



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER 2023

Meet Parishioners Ken and Lindsay Collins

*Embracing the Energy and Positivity
 of Our Faith Community*

Energy and positivity — Ken Collins feels that each time he walks through the doors at St. Joseph's. He and Lindsay joined the parish six years ago, and it quickly became home.

The couple has five children — Mikayla, Derek, Logan, Grace and Cameron. The family joined the parish after moving to Amherst. Their previous parish was St. Thomas the Apostle in Sheffield Lake, where Ken grew up and all the children, except Cameron, were baptized. Cameron was born prematurely and had complications. It was at this time that the Collins family relied on their faith.

"Serving was a result of that experience," Ken says. "We wanted to do more within the church."

Lindsay went through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process and became Catholic in 2008. It was important to the couple to raise their children in the faith.

Ken serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, usher, and a member



The Collins family

of the Men's Group and Prayer Chain. He also helps set up for Mass. Derek, Logan, and Grace also help with ushering. Lindsay is there as the backbone so the family can be involved.

Of all those ministries, Ken most enjoys being an Extraordinary Minister.

"I feel that being a conduit between Jesus and the person I am serving

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Good Stewardship of Our Social Media

When talking about stewardship and how we care for the gifts we have been given, it is not often we stop to think about how we are using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic to consider when talking about the many young people, as well as adults, who gather online. Therefore, it is important to consider how we are using the amazing gifts of technology.

If you are frequently online — especially on Pinterest — there is a popular acronym that you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is *THINK*, and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

T rue? Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

H elpful? Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don't need to over-examine all of our content to consider its "educational factor," but is the content we are posting going to help someone learn about us, learn about a place or an activity,

think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

I nspirational? There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. "Positive" is the key word — are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?

N ice? Have we considered the feelings of others when we include them in a status or post a picture of them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

K ind? What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. *THINK* is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. A major part of living out the Gospel has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God's light and love to others — and we can do just that by sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, or a beautiful image of God's inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!

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A Letter from Our Pastor

Nurturing the Spirit of Stewardship Through the Rosary



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

With Fall in full swing and October upon us, I am filled with joy and gratitude for the opportunity to share with you the profound significance of this month as the Month of the Most Holy Rosary. October is a time when we, as faithful Catholics, are called to deepen our commitment



to living out the principles of stewardship and discipleship, guided by the beautiful devotion of the Rosary.

The Month of the Most Holy Rosary holds a special place in our hearts and our Church calendar. It is a time when we are invited to meditate upon the mysteries of our faith through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Just as the beads of the Rosary are intricately woven together, so too are our lives woven into the fabric of God's plan for each of us. By contemplating the joyful, sorrowful, luminous, and glorious mysteries, we are drawn closer to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Stewardship is a concept deeply rooted in our Catholic faith, reminding us that all we have is a gift from God, and it is our responsibility to use these gifts wisely for the service of others and the glory of God. The Rosary, a prayer that encompasses the entirety of Christ's life, is a perfect tool for nurturing the spirit of stewardship within us.

As we reflect on the joyful mysteries, we are reminded of the gift of the Annunciation and the humility of Mary's "yes" to God's plan. This encourages us to be open and receptive to God's will in our lives, just as Mary was.

The sorrowful mysteries teach us the importance of self-sacrifice and compassion, as we meditate on the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus. This prompts us to consider the ways we can alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters in need.

The luminous mysteries remind us of Christ's public ministry and the importance of sharing the Gospel with others, motivating us to be active disciples who spread the message of love and salvation.

Finally, the glorious mysteries inspire us to look forward to the eternal rewards that await

us, motivating us to live lives of faithful stewardship in anticipation of God's heavenly kingdom.

In this Month of the Most Holy Rosary, I encourage each of you to take up this powerful devotion as a means of deepening your stewardship and discipleship. Set aside time each day to meditate on the mysteries, allowing Mary to guide you in embracing your role as stewards of God's gifts and as dedicated followers of Jesus. As we offer our intentions through the Rosary, let us also pray for the grace to live lives that reflect the love and mercy of Christ, reaching out to those in need and shining His light in a world often filled with darkness.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary intercede for us as we embark on this journey of stewardship and discipleship through the Rosary. May her example inspire us to live lives that bear witness to the transformative power of faith and prayer. And may our commitment to the Rosary lead us closer to Christ, guiding us in our mission to be faithful stewards and devoted disciples.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor

The True Meaning of the Word "Stewardship"

There is a stigma attached to the word "stewardship" in some Catholic parishes, likely because many pastors and parish leaders mistakenly equate stewardship to money. But a true steward knows that couldn't be further from the truth.

