

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

July-August 2026

Looking back, looking forward

*Because of our parish anniversary, readers of *In Focus* have been reliving some of the stories of our past. When you look back, what do you see? You see that we had the people we needed throughout our history. We had Fr. Cannon when we needed a real go-getter to pull a*



community together and begin our rhythm of life and worship together. At times we needed people to care for our neighbors in need, or to step up to a critical need, or to care for our facilities, or to plan for the future. We needed people to welcome newcomers, to comfort those in trouble, to care for the sick and the lonely. We needed people to lead our liturgies, or to share their faith, or to bring us together in times of joy and times of sorrow.

God has given us the people we need, clergy, staff, parishioners, and neighbors. God has been with us in times of change to help us discern the needs around us and how we might meet them. God has given us people with energy, talent, a desire to come together, and a willingness to serve. God has been with us in Word and in Sacrament, teaching us how to live and giving us the

strength to live out our faith. God, who is love, has helped us to love one another. There's much here to be grateful for!

When you look back over your own life, who are the people that you see? Who was with you at important times in your life? Who provided insight when you needed to make a decision, or comfort in difficult times, or love when you were feeling

unlovable? Who helped you avoid a mistake, or helped you rebuild after making one? Who provided for your everyday needs or food, home, and companionship? Who taught you about God and modeled for you a life of vibrant faith?

It's amazing, when you think of it, how many people have influenced us. It's amazing how many influences we need, different at different times of our lives, to grow, and thrive, and become who we are. Our lives are God's gift to us. The many people who touch us are God's gifts. The circumstances, challenges, and influences in our lives are God's gifts. By making us people who need to live in community, sharing our lives with each other, God has given us to each other.

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A new seminarian!

One of our young people, Charlie Polonus, has decided to study for the priesthood. Fr. Anthony interviewed him:

Could you give us an introduction to who you are?

Hello! My name is Charlie Polonus. I'm a 22-year-old from Sidney, Illinois, and I'm currently in the process of preparing to start seminary this coming August. I grew up in Champaign County, where I first knew St. Patrick as my home parish. Soon after, my family moved out further into the country before moving back in 2020, where we resumed going to St. Patrick. I attended Bradley University in Peoria, majoring in game design and



graduating in Spring 2025. After graduating, I moved to South Bend, Indiana, where I worked as an AV/IT Specialist at St. Pius X Catholic Church. Now, a year later, I've made the decision to study to

See **A new seminarian!** on p. 3

Women of St. Patrick updates

May 16-17 was a busy weekend for The Women of St. Patrick, with their summer potluck and meeting for the membership on Saturday, and an afternoon movie the following day. Also, the annual Cellar to Garret parish rummage sale is moving ahead, with much planning and many volunteers needed to make this event a success.

pilgrimage in March; the group celebrated Mass in the crypt of the church where Gaudi is buried.

The annual Cellar to Garret sale will take place this year on August 6-8, with set-up on Sunday, July 26. Many volunteers are needed to help make this event a continued success and a great service to the community! More information on volunteer opportunities will be forthcoming, but in particular, July 26 and August 8 are busy days for set-up and tear-down. Families with teens

are welcome to participate, and sheets for students who need community service hours will be signed. During the week of July 27-31, helpers are needed throughout the day to receive, sort, and organize donations. The co-chairs of Cellar to Garret are Anna Connor and Bernadette Nelson. This is a great opportunity to meet new people!

On Sunday, May 17, the movie shown was "I am Patrick: The Patron Saint of Ireland." Several scholars address the historical Patrick, his writings, and what is known about him, and reenactments show his experiences as a captive

slave and a rising young clergyman who brings the Gospel to Ireland. WSP plans to continue bimonthly movie offerings; the next movie is scheduled for July 19.

For questions about The Women of St. Patrick and its ministries, please contact Roxanne Munch (Roxanne_munch@sbcglobal.net).

Last Year's Cellar to Garret Sale



The summer salad and dessert potluck was held on a Saturday evening, after Mass on May 16, as an experiment in trying different gathering times to encourage more participation. They were happy to see some new faces, and hope for continued growth of the group. Participants enjoyed a delicious variety of salads and desserts, which was followed by a brief business meeting, its emphasis on the upcoming Cellar to Garret sale.

