

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

April 2023

## If you want to know what we believe...

Of all the liturgies of the year, the Church teaches us that the Easter Vigil is the greatest and most noble. This is the liturgy that helps

parents share their faith with their children, when members of a community share their faith with others, we can see the light of Christ shining



us to prepare for and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It is also the liturgy in which we see the fruits of Jesus' resurrection in our own lives and in the lives of those who are entering the Church. Many of the deepest elements of our faith are set forth so that we can remember and ponder them. If you want to know what we believe, the Easter Vigil is a beautiful time for reflection.

We believe that Christ is our light. Jesus is our way to salvation, our path to oneness with God, and our guide to unity with one another. The light of Christ is easiest to see when we share it. When spouses share their faith with each other, when

brilliantly among us.

We believe that the scriptures tell us a great deal about God through stories, histories, poetry, and prophecy. We believe that God called the world out of chaos. God crafted a place lush with life, a place where humanity could live and encounter him. We believe that God called the people of Israel from among the

see **What We Believe** on page 4

The Easter Vigil will be celebrated at St. Patrick on Saturday, April 8, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

## Spring events add to parish Eucharistic Revival

In addition to the days of Eucharistic Revival (see article on page 3), special events this spring underline their significance for us.

On **Monday, March 27**, a traveling monstrance and chalice will be at St. Patrick's. These are special vessels that contain Christ's Body and Blood during our worship services – the monstrance to display the Body of Christ during Benediction or a Holy Hour, and the chalice to hold Christ's Blood during the Mass.

The traveling monstrance was commissioned by Bishop Louis Tylka. While in Rome he purchased



*Bishop Louis Tylka*

a chalice, paten, and ciborium (shown here), which were blessed and used for the first time at a Mass with the priests of the Diocese of Peoria during their annual Assem-

see **Spring Events** on page 3

## Something new for something traditional

If you attended Stations of the Cross this year, you may have seen the beautiful new veil covering the processional cross. Thank you to Tina Colombo of our Liturgical Arts Team for making it. The team found the rich purple fabric in its stores. Tina took some measurements and went home to do her magic. We are so lucky to have such talented volunteers!

Have you noticed the large wooden cross in the Gathering Space? For many years, this has been the cross used on Good Friday for the Veneration of the Cross. Our Liturgical Arts Team got the idea of placing it in the Gathering Space from an article in *Pastoral Liturgies* magazine. It said, "One of the central symbols of the Lenten season is the cross. If at all possible, the cross that is to be used



for the veneration on Good Friday should have a primary focus during the entire season.

"If the main cross of the sanctu-

ary is not accessible for adoration on Good Friday, then another substantial cross should be made. It is best to use a cross without a corpus on it and could be located in a prominent place; for example, in the gathering area or main entryway, at a mid-point in the center aisle, or near the baptismal font, if that is located near the threshold of the church.

"When placed in one of these locations, everyone encounters the cross each time they gather. It is a powerful reminder that we accompany Jesus in these days of Lenten journey. The cross is then carried from that place to the sanctuary area for the veneration on Good Friday."

Thank you to Craig Goad and Mick Harmon for finding a way to place the cross where we can all see and ponder it.

## The health benefits of volunteering

Every U.S. president since 1974 has signed a proclamation designating a "National Volunteer Week" during the month of April. National Volunteer Week this year is April 24-26. The intention is to recognize those who dedicate their time to helping others and encourage all of us to look at how we can impact the lives of others and improve our communities.

There are many reasons to volunteer. It is no surprise that helping others makes us feel good, but did you know that studies have shown that volunteering provides benefits to your health as well? Volunteering has been shown to enhance the immune system, reduce the risk of depression, and even lessen the symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease. So take a look at how you can put your interests and passions into action and volunteer to help others, which in turn helps protect your own health.

You might look around the parish to see how you can help, or look to local organizations whose sole purpose is to assist others. If you

find later that the one you chose just doesn't seem for you, look for another to take its place.

Some worthy ministries at St. Patrick's that you might consider:

**Serving the priest at Mass.** Adults as well as grade- or high-school parishioners are needed to assist the priest with the Roman Missal, chalice, wine and water. The pandemic interrupted this service, and it's high time to pick it up again!

