

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

May 2022

We are a community of faith

Growth in faith “is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful.” This is one of the key insights of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, which guides the way we bring new Catholics into the Church. Our catechumens (those who come to us for Baptism and full membership in the Church) and our candidates

(baptized Christians who come to us for full membership) spend several months in preparation.

Part of this preparation is studying what we believe, “head knowledge.” Part of their preparation is learning to pray, “heart knowledge.” And part of it is learning what it is to be part of the living, breathing Body of Christ, the community of believers. By sharing in our prayer and our community activities, they see how we support one another and live out our faith. The experience of community is an essential part of their preparation.

There’s a great deal of wisdom in this. Where else could our catechumens and candidates see people putting the love of God into action? Where else could they learn the rich and varied answers to the question, “And who is my neighbor?” Where else could they see how thoughtful Christians apply their faith-formed

values to the issues of our day? Where else could they encounter a variety of ways to live out their faith? Where else could they find that it’s okay to not have all the answers, but to move forward in faith nonetheless? The experience of community is essential indeed!

It’s no different with our children, born into Catholic families, baptized as infants. Growth in the faith is a process for them too, one that takes years. From their exposure to the community, they learn that there are many ways

to express their faith and to act on their faith. They encounter a rich variety of prayer that will fit them in different ways as they grow up. They discover that the Church is bigger than their family, bigger than their parish, stretching across the world and to all times. They learn of the love that God has for them, his eagerness to forgive, his longing to nourish, strengthen and guide them. Parents can teach their children these things, but it is in community that they hear it in more diverse ways, and catch ideas that will support their faith as they grow.

The same applies to all of us. We all need to continue to grow in our

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Attention, gardeners!

If the spring breezes and green shoots and buds beckon to you to plant some seeds, please consider planting a few extra vegetables in your garden and donating that extra harvest to St. Patrick’s SVDP Food Pantry. Think about how much you love fresh, garden-grown vegetables. Our food pantry guests are no different! They greatly appreciate the chance to enjoy homegrown tomatoes, peppers, squash, greens, and other summer delights. Last summer, the food pantry received well over 250 pounds of fresh vegetables from our generous parishioners, sharing the bounty from their home gardens and from the parish’s dedicated garden plots.



Whether you plant an extra row specifically to donate or make a note to share any bumper crops that overwhelm your kitchen, your gift of produce makes a difference to our neighbors who visit the food pantry.

You might enjoy a bumper crop

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Centering prayer eludes the pandemic

by Dave Sandel

Centering prayer helps me prepare for other kinds of prayer. When I sit silently, or occasionally walk without a goal in that same special silence, my body and mind quiet themselves, and I gradually approach my “center.” As I learned in Sunday School, God lives inside my heart. At the center of me.

As this kind of prayer becomes a daily practice, life becomes much easier to live, whether in joy or sorrow, whether in chaos or quiet, whether in peace or war.

In 1987 three St. Patrick’s parishioners (Mary Lou Menches, Joseph Wu, and Phil Musser) made a centering prayer retreat with the Benedictine Sisters in Nauvoo, Illinois. They decided to come together weekly for centering prayer, and it has been functioning ever since, for the last several years facilitated by Mary Lou.

Participation in these gatherings have included as many as ten men and women, not all of us Roman Catholics. We gathered in St. Patrick’s church until Covid-19 closed its doors. Since March 2020 the group (sometimes two or three, sometimes several more) meets via Zoom. And this of course enables some who have moved to distant locations (including myself) to continue to participate.

As has been the case for thirty-five years, anyone is welcome to join us. First-timers are always welcome. We begin with a bit of fellowship, then meditate on a portion of next Sunday’s scripture passages, using a method called *lectio divina*. After reading the scripture passage aloud a few times and sharing our response to it in simple words, thoughts, and prayers, we sit silently for twenty minutes, centered in our own solitude with our ever-present God.

A bell sounds to bring us back together. We pray the Our Father and offer our personal prayer intentions. Our time together ends with a short discussion of a reading from Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, or another spiritual teacher.

This gathering has met consistently, week in and week out, for thirty-five years. It provides backbone for my prayer life, and I am very grateful that those three pilgrims returned from their retreat to share this blessing with the rest of us.



Community of Faith

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faith, and the experience of community is essential. We all need the challenge of sharing our faith with others and hearing how they express their faith to us. We need a place to practice getting along and working together. Even when God seems distant, we continue to let Christ form us all into his Body. When beset by many burdens, we need others on whom we can rely. When we don’t know where to turn, we need the witness of others to remind us to always turn to God, to offer different perspectives on a problem, and most importantly, to be there for us.

All the images that Jesus used to describe the church are collective: the vine and the branches, the sheep and the shepherd, the chicks under mother hen’s wing, the body with many members. God doesn’t want us to try to live out our faith alone. He places us in community. He gave us each other!

