



ST. MARY PARISH

Messenger

MAY 2021

We, the Roman Catholic community of St. Mary Parish under the patronage of our Blessed Mother, will proclaim, celebrate, and live out our faith in God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and who sanctifies us in word and sacrament.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GIFT OF THE PRIESTHOOD

By Father Dan Redmond

In my office here St. Mary's, there are a number of things that have been framed and placed on the walls of the office. There is a framed certificate signed by Bishop Emeritus Anthony M. Pilla (who was Bishop at the time) attesting to the fact that he ordained me to the Order of Priest in May of 1996. There is also a framed invitation that was sent out to family and friends inviting them to a Mass of Thanksgiving at my home parish the day after my ordination. On still another wall is a framed portrait of the 1996 ordination class as well as framed diplomas from St. Mary Seminary in Wickliffe.

Perhaps the most important framed item is on the wall directly behind my desk. I look at it every day that I am in my office and, more importantly, offer it as a prayer to God (which indeed it is). It is a gift that I received upon ordination and it has been with me for 25 years. It is a prayer from the Roman Missal prior to the new translation being issued in 2011. The wording of that prayer may be different today, but the spirit of the prayer remains the same. It is the Collect (or Opening Prayer) for the Mass for the Priest Himself On the Anniversary of His Ordination. The prayer (from the old translation) is:

Father, unworthy as I am, you have chosen me to share in the eternal priesthood of Christ and the ministry of your Church. May I be an ardent but gentle servant of your Gospel and your Sacraments.

This has been my prayer each and every day of the 25 years that I have the privilege of serving God and His People as a Priest of the Diocese of Cleveland. I share this with you out of a spirit of thankfulness and to praise God for His love, mercy and generosity. God is never to be outdone in generosity. I have experienced this time and again and, for this, I am profoundly grateful.

From the days of serving as a Parochial Vicar to the last nine and a half years of service here as Pastor of St. Mary's in Chardon, God has blessed me in so many ways. I have been, and continue to be, blessed to celebrate the Sacraments for Christ's people. I have been, and continue to be, blessed to serve alongside so many dedicated people who share their faith so beautifully and powerfully. I have been inspired by the witness of those who have truly embraced the call to holiness that comes to us in baptism. To share the Word of God and to share the Catholic faith have been, and continue to be, blessings beyond measure. To celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and give the Body and Blood of Christ to the people I serve has been, and continues to be, a privilege beyond measure.

All of us, as St. Paul says, "are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us (2 Cor. 5:20-ff)." Whether we are called to the Single life, the Married life or the Priesthood or Religious Life, our Blessed Lord calls us to the abundant life of holiness. May we all allow the Light of Christ to shine brightly in our lives and in our world.

Whether it be times of celebration, times of sorrow or all the times in between, I have experienced the reality that God is good all the time! God's People are truly generous as well. I ask that you please keep me (and all Priests) in your prayers. Let's pray for an increase in vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Let's pray for strong, faith-filled families! Please be assured that you and your loved ones are always in my prayers.

God bless you.

Fr. Dan Redmond

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

By Friederike Wintersteller

Dear St. Mary School Families and Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that we almost completed the 2020/2021 school year. St. Mary School was able to operate in person almost through the entire school year and we are very thankful for that. A special thanks to our maintenance staff for going above and beyond to thoroughly clean and disinfect the school building each day.

Although several events, such as the Christmas and Spring concerts, and our Book Fair were conducted virtually, I would like to point out a few highlights that allowed us to be in person:

Our sixth graders graduated from the Peers Learning Usable Skills (P.L.U.S.) program, a 14-week long drug/violence prevention and personal safety skills education provided by Officer Willis. Congratulations!



We held our annual Viking Quest Spring Fundraiser in April. This year, it was a virtual event. Thanks to our PTU and dedicated volunteers to make this a special event. This year's funds were allocated to a new playground/outdoor learning center. Our goal was to raise \$50,000. By the end of March, we reached the \$25,000 mark and as of April 16 we raised a total of **\$52,594**. Thanks to everyone for your great support! It is much appreciated.



Mrs. Lisachenko's second graders prepared for their First Holy Communion.

Our Junior High Students are ready to perform the Willy Wonka Musical in May.

All our students continued to work hard during this challenging year. Academic achievements were celebrated during our quarterly Honors awards. Our monthly Viking Pride awards recognized students for their acts of kindness.



