

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

October 2024

## Blessings

We use the word “blessing” in two distinct, though related, ways. Sometimes we mean a good thing received from God’s hands, a sign of God’s abundant love and favor. Sometimes we mean a ritual blessing, a prayer asking God to help someone.

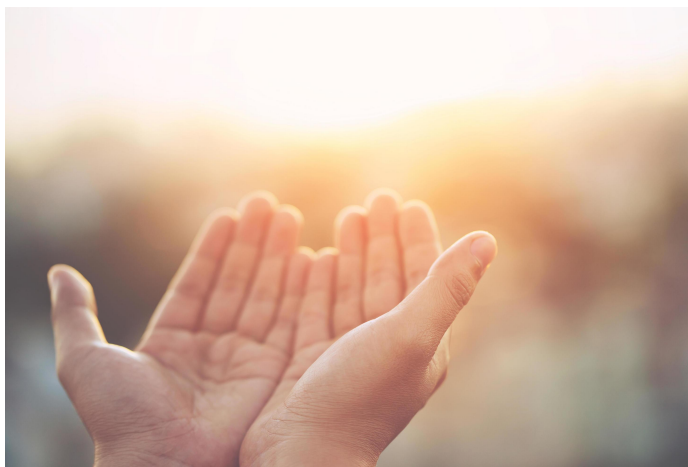
There are a lot of ritual blessings at this time of year: Our catechists are blessed to launch them into a new year of teaching our young people about the faith.

Our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are blessed to commission them to share the Body and Blood of Christ among us. Even our pets are blessed on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi.

The Church lays out the words and actions of ritual blessing in *The Book of Blessings*. Some blessings are formal and solemn, and are reserved for a priest or deacon, or even a bishop. Many of us remember the blessing that Bishop Jenky gave to our parish and our church at the rededication of our church nine years ago. We may ask a priest or deacon to bless a rosary or other devotional article. Other blessings are informal, everyday

things that may be done by anyone. A parent may bless a child every morning and evening. We may bless ourselves and our food before each meal.

*The Book of Blessings* includes these and many other blessings: the



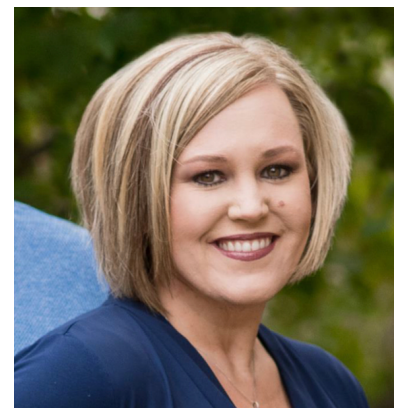
blessing of throats that is associated with the feast of St. Blase on February 3; blessings of homes and families; blessings of schools and workplaces; blessings of crops and livestock; blessings for a parish council or meeting. One lovely thing about all these blessings is that they show God’s loving care for every part of our lives. It’s not as if some parts of our lives are holy and others are irrelevant to our lives of faith. Every part of our lives, everything that we do is made holy when we do it in God’s service.

See **Blessings** on page 2

## St. Patrick’s Financial Picture

Behind the scenes many people work to provide the financial support needed for St. Patrick’s to continue with excellence in spiritual leadership. St. Patrick’s financial year ends June 30. The process of closing the budget is called the year-end process. The year-end records are presented to the diocese and the Diocesan Finance Council, which reviews each parish and school in the diocese.

Business Manager Jackie Grandone coordinates with St.



Patrick’s Finance Council Chair Bruce Rogers and trustees Michelle Chitambar and James Davito, and committee members Mardia Bishop,

See **Financial Picture** on page 2

## Blessings

From page 1

And God blesses it all.

Fundamentally, all blessings are prayers of petition, asking God to do something, but there's more to it than that. A blessing also acknowledges that God is the source of all blessings. When we bless someone or something, we express our faith that God is the creator of the one we bless, that God is the source of every good thing, that we rely on God to be active among us. This helps us to see what we mean when we say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." We're not asking God to bless himself. We're stating our belief that God is the source of all blessings.

Blessings help us remember that we can't get through our day without God's presence and God's help. And to all this goodness, we can only say, "Thank you, Lord!"

