

# On Eagle's Wings

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church  
January / February 2017



## From the Pastor

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2017. What challenges will this New Year bring to us and to the world? As I was praying about what to write, I was drawn to a passage from John's Gospel and oddly enough, a quote that I found on Facebook. The passage from John's Gospel is from the farewell discourse with his disciples. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." (Jn.14:27)

Jesus gave them something that they needed in their lives as they continued to endure the pains of carrying out the Good News. It's hard to do in a world that doesn't always embrace the message with open arms. But through it all, the Gospel remained and the church was born and is still alive today. However, I sometimes wonder how well we embrace the peace that Jesus gave to his first apostles.

The second quote was one I found on Facebook, a post from a radio station: "Why do we only rest in peace? Why don't we live in peace too?" I stopped and thought hard about that one. It is amazing, to me, how true that message seems to be in the world today. I have seen a lot of violence and hate in my lifetime, but it now seems to be growing with more intensity. That truly saddens me. I wish we could erase the board and start fresh with a new attitude for peace and bury the hate and violence. I have encountered many people who are angry, but that is not what Jesus had in mind when he gave out the two great commandments: love God with your whole being and your

neighbor as yourself. We have drifted so far from that understanding as a nation and as a world. "Rest in peace," said at a person's death, should not be the only way to peace. We need to continue to find ways to *live* in peace too.

Fr. Terry was my spiritual director on and off through all of my seminary days until he died a year or so ago. We shared a bond that meant the world to me. He always kept me focused on my spiritual journey and gave encouragement when my vocation seemed to be drifting. He always knew how to keep me grounded, which was not an easy thing to do. When we talked about prayer, he would eventually always ask me what I wanted from God. It would vary from time to time, but somewhere in the conversation, I would come to one word: peace. He would give his trademark smile that, to me, said that he understood what I meant. Some things have not changed. I am still in search, among all the chaos, for that inner peace that only God can offer to me and to you. As this New Year begins, that is my prayer for each of you. Peace: Not as the world gives, this is fleeting at best, but the peace that comes from an intimate relationship with Jesus. The best way to do that is through prayer and receiving the Eucharist. If we want peace we have to work for justice. God is calling us. Are we willing to make a difference in this New Year? Can we find peace in the world we live in? I hope we can. God bless you, and thank you for being you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. 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 second "Generations of Faith: Night of Service" in October and sent hundreds of gifts to several local organizations. We had a great festival, replaced many of our AC units, got new security cameras and a new office phone system, and we are almost finished with the newly updated restrooms in the Pavilion. 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 to each other and to our community. You are all blessings to me as well.

We are entering into a new year according to the calendar, but we are at the halfway point according to our fiscal year calendar. We are staying on budget in both giving and in our spending. Thank you for working hard along with our parish staff to keep things going here at St. John.

Our final festival numbers are in and our net income was in the top five years since we've recorded our results. Our net profit was around \$160,000! 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. Many of the improvements I listed earlier are due to the income from our festival. 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. Thank you for sharing your time and talent with us. Mark your calendars for August 4-5-6, 2017. We'll be doing this again before you know it!

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 always available via phone, e-mail or in person! Don't hesitate to stop by, call or e-mail me with your questions.

If you would like to give to St. John parish with a stock donation, that would mean a lot to us. Donations of stock to St. John Church are processed through our individual custodial account at Fifth Third Bank. To donate stock to our parish, please make sure to include the information below in your communication. Please note: the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Gift Acceptance Policy requires a donor name be included with the transfer. All stock transfers without a donor name and a recipient account number will be rejected and returned to the donor account.

**Company Name:** Fifth Third Bank

**DTC Number:** 2116

**Account Number:** 0104471751BV

**Account Name:** St. John West Chester

If you have any questions, please contact Marianne Ball in the parish office at 777-6433 ext. 119 or [mball@stjohnwc.org](mailto:mball@stjohnwc.org).

Have a blessed 2017! I continually pray for our parishioners. For 2017, I am praying for peace for all in our parish community. God has called you by name, bring peace to one another!

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

Joan Seibenick  
Business Manager

# Will This New Year Bring About a New Beginning?

With the New Year dawning, there's no doubt we have all made a New Year's resolution. A perennial favorite for me is to lose twenty pounds. The struggle is ongoing and I never seem to reach my goal.

