

# On Eagle's Wings

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church  
January / February 2016



## From the Pastor

Happy New Year! Here we are, beginning 2016. I just got used to writing 2015 on my checks, so I guess I have to get caught up. For most people, Christmas has been long gone for some time now. The family has come and gone for the big holiday feast, college students can't wait to get back to school and students in grade school and high school wonder how two weeks could move so quickly. They're all hoping that the New Year will bring lots of snow days. I used to love those days when I was a teacher. These days, when snow storms come, I wonder if our budget can cover the snow removal. And now, stores have moved on to Valentine's Day merchandise, displaying all the things needed to make that day perfect. Thanks, Hallmark. And, there still is time to buy Christmas decorations marked down 70%. I apologize; I do tend to be a bit sarcastic about the holidays and the material side of things.

I am not very good at setting New Year's resolutions. They start out well, but somehow they seem to fade quickly. They become like gym memberships for many. The places are booming in the beginning of January, but by early February they are back to being ghost towns. For the last couple of years, I have joked that my New Year's resolution was to get up every morning. For the last six years, I have proclaimed that I have succeeded. That is not a very positive outlook on the New Year, nor is it all that challenging.

This year, I want to be more Christ-Centered. I truly love the Eucharist and all that it means to me. I try to never miss an opportunity to speak about the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist in the homilies that I give. But I think it is time to put more of that into action in my own daily life. It's easy to get caught up in the daily routines and miss opportunities to share Christ with others. However, it's the little things that matter. It's in the ordinary fabric of the day that you and I need to encounter Jesus in one another. I'm sure there will be shortfalls, but focusing on making the Eucharist real beyond the liturgy is so very important.

So what about you in this New Year? Have you got something special planned for 2016? When thinking about the resolution you want to work on, make sure it is life-giving. Make sure that your New Year is Christ-Centered. God has given us so much and blessed us with his Son; let us show our gratitude in good will towards others. Being Christ to one another is the best way we can show our gratitude. In this year of Mercy, let us remember the times that the Lord has showed us mercy and compassion and pay it forward to others. Be compassionate as the Father is compassionate. Happy New Year! Have a great month!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don West'.

Father Don West  
Pastor

# From the Business Manager



Happy New Year! We have so many things we were blessed with this past year at St. John. We did our first “Night of Giving” event in October and sent hundreds of gifts to several local organizations. We had a great festival (more on that later) and we celebrated Father Don’s 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee. We had fundraisers, sent school supplies, food and gifts to our sister parishes and did so many great things for our community. We really work together to create blessings for others. Our parishioners are truly blessings for me and I feel blessed to work for you. Thank you for another tremendous year.

We are entering into a new year according to the calendar, but we are at the halfway point according to our fiscal year calendar. At this point in the year, we are usually celebrating being “in the black” in terms of our offertory income. The past few months have been especially slow in weekly giving. So, if you could prayerfully consider an increase in your weekly offerings in 2016, we would be so thankful. If you can’t afford an increase, continue to pray for our parish. Praying for each other is so important!

Our final festival numbers are in and our net income was the best we’ve recorded in the past five years. Our net profit was \$170,000! This is such great news for our parish. Because we budget for \$100,000 in income from our festival, this actual net income is a true blessing. Of course, with our current weekly offerings lower this year than in years past, we need this festival income. We used \$5,000 of festival money to put new, brighter and more efficient lighting around the parking lot and exteriors of some of our buildings. Thank you to everyone who served on the festival committee, as a booth captain, as a volunteer or baker! Your service means the world to our parish. We are blessed by your time and talent.

We want to give thanks to those parishioners who are able to share their gift of treasure with our parish. If you are interested in setting up your regular contributions electronically, it is easy to do. Just click on “Donate/Payment” button on our website and follow the instructions. As always, if you ever have questions about giving, I am available via phone, e-mail or in person!

Have a blessed 2016! I continually pray for our parishioners. At this time of the year, I add some special prayers for those who are heading into a new year without a loved one by their side. Please keep our parishioners who have lost a friend or family member this past year in your prayers as well. Be Christ to One Another!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan', located above the printed name.

Joan Seibenick  
Business Manager



# Cleansing Your Spiritual Palate

If you've ever been to a fancy wedding or an elaborate dinner party, you may have seen firsthand the art of what is called cleansing the palate. If you haven't experienced it firsthand, you may have heard of it. Palate cleansing is used to neutralize your taste buds between courses of food. Cleansing your palate can enhance your culinary experience by leaving you to remember the pleasurable course or beverage you just had, while at the same time giving you a clean slate to accentuate your next one. Lemon or lime sorbet is quite often used as a cleanser. The sorbet certainly has a wonderful flavor, refreshing taste and experience all on its own. Nonetheless, the point of it is to give you the opportunity to stop and enjoy what you had received and gear you up for the coming attraction.

