

On Eagle's Wings

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
May / June 2016



From the Pastor

The feast of Corpus Christi is a feast that has great meaning to me. It is also known as The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. When you think about it, this is celebrated not only during the feast of Corpus Christi, but every time we celebrate Mass. We are reminded how special the Body and Blood of Christ should be to every Catholic. To remind myself of how special the Eucharist can be, I look to those adults and children who come to the table to receive Jesus for the first time. There is a nervous energy, an excitement that is shown on their faces as they come to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. Many years ago, I remember a young girl who saw me walk into church and she ran down the hallway smiling and yelling to me that she got to receive Jesus for the first time. It was amazing to see the look in her eyes and the joy she had. That was almost twenty years ago, and I wonder if she has the same joy for Jesus as she did that day. I wonder how long the excitement will last for our second graders here at St. John.

The Eucharist is the center of our liturgical life. When someone comes to receive the Eucharist, their "amen" means, "I believe." Many people, when they receive the body and the blood, give a response that is barely audible. It is an honor and a gift to receive the Eucharist, but sometimes it doesn't seem to make a difference.

Sometimes I think the Eucharist is too available; we get used to having it on regular basis. Does having this available all the time cause us to perhaps take it for granted? Did we get so comfortable that we really don't understand what a gift it is to have the Eucharist? The greatest gift that the Father gave to us was his Son and we are graced to receive him every time we come to the altar. Corpus Christi Sunday should remind us of what an awesome gift we have in the Eucharist. We should be grateful and humbled to receive such a life-giving gift. As St. Augustine said, "We should become what we receive." As the Eucharist fills our hearts with the love of God, our gratitude should spill over to the lives of those we encounter in our daily world. How can something so amazing, like the Eucharist, not make a difference in our lives? Believing in the true presence in the Eucharist is the foundation of our salvation.

Corpus Christi Sunday calls us back to understand what God gave us in his Son. Jesus called us to do this in remembrance of him. Each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharistic meal, may it bring nervous excitement. May it also call us to a true sense of humility and gratitude. What an awesome, loving God we have!

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

Father Don West
Pastor

From the Business Manager



Our parish finances are currently in good shape. At the beginning of April, our total donation income was \$1.064 million versus a budget of \$1.005 million. With our expenses 2% behind budget (a good thing) and our income ahead of budget, we are currently in great shape on a year-to-date basis. Thank you for your gifts of treasure. It is so important for us to be able to stay ahead of our expenses and also be able to keep our buildings updated and safe. Our parish staff is continually watchful over the gifts we receive from our parishioners.

We are always working on improvements around our parish campus and this spring is no different. The restrooms in our Pavilion building are going to get an overhaul with new fixtures, new plumbing and new flooring. Additionally, because our Pavilion bathrooms are not handicapped-accessible, we are also adding a unisex bathroom in the corner of the building. This new bathroom will be handicapped-accessible and can also serve as a family bathroom for young families as well. We will be working hard to make sure that the updated bathrooms are ready for our festival!

I would like to take a minute to send some love and prayers to all mothers, fathers, grandparents and parental figures for Mother's Day and Father's Day this May and June. Thank you for choosing life and for bringing a future generation into the world.

This year's St. John Family Festival will be on August 5-6-7. The Festival Committee has been working hard to bring you an even better festival this year. If you are interested in chairing a booth at this year's festival, please e-mail me at jseibenick@stjohnwc.org and we will match you up with a great booth!

Are you making plans for some family travel this summer? Did you know that you can set up electronic giving to our parish in under five minutes? It is super easy to do using your checking account or credit card. It is also safe and secure. Go to www.stjohnwc.org and click on "Donate/Giving" and then "Sunday Collection". Any questions?

Feel free to call or e-mail Marianne Ball at mball@stjohnwc.org or 777-6433, ext. 119.

As always, I continue to pray for all of our parishioners, from the youngest to the oldest. Thank you for all that you do for our parish family. I am proud to be a part of this community.

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

Joan Seibenick
Business Manager



As summer approaches, staff and volunteers are working hard to get ready for our festival! Thanks to everyone who has so far supported this event with the Basket Bonanza Giving Tree! Make sure to mark your calendars for the first weekend of August. We will have all of the usual favorites, plus a few new surprises! If you are interested in volunteering, we will have volunteer sign-ups on our website in May. Thanks and God bless!