As we are finishing the last quarter and are looking forward to the next school year, I would like to thank our parents and parish community for all your support and help. We are blessed by your generosity and commitment to make St. Mary's a special place for our students.

In Christ,

Mrs. Friederike Wintersteller - Principal

PRO LIFE MINISTRY

By Vicki Fink

Pro Life ministries offer hope, encouragement and love to people in need of healing and deliverance from the grief and devastation caused by abortion and every attack against God's plan for humanity.

Pro Life means protecting the dignity of life from conception to natural death. Our society does not practice what is right in God's eyes but what is right in their own eyes which leads to their detriment. As people of Life we should imitate the lives and examples of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and most of all Jesus. Spreading the Gospel of Life will demonstrate the love of Christ to nations bound by fear and disillusionment in turbulent times. St. Mary's Pro Life Ministry offers the parish and community many ways to come together sharing prayer and information for education, notifications of Pro Life bills in the legislature, annual baby bottle fund raiser, announcing Pro Life political events, updates in the Church bulletins, and especially supports Priest for Life, 40 Days for Life, Birthright of Geauga, Hanna House, and Rachel's Vineyard, for those who are suffering after an abortion.

Prayer is essential for the success of saving lives, especially the Holy Rosary. God can use your time and talents to promote a society built on Godly principles. You may be homebound and offer some time as a prayer warrior.

If you are interested in donating some of your time and talent to the Pro Life Ministry or would just like more information without any obligation contact the parish office 440-285-7051 or attend one of the Pro Life meetings.

Pray for Life features a monthly prayer intention, short reflection, suggested actions, and more. It focuses on the needs of pregnant and parenting moms of young children in our parishes and our neighborhoods. For more information visit these websites:

www.respectlife.org www.40daysforlife.com
www.priestsforlife.org www.endabortion.us

Spiritually Adopt A Baby

Everyone loves the beauty and innocence of a baby. But not all babies who are newly conceived are allowed to be born. More than 4,000 babies lose their lives every day. As faithful Catholics we are asked to come together as the body of Christ uniting our prayers promoting life in all its stages.

To help stop the anti-life push around the world, the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen encouraged the spiritual adoption of an unborn child. This is done by naming your baby and praying that the one particular but unknown child's life and their parents be spared abortion and be allowed to continue to live. To help accomplish this, it was recommended an individual say the following daily prayer for a period of nine months.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of [baby's name] the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion." - Prayer of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

We have the opportunity to make a lasting difference in saving lives and souls for Jesus. Our prayer intercession will be to end all pain, grief and attacks against the family unit and the disregard for human life, from conception to the end of life.

Prayers are powerful and make a difference:

- Babies and mothers are spared from abortion at the last possible second
- Abortion workers are experiencing conversions and quitting their jobs
- Abortion facilities are closing
- Serve women in crises pregnancies, to keep their babies
- Stop euthanasia and the elimination of the handicapped and disabled
- Help rebuild a culture of life because ALL life matters!

Please share the love of life given to you by the Lord of all life, Jesus Christ, and join in the Spiritual Adoption Program.



Pro Life Baby Bottle Fundraiser

Mother's Day, May 9 through Father's Day, June 20

Due to Covid, instead of coins we are asking for paper money or checks.

Place in the Pro Life envelopes, then into the offertory box in the gathering space.

You may also donate on the St. Mary's website www.stmarychardon.org

Scroll down to "Online Giving" then click on "Pro Life Baby Bottle Fundraiser".

Support local agencies, Birthright in Geauga County, Students for Life, and Priests for Life.

Thank you for your generous donations that have changed lives!

BABY SHOWER

By Scott Swan



Thanks to the outpouring of love and generosity from the parishioners at St. Mary, the Knights of Columbus hosted another successful baby shower for Birthright Geauga. Birthright provides compassionate support for pregnant women and families with young children. In spite of the pandemic the response from St. Mary was resounding and heartfelt, as usual. The following message from Birthright shows how thankful they are for your donations. "Such a generous donation that will bless so many children!! Birthright is so grateful for the continued support of St. Mary and the Knights of Columbus! We could not do what we do to help the families in Geauga county without the generosity of our community. Thank you!!" Thank you again from the Knights for your generosity.

