



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH

## NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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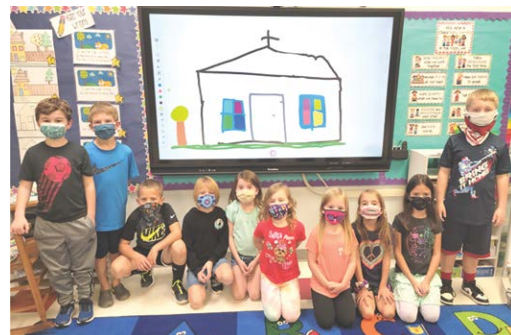
**JANUARY 2022**

## The New Year Offers a *Fresh Start* as We Move Forward with Our Faith

Corrie ten Boom was a member of a Christian family living in the Netherlands during the Holocaust when she and her family began hiding Jewish citizens and helping them escape from the Nazis. But the family was eventually reported and sent to concentration camps. Corrie survived, holding close to her faith throughout this harrowing ordeal. From those horrors came one of her most famous quotes — “Never be afraid to entrust an unknown future to a known God.” Although our current times are not as trying as what Corrie experienced, her words ring ever true today. Our God is known and any fear we have we can give to Him.

Fr. Timothy O’Connor wants to encourage us all to find courage as we approach the new year. We have all faced unknowns in the past two years due to the pandemic, and Fr. Tim is so thankful to see more activities returning with the safeguards that are in place. School is open and the St. Joseph Parish School of Religion has returned to in-person classes. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is also in session and students are practicing sports in the Catholic Youth Organization.

“People are being courageous, but they are also being prudent,” Fr. Tim says. “Just



*First-grade PSR students gathered this fall.*

those things feel so good. It’s gradual, but it makes me feel so good.”

Fr. Tim realizes that some people have preexisting conditions or compromised immune systems, so returning to Mass may not be possible right now. He invites those people to continue accessing Mass online. Christina Dupre has joined our Saint Joseph Staff as Worship and Liturgy Coordinator. Fr. Tim looks forward to the enhanced worship experiences in 2022, under Christina’s direction. He has been so impressed so far by our adult and youth choirs and instrumentalists.

The congregation is doing a great job joining with the choirs,” Fr. Tim says. “It all sounds so wonderful.

During the Lenten season, Christina will be directing a musical that she wrote,

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# 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, many 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!



*A Letter from Our Pastor*



## Start 2022 with a *Clean Spiritual Slate*



Dear Members of St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes,

**W**e were all taught in school that the month of January gets its name from Janus, the ancient Roman god of doors and gates. His image was always carved or painted with two faces, one looking forward and the other backward. This reflected, of course, that you can go either out a door or in through one. From this very specific function, his role was generalized to include all beginnings and new endeavors.

Because of Janus' place in the Roman pantheon, it seemed natural to the Romans to name the first month of the civil year after him. (The Church year began back with the First Sunday of Advent, you'll remember.) And although we no longer worship the pagan gods of the ancient Romans, the name has stuck down the centuries.

But we're not immune to the human instinct that moved the Romans to name the first month after Janus. His double countenance, facing forward and backward, reflects how we approach the coming of each new year.

The last week of the old year finds the newspapers and TV programs giving a glance back at the past year ("the 10 best, or worst, movies of..." and such) along with predictions of what the new year will bring. My personal favorite is always "the 10 worst predictions" for the year just ending – that never happened.

Just like the secular world does — Janus-like — we both look back at our own successes and failures, happy events, and sad ones, during the year just ending, and forward to the new year as we prepare our resolutions.

When we reflect back on the blessings we've received, our hearts should be filled with gratitude — and blessings

there have been, no matter how difficult the year has been. But for most of us, there have been failures and failings, too. That calls for repentance, and perhaps a trip to the confessional — but God, who makes "all things new" (Rv 21:5), will then give us a clean spiritual slate with which we may begin the new year.

I'd also like to challenge you to include your grateful response to God as you make your resolutions for the new year. You don't have to wait until you fill out a commitment card to decide this is the year when you're actually going to attend Mass once a week in addition to Sunday (or begin worshiping every Sunday if you haven't been doing so) or to pray the Rosary every week or to begin regular prayers with your family. Include in your resolutions how you are going to get involved

in some ministry in the parish or some service to the community, and then do so. Decide to become more faithful in your financial stewardship if your treasure commitment is less than it should be. Look forward to the new year and bring Christ and His Church to the center of your resolutions. Then see what a good year it will be, with God at the center!

