsdale College in Michigan, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in economics. While working as a teacher in Arizona, he felt a calling to become a counselor. Currently, he is pursuing a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Collin and his wife, Emma, were married last June. Emma is working on her Ph.D. in classics. Together they enjoy listening to theological podcasts and being cat parents to 11-year-old Tiger Lily. Collin and Emma are members of St. Matthew parish, but you can see Collin here at daily Mass, as well as helping out on a variety of projects. We are happy to have Collin as a part of the team!

Another new member of the parish staff is someone who is not new at all. Mary Tate, a life-long parishioner, has taken the newly created position of Director of Ministries. This new position includes the former part-time position of Pastoral Associate and some new responsibilities.

Mary will be helping to manage and direct ministerial groups. We have



Mary Tate

many important ministerial groups at our parish, and her role will be to help keep them all running smoothly.

Mary is a former Catholic schoolteacher and most recently served St. Patrick's as Parish Council president. She is excited to devote herself to the parish full time. In her free time, Mary enjoys photography, and she and her husband, Mark, enjoy traveling to locations near and far as time allows.

Mary Long has retired as Pastoral Associate (again!) and is looking forward to having more flexibility in her schedule. She will continue her work with the Welcome Team, as well the Racism as Sin project through the Peace and Justice ministry. (Mary is one of St. Patrick's Lay spiritual directors.) She and her husband, Jimmy, are looking forward to spending more time with family and enjoying the great outdoors.



Mary Long

Did You Know?

Last October Pope Francis announced a world-wide synod, inviting all people in every Catholic diocese in the world to reflect on, and share thoughts on, a new vision of Church. This invitation includes every parishioner of every parish in every diocese. This year is to be given over to the gathering of thoughts from participants for discussion by the assembly of the world's Catholic bishops at the synod, which begins in October 2023.

Holy Cross Happenings

As of this writing, the number of COVID cases in our community is at an all-time high. Yet, as the virus continues to rage, this point in the Holy Cross school year feels markedly different than the same point a year ago.

The annual Cluckin' for Catholic Education chicken dinner fundraiser, normally held at St. Patrick's at the start of Catholic Schools Week, was set to return this January after a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic. It has been postponed again — and again, due to the pandemic.

However, schools have also recently been given the go-ahead to reduce the length of quarantine days following a COVID infection or close contact to match the 5-day timeframe recently mandated by the CDC for the general public. This means that students and staff who are affected by COVID can possibly return to school in half the amount of time prescribed by the previous guidelines.

Fully vaccinated individuals — which can now include children aged 5 and over — and those who've recently recovered from COVID don't need to quarantine following a close contact.

All of these new guidelines mean that even as the number of infections in our community spikes, there are still many teachers and students



Q: Why are we sending our people to Holy Cross for RCIA classes this year instead of offering these classes at St. Patrick's as we've done for many years now?

A: RCIA (The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is the process (filled with prayer, discussion, and discernment) to become Catholic as an adult. For those who were never baptized, those who might have been baptized in another Christian tradition, or those baptized as

Catholics but perhaps did not receive other Sacraments, RCIA provides a caring look at the Catholic faith and helps persons discern whether God is calling them to it.

After many years of RCIA ministry, our parish RCIA team, Denise and Chris Freidhof and Frances Drone-Silvers, discerned that it was time to step away from being St. Patrick's RCIA coordinators. RCIA is a labor of love that does involve a commitment of time and energy.

Over the past several years, there has been discussion of local parishes combining for RCIA and other ministries. This year, St. Patrick's is working with Holy Cross for RCIA. Inquirers are attending sessions at Holy Cross, and those who wish to join our parish will receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at St. Patrick's.

Can you help seekers feel comfortable with St. Patrick's? Will you accompany them to the sessions at Holy Cross and to Mass and other events at St. Patrick's? You don't have to be an "expert Catholic" — just willing to share your love for the Catholic faith and St. Patrick's. Please prayerfully consider this invitation and call the parish office (217-367-2665) if you can be a companion on their journey.

If you feel called to be part of the RCIA ministry, Frances and the Freidhofs would be happy to share the wealth of information that has been pulled together over the years. Contact Frances Drone-Silvers (francesds@yahoo.com) with any questions; she will be happy to hear from you!