**Helping to produce the parish newsletter, *In Focus*,** by taking photographs of parish activities, writing an occasional article about parishioners or parish activities, contributing ideas for articles at the Communications Committee's monthly meetings, or preparing the

page layout for our parish secretary.

**Providing recipes for *In Focus*.**

Our readers have asked for low-calorie recipes with few ingredients and easy to prepare. Share those special recipes that have made you the envy of family and friends!

**Do you enjoy singing?** Our parish choir would welcome you with open arms! And if you are free during daytime hours, you might be able to participate in the funeral schola, which makes a difference for a grieving family at a funeral Mass.

There are many more, of course—just look around you and you'll find something of interest just for you. And then there are all the other opportunities to help others in the local community. . .



Several men and women have responded to God's invitation to the Church through the RCIA process. Continue to pray for them during these few days before the Easter Vigil as they make their journey of Faith, and welcome them as they join us in worship and community life, when we continue this journey together.

## Countdown to Eucharistic Revival at St. Patrick's



**Saturday April 29 - May 2**

### Saturday, April 29

**4 p.m.** Vigil Mass. Fr. Luke Spannagel will begin the Eucharistic Revival at St. Patrick's by celebrating this Mass. Fr. Anthony and Fr. Luke have exchanged places for weekend Masses. Following Mass, come to St. Brigid Hall for a social welcoming Fr. Luke.

### Sunday, April 30

**8 a.m.** Mass, Knights of Columbus breakfast to follow.

**10 a.m.** Mass, followed by light social with refreshments; exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

**12:00 noon** First talk of the Eucharistic Revival: "Blessed Carlo Acutis and the Miracles." Children will participate by carrying flowers and balloons. Following the talk, come to St. Brigid Hall for a social.

### Monday, May 1

**6 a.m. to 6 p.m.** Day of Adoration. The Holy Eucharist is in the monstrance on the altar for all to see and to pray in the presence of Christ. You are invited to come at any time during the day for quiet contemplation or to take part in adoration led by parishioners. Watch the Sunday bulletins for details on hour-to-hour topics and times for quiet contemplation.

**6 p.m.** Mass

**6:30 p.m.** Second talk of the Eucharistic Revival: "Seeing the True Presence of Jesus." A "sinfully chocolate" social will follow in St. Brigid Hall. Come for stimulating conversation and delightful chocolate.

### Tuesday, May 2

**12:10 p.m.** Mass, followed by light refreshments in the gathering space at the entrance to the church. Stop for a treat and conversation with friends.

**6:30 p.m.** Third talk of the Eucharistic Revival: "Holy Communion as a Sacrament of Unity with God and Each Other." The retreat for First Communion parents will be held in conjunction with the Eucharistic Revival. Come to St. Brigid Hall after the talk for treats and conversation, as well as to savor the experience and insights gained during the Eucharist Revival.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you need transportation to and/or from the retreat on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday, please contact Pam Donze De Ley (217-778-8738 or [pamdonzedele@gmail.com](mailto:pamdonzedele@gmail.com)). Please send your requests at least one week before the retreat begins.

Child care for children nine and younger will be provided. Please contact Mary Tate ([mary.tate@stpaturbana.org](mailto:mary.tate@stpaturbana.org), 217-367-2665) to let her know how many children you will bring and their ages. Bring the children to the east end of St. Brigid Hall.

*We are not converted only once in our lives but many times, and this endless series of large and small conversions, inner revolutions, leads to our transformation in Christ.*

—Thomas Merton

## Spring Events from page 1

bly Days, Oct. 18-19, 2022. Both the monstrance and the chalice will visit each parish church in the diocese over the next three years.

On **Sunday, April 23**, traveling relics of Blessed Carlo Acutis (May 3, 1991-October 11, 2006) will visit St. Patrick's. Carlo Acutis, who died of leukemia at age 15, outlined the distinctive feature of his brief existence in these words: "Living with Jesus, for Jesus, and in Jesus." And "My life plan is to always be connected to Jesus."

The website [www.miracolieucaistici.org/en/Liste/list.html](http://www.miracolieucaistici.org/en/Liste/list.html), devised and planned by Blessed Carlo Acutis, includes

artwork and articles about the 136 Eucharistic miracles approved by the Church in 20 countries, as well as additional miracles.



