



LaSalle
Catholic Parishes



Parish Magazine
Winter 2020

Our Parish Magazine: Volume 2



Father Carlson making a visit to the Carrara marble statue of St. Hyacinth 90 feet above the main doors of the church during the tower repairs this September.

Dear Friends,

I'm glad we're finally able to send out our second parish magazine. These have been very full months, and so this magazine is almost twice as full! Since our last issue, our parish has welcomed three priests from Africa, conducted architectural studies of both historic church buildings, taken pilgrimages to Italy, Poland, Peoria, and Alabama, and welcomed our new permanent priest, Fr. Tom Otto. We have a lot of people and families pursuing the kingdom and holiness in the LaSalle parishes. I hope this magazine can help showcase just a few of these efforts.

Why another magazine? Because while we're proud of our church bulletin (the only one in the diocese printed in laser color!), there often just isn't enough space to tell our stories. I think it's important to go beyond announcing events. We need to describe and share our proud Catholic history, our current lives and activities, and our dreams for the future.

Please take some time to look through the stories in this issue. They are descriptions of our lives – your life – in our local church. There's a lot going on, and we have a lot more to do! Please, let's keep each other in prayer.

If you missed our first magazine, contact the parish office, we'd be glad to send you one. And when you're done with this issue, please pass it on to a friend.

God Bless You,
Fr. Paul Carlson



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A God's Eye View

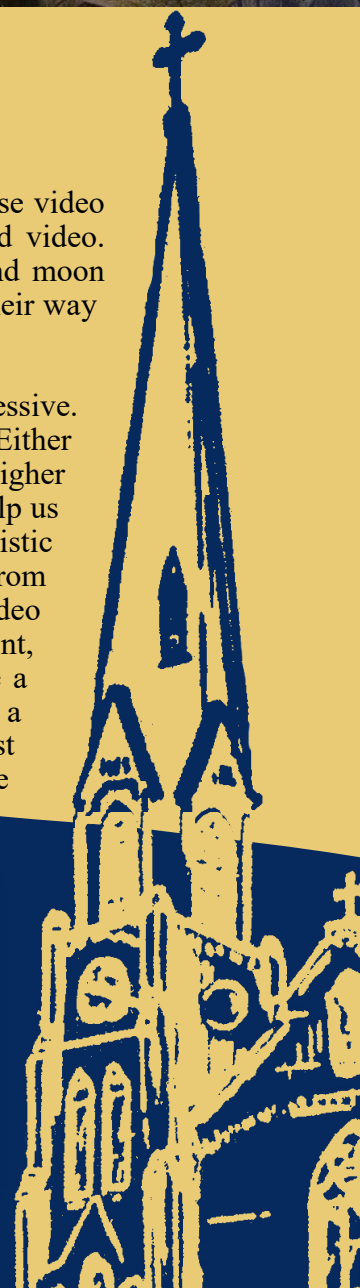
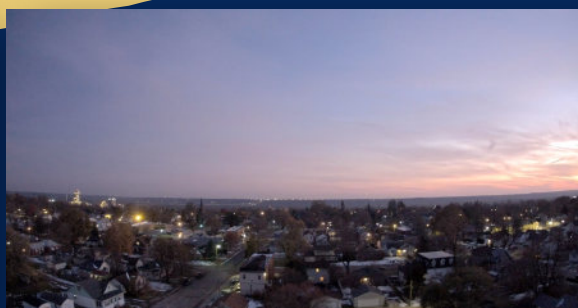
Among the tallest landmarks of LaSalle County are the twin towers of St. Hyacinth. They can be seen for miles. If you've ever looked up and wondered what the view is like up there, wonder no longer! A new camera on the West tower will let you see the view without climbing the stairs.

The camera takes advantage of the Southern view towards the river valley. From the tower you'll see the I-39 Interstate Bridge traffic, the bluffs below Oglesby, and the steeples of St. Patrick, Holy Rosary, St. Roch, and the original St. Joseph. On a clear day, you can even see if there are some open parking spaces at the Save-A-Lot!

Our camera takes one picture every minute of the day, so 1,440 pictures over twenty-four hours. From the parish website you can see this minute's

high-resolution photo or watch a time-lapse video showing a day in LaSalle in a 60-second video. Click on the website to watch the sun and moon rise and set and the constellations make their way across the night sky.

The viewpoint can be beautiful and impressive. See a clear sky or an amazing storm. Either way, we are invited to see things from a higher plain. To see our town from above can help us see our own lives in a more realistic perspective. To watch our days pass from sunrise to sunrise in a one-minute video shows us the value of each moment, understanding that our days are truly like a passing shadow (Psalm 144). Take a moment and see LaSalle from the east tower - see our city from a "God's eye view!"





The Relic Chapel at St. Patrick

The chapel at St. Patrick Church is a prayerful place. With new floors, new chairs, beautiful windows memorializing the service of the Vincentian Priests and Daughters of Charity, and painted altar panels telling the story of St. Margaret Alacoque, the chapel is a wonderful place to linger, pray, and light a candle. Usually quiet, it is home also to choir practices, catechism lessons, and fussy children during the Sunday Masses.

The most important facet of this chapel, though, is that it is home to the mortal remains of some fifty Saints and Blesseds of the Church. The three-part case on the chapel's altar allows us to draw near to these holy relics. Relics are the physical remains (like a hair or a bone chip) of a Saint, or other objects that belonged to them or were used by them. They connect us to holy persons in a very tangible and immediate way.

The holding and veneration of relics might seem a little strange to our world today, but it is more common than we might first think. We keep museums with relics of our historic past—the original Declaration of Independence or locks of George Washington's hair. Also, we each have our own personal relics such as a family heirloom or a piece of art created by our children. These are similar to our Christian relics, but we believe these things to be more sacred than simple museum pieces.

As Christians, we solemnly profess that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity took on our nature, including a physical body, at the Incarnation. As such, physical connection with Our Lord, as well as with his disciples, martyrs, and saints, has always been important to faithful Christians. We can see this early devotion in the book of Acts (Ch 19), where the people made relics of St. Paul by pressing cloth to his body and taking it back to those who were sick. We also see in early Christianity the veneration of the tombs of the saints.

This devotion to Christian relics must not be thought to be any type of idolatry. St. Jerome, in the fifth century, wrote: "We do not worship, we do not adore relics, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are."

St. Patrick Church has a special treasury of these relics which was recently increased by a donation from Loren Morlan. These include Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins from all periods of Church History. We also have other holy relics, such as a splinter of the True Cross and a piece of Mary's veil.

Relics bring us close physically to the mysteries and persons that we approach spiritually. When we are considering a first-class relic of a saint (which is generally a tiny piece of bone), it is like bringing us to



the saint's tomb. And just as we visit the cemeteries of our loved ones to pray for them and converse with them, the same is true when we approach the relics of our spiritual friends in heaven – the saints.

Tom Collins, senior reporter for our local *News Tribune*, wrote a story on our chapel and relic of St. Camillus. We can't reproduce the article here, but it is very easily found online. In the piece, Tom tells the story of our Principal Deb Myers and her journey to Santa Maria Maddalena Church in Rome to make a visit to St. Camillus' tomb. Deb had just fought and won her second battle with cancer and wanted to visit Camillus, patron of the sick. Now, St. Camillus' resting place can also be visited in LaSalle, in the St. Patrick Chapel. This story went viral, so to speak, and was picked up by the Associated Press, running in newspapers throughout the country.

We would also like to ask anyone who is currently the custodian of any first- or second-class relics to consider loaning or contributing these relics to the chapel. The Vatican is no longer allowing relics to be entrusted to private persons but is requesting that relics be used for consecrated altars or for other public purposes. So often lost or forgotten relics are found in drawers or jewelry boxes which is a great sacrilege. Other times, after the custodian passes away, relatives sell the relics on the internet or at auction, or throw them away not knowing what they are. Please help us save this heritage and provide a place for everyone to venerate these friends of the Lord!

At right, our school children look for the names of familiar saints among the relics in the chapel. Above is the reliquary holding a theca of the relics of St. Anne, St. Anthony of Padua, and St. Therese of Lisieux.



This issue of the Parish Magazine is sponsored by the

St. Anne Sodality

The Sodality is a charitable and social organization for the women of the parishes.

The members craft charitable items for the poor, organize activities for those in senior care facilities and the Veterans Home, care for the landscaping around the shrines dedicated to Our Lady, provide food for our local food pantry and for those who come to the parish office, serve meals at the homeless shelter, and help care for the maintenance of the sanctuary appointments. They also meet for various spiritual and social activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in being involved, call the parish office or simply come to the meetings as announced in the bulletin.



¡Una Auténtica Kermes!

By Rosa M. Vazquez

For those who haven't experienced a Kermes, it is a celebration like a carnival, with traditional food, games, and activities. There is something for everyone. In the midst of the traditional folklore dances, costumes, and regional music, there is plenty to do and explore.

Get started by buying some tickets, and then head to the games! This year these included the mechanical bull, a dunk tank, bounce castle, and dart throw. Of course, for these

celebrations, it's all about the food! Stop by one of the many food stands to grab a snack like churros, corn on the cob, and cotton candy. Drinks include cane-sugar sodas and authentic margaritas served in clay pots.

