



# ST. JOSEPH PARISH

## NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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**MAY 2022**

### MEET PARISHIONER

## GAIL SHINSKY

*Experiencing Deep Connections in Our Faith Community*

**G**ail Shinsky has a unique perspective on St. Joseph. Having been raised in the parish for the first 18 years of her life, Gail joined the Navy, and over two decades later, she returned to the faith community as an adult to register as a parishioner.

“It was so interesting to come back after all those years because everything changes so much while you’re away,” Gail says. “The parents of my old friends remembered me and welcomed me back. I keep that welcome spirit in mind when I see new parishioners or parishioners returning.”

As a child, Gail attended St. Joe’s for grade school and recalls how involved her parents were and witnessing their stewardship as a child.

“You observe everything your parents do as a child and learn from that,” Gail says. “We did Friday night dinners at the parish during Lent, and my dad did a lot of work around the church. My mom was always on the playground helping out at recess time too.”



*St. Joseph's Gail Shinsky*

When she returned as an adult to the parish, Gail wasn't very involved until the associate pastor at the time reached out to her with an invitation to join the Finance Council.

“I was so surprised he knew my name!” Gail says. “In the military, I ran

*continued on page 2*

## Meet Parishioner Gail Shinsky *continued from front cover*



*Gail Shinsky (front, with red sweater) participating in St. Joseph's New Choir*

lots of budgets for the command, and I have an MBA. I thought that the Finance Council was something that I could do, and that's how I first got involved."

Eventually, Gail became the chairperson of the Finance Council and served on that council for 10 years. Then when the person helping the pastor with parish facilities moved away, she saw a new opportunity to give back to the faith community.

"I have a facilities background as well, and so I moved into managing maintenance several years ago," Gail says. "I have been so blessed in my life, so the least I can do is give back to the church in the ways I am capable of giving."

Though Gail has always loved music, she wasn't involved in the parish choir until very recently, with the arrival of our new choir director. Now she praises God through song with the choir at the 11 a.m. Mass

"People need to come hear this beautiful choir," Gail says. "I would like to see more people join! We have violins, guitar, and flute and practice on Wednesday nights. We play more modern songs, and the words go right to your heart."

By being involved in parish life, Gail has experienced a deeper connection with the church community. She's overwhelmed by the examples of so many parishioners who give of their time, talent, and treasure.

"People are so generous, and I appreciate seeing the stewardship of others because that's what inspires me," Gail says. "Stewardship means taking care of my church and living my faith. We have lots of opportunities to do that even on Facebook. Maybe when people see me singing in the choir, I inspire them in some small way."

*"People are so generous, and I appreciate seeing the stewardship of others because that's what inspires me. Stewardship means taking care of my church and living my faith." — GAIL SHINSKY*

A Letter from Our Pastor

## Approaching the Rosary During the Month of Mary



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

**T**his month of May is dedicated to our Blessed Mother. And one of the ways that we honor her is through the Rosary.

The daily Rosary has been in my life since I was a child. It was a part of our family prayer life when I was growing up and has remained with me all these years since.

Matthew Kelly writes about the Rosary in his book *Rediscover Catholicism*, and I found his words very helpful in my own praying of the Rosary. Matthew tells us:

There are many different practical approaches to the Rosary. The first, of course, is to focus on the words. The words of the Rosary are deeply rooted in the Scriptures and Christian tradition.

The Our Father was, of course, given to us by Jesus Himself (Matthew 6: 9-13). The Creed represents the first expression of Christian conviction. The first part of the Hail Mary comes from the message delivered by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Nazareth: "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee" (Luke 1:28). This greeting is then followed by the words Elizabeth used to greet Mary during the Visitation: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb (Luke 1:42). The Glory Be is the simplest expression of Christian belief in the triune God. And from the times of antiquity, Christians have placed themselves under the name of God and the sign of redemption, thus giving us The Sign of the Cross.

The words of the Rosary are powerful and filled with meaning, but so are the mysteries that we use as a backdrop to each decade.

One thing is certain: your mind cannot do two things at once. This is where many people become discouraged with praying the Rosary. They try to pray the words and meditate on the mystery at the same time. Impossible! We must decide between the two, choosing one or the other.

On those occasions when you choose to meditate on the mysteries (that is, the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary), allow the words to float by. Get lost in the scene. Imagine yourself there.

When you choose to focus on the words, it may help to meditate on the mystery for three or four minutes before each decade.

