



ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC PARISH

Christ the King and Holy Spirit Churches

NEW YEAR CAN PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW BEGINNINGS AND DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS

This is the time of year when we traditionally commit ourselves to new resolutions. We make goals to lose weight or plan to develop a new exercise regime, all with the hopes of increasing our overall health and happiness. Yet, sometimes in our New Year's zeal, says Fr. Alex Zenthoefer, we're in danger of forgetting the most important aspect of life — namely, our spiritual well-being.

"We generally ask ourselves, 'What do I need to do in order to be healthier?' and then make all sorts of resolutions to help enact this change," Fr. Alex says. "Similarly, I would say the same opportunity arises this time of year in regards to our faith. What do I need to do to further my relationship with Christ? How can I grow as a person of faith?"

As the New Year commences, Fr. Alex and his staff hope to respond to these spiritual needs by providing greater opportunities for parishioners to encounter and grow in relationship with the Lord. This will include a study on the Creed presented by a local professor, the annual parish mission in February, and a spring Bible study. However, beyond what has already been planned, the New Year also presents the perfect time for parishioners to voice their spiritual needs, giving birth to new ministries



Tom & Kathy Loveridge and Rita Fairchild are this year's Annunciation Parish inductees to the Bruté Society, recognizing their lives of discipleship, stewardship, and service to the church and others.

and ideas.

"If you have a faith need, odds are you probably aren't the only one," Fr. Alex says. "So, by sharing them with us, it's a chance for us to respond to those needs together as a parish family. It's kind

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Stewardship of Treasure *Giving to God First*

Have you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship – giving of your time or talents – but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject. Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So shouldn't we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” – we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt – so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor

financial management may be to blame for our tight resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” – giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to cover our required expenses?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust – believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place – because He is in ultimate control.

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A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Your Spiritual Diet

Dear Parishioners,

About four years ago I found out I was allergic to a number of foods: gluten, eggs, dairy, green beans and garlic. Now you know why I'm thin! Needless to say, it took a while for me to establish a new diet so that my body wouldn't pay the price for me eating things that hurt it.

Sometimes we have to make changes because the habits we've developed are hurting us: they are hurting our relationships, damaging our bodies or causing pain to others. But beyond these physical choices and their consequences, we also make decisions that affect the health of our faith and our spiritual wellbeing. So maybe it's time to re-evaluate our spiritual diet.

The New Year gives us a chance to begin to "eat healthier" when it comes to our spiritual practices and habits. So I want to offer a list of some possible ways to feed your soul. It might be too much to try and start all of these things at once, but maybe you can start feeding on some of these practices little by little. Who knows, by the end of the year, you might find that you feel healthier both in spirit and in body.

- Attend Mass once a week over and above week-end liturgies.
- Spend an hour (or any amount of time) in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a month.
- Pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* (the *Divine Office*) at least once a day.
- Read and meditate on a chapter of Scripture a day.
- Take up a devotion of the Church (e.g. Rosary, Stations, novena, other prayers, etc.) and pray it daily.
- Read a spiritual book once a month.
- Make a morning offering as you begin your day, then an examination of conscience as you end your day.
- Offer a prayer of blessing/thanksgiving before/after a meal.



- Take time to pray daily with your spouse/family.
- As an individual or a family, take time once a week to do some form of charitable work — visiting those who are homebound or in a nursing home, do some work for an elderly friend or neighbor, bring food to someone in need, etc.

This is not an exhaustive menu, so to speak, but hopefully it gives you an idea of how you can begin to feed your soul in a healthier way. I

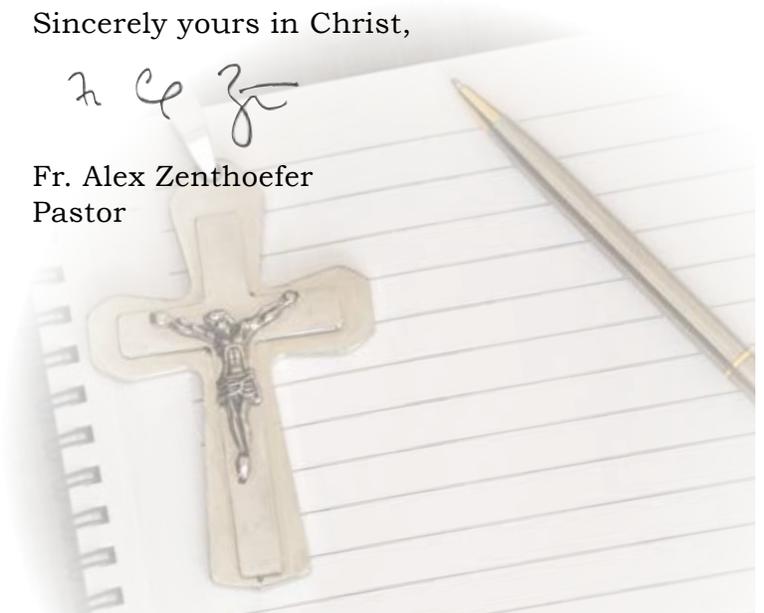
noticed that when I changed my diet, I had to test new foods that I had not tried before to see if they "fit" with my tastes. I suggest the same method with these spiritual practices. See what works for you, what helps you to grow in your relationship with Christ and with others.

