

On Eagle's Wings

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
March / April 2016



From the Pastor

Whenever I think of Easter, I am always drawn to the most wonderful liturgy in the liturgical year: the Easter Vigil. Even before I became a priest I loved being a part of the liturgy and once I was ordained, I looked forward to it even more. In my assignment at St. Henry in Dayton, I always sang the Exultet because no one else really wanted to. It was such a beautiful piece to sing with the choir. Since the new Roman missal, it just isn't the same. But the Easter Vigil is still my favorite Church celebration.

The night of the Vigil is so special. You can see the excitement of the people preparing to enter the Church with the Sacraments of Initiation. Soon, the Church fills with the joy of the resurrection: salvation for the whole Church. The night begins in darkness, then the new fire is blessed and the Paschal Candle draws light into the Church. Once prepared, the procession begins with a single light of the Christ Candle. As it makes its way into the Church, the Candle is lowered so that all may take from the new light. As the Paschal Candle is placed in the stand, the whole Church is aglow. How wonderful it is to take in the light of Christ filling the Church for this special night! It's an image that brings joy to my heart every year.

The Easter Vigil is filled with history. The Old Testament is where our relationship with God began, and the New Testament is where Jesus died for our sins and rose from the tomb, shattering death's hold on us. With help from the readings, we move to blessing the new waters and beginning the Sacraments of Initiation. It is a wonder seeing people of

all ages professing their faith in the Catholic Church at this time. As all are called to renew their Baptismal promises, it reminds us how lucky and blessed we really are. To be able to confirm each one and to see them receive Jesus' body and blood for the first time is a wonderful thing.

As I reflect on the Easter Vigil, it is sad in one way. Not many people take part in this liturgy. Some have told me that it's too long. Others have told me it's too late at night. With so many things happening during the liturgy, I believe that it flows naturally and I am amazed each year when I find how long we've been in Church. It is one of the most prayerful liturgies you can ever attend. If you gave it a chance, I don't think you would be disappointed.

Whatever you do this Easter, make sure you give thanks and praise to God for all he has given you. Experience the Eucharist in a special way on Easter. Remind yourself that Jesus gave up his life for you and me. He rose from the dead so that we might have a chance to be with him in heaven. Enjoy time with your family and friends. Eat a hardboiled egg - it is supposed to be good luck. Celebrate and rejoice for the Lord has risen and dwells among us. Happy Easter!

Father Don West

Father Don West
Pastor

From the Business Manager



Our parish finances are currently in good shape. At the end of January, our donation income was \$868k versus a budget of \$861k (1% ahead of budget). Our expenses were at \$857k versus a budget of \$940k (nearly 9% under budget). Thank you to everyone who gives to our parish. We would not be able to do all that we do without you. The parish staff continues to watch all of our expenses. Please be watching for my monthly bulletin article, "Finance Corner" for more information on our parish budget.

During 2015, our parish participated in an Archdiocesan-wide fundraising campaign called "One Faith, One Hope, One Love". Our fundraising goal for the parish was \$1.67 million. During the campaign, we received pledges for \$1,365,620 over the five year period of the campaign. This totaled about 82% of our goal - an impressive achievement! During the 2015 calendar year, \$312,318 was collected on these pledges by the 1F1H1L campaign. As many of you know, 20% of all collected pledges are returned to the parish. Our parish decided that 75% of our money from the campaign would go to building improvements and the remaining 25% would go to our four designated charities (split between them on an equal basis). The four charities are Reach Out Lakota, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Leo the Great parish and Campton Mission (Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd in Campton, KY). Here is the breakdown of our 2015 income from the campaign (which has now been received by the parish): 20% of \$312,318.26 collected by 1F1H1L = \$62,463.65; 75% goes toward improvements to our campus: \$46,847.65; 25% goes to our four chosen charities: \$15,616 total (\$3,904 to each of the four charities). Thank you to all who have given or pledged to the One Faith, One Hope, One Love campaign. We will be updating the parish on how we will use this money for campus improvements in the next few weeks. For more information on the Archdiocesan campaign, you can visit their website at www.1faith1hope1love.org.

