

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH

A WELCOMING & INVITING PARISH • ALWAYS CHRIST-CENTERED AND WORD-BASED



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

A WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AT ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON SCHOOL

We never have enough opportunities to celebrate the good in life. After the many interruptions we endured through the COVID-19 pandemic, we must appreciate and celebrate our blessings. And during Catholic Schools Week, from Jan. 29 to Feb. 4, our teachers and students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton will have the chance to celebrate the gifts and blessings of Catholic education. The national Catholic Schools Week theme is "Faith. Excellence. Service."

Principal Barbara Kavanagh looks forward to the week each year.

"Catholic Schools Week is a celebration of the rich history, tradition, and excellence of Catholic schools," Mrs. Kavanagh says. "We plan activities that reflect the deep pride and gratitude for our school."



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Schools celebrates CSW by recognizing community members, faculty, staff, pastors, students and parents.

The week begins with an opening Mass on Sunday, Jan. 29, as students represent the school, speak, and welcome people to the open house, which is held that afternoon. This year, each teacher will decorate their room based on a specific country. Parents will provide food from the country.

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Catholic Schools Week *continued from front cover*



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All parishioners are welcome to see the school.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School celebrates CSW by recognizing community members, faculty, staff, priests, students, and parents.

"We focus on the excellence in education and faith formation that we provide," she says. "We plan service activities, special presentations, and faith experiences that showcase the pride and joy we feel as members of this unique community."

This year, the students will participate in a project supporting Live Like Cameron, a non-profit organization dedicated to the life of a young boy named Cameron, who died from childhood cancer.

Having been a Catholic school student, parent, grandparent, and teacher, Mrs. Kavanagh finds much meaning in this special week. Two of Mrs. Kavanagh's sons work in Catholic education.

"I know that my Catholic education shaped my life in many ways — my personal faith, which has sustained me my entire life, the knowledge and understanding I acquired, and my desire to serve others," she says.

Mrs. Kavanagh enjoys seeing the continual positive impact of Catholic education, particularly for her children and grandchildren.

"All my children are faith-filled, well-spoken, caring adults," she says.

Mrs. Kavanagh says the highlight of the week for the students is Student Appreciation Day. They don't have to wear their uniforms which makes it different and fun.

With CSW just a few weeks away, Mrs. Kavanagh is excited. It's truly a chance to celebrate something so near and dear to her — Catholic education at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School. This is her 32nd year in Catholic education.

"I believe so strongly that a deep faith foundation is necessary for our children to face the challenges our world presents," Mrs. Kavanagh says. "I believe our Catholic faith helps them know their own dignity and recognize the dignity of each human person, which is part of our school mission statement."



As Principal Barbara Kavanagh notes, students and teachers will take part in activities that reflect the deep pride in and gratitude for our school.

To learn more about St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, please visit our website at www.seaspc.org.



RESOLVING TO RETURN OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Dear Parishioners,

If we have a genuine stewardship attitude, we know that every month of the year is a wonderful month. December, with all of its joy and reflection, and feelings, is behind us — but January is no less of a glorious time for us as Catholics.

Of course, we know that Christmas is not quite over. It officially ends when we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord on Jan. 8. Good stewards realize nonetheless that every day and every month is a time to improve our stewardship efforts. We speak of the gifts we have received from the Lord. Our most precious initial gift is life itself. That gift is augmented by the gift of time.

I would like to think that we understand the importance of sharing all we have, including our time. All time is God's time. We each receive the same amount of it, although we also each have been given different responsibilities and opportunities in relation to time. The word "opportunity" is important in our understanding of stewardship. Too often we look at our response to the needs around us, including in our parish, as an obligation, a duty. It is not that we do not have obligations, but in truth, we should be pursuing the opportunities we see. In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated through the title of this important document what stewardship should be — *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. We can conclude from this that stewardship is how we respond to the opportunities presented to us to be good stewards.

Here we are at the beginning of a new calendar year,



a year filled with opportunities. My hope is that we recognize our gifts, see, and pursue the many ways we can share our gifts, and then put all of that into action, for stewardship requires action on all our parts. I would call on each of you to return a portion of your gifts — time, talent, and treasure — to God. Note that I said "return," not "give." Everything that we have and everything that we are is through the grace of God.

We are fond of using the term "New Year's resolutions." I would challenge you to make your primary resolution an effort to live out stewardship through love. Love really is good stewardship. Let us each resolve in this official first month of the year to share who and what we are through acts of love, which may mean returning our gifts to God in a variety of ways. Let us spread God's love to all we encounter and to all we know so that the light of that love shines into every dark corner of our world.

The Irish have always had interesting ways of looking at things. A traditional Irish piece of wisdom that applies to the new year is "Always remember to forget the troubles that pass away. But never forget to remember the blessings that come each day." My prayer is that your new year be filled with blessings and that you live in gratitude for them.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Jose Panthaplamthottiyil, CMI
Pastor

Infant

GOD

As Catholics, we believe that life begins at conception. From the moment a child is formed in the womb, that precious being has inherent dignity. This dignity was given to us from God. In the first chapter of the book of Jeremiah, God said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." Each and every soul is willed and loved by God.