When you're ready to sit down for a meal, you are encouraged to try a little of everything! The regional Mexican food is delicious and homemade. Along with enchiladas, quesadillas, and tacos, more seasonal treats like tamales and hot cups of

champurrado are offered when Kermes is held in the fall.

The main purpose of Kermes is to promote parish life, since all Spanish-language groups participate in this annual event. It also raises needed funds for the church. In our Hispanic community, it is very important to conserve and support these cultural initiatives – they mean a lot to us personally, and they help preserve our cultural identity. The Kermes is one way we can grow together as a Catholic community.



Loving Service

An active faith needs to overflow in love. It's important that our parishes reach out and care for those in our community. That can be hard when our resources are stretched thin. But thanks to the generosity of our parishioners, we make sure that no one who comes to our office for help leaves empty-handed.

Our first Sunday-of-the-month food collection helps us stock our parish food pantry. It helps people who need a little extra short-term help with their groceries. The bags are filled with kitchen staples and a \$5 gift card for Sav-A-Lot to get a little something fresh. (Thanks to our St. Anne's Sodality that generously provides these cards!) Each month we pass out with a smile and a blessing about 30 or 40 bags of food. The bags also contain an information sheet with other area resources and sometimes a church bulletin or some sort of encouragement for their spiritual life. Many thanks to our dedicated parishioners who transport the food to the parish office and sort it into well-balanced bags. Mike and Kathy Rauh, pictured top-right, pitch in every Monday morning to make up new food packs. We are seeing an increase in requests for help. Please help us with a monthly donation from your own pantry. We are always on the lookout for granola bars, breakfast cereal, peanut butter, boxed potatoes, meat and fish in a can, mac and cheese, canned fruit and vegetables, and breakfast bars.

Catholic Charities has expanded its activities in our county. For the past few years, this agency of the Diocese of Peoria has assisted the families of LaSalle by providing hundreds of bookbags with school supplies for children in need, Christmas gifts for families who struggled to put presents under the tree, and food items for our parish pantry.

Newly appointed Sr. Michelle Fernandez and case worker Suzie

Meisner (pictured bottom-right at St. Patrick) are working to expand services in our area through the St. Nicholas Mobile Pantry, which will be in LaSalle on the third Tuesdays of the month. This new pantry, recently blessed by Bishop Jenky, will be able to help supply other items, such as canes, baby clothes, blankets, diapers, gift cards, and more. Private meetings with a social worker can also be arranged to help identify services for more extensive needs and referrals. Our office can provide intake forms for requests from the pantry.

The holidays remind us of our duty to care for those families who struggle to celebrate. Our parishes and school have set up giving trees to collect gifts for those who would otherwise not have anything under the tree. The TCA eighth grade class prepared the tree at St. Patrick for young cancer patients, and Catholic Charities sponsors the trees at Trinity Academy and St. Hyacinth. Many families from our parishes and town have been recipients of Catholic Charities gifts.

No matter how we give, we know it is always best when we can give in the name of Christ. We are truly blessed when we find ourselves able to be a blessing to our brothers and sisters.



“So, Father, what exactly do you do all week?”

By Father Tom

The question is one that priests are frequently asked, often accompanied by a chuckle and the little tease, “You only work on weekends, right?!” Well, after years of being asked this by family, friends, parishioners, and even strangers on the street, I thought I’d put something into writing.

DISCLAIMER: The point of this article is not to give the impression that priests are so busy that you should never reach out if you need help. Especially when it comes to giving the Last Rites to those who are gravely ill or giving the Anointing of the Sick to those with serious health issues, we are NEVER too busy to drop what we are doing so that those important graces can be imparted. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you or a family member is seriously ill or in need of Last Rites or simply would like to speak with a priest! As priests, we are here to serve you!

In my experience, there are two common misconceptions regarding a priest’s schedule: 1) thinking that priests are super busy and should never be bothered, or 2) thinking that priests only work on the weekends! As is often the case with two extremes, the truth is in the middle. It is certainly not my intention to try to impress you by showing how “busy” priests are. In our day and age, many people equate busyness with importance, and while it is good to be hard-working, industrious, and productive, overvaluing those things often comes at the cost of other more important things: prayer, contemplation, family time, genuine rest and recreation, and engaging the arts and culture. We should all be careful not to get too busy and miss the most important, most sacred, and most beautiful things in this life!

So, what does an average day in the life of a priest look like? I have always found that question very difficult to answer! No two days are



alike for a priest, which is something I really enjoy about the priesthood. I find it much easier to describe what I do in an average week, though even that can vary widely depending on the time of year and where a priest is stationed. So, here’s what an average week has tended to look like over my past six years of priesthood:

- 10 hours of normally scheduled weekday and weekend Masses, including preparation before Mass
- 4 hours of homily preparation each week (1 hour total for weekdays, 3 hours for weekend homily)
- 2 hours of confessions, both scheduled and by appointment
- 2-3 hours of counseling or spiritual direction for individuals
- 5 hours on average for funerals, including meeting with families, the liturgy, and prayers at the cemetery
- 4 hours teaching and visiting classrooms in our Catholic School
- 5 hours meeting with parish staff, planning events, discussing day-to-day items, doing paperwork
- 1 hour celebrating baptisms
- 2 hours visiting homebound or hospital patients
- 2 hours on average of marriage-

related activities (meeting with individual couples for pre-marriage counseling, planning ceremonies, leading the rehearsal, celebrating the marriage, etc.)

- 4 hours attending or leading school or parish events (school sporting events, fundraisers, K of C events, prayer groups, RCIA, Parish Council, etc.)
- 3 hours visiting homes of parishioners for house blessings, visits to families, mentoring lay leaders
- 2 hours meeting brother priests to discuss best practices in ministry
- 3 hours responding to emails, phone calls, etc.

There you have it! The life of a priest is filled with quite a variety of activities, but I wouldn’t trade it for the world! And you don’t see listed above the most important use of our time: PRAYER! Without substantial, daily time alone with Our Lord, we priests wouldn’t accomplish much, no matter how many activities fill our schedules. Nothing matters more for priests (or anyone!) than cultivating our personal friendship with Christ... when that comes first, everything else falls into place.



O Come, Let Us Adore Him!

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus incarnate: God the Son taking on our flesh and being born for us in Bethlehem's stable. We celebrate God becoming near to us, becoming small and meek so that we mortals can approach and share our lives with him. This miracle of God's presence that we celebrate at Christmas is not reserved to that blessed night two thousand years ago. Jesus draws near to us at every Holy Mass. He again makes himself small and meek and comes to us in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

The Eucharist is Jesus. But sometimes we are too blind to see Him. This is perhaps the greatest spiritual tragedy of our age: to have God dwelling among us unnoticed. This year Bishop Jenky's Festival Letter is on the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The Bishop reminds us that while every doctrine of our faith is important, the Eucharist is the foundation of Christianity. "Just as truly as Christ ascended into heaven, so truly He descends into His Sacraments."

The Eucharist is the "Sacrament of Sacraments" (CCC 1211) because it is Jesus present to us. In his letter, Bishop Jenky outlines this teaching in the Gospels and the New Testament and then shows how this belief was held by the Early Church Fathers. While the Church's teaching on the Blessed Sacrament cannot change and has not changed, our Bishop suspects that our appreciation of this divine

truth was diminished through decades of declining care and reverence to his Presence among us in the Sacrament.

We need to reawaken our excitement and appreciation for this divine gift. Bishop Jenky asks us to make sure we instruct our young ones well, to maintain attentive silence around the tabernacle, to kneel and genuflect with care, to maintain well the vessels, linens, and items used for divine worship. Benediction, processions, holy hours, and quiet time before the Lord are important ways to adore Our Lord in the Sacrament.

In LaSalle we have all these opportunities. One of the most obvious is the annual Corpus Christi procession between St. Hyacinth, St. Patrick, and Holy Rosary Shrine. Hundreds of LaSalle parishioners and guests

have joined the Blessed Sacrament as It is carried through the streets of our city. The police help direct traffic while horse riders lead the way. First Communicants, wearing their suits and dresses, spread flower petals before the Lord, while over two-dozen altar servers accompany Him with incense, candles, bells, and a canopy. The procession is filled with singing, music, and prayers as we stop at each of the three churches for Benediction. Set your calendar for the next procession: June 14th, after the noon Mass at St. Hyacinth!

We also have many opportunities to make a quieter visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Our midweek Eucharistic adoration is available at Holy Rosary shrine beginning after the last daily Mass until 8pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Everyone is welcome to come pray during these times. Because we cannot leave the Blessed Sacrament on the altar unattended, we rely on many volunteers who commit at least one hour each week to spend praying before the Lord.

Maybe you are being called to dedicate an hour each week to spend with Jesus in prayer? Blessed Fulton Sheen reminds us that the only thing Jesus asked of His disciples was that they pray with Him for an hour. Jesus did not ask them for activity or business. He asked them to be in His Presence and pray with him. Surely, we can make the time to answer our Lord's plea. Our recent Christmas season is a season of Adoration. Let's join the angels, the shepherds, the three magi, in adoration of Christ, our humble king.

The full text of Bishop Jenky's letter, as well as information on our annual procession and our midweek adoration, is on the parish website. If you have any questions or would like to take a scheduled hour of adoration, please contact our Parish Life Director Sue Calderon at the Parish Office.