Roxanne Munch gave a presentation on Sagrada Familia, the beautiful cathedral in Barcelona, Spain, and its architect, Antoni Gaudi. In March, the cross on the top of the Jesus Christ Tower was placed, and the cathedral is now the tallest in the world. On June 10, Pope Leo XIV visited the cathedral to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Gaudi's death. Gaudi was declared Venerable in 2025 and is on the path to sainthood. Roxanne was fortunate to visit Sagrada Familia on a

Master Shepherd,
tend my thoughts
as if they were your sheep.
Shelter them from wolves
of envy, anger, greed, regret.
Your presence
is their safety net.

—Ruth R. Rains

Looking back

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There is much here to be grateful for! And there is a great deal of challenge too, because we need to share what we have. If you have had good role models, be a good role model. If you have had good companions in the love of God, be one. You have received the love of God; share that love. If someone has taught you how to cook or crochet, rake or repair, make music or make celebrations, do the same for others. This is how God helps us grow, both as individuals and as a parish community. Blessed be God!

another step toward being who God is calling me to be. Pray for me that I may trust Him more fully, ridding myself of worries and fears as St. Paul tells us: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God" (Philippians 4:6). Pray for me and know that I will be praying for all of you!

Fr. Anthony adds: Please pray for Charlie as he begins this new adventure. Discernment is about trying, and we are grateful to God that he is trying one year of seminary. Also, if you'd like to help with some of Charlie's seminary expenses (cassock, surplice, gas money, etc.), kindly place a note on your donation "For Charlie's seminary costs."

A new seminarian!

from page 1

become a diocesan priest for the Diocese of Peoria, if that be God's will for me. Please pray for me as I embark on this journey!

What does your first year of seminary look like as far as you know?

The first year of seminary is what is known as the Propaedeutic Year, which is a special period of formation and preparation for the kind of life that I would experience the rest of my time in seminary and, God willing, my life as a diocesan priest. I will spend this year alongside other first-year seminarians from across multiple Illinois dioceses, living out a life of prayer and charity through participating in daily Mass, serving local organizations, and enjoying many opportunities for silence and reflection. We will also spend time learning more about the Catholic faith by reading Scripture, the Catechism, and Vatican II. The USCCB describes the Propaedeutic Year as "...introductory in nature, but also intensive through its focus on significant times of growth in prayer, trust, and fraternity." This first year will help me shift my focus from the things of this world to the things of heaven, reordering my life with God at the forefront so I'm ready for wherever He leads me.

How can the parish pray for you?

You can assist me on this journey by praying for the Holy Spirit to guide me through these coming years and to bestow upon me the gifts of patience and faith. Discernment of any kind requires faith in God to trust that He'll show you where He desires you to go, and patience to know that He'll do so in His time, not yours. My accepting the invitation from God to join the seminary is not the end of the journey, but simply

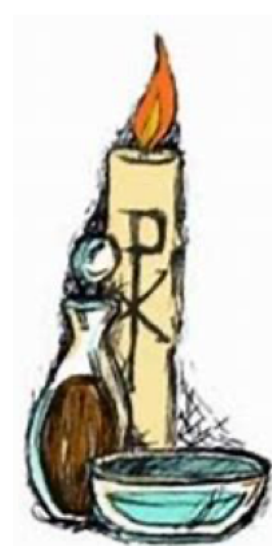
Baptisms at St. Patrick's

We welcome the following into our faith community:

Vo Thi Anh (Anna) Thi, baptized May 25, whose parents are Vo Cong Thuan and Tran Thi Huong

Ivy (Maria) Nguyen, baptized May 25, whose parents are Dung Van Nguyen and Hang Thi Vuong

Owen John Deeke, baptized June 13, whose parents are Alexander and Julie Deeke



Leylani Ventura Mendez

baptized June 14, whose parents are Kayla Mendez and Cristian Ventura Lopez

We celebrate their baptisms, for this 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 except July, or by appointment. Parents, godparents, and all are welcome.

In my little way everything is most ordinary, for all I do must likewise be within everyone's reach.

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Life-saving Narcan now available in the food pantry

St. Patrick's St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry has tried to provide health-related resources to our guests whenever possible. Over the years, we have occasionally had opportunities to offer services ranging from flu shots to cooking classes to dental clinics.



