

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS



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

May 2024

## Days of grace

**D**o you remember your baptism? Maybe not, if you were baptized as an infant, but some of us were baptized when we were older and may remember the day. Either way, have you ever reflected on the wonderful gifts that you were given by God that day? He gave you birth among people of faith who would pass on their faith to you. He marked you as his own special child, one he knows and loves as an individual. He launched you into a life of growing to know and love him in return.

There's much here to celebrate with joy. Do you know the date of your baptism? Perhaps your baptismal certificate is among your childhood records. Perhaps you could ask a parent or godparent for the date. Or you could phone the parish where you grew up to ask them to look it up for you. Why not put the date on the calendar that you use to remember birthdays and anniversaries of your family and friends. Each year, when the day comes around, remember and give thanks. If you are a parent or godparent, help your offspring in the faith to remember their own anniversaries of baptism.

Do you remember your First Communion? Maybe it was recent enough that you remember many feelings, people, and images of that

day. Maybe it was long ago, and you have only mental snapshots. Either way, consider what a gift God gave you that day. He gave you his body and blood to nourish you and help you to grow in him. That gift of love has been with you week in and week out ever since. Perhaps it

will only be in heaven that we will fully realize how God has nurtured and protected us though the Eucharist. Why

not put this date on your calendar too? Use it to remind yourself to be grateful for the love God has for you.

Do you remember your First Reconciliation? Maybe you recall an experience of God's love, or feeling grown up, or even something awkward or scary. In any case, it was another step in your growth in faith. That day, God gave you a sign of his love that can never be defeated by sin, and he gave you a tool to help you grow in faith and goodness. Can you find the date? If not, you might choose the day before your First Communion anniversary to remember your First Reconciliation, and take that day to give thanks for the steadfast, merciful love that he has shown you through this sacrament ever since.

Do you remember your Confirmation? Many of us received this

see **Days of grace** on page 5

## Remember your First Communion?

**Y**our First Communion may well have looked pretty much the same as that of our children today, and even the Church's basic teachings would sound familiar to those of us who grew up in a different time and place. Yet, although the method of preparation may have been different then, we find it easy to relate to children's sense of the specialness" of the occasion, their excitement at the prospect of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion for the first time, the loving care of family and friends who remember all too well the joy and fervor with which they received Jesus for the very first time. Let the memories of that special day in your life prompt you to pray for these youngsters of today.



# Patron Saint Celebration at St Patrick's

This year's celebration of St. Patrick's patron saint took the form of a festive brunch after the 10 a.m. Mass on March 17. St. Brigid Hall was filled with parishioners enjoying food, fellowship, and fun.



## A Proclamation in Honor of Fr. George F. Remm

WHEREAS, Fr. Remm has been and remains a son of the Peoria Diocese since his birth in 1934, marking this year of 2024 as the 90th year of his presence with us; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Remm has served the PEOPLE OF GOD as Priest and Pastor at seven parishes throughout the Peoria Diocese since his ordination in 1960; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Remm has also served the Peoria Diocese through diocesan-wide offices and programs such as Marriage Encounter, Beginning Experience, and as the Director of the Office of Christian Worship; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Remm served St. Patrick's Church, Urbana from 1986-2004 as pastor. During his tenure, Fr. Remm worked with the parish and its leaders to lay the foundation for the physical growth and expansion of parish facilities through study, prayer, and a wise use of financial resources. He inspired the parish's celebration of its centennial in 2001, acknowledging the faith and contributions of our parish ancestors and our mission to carry on the Catholic faith in our own time; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Remm built a strong foundation for lay leadership and ministry, encouraging all parishioners to actively participate in the spiritual life of the parish; and