An important part of our parish life is our wonderful Family Festival. This year's festival will be on August 5-6-7, so mark your calendars! We are looking for a few key positions to be filled on our festival committee this year. These positions will work with current committee members, so, lots of coaching and assistance will be provided. We need the following positions to be filled: Sponsorship Co-Chair, Purchasing Co-Chair and Poker Booth Volunteer Coordinator. Please call or e-mail me if you are interested in any of these positions at 777-6433 (ext. 124) or jseibenick@stjohnwc.org. This is a great way to give back to our parish community and the friendships created while working on our festival will last you a lifetime.

Make sure that part of your Lenten sacrifice is not just "giving up" but also "giving to". Please try to spend some time helping others this month! You could work at a Friday Fish Fry, the Easter Egg Hunt or many other parish or community activities. I will see you at church!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joan".

Joan Seibenick
Business Manager

Celebrating the Eucharist

There are many saints that have a deep love and devotion to the Eucharist. St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Katheri Tekakwitha, and Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta are a few. But how many saints give us an account of their own First Communion day? Saint Therese of Lisieux (also known as the Little Flower or St. Therese of the Child Jesus) writes in her autobiography, *The Story of A Soul*, a beautiful description of the day of her First Communion.



"I can remember every tiny detail of those heavenly hours; my joyous waking up at dawn... the room where we dressed – filled with the white snowflakes in which one after another we were clothed, and above all, our entry into Chapel, and the singing of the morning hymn: 'O Altar of God, where the angels are hovering.'" (*Story of a Soul*, 64)

For many of us, when we take a moment to look back to this day, we remember our excitement mixed with nervousness, the clothes we wore, and maybe the party that we had with family and friends afterwards. But St. Therese spends only a little time describing her dress and the music that played. For her, this day marked a special time in her life where she encountered Jesus in a new way. "Long before that He [Jesus] and little Therese had seen and understood one another well, but on that day it was more than a meeting; it was a complete fusion." (*Story of a Soul*, 64) St. Therese, from a very early age, had a clear understanding of the meaning of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist at her First Communion. For many of us (myself included), it may have taken many more years for a deeper understanding to emerge. We can still learn much from this humble saint.

St. Therese goes on to describe that upon receiving her First Communion, she started weeping. This greatly surprised those around her. They thought that she was weeping because her mother, who had died some years earlier, was not able to be there for her First Communion. But Therese explains that her tears were because of, "...all the joy of Heaven had entered one small, exiled heart, and that it was too frail and weak to bear it without tears." (*Story of a Soul*, 65) While many of us do not cry upon receiving the Eucharist, there is a sense that we are humbled and in awe of God, who chose out of great love to be with us in a simple, tangible way through bread and wine. On one level, bread and wine are symbols that even our children understand; food nourishes our bodies, just like God gives us the gift of Himself to nourish us on our faith journey.

St. Therese gives us one more insight when she recalls, "as all Heaven entered my soul when I received Jesus, my mother came to me as well...we were closer than ever before." (*Story of a Soul*, 65) We don't just receive Jesus in the Eucharist, but we are connected to the whole Body of Christ that transcends time, space, and even those who have gone before us. All the People of God are nourished and united in these simple gifts. Take some time to reflect and remember your own First Communion and compare it with the last time you received Communion. What was similar? What was different? As our First Communicants prepare this year, join in their great joy as they receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

NOTE: If you are interested in learning more about Saint Therese of Lisieux, check out her book, *The Story of a Soul*. There are several different translations and some were edited by her sister, Mother Agnes of Jesus, whom Therese gave permission to edit her work.