Religious education news

The annual **Chicken Dinner** in support of Catholic education has been postponed to a later date, Jon McCoy said, due to pandemic concerns. The dinner typically makes around \$3,000 (the proceeds from ticket sales minus the cost that is paid to Nelson's for the meal). The total donations are then split 50/50 between St. Patrick and Holy Cross. We typically use the proceeds for financial assistance to families who have children attending our Catholic schools: Holy Cross, St. Matthew, St. Thomas, and St. Thomas More.

Catholic Schools Week is always the last week of January through the first week of February. The week highlights our local Catholic grade schools and high school. In the past, we have invited the principal from Holy Cross to greet the parish during Catholic Schools Week as only one of the ways our parishioners have highlighted our Catholic schools, but COVID-19 has put those things on hold for now.

Youngsters will receive their **First Communion** at St. Patrick on Saturday, May 7, at 10 a.m.

And just a week later, on May 14, the sacrament of **Confirmation** will be celebrated here. Bishop Tylka will confirm our young people at the 10 a.m. Mass.



Patron Saints for February

Vocation Prayer

Lord, I know you love me and have great plans for me. But sometimes I am overwhelmed by the thought of my future. Inspire in me wisdom and understanding to see your vision for my life and to respond with openness to whatever you call me to be and to do. Show me your way, Lord!

Who is St. Valentine and how did he become the symbol of love?

We know that Valentine was born in 175 A.D. in Terni, Italy. From historical sources, we know that there was a priest in Rome named Valentine who was beheaded on Feb. 14, 269, by Emperor Claudius II. Other historical sources say that there was a Bishop Valentine of Terni, Italy, who was beheaded by the emperor on that date. These likely were the same Valentine.

Valentine was a popular name 2,000 years ago. It was derived from Valens, meaning strong, powerful, and worthy. Valentine, whether a bishop or a priest, was imprisoned by Emperor Claudius II for many reasons. Valentine aided persecuted Christians, and he refused to worship pagan gods or renounce his Christian faith. Most of all, he kept secretly marrying Christians to keep the husbands from being sent to war as soldiers of the emperor.

While Valentine was in prison, he performed miracles. One of them was to restore the sight of a young lady. According to legend, she was either the daughter of his jailer, or of a judge, or of the emperor himself. But that deed was not enough to soften the emperor's heart and cancel Valentine's execution.

On the morning of his execution Valentine wrote a note to the young lady whose sight he had restored. He signed the note "From your Valentine." Later he was executed by being beaten with clubs and stones, and finally beheaded outside the Flaminia Gate of Rome. He was buried in a Christian cemetery on the Via Flaminia on Feb. 14, 269 A.D.

St. Valentine's relics are all over Europe. His skull is adorned with flowers and displayed in the Basilica of

Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. Early in the 1800s, an excavation of a catacomb near Rome found skeletal remains associated with Valentine. This discovery sent bits and pieces of St. Valentine's body to Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Poland, Austria, Czech lands, and Malta.

History did not forget St. Valentine. In 494 A.D., Pope Gelasius I wrote a letter criticizing Christian participation in the pagan Lupercalia, an ancient Roman festival held each year on February 13–15. Lupercalia was a bloody, violent, and sexually charged celebration awash with animal sacrifice, random matchmaking, and coupling in hopes of warding off evil spirits and infertility. Pope Gelasius I replaced the pagan Lupercalia with the Christian celebration of the martyrdom and feast day of St. Valentine.

St. Valentine's feast day got another boost in popularity in England when Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a romantic poem in 1375 entitled "A Parliament of Fowls." One line of the poem was, "For this was on Saint Valentine's Day/when every bird came there to choose his mate."

This poem links courtly love with the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day. Soon people were sending love letters and cards on February 14. Currently, more cards are sent on Valentine's Day than on any other holiday except Christmas.

Although the Roman Catholic Church in 1969 removed St. Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, the church still recognizes him as a saint and lists him on the February 14 date of Roman Martyrology. He is the patron saint of beekeepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, happy marriages, lovers, and young people.



A KC feast under a new name

The Super Bowl Breakfast now will occur two weeks after the Super Bowl – delayed because of the COVID surge and just before the beginning of Lent. Consequently, it has been renamed the **Tom Costello Memorial Mardi Gras Breakfast** in honor of the man who helped guide us through several highly successful Knights of Columbus Super Bowl Breakfasts.

