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AN ADVENT ADVENTURE

By David Schmidt

As we begin a new year, and look ahead to what we hope to accomplish, let us take a moment to look back at the Adventure we all took this Advent and Christmas season.

This last month St. Pat's was alive with the hope and promise of our Savior and the joy of his birth.

Reflecting back on all the Parish did this Advent season, one can start 2019 knowing that St. Pat's is a growing, thriving community. One that can and will do great things in the year to come as we all continue to share the love of Jesus with everyone around us.

So take a look at the Advent Adventure we, as a Parish family, took this last month:

- PCCW hosted their annual "Advent Spirituality Day"
- St. Pat's supported the Salvation Army Kettle Bell Campaign
- St. Pat's School held their annual "Breakfast with Santa"
- St. Pat's 2nd Grade Students received the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- St. Pat's School students provided "Cookies for Christmas"
- We held our Sunday Social with a meal provided by the Knights of Columbus
- We continued to pray the Rosary before every weekend Mass
- St. Pat's held an Communal Penance service
- Continued weekly Eucharistic Adoration
- Supported Second Harvest Mobile Food Pantry
- The Hispanic Community organized 8 days of prayer with "Las Posadas"
- Raised money for flowers and beautifully decorated our Church for Christmas
- Held a Midnight Mass for Christmas

- Held a Parish wide Book Giveaway
- Donated for 88 Christmas Food Baskets

Take a long look at that adventure. Take a look at all the times we as a Parish provided opportunities for Faith, Fellowship, and Fun. Take a long look at all the joy, promise, and hope that was alive this Advent and Christmas season and let's take this with us into 2019.

Let us all prayerfully consider how we can best continue to share the love of Jesus with our friends, families, Parish, and greater Community as we begin this New Year.

Thank You and God Bless!!!





“In the midst of that same humanity, Jesus calls His own to various kinds of service in the Church. Those whom He calls to the priesthood are still a unique and special fraternity, the forefront of the mission and evangelical effort of Christ and His Church in the world.”

From the Bishop - Consider Priesthood

By Bishop Callahan

When I was a young boy, there were very few of us in my neighborhood who did not have his own “vestments” and furnishings to celebrate “Mass” in our homes. Playing priest was simply part of growing up on the Catholic southside of Chicago. Then again, I think playing priest was part of the life experience of many Catholic boys in those days. Many of us grew up to see our make-believe become reality.

So much in the Church has changed in those sixty years or so. I don't know if kids still play priest or if so many challenging twists and turns have made it a bit more difficult in today's world to imagine the thought of being a priest for real.

I believe that many seminarians in today's culture are, in fact, beginning to take their faith much more seriously and are striving to find the balance between responding to “the call” and merely fantasizing about it.

Men of college age (mid-twenties) on up to late thirties particularly are considering the prospects of priesthood more and more seriously. They seem to understand the urgency for such a lifestyle in today's world—a turning away from materialism, promiscuity,

and self-indulgence—but the cloud of fear and doubt about their own ability to genuinely live such a life continues to offer a personal challenge. Of course, the shadow of the abuse scandal, ecclesiastical discipline (obedience and celibacy), and societal expectations offer a different array of points for pondering, prayer, and discernment.

As any Catholic, male or female, considers the importance of the priesthood in today's society, one cannot help but understand that the Church Herself is pondering, praying, and discerning in a new era. The Church, as we know, is organic—continually changing and growing—bringing the Gospel, ever-old and ever-new, to a new age of people in need of hearing the message. So it is for those whom She welcomes into the priesthood. The Church is very much aware of the mistakes and sins of the past—She is eager to make amends and not see those same mistakes and sins repeated.

Seminaries have become proving grounds for the kinds of priests necessary for the current age and beyond. Human formation, as it is called, has become just as important as academic, spiritual, and pastoral formation in advancement to ordination. Today's

seminarians are exposed to psychological, social, and peer evaluations, in addition, spiritual and personal development round out some rather rigorous areas of formation and education.

I have been a priest for forty-one years, and the Church and the world have indeed changed since I used to “play” priest almost sixty years ago. The complexities of human life have changed dramatically from those days—an Ecumenical Council, a Sexual Revolution, technological-medical upheavals and developments, street riots, cultural and gender shifts, and on and on. In the middle of it all stands Our Mother, the Church, the Spotless Bride of Christ, always standing to love and welcome Her Children who have been redeemed by Her Son, our Blessed Lord.