## Financial Picture

From page 1

Gary Wszalek, and Marguerite Maguire. Together, they ensure budgets are used according to policy and are reported correctly. They use best practices to ensure expenses are accurately recorded in a timely manner. Parishioners are sent a detailed listing of their contributions as tax time approaches.

Jackie Grandone will present the year-end records for 2023-24 to St. Patrick's Finance Council this fall. When the records have been reviewed and completed, the parish's financial picture will be posted in the bulletin.

This year's ADA, "Do everything for the Glory of God," begins September 7-8. The ADA assessment for St. Patrick is \$130,210. Any shortfall in donations to the ADA must be made up from our ordinary income accounts – and any donations over the total assessed will be returned to the parish.

We are in good financial standing. This year, we have been able to install new windows in the parish center and classrooms. The old windows, installed in 1965, were single-pane glass, not energy efficient. They also posed a safety concern in that if a window were to break, someone could be cut by broken glass. We have also been able to replace the 23-year-old HVAC system in the parish center with a new system that is much more

energy efficient. Both the new HVAC system and the new windows will save the parish money in the long run.

Another addition we were able to make was the fencing on the south side of the parish center. It was installed to give our children a safe place to play, and it has definitely been used for this. There are children who routinely play in this area while their parents are at Coffee Shop. The fenced area was a huge help this summer during Totus Tuus. The kids who attended could go out and play in the fenced area before Totus Tuus as well as at lunch. Our Faith and Reason homeschool group also uses this area on a regular basis for class and during lunch/recess time.

Many wonderful things are happening and it's because of generous donations of parishioners. Thank you!

## St. Patrick's has a new sign



# John of Capistrano, a born optimist

John of Capistrano was born in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, on June 24, 1386, in Capistrano, Italy. One-third of the population and nearly 40 percent of the clergy were wiped out by the Black Death. The Western Schism split the Church with two and then three claimants to the Holy See at one time. England and France were at war, and the city states of Italy were constantly in conflict. Yet John became a real and successful optimist.

His education was thorough, his talents and success were great. When he was 26 he was made governor of Perugia in Italy. As governor, he set himself against civic corruption and bribery. When war broke out in 1416 between Perugia and the Malatesta, a noble ruling Italian family, John was sent as an ambassador to propose peace to the Malatesta, but Malatesta cast John into prison. During this imprisonment, he had a dream in which he was advised by St. Francis to enter the Franciscan order, and John, who had been married, separated from his wife (presumably by mutual consent) and became a Franciscan friar. He was ordained a priest just four years later, at the age of 34.

Throughout Italy, throngs came to listen to him preach or to receive healing blessings. During a mission, over two thousand invalids came to receive from him the sign of the Cross, for he had become known as a healer of the sick.

He was nicknamed “Soldier Saint” when, in 1456 at the age of 70, he led a Crusade against the invading Ottoman Empire at the siege of Belgrade in modern-day Serbia. He survived the battle but fell victim to the bubonic plague, which flourished in the unsanitary conditions among armies. He died October 23, 1456.

John had a deep Christian optimism and approached problems with confidence in his faith. He is the patron saint of judges, chaplains, and military chaplains. We celebrate his feast day on October 23.



## Calling all pets!

The blessing of pets takes place annually at St. Patrick’s on October 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, who was known for his love for all of God’s creatures. As *The Book of Blessings* points out:

“According to the providence of the Creator, many animals have a certain role to play in human existence by helping with work or providing food and clothing.”

We are also reminded of how animals have appeared in the Bible as reminders of the gifts of salvation:

- Animals were saved from the flood and afterwards made a

part of the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:9-10).

- The paschal lamb brings to mind the Passover sacrifice and the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (Exodus 12:3-14).
- A giant fish saved Jonah (Jonah 2:1-11).
- The ravens brought bread to Elijah (1 Kings 17:6).



Parishioner Nancy Costa regularly attends the parish’s blessing of

pets. She is motivated by love for her own pet, a cat named Sophie, and says, “God created all animals and gave them into our good care. . . . Feeding them appropriately and giving them shelter and love is what Our Lord directed and expects from us as their guardians.” Nancy prays to St. Francis for Sophie to be kept safe, and she has attached a Miraculous Medal to Sophie’s collar, further reassurance that Sophie will always be protected.

All are welcome to join in this joyful celebration of the feast of St. Francis, bringing their pets to the church to be blessed by Fr. Anthony on Friday, October 4, at 5:30 p.m.

