

Queen of the Holy Rosary

CATHOLIC CHURCH



Check Out Our Opportunities to Grow Closer to Christ this Lent

Our Holy Week and Easter celebrations will be in-person this year, and no one is happier than Fr. Bill.

“The Easter Triduum without the congregation is what I missed the most last year,” he says. “We had the highest season of the Church, and although it was livestreamed, it was without the congregation. I missed the choir — and we still will miss it this year. I couldn’t baptize at the Vigil Mass and bring people into the Church. That was the hardest thing.”

In looking back at the year under COVID-19 restrictions, Fr. Bill is very grateful to our parishioners.

“I have gratitude for the people in these challenging times,” he says. “They have been generous and so helpful to each other. I’m so grateful for how much our people have shown their faith through these challenges.”

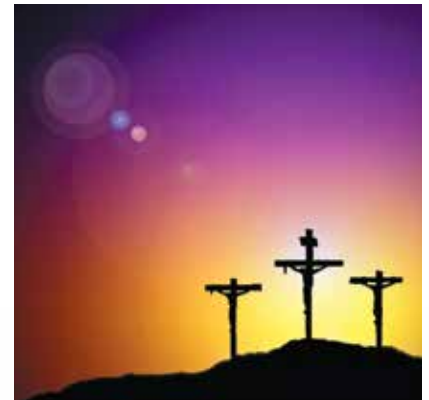
There still are some precautions that will continue during Lent, however.

A virtual retreat, Stewardship for the Family, will be offered on Feb. 27 and will provide families a chance to learn more about growing as disciples of Christ and strengthening their domestic church.

There will be other opportunities to build our faith as we proceed through Lent. For instance, families can take part in online activities provided by Faith Walk.

“There is, on our website, a link to a website established by Shane Jones at www.myfaithwalk.org,” Fr. Bill says. “There is a whole week of things you can do at home. It has information on how to prepare for Mass, and ‘My Faith Walk for the Morning,’ and a section for young adults, among other things. Shane is a layperson who is very involved in our archdiocese. This is a great opportunity for people to be able to grow their faith at home, and it is free.”

Currently, Fr. Bill is unsure if we will be able to offer “meatless Fridays,” which had to be canceled last year during Lent.



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Celebrating the Miracle of St. Blaise

Feast Day, Feb. 3

This month, we reflect on the life of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, who is one of the “Fourteen Holy Helpers” — a group of Catholic saints whose intercession is believed to be effective against diseases. Every year on Feb. 3, we celebrate the feast day of St. Blaise, during which parishes around the world bless the throats of the faithful. So, as we continue to navigate the ongoing challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, we may look toward St. Blaise’s example and pray for his intercession during these difficult times.

Though we do not know much about the life of St. Blaise, tradition tells us that he was born to wealthy, saintly Catholic parents. Born in Armenia, he devoted his life to medicine and helping the sick. He was a physician, until he was begged by the people to become their bishop. He was appointed by the Church as bishop of the Diocese of Sebaste.

Around the year 313, when the Roman Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Church, Blaise lived as a hermit in the woods among animals that he befriended. One day, a group of hunters found Blaise and seized him. Upon their trip to the governor, they encountered a woman whose pig was being attacked by a wolf. Blaise commanded the wolf to leave the pig alone and, upon his command, the pig was freed unharmed. Blaise was then taken to prison, where he miraculously healed a boy who was choking to death on a fishbone. While Blaise remained in prison, the woman whose pig he had freed brought him two candles to serve as his light so that he could read the Scripture.

It was from the miracle of saving the choking boy that the

custom of praying to St. Blaise to cure all ailments of the throat was born. And, so, after still refusing to recant his Christian beliefs, he was suspended from a tree and his flesh was torn with iron combs or rakes.

Blaise was then thrown into a lake to drown. To the surprise of his persecutors, he surfaced and walked upon the water, and he invited his persecutors to join him. They should do this, he said, to show the power of their gods. The pagans took him up on his invitation, and ultimately they were drowned. Blaise was then told by an angel to return to dry land to receive martyrdom. He was beheaded on the shore and immediately went to heaven.

Because of his prison experience and his great reputation as a healer, St. Blaise’s intercession is invoked for the healing of diseases affecting the throat. The candles

that the clergy place upon our throats while blessing them symbolize the candles that enlightened St. Blaise’s cell as he studied Sacred Scripture — connecting his spiritual life to the physical healing. Let us remember to invoke the intercession of this great healer upon any ailments that might be affecting us, either physical or spiritual — especially those pertaining to the throat.

The blessing of the throats is done by the priest holding two blessed candles near the throat in the form of a cross. The priest says, “Through the merits and intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver thee from all diseases of the throat, and preserve thee from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”





A Letter From Our Pastor

Sharing Love in Different Ways

Dear Parishioners,

What's the most widely observed saint's day in February — the one that's kept even by those who aren't practicing Catholics? Undoubtedly, it would be St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

The irony is that his feast isn't even on the General Roman Calendar of feasts to be observed throughout the world. That doesn't mean that he's not recognized as a real, historical person, or as a genuine saint, but only that his influence throughout the Church has not been as significant as that of other saints.