Stewardship is a biblical principle that actually has nothing to do with money. As a matter of fact, 19 of the main parables of Christ relate directly to stewardship. And, in those parables when Christ speaks of stewardship, He never mentions raising money. Surprised?

Stewardship simply means being grateful for all of God's blessings. Everything we have – each breath we take on earth, the tremendous talents we possess, and our ability to earn income to sustain ourselves – all stem from God. We come into the world with nothing and we leave with nothing.

Recognizing this and being grateful for our bountiful blessings is the first step of stewardship. Once these realizations fall into place, we are then eager to find a way to respond to God's generosity and to embark upon a stewardship way of life.

And stewardship is just that, a way of life. It is not like a TV show to which you can tune in whenever the mood strikes, and shut off when you are no longer interested. It is truly a way of living.

Yet, the mere word "stewardship" has gotten a bad rap over the years — and not just by us lay people.

According to the late stewardship pioneer Msgr. Thomas McGread, when a pastor speaks about money during his homily, 75 percent of the congregation immediately stops listening. However, did you know that tithing is mentioned in the Old Testament 39 times, and in the New Testament

11 times? Tithing is biblically based, and it simply means to give a portion of our gifts back to God.

In 1992, when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops were forming the Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, they originally didn't want to title it *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.

"Instead, they wanted to just call it *A Disciple's*

Response, with the reason being that they felt stewardship meant money," said Msgr. McGread before his passing in April 2013. "I convinced them at the time that 'stewardship' is a biblical term and it is our job to explain what a steward is. Before the Pastoral Letter, most of us didn't understand the spiritual dimension of stewardship."

So, how do we go about sharing the spiritual dimensions of stewardship with fellow parishioners and lay leaders?

First of all, Msgr. McGread cited the importance of being hospitable

and discovering the needs of parishioners. He felt that when parishioners were welcomed and their needs were met, they were fulfilled and felt a sense of belonging to their parish. This, in turn, creates ownership. Once parishioners felt like they were part of the parish, they wanted to respond by volunteering, and sharing their time, talent and treasure in order to help make it the best parish community possible.

And, as parishioners support their parish with all of their resources out of gratitude, the entire parish blossoms. Prayers increase, ministries grow, and yes, the offertory increases. These blessings are natural outcomes of living a stewardship way of life, and they are why it is important that we should always remember the true meaning of the word "stewardship."



*Ellen and Justin Hunker and
little Ezra with Fr. Tim*



Meals for the Homeless: *Putting the Corporal Works of Mercy into Action*

As Catholics, when we reflect upon the importance of serving others in need, one particular Scripture passage may immediately come to mind — “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25:35-36).

The Catholic Church recognizes seven corporal works of mercy that are based on this Scripture passage — feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, burying the dead, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned and giving alms to the poor.

One local opportunity to engage in these works of mercy is through the St. Elizabeth Center in Lorain. This center is a part of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Cleveland and has been providing food and shelter to our area for more than 20 years. Our St. Joseph and Nativity parish communities have been happy to support the mission of the St. Elizabeth Center for nearly as long as they have been open. Our primary means of supporting the St. Elizabeth Center in its efforts is by providing meals on the first Friday of each month.

“I continue to do this ministry because I want to give back to our neighbors in need,” says Linda Howell, who has been involved in this ministry for at least 15 years. “I have been there and know what it is like to not have a lot of money to buy groceries at the store to feed my family. I stood in line to receive free food so that I could cook for my children. I have never been homeless, but I feel as a Christian that God

has provided for me and my family, and so I should share the blessings and bountifulness that we have received.”

As ministry leader, Linda has worked to organize and schedule the cooks and collectors for the meals that the church provides each month.

“I started as a cook when I was a parishioner at St. Anthony’s,” she says. “I became a collector in addition to cooking when I joined St. Joseph’s. Over the years, we have lost a few collectors, so I have ended up cooking a few of the meals on my own. Some of the cooks that we have, they have been serving for many years. They are so wonderful, giving, and eager to serve those in need.”