Anna Peloquin

Anna Peloquin

Pastoral Associate of Children's Faith Formation

Be More Christ-Like This Easter

The Easter season is a time for us to reflect on our own life in the church. During Lent, we look inward. Are we being Christ-like in the way that we live our lives? Are we doing enough for others in the way that Jesus would? I like to think of Lent not only as a time to "give up" certain items, but also as a time to "give to" others and to "give away" our excesses. Spending time working on ourselves during Lent allows us to truly celebrate the joy of the Easter season. It can give us a true season of spring in our lives. We should allow Christ to guide our Lent.



Lent began on Ash Wednesday, when we were signed with the ashes of burned palms and are reminded to "Repent, and believe in the Gospel". This is the day that we begin our 40 day period of sacrifice and repentance. When Jesus was out in the desert for 40 days being tempted by the devil, he set an example to us. It is never too late to start your Lenten commitment. What is it that "tempts" you in your life? Are you someone who takes great pride in all of the clothing and shoes in your closet? Maybe it is time to clean out the closet. Take the excess to a charity such as Reach Out Lakota or St. Vincent de Paul. Take a break from buying these items during Lent. Are you tempted by eating out every meal? Pare down this Lent by spending less time in restaurants and drive-throughs; spend more time across the kitchen table from your family and friends. Are you obsessed with social media? Remove yourself from Facebook or Twitter this Lent and spend that time doing something kind for others. Learn to knit scarves to give away, volunteer at a soup kitchen, do some landscaping at church or for an elderly neighbor. What is that temptation in your life that seems to control you at times? It is blocking you from your best relationship with Christ. Give that up this Lent, pray about it, and use the time to help others.

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind." - Hebrews 13:16

Of course, one of the best ways to prepare for Easter is to spend your time and energy helping others. We are all busy and have a hard time squeezing one more thing into our calendars. If you are not spending any of your time giving to others or doing something for others, maybe this is something to start before Easter arrives. Being more Christ-centered means being more focused on others and less focused on ourselves. Think creatively! There are many ways to help others. Call a school and see if they need tutors, help with driving an elderly or disabled person to Mass, volunteer at an animal shelter or retirement home. The possibilities are endless.

"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others." - Philippians 2:3-5

If you allow Christ to guide you, you might just feel a bit more like him on Easter morning. May the blessing of this Easter be upon you and your family!

Joan Seibenick
Business Manager

Being Christ to One Another By Singing

I recently watched a documentary titled *Hungry for Change*. One segment stuck with me in particular. Jon Gabriel speaks about love in one of its fundamental forms: safety. A newborn baby in the first days, weeks and months of life is entirely dependent on the mother for life. If the mother doesn't take care of the child, the baby will die. Love, at its basic form, is safety.

Our parish is blessed with excellent volunteers of all ages who commit to one or more music rehearsals a week and one or more weekly liturgies throughout the year. But that is not the primary ingredient of excellent church music. Ultimately, every person in the church – including you – must own and take your responsibility in making our music a complete offering to God.

Now, while the Bible contains many exhortations to sing in the Psalms and Epistles and examples of singing in the Old Testament, the Gospels contain almost no mention of music. Jesus says nothing about singing in His teachings. So how can we consider singing as being Christ to one another? Because He sang at one of the most crucial moments in His ministry: the Last Supper. The gospels do not say whether he and the apostles had good voices or not; they simply sang a hymn before leaving for the Mount of Olives. Jesus provided safety to the small group by offering His voice with them to His Father.

We have, on a week-to-week basis, anywhere from 300 to almost a thousand people in the pews at Mass, with much more at Christmas and Easter. When you worship at Mass, you are the principal choir in the church. If few people choose to sing, the safety level that most will experience singing in the choir will be low to none. If you offer your voice with everyone else, the safety, love and power of music in worship will increase many times over. During this Lenten time of sacrifice and preparation, share your voice. Offer love to your parish and safety to the choir. Be Christ to One Another.

Happy Easter!