*Blessed Carlo Acutis*

On **Saturday, May 6**, at 10 a.m., 25 of St. Patrick's religious education students will receive their First Holy Communion. Students spent the fall last year preparing for and receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. Now they are preparing for their First Holy Communion through the Blessed program by Dynamic Catholic, learning about the Mass and that the Eucharist is a spiritual meal for us as Catholics.

The students have painted their own chalices, which they will receive as a keepsake on the day of their First Holy Communion. The team of Mary Kate Arend, Miriam Arend, Deborah Robert, and Quentin Spannagel have been preparing our students for this special event in their lives.

Please pray for our First Communion students as the day draws near.



## Finding my way to Easter

Long ago and far away, when I was a young pre-teen living in Ohio, I was much impressed with the three days before Easter: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. In those pre-Vatican II days I would spend the whole of Holy Thursday night keeping Jesus company in my parish church.

On Good Friday, I took part in the traditional Tres Horae service. The name means "Three Hours," and

refers to the time that Jesus hung on the cross. The service was held from noon to 3:00 p.m. and usually included the Stations of the Cross and meditations on Jesus' "Seven Last Words."

On Holy Saturday morning, I listened to the story of our salvation as it unfolded for us through the several readings from Scripture.

On Easter Sunday, of course, there was feasting and rejoicing – Lent with its fasting and abstinence was finally over, banished for another year! Jesus was risen from the dead! Death was conquered!

With Vatican II, the world's bishops examined the liturgy of those special days and restored their early observances, opening up for us the wonder of Creation and the loving care our Father revealed to us in the gift of his son Jesus, whose death brought about our salvation and whose resurrection assured us of our own.

In my forties I moved to Urbana, where I found that Vatican II's significant effects had really taken root.

In my first experience of the Triduum (the new name given to these special three days) at St. Patrick's, I succumbed to the graced washing of feet and the great gift of Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the stark reminder of Jesus' suffering and death

on Good Friday, and on Holy Saturday . . . on Saturday Jesus was nowhere visible. But that evening, at the Easter Vigil, all was revealed!

At the Easter Vigil we were reminded of all that our Father

and his son have done for us. The evening began with lighting the new fire, blessing the new water, blessing the candle that bore the marks of Jesus' death on the cross, sharing the light to dispel the darkness. Then voices told the story of Creation, revealing the events of the six days in their startling beauty, and recalled for us our salvation history.

I will never forget the highlighted significance of every part of the liturgy of that night, especially the witness given by those who renounced the Devil and all occasions of sin and were washed in the baptizing waters of salvation. And the renewal of my own commitment to walk with our Savior on my own journey of faith.

My memory of those days, of that night, is renewed over and over again as I read and pray the readings and prayers of the Triduum, now in the quiet of my home. Immersed in the wonder of it all, I feel refreshed and renewed as I find my way toward Easter.

—Mary Lou Menches



## What We Believe

from page 1

nations and formed them by the law and the prophets to be ready to grasp the teaching of Jesus.

We believe that Jesus came among us to show us God's love and to teach us how to live well. His suffering and death show us the immensity of that love. His resurrection shows us that a life in love with him will never end.

We believe that Jesus calls us into that love. By our baptism we enter into the community of believers, a community where he lives. This community hands on to us the faith that we learn in Jesus and supports us as we grow in that faith. Here Jesus gives us the gift of the Spirit so that we will have the strength and courage to live out our faith. Here Jesus gives us his Body and Blood to nourish us and to make us one with him and with all the faithful.

We believe in God's creativity and ingenuity. We believe in God's love and power. We believe in God's wisdom and guidance. As we say during the Easter Vigil, "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus." God is good!

*God in heaven,  
you have helped my life  
to grow like a tree.  
Now something has happened.  
Satan, like a bird,  
has carried in one twig  
of his own choosing after another.  
Before I knew it  
he had built a dwelling place  
and was living in it.  
Tonight, my Father,  
I am throwing out  
both the bird and the nest.*

—A Prayer from Nigeria

## Holy Cross Happenings

Here are some of the highlights of the many activities taking place at Holy Cross School this winter.