When the ministry members cook the meals, they are providing for 50 people at the shelter. Linda is looking to step down as the ministry leader for this group, but needs someone to step up to organize the cooks and collectors so they can still continue providing this important work of mercy to those in need in our local area.

“This ministry is so important to me,” she says. “Even during the pandemic, I worked to raise money so I could buy groceries and cook food for them when the shelter was closed. I will continue to cook and feed the homeless, but I need some help with the organization.”

Jesus calls us to care for those less fortunate than us and this is one opportunity to serve those in our area who are in need. By providing this one meal a month, our parish feeds the hungry and gives drink to the thirsty in a very tangible way.

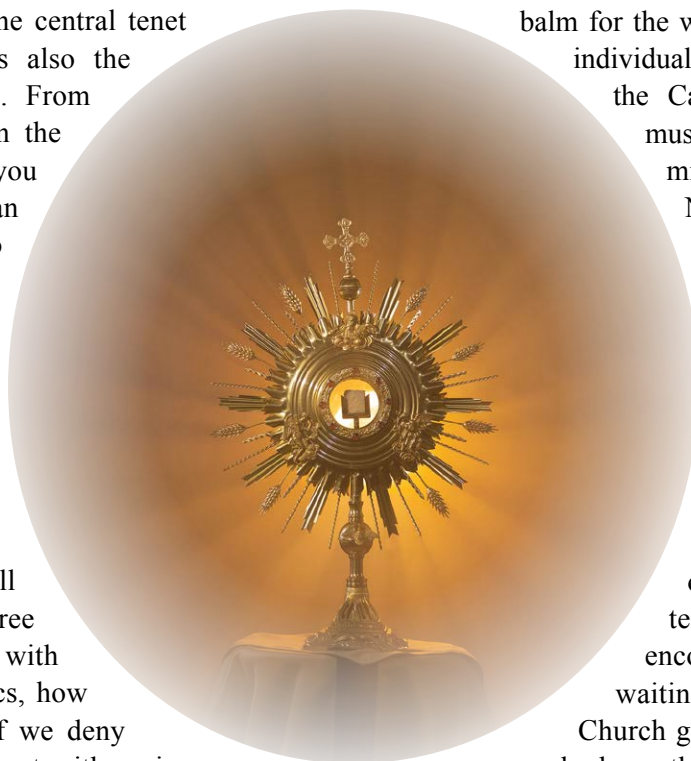
Anyone interested in cooking, collecting the food that has been cooked, or helping with the organization may contact Linda Howell at howelll@howellapparel.com or 440-320-4227.

A Closer Look at the USCCB's National Eucharistic Revival

It's no coincidence that the central tenet of our Catholic faith is also the most difficult to accept. From the moment Christ taught in the Gospel of John that "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you," his followers began to walk away. Today is no different, as the Pew Research Center found that only 31 percent of Catholics believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Christians of all denominations generally agree that a personal relationship with Christ is crucial. As Catholics, how can this relationship grow if we deny that Christ is physically present with us in the Eucharist? How can this relationship deepen if the Body and Blood of Christ is received without belief in His presence?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has listened and looked at the hurt that exists in our world among Catholics and non-Catholics alike. If Christ is the



balm for the wounds that have been created in individuals, families, and societies, then the Catholic Church has a gift that must be shared. With this mission in mind, they now offer us a plan for a National Eucharistic Revival that reaches parishes, dioceses, and the Church as a whole in the hope that by renewing our own faith, we will be ready to share it with others in desperate need of Christ's healing.

What does it mean for us to experience this revival? It's more than a renewal of faith, or simply accepting Church teaching — it is a real and personal encounter with the love of Christ, waiting for us in the Eucharist. The Church gives us many ways to encounter and share this love. Eucharistic Adoration is an opportunity to cultivate one's relationship with Christ in the Eucharist through quiet prayer and presence. Eucharistic Processions — which many churches held when the Eucharistic Revival began on the Feast of Corpus Christi — are a public way to show reverence and belief in the healing power of the Eucharist.

From Nov. 5-18, our parishes will be displaying the Eucharistic Miracles by Carlo Acutis — different displays will be available for viewing at both parishes. On Nov. 14, Nativity of the BVM Parish will begin a day of adoration following the 8 a.m. Mass and ending with an EXULTE by Sanctuary and Christina Dupre. On Nov. 17, a day of adoration at St. Joseph Parish will begin following 9 a.m. Mass, concluding with guest speaker Trapper Jack presenting "Eucharist: A Challenging Truth to Swallow" during Taize Vespers with Christina Dupre. On Nov. 18, at 7 p.m., there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and closing at both parishes. All are invited and encouraged to attend the events at both parishes.