In the midst of that same humanity, Jesus calls His own to various kinds of service in the Church. Those whom He calls to the priesthood are still a unique and special fraternity, the forefront of the mission and evangelical effort of Christ and His Church in the world. In ten years of being a bishop, I have ordained thirty-five priests.

(Cont. on Pg. 3)

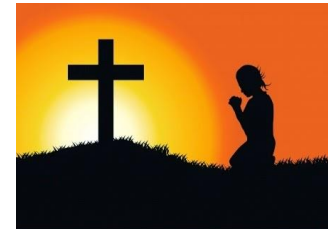
From the Bishop (Cont.)

(From Pg. 2)

As the Bishop of La Crosse for the past eight years, I have had the privilege and honor of ordaining eighteen of that total for service in our beloved Diocese, with the most recent being Fr. Kyle Laylan and Fr. Barry Saylor. I cannot even begin to formulate the appropriate

words of thanks for Fr. Alan Wierzba, our Diocesan Vocation Director and his assistant for the past year, Fr. Billy Dodge (now serving as Pastoral Administrator at Roncalli Newman Parish). I thank the priests, deacons, and Consecrated Religious of our Diocese for being so welcoming to

those who consider Church vocations. I am especially grateful to all of the Faithful men and women of our Diocese who pray for and support our seminarians. God has blessed us with many fine priests—please join me in giving thanks to God for them each day!



"I am especially grateful to all of the Faithful men and women of our Diocese who pray for and support our seminarians."

Growing in; Learning about; and Participating in our Faith

By David Schmidt

As we finish a beautiful Advent and Christmas season, settle into winter, and roll into the New Year, it can be the perfect time to grow in, learn about, or become more active in our Parish and Faith.

If you are looking for something this winter, St. Patrick's has multiple opportunities or all of us, young and old, to learn, grow, and participate in our Faith.

Here's what's available at St. Patrick's:

Religious Education

Program: Every Wednesday. K-6th 3:45pm, 7th-11th 7:00pm. Teachers are needed. For more information and registration contact the DRE, at stpatrickspartarep@gmail.com

Spanish Religious

Education Program: Every Sunday for K-11th at 12:30pm. For more information contact: Rocio Rivas

rocior152@gmail.com or Wendy Swenson at wendy_swenson@yahoo.com. Adult sessions available.

RCIA: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. For more information contact the Rectory at (608) 269-2655.

Bible Study: Every Wednesday at 7:00pm. Contact Judy Schmidt @ 343-0777 or email, lwschmidt@centurytel.net for more information or any questions.

Adult Study Sessions: Every Tuesday for all Parishioners. Coffee: 7:45—8:15am, Study Session: 8:15—9:15am, at St. Patrick's School. Young children are welcome. For more information contact Jessica Thomson at Thomson.jessica.c@gmail.com

Sunday Social: Every third Sunday of the month after 8:15 Mass. Come for different activities and sessions to learn and enjoy fellowship with other

parishioners. For more information contact davidjschmidt@hotmail.com

FORMED.org: Visit stpats.formed.org for your FREE account and a great variety of Catholic media content for the whole family!

Lay Ministries: Becoming a Lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Cantor, Choir Member or Usher are great ways to participate. For more information contact the Rectory at 608-269-2655.

Parish Committees:

From the Parish Council, Finance Council; Sacred Worship Committee; Building and Ground Committee; Education Committee; Cemetery Board; and Pro-Life Committee There are many groups that make our parish run. For more information or questions contact the Rectory at 608-369-2655.

Thank you for all you do and God Bless!



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2018 ... A great year for the Knight of Columbus!

By David Schmidt

2018 was another great year for the Knights of Columbus at St. Patrick's. With the help and support of not only all our brother Knights, but you, the parishioners of St. Patrick's, the Knights were able to raise and then provide over \$9,500 of support to the parish, our community, and various other organizations during the year.

This support included:

- Crucifixes for Baptisms
- Donation to Rainbow Riders Therapeutic Horseback Riding
- Food Pantry Donations and Collections
- Financial support for local families in need
- Donations to St. Patrick's Parish, School and VBS
- Support for Right to Life through Mother's Day Roses
- Raising funds for Intellectually Disabled through KC Tootsie Roll Campaign
- Donation to St. John Bosco Youth Day
- Donation to Seminarians
- Donations to Sparta Community Christmas Dinner
- Ringing of Salvation Army Kettle Bells

As we begin 2019, we Knights of Columbus hope to continue our efforts to spread the love of Christ through the numerous events and organizations we support. We pray for you all, whose help and enthusiasm allows us to continue and grow our efforts.