The event will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, Febru-

ary 27, in the parish center's St. Brigid Hall. The menu will include carved ham, pastries, pancakes, egg dishes, biscuits and gravy, fresh fruits, sausage and egg burrito, breakfast biscuits – and much more. Diners are asked to provide a free-will offering.

Under its new name the breakfast will not be a competition as it has been in past Super Bowl Breakfasts — just a big feast of food and fellowship. Come and enjoy both!



Holy Cross from page 3

who are able to attend school every day. At this same point a year ago, the return to in-person school following Christmas break was delayed out of an abundance of precaution — this, following an extended period of virtual learning beginning midway through November.

Sports and other extracurricular activities have also returned to more or less pre-pandemic levels of participation, and spectators are allowed.

This past December also saw the return of the school Christmas pageants/programs. And again, spectators were allowed.

There are, of course, no guarantees that future cancellations and virtual learning periods won't be necessary.



Congratulations to the girls' cross-country team, which placed 12th at the IESA State meet!

Pray that this won't be the case, but at the same time let's not forget to thank God for the many blessings Holy Cross School has enjoyed during this extraordinary time!

* * *

Please feel free to contact rachmcmill@gmail.com if there is anything you'd like to see featured in an upcoming installment of Holy Cross Happenings or if you have any additions/corrections to report.

Interested in having your children attend Holy Cross School? Schedule a tour of the school by calling Principal Greg Koerner (217-356-9521). Financial help may be available; contact St. Patrick's parish office (367-2665) for more details.



Students work on painting the background of the manger scene for the Christmas pageant.



Grades 3-5 participated in a Christmas pageant to tell the story of Christ's birth through traditional carols.

The Christmas cookie and sweet treat sale returns

This year The Women of St. Patrick were able to hold their Christmas cookie and sweets sale once again. It was a successful mix of old and new traditions. This time around homemade jam was on offer along with the usual delicious homemade cookies, breads, cupcakes, and candies. Also new were the assortment of handcrafted gifts for adults and children. Along with kitchen boas (a la the Baking Monk) and ornaments, there was a variety of quilted, crocheted, and beadwork items for sale. Although there were no large gift baskets this year, Leslie Risatti was able to assemble a number of beautiful smaller ones that proved very popular.

WSP board chair Roxanne Munch says the sale brought in about \$1,500. The money is quite welcome because although the WSP has had to spend money in the past two years, they have had little income. Twice now their major fundraiser, the annual Cellar-to-Garret sale, has had to be canceled. The WSP's funds make possible significant large purchases that contribute to our parish life. In the past, these have included tables and chairs for our parish hall and the ice machine in the parish kitchen. Contributions to the WSP benefit all of us, so many thanks to everyone who made and donated sweet treats and crafts for the sale, and thanks to everyone who bought them!



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.

Editorial board: Sofia Dunets, 217-848-0719 (sdunets@illinois.edu); Judy Fierke, 352-7670 (j-fierke@comcast.net); Denise Green, 553-7110 (dgree1@gmail.com); Elizabeth Hendricks, 328-2184 (elizabeth-walhend@gmail.com); Mary Lou Menches, 344-1125 (mmenches@illinois.edu); Cathy Salika, 367-7861 (csalika@illinois.edu).

Associates: John Colombo, Rachael McMillan, Rick Partin, Shirley Splittstoesser, Jim Urban, and Jerry Walsh.

Articles, information, and photos for this issue were provided by Frances Drone-Silvers, Judy Fierke, Denise Green, Elizabeth Hendricks, Tom Kacich, Jon McCoy, Rachael McMillan, Mary Lou Menches, Roxanne Munch, Cathy Salika, Lucille Salika, Kelly Skinner, and Mary Tate. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Jerry Walsh, with page layout prepared by John Colombo.

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Lucille Salika



Oven Stew

- 2 lbs stew beef
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 bunch celery, washed, cut in one-inch pieces
- 1 pkg carrots, washed, cut in one-inch pieces
- 2 t salt
- 2 shakes black pepper
- 3 T tapioca
- 2¼ c tomato juice or sauce
- 1 t sugar

Mix all ingredients and place in large pan (10 × 14 × 2), cover with lid or foil tightly tucked, and bake 4 hours at 250°.



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of In Focus is **Sunday, February 6.**

Christmas at St. Patrick's 2021

