

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

April 2026

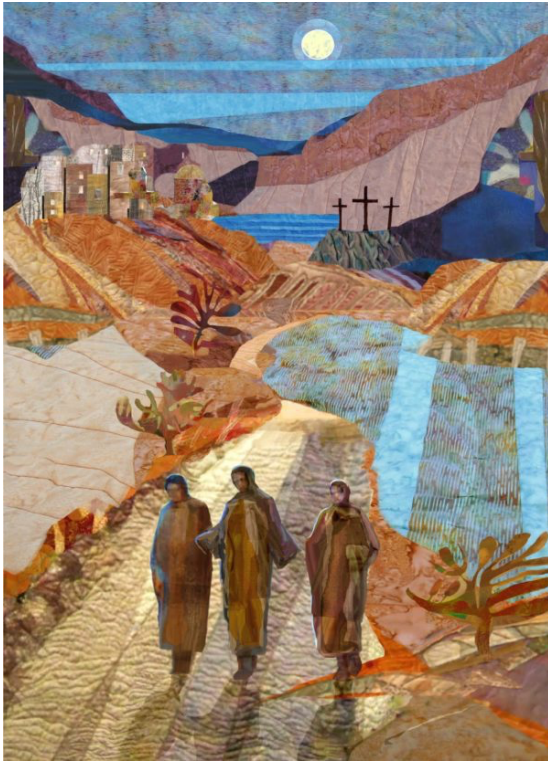
We have seen the Lord!

Imagine that you were standing at the foot of the cross when Jesus died. You saw his body taken down from the cross, and followed along to see him buried in the tomb. If you had

returned to the tomb on Easter morning and found it empty, what would you have thought?

Most likely, your first reaction would have been like that of Mary Magdalen. You would have thought that someone had stolen his body. Jesus understood. He called her name,

“Mary!” and she recognized his voice and knew that he was alive. Maybe your second idea was that Jesus had returned from the dead, like his friend Lazarus. The breath of life returned to his body and he lived. Same body, same spirit. And, no doubt, one day he would die again. Jesus understood. He said,



“Do not cling to me.” It’s not that he came back to life. Rather, he was going forward to something new.

What if you were in the upper room with the apostles when Jesus appeared in their midst? Maybe you

would have thought he was a ghost, that he was present in spirit, that it was just a vision. Jesus understood. He showed them the wounds of his passion. He invited Thomas to touch him. He ate with them. They could see that he was there in body as well as spirit, and that it really was his body.

Not a dream. Not a ghost. Their friend and teacher, their leader and their love.

And yet, it was clear that something was different. His glorified body could go whenever and wherever he wanted to be.

See **We have seen the Lord!** on p 3

Why should we observe Earth Day?

We are called to become artisans and caretakers of our common home, the Earth, which is falling into ruin.” *Pope Francis, Earth Day 2024*

As Catholics, we are called to care for God’s creation. In his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis highlighted how we are all interconnected. Thus our care, or lack of care, for the Earth affects all of us. The poor are especially impacted, disproportionately hurt by environmental damage.

With this in mind, we ought to participate in events such as Earth Day, an event that takes place every year on April 22. Earth Day promotes activities that support environmental protection, ranging



from river cleanups to removals of invasive plants.

See **Earth Day** on p 5

Anyone for chili? Yes!

By Frank Rosser

The idea of the Chili Cookoff fundraiser for high school youth began last October. The Mariachi Tigres de Urbana, coordinated by Urbana High School orchestra director Tamra Gingold, performed at our International Festival. Tamra shared how the group started two years ago with four students wanting to form a mariachi club, and how the group has grown to over 20 members since then.



When Tamra mentioned that the group was trying to raise money to buy uniforms, and how expensive they are, the idea of helping took hold in our Parish Council discussions about outreach to the broader community. Coupling the fundraiser with the Father Charles Martell Scholarship for high school youth was a natural progression.