So who was St. Valentine? There are several St. Valentines, as the name was not a rare one in the ancient Roman Empire, but the saint

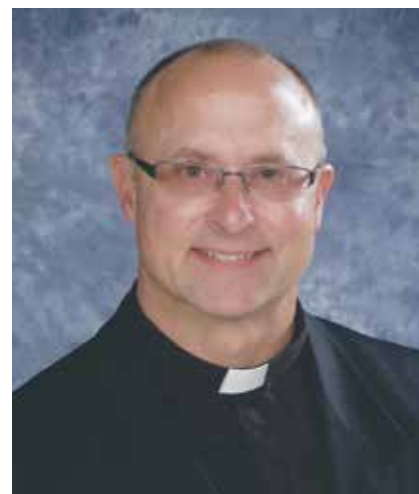


we celebrate was a priest of Rome martyred in the late third century. Still, that doesn't explain how his feast came to be celebrated as the day one sends letters, cards and presents as expressions of romantic love.

The truth is that the custom of sending tokens of love comes not from any direct connection with St. Valentine, but from the ancient belief that birds begin to pair off on Feb. 14. And if courtship in the natural world occurred then, it must be appropriate for humans, as well. The association between St. Valentine and love notes is a later development.

Nevertheless, it's not wrong to connect the two. Love has many aspects, and our conception of it is richer if we keep more than one of them in mind. Martyrdom is the result of loving God more than our earthly life. St. Valentine was a martyr because of his love — his love for Jesus Christ and His Church. If he had not loved God so much, he could have repudiated his Lord and saved his life. We, in turn, express our love by sending cards and gifts on St. Valentine's Day.

But isn't that what stewardship as a way of life is — a little martyrdom? Not to push the image too far, but when we are faithful stewards, we give up a little portion of our lives out of our own love for Christ. Most Christians will not be called on to be martyrs, in the



sense of forfeiting our physical lives for God. But we are called to give up some of our comforts, indulgences and riches because of our love for Him.

So then, as you prepare to celebrate and share your love with your Valentine this month, remember St. Valentine and his love for Christ. As well, keep in mind that God loves us, and return that love with your own toward Him. Loving God will be reflected in how you prioritize your use of the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to you. As St. John wrote (1 Jn 4:19), "We love because he first loved us."

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. William Bruning
Pastor



“Stewardship in the Family” Inviting Parishioners on

As one of the co-founders of Catholic Stewardship Consultants — an organization committed to developing Disciples of Christ through the practice of stewardship at parishes across the United States — Lisa McArdle has been having conversations on the topic of stewardship with people all over the country for close to 25 years. Not long ago, however, she was so inspired by one of these conversations that she created an entirely new retreat experience.

“I was speaking with a gentleman recently and he apologized because he felt he hadn’t been a good steward in the parish,” Lisa says. “He had been the primary caretaker for his father and told me that his father had just passed and now he hoped to be a better steward. My heart just broke, because what he didn’t understand was that he had been living as a steward in the best way he could by taking care of his family.”

Following that conversation, Lisa knew she had a mission —



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helping people understand that we are all called to holiness and that this call most often begins right in our own homes. With this in mind, Lisa has begun leading retreats on

the theme of Stewardship in the Family. Queen of the Holy Rosary will be blessed to have Lisa bring this retreat “virtually” to our parish.

In contrast to many other spiritual experiences, the “Stewardship in the Family” retreat is directed by laypeople. As a mother of five daughters and now a “Mimi” to her first grandchild — Lisa has experienced firsthand both the challenges and rewards of family life. Her talks at the retreat will highlight the spiritual transformation that takes place when we make stewardship central to our family life.

“We’re all called to live as stewards,” Lisa says. “It’s not just for saints or pastors or Pope Francis. Stewardship doesn’t just begin and end in our parish families, either — it really begins at home in our domestic churches. Ultimately, that is where it is taught and resonates the most.”

The virtual retreat will include talks, personal reflection, and brief small-group discussion.

“I think that learning more about discipleship will transform hearts and transform lives. In turn, strengthening families will strengthen the parish. I think of the words of St. Teresa of Calcutta — ‘If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.’ It sounds so simple, but it’s so profound. If we all did that, it would have a ripple effect and the world would be so much better.” — Lisa McArdle



The Family” Retreat

a Closer Walk with Christ

As a busy mother, Lisa knows that it is not always easy to carve out the time for a retreat. Often, however, that is the very reason we should make the effort to do so!

“Families are so busy now that we don’t know how to stop,” she says. “Learning to be still and finding out what God is calling us to is so important, and to be centered in our faith is now more essential than ever. A priest once told me that we were created as human beings, not ‘human doings,’ and yet we’re so busy doing that we never stop to reflect. It’s really a gift to stop and make sure we’re on the path where God wants us.”