Starting with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God gave us the right to life. In that right, He also gave us the power to choose to love Him. Adam and Eve were given the Tree of Knowledge so that the choice to love and serve God was theirs. As we all know, they chose to eat of the fruit and thus gave each and every person conceived afterward the stain of original sin. But God, in His infinite wisdom and love, chose to save us from death through the sacrifice of His Son. Through Christ's mission on earth, He gave us the Great Commission: "Go, therefore, making 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 behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).



Tillie Grace Cavalluzzi

The Sacrament of Baptism removes the stain of original sin and the baptized becomes a member of the church.

Jesus was conceived without sin, but He was still baptized by John the Baptist. This gave us Baptism as a sacrament for which God uses to pour out His graces on us to help us follow Him and live a holy life so we can go to heaven and be with Him. God gives us the sacraments as a means to receive His Grace, not as a gate to withhold grace from us. The gift of Baptism is a gift that upholds the dignity and restores our souls to the perfection that God intended when He created us.

Baptism is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation — the other two are Eucharist and Confirmation. These three sacraments are where we encounter Christ and receive the graces needed to live a Christian life.

When Baptism is being sought for a child, the parents and godparents attend classes to learn about this important sacrament.

"During this class, they learn about the different parts of Baptism including the different sacramentals used — the oil, Holy Water, candle, and the white garment," says Deacon Tom Alayu. "The Baptismal

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"When parents are asking for Baptism for their children, they are embracing the faith with the commitment that there is a real possibility of defending our faith with their lives. During the Baptism, we recommit to our profession of faith in the Nicene Creed. We must answer it loudly and firmly." — DEACON TOM ALAYU

At Baptism:

'S GIFT OF GRACE AND DIGNITY

candle is lit from the Paschal candle, the light of Christ. It is symbolic of the light that we only get from Christ. Parents and godparents need to keep this light burning brightly and guide this child to be the light of the world. Parents and godparents must take this class and learn more about this aspect of our faith. We cannot give something that we don't have. We need to learn the important parts of our faith so we can pass it on to our children and godchildren."

Our society is constantly attacking the value and dignity of children. Because of this, the responsibility of raising children in the church is of crucial importance. When a child is baptized, parents and godparents are given the weight of this responsibility.

"When parents are asking for Baptism for their children, they are embracing the faith with the commitment that there is a real possibility of defending our faith with their lives," Deacon Tom says. "During the Baptism, we recommit to our profession of faith in the Nicene Creed. We must answer it loudly and firmly."

Being a godparent is not just an honor, but it is also a great responsibility.

"Godparents should be building a relationship with their godchildren," Deacon Tom says. "It is important that godparents recognize the importance of their roles in a child's entire life. They are there to be spiritual guides for these children. They should be praying for them and supporting them in their faith and in their lives. Parents should be very conscientious of the importance of this role as they choose godparents for their children."

The Sacrament of Baptism is a gift that God gave us to deliver us from the original sin that stains our souls. As parents seek to raise children in a society that does not value the gift of life, this sacrament is an important first step in bringing good and life into the world. Bringing children into the Church to love and serve Jesus Christ is the mission of parents and an important way that we can change the view of our culture.



(From left to right) Kristina Rexford, Nick Cavalluzzi, Ashley Cavalluzzi, Tillie Grace Cavalluzzi, Vincent Cavalluzzi; (standing, back) Mark Rexford



Deacon Tom Alayu, Ashley Cavalluzzi, Tillie Grace Cavalluzzi

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Baptisms occur every first and third Sunday of the month after the noon Mass. Classes are offered every second Monday of the month at 7 p.m., in the Rectory meeting room. To register in advance, please contact the parish office at info@seaspcfl.org or call 386-445-2246.



Stewardship:

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

The New Year has arrived, and we have all been busy making — and trying to keep — our list of New Year's resolutions. Many of us choose resolutions geared toward health and fitness. After all, possessing good overall health is critical to our well-being. Others may try to avoid a particularly bad habit. Maybe you need to quit smoking or stop swearing. Still, many of us plan things we have always wanted to do, but never get around to doing.

As the days of January continue onward, however, many of us find the inspiration of keeping our good-intentioned resolutions to be fading fast. By the end of the month, most of us have given in to our temptations and returned to our old ways. We are only human, right? Discouraged by this yearly failure, many of us don't even bother making New Year's resolutions anymore, especially if we feel like we won't succeed.

Maybe our failures lie in both how we make our resolutions and what resolutions we actually choose. What we need to understand is the "root" of our resolution. For example, if you resolve to eat less candy to drop those recently added holiday pounds, is the "root" of your resolution a selfish one — wanting to look better since you overindulged? Or are you genuinely seeking to stop giving in to each "sweet tooth" craving by practicing mortification — giving up of a personal pleasure to glorify God? If the "root" is a selfish one, only to benefit yourself, then it is often difficult to keep in the long run. However, if we

are trying to glorify God, our mission is much more important and worth keeping.