In light of the decades-long epidemic of opioid addiction and deaths from opioid overdoses in the U.S., the food pantry recently began stocking Narcan, a drug that can save the life of a person who is experiencing an opioid overdose. Although food pantry volunteers have not experienced anyone overdosing at the pantry, they felt that this would be a good addition to the supplies available to pantry guests, as well as St. Patrick's parishioners.

Narcan is a nasal spray that is administered during an opioid overdose. Its main ingredient,

Naloxone, binds the same receptors in the brain, reversing the effects of the opioid overdose in 2-3 minutes. Administration of Narcan quickly during an opioid overdose can save a life.

The American Medical Association estimates that tens of thousands of lives may have been saved in the recent years since Narcan became more widely available, and available for use by not only emergency responders but by anyone addicted to opioids or who might encounter someone who is overdosing. In fact, the AMA recommends that schools, educational settings, and public businesses be encouraged to have Narcan/Naloxone on their

premises. (It should be noted that Narcan/Naloxone does not work for non-opioid overdoses.)

With the help of parish nurse Roxanne Lowry, David King (former Community Outreach Manager at Carle Health) did a wonderful presentation to the parish staff and pantry volunteers on administering Narcan. He shared experiences that illustrated how important it is to have Narcan available to those in our community who struggle with addiction, as well as to their family and friends.

David also emphasized the importance of treating those in need of help with respect and keeping an open, positive line of communication with all involved – something our food pantry volunteers already strive to do in encounters with our guests.

Parish staff and pantry volunteers were given the simple directions and limited precautions for use of Narcan. It is easy to administer, but calling 911 is also an important part of the process. Although Narcan truly is a lifesaver in the moment, most people experiencing an opioid overdose will require subsequent medical help.

The pantry now has several cases of Narcan to keep handy and to distribute to anyone who feels a need to have it on hand, both guests and parishioners. Narcan kits are also available from the C-U Public Health Department (c-uphd.org/narcan.html, 217-531-5365).

Food Pantry Coordinator Sally Czapar says, "While we have not experienced an overdose at the pantry, we are grateful that we are now educated and prepared. If you know of someone who may need this help, contact a staff member or stop by the food pantry. No questions asked!"

It is not enough to be good. It is not enough to not do evil. My Christianity is something more positive; it is not a negative. There are many who say, "But I don't kill. I don't steal. I don't do anything bad to anyone." That's not enough. You are still lacking a great deal.

—St. Oscar Romero

Jesus' grandparents, Sts. Joachim and Anne

St. Joachim was, according to Christian tradition, the husband of St. Anne, the father of Mary and grandfather of Jesus. Joachim and Anne are believed to have lived in Palestine around 1 B.C. The Bible does not mention them by name, but the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James (dating back to about A.D. 150) provides details about their lives.



Joachim was born in 75 B.C., and Anne sometime before 49 B.C. The couple was wealthy and devout, but despite their piety, they were childless. The couple's childlessness was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure. Joachim consequently withdrew to

the desert, where he fasted and did penance for 40 days. Finally, an angel appeared to each of them separately and announced that Anne would conceive. She gave birth to a girl they named Mary. Anne had promised God that her child would serve him, so they brought Mary to the Temple of Jerusalem at age 3.

Joachim and Anne are considered the patron saints of grandparents. Joachim is also the patron saint of fathers, grandfathers, married couples, cabinet makers, and linen traders.

Anne is the patron of unmarried women, housewives, women in labor or who want to be pregnant, grandmothers, mothers, and educators. She is also, curiously, a patron of horseback riders, cabinet-makers, and miners.

Symbols associated with St. Joachim include a book or scroll representing linen makers, a shepherd's staff for the Christian Word, and a basket of doves representing peace. St. Anne's attributes are traditionally an open book representing the scriptures; a lily symbolizing purity; and a nest of young birds symbolizing nurturing and protection.

Joachim died in 18 B.C., and it is believed that Anne died around A.D. 12. They share a feast day, July 26.

Parish Council News

At their May meeting, Parish Council members first reviewed plans for the anniversary celebration of the May 24 dedication of St. Patrick's. Then they moved on to plans for the July 18 celebration of the parish's 125th anniversary.

The multilingual Mass program will probably be printed here, allowing a little more time to determine what to include in a brief four-page history of the parish during the last 25 years. Members also discussed setting up a display of historical items (perhaps chalices, baptismal font, artist's preliminary renderings for "The Rising Christ," etc.) in a mini-museum, possibly in the Lounge. And a commemorative cake will be ordered from Schnucks.