Let us pray that 2019 will be a year of grace and favor from God. I wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white notepad, appearing to read "Fr. Alex Zenthoefer".

Fr. Alex Zenthoefer
Pastor





A TRUE LIFE-GIVING GIFT:

As Catholics, we're familiar with the imagery of "life-saving Blood." At the heart of our faith is the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose blood was shed, bringing new life to each of us.

And while our blood doesn't bring eternal life to someone in need, it can indeed be life-saving in the temporal sense — and perhaps be an invitation for someone to receive God's love, as well.

Parishioner Marci Moore became involved with the blood drives at Annunciation six years ago, shortly after joining the parish, when the need arose for a new coordinator of the ministry.

"I'd never even given blood, but I was like, 'Sure, why not?' Marci says. "I felt like it was a great way to meet people within the parish, and obviously a really great service we were provid-

ing through the donations of blood."

However, Marci's perspective changed three years ago, when both she and her prematurely born son found themselves in a dire situation, needing blood.

"I ended up having internal bleeding, so I went into emergency surgery while I was pregnant to figure out what was going on and to stop the bleeding," she says. "After the surgery, I started to crash, so they decided to deliver my son 9.5 weeks early. They delivered him and somewhere in the process I received a total of seven units of blood."

Near the end of his five weeks in the NICU, her son also ended up receiving a unit of blood that helped him progress and be able to come home.

"I fell into the blood drives, just to help, and then it became pretty real," Marci says.

Our blood drives at Annunciation are hosted by the Red Cross, who brings in all the necessary supplies and staff, and volunteers from Annunciation serve to help people get registered, feel comfortable, and provide refreshments and company for people, as they take a few minutes to recover. All in all, the process takes about an hour.

Although not officially regarded as a corporal work of mercy, giving blood is a chance to serve those in need.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself," says Marci, recalling Jesus' words. "There are people in need and you have a way, that doesn't cost you anything financially, that you can give to help them.

As Marci notes, one donation of blood can potentially save up to three lives and every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood.

"These are people who are in vulnerable situations because of trauma or cancer or chronic illness — there are a lot of people in need," she says. "If I didn't have seven units of blood, I wouldn't be here today."

Marci encourages parishioners to consider serving either a morning or afternoon shift, helping those who are giving blood.



The Moore family: Matt, Marci, and their son Emmett.

Our Annunciation Blood Drives

“It’s really a great way to meet other parishioners,” Marci says. “Especially for people who may not be able to volunteer for other things, this is a way they can give back and get a chance to talk with other people in the parish that they might not get to otherwise.”

Marci also hopes that parishioners who are able will make the generous donation of blood.

“There’s almost always a shortage of blood and an hour of your time can do a lot to save lives,” Marci says. “We’ve had 16-year-olds and 92-year-olds and everybody in between. It’s a great thing, for sure.”

“It’s an easy thing to do, it doesn’t cost anything,” she adds. “It’s rewarding to see these people who come in so selflessly. They truly feel this is a way they can give back, and for me, it’s rewarding in knowing how much it can help others.”



Twice a year, volunteers from the parish work together with the Red Cross to host blood drives.

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For more information or to pre-register for upcoming blood drives, please visit redcrossblood.org. Search zip code 47714 and date “February 10,” in order to find the blood drive at Annunciation, and make an appointment. You can also call the parish office at 812-476-3061. Annunciation will be hosting blood drives on Sunday, Feb. 10 and Sunday, June 30. The drives are held in the Christ the King school cafeteria.

The twice-annual blood drive is an outreach of our parish Health and Wellness Ministry. “The goal [of the Health and Wellness Ministry] is informing people and informing consciences about what it means to be a temple of the Holy Spirit,” says Julie Rosario, our Evangelization Coordinator. For more information on this ministry, as well as upcoming events and opportunities, please contact Julie Rosario at 812-476-3061, ext. 260, or jrosario@evdio.org.



OFFERING OUR LOVE AND ADORATION TO JESUS

Eucharistic Adoration is the adoration of Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist. Churches that have this adoration display the Eucharist in a special holder called a monstrance, and people come to pray and worship Jesus.

Christ's great love for us was shown when He was crucified on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and give us eternal life. He loves us without limit, and offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Can we not give Jesus a few minutes of love and adoration in return?

What is the importance of Eucharistic Adoration?

Eucharistic Adoration is the respect and worship we give to Jesus, who is truly present to us under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure; by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass, we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace.

What are the fruits of Eucharistic Adoration?

People who observe Eucharistic Adoration experience a deeper devotion to Jesus, and this manifests itself in countless ways. The primary fruits are repentance and conversion, which lead to increased charity — that is, the love of Christ alive in His people. The adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist also leads to greater reverence at Mass, a deeper desire for personal holiness, and a stronger sense of union with the parish and the whole Church. Ever since the early centuries of Christianity, the Church has linked Eucharistic Devotion to service to the poor. The practice has, more recently, led to an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.