Have a happy, and holy, New Year.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,  
Pastor



## MEET PARISHIONER *Lynn Johnson:*

*Embracing Service and Involvement, Walking with Christ*

**A**s St. Therese of Lisieux once said, “Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.” This is something that parishioner Lynn Johnson certainly strives to live out.

“God calls us to do different things and for me, He has called me to be a caregiver,” Lynn says. “No one has a perfect life but through our faith, we can get through anything. You are able to do the things that you need to do. My faith is where I get my strength.”

Lynn and her husband, Dereck, have been parishioners at Nativity for nearly 25 years. Throughout their time at the parish, they have been involved in various ministries, from serving as lectors and Extraordinary Ministers, being a member of the Altar and Rosary Society, to helping with pancake breakfasts, steak fries, and clam bakes.

“I am a convert to the Catholic faith but I was raised in a very faith-filled family,” Lynn says. “My mom was very active in our church and volunteering is just something I have always been a part of. We have always been involved in the parish as a family, but in the past five years, we have gotten more involved. We decided we needed to take it a step further and really start giving back to our parish family and just giving back to God.”



*Lynn Johnson (left) presents a check to the local food bank after the Dinner on the Go fundraiser last Easter, which gives the proceeds to the two local food banks.*

When the parish started making some changes, Lynn shares that it had an impact on her and Dereck.

“We decided it was a good time to become more involved and become a positive note in some of the turmoil that was going on,” she says.

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*“God calls us to do different things and for me, He has called me to be a caregiver. No one has a perfect life but through our faith, we can get through anything. You are able to do the things that you need to do. My faith is where I get my strength.” — LYNN JOHNSON*

## MEET PARISHIONER *Lynn Johnson* *continued from page 4*

This was when Lynn took an idea from a ministry in which her aunts are involved at their church in Ohio. This was the beginning of the Dinners on the Go Ministry.

Dinners on the Go is a ministry that helps support the parish financially. On the second and fourth Tuesdays, September through April, volunteers prepare meals and individually package them. They bring the orders out to cars as they drive up. They will also deliver meals to homebound people. There are anywhere from 250 to 320 orders each meal. Meals are each \$12 with an option of adding soup for \$4 more.

“We have a core group of about 18 volunteers of all ages and Dan Abfall, our head cook, is a caterer,” Lynn says. “He

takes a half-day off of work every Tuesday that we do this. We have ladies from the parish who bake desserts for the meal as well.

“Through this ministry, it has really given us a chance to get to know other people in the church,” she adds. “We also have a greater sense of relationship with parishioners at St. Joseph’s.”

For Lynn and her family, being a part of the church is a very important part of her walk with Christ.

“It just fulfills who I am,” she says. “It helps me to see things in a bigger picture and to be selfless where I need to be. It is just the right thing to do.”

## The New Year Offers a Fresh Start as We Move Forward with Our Faith *continued from front cover*

called Compassion, which tells the story of the Passion through the eyes of St. Peter.

As we leave 2021 behind, Fr. Tim wants us all to consider how we might become more involved in the life of the parish in 2022. Whether it’s serving as a lector, choir member, or greeter, we are all needed to make our parishes hospitable and vibrant.

“Take time to pray about how you might serve this year,” Fr. Tim says.

He also encourages us to focus on the fresh start the new year affords us.

“Like in the Sacrament of Penance, we can leave things behind,” he says. “God is giving us another chance. That’s a lot of hope.”

Of course, we can always do more for those around us in need. So, let’s use the new year to look outside ourselves in order to better serve those around us!

“The Lord is with us,” Fr. Tim says. “It is simple. Just don’t be afraid.”



# Catholic Schools Week:

Parish School Prepares to Joyously Celebrate Catholic Education

It will be a full week of joyous celebration we are invited to share as St. Joseph Parish School observes Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 30 through Feb. 5 under the theme, “Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.”

“Catholic Schools Week is a special week that is set aside to recognize the contributions Catholic education makes to our society as a whole and allows us a special time to acknowledge the blessings we have for being part of Catholic education,” says Amy Makruski, Principal. “It also lets us show appreciation for all of the people that make Catholic education possible in our schools and communities. Each school celebrates Catholic Schools Week individually, but it is truly a country-wide recognition.”



Our St. Joseph Parish School students enjoy sports with the CYO program.