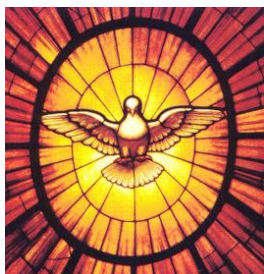
If you are a man of our Parish looking for a way to give back and if the Knights seem like a fit for you, then please see our information Kiosk in the back of Church or contact our Grand Knight Dave Kuderer. All are welcome.

Thank you and God Bless!!

December Calendar Raffle Winners. Congratulations!

- 01 Dec: Lamont Berendes
- 02 Dec: Heidi Roberts
- 03 Dec: Connie Williams
- 04 Dec: Dorothy Zillmer
- 05 Dec: John Radocha
- 06 Dec: Tom McAnulty
- 07 Dec: Joan Bushmaker
- 08 Dec: Jacey Breitsprecher
- 09 Dec: Dorothy Ricke
- 10 Dec: Dennis Koranda
- 11 Dec: Ray Mulzacher
- 12 Dec: Dennis Koranda
- 13 Dec: Erin Kennedy
- 14 Dec: Jacey Breitsrecher
- 15 Dec: Trygue Schanhofer
- 16 Dec: Shirley Kuderer
- 17 Dec: John Burke
- 18 Dec: Trygue Schanhofer
- 19 Dec: Beu Burke
- 20 Dec: Andy Berendes
- 21 Dec: Tom Smith
- 22 Dec: Char Roehel
- 23 Dec: Beth Ford
- 24 Dec: Diane Steinhoff
- 25 Dec: Jody Steinhoff
- 26 Dec: Mike Hemmersbach
- 27 Dec: Randy Crawford
- 28 Dec: Shirley Kuderer
- 29 Dec: Mark Tennie
- 30 Dec: Catherine Stuntebeck
- 31 Dec: Paulette Johnson

"We pray that parishioners have a faith filled new year in 2019! May God continue to bless you all."



REP Roundup

By Charlie Burnett, DRE

The St. Patrick's Religious Education Program serves students in grades kindergarten through eleven. We currently have 124 students in our program. Our calendar year runs from the middle of September to the first full week of May.

Our Sophomores will be attending a Confirmation retreat led by Fr. Berns on Sat., March 16th from 11AM to 3PM at the Mark and Bernice Hirsch farm. A big thank you to the Hirsch family for supplying the venue for this special day!

Our students will be celebrating Mass on the following Wednesdays: Jan. 16, March 6(Ash Wednesday), and May 1st. We will also pray the Stations of the Cross on April 3rd. Parents and parishioners are invited to join us for any of these prayerful experiences. Grades K through 6 meet in church at 3:45 and grades 7 through 10 meet at 7PM.

The second grade students recently had their first reconciliation and now begin to prepare for First Eucharist. First Holy Communion Mass is Sunday, May

5th at noon. Please pray for these children as they enter into this deeper relationship with our Lord.

Thanks to Linda Svoboda for all of her great work with REP. She has been busy with much necessary paper work and organization since the middle of October when she stepped into her new position with the parish.

We pray that parishioners have a faith filled new year in 2019! May God continue to bless you all!

St. Pat's PCCW News

By Rita Verkler

December was a busy month for our organization. Our Advent Day of Prayer on December 1st was well received by the parish with about 70 people attending. Thank you for supporting this event, and thank you to the PCCW members who planned, set up, donated food, worked the kitchen, or helped out in any other way. Most of our members are also involved in other parish committees/groups. Many helped clean and decorate the church to prepare for Christmas, some sing in our choirs

and contributed to meaningful Christmas services, some lector and/or serve as Eucharistic ministers. Our talents are endless!

We would like to extend a public welcome to Father Eric to St. Patrick's. We are thankful for your support and look forward to getting to know you better.

Our next meeting is on Saturday, February 9, 2019 in our church hall. The doors will be open at 8:30 for fellowship and the meeting will start at

9:00. If you have been saying, "I really should start going to the PCCW meetings," we agree! It's a great opportunity to get to know other women in the parish, offer new ideas for our organization, and provide support for our existing events. The PCCW needs you! Upcoming events include our spring spirituality day, the spring/summer thrift and bake sale, and our annual appreciation dinner.

We hope our parish families have a blessed 2019!



"It's a great opportunity to get to know other women in the parish, offer new ideas for our organization, and provide support for our existing events. The PCCW needs you!"

St. Patrick' School News and Wisconsin Parental Choice Program

By Jean Suttie

The school year is rolling along - - very quickly!! We've had a great year so far and look forward to 2019!