The Life and Legacy of Sister Ignatia, DC

Sister Ignatia was a well-known, even legendary, figure in LaSalle. Short in stature but enormous in energy, she was known to her older students as Mighty Mouse. Her younger students (unable to pronounce Ig-nay-shah) simply called her Sister Natie. When Sister was born into this world on the feast of the Purification in 1898, she was simply called Anne Marie. Anne was the oldest of five siblings, and after the death of her mother, she cared for her brothers and sisters until the age of 22, when she boarded a train to Perryville, Missouri, to enter the convent of St. Vincent.

The story of Sister's life that follows comes to us from an essay that Sister Mary Stella Aquilina, D.C. wrote to the parishioners in the summer of 1985 as a parting gift. The essay, which was suggested by a parishioner and was then expanded by Sister Mary Beth Kubera, is a wonderful summary of the joy of religious life. Please see the full essay on the parish website!

Anne Marie formally entered religious life on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in August of 1921. She received the Holy Habit and the name Ignatia. Her first assignment was very brief, teaching kindergarten in Chicago for a few months. Her second assignment would last for 55 years! Sister, who was 100% Irish, was very happy to be sent to St. Patrick in LaSalle. Here she would work at and manage the parish school, teaching a total of 2,500 children.

Sister Ignatia was the teacher, the principal, and the nurse. When a young Charles Kubera came to Sister with a stomach ache, he received a treatment which would become her hallmark, an Alka Seltzer. "Take it, Chuck. Hold your nose; it fizzes. You'll feel better in no time at all." This cure-all wasn't just for stomach ailments. Skinned knees, bruised elbows, scratched shins – they all got the same remedy, a pat on the head, an occasional squirt of Bactine "to kill the germs," and an Alka Seltzer.

Sister was also the professional tooth-puller. Sister would help with the first loose tooth by patiently tying one bit of string around the loose tooth and the other end on a doorknob. Then she would quickly close the door. The rite of initiation into the larger world of toothless, smiling 7-year-olds was completed when the patient received a sticky award—a red cherry lollipop. It's impossible to know how many teeth Sister helped pull, but with nearly 60 students per classroom, she certainly helped extract her fair share!

Keeping track of the school, filled to capacity, was a trying thing for Sister. One of the most difficult days was the annual Hygienic Institute physical examination day. Often when the entire undertaking was completed, there was a stray petticoat or an extra sock that no one would claim. Once Sister received a note alerting her that Gary had returned home without his undershirt on the day of the examinations. His mother wrote to Sister Ignatia, inquiring if Sister had found an

extra undershirt anywhere. Sister's return note read thus: "Dear Alberta, with 58 6-year-olds to keep tabs on, I'm lucky I know where my own shirt is. Sincerely in St. Vincent, Sister Ignatia, D.C."

Sister was, however, a master organizer. She kept her altar boys neat, pressed, and dressed down to the last button. She directed the children's choir which sang through the windows over the sanctuary. They were always a joy to hear. Processions for Holy Thursday, Forty Hours, May Crownings, and Corpus Christi were supervised by Sister, who supplied the satin banners which her altar boys would carry with gravity beyond their years. Sister would provide special veils, wreaths, capes, and sashes for her girls to wear. None of these feasts though could compete with the March 17th celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. Sister would organize a rhythm band and teach the children the traditional folk dances. The boys would clog dance, then sister would lift her heavy skirt slightly to teach the girls the Irish jig.

Saturdays were devoted to visiting the shut-ins and hospitals. Often Sister would bring her older students with her—inspiring them to care for those in need. Even into her retirement, Sister would make these visits an important part of her day. She would stop at Littau's, Jupiter's, or Woolworth's to pick up gifts for her visits. Often, she would receive free bananas from Ferretti's grocery store to take to the nursing homes. She would shuffle from room to room visiting with each patient, stopping at the nurses' station for a word, and checking in with the doctors to make sure they too were feeling well. She enjoyed these visits and found humor in them. On one occasion, she asked a patient if she was diabetic. The patient replied, "No, I am a Catholic." She got a kick out of this and repeated it often, chuckling over it as if it were the first time it were told.

Sister would leave a little present with each patient — a roll of lifesavers, either regular or sugarless (for the diabetics!). It became clear that what the Alka Seltzer cured in the first grade, the package of lifesavers was healing in the hospitals and nursing homes! Miraculous Medals, Green Scapulars, and timely prayer cards were also dispensed from her oversized blue bag, which became a symbol of her gifting to everyone who knew her.

And Sister knew everyone! Sister Ignatia had a memory for faces, names, and events. She knew every family, she remembered each brother and sister, aunt and uncle, cousin, grandparent, and in-laws. She could repeat the exact day of each one's First Communion and wedding. She could even recognize, without hesitation, the identical twins Carol and Colleen. She remembered her Sunday School students just as well, and recollected that Joe Dooley was one of hers, even though she saw him only once a week.

June of 1973 saw sister leave the classroom as a fulltime teacher. She became a special resource aid to help the students who needed extra tutoring. The school provided a new room for her, outfitted it with new furniture, and hung her portrait (see opposite) by John Powell, dedicating the room to her student service center. She spent the mornings in that room helping those who needed special attention. Sister gave preferential consideration to the children newly arrived from Mexico who were struggling with the English language. Her

patience and gentleness with the children were her outstanding characteristics.

Sister had the gift of being able to discern a vocation, even of young babies! She would take some of these babies and place them on the altar. We don't know exactly what Sister said to the Lord, or how many babies she placed on His altar, but we can count at least two Daughters of Charity and 15 priests! While the secret of her discernment was between herself and God, she did make this unusual revelation concerning Fr. Martin Christopher, C.M.—When Martin was a very young child, Sister told us she watched him during the collection at Mass, and observed that when the basket passed him, Martin put in a nickel and took out a dime. With a twinkle in her eyes, she said that she knew immediately that he was destined for the cloth!

Like so many of the religious that served us here in LaSalle, Sister gave herself without reserve and received the love and affection of the people. As Sister Mary Stella concludes, "Sister supported all of us in whatever we were doing, starting with the pastor on down to the youngest and newest teacher. She was concerned about the family, the health and welfare of each. She worried about the maintenance man who returned to work too soon after surgery. She kept tabs on the ladies in the kitchen. She went to wakes at the funeral home because she was bound to know people there. Sister attended the basketball games, the bazaars, and the Ladies of Charity meetings. She kept in touch with everyone, sending innumerable Christmas cards, birthday cards, and summer postcards."

Her last letter to her people in LaSalle arrived after she had passed. Sister died on Christmas Eve 1984. She had just written: "God bless each and ALL as you are trying to keep ALL happy. May it continue throughout the year." May we, her spiritual children, love and care for each other as Sister Ignatia has taught us!



This issue of our Parish Magazine is sponsored by Hurst Funeral Homes. You are welcome to call us any time of the day, any day of the week, for immediate assistance. Or, visit our funeral home in person at your convenience.

815-223-0380

TCA-Grad to TCA-Teacher: Local Teacher Moves into Former School

By Catie Calderon

Five years ago, if someone told me that I was going to be a preschool teacher, I would've laughed in their face. I would've patted them on the head and walked away without saying a word. I didn't really have a plan then, but I knew without a doubt that I would never be stuck in a classroom with a bunch of kids.

God had different plans for me. I now find myself in that exact situation; I was offered a position as the three-year-old preschool teacher at my old school, where I would be stuck in a classroom with eleven children. Although, "stuck" wouldn't be the right word for it. The Holy Spirit has blessed me with eleven beautiful children whom I get to teach, spend time with, and watch grow.

To be teaching where I went to school, to be employed by my former eighth grade teacher, is surreal to say the least. To be living in the former school where my mother taught CCD and countless others attended, is something else altogether.