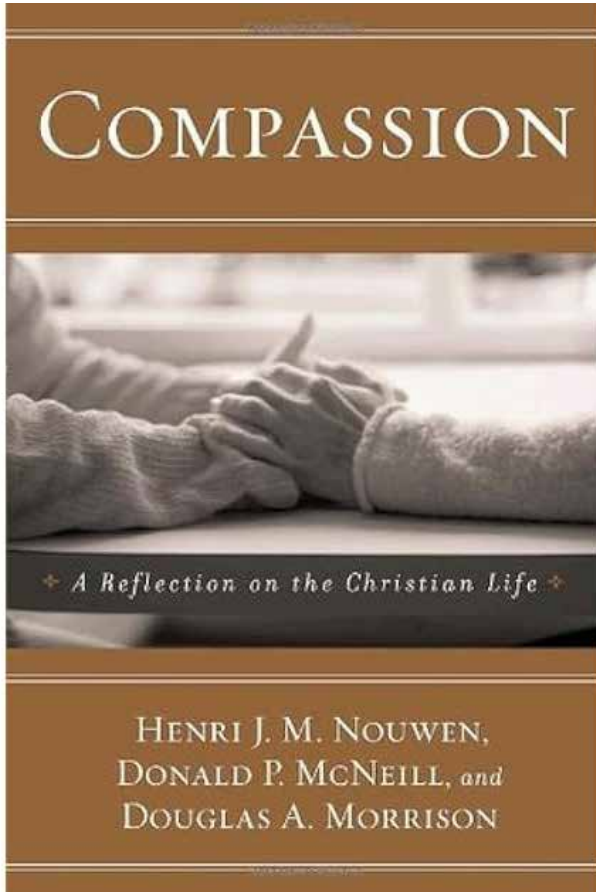
WHEREAS, Fr. Remm continues to reside among us as Pastor Emeritus in retirement. He continues to serve the people of St. Patrick's Church and the Champaign-Urbana area by his presence and care for each of us. He will forever be a beloved member of our church community;

THEREFORE, we, a group of former parish trustees, many of whom were selected to work and serve with Fr. Remm, ask the larger parish community to join us in expressing our love, appreciation, and gratitude for Fr. Remm by offering notes, cards, and greetings in this time of celebration. Communications should be sent to or left at the parish office: 708 W. Main St., Urbana, IL 61801.



## Pursuing a compassionate life

In the 1970s, Henri M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, and Douglas A. Morrison had conversations with a wide array of people, trying to determine: What is compassion? Why do we need it? What does it mean to have it? The results of those conversations became their book, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*.



Practicing compassion can be uncomfortable. Compassion most often comes from our “broken places,” but in our society, we are taught to hide or downplay weakness or vulnerability. To be compassionate is to identify oneself with those without power.

Another difficulty is that while we may feel compassion for an individual or small group, we may have difficulty caring for larger groups. “Human suffering, which comes to us in a way and on a scale that makes identification practically impossible, frequently evokes strong negative feelings.” These feelings may range from psychic numbness to outright hostility.

The authors see community as essential for practicing compassion. Working alone can become exhausting and frustrating; a community can help to renew and refresh us.

In community, we are no longer a mass of helpless individuals, but are transformed into one people of God. In community, our fears and anger are transformed by God’s unconditional love, and we become gentle manifestations of God’s boundless compassion. [...] As long as we depend on

our own limited resources, the world will frighten us and we will try to avoid the painful spots. But once we have become participants in God’s compassion, we can enter deeply into the most hidden corners of the world and perform the same works Christ did; indeed, we may perform even greater works (Jn 14:12)!

While we seek the conversion of others’ hearts, we must also be working on the conversion of our own. We cannot fight evil in the world if we have not fought it in our own hearts.

The evil that needs to be confronted and fought has an accomplice in the human heart, including our own. Therefore, each attempt to confront evil in the world calls for the realization that there are always two fronts on which the struggle takes place: an outer and an inner front. For confrontation to become and remain compassionate, these fronts should never be separated.

Finally, if our pursuit of compassion and justice doesn’t yield visible results, how can we persevere? The authors recommend developing “a spirit of gratitude.”

[T]he compassionate life is a grateful life, and actions born out of gratefulness are not compulsive but free, not somber but joyful, not fanatical but liberating. When gratitude is the source of our actions, our giving becomes receiving, and those to whom we minister become our ministers because in the center of our care for others we sense a caring presence, and in the midst of our efforts we sense an encouraging support. When this happens, we can remain joyful and peaceful even when there are few successes to brag about.

If you are seeking to deepen your own compassion and explore the role compassion plays in the Christian life, you will find much to consider and be inspired by in this inspiring book, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*.

### Vocation Prayer

Dear Lord, guide my steps as I try to follow you. Guide my eyes and ears that I may not be so busy with my priorities that I miss seeing and ministering to others for you. Help me to know how I can best serve you in others. Help me to be your hands and arms, your feet, your heart in caring for your loved ones, today and always.

## Will you help our garden grow?

The SVDP Food Pantry Garden is a wonderful example of how an individual discerning and putting her talents into service can grow something both literally and spiritually nourishing. Although generous parishioners often donate extra vegetables from their own home gardens to our parish's St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, there is always a need for more.

In 2014, parishioner April Jessee was looking for a way to serve in the parish when she realized that she could make use of her gardening skills to bring more fresh garden vegetables to our food pantry guests. Working with then-pastoral associate Jim Urban, April established a garden whose entire harvest was dedicated to the food pantry. The parish rented a plot in Urbana's Meadowbrook Park's organic gardens. Former pastor Fr. Joe Hogan blessed the plot, and April, Jim, and other volunteers got to work, putting up fencing, digging, planting, weeding, watering, and eventually harvesting.