We reached out to various ministries in the parish to see if they would provide a chili, and simultaneously parishioners began to express a desire to enter their own chilis. In all we had 13 entrants, which miraculously just fit into our table setup.

Contributions of side dishes and volunteers to help with the setup, cleanup, and kitchen help came streaming in. The Knights of Columbus provided assistance with planning, ticket taking, raffles, and materials for setup.

Community restaurants and businesses donated gift cards and items for the raffles. Tickets were sold, both in the parish and throughout Urbana by the Mariachi Tigres. By the night of Saturday, March 7, everything was set for an amazing evening.

Guests were given the opportunity to sample various chilis and then decide which they wanted. With nine beef variations, three chicken/turkey entrants, and a vegan chili, there was something for everyone.

Three judges were chosen to taste-test all the chilis to decide our winners. Once everyone was settling into desserts, we crowned our chili winners with Chili Cookoff Champ chef hats. In the beef chili category, first place went to Patric Cosby. Ken Horn, representing the ushers, placed second. First place in the poultry category went to Angelika Wardach for her turkey chili.

Once the raffle winners were drawn, the Mariachi Tigres took the stage for 30 minutes of amazing music. The audience was captivated by the joyous sounds and impressive vocals these young people produced.

Thanks to all who participated as paid guests, chili makers, and support. We did well, raising \$3081 in all! The money will be divided equally between the Martell Scholarship and the Mariachi Tigres.

(By the way, you can find Patric's winning recipe on page 8 of this issue.)



Chili Cookoff Champs Angelika Wardach, Patric Cosby, and Ken Horn

We have seen the Lord!

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Perhaps the reason that some of his disciples didn't recognize him at first was that he could change his appearance. Jesus wasn't just being dramatic. He understood that they needed time to understand that he was risen to a new life.

It was vitally important that the disciples believe that he was risen. The resurrection shows his divine nature. Everything that he taught, everything that he asked of them, was ratified by the resurrection. The resurrection shows that God will not be defeated by sin and evil. God is always willing to restore a heart that turns to him. And the resurrection shows what God wants for us, to live with him as truly as he lives.

It is not easy to believe in the resurrection and to understand its meaning for us. Jesus understood. More than 500 of his disciples witnessed his glorified body. They were there for each other to discuss what they had experienced and to ponder what it meant, even as their hearts burned with joy. They told others that they had met the risen Lord and what his life meant.

The story has been handed on to us. We are here for each other to discuss what we have experienced and to ponder what it means, even as our hearts burn with joy.

St. Patrick's is a fertile ground for vocations, Part Two

We unaccountably missed two priests ordained from St. Patrick's! Here is a little information about each of them:

Joseph Sai Tran, born in Viet Nam in 1960, came to Urbana in 1992 and, just two years later, left to join the Society of the Divine Word, a missionary society, where he continued the deacon education he'd begun in an underground seminary in his home country. Fr. Tran was ordained in June 2003 and now lives in Maurice,



Louisiana, a village on the Gulf Coast with a population of 3514, and serves the 150 families in St. Joseph parish, where he ministers.

Vincent Doan Bui was ordained a priest in June 1995 for the Lansing, Michigan, diocese. As a UI student Vincent gave his time freely to the Catholic Worker House, to the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and, in a special way, to the large local Vietnamese population. As a member of the Communications Committee, he undertook many late-night struggles with the parish computer to demonstrate that *In Focus* could indeed be paged on computer instead of with scissors and paste. He returned in September to celebrate Mass with the Vietnamese and other friends from the area before taking up his priestly ministry in Lansing.



As we learn of other priests ordained from St. Patrick's, we'll share what we can about them with our readers.

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And now, about deacons ordained from St. Patrick's.

We have been very fortunate, in the years following Vatican II, to have parishioners who felt called to serve St. Patrick's as permanent deacons, to undergo the years of study in preparation for this new ministry. Their wives companioned them in their studies to gain a better understanding of the journey their husbands were embarking on.