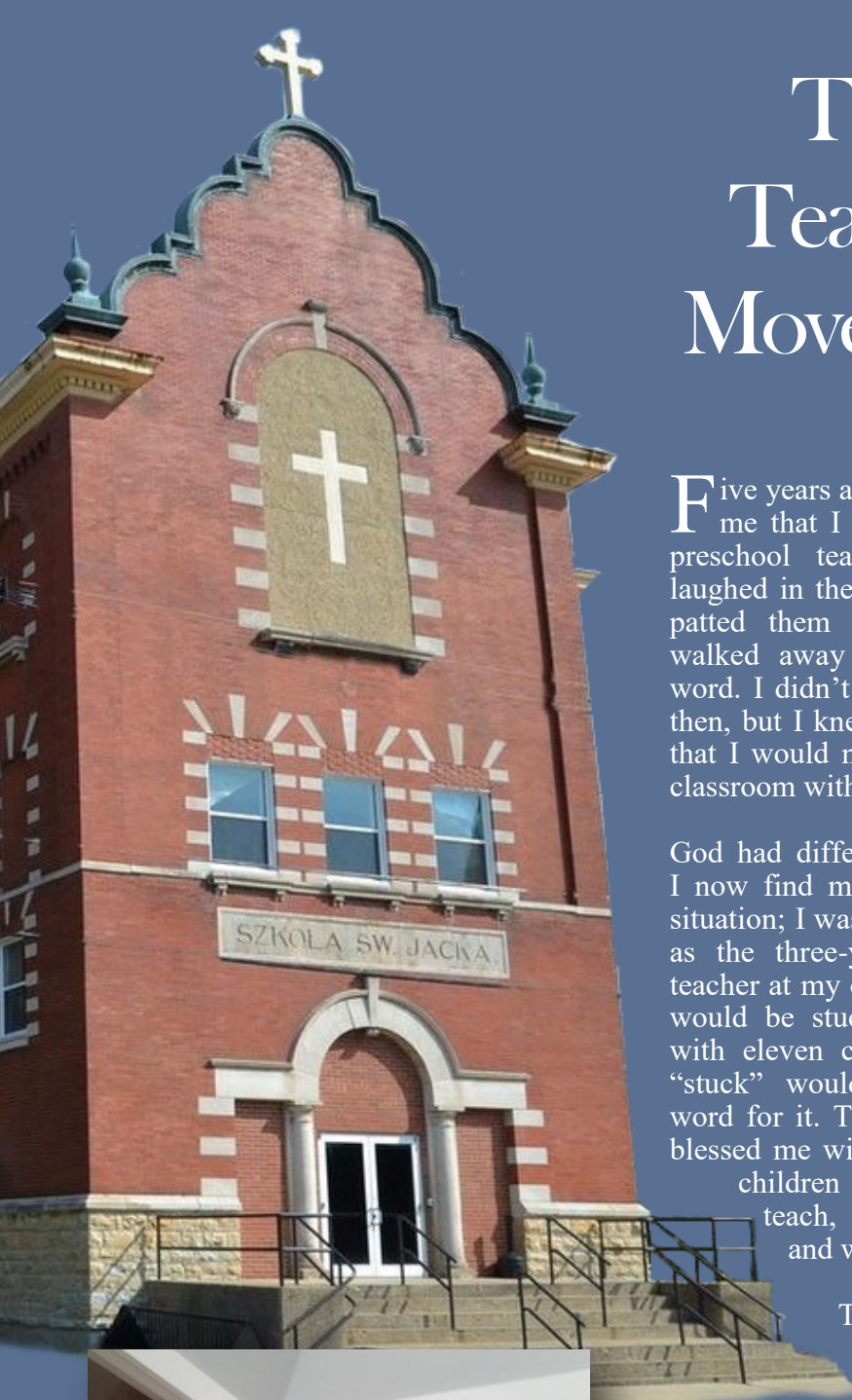
I can remember when the old Felician Center was still a place of bustling activity, where spaghetti dinners were held in the eerie basement, and where I would visit my mother in her classrooms packed full of religious education students. I can also remember when the building was eventually

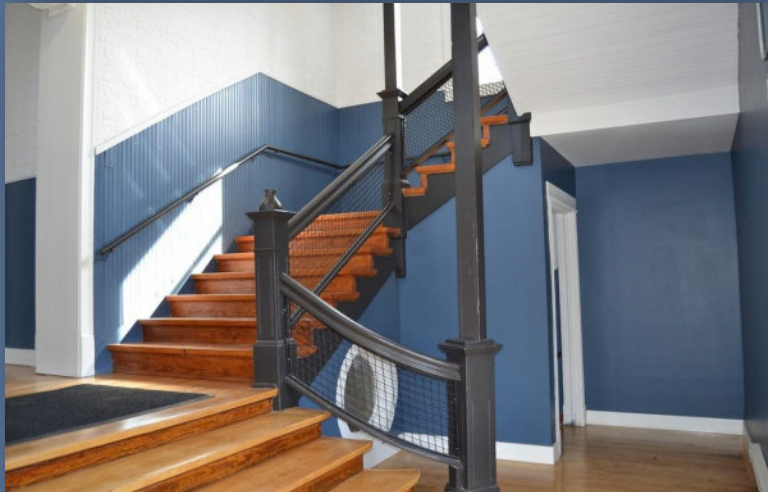
abandoned, the walls practically leaking plaster and other dirt. And then I remember when my mother told me that someone bought the building and planned to turn it into apartments. This was another time when I laughed about it while walking away.

God had different plans for the Felician Center, too, it would seem. When I saw the pictures of the finished apartments, I knew I had to move in. The original floors, polished to look new; the original windowsills, as unyielding as the building itself; the incredibly tall ceilings, the large windows, everything was updated and impossibly beautiful. I contacted the realtor right away and made an appointment to go see one. As soon as I stepped foot inside the apartment, I could feel something click inside my soul.

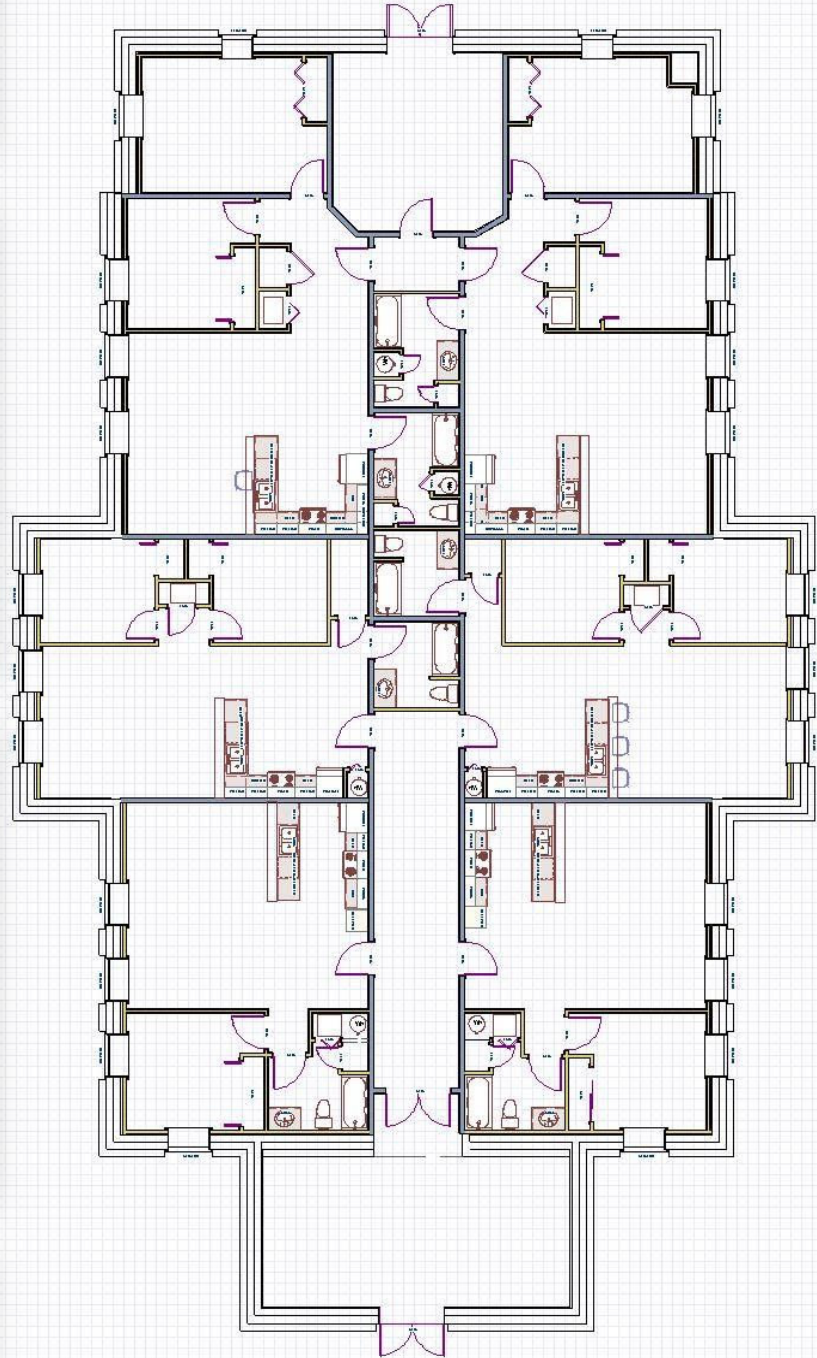
While my bank account was scoffing at the idea, my heart made me go through with it. I was moving in within the week of seeing the apartment. Now, I am right across the street from church, a couple blocks from my parents' house (not to mention my childhood home), and minutes away from work. It finally feels like I've found my place, and every day I wake up in my new home, I thank God for allowing my path to bring me here.

For more information on Church View Apartments, contact B Brothers Real Estate at 815-343-7438 or at bbrothersrealestate.com





CHURCH VIEW APARTMENTS



1ST AND 2ND
LEVELS

From the Choir Loft

A Conversation with our Music Director Alex Dittmer:

How did you become involved in music? Did this lead you to becoming a church musician?

Music has always been a part of my life. At home our family of 8 kids would dance with Mom and Dad in our kitchen to the old hi-fi record player. Mom is Mexican, and Dad is German, so our music was always uptempo and fun. My love of music increased in grade school band. I learned the French Horn, and later I taught myself the trumpet and chords on the piano. In high school I learned guitar and basic stand-up bass, mandolin, and banjo for different theatrical productions. So, I have a grasp, but not a mastery, of many other instruments.