Over the years, food pantry guests have been delighted to share in the harvest, enjoying their choice of tomatoes, peppers, green beans, zucchini, squash, assorted greens, and other vegetables. Volunteers have felt blessed to be able to offer such delicious and healthy food to our

guests.

As in all gardens, there has been change and growth. The garden was moved from a seasonal plot to a year-round one to eliminate the need for putting up and taking down the fencing each year. When April needed to devote more time to her family, avid gardener Anna Fedders stepped up as garden coordinator. Jim Urban built raised beds in the garden to improve productivity, reduce the need for watering, and discourage the rabbits that were squeezing through the fence and munching on the crops.

This year, Food Pantry coordinator Sally Czapar was worried that the garden would have to be given up. Anna had moved on and she could not find a volunteer to succeed her. But fortunately, several parishioners have now stepped up – although more volunteers are always needed.


Throughout the season, volunteers are needed for weeding, watering, harvesting, and delivering produce to the SVDP Food Pantry at the parish center. The more volunteers there are, the less work for each one. The commitment is flexible: you can work only when and as much as you are able. An hour here and there can make a real difference! Can you help? Contact Sally (217/531-7009 or [stpatfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:stpatfoodpantry@gmail.com)).

Please help keep our garden growing!

## Days of grace from page 1

sacrament at the doorway to Christian adulthood. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are intended to strengthen and guide us as we take on more responsibility in our families and communities. But there is also the gift of wonder and awe in God's presence, the gift of coming to know and marvel at God's love for us. If you can't find the date of your Confirmation, you might ask your Confirmation sponsor, or the parish where you received the sacrament. If you have ever been a Confirmation sponsor, you could help the one you sponsored to remember the anniversary.

There is so much to be grateful for in these sacraments! They show us the many ways that God seeks to be active, present, loving, and powerful in our lives. They show us that God cares for us at every age, in every aspect of our lives. Remembering these special days of grace can be a joyful way to remember what he has given us.



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (January) is **Sunday, May 5.**



The 2014 Food Pantry garden blessing. From left: Fr. Joe Hogan, April Jessee, Ellen Abell, Kathy Jobin, and Jim Urban.

This is what the Church needs;  
she needs the Holy Spirit!  
The Holy Spirit in us,  
in each of us,  
and in all of us together,  
in us who are the Church.  
So let all of us ever say, "Come!"  
—St. Pope Paul VI



**Q: Hasn't the age for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation changed over the years?**

**A:** Yes! Some years ago, your correspondent was confirmed at the age of ten. However, as of July 1, 2002, the bishops of the United States issued a decree declaring that "the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin rite shall be conferred between the age of discretion and about sixteen years of age, within the limits determined by the diocesan bishop and with regard for the legitimate exceptions given in canon 891."

Confirmation is the third sacrament of initiation and serves to "confirm" a baptized person in their faith. The rite of confirmation can occur as early as age 7 for children who were baptized as infants but is often received around age 13 or a bit older; adult converts receive this sacrament immediately after baptism.

Why the change? Does Confirmation actually "do" anything at all? As Catholics, we must answer "Yes!" When a bishop or priest places his hand on someone's head, anoints the person's forehead with consecrated Chrism, and says, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit," the person becomes permanently and radically changed. The Church uses the terms "character" and "indelible mark" to express this total spiritual transformation. The Holy Spirit has entered and empowered them to live the Christian life that began with Baptism. It was thought that perhaps youngsters needed more time to develop a mature understanding of what was taking place with this sacrament.

May this well-considered – and very bold – change produce much fruit among our children!

## Mary, Mother of the Church

On February 11, 2018, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Pope Francis signed a decree that the ancient devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of Mother of the Church, be celebrated annually as a Memorial on the day after Pentecost. No other feast or commemoration may take precedence over it.

This year, the Church will honor Mary, Mother of the Church, on Monday, May 20.

