

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

[www.stpaturbana.org](http://www.stpaturbana.org)

January 2022

## Being Together

What a blessing it is to gather together with others! At Christmas, many of us gather with family and friends. We gather to make a place of love and friendship, a time of welcome and acceptance. We gather to hear stories old and new, and to make new memories. We meet around our traditions, those that we do, those that we eat, those that we sing, those that bring laughter, and those that raise a tear.

We come together to make family. It is demanding work, not at all easy. It takes time and preparation and patience. It takes commitment to one another. It requires honesty and forgiveness of us, and tolerance of the shortcomings of others as well as our own. But it's worth it to deepen our relationships, to nourish our family and friendships for the years to come. It has richness because we gather time and time again.

At Christmas, we gather with our faith community, and it's really much like our family gatherings. We come to make a place of love, friendship, welcome, and acceptance. We are drawn here by the stories of Jesus' birth, and by our traditions that we do and sing together.

We are drawn here by the presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament, and by an instinct that tells us that he is most clearly seen when all the members of his body come together.

It is demanding work; there is nothing casual about it. It requires time, preparation, and patience, honesty and forgiveness. But it is worth it to draw closer to God, to receive the support and encouragement of other faithful people, and to grow into our best selves. Our community life has richness because we gather again and again, life-long.

Christmas is the celebration of Emmanuel, God-with-us. God came to be with us in the fullest way possible, by becoming one of us, one with us. God is with us always, present whether we recognize him or not. Even when we are isolated or lonely, he is with us, binding us to faithful people of ever time and place.

When we gather as family, God is with us, teaching us how to grow together in joy, honesty, and forgiveness. When we gather as a faith community, God is with us, nourishing us for this life and the life of the world to come.

Yes, God is with us! We have much to celebrate!

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The Lord said to me: You are my Son.  
It is I who have begotten you this day.  
Let us all rejoice in the Lord,  
for our Savior has been born into the world.  
Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.

# Sharing stories about immigrants and refugees

*As we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families.*

---USCCB, from  
*Prayer for Migrant Families*

Inspired by such reflections, the third session of St. Patrick's anti-racism program, *Sharing Stories around the Table: An Educational and Spiritual Series about the Sin (Soul Sickness) of Racism*, focused on the stories of immigrants.

A panel of St. Patrick's parishioners who are immigrants shared their stories of what caused them to leave their home countries. Delphine Mulumba came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2001; Joseph Youakim from Palestine in 1967; Luis Cuza from Cuba in 1952; and Susana and Francisco each came here from Guatemala several years ago. They had a wide range of stories about their encounters with racism and marginalization since coming to

the United States,

Next, program participants were given four questions that had been written by the panelists. The list of questions included "What is one thing you can do to spread the love of Jesus and help eliminate hatred, racism, and oppression around you?" and "Why do you think racism exists in our society? How do you think it is impacting the Church?" Participants broke up into groups of two or three to take turns answering the four questions and deeply listening to one another's answers.

A meditation and prayer followed. Kelly Skinner and Lorraine Kim alternated reading Scripture passages about the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem and the flight to Egypt



with reading quotes of derisive comments that are often made about immigrants.

As participants prayed and meditated on these contrasting words, a slide show displayed a variety of images of the Holy Family depicted as different races

and ethnicities. When the session concluded, participants were



January 2022

invited to choose several cards bearing some of those images to use for prayer and meditation at home.

If you haven't been able to attend sessions of the Sharing Stories program or simply want to hear the speakers and prayers

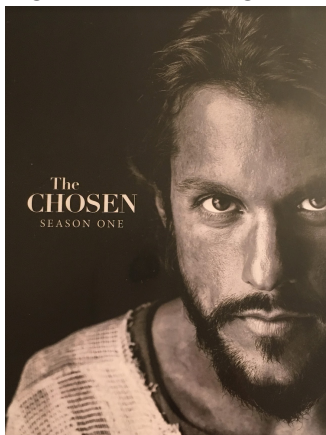


again, videos of Session 2 (Impacts of Racism) and Session 3 (Immigration) can be found on the St. Patrick Urbana Youtube channel (go to Youtube.com and search for "St. Patrick Urbana"). If you would like to be added to the Sharing Stories email list to receive reminders of upcoming sessions, as well as the video link and follow-up summary with list of resources, please contact Stan Yanchus (family4yanchus@comcast.net). If you need help finding the link to a video or would like the follow-up and resource list from a previous session, please contact Elizabeth Hendricks (elizabethwalkend@gmail.com).