When the position for music director at the LaSalle parishes became available, my brother, Father Dittmer, asked me to take over temporarily. There was a huge learning curve for me and an interesting dynamic between the two parishes I was serving. My goal was to bring the music together at both churches so all parishioners felt at home and familiar regardless of where they attend.

Who helps direct our music?

I rely heavily on our organist Stacy Konczak for music at both churches on Sunday. She is classically trained but has none of the pretentiousness one might assume could be attached to such talent. She leads the funeral choirs, is the main go-to organist for weddings, teaches music at TCA, and runs her own music studio Maestro & Mi.

Pablo De La Cruz organizes music for the Spanish Masses. He is a naturally gifted musician with a fierce passion for his faith. I've helped him out a couple of times and am amazed at his gift with the keyboard and singing.

There seems to be quite a variety of music at Mass, from Latin Chant to modern meditations with the guitar. How do you go about planning what to sing?

I try to plan out my music several months in advance. In our digital age, there are several planning resources online, and our *Pew Missal* has its own resource that suggests hymns appropriate to the gospel and season. I believe, and I tell this to our choir members, our responsibility as the music ministry is to bring people closer to God.

Christmas music this year seemed very full. How many people participated? There seemed to be a lot of instruments...

We have a talented group of singers and musicians who graciously give their time and talent to the Church. Chris Drag is our regular piano player for Saturday Masses at St. Hyacinth. She was joined on Christmas Eve with Catherine Engels, a young flutist who frequently plays with the choir. Chris is also an excellent flutist, and she and Catherine played several duets. The early Mass at St. Hyacinth features the children's choir. We were especially glad to have professionally trained Brandon Czubachowski and Natalie Verruchi sing at this Mass.

St. Patrick had quite a large sound at the early Christmas Eve Mass. We had Phil Whaley and John Armstrong on trumpet, Abigail Smith on violin, Aubrey Garretson on flute, and myself on guitar. We also plugged in hymns from the organ so we had a full and complete sound. At the late Mass we

had Joe Harzheim pulling cantor duties, Nick Kelsy and myself on guitars, Rachel Whaley and Aubrey gifted us with their flutes, and Mary Ann Whaley sang a duet with her sister Rachel.

On Christmas day, the choir sang at St. Hyacinth. Jason Maus cantored at St. Patrick while his son Jack added percussion. Abigail Smith stopped back in too to contribute her violin and vocals. It was a wonderful Christmas for all involved! The music was more than I could have hoped for!

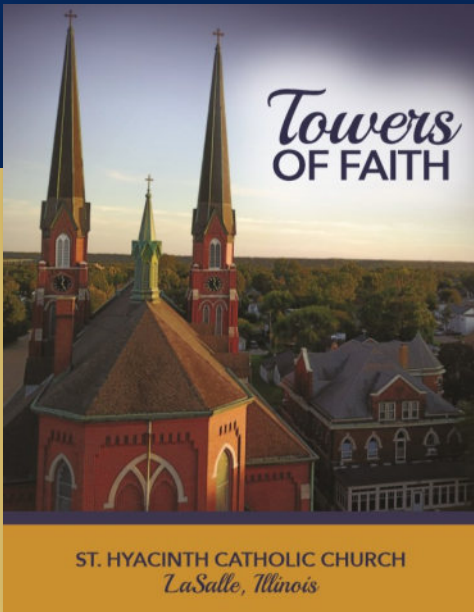
Can anyone join the choir? How can I get involved?

YES!! And please do! We practice twice a month. I also provide the music and videos through email to help, especially if you can't make a practice. If you play an instrument, please contact me as well. Just bring a good attitude, and everything will be fine. Students also receive service hours. We are glad to have grade school students also attend the choir, featured specifically at the Communion hymn. They are our church's future. Offering them a sense of "ownership" in their church and parish will wonderfully tether them to their faith during their adult life.

Pictured in the St. Hyacinth loft on the Sunday of the Epiphany are Alex Dittmer, Stacy Konczak, and Pablo De La Cruz.



Towers of Faith



Last year both parishes received a full structural condition assessment report from American Structurepoint in Aurora. The reports, which are available in full on the website, break down the needed repairs into categories and urgency levels for our two historic buildings. While both St. Patrick and St. Hyacinth have repairs to make, the more immediate need is at St. Hyacinth.

Last year's severe winter exasperated masonry problems on the towers. Some stones became loose. We are grateful to the LaSalle Fire Department and Lt. Brian Zeller for helping remove a broken capstone and brick fragments before they became hazards. In September, Otto Baum Company from Morton spent a week securing other loose stones with wire mesh and providing temporary masonry patches to deteriorated sections. These patches prevent additional water damage to the structural timbers of the towers.

When the scope of the needed repairs was made known, a summary of the report was mailed to every parishioner, and the St. Hyacinth Parish Council expanded its membership to better review the situation. The decision was made to hire Joseph Consulting of Bettendorf to develop a plan for repairs and objectively assess our parishioners' thoughts and opinions. Joseph Consulting has completed a number of successful projects in our Diocese, including the most recent renovations at St. Columba in Ottawa.

Our feasibility study was dubbed "Towers of Faith." The consulting company and the feasibility committee produced a bilingual case booklet which outlined the scope of a proposed renovation project and basic priorities for repair. This casebook was presented by committee members to parishioners in 14 informational meetings. Nearly 250 attended these meetings which also allowed time for parishioners to discuss the project and ask questions. After the meetings were concluded, 130 families returned a detailed questionnaire, and 63 individuals sat down with one of the consultants for a confidential interview.

The Parish Council will review the final report from Joseph Consulting in the new year and work with the Diocese in determining our best course in beginning repairs. The consultants noted that our parish had a very good participation and response rate. Thanks to everyone who participated in the study!

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We're dedicated to providing personalized, professional, and compassionate services to help lighten your burden and support you through the difficult times that follow the loss of a loved one. We're honored to assist you in your time of need and would like to assure you that we'll do everything in our power to make your experience a meaningful and memorable one.

As our lives have changed over the years, so has the way we elect to choose the way we remember our loved ones. The addition of the Memory Lane Lounge to our funeral home gives us the capability to serve families like no other in the area, whether it is a meal following the visitation, funeral dinner following the funeral services, or just a simple breakfast before the services in the morning. We will deliver the best service and the most options for a family to pick from. We are able to accommodate up to 80 people to have the meals catered in from many of our fine restaurants that have already contacted us to be part of our unique concept.

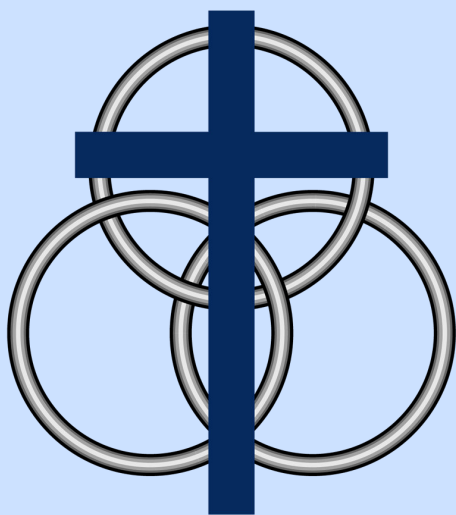


**Thomas E.
Burgess**



**Lawrence
Happ**





Trinity Catholic Academy:

In the Principal's Office!

A Conversation in the Principal's office with Mrs. Deb Myers:

We see a lot of pictures of kids stopping by your office. We hope they're not all in trouble!?

Since my first day as TCA Principal, I have always tried to instill "my door is always open" for current, former students, and parents. The Principal's office should always help students feel welcome. The lollipop basket is always full!

Why did you decide to become a teacher and then principal in a Catholic School?

Catholic education has been a part of my life since I was a child. As parents, my husband and I chose Catholic education for our sons. As an educator, I am

blessed to share my Catholic Faith with my students each and every day. I often tell my students, "my greatest responsibility as a teacher/principal is to help you get to heaven." After being a 20-year teacher for St. Patrick and TCA, I talked with Fr. Dittmer about the process of possibly becoming a school principal. After serving with veteran local principal Jerry Carls for two years, I became principal in 2017.

There is a school assembly every single morning and before each RE class on Wednesday. Why take the time?

As a Catholic school, we promote community and family. I see no better way than to start our day with prayer and community. We celebrate each other's birthdays, congratulate our students' academic and athletic accomplishments, and this year we are also celebrating baptism days. On the anniversary of each student's baptism, we recognize the day he or she received this first sacrament. We sing "Happy Baptism Day to You" and give them a bottle of Holy Water. The great thing is, few students know when their baptism day is – it is a great surprise for them! I always remind them to share their holy water with their family members.

Transfer grants have been advertised in the church bulletin and the news paper. What is a transfer grant?

The grant is an invitation for those in non-Catholic schools to see first-hand the incredible value of Catholic education. We worked with the Diocese to develop a two-year grant program. It begins with a 50% reduced tuition rate the first year. In the second year, tuition is reduced 25%. Students from public or homeschooling in grades 1-7 qualify for the grant. At TCA, we want to offer a Catholic education to all of our parish families.

Education gets more expensive every year. How can we keep Catholic schools affordable?