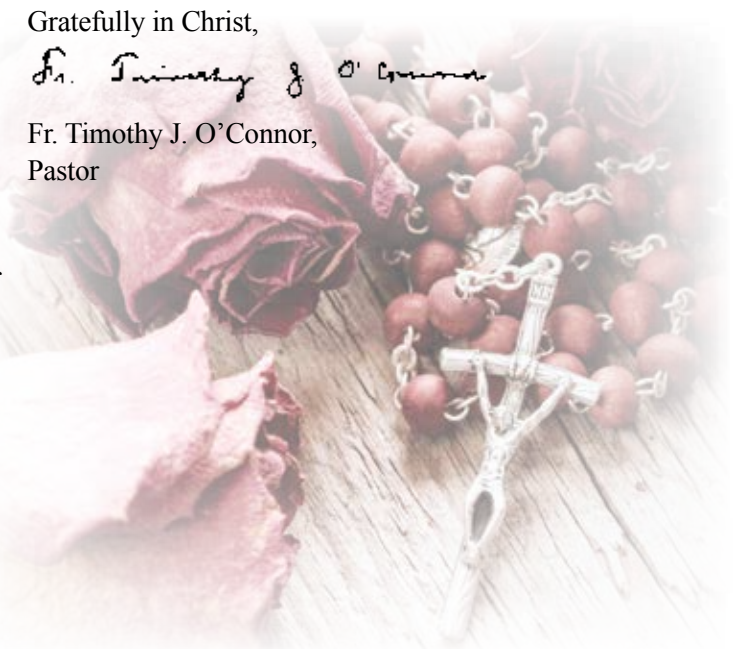
I also find it very fruitful to unite an intention with each decade. Offering each decade for a person or a situation helps me to stay focused, and avails me the opportunity to pray for many people in my life (Matthew Kelly, *Rediscover Catholicism*, pages 268-269).

I hope that Matthew Kelly's ideas might be helpful to you as you pray the Rosary, especially during this month dedicated to Mary. And please remember me as you do, and I will remember you.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor".

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,  
Pastor





# The Bible

## *The Textbook of Stewardship*

**H**ave you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there *is* such a manual — the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, conveyed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have taken possession and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land the LORD, your God, is giving you; put them in a basket and go to the place which the LORD, your God, will choose as the dwelling place for his name... ‘Now, therefore, I have brought the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, LORD, have given me.’ You shall set them before the LORD, your God, and you shall bow down before the LORD, your God” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as



already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church — St. Paul — preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of Who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.

## Celebrating Sacraments of First Reconciliation and Eucharist

### *A Year of Firsts for 34 of Our Second-Grade Students*

**S**econd grade is a special year for students from St. Joseph Parish School and our Parish School of Religion (PSR) students at St. Joseph and Nativity. After receiving their First Reconciliation on Dec. 11, the students all looked so angelic. After receiving First Holy Eucharist on April 30, dressed in their best, the students were all joyful smiles. Our parish community is grateful to celebrate alongside these 34 students.

After many months of preparation with PSR teacher Tracie Heuring and St. Joseph School teacher Ellen Hunker, the second-grade students were excited to receive First Holy Eucharist on April 30 with Fr. Timothy O'Connor presiding.

"The students are so joyous after receiving the sacraments for the first time," she says. "I have watched students literally jump back to their seats with smiles so big!"

PSR Principal Angela Eads has loved walking alongside these students through sacramental preparations. Students participated in a day-long retreat and learned from the Dynamic Catholic *Blessed* series to prepare for both sacraments.

"In Reconciliation, we are provided an opportunity to heal our relationship with Him," she says. "In the Eucharist, we are reminded about the sacrifice Jesus made for us."

Mrs. Hunker also feels blessed to walk the students through sacramental preparations. Their faith keeps her growing in her own faith, and she loves seeing them experience God's forgiveness in Reconciliation.

"Most students feel like they are going to get in trouble or have to do something to earn God's forgiveness," Mrs. Hunker says. "Seeing them receive it unconditionally when they come to Reconciliation with repentant hearts is awe-inspiring."

April 30 was certainly a much anticipated day. Now that it's over, Mrs. Eads and Mrs. Hunker hope the students will carry their joy for the sacraments for many years to come.

"They look forward to the day and often ask me on the first day of school what the countdown to their First Communion is," Mrs. Hunker says. "They have a pure, unadulterated love for Jesus that is just such a joy to be around."

We offer our heartfelt congratulations to the 34 students of our faith community who received these beautiful sacraments.



*Second-grade PSR students*



*Second-grade St. Joseph School students*

# Celebrating Our 2022

"THEY WILL ALL

Every single student, from preschool to eighth grade, is of special value at St. Joseph Parish School. Each child brings something very special to our school family. Each year, all the St. Joseph school staff is both excited and sad to see the eighth-grade students graduate — it's a joy to see them move forward, but hard to see them leave.

On June 2, we will celebrate our 10 eighth-grade graduates with Mass and a reception. Teachers will share stories, talents, and strengths for each student to celebrate them for who they are. The students also sing a special song for the occasion. The rock in front of the school is painted for the class and is left that way until the following year's class graduates.