Lisa hopes that parishioners joining in this virtual retreat will gain a renewed sense of their mission in this world — a mission that does not begin and end in our parish, but instead informs the way we live our lives, every day and everywhere.

“I encourage people to look at how they spend time with their families and what decisions they are making as a family of stewards,” she says. “God has given us all talents. Whether you are washing dishes, changing a diaper, cheering for your son at baseball games, caring for a parent — all of these things are important.”

All parishioners and visitors — from young parents to empty-nesters to singles — are welcome to experience the

spiritual growth that this retreat promises. A closer walk as disciples of Christ awaits you!

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*Our Virtual Retreat will be Feb. 27 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Check out our website and bulletin for more information.*



FIRST SATURDAY STREET MINISTRY:



Noon rolls around, and your gut starts growling. Whether you head out the door to grab a take-out lunch or pull together a bite from the fridge, it's usually not long before you satisfy the angry stomach rumbles. Many people aren't so lucky.

Here in our community, on the first Saturday of each month, a faithful group of parishioners works together with the Sisters and Friars of the Poor of Jesus Christ to provide food for those in need.

"I think of this ministry as feeding the souls and tummies of the most vulnerable in our community," says parishioner Stacey Foster, who has been involved with this project since shortly after its inception five years ago.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were several different ways that people could serve, including

donating food, preparing sack lunches, and delivering meals to those in need. The ministry serves those living on the streets, as well as those unable to afford the food they need.

Since the pandemic, the role of volunteers has changed, with parishioners being asked to bring completed meal bags, which the Sisters and Friars then deliver to those in need. Currently, this effort has been halted to ensure the safety of all involved.

In the past, Thanksgiving and Christmas were also opportunities for volunteers to prepare food, as well as celebrate alongside those in need, with games and music. However, for Thanksgiving this year, the volunteers provided desserts that the sisters and friars put into to-go boxes to deliver to those in need. For Christmas,





Feeding the Hunger for Food and Human Connection

parishioners donated gift cards, which were delivered, along with other items, by the sisters and friars.

For Stacey, who currently coordinates the ministry, being involved in the First Saturday Street Ministry has been an opportunity to see the face of Christ in others and fulfill His mission to help “the least of these.”

“I love this ministry and being able to connect with men and women that are not in my normal day-to-day life,” Stacey says. “It has opened my eyes that there are many different reasons that a person has come into this position in their life, whether it has been the loss of a job, illness, or possibly an addiction. I am not here to judge them, but to love them.”

Over the years, Stacey has found her faith being enriched as she realizes the importance of connecting with those she serves. In many cases, she finds that the hunger for human love and connection is even greater than the need for food.

“This ministry has brought me such an appreciation for all people and I have grown deeper in my faith, as I try to meet each person as Jesus,” Stacey says. “I know that I always want to make each person I meet feel that they are loved, respected, and cared about. I want them to know that people are praying for them. It isn’t always about the material things we can give, but our time and our presence with them.”

Stacey encourages her fellow parishioners to consider becoming involved, in whatever way they feel called.

“You may donate food items, or go to the convent and help prepare the meal bags, or go out and minister to our

brothers and sisters with prayer, conversation, and food,” she says. “Anything and everything is appreciated, and being involved is also a great way to meet others in the parish!”



If you would like more information, or to learn how you can become involved in helping those in need through the First Saturday Street Ministry, please contact Stacey Foster at stfoster1@yahoo.com or 913-558-3836.



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Opportunities to Grow Closer to Christ this Lent

continued from front cover

“But there are lots of things we can do,” he says. “We have seven people in formation to join the Church at Easter. RCIA has been continuing in-person on Tuesday nights with social distancing and masks. We have seven people who have said, ‘I want to come in full communion with the Church.’ This is very exciting!”

Fr. Bill has also planned a standard Holy Week schedule. Please keep an eye on the website and parish bulletin for more information on the Holy Week schedule.

All Masses and Stations of the Cross will remain available online via livestream so parishioners who are at home may remain connected to the Church.

“We’ll keep livestreaming Mass after the pandemic is over,” Fr. Bill says. “We have a lot of vulnerable and elderly parishioners and this will be a way to continue serving everyone.”

We encourage everyone to use this Lent to draw closer to our Lord in prayer, so we can fully celebrate the beauty of Easter 2021!

Other opportunities also scheduled for Lent:

Ash Wednesday Masses — 8:15 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 7 p.m.

Stations of the Cross — 5:30 p.m. each Friday.

Confessions will be heard from 5:30–6:30 p.m. each Wednesday, and each Saturday from 2:30–3:30 p.m.

If you would like more information about Lenten activities, please call the parish office at 913-432-4616.

WEEKEND MASS

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. | Sunday: 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

DAILY MASS

Monday - Friday: 8:15 a.m. | First Saturday: 8:15 a.m.