Making Graduation Season Last All Year Long



The end of the school year can bring a sense of elation and giddiness for kids and teenagers. Summer break with no responsibilities, warm weather and vacations; what could be better? For some, however, this summer will bring with it anticipation for the future and lots of uncertainty. Recent graduates like me know these feelings well. With my one year anniversary of graduating college quickly approaching, I've realized a few things.

Graduation stirs up fear. However, in life, fear is what drives us to take chances and make decisions to form who we are. After I graduated, I already had a job lined up with the PGA of America that would take me to different states for a few months, working several tournaments. I was excited that I had a plan, but I also knew that this plan would be short-lived once the tournament season ended. Instead of panicking, I thanked God that I had a wonderful and supportive family to help me, and I started looking for communications jobs in Cincinnati. I wanted a job where I could utilize the skills I had studied in school, skills I was not able to practice with this summer job. I'm confident that no matter what decision I made at that point, God would have steered me in the right direction. And I'm so thankful that my decision brought me to St. John!

For many, there are several graduations in our lives. Some people might even have three or four cap and gowns hanging up in the back of their closets. But I'm not just talking about walking across a stage and getting a diploma. There are hundreds of moments throughout the years that we can and should mark off as "graduations", or little victories. We never stop graduating!

In the Church, each sacrament we receive for the first time is like graduation. When you're young, you finally get to participate in the Eucharist and experience Jesus in such a special way. Then, later, we become confirmed, which is the full initiation into the Church. And we keep graduating as we get older and strengthen our faith. These moments define us as Catholics and are symbolic of our hard work that we put into forming our faith and morality. Just like in school, we work towards our goals to enter a different phase of life. From our practice and education, we are much more prepared than in the beginning.

Whether or not you or your children will be graduating this year, take some time to think about the little graduations you've achieved in your own life. It could be as simple as finally finishing that 5k, helping another student understand a difficult math problem, or starting a new position at work. Give thanks to God, give yourself some credit for your victories, and congratulations!

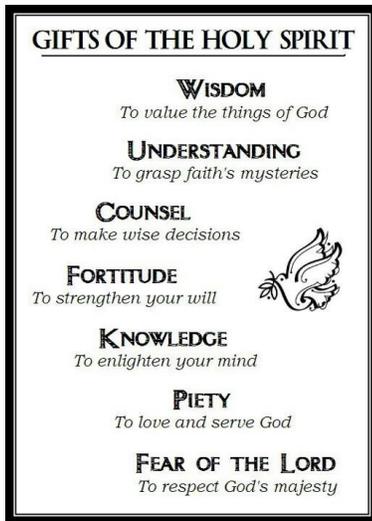
Angela

Angela Pugliano
Pastoral Associate of Communications

Prayer for Graduates

Dear God, we thank you for these graduating students. We pray that you will give them direction, purpose, and perseverance as they enter into the next phase of their lives. God, give them clarity of mind and judgment to move forward into the plans and purposes that You have for them. Give them wisdom in all of their choices and grant them success for their efforts at every turn. May they be eager to do good all the days of their lives. Amen.

Confirmation - Learn to Exercise your Spiritual Muscles



I remember the day I was confirmed; I kept waiting for the skies to open. I was anticipating the ceiling of the St. Peter in Chains Cathedral to open up and the Holy Spirit to come down upon me, just as it did for Jesus.

Of course, that never happened. I couldn't wrap my head around the idea of the Holy Spirit being a part of me without being able to see it myself. My idea of Confirmation was so far from what it really is. Throughout my years of furthering theological education, I continue to grow in my understanding of this sacrament.

Confirmation is one of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is also uniquely connected to the Sacrament of Baptism. In Baptism, we are gifted with the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation, we confirm this gift and it strengthens the grace received in Baptism. The gifts we receive at Confirmation are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These seven gifts allow us to more firmly live like Christ. It is up to us to use these gifts in our lives and allow them to grow. We can think of these gifts as spiritual muscles. The more we exercise these gifts, the stronger they become.

When I first received Confirmation, I didn't see the gifts of the Holy Spirit as gifts that I needed to make stronger. Now, I make sure to get in my spiritual "workout" every day. I pray daily and I strive to live like Christ with my actions. One example of exercising my spiritual muscles happened during senior year of college. A new band member was a vocal atheist and when he found out I was studying Theology, he immediately took the opportunity to challenge my faith. I used the gift of Fortitude in these encounters. He challenged me and made me uncomfortable. He had a strong personality, and was hard to handle calmly at times. I needed the gift of fortitude to not avoid him and to stay calm during our discussions. At first, he discussed how God clearly does not exist and why he doesn't believe in God but over time our conversations shifted. He talked about scripture and I was surprised at how much of the Bible he knew. I reflected on our conversations and realized he knew more about the Bible than I did. My gift of Knowledge began to grow because I realized a weak area in my knowledge of the faith. I then began to read the Bible more because of our discussions. These conversations lead to growth in the gifts of Fortitude and Knowledge. In the end, I appreciated our discussions, even though they made me uncomfortable at the time.