Gardeners

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by send up a prayer occasionally to St. Isidore, patron saint of farmers (his feast day is May 15). Born to poor parents he was sent to work for a landowner. Isadore attended Mass and was often late arriving at the fields, but legend has it that his work was often done by angels in his absence—nonetheless, in one way or another, his work was done. He too, like many of our parishioners, shared what he had with the poor.

Watch future issues of In Focus and the weekly bulletin for more information on donating to the food pantry or volunteer opportunities for gardeners.

Rosary Rally for peace

A Rosary Rally to venerate our Blessed Mother in conjunction with the Feast of the Annunciation was planned to follow immediately after 4:00 p.m. Mass on March 26. Cold weather disrupted plans for parishioners to pray the Rosary while marching around the block. With a quick adjustment, Fr. Anthony and Beth McDonald marched around the interior of the church, carrying the banner of Our Lady of Fatima while parishioners remained in the pews to pray the Rosary. While praying the Rosary, we meditated on the life of Jesus and his Blessed Mother. We were reminded to participate in the life of Mary, whose focus was on Jesus. Refreshments and fellowship concluded the evening.

The banner of Our Lady of Fatima reminds us of the apparition of Our Blessed Mother to three children on May 13, 1917, in Fatima. She appeared to the children six times. Our Lady promised a miracle in October, and on October 13 a crowd of about 70,000 people witnessed a miraculous solar phenomenon in which the sun appeared to fall toward the earth.

Our Lady of Fatima exhorted the children to pray the Rosary for world peace. On March 26, 2022, Pope Francis invited bishops, priests, and the faithful around the world



Beth McDonald holds the banner of Our Lady of Fatima.

to join him in prayer for peace in Ukraine, in a ceremony that hearkened back to the 1917 appearance of Our Lady.

The Rosary has a long history of development. In the middle of the twelfth century, the Hail Mary came into use as a prayer of devotion. Pope Pius V (in office 1566–1572) formalized the Rosary to include the Joyful Mysteries, the

Sorrowful Mysteries, and the Glorious Mysteries. In 2002 Pope John Paul II said that it was fitting to add the Luminous Mysteries that focused on Jesus' baptism, miracles, and teaching, and on the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Pope Francis' Prayer for an End to the War in Ukraine

Forgive us for war, O Lord.
 Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us sinners!
 Lord Jesus, born in the shadows of bombs falling on Kyiv, have mercy on us!
 Lord Jesus, who died in a mother's arms in a bunker in Kharkiv, have mercy us!
 Lord Jesus, a 20-year-old sent to the front lines, have mercy on us!
 Lord Jesus, who still beholds armed hands in the shadow of your Cross, have mercy on us!

Forgive us, if we continue like Cain to pick up the stones of our fields to kill Abel.

Illumine our consciences;
 May our will not be done;
 Abandon us not to our own actions!
 Stop us, O Lord, stop us!
 And when you have held back the hand of Cain, care also for him. He is our brother.
 O Lord, put a halt to the violence!
 Stop us, O Lord!

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 Sallika at 367-78761 or csallika@illinois.edu.

St. Philip Neri, a saint with a sense of humor

Philip Neri, born in 1515, at an early age devoted his life and his individuality to God. But after three years of studying philosophy and theology, he gave up any thought of ordination. Instead, he spent the next several years in a vocation unusual at the time — that of a layperson actively engaged in prayer and the lay apostolate.

Philip's appealing personality was winning him friends from all levels of society, from beggars to cardinals. A group of laypersons won over by his audacious personality met initially as an informal prayer and discussion group, and also served the needy of Rome.

At the urging of his confessor, he was eventually ordained and soon became a sought-after confessor himself, gifted with the knack of piercing pretenses and illusions of others, though always in a charitable manner and with humor. He arranged talks, discussions, and



prayers in a room above the church, and sometimes led excursions to other churches, often with singing and a picnic on the way.