*Another Crusaders volleyball season is in the books.*



*Checking on the progress of the yummy veggies in the aquaponics lab.*



*Dr. Seuss' birthday always brings a very special visitor (pictured here with 4th-graders).*



*Radishes are ready to harvest!*



*Back to the 90s for Trivia Night 2023.*



*What could be more 90s than Beanie Babies?*



*A beautiful new mural, courtesy of some HCS middle schoolers.*





**Q: What is a holy hour? Is this a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, or can it be simply a time set aside for prayer in a church or at home? How are we to pray during a Holy Hour?**

**A:** Holy Hours are the Roman Catholic devotional tradition of spending an hour in Eucharistic adoration in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. You really don't have to "do" anything during your holy hour – you can just sit there and look at Jesus. You could make a Holy Hour in a church, in your home, outside in nature – anytime, anywhere.

The most important part of making a Holy Hour is preparing yourself to spend an hour with God. You might read a little Scripture, listen to some worship music, journal, or simply sit and talk with God, or a combination of all the above.

If you're praying before the Blessed Sacrament, gaze at Jesus and let Jesus gaze at you. Rest in wonder at who God is and how God invites you to know him. Time spent in contemplation of God is the core of the Holy Hour.

Spend some time thanking God for the gifts in your life. This might be something big, such as a new friendship or job, or it might be something small, like your coffee in the morning or the nice walk you took the day before. Turn to God with the cares and concerns of your heart, those close to you, and the needs of people throughout the world. Entrust everything to God.

You might keep the last few minutes of your Holy Hour to make a resolution that came out of your prayer: how is God calling you to act, think, change, pray? What can you take away from this time spent with him? Then close with any prayer that is on your heart.

### *Vocation Prayer*

Loving Father, take care of us, your Church, this day. Give to us all the grace and courage to live out our baptism as faithful disciples of your son, Jesus. Give us good pastors who will call us to love and forgiveness and lead us to worship in the community of the Spirit. Bring forth from among us other ministers whose many-splendored gifts will strengthen our community and bring others to your service.

## A saint for our times

Although Benedict Joseph Labre was born almost 300 years ago, in France on March 25, 1748, he would have felt at home in many of our modern cities. He was the eldest of



15 children born to a prosperous shopkeeper, Jean-Baptiste Labre, and his wife, Anne Grandsire.

Benedict's uncle, a parish priest, undertook his early education. At 16 years of age Benedict wanted to become a Trappist monk, but his parents said he was too young. When Benedict was 18, an epidemic struck his city. After his uncle died helping others, Benedict set off for La Trappe Abbey to enter the Order, but he did not meet the requirements. They said he was underage, too delicate, and had no special recommendations.

Benedict later tried to join the Carthusians and then the Cistercians, but both rejected him as "unsuited for communal life," understood to be a kind way of saying he was mentally ill. Later he joined the Third Order of St. Francis and led a life of poverty and pilgrimage, making his way to every major shrine in Europe.

As a pilgrim, Benedict survived by begging and often shared his meager alms with others. He always traveled



Fr. George Wuellner

Patron Saints for April

see **St. Benedict Labre** on page 8

## Love calls . . .

How can we open our hearts to love, as our bishops call us to do in their letter on racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts: An Enduring Call to Love*? We might consider deepening our awareness of racial (in)justice by adding one or more of these resources to our spiritual practice.

The website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) offers several resources for praying the Stations of the Cross ([usccb.org/prayer-worship/prayers-devotions/stations](http://usccb.org/prayer-worship/prayers-devotions/stations)). Whether or not you have read the bishops' letter on racism, you might find praying the "Stations of the Cross: Overcoming Racism" helpful in contemplating the damage done by racism. Praying the "Stations of the Cross for Victims of Human Trafficking" could help to raise your awareness of the vulnerability of migrants.

Resources used or recommended in last year's "Sharing Stories" anti-racism program are available from St. Patrick's Peace & Justice Committee ([stpatpeaceandjustice1901@gmail.com](mailto:stpatpeaceandjustice1901@gmail.com)).

Henri Nouwen, in *Bread for the Journey*, reminds us that ours is a unique call, that although we cannot expect to solve the problems we see, we can make a response, however limited it must be:

"So many terrible things happen every day that we start wondering whether the few things we do ourselves make any sense. When people are starving only miles away, when wars are raging close to our borders, when countless people in our own cities have no homes to live in, our own activities look futile. Such considerations can paralyze and depress us.