Deepening Our Relationship with Christ

The National Eucharistic Revival will span three years and began in June 2022 on the Feast of Corpus Christi. The first year focused on how each diocese can promote love for our Eucharistic Lord. The second year — which began this past June 11 — is focused on bringing this closer to home to the parish level. Here at St. Joseph and Nativity, we will evaluate how to deepen our relationship with Christ in the Eucharist. The third year will bring us to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress and the National Year of Mission,

when we will be prepared after our own renewal to bring the love of Christ to our families, neighbors, and communities.

The vision for the National Eucharistic Revival is long-term. Beginning with our own hearts, Christ's love has the power to bring deep and lasting healing to our world. The Catholic Church holds the unique gift of Christ's Eucharistic Presence, but this gift is for everyone. Please join us as we deepen our faith and relationship with Christ individually and as a parish.

For more information, visit www.eucharisticrevival.org and www.usccb.org/resources/welcome-national-eucharistic-revival.

Meet Parishioners Ken and Lindsay Collins *continued from front cover*

Communion to is such a beautiful and fulfilling experience, and I get to have that experience multiple times at each Mass," he says. "There is truly no feeling like it."

Ken loves involving the children in setting up for Mass. He tries to get them involved whenever possible.

"They get to experience the reverence of approaching the tabernacle and seeing Jesus looking down on them from the crucifix," Ken says. "By being able to set up before Mass, they have begun to understand our relationship with God and Jesus."

The children also enjoy their involvement in the Parish School of Religion. Ken and Lindsay are always impressed by how much they learn. The couple loves their community, who have become like family, at St. Joseph's.

"We are all children of God, and it is enjoyable to be around others who appreciate that like we do," Ken says. "We all love the music and the productions they put on during the holidays."

Get involved in a ministry that fits your talents — that's Ken's advice. Get past any nervousness you might have and just give it a try.

"I believe God is calling us to help in any way we can," Ken says. "I do not sing well, nor do I like reading in front of large groups, so I think I found my niche."

The Collins family is very active and loves to spend time together and with friends and family. The kids are involved in sports and other activities which keep them busy. They also love camping, traveling, cooking, and music.

"I feel that being a conduit between Jesus and the person I am serving Communion to is such a beautiful and fulfilling experience, and I get to have that experience multiple times at each Mass. There is truly no feeling like it." — Ken Collins

The Feast of St. John Paul II: Oct. 22

Beloved Pope Exemplified Stewardship in Service and Love

October brings us the feast day of a remarkable saint and spiritual leader, St. Pope John Paul II. On Oct. 22, we have the privilege to honor and reflect upon the life of a man who embodied the essence of Catholic stewardship and discipleship. His legacy continues to inspire and guide us as we navigate our own paths of faith.

St. Pope John Paul II, born Karol Józef Wojtyła, was a luminary figure who left an indelible mark on the Church and the world. His deep devotion to Christ, his unwavering commitment to stewardship, and his profound discipleship provide us with a roadmap for living authentically as Catholics in our modern times.

Catholic stewardship, at its core, is about recognizing that all we have is a gift from God and that we are called to use these gifts to serve others and build God's kingdom. St. John Paul II's life exemplified this principle. From his early days as a priest in Poland to his pontificate as pope, he demonstrated a profound humility and selflessness. His dedication to the poor and marginalized, his efforts to promote peace and justice, and his advocacy for the sanctity of human life showcased his commitment to stewardship. His encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, emphasized the dignity of work and the responsibility we must ensure just working conditions for all. St. John Paul II's stewardship extended beyond material resources — it embraced the stewardship of time, talent, and relationships, fostering unity and solidarity among all people.

Furthermore, St. Pope John Paul II's discipleship mirrored the heart of Jesus' call to follow Him. His deep personal relationship with Christ was evident in his prayer life, his devotion to the Eucharist, and his

profound love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. He constantly emphasized the importance of encountering Christ in our lives and allowing that encounter to transform us. His devotion to the Holy Rosary and his practice of the Divine Mercy devotion showcased his trust in the mercy and love of God. As disciples, he encouraged us to be unafraid witnesses of the Gospel, courageously proclaiming Christ's message of hope and salvation to a world in need.