The truth, of course, is that we all struggle, some more than others. How we deal with life's challenges can be a measure of our character. I am reminded of my good friend, Hank. Hank is happily married and has three children. Before his marriage, he served in the Marine Corps. At the age of 20, he found himself lying wounded in a rice paddy field in Vietnam. Mortar fire had severely damaged his head and body. On top of this misery, he also suffered a gunshot wound to the leg. He would have died, but God sent a medic who performed a tracheotomy, keeping him alive. He left Vietnam totally blind. For a year and half, he was in a V.A. hospital attempting to recover from his injuries. Eventually he met someone and they married.

Over a period of many years, he faced 32 surgeries to repair his battered body. Twenty one of them attempted to reconstruct what was left of his remaining eye. Eight of his surgeries involved cornea transplants. After the last of such surgeries, the doctor slowly unraveled the gauze bandage from his head. Hank could see the glimmer of light shining through the cloth. After his head was uncovered, for a brief moment he was able to gaze upon his wife for the first and only time – just three seconds! Then his world went dark again. He has not been able to see again since, and he never had the privilege of viewing his children. His hope of regaining his sight is lost forever, because his eye is too damaged from all of the surgeries.

Today, many years later, it would be understandable if we would find this person a bitter, angry man. But he is not. Yes, initially he wrestled with the mystery of suffering. Hank struggled with his faith. He faced the anguish of doubt. He wondered where God was in all of his pain. Yet, ultimately Grace triumphed! Today, he is very faith-filled and optimistic. He serves the RCIA ministry of his parish, and is a powerful witness for the converts-to-be because despite his personal angst, he is a living example of faith and an inspiration to us all.

Once in the RCIA, Hank shared his faith journey and gave witness to the power of God's love. He did so with such conviction that when he ended, the participants broke into spontaneous applause. He is always quick with a joke, and his joy is written all over his face. The man I speak of inspires me and gives me hope. Hank is a living witness to the power of the human spirit and the power of God's Grace in the face of adversity.

Regarding our New Year's resolution, whatever promises we have made to better ourselves for the coming year, may Hank serve as an example that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Happy New Year!



Jerry Barney  
Deacon

# Sport and Faith

Did you know that the Vatican has a special council called the Department of Culture and Sports that is dedicated to dialoguing and finding connections to how sports can help us to grow in our faith? While this is not necessarily an excuse to watch football all weekend long, it does help us to understand how God created us to have both body and soul, so we are called to grow both spiritually and physically in our faith.



“Sport is a tool for communicating the values, which foster the good of the human beings and contribute to build a more peaceful and fraternal society. Let’s think about loyalty, perseverance, friendship, sharing, and solidarity,” Pope Francis proclaimed at the opening of the Interreligious Match for Peace held in Rome on Sept. 1, 2014. These virtues that we learn on the field, in the pool, or on the track affect our actions in daily life at school and work.

Many times, we forget about what it means to be part of the Body of Christ, but when playing together on a team, it is easier to see this in action. St. Paul states, “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). Using our unique gifts and talents as a team, God’s message of love can reach more people. Take a moment and think about how your faith has been affected by sports both positively and negatively.

- Did a mentor or coach show you what it meant to persevere in the face of defeat?
- Do you pray for the safety of all players before the game and to do your best?
- Are you an encouraging fan and supportive of all players?
- What sacrifices have you had to make to play at your best? Were they worth it?
- What virtues have you learned from a mentor or coach?
- In what ways have your teammates been a blessing in your life?