The week will begin with St. Joseph Parish School’s tradition of having our students lead the parish in worship at the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass. They will serve as the greeters, ushers, readers, lectors, and choir. Right after Mass, we are invited to the school Open House, where open enrollment for the 2022-23 school year begins.

“Visitors can also visit our Student Vendor Craft Show to see the creative products our students have designed and have available for sale!” Mrs. Makruski says. “The rest of the week will center around our students, parents, and staff with a whole school

kick-off event on Monday, a focus on parent appreciation throughout the week, a recap of the service that the students have done over the past few years, and some special treats to honor our dedicated staff on Friday, as we end our week together. Another special thing that will happen this year is that each student will receive a Catholic Schools Week bracelet that they can wear to school all week to remind us that it is a special week of the year.”

As the new year begins, Catholic Schools Week provides the perfect opportunity for our parish to become more aware of the great things

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Last year, our eighth-grade students took part in a Rosary project for Elyria Catholic High School. All of these students are now attending Elyria Catholic.

## Catholic Schools Week *continued from page 6*

St. Joseph Parish School does throughout the year, as well as the value of a strong Catholic education. The week stands out not only for the students but also for the entire St. Joseph Parish School family.

“I feel like this week is different because it is purposeful recognition of our amazing school, teachers, staff, parents — all of it!” Mrs. Makruski says. “Each week of the year feels special and different, but the purpose of this week really makes it shine. It is also different because we begin to purposefully think to the future school year and welcoming back families that are re-enrolling and welcoming new families who desire a Catholic education for their children at SJS.”

As Mrs. Makruski points out, the week also reminds us of the truly unique gifts we receive through Catholic education.

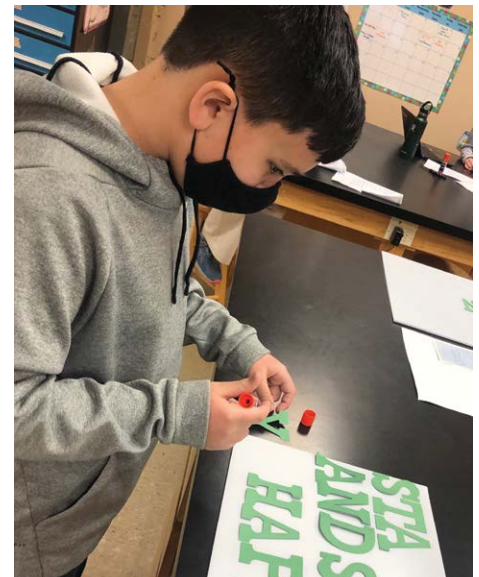
“This week makes us feel significant and remembered,” she says. “From day to day it is easy to feel like, doesn’t everyone get to be in an educational environment like this? Doesn’t everyone get to pray and build morals and values based on faith teachings at school? Doesn’t everyone get to spend time serving others and growing as a Christian each day while having a strong focus on academic growth for each student? No, they don’t. This week helps us remember that and re-centers us on our journey to the end of the school year.”



**If you would like more information about Catholic Schools Week, or for information about enrolling a child in St. Joseph Parish School, please call the school office at 440-988-4244.**



*The third and seventh grade worked together on a service project for the Second Harvest Food Bank.*



*Last year, our students took part in a service project, making signs of encouragement for local hospitals.*

# NEW WALLS

By NATHAN FRANKART, 1st Theology

Peace of Christ to you! It's hard to imagine that roughly three and a half years ago, I was moving all of my possessions into my new room at Borromeo Seminary, room 224. The memories that I have of that particular moment are still tangible to me today. I remember the sights, smells, sounds, feelings of moving into that antiquated space. (Thankfully, the taste was not involved in the move-in process.) It was a difficult time of my life, compounded by a sense that the space I was moving into was ill-equipped and outdated for my needs. The reality of sacrifice in discerning the vocation of priesthood became immediately apparent from day one.

Just from these two pictures alone, I'm not sure how much I can tell you how appreciated the move into this newly renovated living space. The memories that I have created making this room my own is a world different than from all those years ago. The amenities, conveniences, and improvement to dorm life have had an immediate impact on the community. Within hours, we were touring each other's rooms, to show off how we have moved in, and to invite the other brothers to spend time with us in ways that we really did not previously. Even into the start of this new semester, that lively spirit still remains.