Following an earlier consideration of adding to the Council's membership by inviting five ministry coordinators to serve a one-year term on the Council, members approved a letter of invitation to be sent.

Parish Council officers for the coming year were elected unanimously: Frank Rosser, president, and Kathy Cimasky, vice-president.

A suggestion to change the day and/or time of the Council's monthly meeting was tabled until after new members are seated.



As for you, dear Reader, have you never thought to serve your parish as a member of the Council? "Now is an acceptable time, . . ."

At once I believed that there was a God; I understood that I could not do anything other than live only for him.

—Charles de Foucauld

WSP Bunco: Fun for everyone!

The Women of St. Patrick have been sponsoring Bunco game nights on alternating months for the past year and plan to continue these popular and fun-filled evenings. These game nights have been open to all men and women over eighteen, and plans are in the works for family events as well. Game night is free, but participants are asked to bring items for the potluck.



Bunco is a simple dice game played in teams of four and based on rolling specific sets of numbers until a specific score is achieved. Jill Slack of the WSP Board coordinates game

nights and explains the basic rules every time the games begin, so beginners catch on quickly. Since team members rotate after each game, plenty of opportunities to make friends and share in the fun help everyone to experience the good times. Typically, we play two rounds of six games, and everyone keeps score for prizes at the end of the evening.

Currently, the Bunco games have taken place on Saturdays after Mass at 5:15, beginning with a casual potluck supper. Both Fr. Anthony and Fr. John have visited and given the blessing, though they haven't stayed yet to gamble! We did convince Fr. Anthony to stay and eat at the April session.

At the end of the games, people tally their scores and receive a variety of door prizes, both for the biggest winners and losers!

Come join in the fun! Some Bunco dates are for the entire family; some are for ladies only; and some are for both ladies and gents. Put these dates on your calendar and watch the bulletin for additional details.

Questions? Contact Jill Slack (260-585-9579, jill.s.slack@gmail.com).

Upcoming games:

Aug. 22, 2026 - Ladies Bunco
Oct. 17, 2026 - Adult Bunco
Dec. 12, 2026 - Ladies Bunco
Feb. 7, 2027 - Family Bunco
Apr. 4, 2027 - Adult Bunco
Jun. 12, 2027 - Ladies Bunco

More movies to come

WSP movies dates and titles are a work in progress. Plans are for movies to alternate with the months that Bunco is featured. Watch for notices of dates and details. The movie "Becket" will be shown in July.

"Becket" is a 1964 historical drama. It chronicles the friendship and eventual tragic conflict between King Henry II of England and his close friend, Thomas Becket, spanning from Becket's time as Chancellor to his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury.

In the fall, WSP will offer a family-oriented animated film, either "Prince of Egypt" or "David."

Body language

It is said that in the first 5-10 seconds of meeting someone, we know what kind of a person we are meeting. How? Body language. It says a lot about who we are and our attitude.

Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments for us into two: Love of God and love of neighbor. How do we show our love? Are we open to greeting others around us or do we want to be left alone? Are we happy to be at Mass or are we just putting in our time? Do people see joy in us as Christians? Do people encounter Christ when they encounter us?



St. Patrick prayed the wonderful prayer that includes "Christ be before me, Christ behind me, Christ over me, Christ within me, Christ all around me." Let us be Christ and his love that others may encounter him through us.

It was not you who chose me,

It was I who chose you

To go forth and bear fruit.

Your fruit must endure,

So that all you ask the Father in my name

He will give you.

-John 15:16

Conference on the Great Commission

On May 13, The Augustine Institute offered a day of formation for parish leaders at the Blanchette Center in Joliet, Illinois. The information came to leaders of various ministries at St. Patrick, and Roxanne Munch was fortunate to be able to attend this very informative and rewarding opportunity. The presenters were dynamic and enthusiastic, and the program offered plenty of moments for interaction and participation.

The mission of the Augustine Institute is to “Understand, Live, and Share Your Faith.” The program was filled with practical suggestions for parishes to move forward with evangelization. The Institute itself is located in Florissant, Mo., and offers on-site training and degree programs. The main presenter was a former Carthusian monk named Austin Habash, who recently joined the Augustinians to bring people closer to God.