## What does “respect life” mean to you?

*October 6 is Respect Life Sunday. St. Patrick's parishioner and pro-life advocate Megan Logsdon offers her thoughts on what it means to be pro-life and how you can show your support.*

Being pro-life means much more than caring for the baby's life before birth. Being pro-life involves advocating for those who cannot speak for themselves, regardless of age, race, developmental stage, or mode of conception. With the advancements in our understanding of fetal development, it is surprising that there are still advocates to terminate a pregnancy at any stage.



Addressing women's health is crucial, and it is important to engage in open discussions about how best to support women. However, the issue of abortion invariably involves another life. This does not mean that one life is more significant than the other, but it highlights the complexity of the situation.

It is often overlooked how a woman may be affected both mentally and physically by the decision to abort. Studies indicate that women who have undergone abortions may experience various psychological and emotional effects. Additionally, while some claim that pro-life laws will not adequately address cases such as ectopic pregnancies or miscarriages, this is a misconception. Pro-life legislation generally includes provisions to ensure that women receive necessary medical care in such situations.

It is important to note that pregnancies resulting from incest or rape are exceedingly rare. These cases represent a small fraction of all abortions and should not overshadow the broader ethical and moral considerations involved in the abortion debate.

Advocating for the pro-life position means valuing all stages of life and includes striving for a compassionate and informed approach to both women's health and fetal development. At St. Patrick, we are currently planning the Annual Ecumenical Pro-Life Prayer Vigil, which occurs on the January 22 anniversary of *Roe v Wade*. Sponsors meet on the second Monday of each month through January, 6-8 p.m. at the Mahomet Public Library.

You can support the pro-life movement by joining the Pro-Life Discussion Group, which meets every third Monday at Holy Cross at 3:30 p.m. We would love for you to join us, even if you just come with questions.

September 25 – November 3 marks 40 Days for Life, with October 6 being Respect Life Sunday. As a group, we do all we can to help mothers and families before and after the birth of a baby. Please join us if you would like to help or learn more about our group.

*The Respect Life program was established to study, pray, and plan activities in our parish that foster reverence for the whole of life, from conception to natural death.*

*For questions, or if you'd like more information on how you can participate in the pro-life movement, contact Megan Logsdon at [m.logsdon@hotmail.com](mailto:m.logsdon@hotmail.com) or 217-637-3481.*

## Help Needed!

*In Focus* has been going strong for 43 years now, and we can do this because of the many people who pitch in. We have three special needs right now:

**LAYOUT** A few times a year, scheduled in advance, you'd receive files of edited text, photos, and graphics. You'd have three days to do the layout and create a pdf using whatever publishing software you're already familiar with.

**WRITERS** Every couple of months, you'd receive a topic, knowledgeable contact people, and Web resources. You'd have about 10 days to write 400-600 words on a topic.

**PHOTO EDITOR** Photos give vibrancy to *In Focus*, but it takes time to select them each month. You'd read the draft of *In Focus* and select photos to help tell the story of our parish life.

Can you help? Contact Cathy Salika at [csalika@illinois.edu](mailto:csalika@illinois.edu).



## Vocation Prayer

Lord, help me to see how best to use the gifts I've received from you, to hear your voice in the depths of my heart, to discern your call, and to respond with a generous spirit.

# How will you serve?

A few weeks ago, St. Patrick’s parishioners celebrated its Time & Talent Fair. This gathering aimed to showcase the many ministries at Saint Patrick’s and invite others to join them.

St. Brigid Hall was set up in advance with tables for hungry parishioners, with a buffet centered among them. Tables with seating for those representing the many ministries at St. Patrick’s lined the hall, many with handouts for interested folks to take home as they considered which ministry best suited their abilities and interests. People moved from one place to another, brochure in hand, inquiring about the ministries.

If you have any questions, even now, feel free to reach out. There’s still time to join a ministry, and there’s surely one that will fit your talent and interests.

Thank you for your generosity as you explore how best to serve our faith community.



**Q: At Mass lately bells have been rung at the time of consecration, a practice I have not experienced for many years. Why has this practice been resumed?**

**A:** Three factors historically led to a certain disconnect between the actions of the priest during parts of the Mass and the actions of the people: language, posture, and acoustics. Over the centuries, especially during the Middle Ages, Latin became increasingly less well understood by most people. The priest stood at the altar facing the same direction as the people and, in some churches, where the altar was a good distance from the pews, acoustics simply did not allow the congregation to hear words spoken at the altar in a low voice.