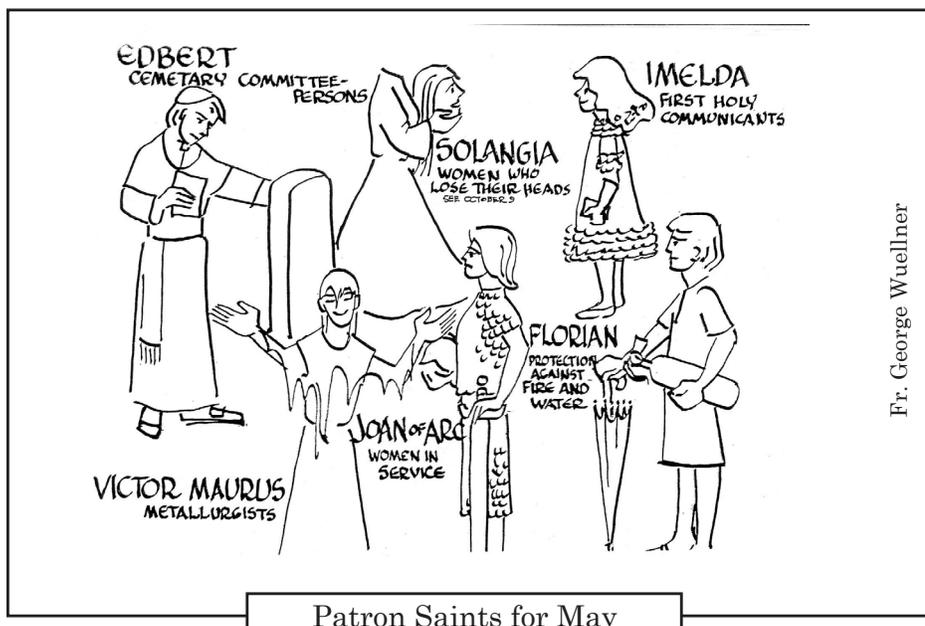
Some of his followers became priests and lived together in community. This was the beginning of the Congregation of the Oratory (Oratorians), the religious institute he founded.

Philip was ahead of his time in urging more frequent reception of Holy Communion, and he introduced the Forty Hours devotion with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. He was apt to go into ecstasy when celebrating Eucharist and often had to try to distract himself so he could finish.

Many people may feel that such an attractive and fun-loving personality as Philip's cannot be combined with spirituality, but Philip's life does away with this narrow view of piety. His approach to sanctity was truly catholic, all-embracing — and often accompanied by a good laugh.



Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to
your protection,
implored your help,
or sought your intercession
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins,
my mother;
to you do I come,
before you I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
Despise not my petitions,
but in your mercy
hear and answer me.
Amen.



Patron Saints for May

Vocation Prayer

*I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?*

Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the
night.
I will go, Lord,
If You lead me –
I will hold Your people in my
heart!

—Michael Talbot

Holy Cross Happenings

Since the last update, Holy Cross has held its annual Trivia Night fundraiser (Mardi Gras-themed this year), has hosted the Cluckin' for Catholic Education chicken dinner at St. Patrick's, and has presented its all-school play, Peter Pan, Jr. It has been wonderful to get back to having these community-building activities that help make Holy Cross School so special – thanks be to God!

Speaking of things that make Holy Cross special, the school has been gifted a new aquaponics system, and has been promised a second one to add to its (also new!) aquaponics lab by the end of the school year. What exactly is aquaponics, you might ask?

The name comes from the combination of aquaculture, which pertains to raising fish or other aquatic creatures, and hydroponics, which involves growing plants in nutrient-rich water. The idea is that the aquatic creatures (tilapia, in this case) will, ahem, provide fertilizer for the plants, while by-products from the plants' growth will help feed the tilapia (the critters will need to be given additional food once a day).

The plants include radishes and lettuce, among other kinds of produce, which, once harvested, will be donated to Holy Cross's St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry.



This year, Ash Wednesday also fell on Dr. Seuss Day, which always brings a special visitor.

The thinking behind creating an aquaponics lab is to give the students practical experience with concepts they explore in the classroom. The aquaponics lab is also designed to be sustainable and gives the students an opportunity to help meet a need for healthy food donations in their community, reinforcing concepts they learn naturally by being students of Holy Cross School.

By the time you see this issue of *In Focus*, there will be only a few weeks left in the 2021-22 school year. The track season will be well underway, the May Crowning right around the corner, and the kindergarten/1st grade Mother's Day Tea soon to follow.

Please remember to keep all of the Holy Cross students, faculty, and staff in your prayers – and at this time of year, especially the graduating eighth-graders and their families. The Holy Cross years go by so fast; may those students who are moving on to high school continue to reap



Father Donton blesses the new Aquaponics Lab.



A student prepares to add his handprint to the floor of the Aquaponics Lab

the lessons and blessings of their time as Crusaders for many, many years to come!

* * *

Please 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 at 356-9521. Financial help may be available; contact the St. Pat's parish office (367-2665) for

Holy Cross School Honor Roll 3rd Quarter, 2021-22

Highest Honors

Sarah Surratt
Grace Arend
Eireann Byard

High Honors

Elizabeth Withers-Sickles
Emily Surratt
Prunella Tembo
Natalie Pociask

Honors

Ursula Tembo
Faith Dean
Peter Samu



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Aquaponics Lab

A journey from awareness to advocacy

[T]o understand how racism works today, we must recognize that generations of African Americans were disadvantaged by slavery, wage theft, “Jim Crow” laws, and by the systematic denial of access to numerous wealth-building opportunities reserved for others. ...While it is true that some individuals and families have thrived, significant numbers of African Americans are born into economic and social disparity. The poverty experienced by many of these communities has its roots in racist policies that continue to impede the ability of people to find affordable housing, meaningful work, adequate education, and social mobility.