Principal Mrs. Amy Makruski and eighth-grade teacher Mary Mullins will especially miss these students.

"For some, their whole school journey has been here at St. Joe's," Mrs. Makruski says. "Graduation is a big event as we wish them well at their future school."

Students who attend St. Joseph Parish School primarily attend Elyria Catholic High School; Marion L. Steele High School; Magnificat High School, an all-girls school; and Saint Ignatius High School.

"Many are going to different places, but they will all take a piece of the school with them," Mrs. Makruski says.

Mrs. Makruski and Ms. Mullins are confident that the students have been well-formed in the faith since it's been a part of their daily lives for their school careers.

"They have all taken to heart what their faith means to them," Ms. Mullins says.

Mrs. Makruski has been so pleased with how dependable these students are — they are always willing to help.



*The class of 2022 (not pictured, Taven Milum)*

"The strengths these kids have play out each day," Mrs. Makruski says. "They are just a really great group of kids."

"I am really going to miss them next year," Ms. Mullins says. "They all mesh well together. Even though they are all very unique, they are so accepting and open with each other. That's rare."

This class has spent the years participating in several sports and activities. Many of the students have strong musical and theater talents, as well.

Ms. Mullins and Mrs. Makruski have some parting words for the students as they all head off to new places.



# Eighth-Grade Graduates

TAKE A PIECE OF THE SCHOOL WITH THEM"



*The graduating eighth-grade class*

"Remember the St. Joe's version of yourself," Ms. Mullins says. "Carry that person with you as you become the high school and adult version of yourself."

"Remember that excellence happens on purpose," Mrs. Makruski says. "Try to continue to live that out for the rest of your life."

Congratulations to our eighth-grade graduates! We wish you every success in your next chapter!

Each of the 10 graduates had some parting words as they leave St. Joseph's.

"When I get to high school, I won't ever have the same kind of relationships with my peers that I have at St. Joe's, and I will really miss that," says Noah Lewis.

"I would like to thank the teachers at St. Joe's for encouraging me to try my hardest every day and grow as a student," says Audrey Ilcisko.

"SJS taught me that if you keep trying, you will get it right and live up to your expectations," says Audrey Crossan.

"I'm so glad I got to go to a Catholic school because all of the teachers push me to do my best every day," says Lilly Stewart.

"I'm thankful for going to St. Joseph School because I've met so many great people and the teachers help me and are there for me," says Giada Cioffi.

"Some of my best memories are at SJS," says Riley Baker. "I'll miss being able to have friends like the ones that I made here. The best thing about being able to go to SJS is the teachers because they never give up on struggling kids."

"This is not just a school, but a family," says Taven Milum.

"SJS taught me how to be kind and forgiving towards others and also how to persevere through tough times," says Jacob Gillispie. "I am going to miss SJS because of the people and the things they have done for me."

"This school has been the best atmosphere for me to succeed, the classes and people have been welcoming, the teachers are helpful and open with us," says Michael Marrero. "I wouldn't want to graduate from anywhere else."

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*"The strengths these kids have play out each day. They are just a really great group of kids."* — AMY MAKRUSKI, PRINCIPAL

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# St. Philip Neri's Faith Journey

## *Patron Saint of Holy Fun*

**C**an a saint have fun on the way to attaining holiness?

Many would say that St. Philip Neri definitely fits that bill.

Born in 1515 in Florence, Italy, St. Philip Neri showed his fun side from the time he was a boy. One such incident almost cost him his life. Seeing a donkey loaded with fruit for market, the impulsive and spontaneous little boy jumped on the donkey's back. Surprised, the donkey lost his footing, and along with the fruit and young Philip, tumbled into a cellar. Miraculously, Philip was unhurt.

Philip's father struggled financially, so 18-year-old Philip was sent to work with an older cousin who was a successful businessman. During this time, Philip found a favorite place to pray in a spot upon a mountain that had been turned into a chapel.

During these hours of prayer, Philip is said to have decided to leave worldly success behind and dedicate his life to God.

Eventually, Philip went to Rome. In 1548, Philip formed a confraternity with other laymen to minister to pilgrims who came to Rome without food or shelter. The spiritual director of the confraternity convinced Philip he could do even more work as a priest. After receiving instruction from this priest, Philip was ordained in 1551.

As a young priest, Philip learned to love to hear confessions. Young men especially found in him the wisdom and direction they needed to grow spiritually. But Philip began to realize these young men needed something more than absolution — they needed guidance. So, Philip began to ask the young men to come by in the early afternoon when they would discuss spiritual readings, and then stay for prayer in the evening.