Prayer to End Abortion

*Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life,
And for the lives of all my brothers and sisters.
I know there is nothing that destroys more life
than abortion,
Yet I rejoice that you have conquered death by the
Resurrection of Your Son.
I am ready to do my part in ending abortion.
Today I commit myself never to be silent, never to
be passive, never to be forgetful of the unborn.
I commit myself to be active in the pro-life
movement, and never to stop defending life until
all my brothers and sisters are protected.*

RCIA JOURNEY OF FAITH

By Deacon Larry Boehnlein & Mike Boehnlein



As members of St. Mary parish community we are excited to welcome 3 individuals to full initiation into the Catholic Church and a 9 year old who was baptized and received her first Communion through the RCIC program. They have participated in the RCIA program this past year because of a desire to be part of the Catholic Community of faith. As catechists and team members we have journeyed along with them growing our own faith lives. They have each written the following about themselves and their personal faith journey to share with you. (See the next page.)

In September we will resume our RCIA journey of faith; if you or someone you know has not begun or completed their sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Faith we welcome you to join us on this exciting journey. The program begins in September and continues to the Easter Vigil or when the Candidates are ready to complete their journey. For more information or for any questions you might have call Deacon Larry at 440-285-7051 ext. 21. May the blessings of the Easter Season be with each of you as you continue on your own journeys of faith.



Gladys Lopez

My name is Gladys Lopez. I am originally from San Bernadino, CA, but moved to Chardon in December of 2017. I am currently an IT Helpdesk Technician with Geauga County. In my spare time I like to listen to music, play video games with friends/family, and take nature walks. I am single but did not start out my RCIA journey this way – my boyfriend of 6 years, Ross Verrocchi, wanted to become Catholic so that we could get married through St. Mary's (I was raised Catholic but grew apart from the church when I was a teen). On November 4th, 2020, he received his Rite of Acceptance. He passed away from

natural causes only hours later. The RCIA process has helped me so much in how to deal with grief and putting my trust in God. I honestly do not know how I would have handled his sudden passing if it wasn't for my faith. These past couple of months have been the most difficult in my life, but I know he is watching over me and proud that I am continuing my journey to be confirmed.



Brianna Lang

I'm Brianna Lang. I was born and raised in Chardon and was a 2013 graduate of Chardon High School. After attending Miami University of Ohio for college, I moved to Columbus to begin my career in retail fashion merchandising, but recently moved back home to Chardon to prepare for my wedding in June. It was in Columbus that I met my loving fiancé, Eddie, who had a positive impact teaching me about the Catholic faith and supporting me through the RCIA process. With Christian values and a strong faith being a large part of our relationship, I knew that I wanted something more and God put a calling on my heart to join the Catholic Church and enroll in RCIA. RCIA has had a profound impact on me and through the process I feel closer to God than ever before. I am looking forward to my baptism and partaking in the Eucharist, both of which I know will have a great effect on my future life in the church.



Kim LaSpina

My name is Kim LaSpina. I have been a nurse for the past 18 years. The first 15 years were where I built my foundation in long term and sub-acute care nursing and the last 3 at the Cleveland Clinic main campus flourishing in my role as a perioperative nurse in neuro-surgery. I love being a nurse and feel as though it is my calling. I have been married to my wonderful husband, Anthony, for the last three and a half years. Marriage has been one of our greatest adventures. Anthony and I enjoy spending time outdoors camping and fishing. Together we have one beautiful, kind, smart, and funny baby boy named Nico Antonio. He is 15 months old and will be joining me in getting baptized at the Easter vigil. Becoming a Catholic and joining my son on his spiritual journey to develop an everlasting relationship with God is my privilege and honor as his mother. When I signed him up to be baptized, they asked me if I was Catholic. I said no and they said would you like to be. I immediately answered yes and couldn't be happier. Becoming an RCIA member has led me to a path of walking with God again. It satisfies a spiritual hunger that I have had all of my life and gives me a sense of belonging as well as support. "I once was lost, but now am found" has never been so meaningful until now.



Kristin Brummitt

Hello, my name is Kristin Brummitt and I am nine years old. My favorite subject is reading. My favorite color is light blue. I want to be baptized because I feel like I will be better to God and he will love me so much for doing it and I can pray with my family around me. God will be with me forever if I get baptized. I love my Godmother. I try to respect her so much, she is so nice. She talks to me a lot about God. I think that she is an amazing person.