Our school is a ministry of the LaSalle Parishes, which underwrite our programs. We are also blessed with wonderful parent and community support, scholarship opportunities, tuition assistance, and the new scholarship program, Empower Illinois. At TCA, we will always be grateful for the support of our parishioners, community, and alumni. Keeping quality education affordable is an important part of our school mission.

What is Empower Illinois? Who can participate?

Empower Illinois is for everyone, for taxpayers and for families who could benefit from financial help for Catholic school tuition. Taxpayers can support TCA by applying for the 75% tax credit



for Illinois income tax. That means you can send your money to the Catholic School instead of the State! A full 75% of your donation to TCA can be redeemed as a tax credit. Empower Illinois is the scholarship granting organization used to work directly with the school. By saying "yes" to the tax credit, you are providing free tuition for one year for one or more qualifying TCA students. Talk to your tax professional or learn more at empowerillinois.org. This year we had 21 students qualify for the scholarship, but only enough funding for 9 students. With your help, we hope to increase the donation funding to provide free tuition for all qualifying students.

Keeping up with maintenance issues must take some doing. Any current projects?

Even though our building is structurally sound, maintenance is ongoing. This past year the school installed a new gym roof, boiler maintenance, installed two new furnace and air conditioning units for the gym, installed new ventilation fans on the roof, replaced the playground mulch, updated electrical wiring in the gym, and created a new STEM lab to align with new Science curriculum. Currently, we have started a fund to install new laminate floors in each of the classrooms.

So, what is a STEM lab?

A STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) lab is an interactive/hands-on lab created for students to explore the world around them. STEM activities are effective learning opportunities for students to become problem-solvers and collaborative team players. Prior to the STEM lab, students and teachers had limited access to a Science learning lab. At TCA, we continue to provide a challenging and state-of-the art curriculum.

Service is an important part of being a Christian. How are our kids helping out now in our community?

The students prepare hospital tray favors, decorating them with encouraging art. Our older students participate in the Lighted Way Pals Program, where they assist and learn with those living with developmental disabilities. Our classes make time for our local Veteran's Home—making cards and visits. At Christmas, we sponsor the Saint

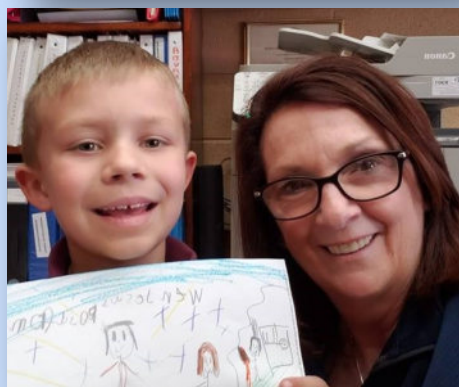
Andrew's Giving Tree which collects gifts for young cancer patients at St. Jude in Peoria. During Catholic Schools Week our school gets involved in a variety of community projects recognizing our police, fire, emergency services, and civic leadership. The week also includes making visits to shut-in parishioners and preparing gift bags for them. Throughout the course of the year, we do fundraisers for student-chosen causes, from Catholic Charities, hurricane relief, Alzheimer, and cancer awareness, etc.

What makes a Catholic school different? Is it really more spiritual?

A person senses the differences when entering the building. More spiritual? Absolutely!! I would not have dedicated my entire career as an educator to Catholic education if it was no more than a "private school." It goes beyond the added daily religion class. Our faith is in every class and every discipline. We teach prayer, and we pray together throughout the day. Our priests are regularly visiting the classrooms. Each Wednesday the whole school attends Mass together at the Shrine where the students lead the music, read the Scriptures, and pray the intercessions. Most of our older students are altar servers. Sometimes it is also just the simple things, like when our classes go casually to Adoration each week and grow in private prayer, learning to be comfortable in silence before the Lord.

What are your future plans for TCA?

Looking into the future, my main goal is to continue providing a quality Catholic education with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Our students are the future of the Church. So, with that in mind, I would like to see enrollment continue to grow in preschool thru 8th grade. The past two years, we have adopted a new K-8 2019 edition Social Studies and Science curriculum. We will continue to research and implement curriculum options that prepare our students to be learners in the 21st century. As for technology, we will continue to provide up-to-date programs, security equipment, and I-Pads for our K-5 students.



In our school, every day, we learn, love, and pray!



The Altar Servers of the LaSalle Parishes

Our LaSalle Parishes have been blessed with many talented and generous young people who serve at Mass from fourth grade all the way through college. We have a hundred servers on our roster and are proud of each of them! The following are reflections from some of our young servers.

I have been altar serving for two years now, for Saint Pat's and for Holy Rosary. I first was an altar server at Utica's Saint Mary's. When I transferred to Trinity, I was kind of nervous to sign up to become an altar server, but with all the priests roaming the school, I was inspired to sign up. I love altar serving, especially whenever a younger kid serves with me. But specifically seeing that the more they serve, the more they get the hang of it. Then soon they aren't nervous to serve anymore, or not as much as before. The most difficult part would probably be when I first started. It seemed like everyone knew everyone, and I felt I would be embarrassed if I messed up. The truth is that everyone messes up, no one is perfect, and everyone was very welcoming. As I altar serve, I get to see, up close, the seriousness and compassion the priest has towards

the Mass. I also have always known a basic background of the Mass, but as I serve I feel I have an abundance of knowledge of what's going on. Then, when I don't serve, I can focus more towards the Mass and the words the priest speaks. Overall, altar serving has impacted my life. Every time I step into the gown, I feel determined to be helpful and ready to serve God. Even after Mass, I do my best to stay a little longer to make the church presentable. I have learned that bringing in the gold, blowing out the candles, or even something as small as picking up the gown rack is noticed. I hope no one is nervous to sign up to altar serve because of the experience of being close to God.

-Ali Bosnich

When I'd go to Mass, and I would see my older sisters serve with other people, I always thought serving was so cool. I saw so many advantages to serving. First, I would be closer to seeing everything that the priest did. Also, I would be able to help the priest with Mass. I always begged my mom to let me serve, but I was either too young, or she knew I would probably mess around all the time. Then, three years ago, I was in fourth grade, and the altar server sign

up sheet came out, and my mom signed me up for it. I was so excited and surprised to see that I could serve now. The best part of being an altar server is that I can help the priest with Mass, that I can make Mass possible for those who enjoy seeing the Eucharist and for those who want to be closer to God. The most difficult part of serving is having something on your schedule that you want to do, but you need to serve. Mostly every time I serve, I sit next to the priest because I do Cross in Church, which is actually a lot of fun. I would not kneel in front on the altar though; I would have to stay in my spot the whole time. The advantage to that is really concentrating on what the priest does with and how he gets the Eucharist ready. Whenever I serve and I see the priest getting the Eucharist ready, I reflect on all the good things that I did that week, helping me feel that I am ready to take the Eucharist and feel a good sensation in me when I do. Altar serving has always seemed enjoyable to me. Altar serving really helps me with hard times because I know whenever I altar serve, God is with me, and I know He is there. Altar serving opens my eyes to know that God is thankful for people that

do altar serve because God knows that we love him and that we are thankful for everything he gives us.

-Rubi De La Torre

My mother and sister really wanted me to be an altar server like they were, so I decided to about one and a half years ago. I would say the best part about being an altar server is having the option to assist Father in doing Mass. It's nice because I - and I'm sure many others - like being able to actually help run Mass and help the priest. It has changed my perspective on Mass because before, I had a hard time paying attention in Mass, but when I'm serving, I actually have to pay attention to know when to do my role. Lastly, altar serving has opened my eyes to how Mass is run and the behind-the-scenes parts of Mass. An example of this would be choosing whether to do the role of helping father set the altar or choosing the role of patens, and rarely, both.

-Michael Peters

It all started with my older brother Christopher. Then my two other brothers became altar servers, leaving me. When I had the opportunity to become a server, I knew I wanted to. My parents also wanted me to become a server. Before I became an altar server, I would sit in a pew and wait, but sometimes I don't like waiting. I would squirm, zone out, or stare into nothing and think. Being a server makes me listen more to the stories



Our LaSalle Servers at the Cathedral for Confirmation

the Priest tells. It would sometimes be a struggle just wracking my brain over nothing during Mass instead of listening. When I got the letter, I knew I would leave the pews, and I would be on the next step of Mass.

-Brianna Sanchez

I became an altar server because I go to church weekly and I wanted to become more involved in the Mass. We used to attend St. Anthony Parish in Spring Valley, and my mom was a lector. I wanted to be like my mom and be included in the Mass. The best part of being an altar server is helping Father. I enjoy being up on the altar, ringing the bells, watching the bread

and wine being changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. The most difficult part has to be remembering all the parts of the Mass and when I am supposed to help Father. I feel that by serving often, I have gotten better at remembering when I am supposed to do each part. Serving has helped me realize how much work goes into a Mass. I have had to really pay more attention to the Mass and to what Father is saying, and it makes me appreciate it so much more. I enjoy serving because I feel more included in the Mass. I feel like I am part of something very special.

-Ella Hermes



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The Society of African Missions



Father Walter, SMA from Togo, helps shovel snow during his time here last winter. He teaches in his communities' house of studies for missionary candidates.



Father James Yeboah, SMA from Ghana, visits the parish office during his assignment in LaSalle. He is currently the regional superior of his order in Ghana.