Rodger Adams was St. Patrick's very first permanent deacon. In the August 1989 issue of *In Focus*, he reflected on his

experiences as a deacon at St. Patrick's. He recounted how then-pastor Fr. Martell had approved his application to join the first group of men



in the Peoria diocese to be trained for the permanent diaconate. The group met from January 1974 until they were ordained in December 1976. Everything about the

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Fertile ground for vocations

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diaconate and the training program was new to everyone involved; in fact, at first Fr. Martell didn't know what to do with this new deacon! That was not a problem for long. Deacon Rodger regularly assisted at Mass, gave Holy Communion, occasionally gave the homily at Mass, and baptized many an infant, adding considerably to the Body of Christ at St. Patrick's. He tended to focus on social justice issues, believing that "in a sense, diaconate is synonymous with social action." In 1992, Deacon Rodger and his wife, Barbara, retired to California.

Deacon Rodger was quickly followed by Bill McClellan, who was ordained a permanent deacon in 1992. Like Deacon Rodger, he tended to be drawn to social justice issues. He once commented that his work at the St. Jude Catholic Worker House was to "help bring prayer and spiritual development to the Worker House volunteers as



well as to the guests. Otherwise, it would be just another shelter." It was the former parish Young Adults at work at the Worker House that drew him to St. Patrick's. During his years as deacon, he served in liturgical ministry, participated in the work of the parish's Social Action Committee and the Cursillo movement, and worked with an

interdenominational group in prison ministry, offering weekend retreats to inmates at minimum-security prisons. Ultimately, Deacon Bill and his wife, Jane, were also drawn to California by their children and grandchildren, leaving St. Patrick's in July 1997.

In 2002, parishioner Cliff Maduzia was ordained a permanent deacon for St. Patrick's parish, concluding several years of study. In an interview soon afterward, he remarked: "I am just very happy that Dorothy and I chose St. Patrick's as our parish when we moved here 18 years ago. We couldn't have asked for more loving and open people. I thank you for turning a blind eye to my failings. And I thank you for



letting me share our life with you." Deacon Cliff's ministry gives visibility to the description of deacons in scripture (Acts 6:1-6) in caring for the people of God: he gathers and delivers food for the hungry, consoles those mourning the death of loved ones, helps in various ways those needing food, clothing, shelter – even jobs, brings communion to residents at Brookdale, and ever so much more. He also regularly assists the priest at Mass, proclaims the Gospel, and occasionally gives a homily exemplifying his life as deacon. We have been blessed with Deacon Cliff and his wife, Dorothy – 42-year parishioners, Cliff 24 years a deacon, and still counting.

Although he was with us as a permanent deacon for just a few years, Deacon David Zola made a lasting impression on St. Patrick's

parishioners. Called to ordination May 2012 and called to God June 2018, Deacon David joyfully gave himself to his calling, his ministry, his parishioners. While he was able to do so, he assisted the priest at Mass, visibly happy for the opportunity.



When asked what he saw as the focus of his ministry, he replied "Spirituality!" – and his was a joyful spirituality. At his funeral Mass we prayed the psalm prayer of praise and thanksgiving that Deacon David wrote, spilling over with joy. His wife, Susan, told us he loved the sacraments. "A large part of his ministry was preparing couples for Baptism and Holy Matrimony. He loved to baptize a 'new child of God.' He baptized over 100 children in his six years as a deacon. Marrying couples was another ministry that brought him great joy. He felt that part of his calling was to live out the gospel in everyday life. His mentoring of students and parishioners in more informal settings became a cornerstone of his ministry."

Another parishioner has begun the years of study to become a permanent deacon for St. Patrick's but has recently taken a hiatus. Pray for him as he considers his next step in following what he discerns as God's calling. Indeed, pray for all our deacons, past and present, in gratitude for their ministry among us and to support them as they continue to do their best to follow God's calling.