At St. John the Evangelist, we have a Boosters program that offers Volleyball for both girls and boys and a Men’s Adult Basketball team. If you are interested in volunteering or being a part of the Boosters, check out our website at: <http://www.stjohnwc.org/athletic-boosters.html>

More information about the Dept. of Culture and Sports can be found here: <http://www.laici.va/content/laici/en/sezioni/chiesa-e-sport.html>  
[1http://www.matchforpeace.org/the-match](http://www.matchforpeace.org/the-match)

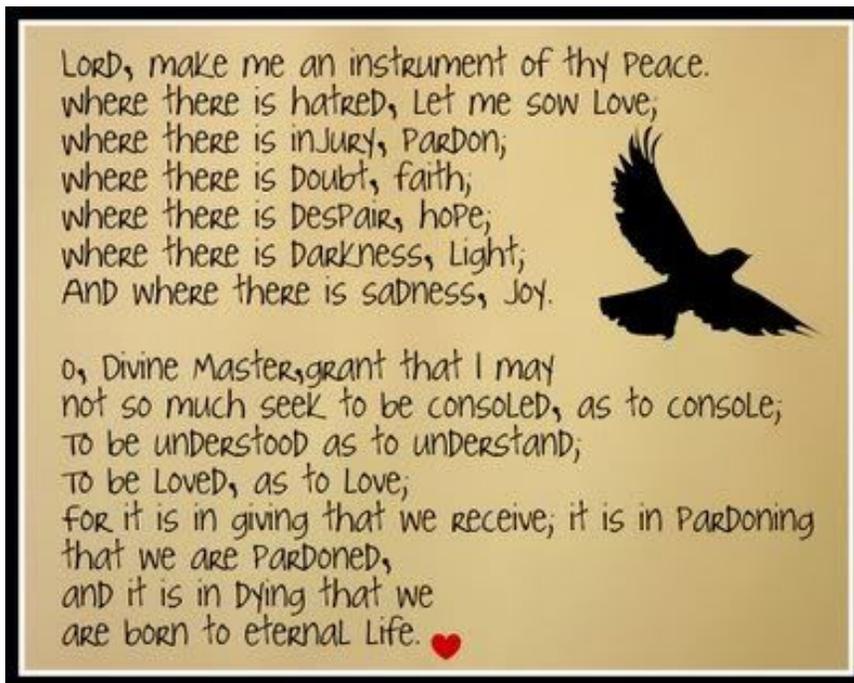
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Peloquin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anna Peloquin  
Pastoral Associate of Children’s Faith Formation

# Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace

Peace – it's such an awesome word, isn't it? Just the thought of being at peace makes you feel better about the world, your life, and what is going on around you. I often struggle with being at peace with my life. I think we all do. How could things be better? How can I be a better person or live a better life? One of the ways I insert a little peace in my life is to walk around in Favret Hall on sunny days. The lights streaming through the colorful glass and the quiet time to pray brings me great peace. What things do you do to find peace in your life?

If peace could be a gift that we could give, wouldn't that be amazing? Just think of all of the times you would share that gift! You could give it to the parents of a sick child or to someone who is struggling in his/her marriage. You could grant it to someone who is dealing with overwhelming loss or someone who can't find peace inside of his/her own mind. I would love to be able to share peace with others. But, as we know, the only way to truly find peace is through the Lord.



I love the Prayer of St. Francis, which speaks to being an instrument of peace. It's actually a great song as well – one of my favorites from when I attended Catholic grade school. What does it mean to be an instrument of peace? I believe that God wants us to help others find peace. How do we do that? I have found in my work ministering to others for the church, that sometimes what people really need is just to talk things through. By simply being there for someone and listening to them, you are working as an instrument of

peace. By showing that you care and that you are willing to help them walk through their battles, you can give peace to others. Take some time this month to reach out to someone who is looking for peace in his/her life. Or, if you are looking for peace, find someone who can sit and listen to you. We are all here as God's gifts to each other. Let's all be instruments of His peace.

Peace be with you and with all of your family! Have a blessed and peaceful month.

Joan Seibenick  
Business Manager

# *Update from St. Gabriel Consolidated School*

**By: Nicole Brainard, Principal**



**Saint Gabriel**

## **Catholic Schools Week and Registration for the 2017-2018 School Year**

Happy New Year from the Faculty, Staff and Students of St. Gabriel Consolidated School! Catholic Schools Week, the annual celebration of Catholic education throughout the United States is upon us! This week begins Sunday, Jan. 29 and ends on Saturday, Feb. 4. The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2017 is, "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." St. Gabriel Consolidated School is proud to be the parish school of the St. John Community of Faith.