The Great Commission comes from the Gospel of Matthew: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). Evangelization is one of the missions of Bishop Tylka and the Diocese of Peoria, as it is for Catholics throughout the United States.

Austin Habash provided current data and historical evidence for the current challenges faced by the Catholic Church in reaching lapsed, current, and potential Catholics. His practical suggestions to address the situation include offering at least two major parish events each year, a door-to-door campaign to reach the parish neighborhood, postcards with special parish events or holiday schedules, or eye-catching information. The take-away for his suggestions is that the path to conversion is conversation and community. In fact, after the session on May 13, a group of Joliet participants went right out to knock on doors and meet the neighborhood.

The leaders of this conference are available to hold formation sessions and provide guidance if parishes are interested. Roxanne left her contact information and has since received an email from Nick LaBlanca, one of the leaders, asking how we are doing and how he can help. She is hoping the conversation can continue at St. Patrick. For further questions and information about this conference, please contact Roxanne Munch (Roxanne_munch@sbcglobal.net).



Q: Q: St. Patrick's had pew rentals? Really?

A: Yes indeed. Pew rent got its start in the fifteenth century, and it was still a common practice at the time our church was built. It was a

necessary means of funding church maintenance and other parish expenses.

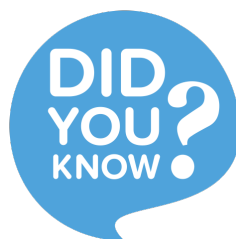
A family paid a yearly fee for a pew and thereafter was the only user of that pew. On the arm of the pew was a metal tag with a number that corresponded to the family's church envelope.

For the first and only time, in 1932 a house-to-house collection was taken up to be used as parish income, supplementing income from fundraisers and Sunday collections.

In 1935, pew rent was discontinued at St. Patrick's, and while fundraisers still provide some needed income, the funding of maintenance, programs, and other parish expenses primarily comes from weekly collections.

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



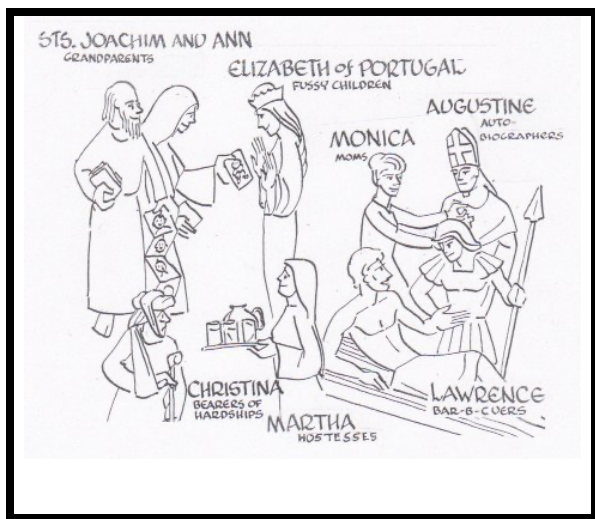
Fr. Cannon once announced that youngsters misbehaving during Mass would find themselves hanging from the rafters. The young parish was reputed to have the best-behaved children in Urbana!

* * *

Who won Tom Kacich's parish history quiz? Cathy Salika, that's who – she answered every question accurately. Her prize? Lunch with Fr. Anthony.

July-August Saints

By Fr. Frank Wuellner



Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Lenore Nagele

Spaghetti Pie

- 7 oz pkg spaghetti
- 2 T butter
- 1/3 c grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 1 c cottage cheese
- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1/2 c chopped onion
- 1/4 c diced green pepper
- 15 oz jar (or your own) spaghetti sauce
- 1/2 c shredded mozzarella cheese



Sauté ground beef, onions, and green pepper. Skim off fat and add spaghetti sauce. Cook spaghetti as directed on package, and drain. Mix butter, eggs, and Parmesan cheese, pour over spaghetti, and mix well. Put spaghetti mixture in pie pan, making an indentation in the center. Put cottage cheese on spaghetti, and pour spaghetti sauce over all, lightly covering edges of the spaghetti. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes, or until bubbly. Remove from oven, sprinkle with mozzarella cheese, and return to oven for about 5 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

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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!

July-August 2026



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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Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (September) is **Sunday, August 9.**