We have indeed been blessed by our deacons!

Next issue, parishioners called to religious life.

Earth Day

from page 1

First held on April 22, 1970, Earth Day grew beyond the original idea for a teach-in to include the entire United States. In 1990, the movement went international, with events organized in 141 nations. On Earth Day 2016, the landmark Paris Agreement was signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and 120 other countries.

Over 100 million people around the world observed the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, events were online, with a coalition of youth activist groups hosting Earth Day Live, a three-day livestream. Celebratory activities centered around citizen science, volunteering, community engagement, education, and the role of art in furthering the cause.

In 2021, the Biden administration organized a Leaders' Climate Summit, a virtual Zoom-like meeting that featured 40 world leaders and dozens of speakers, including Pope Francis, who warned of climate change: "This is the moment to act. We are at the edge." Soon after, the Vatican introduced the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform (laudatosiactionplatform.org). A multi-year effort, its aim is to move the Church toward better embracing and acting upon Catholic social teaching on care for creation and integral ecology.

The Earth Day theme for 2026 is "Our Power, Our Planet," which emphasizes collective, community-driven action to secure environmental progress. You can find information and resources at earthday.org.

Numerous communities engage in Earth Day Week activities, an entire week focused on the environmental issues that the world faces. Look for local Earth Day activities and projects in your community on Saturday, April 18, and continue the momentum through Earth Day, April 22 – and beyond!

St. Patrick will celebrate by hosting a talk about *Laudato Si'* by Fr. Charles Klamut, on Wednesday, April 22, at 5:30 p.m. in St. Brigid Hall. Come learn more about what *Laudato Si'* teaches about faith, justice, and creation; the connection between environmental harm and human suffering; why this encyclical is central to Catholic moral teaching today; and practical steps for living our vocation as stewards of God's creation.

Lord, help me enter into that peace which consists in having put my life in your hands.

—Carlo Maria Martini

Parish Council News

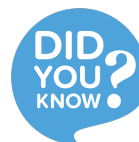
Council members devoted their February meeting to discussion of plans for the Anniversary celebration. It was suggested that because the church's first dedication was on May 24, we might have a secondary celebration on May 24 (Pentecost this year), with the July 18 celebration remaining the primary focus.



The May 24 event might include a potluck picnic with a multi-cultural talent show and/or a youth musical talent show. If this is decided upon, the refreshment following the July 18 celebration might be a commemorative cake cutting after the 4:00 Mass. Lacking a quorum, no decisions could be made, and further discussion was deferred to the March Council meeting.

Easter Season

We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song! How wonderful that the Church gives us 50 days to celebrate the joyous season of Easter. Over these 50 days we hear about the early days of the Church and how the early disciples went from fear and uncertainty after Jesus' death to great joy and boldness in their proclamation that Jesus is risen from the dead! Our challenge is just like theirs; to overcome our fear and uncertainty, to become joyful and bold in our proclamation that Jesus LIVES!



The first St. Patrick's cookbook was published in 1926 as a (very successful) fundraiser.

The mystical St. Catherine of Siena

Catherine of Siena was born March 25, 1347, into a middle-class family in Siena, Italy. She and her twin sister, Giovanna, who died shortly after birth, were the 23rd and 24th children born in the family of 25 children.

Catherine was a merry and joyful child who had her first vision of Christ when she was only five or six. By seven years old Catherine vowed to give her whole life to God. When she was sixteen, her parents wanted her to marry the widower of an older sister. Catherine refused and cut her hair short to make herself unattractive.



Catherine joined the “Mantellates,” a group of pious women who informally devoted themselves to Dominican spirituality. Catherine began to fast, but found it difficult. One night she was visited by Jesus who invited her to drink the blood gushing from his pierced side. She no

longer had need of food. She lived in almost total silence and solitude in her family home.