LaSalle Parishioner Visits our Priests from Africa

By Diane Prazen

This past year we got to know two African priests belonging to the religious community of the Society of African Missions. While the community was founded by French priests, most of their young vocations come from the indigenous people. These missionaries were able to share with us a little of what it is like to be a Catholic Christian in West Africa. One of our parishioners, Diane Prazen, had to opportunity to visit and experience this life first-hand:

My story begins on November 1, 2018, when I boarded a flight to Accra, Ghana, to babysit our 3-year-old grandson Bistrat (Biz). Our daughter Jeannette is a middle school science teacher at Lincoln Community School in Accra, Ghana. Jeannette adopted Biz from an Ethiopian orphanage when he was 2 1/2. She called one day and asked if I would come and babysit Biz while she flew to Dubai to attend a job fair. Of course I said yes! I arrived at the Accra airport to find Biz holding a sign that said "Noni Prazen."

Being able to see where Jeannette and Biz live, meet their friends, visit Lincoln Community School, and attend yoga classes for three-year-old youngsters was a dream come true for me. I volunteered at a swimming camp held at the school for children from Jamestown. The children go to a local school and have never seen or been swimming in a pool. Unfortunately, Biz was not going to let anyone else have his Noni. Every time I attempted to help one of the students, Biz yelled: "That's my

Noni, and you can't have her"! Any fears we had about bonding were erased.

Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas in Accra introduced me to the warmth of the Ghanaian people. The Mass was in English with tremendous involvement from the congregation, choir, and musicians. The Ghanaian clothing is very colorful and beautiful with the Batik process of coloring the cloth very popular. Trashy Bags (eco-friendly recycled plastic bags and gifts) and Ghana's glass beads are very popular, with both providing jobs for women.

Mary Beth Piacenti Coffin, Biz, and I were able to visit Father James and Father Michael at the SMA Regional House in Accra. It was very special! Father James was a very gracious host ... he invited us in and had a full Ghanaian spread of welcome including refreshments and 12 yards of beautiful Ghanaian cloth as a present. We toured the facility, the construction site of the new school, and the future site of the church. Father James is a visionary with determination, and many will benefit from this.





Our Heavenly Patrons

Our town is blessed with patrons from the different ethnic communities who brought the Catholic Faith to the Illinois Valley. The Irish have their devotion to St. Patrick. The Germans dedicated their church to St. Joseph. Our Slovenian community built their church in honor of St. Roch, and the Polish chose St. Hyacinth. When it came time for our Italian faithful to build their church on 4th Street, they dedicated it to the Queen of the Holy Rosary and placed the miraculous image of Our Lady of Pompeii in the high altar.

These saints are tributes to the culture and background of our people. But they are more than that. They are our patrons. They are the holy ones we claim as heavenly intercessors. They had a special and personal relationship with our

spiritual ancestors, and we claim them now too! We are their people; they are our friends and guides.

Sacred art helps us to see realities beyond our normal sight. The image above is a photo of a special painting commissioned to depict our intercessors in heaven. The saints are portrayed in a classic *sacra conversazione*: an Italian Renaissance genre where the saints are shown in an informal meeting of the Heavenly court. Ours is specifically modeled from the work of Blessed Fra Angelico.

In our image, we see each of our patrons, holding their LaSalle Church, as they converse with the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Child. Mother and Child are shown as our Lady of Pompeii, and Holy Rosary Shrine is depicted in the hills behind

the saints.

This picture shows our saints, holding and supporting us, as they bring us to the throne of Jesus Christ. It is a reminder of their love for us, and the gratitude we have to them for their protection and example. It also reminds us that even if these churches are no longer active parishes, the relationship hasn't ended. While we still live in a world of time and change, they live in God's eternity. In them we have a constancy that might not be possible in this life.

Soon this image, measuring four feet across, will visit each of our churches. We hope to be offering prints of the image soon. Keep an eye on the bulletin for details.

Holy Patrons of LaSalle, Pray for us!



Youth Ministry and Youth Missionaries

By far, our most extensive youth ministry program is our Catholic School. It educates our full-time students and also our young parishioners who attend area public schools. But we were happy to welcome two youth programs to LaSalle this year: Totus Tuus and NET Ministries.

Totus Tuus is a Latin phrase that means “totally yours,” a motto given to us by Pope Saint John Paul II in describing his dedication to Jesus through Mary. For one week during the summer, we provide Catholic children in grades 1-12 a prayer-filled environment that will help them come closer to Christ through His Mother, Mary.

The program, sponsored by the Diocese of Peoria Office of Priestly Vocations, is annually hosted at our parishes. Up to 150 youth participate every summer and relish the spirit, youth, and energy of the Totus Tuus Team. The team consists of four young people in college or above, who donate their summer to be a missionary to our children. They are well trained in the faith, in prayer, and in fun! Typically, at least one member on the team is a

seminarian studying to become one of our future priests.

It is a spiritual week that allows our kids to reach a deeper level of religious education through catechesis, prayer, and celebration of the sacraments. It is also, of course, a lot of fun. Grade school students come during the day, and junior high and high school youth attend evening sessions. The Parish underwrites the cost of the program to make it affordable for all.

We pray and hope that the seeds of any vocation to the priesthood and religious life will be encouraged to grow in the youth who attend. Please see some photos and videos from Totus Tuus’ time in LaSalle on our parish website and check out the videos on the diocesan page comeandfollowme.org.

NET Ministries (National Evangelization Teams) came to LaSalle in September to host an all-day retreat for our junior high students at Trinity Academy and facilitate our annual Confirmation retreat for this year’s eighth grade class. Eleven young missionaries came to engage with our students

and help inspire them to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church.

For our Confirmation students, the team presented a retreat titled “One Church.” The focus is on the Church as our universal home. That even though we have our struggles, God will stand by us in the holy institution left to us by Christ: his living body.

Our junior high students participated in the “Strength in Numbers” retreat, which highlights the importance of authentic friendship. We all know adolescence can be a difficult time. Our NET Team helped our students recognize the false ideas of friendship presented by the entertainment industry and focus on true relationships free from betrayal, gossip, and scandal. Our friends can help empower us to greatness. We need to be great friends to one another.

Our Net Team received high praise from our students. We would sincerely like to have them back again soon. Many thanks to all the parishioners who helped to host our missionaries by providing meals, drinks, air mattresses, and other supplies.



University-level Theology in LaSalle

Two years ago, LaSalle became one of four locations in the Diocese to offer classes toward a theology certificate issued by the Regina Apostolorum, a Pontifical University in Rome. The academic program follows the basic course of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Classes are offered in Spanish through the Escuela de la Fe program which presents the interactive courses through two-way video conferencing from Mexico City. The new technology allows students to relate with the professors and other classrooms throughout the country.

The extensive course requires one hundred twenty hours of classes, written papers, and formal exams for each of the eight modules. Upon completion of the certificate, our scholars will be qualified to teach and lead groups and studies in our parishes.

We are proud of the fourteen participants who meet on Saturday mornings in the Omega Room at St. Patrick to participate in this challenging course. Coming to know God better helps us to love him all the more!

Catorce personas de LaSalle y Ottawa están tomando clases por 4 horas cada primer y tercer sábado del mes en el Omega Room de la oficina parroquial ellos están tomando el siguiente curso: Diplomado en fundamentos de la fe católica y catequesis.

Los cursos consisten en 120 horas de clase divididas en ocho módulos: Módulo 1. Introducción a la fe / Historia de la Salvación; 2. La Sagrada Escritura; 3. Un solo Dios, Padre de todos los hombres; 4. Jesucristo, Hijo de Dios y de María; 5. Creo en el Espíritu Santo y en la Iglesia; 6. Liturgia y sacramentos; 7. La vida en Cristo; 8. Los diez mandamientos.

¿Qué hacemos? Impartimos cursos y diplomados, proporcionando a los alumnos los instrumentos adecuados para el conocimiento de su fe y así potencializarlos para que lleguen a ser futuros formadores.

Los programas de estudio están planeados de modo que equilibren el aprendizaje teórico con la experiencia cristiana, de manera que puedan servir mejor a la propia comunidad y la conversión interior. Los cursos son impartidos vía internet por las maestras de sede Satélite en la ciudad de México sede de Escuela de la Fe.



Priests Pedaling for Prayers

By Father Tom

About four years ago, while on a junior priest retreat at Nazareth House, newly ordained Fr. Michael Pica joined Fr. Adam Cesarek and myself on a little bicycle ride through the farm fields and river valley around Henry, Illinois. All three of us had grown to share not only a love for the priesthood, but also a love for cycling. While on that ride, Fr. Pica, still too young and spirit-filled to be discouraged by a daunting task, proposed that we ride across the entire diocese on our bikes. Well, maybe it was the heat and humidity of that central Illinois summer, or maybe it was the exercise-induced endorphins flooding our brains, but we enthusiastically agreed...only to later realize the magnitude of the project we had undertaken!

Three years, three cross-diocesan rides, and nearly a thousand miles later, Priests Pedaling for Prayers has kept us busy pedaling...and PRAYING! We have always been adamant that the event is not a fundraiser, but rather a PRAYER-RAISER. Our message at every rally, Mass, potluck, or Holy Hour has always been the same: we need



to pray that the men whom God is calling to be priests will have the courage and generosity to hear and accept God's call.