St. John Paul II's papal motto, "Totus Tuus," meaning "Totally Yours," encapsulates his complete consecration to Mary and through her, to Christ. This devotion to the Mother of God teaches us the value of entrusting ourselves completely to God's will, just as Mary did. In doing so, we learn to navigate life's challenges and joys with unwavering faith and surrender.

As we celebrate the feast day of St. Pope John Paul II, let us reflect on his life and teachings. Let us be inspired by his dedication to stewardship, reminding ourselves that we are called to use our gifts for the betterment of others and the glory of God. Let us embrace his model of discipleship, striving to encounter Christ daily through prayer, the sacraments, and acts of love and mercy.

May we find in St. John Paul II a guiding light, encouraging us to live as true disciples of Christ in our families, workplaces, and communities. Let us draw strength from his example, especially in times of challenge, and seek his intercession in our journey of faith.

On this feast day, let us pray that the spirit of St. Pope John Paul II continues to ignite our hearts and guide us as we embrace the call to stewardship and discipleship in our lives.



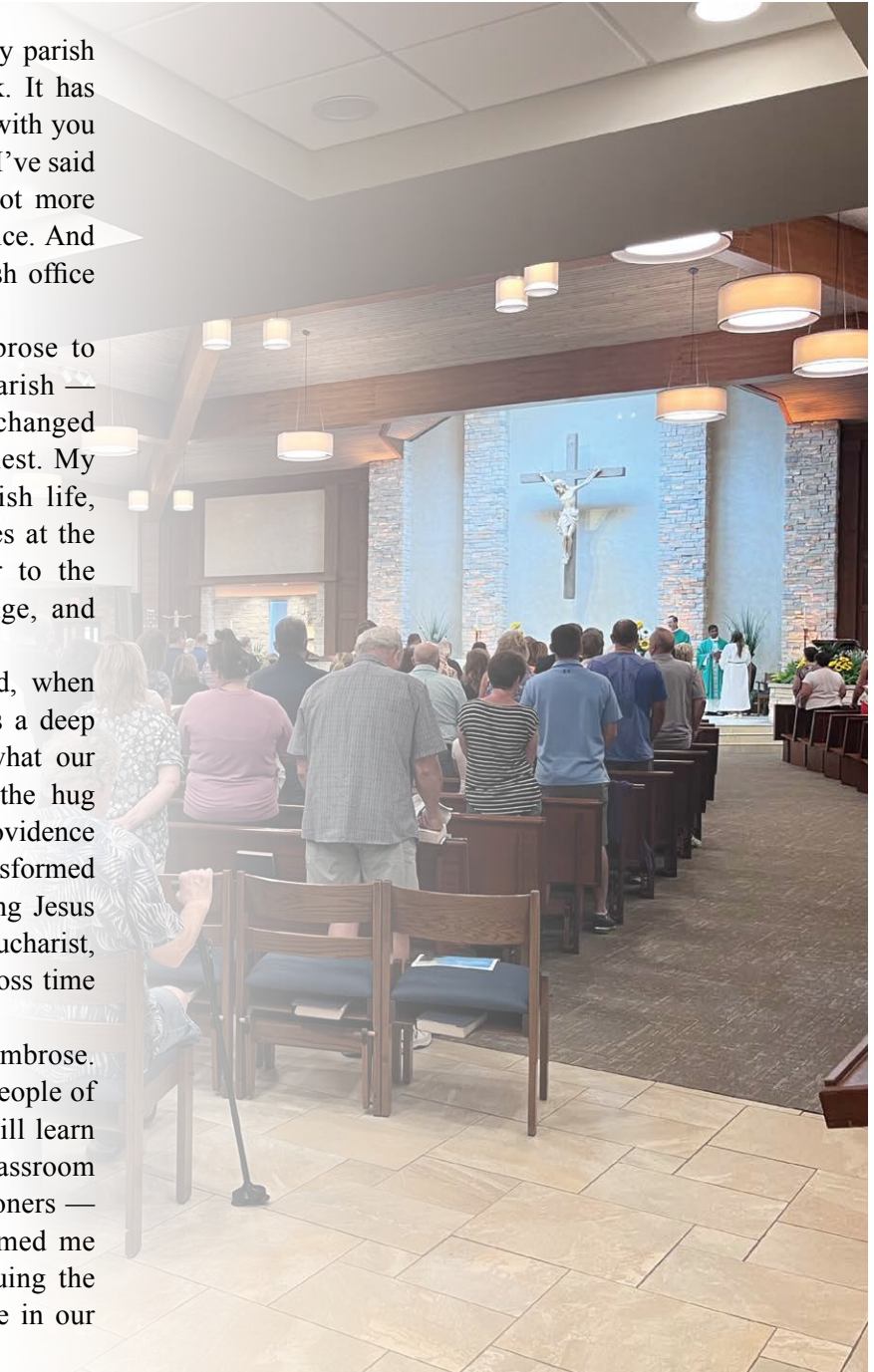
Leaving an Impression *By Nathan Frankart*