Put simply, these are my words of thanksgiving to the parish — all who were involved in the organization, planning, and of course, those who committed to the Heart of the Shepard campaign. You had an immediate impact upon not only our home parishes of St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary but also an impact upon my life. Our parish communities never cease to give me the gift of joy, which is not just limited to the ecstatic support of my discernment, but support for all the various ministries and activities in our community. Your love, prayers and devotion will continue to positively impact me, my brother seminarians, the future of religious vocations in the Diocese of Cleveland, and the lives of those who receive the gift of encountering

you. Remember, brothers and sisters, Christ is born! Go out and rejoice in the world that the Lord is with us!

I rejoice for the gift of journeying with you.





## The Feast of the Epiphany

### *Celebrating the Revelation of God to Mankind*

**W**hile “The Twelve Days of Christmas” is one of the most popular and widely recorded Christmas carols in America and Europe, its lyrics are rarely recognized as referring to the 12 days that stretch from Christmas Day on Dec. 25 until the glorious Feast of the Epiphany.

For centuries, we as Catholics celebrated this feast as the commemoration of the coming of the Magi on Jan. 6, but the decision was made a number of years ago (at least in the United States) to celebrate Epiphany on the Sunday that falls between Jan. 2 and Jan. 8. This year, it falls on Jan. 2.

The Feast of the Epiphany, which originated in the Eastern Church, marks the end of the Christmas season and is intended to celebrate the revelation of God to mankind in human form through the person of Jesus. The

word “epiphany” is taken from a Greek word meaning “appearance” or “manifestation,” and finds its earliest reference as a Christian feast in the fourth century.

But exactly which “manifestation” of Christ Jesus do we recognize on the Feast of the Epiphany? These three men, traditionally named Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, travel in haste towards the Christ Child and remain an undying testimony to the long pilgrimage of peoples in search of salvation.

On the Feast of the Epiphany in 2007, Pope Benedict XVI acknowledged that this celebration elucidates not only man’s pilgrimage towards God, but also God’s pilgrimage towards man in the person of Jesus Christ. He spoke of the glorious incarnation with these words: “It was out of love that He made Himself history in our history.”

On the Feast of the Epiphany, therefore, we come to realize that we are all on a pilgrimage towards Christ, the source of salvation. This pilgrimage is unique to each and every man, but results in a universal and dynamic experience — a constant “growing closer” between God and man. It is for this opportunity that we rejoice!

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: “Happy are those who, while possessing the truth, search more earnestly for it in order to renew it, deepen it and transmit it to others. Happy also are those who, not having found it, are working toward it with a sincere heart. May they seek the light of tomorrow with the light of today until they reach the fullness of light.”

Now when asked: “What occurs on the 12th day of Christmas?” we can respond with joyful certitude: “Epiphany!”

*On the Feast of the Epiphany, we come to realize that we are all on a pilgrimage towards Christ, the source of salvation. This pilgrimage is unique to each and every person, but results in a universal and dynamic experience — a constant “growing closer” between God and us. It is for this opportunity that we rejoice!*



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## Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes

### Mass:

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*  
Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*  
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*  
Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*  
Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*  
5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*  
Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

### Confession at St. Joseph:

*Thursday* - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.  
*Saturday* - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

### Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

## Upcoming Events

### School Resumes

Tuesday, Jan. 4

### Wonderful Women

Monday, Jan. 11 - 7:00 p.m. St. Joseph  
Social Hall

### Immersion 7/8 Meeting

Friday, Jan. 14 - 7:00 p.m. Convent

### IMMERSION High School Meeting

Sunday, Jan. 16 - 12:00 p.m. Convent

### No School - MLK Jr. Holiday

Monday, Jan. 17

### Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 25 - 7:00 p.m. School  
Art Room

### Kick off to Catholic School Week - School Open House

Sunday, Jan. 30 - 12:00 p.m.

### Knights of Columbus 5th Sunday Rosary

Sunday, Jan. 30 - 2:30 p.m. St. Joseph  
Church

### Vincentians Meetings

Thursday, Jan. 6 and 20 - 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room

### R.C.I.A. Meetings

Mondays, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 -  
7:00 p.m. Nativity Parish Hall

### Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays in January  
9:30 a.m. Nativity Parish Hall

### Men's Group Meetings

Tuesday, Jan. 4 and 18 - 7:00 p.m.  
St. Joseph Social Hall

### PSR Classes

Wednesdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 -  
5:30 p.m. St. Joseph School

### Youth Choir Rehearsal

Wednesdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 -  
6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church

### Teen and Adult Choir Rehearsal

Wednesdays, Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 -  
7:15 p.m. St. Joseph Church