The February 11 decree states that this feast day is intended to celebrate Mary not only as the mother of Jesus, but also as a fundamental figure in the Church. It reminds us of Mary's presence with the Apostles on Pentecost and recalls her maternal care for the newborn Church. All who

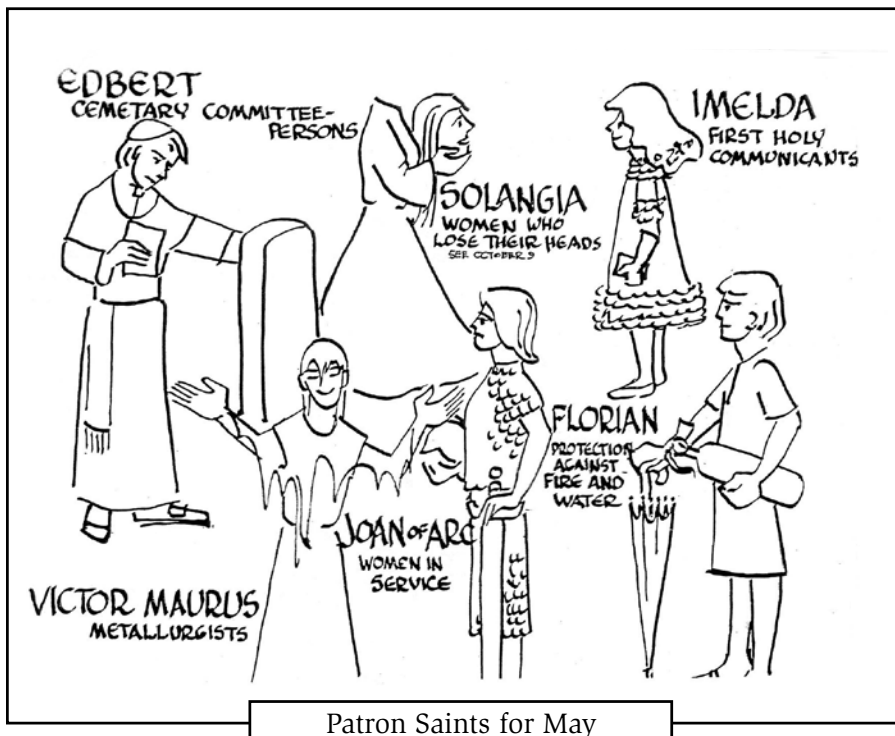


are birthed by water and the Holy Spirit through baptism belong to the Church, the Body of Christ, and thus are mothered by Mary, Mother of the Church.

The month of May has traditionally been devoted to Mary and observed with May crownings, rosaries, and novenas, culminating in the May 31 celebration of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. But the feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, is one that touches each of us, reminding us of our filial relationship, which we share with the great host of brothers and sisters who also look to Mary as Mother.

With Pope Francis, we pray:

Mother, help our faith! Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognize his voice and call. Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps. Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith. Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, when our faith is called to mature. Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One. Remind us that those who believe are never alone. Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day, which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!



Patron Saints for May

## Audio/Visual Ministry at St. Patrick's

By Patric Cosby

I am a member of St. Patrick's Audio/Visual team at St. Patrick's. Each time there is a Mass, there is someone "behind the scenes" making sure that the Mass is live-streamed to St. Patrick's YouTube channel for those unable to attend. The Masses remain on YouTube, available to watch even after the Mass has concluded.

Working on the A/V team has personally brought me great joy. I began participating in this ministry when St. Pat's began streaming Masses during the COVID-19 pandemic. I continue to participate in the A/V ministry on Thursdays at the 12:10 p.m. Mass – it is a joyful break in

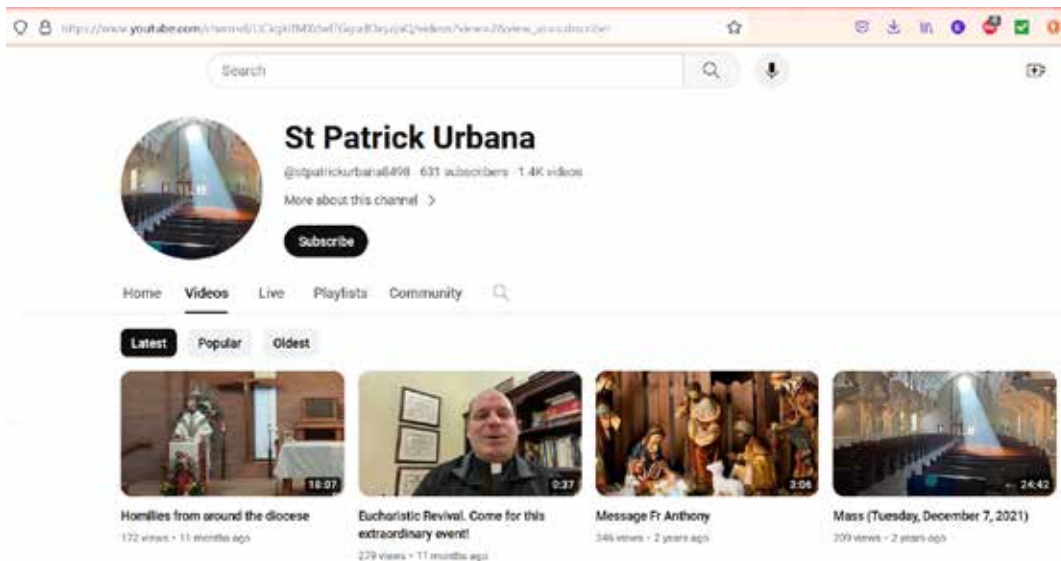
my workday. I can do this from home or my office. While working the cameras, I not only execute my duty, but I feel a sense of peace as I stream each Mass, knowing I am bringing the spirit of Jesus to others. It is gratifying to be able to support our church in allowing people to attend Mass who cannot go in person.