PSR & SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

By Heather Gady

It has been an unusual year in PSR due to changing the way classes are held as directed by the guidelines set forth by the Diocese. Our class sizes were smaller as more families opted to do the home school elective. Our classrooms were also unique this year as we utilized the church space more than the classrooms. We are happy that we have been able to hold class and that everyone followed the guidelines and remained safe. The teachers and students handled all of the changes with great enthusiasm. We hope to have a more standard year this upcoming fall. If you are interested in sharing your faith with others, we are looking for volunteers to help guide our parish children in their faith and love of Christ. Let us know — we would love to welcome you into this exciting and fulfilling role.

Our second graders and eighth graders have been working hard at preparing for their Sacraments. Although their masses will still be different due to restrictions, we are happy that they are able to have their First Holy Communion and Confirmation. They are looking forward to a closer relationship with Jesus.

Our second graders have been able to attend special review classes once a month to review their religion book and special videos or hands on activities to go along with the chapter topics. The First Holy Communion Retreat was held on April 17. (See the photos on the next page.) It was an exciting and special day, with crafts, skit, activities, practice receiving the host, and reflection as they prepare to receive Jesus for the first time. This year we have about 65 children in the Parish making their First Holy Communion. Please continue to pray for these children as they continue on their path to follow Jesus.

This past March, our eighth graders attended their Spirit Day retreat led by our Life Teen ministry. They had a wonderful day of reflection, as well preparing for their Confirmation. Life Teen did a tremendous job leading them in a day of prayer, skits, table discussion, a craft, adoration and reflection as they read cards from their loved ones. We are proud of the students with all the hard work they have put in this year as they await to become fully initiated members of the Church. Please continue to pray for all of our Confirmandi as well.



PSR 2nd Graders Make Resurrection Crafts



Witnesses and Singing at the Confirmation Retreat

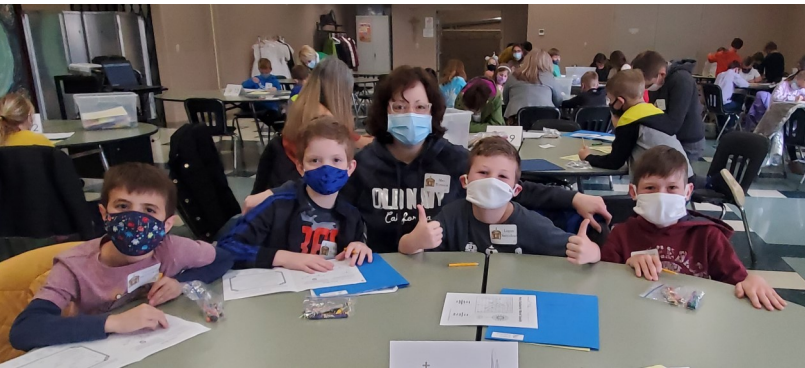


Adoration and Prayer at the Confirmation Retreat



6th Grade PSR Celebrates the Seder Meal

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION RETREAT



DEACON'S VOCATION

By Deacon Tom Peshek and Carolyn Peshek

Introduction

"What exactly is a Deacon?" If you're not sure, you're not alone. While many people understand most of the duties of the priest, many are unsure of the role of the Deacon in the life of the church. Here at St. Mary's Chardon, we are blessed to have two permanent Deacons, one candidate for permanent diaconate, plus a transitional Deacon, who will be ordained to the priesthood next year.

Each of these gentlemen has taken the time to write his story and explain his role, so we may know him better and understand his commitment to our Catholic faith, our church and us individually. These will be published over the next several issues of the *Messenger*. A special "thank you" to Marita Burke for submitting the idea for this article and initiating the interviews with our Deacons!

We begin with an interview with Deacon Tom Peshek, and with thoughts from his wife Carolyn.

How and when did you discern your vocation?

My path of discernment was definitely not a short one. I believe it started when Carolyn and I were married. I was Methodist but we were married in the church, where we agreed that we would raise our children in the Catholic faith. When our oldest child began school at St Mary, I think I was concerned I would not be up to the task of participating in his faith formation. Hence I joined RCIA, purely as a means to learn more about the faith, with no intention of joining the church.

That didn't last long and in fact was the source of early discernment to do more in and for the church. I believe that my desire to serve led me to participate as a member and leader of Parish council, the school future committee, PTU member and on to several sacramental preparation teams.

However, the key factor leading me to consider the Diaconate was the support, encouragement and example of Deacon Ed McCarthy. Ed was involved in nearly all aspects of the parish and served on many diocesan committees most related to diaconate formation.