"Here the word 'call' becomes important. We are not called to save the world, solve all problems, and help all people. But we each have our own unique call, in our families, in our work, in our world. We have to keep asking God to help us see clearly what our call is and to give us the strength to live out that call with trust. Then we will discover that our faithfulness to a small task is the most healing response to the illnesses of our time."

Pray for the vision to see and the courage to respond to your unique call.



## A special celebration for a special event

While receiving the Eucharist is a sacrament each and every time we receive it, we celebrate the very first time with a special ceremony and as a memorable, significant event in our lives.

This year, our First Communicants have painted chalices which they will receive as a keepsake on the day of their First Communion. Here are some other suggestions for families to help make this special day memorable:

- Make a First Communion banner to put up in their room, to be decorated with a saying or prayer of their own choosing to commemorate the day.
- Have a special First Communion meal that the child helps plan. The meal can be enjoyed the night before or as a special breakfast or at any time on the day of the First Communion.
- During the grace before the meal, ask for a blessing for the First Communicant.
- Have a First Communion party and invite relatives, godparents, and friends.
- Make a First Communion cake with icing designed and applied by the First Communicant.
- Ask the child to share with you their feelings about their First Communion. This might be expanded in a session for everyone to share their memories about their own First Communion—and feelings about their current receptions of this sacrament.
- Give the First Communicant a gift such as a prayer-book, rosary, crucifix, or Bible with their name, occasion, and date written in it.
- Accompany the First Communicant to invite a priest to bless the gift(s).
- Take pictures of the First Communicant dressed for this special event, and display them prominently in your home.



## St. Benedict Labre

from page 6

on foot and slept in the open or in the corner of some room wearing his muddy and ragged clothes. He rarely spoke but prayed often. He quietly accepted abuse. He spent hours in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He swooned when contemplating the Crown of Thorns. He was said to levitate. It was also said that Benedict cured the homeless and multiplied their bread for them.

Towards the end of his life, Benedict lived in Rome in the ruins of the Colosseum. He became a familiar figure in Rome and became known as the "Saint of the Forty Hours" because of his Eucharistic adoration. During Holy Week, he collapsed on the steps of the church of Santa Maria ai Monti, near the Colosseum and was taken to a house behind

the church to be cared for, but died of malnutrition and exhaustion the next day, on April 16, 1783. He was buried in the church of Santa Maria ai Monti. Benedict's confessor wrote of 136 attributed to him during the three months after his death.

Benedict Joseph Labre was beatified on May 20, 1860, by Pope Pius IX and was canonized on December 8, 1881, by Pope Leo XIII. His feast day is April 16. His major shrine is the church of Santa Maria ai Monti, where he is buried.

St. Benedict is the patron saint of the homeless, beggars, and the mentally ill. He would have felt at home in the tent cities of our major cities, maybe even in Champaign-Urbana.

Pray to St. Benedict Joseph Labre for all our homeless.



### 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 the first weekend of the month for an upcoming 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 any Communications Committee member (listed with contact information below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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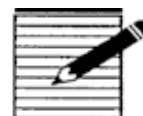
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Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (April) is **Sunday, April 2.**

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

### Mom's Orange French Toast

8 eggs  
1 c orange juice  
1/2 c orange liqueur  
(Triple Sec, Grand Marnier, etc.)  
1/2 c milk  
1/4 c sugar  
1/2 t vanilla  
1/2 t salt  
Zest of 1 orange  
9 (1-inch thick) slices French bread  
3-4 T butter  
Powdered sugar



Beat eggs in a large bowl. Add orange juice, orange liqueur, milk, sugar, vanilla, salt, and orange zest. Mix well. Dip bread into the mixture, turning to coat all surfaces. Transfer to a 9 x 13-inch baking dish in a single layer, and pour any remaining egg mixture over the top. Cover and refrigerate overnight (liquid will be absorbed). Next morning, melt butter in a large skillet over medium to medium-high heat. Add bread slices in batches and cook until browned, about 8 minutes. Turn and continue cooking until browned, about 8 minutes. Arrange bread slices on a platter and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve immediately with butter and maple syrup.