People were still active in prayer during the Mass, but very often, especially in more solemn celebrations, the choir sang extended settings of the acclamations while the priest had already moved on to other texts. And sometimes the congregation was involved in private prayer (reciting the Rosary or prayers from the missal).

Bells were rung to alert the people to what they could not easily see or hear. Today, use of the bells is permitted although optional, not required, since language, posture, and acoustics generally permit the congregation to follow the action of the Mass.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition, has this to say about the practice: “A little before the consecration, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful. According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the host and then the chalice” (No. 150).

## “Incredibly moving this year!”

By Michael J. Kaap

Emmaus Days is a retreat for young men who are open to the priesthood. It is a place where you can make friends, have fun, and grow closer to God. Throughout your stay, you are split into groups, which are led by the seminarians. The many seminarians and even the vocations director of the diocese, Fr. Chase Hilgenbrinck, are there to lead you through the retreat and to help you grow closer to God.

I have participated in Emmaus Days three times now, and it is still one of the highlights of my year, the others being Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, and my birthday, because on those days I get to see all of my grandparents.

Emmaus Days is divided into four sessions; the first is for college students, the second for eleventh- and twelfth-graders, the third for ninth- and tenth-graders, and the fourth for seventh- and eighth-graders. The first and second sessions are offered at the Newman Center on campus at the U of I, while the third and fourth sessions are held at Peoria/Notre Dame High School. This year I went to St. John's Newman Center on campus.

This year was slightly different from earlier years at Peoria/Notre Dame. The first and second sessions have much more time for prayer, and participants are given a lot more responsibility. There is Mass and adoration daily, plus a Mass with the bishop, an all-night vigil with

our Lord in the Eucharist, and a eucharistic procession.

There are numerous talks given by the seminarians and by Fr. Chase. We even had a five-hour period of silence, which most of the guys used for prayer.

The Emmaus Days experience was incredibly moving for me this year. I was able to just be close to God in a way that we usually forget about in our daily life. I learned what his voice “sounds” like, I felt his love, his comfort, his peace, his forgiveness. I felt like his child once again. There is a special joy that I get from being close to Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar. And I was able to continuously experience this through the retreat because of the daily Masses and adoration.

The all-night vigil was the best night of my life. It was basically all-night adoration, and each of the boys got to pick a section of the night when they would stand vigil with the Lord. I ended up staying from midnight until 7 a.m. by accident. I loved the five-hour silent period of prayer and eucharistic procession the next day. During these three events, I felt a profound sense of belonging and peace, the presence of the Lord. Emmaus Days is a place where I feel the Lord the most. *Lord, help me to be who you want me to be.*

Emmaus Days has strengthened my faith, has given me purpose, has drawn me closer to God. It is a place of rest for the spiritually weary. It is a request from the Lord, an invitation to go to him who loves you perfectly. There you will be **taken, blessed, and broken** for the glory of God. I encourage all young men to go to Emmaus Days to experience our Lord and be made new.

I hope to see you at Emmaus Days next year!





## Parish Council News

Planning was the theme of the Parish Council's September meeting.

Results from the Time and Talent Fair were yet to tallied, but it seems that most were happy with the interest shown in their ministry. It was suggested that for the next one name tags and better distribution at the tables would be helpful. And a second Time and Talent Fair later in the year might be useful.

Planning for the International Festival is well advanced, although volunteers for setup and clean-up are still needed. And plans for possible use of the outdoors will, of course, depend on the weather.

The number of events planned for December will probably move the next family movie to follow Christmas instead of preceding it.

Given the importance of the annual Council retreat, which was canceled earlier in the year, it was suggested that an hour's inspirational talk given by Fr. Anthony, followed by a brief social time, take the place of the Parish Council's annual Christmas party.

Other suggestions proposed included adding a Council meeting in July, moving the Council's monthly meeting to the second weekend of the month to avoid holiday weekends, and creating a Big Events calendar for the staff when the annual parish calendar is developed in late spring.

There was initial discussion of the need for a guide for ministers' meetings in the parish center. It would include directions for using the dishwasher and coffee pots, staff forms for hosting an event, a list of which staff to contact for specific ministry events, etc. The current form used for events would be added to what will become the Ministry Meeting Guide. More discussion to follow.