—From USCCB, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The enduring call to love, a pastoral letter against racism*

For the seventh session of the parish anti-racism program, “Sharing Stories,” held on a Saturday morning in April, local real estate professional Matt Difanis told his story of conversion from someone who thought of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 as a set of vocabulary words to be memorized and then forgotten to an advocate and activist for fair housing and improved inclusion in the real estate industry.

After 16 years in real estate, Matt served a term as president of the Illinois Association of Realtors®. When the organization was preparing materials to mark the 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, Matt began to learn the history of fair housing, particularly in Chicago, and see how the real estate industry reinforced fears and prejudices and helped to limit areas where Black people could live. As he learned more about this, he also had other transformative experiences. He met and befriended Black Realtors® and heard their stories about the hostility and barriers they faced.

As Matt worked to advocate for breaking down those barriers and making change in the real estate

business, he received hateful messages from other Realtors®. As a member of the board of the National Association of Realtors®, Matt worked on a committee to draft changes to the Realtor® Code of

tube.com/watch?v=FifbBegwdk0) in which he addressed his fellow Realtors®, some of whom were upset about the changes ultimately made to the Code of Ethics.

Locally, Matt has mentored and provided opportunities for people of color in his own real estate business. It was through this and his work in videography that he unexpectedly found himself a spiritual home at Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church in Champaign. After he had experienced the intensity and pure joy of the Black Church experience, he says that he found himself called to become a part of the community there.

If you were not able to attend this session, it will be available on video. If you have questions about this and future sessions, would like a reminder email, or would like a list of resources, please contact Stan Yanchus (family4yanchus@comcast.net) or Elizabeth Hendricks (elizabethwalhend@gmail.com).

The next session of “Sharing Stories” will take place on Thursday, May 5, 6:30-8:00 p.m. The topic will be Healthcare. Everyone is welcome. Watch the weekly bulletin for more information on the speakers.



Ethics, making it unacceptable for Realtors® to use harassing or hateful speech. In March 2021, an article in The New York Times linked to a video Matt had made (www.you-

March events at St. Patrick's

March was a busy month at St. Patrick. Many of us prayed the Stations of the Cross on Fridays. The Knights of Columbus worked hard preparing the delicious food they provided afterwards at the Lenten dinners. March 17 was the feast day of our patron saint and there was good food and fellowship to be had at our St. Patrick's Day celebration.



Why do we go to Mass?

One compelling reason to go to Mass is that the Church has a mission to send us on, the very mission on which Jesus of Nazareth sent the original disciples. That mission is to make this world a better place, a place more like the way God would have things – to bring the world into a better relationship with its Creator.

We need two things in order to accept and carry out this mission: one, a community of believers to send us forth on the mission, and two, the same community to go forth with us to help accomplish it.

That community could be the church, the local arm of the Church that we Catholics call the parish. And that community should already be committed to this mission. We have a liturgy to celebrate and promote our mission: the Mass, a word that is loosely translated as “the sending forth.”

We can test this reasoning: Are we interested in a mission worthy of our life? Is making the world a better place a worthy mission? Are we willing to be sent forth on that mission each time we go to Mass? Do we need a community to send us forth, to go with us, and to be there when we return?

If we go to Mass

- because the Church says so,
- because God wants us to,
- because we need a community,
- because we like the music or the homily or the worship space,
- because it makes us feel good or holy or peaceful,
- because we'll feel guilty if we don't go,

then we have another really good reason to go to Mass: we are committed to the mission of Jesus Christ.

Concluding every Mass, we are sent forth on mission in the familiar words “Go, the Mass is ended” or “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord” or “Go in peace.” This is our call to mission.

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

Articles, information, and photos for this issue were provided by Anna Fedders, Judy Fierke, Denise Green, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Lou Menches, Cathy Salika, Dave Sandel, Shirley Splittstoesser, 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 . . .

Judy Fierke



Southern Fried Chicken

A Bookbinder's Restaurant recipe, adapted

Chicken pieces
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 t garlic salt or powder
3 T butter
1/2 c flour
1 t paprika
2 c cold water

Season chicken with salt, pepper, and garlic. On a sheet of waxed paper, combine flour and paprika. Dust chicken with the flour mix, shaking off excess. (Save leftover flour mix for use in making gravy.) Melt butter in a large skillet. Add chicken pieces and cook, uncovered, over medium heat for 10 minutes. Turn over chicken pieces, turn heat to medium-low, and cook, covered, for 20–30 minutes. Bone-in pieces will take longer. Gravy: Remove chicken to platter and keep warm. Whisk leftover flour mix into cold water and slowly stir it into scraped-up leavings in pan until it thickens.



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of In Focus is **Sunday, May 8**.