Occasionally our A/V team will receive notes and letters from individuals who express their gratitude that our Mass was available online. I personally received a text message from a colleague who does not attend St. Patrick's saying that his mother was watching the Sunday Mass from her hospital room in Chicago! I feel

especially blessed that I am a part of a team that makes this possible.

If you ever find yourself unable to attend Mass in person, or just want to connect with God in "off-Mass" hours, go to the parish website ([www.stpaturbana.org](http://www.stpaturbana.org)) and click on the box that reads "Watch our Masses online." If you are interested in becoming a member of the A/V team, you can contact Diane Wilhelm ([wilhelmd@earthlink.net](mailto:wilhelmd@earthlink.net)).

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to contribute to the A/V ministry, to provide a spiritual source to individuals and families at home, and to spread more widely the love of Jesus.



## Thank you from a scholarship recipient

Growing up at St. Patrick's has been such a blessing! You have probably seen me serving at the altar, teaching religious education classes, helping at the Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfasts, or helping at coffee shop on Sundays with my grandparents, Susie and Jerry McArthur. I always think of St. Patrick's as my second home.

Growing up in a parish that is always supportive and wraps you in love and prayer is truly a blessing, and something that I will be forever thankful for. Even now, being all the way away in Carbondale, I always look forward to returning home and visiting St. Patrick's. It is as if I've never left. I am always welcomed back with open arms, incredible advice on this new journey of adulthood, and with so much love and prayer.

It's hard to believe that I am wrapping up my final semester of student teaching and will be graduating in May from Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a bachelor's degree in Special Education. As my college career is coming to an end, I have been spending a lot of time reflecting on these past four years, and to say I was blessed is a complete understatement.

It was such a blessing to receive the Fr. Charles Martell and Vincent O. Greene scholarships. These generous donations helped fund my education at Southern Illinois University. St. Patrick's is a place that means so much to me. I will always carry St. Patrick's in my heart, in my work, and in my life as I continue to grow in love, faith, and life.

Thank you again,  
Abigail Goad

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

### Rhubarb Crunch

1 c flour  
 3/4 c uncooked oatmeal  
 1/2 c oil  
 1 t cinnamon  
 1 c brown sugar  
 4 c diced rhubarb  
 1 c granulated sugar  
 2 T cornstarch  
 1 c cold water  
 1 t vanilla



Mix until crumbly the flour, oatmeal, oil, cinnamon, and brown sugar. Pour half of this mixture into a greased 9 x 12 baking dish and press flat. Cover with diced rhubarb. Combine granulated sugar, cornstarch, and water, and cook until thick; add vanilla and pour over diced rhubarb. Cover with remaining half of the crumbly mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

\* \* \*

If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (217/344-1125 or mmenches@illinois.edu). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!

*The fruit of the Spirit  
 is love, joy, peace, patience,  
 kindness, goodness,  
 faithfulness,  
 gentleness, self-control.*

—Galatians 5:22

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 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 info-cusstpats@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.

#### **Editorial board:**

Connie Bell-Mayers  
 cbmayers@gmail.com

Bianca Dawalibi,  
 biancadawalibi@yahoo.com

Judy Fierke, 352-7670  
 j-fierke@comcast.net

Elizabeth Hendricks, 328-2184  
 elizabethwahlhend@gmail.com

Mary Lou Menches, 344-1125  
 mmenches@illinois.edu

Alia Rdissi, 281-382-1623  
 aliardissi@yahoo.com

Cathy Salika, 367-7861  
 csalika@illinois.edu

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

**Articles, information, and photos** for this issue were provided by Rose Brown, Patric Cosby, Abigail Goad, Elizabeth Hendricks, Mary Lou Menches, Alia Rdissi, Cathy Salika, and Mary Tate. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Elizabeth Hendricks; page layout was prepared by John Colombo.