Was your family supportive?

My immediate family (Carolyn and 3 children) did support my desire and decision to enter formation, in 2000. In fact, Carolyn was asked to publicly sign a letter indicating that support and her understanding of the diaconate ministry.

Bishop Pilla was sure to mention to us on several occasions that our marriage comes first as the source of our strength, followed by family, job (means of supporting ourselves and family), followed by diaconal ministry.

How long was your training?

Formation in the early 2000s was for 4 years. We met on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, September through May each year. Now in addition to the formal course work and homework (lots of reading) there were also several liturgical celebrations for the diaconate community each year, not to mention the non-course work formation opportunities that continued throughout formation and we had a candidate retreat each year.

Carolyn was encouraged to attend all classes and extra events and retreats with me. That was a key component to a successful time of formation, allowing us to grow in our faith together and in the same direction with a similar understanding.

The professors - mostly priests, deacons, and sisters - who often were instructors in the seminary, were outstanding in their knowledge, ability to communicate and their desire to connect to each of us on a deep and spiritual level.

(continued on the next page)

When were you ordained?

Ordination for service to the Diocese of Cleveland was Saturday May 22, 2004 at the cathedral. There were 8 couples in my formation class. Carolyn and I had a parish mass of thanksgiving the next day including a parish reception afterwards. There was also a more private dinner celebration for many parishioners, and family members.

How has this changed or blessed your life and others?

Ordination has definitely changed me. Not just the formation process, but the ongoing formation (there is a diocesan department dedicated to this) and the less formal formation I pursue through reading, prayer, and retreats, the blessings of a deeper prayer life and life of service to God's people always gives me more than I put into anything I do.

I can't precisely say how others have been impacted by my ministry, but I do know that in general the church is richer with the component of married clergy and their life long commitment to the church. I do believe that many have been positively impacted in their faith by: funeral services I've led (in and out of church), Communion services we lead in nursing homes and residences, preaching from a perspective of husband and father, and leading sacramental preparation programs.

What part of your diaconate is most fulfilling for you?

I have to say that there are many elements that are quite rewarding. Chief among them are visits to the elderly. Although these visits are primarily communion services, the personal contact and dialog are what people seem to value as much as receiving Jesus. Also of course are the happy sacramental celebrations of baptism and marriage. These are always extremely touching and a great opportunity to help those participating into a deeper relationship with God.

Anything else you would like to add?

Deacons are ordained for service to the people of the Diocese, at the direction of the Bishop and his successors. I am currently assigned to St Mary Chardon, but that is not necessarily permanent.

We are ordained to serve in the three fold ministry of Word / Liturgy / Charity.



Carolyn's Thoughts

When Tom and I were married, he was Methodist. I saw in him what a great Christian man he was and knew he would be a great husband and father. Throughout our early marriage, he was supportive and participated with me in my Catholic faith. After our two sons were born, he decided to look more deeply into the Catholic faith. He joined RCIA in 1989 and I had the privilege of being his sponsor. It was a learning experience for us both and deepened my faith as much as Tom's. At the Easter vigil, April 14, 1990, Tom was received into full communion of the Catholic Church. We did not realize this was only the beginning of our story and faith journey.

Deacon Ed McCarthy, by his example and his ministry, had a lot to do with Tom discerning the vocation to diaconate. He too could see the kind and compassionate man that Tom was and encouraged him to enter formation. For four years, Tom and I attended classes twice a week and participated in many retreats and other activities. The kids and I tried to support Tom through this as best we could. This was sometimes a difficult thing, since there were also family activities and kids sports that conflicted with these time slots. It was sometimes difficult to juggle everything, but I am so blessed to have had this time with Tom. As he grew in his faith and understanding of the church, so did I.

Diaconate has been such a blessing in our lives. The community of deacons is a supportive family that is always encouraging and loving. We have been blessed to be a part of the sacramental journeys of many friends and family through the years. I enjoy the opportunity to work with Tom on sacramental preparations. There is a lot more to life, than taking care of yourself. The diaconate is all about service to others. Tom is a good example of a faithful servant and I try to work with him and support him in his ministry.



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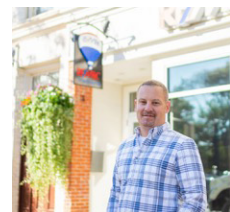


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