Session Four, which will examine trauma as it relates to racism, will take place from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 6, in St. Brigid Hall. The guest speaker will be Karen Simms from the C-U Trauma and Resiliency Initiative. Karen speaks eloquently on the impact of trauma and how individuals and communities can work toward healing. Everyone is welcome. There is no signup required, but it would help the organizers better prepare if you would email Stan or Elizabeth that you plan to attend.

## The Chosen” presents a unique view of the life of Christ

Starting this January parishioners will have an opportunity to watch the eight episodes of the much praised first season of “The Chosen.” Everyone is welcome to watch this view of the life of Christ on the big screen in St. Brigid Hall.



The film was produced and directed by Dallas Jenkins, who has won many film-festival awards for his uplifting and Christian films. “The Chosen” was made with input from Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical scholars who have praised the way the series depicts life and culture at the time of Christ.

The eight episodes in Season One are not told in chronological order. Each episode gives a back story on those whom Jesus encountered and how their lives were changed in amazing ways.

Tuesday screenings will begin January 11, and end on Mardi Gras, March 1. They will start at 1:00 p.m. after 12:10 Mass. You are invited to bring a sack lunch or snack to eat during the movie. Coffee, tea, and water will be provided. The eight screenings last from 39-60 minutes each. After each episode there will be a brief discussion. The session will finish around 2:15 p.m.

If you are unable to attend on Tuesdays, the episodes may be viewed on YouTube. Search online for “The Chosen” television series and you will find a vast array of information about the series. Its creator, Dallas Jenkins, is very generous in sharing his vision about the series, and each episode has an in-depth roundtable discussion with three religious scholars and Jenkins, himself.

Father Anthony first saw this series months ago. One Sunday he shared his enthusiasm and the emotions he experienced while watching “The Chosen.” He would like all parishioners to experience this moving series too.

Attending Mass and watching a great story with friends is a wonderful way to prepare for the Lenten season. Circle January 11, the date of the first screening, on your calendar today!

## Let’s hear it for parish life

If you are not a child and still get a stomach-ache on Sunday mornings when you think about going to church, or if you have thought how nice it would be to spend that hour at Starbucks reading the newspaper, this is for you.

Parishes are important. The parish is the place where Church happens, not as an abstract ideal or as an administrative structure but as an expression of real human life, a rich but frustrating work on progress, diverse lives united by common hungers and hopes.

Faith communities nourish parish life. They arise out of felt need, especially among parents determined to pass their faith along to their children. They share a history with the house churches that nourished early Christians. A kind of intuitive grasp by the laity about what works and doesn’t work continues to shape parish life.

Baptized people are meant to be in community. It is a loss to all of us when some feel so discouraged that they leave their local church. We know those who, for varying reasons, have needed to “go away for a while” or who have found safe haven and nourishment in other communions.

Yet, like the anonymous Christian, the anonymous Church exists everywhere. People get together over



coffee to talk about life. They tell stories, rediscover the Scriptures, break bread, drink to make a difference in the world. And like the formal Church they have left, they become two or three gathered together, disciples on the road to Emmaus.

The essential work of the Church is reconciliation in the world, and this reconciliation starts with us, at the altar, where forgiveness is the miracle we witness in the death of the Lord. Parishes are centers where this grace waits to become flesh in us.

## Mary, Theotokos – Mother of God

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the greatest of the Church's saints, and Mother of God is the highest of her titles. It is the basis for every other title and dignity accorded to her.

The holy day honoring her, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1), is the most ancient liturgical observance of Mary in the Church's calendar, going back to the Council of Ephesus in 431, which declared her not only the mother of Jesus but also the mother of God, for her son is both God and man, divine and human.



Over time, January 1 acquired a different focus. The eighth day after birth was the traditional day for the circumcision and naming of a child, and so this became the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord (and the naming of Jesus). In 1969 the Marian character of this ancient feast was restored.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) grounded devotion to Mary more firmly in the Bible and the liturgy of the Church. It situated Mary in the context of the Church as the first among the redeemed, as the disciple par excellence, and as Mother of the Church, in which she is a "preeminent and altogether singular member." The Council continued, "Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion . . . proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues."

January 1 has been devoted liturgically to Mary, the Mother of God, since 1970, following the revision of the General Roman Calendar in 1969. It has the rank of a Solemnity, which means that it is a feast of the greatest importance.