Pease of Christ to you!
Well, it has officially started! I began my parish internship at St. Ambrose in Brunswick. It has dawned on me that I haven't gone into detail with you on what this internship is supposed to do. Yes, I've said some of the practical things, but there is a lot more than simply knowing how to run a parish office. And trust me, I'll be under great tutelage for parish office dynamics under Fr. Bob Stec!

I'll be following the priests at St. Ambrose to whatever is happening or going on in the parish — not simply to learn the nitty gritty, but to be changed by my experiences of living the life of a priest. My job is to absorb and be formed by the parish life, rather than just the intellectual life of studies at the seminary. There is something even deeper to the internship experience that causes this change, and directly connects to the Incarnation.

When we experience something firsthand, when we can hear, see, touch, and feel it, it leaves a deep impression on us. Who doesn't remember what our favorite meal tastes like, or how powerful the hug of a loved one is? Similarly, God in His providence understood that we would be formed and transformed by interacting with a person, that person being Jesus Christ. It's the basis for our doctrine on the Eucharist, that God wishes to dwell with His people across time and space.

For me, this is the goal of living at St. Ambrose. I want to be formed and transformed by the people of St. Ambrose. By serving them in person, I will learn more about the priesthood than any book or classroom could ever hope to. And don't worry, parishioners — St. Joseph and Nativity, it was you that formed me first. The people of St. Ambrose are continuing the good work that has already been started here in our parish community.



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This newsletter brought to you by the Catholic Communities of:

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200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

Address Service Requested

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

Hospitality Tuesday

Tuesday, Oct. 3 — Following the 8 a.m. Mass, Nativity BVM Church and Hall

Candlelight Rosary Service

Tuesday, Oct. 3 — 7 p.m., Nativity BVM Church and Hall

First Saturday Rosary

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

Parish Health and Wellness Blood Pressure Checks

Saturday, Oct. 7 — following the 4 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph gathering area
Sunday, Oct. 8 — following the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses, at St. Joseph gathering area

No School — Teacher Personal Development Day

Friday, Oct. 13

Parent Meeting for First Reconciliation

Sunday, Oct. 15 — 12 p.m., St. Joseph Church (following the 11 a.m. Mass)

Wonderful Women

Tuesday, Oct. 17 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall South

Catholic Golden Agers

Wednesday, Oct. 18 — 11:30 a.m., Nativity Parish Hall

No School

Friday, Oct. 20 — Emergency Operations Drill for Staff

Polka Mass/Oktoberfest

Saturday, Oct. 21 — 5:30 p.m. Mass and social in celebration of their 90th Anniversary

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 24 — 7 p.m., School MPR

Day of Prayer for our Priests

Friday, Oct. 27 — 12 to 4:30 p.m.
St. Joseph Church will be open to all who would like to come and offer prayers up for our priests.

RCIA Meetings

Monday, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 — 7 p.m., Nativity Parish Hall

Men's Group Meetings

Tuesday, Oct. 3 and 17 — 7 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall North

PSR classes

Wednesday, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 — 5:30 p.m., St. Joseph School

Holy Ground Youth Group

Sunday, Oct. 8 and 22 — 6 p.m., St. Joseph Social Hall (join us for 5 p.m. Mass before the meeting)

Vincentians Meeting

Thursday, Oct. 12 and 26 — 9 a.m., St. Joseph Conference Room

Faithfully Fit Yoga Classes

Tuesdays and Thursdays in October — 9:30 a.m., Mill Hollow