Mike Dailey
Pastoral Musician



Update from St. Gabriel Consolidated School

By: Nicole Brainard, Principal



The children of St. Gabriel Consolidated School are busy preparing to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter Sunday. Along with actively participating in Lenten service projects and our Communal Penance Service, they have been praying the Stations of the Cross each week and this activity will culminate with the Living Stations of the Cross on Holy Thursday. Our eighth grade students will dress to represent each station stretching along the sidewalk from the school to the St. Gabriel Parish Center and the entire school will pray the stations throughout the morning. We would like to extend an invitation to all St. John parishioners to join in this special form of prayer with the children of your parish school. More information on the time of the Living Stations of the Cross is available by calling the School Office at 513-771-5220.

We are delighted to report the outstanding achievements of the St. Gabriel Consolidated School Class of 2016. 36% of these students scored in the 90th percentile or higher on the High School Placement test this fall. Their excellence has earned them over \$355,000 in scholarships to local private and parochial high schools. This is an outstanding group of boys and girls and we are pleased that their hard work and dedication, as well as that of our incredible teaching staff, has been recognized by these secondary institutions.

In April, the children will morph into "Habitat Heroes" as part of our Primary Science Night and Curriculum Week activities. We are thrilled that our speaker for Primary Science Night this year will be Thane Maynard, the Executive Director of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. The children will be making connections between the habitats of God's creatures and the Catholic Social Teachings of Caring for God's Creation. Interdisciplinary units dealing with financial conservation and philanthropy will also be included as activities during this week. In the near future, we will be issuing a financial conservation challenge which we hope will help the zoo and teach the children that even small people can help make a big difference.

On behalf of the children, faculty and staff of St. Gabriel Consolidated School, I would like to wish you all a Blessed Easter!

Sincerely,
Nicole Brainard
Principal

St. John the Evangelist

Calendar of Events

March / April 2016

Tuesday, March 1

Generations of Faith (6-8 p.m.)
Dinner in Center 6 - 6:45 p.m.
Gospel Skits in Church 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 2

Generations of Faith(6-8 p.m.)
Dinner in Center 6 - 6:45 p.m.
Gospel Skits in Church 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 10

Parish Lenten Penance Service
7 p.m.

Thursday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day
Vespers 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 20 Palm Sunday

Easter Egg Hunt Lunch at 12:30 p.m.
Easter Egg Hunt 1 - 2 p.m.

Thursday, March 24 Holy Thursday

Mass at 7:30 p.m. with washing of the feet
Adoration 9 p.m. - 12 a.m.

Friday, March 25 Good Friday - Office Closed

Stations of the Cross 12 p.m.
Veneration of the Cross 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 26

Holy Saturday - Office Closed
Blessing of food at 12:30 p.m. in Chapel
Easter Vigil Mass at 9 p.m.

Sunday, March 27

Easter Sunday - Office Closed

Mass at 8 a.m.
Mass at 9:30 a.m.
Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, April 6

Life in the Spirit Seminars begin and continue
every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m.
until May 18

Saturday, April 9

Campton Mission Food and
Clothing Collection
E-Recycling in Parking lot
8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 10

Campton Mission Food and Clothing
Collection

Happy Easter!



Our Prayers and Sympathy go out to...

December

- Marie Mann on the death of her sister
- Jeff Maupin on the death of his stepfather
- John Campbell on the death of his wife Alice Campbell
- Michael Wright on the death of his father
- The Marshall family on the death of Charlene Marshall
- Carol Nail on the death of her father
- Ray Sousa on the death of his father
- Don Meiners on the death of his sister
- Matt Bolton on the death of his sister

January

- Mary Gorski on the death of her husband Jimmy Gorski

- Connie Caruso on the death of her father
- Carol Thomas on the death of her brother & sister-in-law
- Jack Heenan on the death of his wife Susan Heenan
- Dick Carpenter on the death of his mother
- Gerry Weisgerber on the death of his father
- Sawtin MacLellan on the death of her husband Daniel MacLellan
- Kay Huss on the death of her husband Jim Huss
- The Lee family on the death of Dennis Lee

February

- Karen Hackett on the death of her father

www.stjohnwc.org

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