At the age of 21 in 1368, Catherine experienced a mystical marriage with Jesus. Instead of a ring of gold, she received a ring of Jesus’ flesh. Christ told her to leave her withdrawn life and enter the public life of the world. So between 1367 and 1374, Catherine devoted herself to helping the sick, the poor, and the incarcerated of Siena. She became known as “Santa Donna” (Holy Woman).

As social and political tensions mounted in Siena, Catherine became involved. She and her followers traveled throughout northern and central Italy advocating reform of the clergy. While in Pisa she received the stigmata, but requested that it be visible only to her. In 1375, she wrote letters for peace and the return of the papacy from Avignon to Rome. In 1377, Catherine

finally convinced the last Avignon pope, Gregory XI, to return the papacy to Rome.

Catherine returned to Siena, and in 1377 and 1378, she wrote her “Dialogue.” Much of it was dictated while she was in ecstasy. She viewed Christ as a bridge between the soul and God.

For many years Catherine accustomed herself to vigorous abstinence. She also received the Holy Eucharist daily, but that was her only food. By 1380, those around her ordered her to eat, but she said she was unable to eat or drink. In February, 1380, she lost the use of her legs. In April 1380, at the age of 33, she suffered a massive stroke and died eight days later on April 29. Her last words were, “Father, into your hands I commend my soul and my spirit.”

Pope Pius II canonized St. Catherine on June 29, 1461. On October 4, 1970, Pope Paul VI named her a Doctor of the Church at nearly the same time that St. Teresa of Avila was also named a Doctor. They were the first women to receive this honor. St. Catherine’s feast day is April 29. She is the patron saint of Rome, Italy, Europe, against fire, bodily ills, people ridiculed for their piety, nurses, sick people, and miscarriages.

The body of St. Catherine lies now inside Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Her head and one thumb were separated from her body and taken to the Basilica of San Domenico in Siena.

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how the early disciples went from fear and uncertainty after Jesus’ death to great joy and boldness in their proclamation that Jesus is risen from the dead! Our challenge is just like theirs; to overcome our fear and uncertainty, to become joyful and bold in our proclamation that Jesus LIVES!

It was time for a new notary-auditor

By Barbara Wysocki

It's been three years since I reached the decision that the time had come for me to step away from serving St. Patrick's as a notary-auditor.

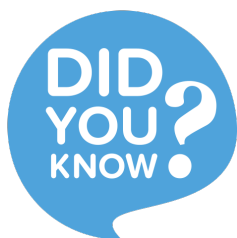
What is the post of notary-auditor about? It's an opportunity for the laity to assist Catholics and others not in full communion with the Church to examine the circumstances of their marriage and determine if full communion is even possible. Each case requires documents, witnesses, and a hearing as to the state of mind of both parties and their commitment to each other and the sacrament of marriage at the time they married.

Sharon Yanchus responded to my invitation to consider this ministry. She and I, both independently and together, spent time discerning our respective positions in life to determine if a transition were possible. Sharon is a busy grandmother, traveler, and a volunteer. I have been serving as a notary-auditor for over thirty years, aware that a long-term commitment and tenure was not in the best interest of the parish.

Sharon recently completed the on-line course on canon law and the local practice of the Peoria Diocese. Canon law is the basic underpinning for the Office of the Tribunal. Having been a petitioner herself, Sharon understands the healing power and grace of the process, while fully respecting the position of all parties involved, and the desire of those wanting to regulate their marital situation in the Catholic Church.

Sharon is a very compassionate listener and asks insightful questions. She has observed me conduct interviews, and I have observed her conduct interviews. She has been very open to debriefings, self-evaluation, and feedback. She is able to think through difficult situations, pick up on small, sometimes casual cues, and never forgets that the entire process is designed to be a healing moment as much as a legal requirement for those seeking full communion with the Church.

Already Sharon is at work on her first case. She will do fine.