Has the event been a success? Well, thousands have heard us speak and joined us in prayer for vocations, so in that sense it certainly has! Prayer is powerful and effective, and the more recourse we have to it, the more the Catholic faith will continue

to grow in our hearts and spread throughout central Illinois. Many people have also asked whether this event will continue. While I don't have a definite answer at this point, one thing is certain: ALL CATHOLICS are called to continually find new and creative ways to use the gifts and interests that God has given us to help His kingdom grow!

Priests Pedaling for Prayers, by the numbers:

3 priests; **3** annual rides

15 days; **55** hours "in the saddle"

970 total miles covered

30°F / 88°F coldest day / warmest day

37,125 total calories burned per person...equaling about

43 CHEESEBURGERS *per week!*

51 vocation-promoting events at schools, churches

8,500 people attending rallies and Masses



Holy Rosary Spaghetti Sauce

Food isn't always just food. It can bring us together, express our culture, and honor our ancestors. This has certainly been the case with the spaghetti sauce made at Holy Rosary. Its roots are in the Northern Italian tradition of the Bernardi Family, but it has been refined and perfected over the decades to suit the tastes of the people of LaSalle.

The sauce is made from three meats: pork, veal, and beef. These are cooked and blended with tomatoes, mushrooms, carrots, onions, celery, green peppers, and spices. The result is a wonderfully thick sauce with a truly distinct flavor.

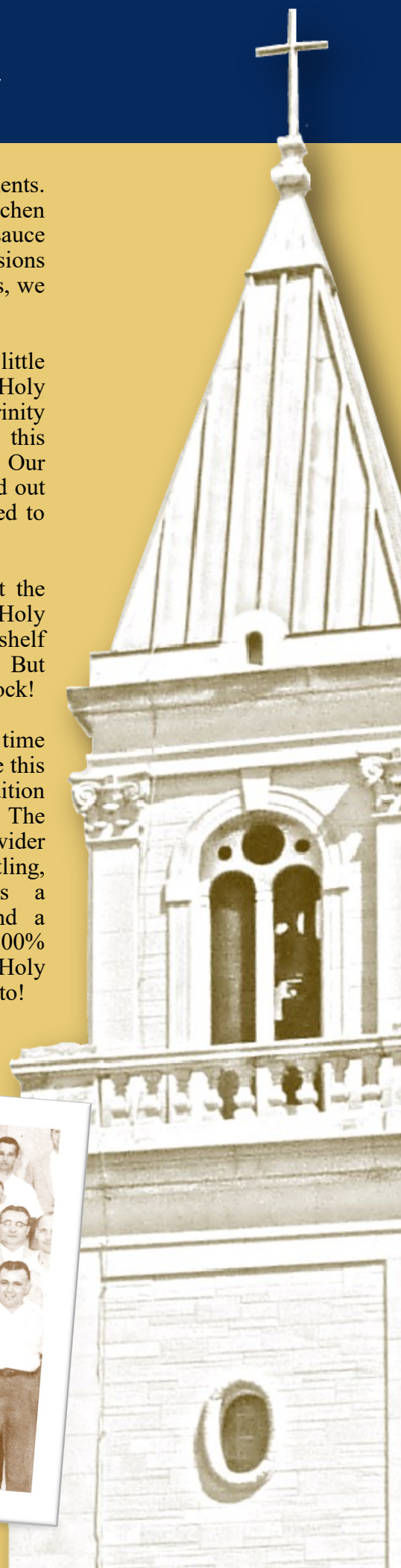
Everyone knows not to mess with an Italian's spaghetti sauce recipe. When the idea was floated to reproduce the sauce just as it was for the famous spaghetti dinners, we knew we had to be careful. The original recipe was found, and careful measurements of the equipment at the Holy Rosary kitchen were made to

quantify non-standard measurements. This was given to a commercial kitchen near Chicago, and a test batch of the sauce was produced. After two tasting sessions with veteran sauce makers and tasters, we were ready for production!

Dalla Campanella, named for the little bell tower that stands over the Holy Rosary kitchen, premiered at the Trinity Catholic Academy Spaghetti Dinner this September. It was a great success! Our first batch of 35 cases (420 jars) sold out quickly and a larger rush order placed to have enough on hand for Christmas.

Right now, the sauce is available at the parish office and in the vestibule of Holy Rosary. It has also been given some shelf space at our Hy-Vee store in Peru. But we are having trouble keeping it in stock!

In an age when few can manage the time to make sauces from scratch, we hope this becomes away to keep our local tradition alive and more widely available. The production is ready for even a wider reach; it has FDA approved bottling, label, and production. There's a professional nutritional analysis and a registered barcode. And, of course, 100% of the proceeds go to help maintain Holy Rosary Veterans Shrine. Buon appetito!





Pilgrimage to Poland

By Jacqueline Bend

Father Carlson and Sister Norberta led our group on a spiritual and cultural trip through the beautiful country of Poland where 95% of the population is Catholic. We were fortunate to have Father Gregory join us in celebrating Mass every day. We knew this pilgrimage focused on the lives of St. Faustina (Helena Kowalska) and St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla). What we discovered was an opportunity to visit a beautiful country that had produced several blessed Saints, but had seen so much war and grief yet survived to become a beautiful, warm, and inviting destination.

Our trip began in Warsaw. This city had been destroyed by the Germans in WWII and has been beautifully restored. We visited St. James Church,

where St. Faustina prayed and sought the advice of Rev. James Dabrowski prior to entering the convent. We toured Three Crosses Square, where there were two large crosses and a smaller one cradled in the arms of the statue of St. John of Nepomuk. Our Mass took place at the chapel in the Shrine of St. Faustina. There was a kneeler located near the front containing a relic of the blessed saint.

We visited Stanislaw Kostka Church and the museum of Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko. He was the spiritual leader of the Solidarity Movement and was killed by the Communists in 1984. From 1980 until his death he conducted very popular Masses that became a kind of manifesto for the social movement and protesters, attracting people from all around

Poland. Fr. Jerzy's tomb is situated beside the church. The site was visited by Pope John Paul II in 1987. Other points of interest in Warsaw were the Market Square, the Barbican, Lazienki Park, containing a unique statue of Chopin, the famous Polish composer, and the Royal Castle.

In Niepokalanow we toured and celebrated Mass at the Franciscan monastery founded by martyr St. Maximilian Kolbe. The museum depicted his life and horrific death in Auschwitz when he gave his life to spare that of a stranger. At Swinice Warckle we visited the Church of St. Casimir where St. Faustina, the Apostle of The Divine Mercy, was baptized, had her First Confession and her First Communion.

We were privileged to be allowed within the gated area protecting the Black Madonna, the painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus being displayed in the Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa. To be so close to such a historically and religiously important piece of art was amazing. In the respectfully quiet surroundings you could hear the soft shuffling of pilgrims proceeding along the wall, behind the painting, and around the far wall on their knees – young and old. This signified the veneration given to this holy icon.

In Wadowice we saw the birthplace of St. John Paul II. In Zakopane we rode in a funicular (a type of cable car) to view the beautiful Tatra mountains. We visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Zakopane on the anniversary of the 6th and final apparition of Mary to the three shepherd children at Fatima on October 13, 1917. There was a special Mass being held with a procession. Many participants were dressed in the beautiful traditional clothing of the Highlanders.

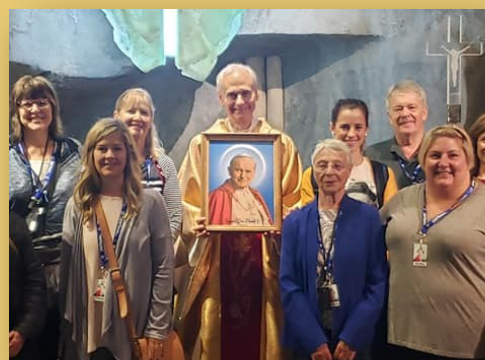
We toured Europe's oldest salt mine in Wieliczka. It was filled with amazing sculptures and chandeliers all created from salt. We returned to Krakow for a guided walking tour. Krakow was spared by the Germans

and has maintained its original beauty. We saw the Market Square, Saint Mary's Basilica, Cloth Hall, Wawel Hill, Wawel Cathedral, and the Old Town Historical District. Trinity Church in Krakow is also the final resting place of our own St. Hyacinth!

The tour of the Nazi concentration and extermination camp, Auschwitz, was a sobering reminder of the atrocities inflicted on millions of people during WWII. We entered the gas chamber, saw the living conditions and personal effects of the victims, viewed the Martyrdom Museum, and the cell of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

In the District of Lagiewniki we had Mass in the chapel of the Divine Mercy Basilica. In the center of the Basilica is a simple marble altar that contains a vial with a relic of St. John Paul II's blood. The blood-stained cassock that he wore on the day of the attempted assassination is on display here. We prayed in the Divine Mercy Sanctuary that contains the image of the Merciful Jesus, and the tomb of St. Faustina, who was canonized on April 30, 2000.

We were so blessed to have shared this pilgrimage.





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Fr. Tom Otto holds the Holy Eucharist in Benediction on the porch of St. Patrick during the Corpus Christi procession, while faithful hold Vatican, Christian, and Jerusalem banners.