January 10 marks the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord and the end of the Christmas season. We certainly do hope everyone had a blessed Christmas and New Year's celebration and that it was wonderful and memorable for all. But, guess what? February 10 marks the beginning of Lent! Yes, Lent! We come out of the Christmas season and within a short month we celebrate Ash Wednesday and begin the season of Lent. How in the world do we give ourselves the opportunity to joyously absorb all that took place during the holiday season, take a breath or two, embrace the present moment, and then jump into the next?

Cleanse your spiritual palate. Take the little time we have between these two big seasons to remember and thank the Lord for the pleasurable moments you had. At the same time, take a deep breath and cleanse your palate. Enjoy the present moment with its own wonderful flavor and experience, and rise anew in Christ, ready for what's to come. The remaining days of January and beginning of February can symbolize a sense of peace and a time to spiritually absorb everything. It can re-freshen and enliven you.

So, have some sorbet! See this as an opportunity to joyously cleanse your spiritual palate and embrace where you are with the Lord. Make this a special time with just you and Him. That way, you will be ready when the next course is set before you, the season of Lent.

**Scott**

Scott Steinke

Pastoral Associate of Liturgical Ministry

# Lent: A Chance to be Happy

According to Theologian Bishop Robert Barron, St. Thomas Aquinas identified four things on this earth that we usually pursue on our quest for happiness in place of God: Wealth, Pleasure, Power, and/or Honor.

**Wealth:** Who hasn't fantasized about being awarded the Mega Millions prize? It would mean no more debt, an immediate retirement, nice family vacations, and long-term financial security. Of course, there are some sad stories of lottery winners that end up with the opposite: broken marriages and/or relationships, and oddly enough, penniless. On a much smaller scale, all of us have learned that the excitement gained from buying a new car or a bigger TV is short-lived. Jesus' words ring true: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroys, and thieves break in and steal, but store up treasures in heaven... where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." (Matt. 6: 19 – 21) In the end, more things will not buy us more happiness.

**Pleasure:** We know from our own celebration of the recent holidays that overindulgence does not ultimately lead to happiness. After the parties we attended, we were likely stuffed to the brim with holiday food. Clearly, our pursuit of pleasure does not bring about lasting fulfillment and if it is a constant pursuit, it can become a false idol.

**Power:** As voters, we watch the current political races and we evaluate the candidates. Part of our assessment is wondering about the character of each candidate. Is he or she on a "power trip"? Are they motivated by gaining a position of authority to meet their own ego needs, or are they ultimately concerned about serving our country? In our own little worlds, what place does power have in our lives, and how do we exercise it? We may not be a manager or a CEO, but all of us have been in a position of power as a customer in a store. If a company has given us bad service or a defective product, do we see this as license to get angry at the store clerk? I have, at times, been guilty of this myself, and I felt horrible afterwards. I let my ill temper get the best of me. It seems that power for power's sake is not the road to happiness, either.

**Honor:** The comedian Rodney Dangerfield always complained about not getting respect. He quipped that he walked into a McDonald's restaurant and they told him, "You don't deserve a break today." Sometimes we can be offended all too easily. We can get puffed up with pride and our own importance, and we face a humbling experience that quickly deflates our over-sized egos. As Pope Francis so eloquently exhibits every day, true honor is not about our position in life, but rather about putting others first. If we pursue the former for glory, we will forever be disappointed.

The upcoming penitential season of Lent affords us precious time to take a hard look at our own moral character and hopefully discover areas for growth. What are we chasing after that ultimately will not lead to spiritual fulfillment? With the help of God's grace, we can discern what our false gods are, and hopefully we can find ways to purge them. As it says in the RCIA's Second Scrutiny Rite, "may we be freed from the false values that surround and blind us, set us firmly in your truth, children of light forever." Amen.



Jerry Barney  
Deacon

# Subtraction by Addition: Making the Most of your Lenten Promise



When I was younger, I was not a fan of Lent. It represented six weeks of not eating chocolate, skipping out on soft drinks, or covering my mouth after accidentally slipping out an “Alleluia”. Obviously as I grew older, I recognized that Lent was about much more than giving up something I liked. It’s about recognizing Jesus’ sacrifice by making smaller ones of our own. It’s also about becoming more like Christ and removing ourselves from sin. They have a saying, “addition by subtraction” when talking about a negative influence in our lives. Lately, during Lent, I’ve been doing the opposite: “subtraction by addition”.

Now during Lent, I try to add something positive to my life. When I used to give up junk food because of how I wanted to look at Spring break, I’ve now decided to make Lent about becoming someone better, someone more like Jesus. That’s why I add something positive to my life rather than subtracting.

For example, one year I tried to give at least one person a genuine compliment every day. This sounds simple, but it’s so easy to get wrapped up in our own little worlds that we forget even the tiniest acts of kindness can inspire, uplift and make anyone’s day! By doing this, I was able to cut out negative thoughts about people by trying to find the good in them. Another year, I kept a journal and wrote down 10 things to thank God for in that day. This prevented me from complaining about things in my life and to make the most out of negative situations.