Fr. Louis O'Connor, pastor in 1919, showed his appreciation to the altar servers by taking them to the circus or the Wild West Show when these came to town.



Q: When I was in the hospital recently, a deacon brought me Holy Communion, but when I asked him to anoint me with the sacrament of the sick, he said he was not able to do that. What is the role of a deacon in the Church?

A: The term "deacon" comes from the Greek "diakonia," meaning "service" or "ministry." In the New Testament (Acts, 6:1–6), seven men were appointed to oversee the distribution of food to widows, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and teaching the Word of God. This established the principle that deacons serve the Church by addressing practical and organizational needs while spiritual leaders focus on preaching and teaching.

None of the responsibilities of deacons is rigidly defined. You will have seen deacons who are at their very best while assisting the priest at Mass, others who live out the role of a deacon today much as the first deacons did, addressing the needs of the people.

As for assisting with the sacramental needs of the parish, deacons may prepare the faithful to receive the sacraments, and they may be authorized to preach, teach, and give spiritual guidance. They may baptize, witness marriages, and preside at funerals. But they may not confirm, give absolution from sin, administer the sacrament of the sick, or preside at Mass – these responsibilities are reserved to those ordained to the priesthood.

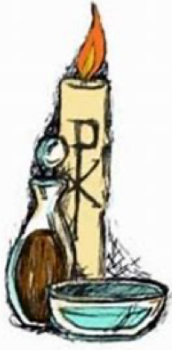
Deacons may be married when ordained but may not remarry if their spouse dies. And ordination leaves a permanent mark on their soul – they remain deacons even if they no longer practice the ministry of a deacon.

You've seen our deacons at work in many ways. Ordained by the Bishop of Peoria to serve in their home parish (St. Patrick's), our deacons have prepared parishioners to receive the sacraments, baptized infants and adults, given Holy Communion, presided at marriages and funerals (though not at funeral Masses), planned special services (e.g., communal penance service), assisted the pastor in any way he requested, and proclaimed the Gospel. They have preached at Mass, assisted the presiding priest, served those in special need (food, clothing, shelter, job search), and done so much more!

Give thanks for our deacons — we are so blessed to have them!

Lord, I want to go where you want me to go, do what you want me to do, be what you want me to be. I love you!

—Marian Wright Edelman



Baptism at St. Patrick

We welcome the following into our faith community:

Evelyn Rose Ely, baptized February 8, whose parents are Ben Ely and Genevieve (Harrington) Ely

Lowie Nguyen, baptized February 15, whose parents are Trieu Van Nguyen and Trang This Huyen Tang

Let us celebrate their baptism with **Evelyn and Lowie**.

It is the sacrament by which they and we have become adopted sons and daughters of God!

Baptism preparation class is offered at St. Patrick at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month or by appointment. Parents, godparents, and all are welcome.

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.

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Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Patric Cosby



Here's the winning recipe from the Chili Cookoff fundraiser, March 2026. Try it!

Spicy Chili

- 1/2 t ground cayenne pepper
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium onion or 2 t onion powder (or both!)
- 3 T chili powder
- 2 t ground cumin
- 1 T ground black pepper
- 2 t paprika
- 1 t oregano
- 1/2 t red pepper flakes
- 4 cans seasoned (or unseasoned) chili beans
- 4 cans diced tomatoes
- 3 sliced fresh jalapenos (include seeds, the winning ingredient)

Brown beef in a skillet. Drain off the fat. Transfer to a slow cooker or stove top. Add all other ingredients on top. Cook for four hours in slow cooker or simmer four hours on low on stove top. Stir occasionally. Serve with shredded cheddar or Mexican cheese and sour cream if desired. And enjoy!

*

Do you have a favorite quick and easy recipe to share? Maybe something your family and friends really enjoy? Please send it to Mary Lou Menches (mmenches@illinois.edu) – our readers are always looking for that great addition to a meal!



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