So, what spiritual "muscles" do you need to exercise? I encourage you to think back to your own Confirmation and see how you've grown since then. Take some time to reflect on what parts of your faith life have grown the most and where you still struggle.

Josh Plandowski
Pastoral Associate of Youth Ministry

What is Mercy?

A reflection by Connie Caruso

Mercy is a noun; it means compassionate forgiveness shown toward an offender or other person. Pope Francis has declared 2016 a Jubilee Year of Mercy. Jubilee years are usually every 25 or 50 years, and our last one was in 2000. They usually focus on themes of forgiveness and pardon with the intention of helping people grow closer to God. Our Pope made an exception by not waiting the 25 years in order to have his people focus on one of his favorite themes: the mercy of God the Father.

When we go before God to ask for his mercy or forgiveness, he welcomes and forgives. He completely forgets the sin committed and never says,

"no". He will not deny anyone who repents. The most obvious way for us to ask for God's mercy is through Reconciliation.

In my opinion, another beautiful way to obtain mercy is through Mary. She is called the Mother of Mercy. When she accepted God's call to birth his only son, she took on a life of forgiving those whose continuous cruelty to her son would have been overwhelming to the rest of us. Yet, as she knelt at the foot of the cross of her dying son, she listened to words of forgiveness. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." From then on, she lived her life serving others and performing merciful acts of kindness. As we continue on through this Year of Mercy, have you asked for God's mercy? Have you shown mercy?

The Feast of Corpus Christi: What Does it Mean to Me?



On May 29 of this year, we celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi (Latin for the body of Christ). The Feast of Corpus Christi celebrates the tradition and belief in the body and blood of Jesus Christ and his Real Presence in the Eucharist. It emphasizes the joy of the Eucharist. If we were to choose one thing that makes us Catholic and differentiates us from other Christian faiths (besides Orthodox Christian Churches) it would be the fact that we truly believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist. As Catholics, when we take the body and blood of Christ at communion, we believe that Jesus becomes a part of our whole being. He lives within us. How amazing to think that we can carry Jesus with us as we go out into the world every week!

On Corpus Christi, we will listen to these words from Paul to the Corinthians: “Brothers and sisters: I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.” *1 Cor. 11:23-26*

During the spring, we celebrated the sacrament of First Eucharist with 70 of our young parishioners. Sharing our faith and belief that Jesus is real in this sacrament is an amazing gift. I hope that you were able to celebrate with at least one group of these children! As part of their preparation for First Eucharist, several of us on staff got the opportunity to interview the children to ask questions and make sure they felt ready to receive the body and blood of Christ. Their enthusiasm was contagious. I wish we could all approach the altar each Sunday with such joy and anticipation!

As we receive the true body and blood of Jesus during Mass, perhaps we can ask ourselves, “What can I do to show Jesus that I am deserving of his gift to me?” How can we leave



Mass carrying Jesus within us and show the world that we are truly living our Catholic faith? Think about this question every week. Maybe it should be a discussion on your way home from Mass in the car. Do you have some great ideas on how to be Christ to one another? Share them with your parish, friends and family. Explain what it is like to truly be Jesus because you have him within you. God has blessed you and your families, pass those blessings on to others!

Handwritten signature of Joan Seibenick.

Joan Seibenick
Business Manager

Update from St. Gabriel Consolidated School

By: Nicole Brainard, Principal



Saint Gabriel

Recently, St. Gabriel primary students had the opportunity to participate in our annual Primary Science Night. This is an event that was created by our teachers for students in grades one through three to expose the children to themes and concepts in science that are not typically covered in the primary curriculum. To give you an idea of past themes, we have studied weather, dinosaurs, space and forensic science most recently. This year's theme, given the proximity of the date to Earth Day, centered on conservation and included hands-on activities that explored the rainforest, the oceans and the Savannah. We were blessed that Thane Maynard, the Executive Director of the Cincinnati Zoo, accepted our invitation to serve as our guest speaker this year.