Simple things like this not only make you feel good, but they help others and promote a positive relationship with God during a time when we are supposed to be prayerfully reminded of Jesus’ sacrifice. Offering up a quick prayer of thanks for something that we might normally take for granted is a huge step toward becoming more Christ-like. It’s something that I’ve gotten into the habit of doing ever since I practiced it during Lent.

Becoming a better person doesn’t only have to be during Lent – It should really last all year long. However, starting a small tradition during Lent to honor Jesus’ sacrifice is a great way to instill good habits within ourselves that can last a lifetime. Lent is about sacrifice. What better way to honor Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice than to become more like him? This Lent, try to not only make a sacrifice of subtraction, but channel Jesus’ love and make an addition to the world with your own light.

*Angela*

Angela Pugliano  
Pastoral Associate of Communications

# Catholic Schools Week and Registration for 2016-2017 School Year



*Update from St. Gabriel*

*Consolidated School*

**By: Nicole Brainard, Principal**

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts on the last Sunday in January and runs all through the week of January 31 - February 6. The theme for this year's National Catholic Schools Week is, "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." On behalf of the faculty, staff and students of St. Gabriel Consolidated School, I would like to wish the St. John Parish Community a very happy Catholic Schools Week!

We invite each St. John's family to join the St. Gabriel Consolidated School Community for two information gathering opportunities regarding the upcoming 2016-2017 school year. Whether your family has a Kindergartner ready to begin their Catholic school experience or you are thinking about transferring a student to St. Gabriel from another elementary school, these events are great ways to learn more about what St. Gabriel Consolidated School has to offer.

On **Saturday, January 30 and Sunday, January 31**, our nationally recognized school of excellence will be on display in the gathering space at St. John, West Chester as part of Catholic Schools Week. All visitors will have the opportunity to interact with our students and members of our outstanding St. Gabriel faculty, ask questions regarding your parish school, and gather printed information.

On **Wednesday evening, February 3**, St. Gabriel will host our annual Open House beginning at 6:30 p.m. Visitors will have the opportunity to view student work, speak with teachers about our innovative grade level programs and interact with parents and representatives of our various organizations which include: PTO, Athletic Boosters, Advisory Commission and Scouting programs.

Parish registration for current and new families begins on **January 17** and concludes at 3:00 p.m. on February 12. Please contact Mrs. Sherie Brickner at 771-5220 for additional information or to schedule a tour of the school.

The community of St. Gabriel Consolidated School is dedicated to nurturing the faith, academic and service lives of our students with an emphasis on educating the whole child. Come and discover what St. Gabriel can offer to your family.

# St. John the Evangelist Calendar of Events January / February 2016

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Solemnity of Mary  
*Office closed*  
**Jan. 1**

Ash Wednesday & Ash  
Wednesday Enevelope  
**Feb. 10**

Epiphany  
**Jan. 3**

Stations of the Cross  
Fish Fry  
**Feb. 12**

Reach Out Mission Collection  
**Jan. 9-10**

Valentine's Day  
**Feb. 14**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
*Office closed*  
**Jan. 18**

President's Day  
*Office closed*  
**Feb. 15**

CRHP Weekend Retreat  
(women)  
**Jan. 23-24**

Stations of the Cross  
Fish Fry  
**Feb. 19**

CRHP Weekend  
Retreat (men)  
**Jan. 30-31**

Stations of the Cross  
Fish Fry  
**Feb. 26**

**Don't forget to sign up for Confirmation  
by Friday, January 22!**

Contact Josh Plandowski at  
[jplandowski@stjohnnwc.org](mailto:jplandowski@stjohnnwc.org).



## Christ Renews His Parish

Women's Weekend:

January 23-24, 2016

Men's Weekend:

January 30-31, 2016

Christ  
Renews  
His Parish



If you haven't already, please consider becoming a part of the Christ Renews His Parish Retreat. CRHP is a program to bring members of the parish community together in Christ. You may call the invitation coordinator, or Scott Steinke, Program Coordinator at the following telephone numbers: Lori Fehr (Women's Invitation Coordinator) 503-7127, Joe Cini (Men's Invitation Coordinator) 505-3534, Scott Steinke (Program Coordinator) 777-6433 Ext. 115.

## *Our Prayers and Sympathy go out to...*

- Joyce Risch on the death of her husband Ray Risch
- Judy Horne on the death of her father
- Beth Andrews on the death of her mother
- Kevin Kroeger on the death of his mother
- Rosemary Gebhart on the death of her mother
- Susan & Steven Ashford on the death of their son Isaac Ashford and to Abigail and Joseph on the death of their brother
- The Freson family on the death of Carol Freson
- Jerry Nelson on the death of his brother
- Dawn Newsted on the death of her husband Rich Newsted
- Connie Miller on the death of her sister
  - The Hauser family of the death of Elsie Hauser
  - The Knights of Columbus on the death of their brother Mike Purcell
- Bill McLaughlin, on the death of his mother

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

(513)777-6433



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