Catholic Schools Week kicks off on January 27. New this year, a **Pig Roast and Pasta Dinner!** Serving will begin at **4 PM on Sunday, January 27** in the school gym. We will have many fun activities for the students during the week. Check out the bulletin for additional information.

Choice Program Information

St. Patrick's first enrolled in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) for the 2018-

19 school year. The WPCP allows families within the income requirements to apply for a tuition voucher. If your child is selected, he/she would receive a voucher that covers tuition to attend St. Patrick's. Those chosen, do not have to pay any books, enrollment fees, or family fees.

When To Apply

Apply online from Feb 1st - Apr 22nd, 2019. Apply early! Late applications will not be accepted for any reason. If you meet the income limits, complete an online application at <https://apps4.dpi.wi.gov/ChoiceParent/> or stop in during normal school hours at the school office.

To qualify, a new student must have a family income equal to or less than 220% of the federal poverty level income limits.

How To Apply

Parents must complete the on-line application at: dpi.wi.gov/choice. Parents may only apply during the open application periods. In addition to completing the on-line application parents must provide income documentation (for a new student) and residency documentation (for all students) to the school they apply to.

Parents of new applicants must also show they are income eligible by either: (a)

providing their social security numbers or taxpayer identification number and having the Department of Revenue determine eligibility; or (b) using the Department of Public Instruction's method by answering a series of income questions in the application and providing paper documentation to the school as directed. Applicants must also provide proof of residency directly to the school during the open application period.

WPCP is a great opportunity. Please call the school office with any questions. God Bless!

RECTORY ADDRESS:

319 W Main St
Sparta, WI 54656

PHONE:

(608) 269-2655

FAX:

(608)269-0245

E-MAIL:

stprectory@stpats.net

SCHOOL ADDRESS:

100 South L St Sparta,
WI 54656

PHONE:

(608)269-4748

FAX:

(608)269-4487

E-MAIL:

officestpatrickschool@stpatricksparta.net

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://stpatricksparish.weconnect.com/>

Online Giving at:

<https://stpatricksparish.weshareonline.org/>

St. Patrick's School at:

www.spartacatholic.org

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 01 Jan – Eucharistic Adoration | 14 Feb – St. Pat's School Conferences |
| 02 Jan – K-10 REP | 17 Feb – St. Pat's Sunday Social |
| 08 Jan – Worship Committee Meeting | 18 Feb – Second Harvest Food Pantry |
| 08 Jan – Education Committee Meeting | 20 Feb – K-10 REP |
| 08 Jan – School and Home Meeting | 22 Feb – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 09 Jan – K-10 REP | 24 Feb – End of Month Food Drive |
| 11 Jan – Eucharistic Adoration | 27 Feb – K-10 REP |
| 14 Jan – Knights of Columbus Meeting | 01 Mar – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 16 Jan – K-10 REP | 05 Mar – Worship Committee Meeting |
| 18 Jan – Eucharistic Adoration | 06 Mar – K-10 REP |
| 20 Jan – St. Pat's Sunday Social | 06 Mar – Ash Wednesday |
| 21 Jan – Second Harvest Food Pantry | 08 Mar – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 23 Jan – K-10 REP | 11 Mar – Knights of Columbus Meeting |
| 25 Jan – Eucharistic Adoration | 12 Mar – Education Committee Meeting |
| 27 Jan – Pig Roast & Pasta Dinner | 12 Mar – School and Home Meeting |
| 27 Jan – End of Month Food Drive | 13 Mar – K-10 REP |
| 28 Jan – Catholic Schools Week | 15 Mar – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 30 Jan – K-10 REP | 16 Mar – PCCW Meeting |
| 01 Feb – Eucharistic Adoration | 16 Mar – 10 th Grade Retreat |
| 05 Feb – Worship Committee Meeting | 17 Mar – St. Pat's Sunday Social |
| 06 Feb – K-10 REP | 17 Mar – St. Patrick's Day Dinner |
| 08 Feb – Eucharistic Adoration | 18 Mar – Second Harvest Food Pantry |
| 09 Feb – PCCW Meeting | 20 Mar – K-10 REP |
| 10 Feb – First Communion Meeting | 22 Mar – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 11 Feb – Knights of Columbus Meeting | 27 Mar – K-10 REP |
| 12 Feb – Education Committee Meeting | 29 Mar – Eucharistic Adoration |
| 13 Feb – K-10 REP | 31 Mar – End of Month Food Drive |
| 15 Feb – Eucharistic Adoration | |

Additional Resources...

Diocese of La Crosse - <http://diolc.org/>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://usccb.org/>

The Holy See - <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

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