The goal of Primary Science Night is to provide as many interdisciplinary connections as possible. This year, the theme was extended to include not only the older children, but the ideas of financial conservation and philanthropy. We have issued a financial conservation challenge via social media that will benefit the Cincinnati Zoo and possibly zoos across the nation. We would like to extend that challenge to our St. John families, and those tied to them via social media, to conserve financially for one day, i.e. pack your lunch, make dinner from what is already in the pantry instead of eating out, give up the Starbucks for one morning, etc. and donate what you would have spent to the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. If you are active on social media, please use the hashtag #conZOOvation to challenge others to do the same. We are hopeful that this idea might catch on and be of benefit to the Cincinnati Zoo and any other zoos to which individuals may choose to donate.

Margaret Mead is credited with saying, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." How wonderful it would be if our relatively small school and parish communities could start a ripple that continues to radiate out to help make the world for our children and our children's children a better, more sustainable place.

We are also preparing to say goodbye to our wonderful eighth grade students. They will be participating in our May Crowning this month with the rest of the student body in attendance. It is very fitting that this beautiful devotion to the Blessed Mother serves as one of the culminating moments of their elementary school career. These young men and women, many of them St. John parishioners, have made a positive mark on the St. Gabriel Consolidated School community. Their high schools, the vast majority of which are Catholic high schools, will undoubtedly be better places as a result of their presence as well. We wish them well and know they will continue to grow closer to the Father and in service to their schools and parishes, especially St. John, for a long time to come.

St. John the Evangelist

Calendar of Events May / June 2016

Saturday, May 7
God's Gardeners

Sunday, May 8
Blessing of Mothers, Grandmothers
& Godmothers

Saturday, May 14
Pentecost

Sunday, May 15
Pentecost

Saturday, May 21
Pastoral Council Elections
Little Libraries

Sunday, May 22
Pastoral Council Elections
Little Libraries

Wednesday, May 25
Life in the Spirit Seminars

Monday, May 30
Memorial Day - Office Closed

Wednesday, June 1
St. Gabriel Graduation

Thursday, June 2
Happy Anniversary, Father Don!

Saturday, June 4
Corpus Christi
Mission Appeal

Sunday, June 4
Corpus Christi
Mission Appeal

Saturday, June 18
Blessing of Fathers, Grandfathers
& Godfathers

Sunday, June 19
Blessing of Fathers, Grandfathers
& Godfathers

Monday, June 27
Vacation Bible Camp Begins



Summer is full of adventures, and it is a chance for many to explore, spend time outside and enjoy some much needed rest and relaxation. Remember that God goes with you wherever you go! Here is a simple prayer you, your family, and friends can pray before you head off!

Prayer for Safe Travels

*O Lady of the Highway
Be with us on our Journey,
For all your ways are beautiful
And all your paths are peace.
O God who with unspeakable
Providence does rule and govern the world
Grant unto us, your servants,
Through the intercessions of our watchful mother,
To be protected from all danger and brought
safely to the end of our journey. Amen.*

Our Prayers and Sympathy go out to...

February

- Elsa Griswold on the death of her husband, Walter Griswold
- Stacy Hillman on the death of her father
- Helen Trona on the death of her husband, Albert Trona
- Karen Hacket on the death of her father
- Ron Carroll on the death of his sister
- Lorri Candrl on the death of her husband, Mike Candrl
- Judy Miller on the death of her brother-in-law
- Ann McMackin on the death of her mother
- Greg Tetzloff on the death of his aunt

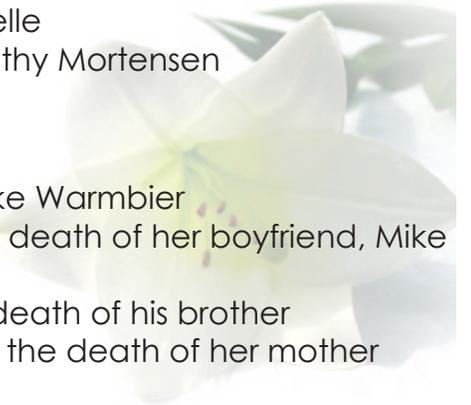
March

- Linda Heglin on the death of her mother

- Carl and Tom Deutch on the death of their father
- John Porterfield on the death of his mother
- Jerry Deehan on the death of his sister
- Dan Koenig on the death of his uncle
- Gary Bolte on the death of his father
- Vincent LaChapelle on the death of his wife, Bernie LaChapelle
- The family of Cathy Mortensen

April

- The family of Mike Warmbier
- Rita Neal on the death of her boyfriend, Mike Warmbier
- Tim Poff on the death of his brother
- Lonetta Kelly on the death of her mother



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