Council members are once again working on their Council by-laws, comparing how the Council currently functions with statements in the by-laws, and discussing what may need to be changed. Discussions on this will continue in future meetings.

Please continue to pray for the Parish Council as members try to do their very best for our faith community!

## Can you help make Trunk or Treat happen?

Trunk or Treat has been a fun family event at St. Patrick's for a number of years now. Children can dress up in costumes and safely "trick or treat" around the Parish Center. There are games and food and fun for the whole family.



A lot of volunteers are needed to make this event a success but as of this writing, we're not sure it's going to happen. Can you help? We're looking for adults in the parish who can help our youth coordinate the Trunk or Treat event. If you are interested, please contact Jon McCoy (217/367-2665 or [jon.mccoy@stpaturbana.org](mailto:jon.mccoy@stpaturbana.org))





## Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Nancy Steerman



### Pudding Cookies

3/4 c Bisquick  
1 pkg instant pudding  
1/4 c salad oil  
1 egg

Mix well all ingredients. Form with hands into small balls, flatten balls with hand (or bottom of a glass) on ungreased cookie sheet, and bake for 8 minutes at 350 degrees. Yield: 3 dozen, depending on the size of the balls. Want more? Just double the recipe. Instant pudding flavors provide different colors for your cookies.

*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!*

*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.

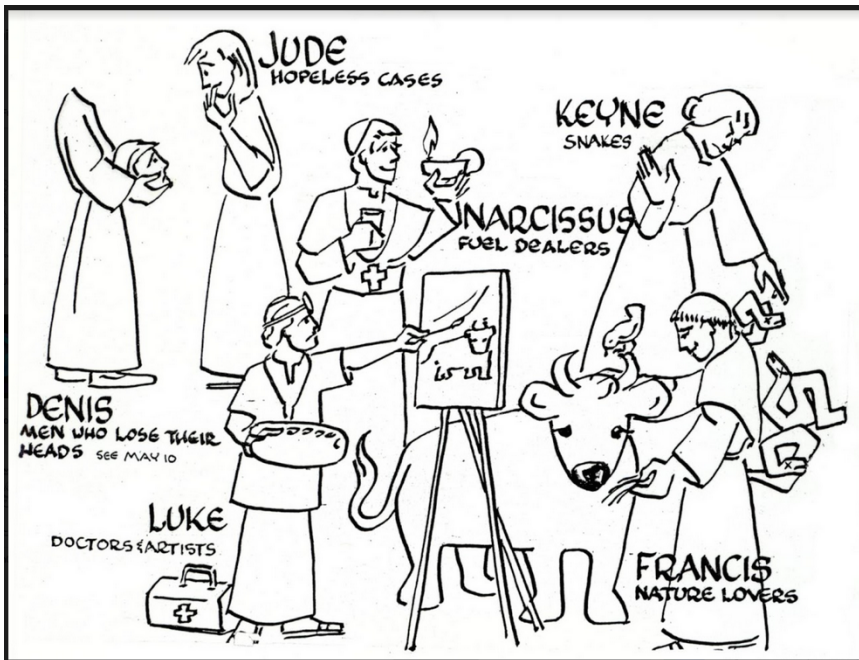
Please send news items to infocusstpats@gmail.com. You may also send them to any Communications Committee member (see below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

#### Editorial board:

Connie Bell-Mayers,  
cbmayers@gmail.com  
Judy Fierke, 217-352-7670,  
j-fierke@comcast.net  
Elizabeth Hendricks, 217-328-2184,  
elizabethwahlhend@gmail.com  
Álvaro Martinez,  
alvarojmartinez97@gmail.com  
Mary Lou Menches, 217-344-1125,  
mmenches@illinois.edu  
Alia Rdissi, 281-382-1623,  
aliardissi@yahoo.com  
Cathy Salika, 217-367-7861,  
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 Nancy Costa, Kathryn Guy, Elizabeth Hendricks, Michael Kaap, Megan Logsdon, Álvaro Martinez, Mary Lou Menches, Alia Rdissi, Cathy Salika, Splittstoesser, and Nancy Steerman. Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Mary Lou Menches; page layout was prepared by Shirley Splittstoesser.



October saints by Fr. George Wuellner



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (November) is **Sunday, October 6.**