Tying your New Year's resolutions into the principles of stewardship — giving of your time, talent and treasure back to God — is a great way to ensure that the "root" of your resolution is right on track! For instance, resolving to pray each evening before going to bed glorifies God, brings you peace before slumber, and allows you to grow in your relationship with Christ. The "root" is pure. Your desire to keep it will be stronger and make it easier for you to keep. In the same way, resolving to return your talents to God by helping others in need is an excellent choice in creating a selfless resolution with the right "root." Furthermore, resolving to re-evaluate your finances is also extremely important, and the beginning of a new year is a great time to do it. Are you giving back to God out of gratitude for all He has given you? Or are you merely dropping a dollar or two in the collection basket just to feel good about yourself?

If you are not where you would like to be as a good steward — either with sharing your time, talent or treasure — you can resolve to do better. The New Year is a perfect opportunity to start anew and become the good steward that God desires each of us to become. And when we choose selfless things that build His kingdom instead of ours, we are sure to not only stay on track, but to succeed!

*Tying your **New Year's resolutions** into the **principles of stewardship** — giving of your time, talent and treasure **back to God** — is a great way to **ensure** that the "root" of your resolution is **right on track!***

Feast of Santo Niño de Cebú

Celebrating Holy Image of Child Jesus

The third Sunday of January marks a great historical day for the Church. Santo Niño de Cebú is a Filipino feast that celebrates the conversion of the Philippines to Christianity. Each year at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, we join millions around the world in celebrating this great occasion. This year, our celebration will be on Jan. 15.

At the heart of Santo Niño de Cebú is the holy image of the Child Jesus, which is the focus of the festival's veneration. In September 1519, Ferdinand Magellan set sail at the service of the Spanish King and Queen. He intended to find and conquer "Spice Island." Instead, he discovered the Philippines. There, he found a friendly people who welcomed him to the islands. Magellan settled in the city of Cebu, where he befriended the King and Queen and even helped them defend their land from a rival neighboring tribe. It was in that battle that Magellan lost his life, just three years after setting sail.

Before his death, Magellan was able to convert the city of Cebu — including the King and Queen. Upon Queen Juana's Baptism, Magellan gifted her with an image of the Christ Child, which is the focal point of the Santo Niño de Cebú celebration.

Marilou Mallada helps coordinate the annual celebration at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and has seen the uniting power of the feast.

"Three years ago, my husband and I visited the Santo Niño Basilica in Cebu, and we could not believe how large the crowds were," Marilou says. "It was amazing to see all the people partaking in the festivities and it was impressive to see the piety and devotion of the people.

"For the last four and half centuries, the image of the Child Jesus has been visited by pilgrims and many miracles have been attributed to the image," she adds.

The origins of the great devotion to the image of the Christ Child are shrouded in the miraculous.



To celebrate Santo Niño de Cebú, our parish prays a nine-day novena leading up to the feast, celebrates Mass, and hosts a joyous gathering.

In 1565, another Spanish expedition came to Cebu. Unlike Magellan, these conquistadors were hostile and burned the entire city. After the fire, the image of the Christ Child, which was once gifted to Queen Juana, was uncovered in a wooden box totally unscathed by the flames although its surroundings were completely charred.

Later, during World War II, a bomb hit the Basilica where the venerated image was housed. Once again, the image was preserved among great wreckage.

To celebrate Santo Niño de Cebú, our parish prays a nine-day novena leading up to the feast, celebrates Mass, and hosts a joyous gathering.

"In Cebu and other provinces throughout the Philippines, there are lavish parties with fun games, food, and parades attended by millions," Marilou says. "Everyone is welcome to attend our festivities, more information will be announced in the bulletin."

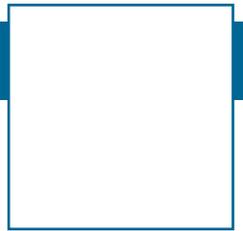
"Devotion Santo Niño de Cebú deepens our faith and helps us to become like children, just as Jesus tells us that it takes childlike faith to enter the Kingdom of God," she adds.

*Please join us for this wonderful celebration on Jan. 15.
For more information, please refer to the parish bulletin.*



ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Welcoming & Inviting Parish • Always Christ-Centered and Word-Based



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UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ Jan. 13 — 6 p.m., Mass followed by Adoration and Healing Prayers by Martin Ibeh
- ▶ Jan. 15 — Noon Mass: Celebration of the Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton with Bishop Erik Pohlmeier
- ▶ March 12 — 2 p.m., Youth Confirmation
- ▶ March 19 — 1:15 p.m., Concert by Fr. Stan Fortuna, C.F.R in Seton Hall
- ▶ March 20-22 — Lenten Retreat with Fr. Stan Fortuna, C.F.R.
- ▶ March 23 — 5 p.m., Lenten Penance Service
- ▶ April 23 — 2 p.m., First Holy Communion
- ▶ May 13 — 6 p.m., Marian Gala to honor mothers at Plantation Bay Country Club
- ▶ May 14 — 6:30 p.m., Concert by Marty Rotella in the church
- ▶ Oct. 20-22 — SEAS Community Fall Festival