I would like to invite each St. John's family to join the St. Gabriel Consolidated School Community for two information gathering opportunities regarding the upcoming 2017-2018 academic year. Whether your family has a child entering Kindergarten or you are entertaining transferring a student to St. Gabriel from another elementary school, these events are great ways to learn more about the incredible opportunities St. Gabriel Consolidated School has to offer.

On Saturday, Jan. 28 and Sunday, Jan. 29, we will have a display in the Gathering Space at St. John as part of Catholic Schools Week. Please take a moment to stop by our table and talk with us about your parish school and what it has to offer you and your children. Information regarding registration will be available, as will information on the new One Faith, One Hope, One Love Financial Aid opportunity for students to attend a Catholic school.

On Wednesday evening, Feb. 1, St. Gabriel will host the 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 including PTO, Advisory Commission, scouting programs, and robotics to name a few. If you have not been to the school recently, please come take a look at the facilities improvements that have recently been made.

Parish registration for current and new families begins on Jan. 15 and concludes at 3 p.m. on Feb. 17. 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. We have been educating children in the Catholic tradition for 150 years. Please take some time to come and discover what St. Gabriel can offer your family.

# New Years' Resolutions for all Catholics

Written by Angela Pugliano

Every New Year, resolutions come and go. Eat less, exercise more, and procrastinate less all seem to be common promises when January rolls around. What if you really committed to changing your life this year? Below are some ideas for any Catholic when it comes to New Year's resolutions. This list was inspired by catholic.org

([www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=66233](http://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=66233)).



1. **Educate** yourself more. Read what's going on around the world, research your favorite book of the bible, and learn more about those around you to see what they're going through. Catholic.org says, "Understanding the world, even its horrors, can help you understand what you need to pray for, and for some it can open the door to a ministry you didn't even know you were meant to enter."
2. Be a better **listener**. Listening to others around us is often difficult when we are just waiting for them to finish so that we can talk. Take time this year to consciously make an effort to quiet yourself and listen more. James 1:19 says, "Remember this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to human anger..."
3. Live each day with **generosity**. Listen to your call to give. According to 1 John 3:17, "If anyone is well-off in worldly possessions and sees his brother in need but closes his heart to him, how can the love of God be remaining in him?"
4. Finally, **Be Christ to One Another**. Our former Parish theme still rings true. How can you channel Jesus' love through your daily words and actions? By thinking of how you can be Christ to one another, you can change the world around you.

## Catholic Prayer for the New Year

*God, thank you for a new year. May everyone in our family be willing to begin anew with a clean slate. We know that you are always ready to forgive us. Help us to be willing to forgive ourselves and to forgive one another.*

*As we begin a new year, remind us of our truest values and our deepest desires. Help us to live in the goodness that comes from doing what you want us to do. Help us to put aside anxiety about the future and the past, so that we might live in peace with you now, one day at a time. Amen.*

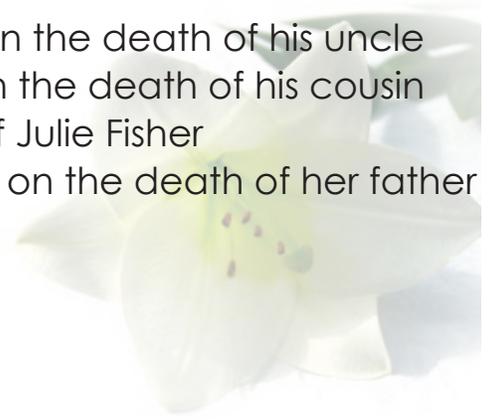
# Our Prayers and Sympathy go out to...

## October

- Chris Simeone on the death of her cousin
- Marilyn Capano on the death of her husband Joe Capano
- Chelle Barnhorst on the death of her husband Jamie Barnhorst and to AJ and Zach on the death of their father
- The Wallace family on the death of Irene Wallace
- Henderson family on the death of Clyde Henderson
- Smith family on the death of Mary Lou Smith

## November

- Krista Schroeder on the death of her husband Matt Schroeder and to Reese, Wyatt and Ethan on the death of their father
- Jerry Kohls on the death of his uncle
- Todd Holt on the death of his cousin
- The family of Julie Fisher
- Chris Boylan on the death of her father Bill Weigel



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

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