Philip understood it wasn't enough to tell young people not to do something — you had to give them something to



do in its place. So, at Carnival time, when the worst excesses were encouraged, Philip organized a pilgrimage to the Seven Churches with a picnic, accompanied by instrumental music for the midday break. After walking 12 miles in one day, everyone was too tired to be tempted!

Philip was known to be spontaneous and unpredictable, charming and humorous. He seemed to sense the different ways to bring people to God. One man came to the Oratory just to make fun of it. Philip wouldn't let the others throw him out or speak against him. He told them to be patient, and eventually the man became a Dominican. On the other hand, when he met a condemned man who refused to listen to any pleas for repentance, Philip didn't try gentle words. Instead, Philip grabbed the man by the collar and threw him to the ground. The move shocked the criminal into repentance and he made a full confession.

Humility was the most important virtue he tried to teach others, as he continually worked to learn it himself. Some of his lessons in humility seem cruel, but they were tinged with humor — like practical jokes — and were related with gratitude by the people they helped. His lessons always seemed to be tailored directly to what the person needed.

Philip did not escape this spiritual mortification himself. As with others, his own humbling held humor. There are stories of him wearing ridiculous clothes or walking around with half his beard shaved off. The greater his reputation for holiness, the sillier he wanted to seem.

But Philip was very serious about prayer. He was so easily carried away that he refused to preach in public and could not celebrate Mass with others around. But when asked how to pray, his answer was, "Be humble and obedient and the Holy Spirit will teach you."

Philip died in 1595 after a long illness. His feast day is on May 26, just in time to kick off the season of summertime fun.





# HALFWAY THERE

By *NATHAN FRANKART*

**P**ease of Christ to you! Well, that's another year of discernment, formation, and growth accomplished at the seminary. I just finished my fourth year of studies, and with only four more years to go, I anticipate many blessings...

Wait... that's it? Am I halfway done? Do you mean that there will be fewer days ahead of me in formation than behind? No one told me I was moving this far this fast... Am I really that close to active ministry? I'M GOING TO BE 24 IN AUGUST?

What you just read was my monologue during my move-out process at the end of this year. Yes, I could reminisce about the time gone by and recount all the beautiful, extraordinary moments of the last four years, but that's not what I wish to do. I choose to talk about time... because there will never be enough time.

In our minds, there will never be enough time to be exactly who we long to be before we start a task. For this reason, Christ did not let His disciples fall into the trap of waiting or wanting more time. Instead, He called them forth, told them to become fishers of men, and they

followed. Out of all the emotions that must have rushed through their minds and the minds of all the followers of Jesus, the most aggravating one could have been the sense of unpreparedness.

It's evident that Jesus did not want His first disciples to wait until they were satisfied to be on mission, and neither should we. So don't delay, have that conversation on faith with a loved one or friend. Don't mull over that invitation you want to extend to someone to return to church. Christ has risen; we have been called to a new life. Go now. Go now and serve the poor, go now and visit the sick and those in assisted living, go now to feed the hungry.

Do you feel unprepared to do these things? You are in good company, the company of every disciple, saint, priest, religious sister and brother, married couple, consecrated religious, everyone. We have our Risen Lord; God is not dead, but alive and with us in the sacraments and our hearts.

I feel unprepared for another year of formation, but I have Jesus, and this is enough.

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This newsletter brought to you by the Catholic Communities of:

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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 Activities and Events

### Faithfully Fit Yoga

Tuesdays and Thursdays — 9:30 a.m., Nativity Parish Hall

### Men's Group Meetings

Tuesday, May 3 — 6:30 p.m. at Brew Kettle  
Tuesday, May 17 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall

### Nativity Altar and Rosary Society meeting

Tuesday, May 3 — 6:30 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

### May Devotion at St. Joseph

Friday, May 6 — 10 a.m., St. Joseph Church

### First Friday Rosary, May Crowning and Benediction

Friday, May 6 — 7 p.m., Nativity Church

### First Saturday Rosary

Saturday, May 7 — 9 a.m., St. Joseph Church

### Parent Club Meeting

Tuesday, May 10 — 7 p.m., School MPR

### Wonderful Women

Tuesday, May 10 — 7 p.m., SJ Social Hall

### Baccalaureate Mass

Sunday, May 15 — 11 a.m. at St. Joseph Church

### Immersion HS and Immersion 7/8 Picnic

Sunday, May 15 — 12 p.m., Convent and Church Grounds

### SJS Spring Concert

Friday, May 20 — 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Church

### Blood Drive

Thursday, May 26 — at 4 p.m., Vitalant bus outside of the St. Joseph Social Hall

### Knights of Columbus 5th Sunday Rosary

Sunday, May 29 — 2:30 p.m., St. Joseph Church

### Memorial Day

No school — Parish Offices closed