What is proper etiquette during Eucharistic Adoration?

When we are not taking part in vocal prayers and hymns with other adorers, we should be praying silently. Whenever we pass before the place where the Sacred Host is reserved, we should genuflect. We should observe the modest dress and decorum that are appropriate to very solemn occasions. We should avoid any actions that might disturb or distract others, or otherwise draw attention to ourselves rather than Jesus.

How should we pray during Eucharistic Adoration?

There are many ways to pray. We may meditate in silence by gazing on the Sacred Host. We may silently speak to Jesus from our mind and heart. We may also rely on devotions and prayers from Catholic tradition, such as the reading of Scripture, recitation of the Rosary, or the litanies. When two or more are gathered before the Sacrament, they may pray or sing hymns together.

What is the best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration?

The best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration is by doing it! Make frequent visits to Jesus at the tabernacle. Invite your spouse, your children, your neighbors and co-workers to join you. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, "Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. 'To visit the Blessed Sacrament is ... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord'" (1418).

BENEFITS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION ARE CELEBRATED DURING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools Week, set to be celebrated at Annunciation Parish from Jan. 28 through Feb. 1, offers our two campuses, Christ the King and Holy Spirit, the opportunity to share what makes Catholic education so vital in the faith formation of our children.

The eighth-grade students from our schools will be joining fellow Catholic school students from the 26 schools in the diocese for a special Mass on Jan. 29. Traditionally, the oldest students at each school attend the Mass to be held this year at Good Shepherd Church.

On Thursday, Jan. 31, the students from the Holy Spirit campus, led by principal David Memmer, will join their colleagues at Christ the King campus for Mass.

"It's a special event when we can all get together," says Matt Moore, Christ the King Principal. "We're one school with two campuses and we get together like this four times during the school year."

Prospective parents will have the opportunity to visit Christ the King campus from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31, for a "Come and See" open house.

Throughout the week, all the students and their teachers will be enjoying special activities at their respective campuses.

On Friday, Feb. 1, our students will be showing their pride in their school with Annunciation Spirit Wear Day. Feb. 1 is the First Friday, so the students will also be taking part in Eucharistic Adoration.

Although there are benefits of Catholic education highlighted during Catholic Schools Week, there also are two misconceptions that might deter parents from enrolling their children in Catholic school.

"The first misconception is that it isn't affordable," Mr. Moore says. "But this isn't the case. The second misconception is that you have to be a Catholic to attend. During

Catholic Schools Week, not only do we celebrate being a Catholic school, but also celebrate our Christ-centered family environment where students of all faiths are welcome."

The small class sizes at our schools are a benefit, as well.

"The average class size at our campus is about 15," Mr. Moore says. "We truly are a neighborhood Catholic school. The small class size makes it possible for a strong relationship between the teachers and students. The teachers can identify the needs of each child."

The caring and loving family environment at our two campuses is what sets Catholic schools apart.

"I know it sounds kind of corny, but what is special about Catholic Schools Week is that it reminds us that each week is a very special week to be in Catholic school," Mr. Moore says. "The most important thing Catholic schools do, daily, is try to fully develop each student spiritually."

Parents who are interested in learning more about enrolling their children at Annunciation may contact either Mr. Moore at Christ the King Campus at 812-476-1792, or Mr. Memmer at Holy Spirit Campus at 812-477-9082.





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New Year Can be Opportunity for New Beginnings and Deeper Relationships continued from front cover

of like starting an exercise routine. If you start it by yourself, you're almost doomed to failure. But if you have someone accompanying you in that process, offering accountability and support, it's much easier to achieve success."

By inviting parishioners to reflect on their relationship with Christ and working to provide new opportunities for them to grow and serve, Fr. Alex hopes to better engage parishioners in the life of the Church this year. Hopefully, this will help encourage parishioners to further use their gifts and talents for God's glory, discovering more about themselves in the process.

"When we offer ourselves and get engaged in the life of a community, we become more ourselves —

the gifts that might hide beneath the surface get drawn out," Fr. Alex says. "When that happens and we begin to develop a culture where people are more alive and truly themselves, then we as a parish begin to function in a way that was previously unforeseeable. So it's really an opportunity to see what God can offer through the specific gifts that He has given each one of us individually."

And lastly, says Fr. Alex, the New Year is the perfect time to let go of any wounds or grudges that have been dragging us down — any barriers keeping us from the Lord. It's the time for new beginnings and a new openness as we ask together, "Lord, what is it you want from me this year?"

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Holy Spirit: Saturday: 4:00 p.m. | Sunday: 9:00 a.m. | Tuesday: 6:00 p.m. | Wednesday: 8:30 a.m.

Christ the King: Saturday: 5:30 p.m. | Sunday: 7:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Monday: 7:45 a.m. | Tuesday: 7:45 a.m. | Thursday: 8:30 a.m. | Friday: 7:45 a.m.

Confessions: Saturday: 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. at Holy Spirit | Saturday: 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. at Christ the King