## Exploring Love and Responsibility

You may not have been aware of this seminar offered at St. Patrick, but it was a great opportunity to grow in wisdom. The seminar began in September and finished November 17, meeting for ten weeks each Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. It was based on the book *Love and Responsibility*, by St. Pope John Paul II, and published in 1960. Before Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope, he was a priest and a bishop; he based his book on his many pastoral experiences with groups exploring what love means and involves.

The book is full of many inspiring quotations: "A person's rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use." "It is not enough to long for a person as a good for oneself, one must also, and above all, long for that person's good."

The seminar was led by an Opus Dei layperson, Dave Holzweiss, a former Marine who had earned a Ph.D. He provided printouts from each chapter of the book to help participants organize the material.

The eight participants in the seminar came from different walks of life. Among them were a young couple who were college students, a married mother, and several retired parishioners. Father Anthony joined meetings as his time allowed. The ability and intelligence of the leader and the profoundness of St. Pope John Paul II's statements made every meeting rewarding, according to participant Diane Wilhelm.

This seminar was a unique opportunity to gain wisdom on how to deepen your relationships. As a parishioner of St. Patrick, keep your eyes and mind open to the various opportunities offered and announced in the parish bulletin or *In Focus*. You may discover a little gem of a program that God knows is just perfect for you!

## Vocation Prayer

Father, I surrender myself into your hands. Do with me as you will. Let my hands and feet and heart serve others as your own. But I need your guidance here, Father – how may I best serve, how recognize those in need? May your Spirit lead and guide me, I pray.

# Filling hearts and stomachs for Thanksgiving

How did you observe Thanksgiving Day? Did it include a Mass of Thanksgiving? A time



with family and/or friends? A meal with many wonderful aromas and flavors? Perhaps at some point you recalled and named the many God-given gifts in your life that you are grateful for – big things like peace and the love of family and friends, but also the little things,



like a lost item found, a forgotten task remembered just in time, a hug given or received, so rare these pandemic days.

St. Vincent de Paul food pantry clients also had something special to be thankful for this year. Parish volunteers prepared 190 bags of food items for distribution on Saturday, November 20. Each “food basket” contained 2 cans pumpkin, 2 cans green beans, 1 can mushroom soup, 2 cans fruit cocktail, 1 box instant potatoes, 1 box stuffing, 2 Jello mixes, 1 box crackers, 1 bottles Ranch Dressing, 1 package cheese, 1 bag carrots, 1 tube rolls, 1 bag Craisins, and a \$20 Walmart gift card.

The cost of the

enabled guests to choose their meat/main dish, dessert, and a few items to personalize their dinner. Each food basket was delivered by volunteers with good cheer and holiday best wishes, but also with friendly smiles and hopes for better times ahead. A delivery of love – something to fill hearts as well as stomachs in thanksgiving to the God who loves and cares for us all.

## Local pro-life prayer vigil, January 22

The theme of the annual pro-life prayer vigil in Central Illinois



this year is “Transformational Love.” The event will take place on January 22 at Meadowbrook Community Church (1902 S. Duncan Rd., Champaign) Speaker Bonnie Donley, from Peoria, will share her story of Love transforming her life.

For more information, please call Shirley (217-762-2953) or check the Facebook page for the event. The service will also be streamed for those unable to attend in person.



foodstuffs for each food basket was approximately \$35, paid for with donations from parishioners. The \$20 Walmart food-only gift card

I open them  
the rainbow days  
God's Christmas boxes,  
one by one –  
each ribbon tied with love  
and chosen to be ours  
in that forgotten time  
when God,  
for his forever Christmas,  
was still hanging stars.  
—Ruth R. Rains



**Q: Why isn't January 1, 2022 a holy day of obligation?**

**A:** First of all, don't forget that right now all holy days, even Sundays, are free of any obligation to attend Mass simply because of the pandemic. You are free to decide for yourself whether it is safe for you to gather with others to worship.

Apart from this time of pandemic, however, there is another reason why the holy day on January 1, 2022, honoring Mary, Mother of God, is not a holy day of obligation. When a holy day falls on a Saturday or a Monday, the obligation is "abrogated," that is, revoked or abolished. This year Mary's feast falls on Saturday and thus, although we are encouraged to participate in Mass on that day, there is no obligation to do so.

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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.*

## Dear parents of young children at Mass

You are doing something really, really important. We know it isn't easy. We see you with your arms overflowing, probably already tired. Parenting is tiring, really tiring.

We see you swaying and bouncing as you try to keep the baby quiet – or asleep, if you're lucky! When your baby cries, you anxiously pull things out of your

bag of tricks to try to quiet your child.

You cringe when your preschooler asks an innocent question in a voice that might not be a church whisper. And when your toddler insists on exploring the sanctuary, where so much

midst of the crinkling of pretzel bags and a growing pile of crumbs.

We know how hard it is to do what you're doing, but we want you to know that it matters. It matters to other children not to be alone in the pew, and it matters to the congregation to know that



interesting stuff seems to be happening. Not everyone is watching, but you surely feel that way. You may leave church more exhausted than fulfilled, wondering whether it's worth the effort. But what you are doing is so important!

When you are here, the church is filled with a joyful noise. When you are here, the Body of Christ is more fully present. When you are here, we are reminded that this worship thing we do isn't about Bible study or personal prayer but coming together to worship as a community where all are welcome, where we share in Word and Sacrament together.

Be assured that your children are learning now how and why we worship, that worship is important. Yes, learning, in the midst of the cries, whines, and giggles, in the

families care about their faith. Even when you can't see the little moments, it matters to your children.

Children learn that they are an integral part of this church, that their prayers, their songs, and even their cries and whines are a joyful noise because it means they are present.

We thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family, with all its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy, is not simply tolerated, but a vital part of the community gathered in worship.

We hope and pray that, when you feel it safe for your children to be with you at Mass – for we must never forget the need for caution during this time of pandemic – we will know of their presence by the joyful noise they raise!

## Did You Know . . .

Father Anthony will be on retreat January 25-28. Please remember him in your prayers.

### Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

**Nancy Olson**



#### Almond Biscotti

Sift together and set aside:

2 c + 2 t flour

1 t baking powder

1/4 t salt

1/8 t baking soda

Add 2-4 oz toasted slivered or sliced almonds

Mix:

1 c sugar

2 eggs at room temperature

2 egg whites at room temperature

1 T + 1 t almond extract

Blend flour mixture into egg mixture along with 2-4 ounces of lightly toasted slivered or sliced almonds. Divide dough into 2 mounds 12" x 2" on a baking sheet lined with parchment or sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 325° until firm and light gold, about 25-30 minutes. (Should sound hollow when tapped.) Cool for 10 minutes. With a serrated knife, cut each strip into 24 half-inch slices. Arrange slices, cut side up, on cookie sheets a half-inch apart. Return to oven set at 300° and bake until crisp and light gold, about 35 minutes.

*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!*

## Praying for Christian Unity

Many Christians around the world participate in an octave of prayer for Christian unity. In this we carry on the prayer of Jesus: "I pray for those who will believe in me ... that all may be one as you, Father, are in me and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 18:20-21)

Christians are divided by differences in theology and church structures, but there is much that unites us. We share in one Lord, one faith, and one Baptism. We share in the work of spreading the Good News of Jesus. We share in the work of fostering justice and love in the world. Yet our witness to the world is stronger when Christians are united.



The Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity is observed every year, January 18-25. Here is a prayer that you might use, from the votive Mass for the Unity of Christians:

Almighty and ever-living God, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, expecting that new things will happen to us.

—Kathleen Norris

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## Being Together

What a blessing it is to gather together with

We are drawn here by the presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament, and by an instinct that tells us that he is most clearly seen when all the members of his body come together.

### 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 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Interested? Contact Cathy Salika at 367-7861 or [csalika@illinois.edu](mailto:csalika@illinois.edu).



It is I who have begotten you this day.  
Let us all rejoice in the Lord,  
for our Savior has been born into the world.  
Today true peace has come down to us from heaven.



January Saints by Fr. George Wuellner

January 2022

St. Patrick Parish  
IN FOCUS

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

Please send news items to [infocusstpats@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:sdunets@illinois.edu)); Judy Fierke, 352-7670 ([jfierke@comcast.net](mailto:jfierke@comcast.net)); Denise Green, 553-7110 ([dgree1@gmail.com](mailto:dgree1@gmail.com)); Elizabeth Hendricks, 328-2184 ([elizabethwalkend@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethwalkend@gmail.com)); Mary Lou Menches, 344-1125 ([mmenches@illinois.edu](mailto:mmenches@illinois.edu)); Cathy Salika, 367-7861 ([csalika@illinois.edu](mailto: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 Sally Czapar, Judy Fierke, Denise Green, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Lou Menches, Renee Mullen, Roxanne Munch, Nancy Olson, Cathy Salika, Chris Whippo, and Diane Wilhelm. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Mary Lou Menches, with page layout prepared by Shirley Splittstoesser.



The deadline for submitting articles and news items for the next (February) issue of *In Focus* is **Sunday, January 10**.