

THE CARPENTER

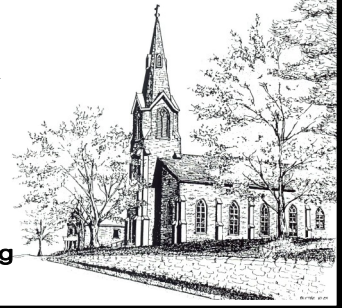
NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOSEPH PARISH

6202 W. ST. JOSEPH ROAD EVANSVILLE, IN 47720

CELEBRATING OUR 183RD YEAR

FEBRUARY—2024

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LIKE A CITY SET ON A HILL THAT CANNOT BE HIDDEN

Fr. Gene Schroeder

PASTOR

One of the unexpected gifts that has come from our church renovation project, is to hear so many people comment how our church now stands tall and seems so much bigger than before. I'm sure a lot of that has to do with the fact that we removed most of the trees around the church. All this brings to mind the words of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and set it under a bushel basket. Rather, they set it on a stand where it gives light to all. In the same way your light must shine so that others may see goodness in your acts and give praise to God" (Matthew 5: 14-16).

Last month we talked about how, when Francis of Assisi heard God speaking to him, he thought he was asking him to physically rebuild the church of San Domiano. Then he began to understand that what God was really asking was to "rebuild" the people, to help them grow up in their faith. It is a lot easier to rebuild a church than it is to help people to grow up in their faith. But that is what Jesus is asking of us. He told Peter, "when you were young you dressed yourself and went where you wanted to go. But when you are older you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not first want to go." (John 21:18-19).

We also talked about how important the first half of our faith journey is. Here is where we get our start. We need solid boundaries. We need a clear set of "rights and wrongs." That is what the ten commandments are all about. When that is done well, it gives us a chance to start from a very secure place. This secure place gives us confidence to grow. As our spiritual fathers and mothers tell us, to grow is to change, and to become holy is to change often. First half of life spirituality is good, as far as it goes. But it cannot help us know and experience the fullness of life that God wants for us. For that to happen, we have to embrace the second half of our spiritual journey. I think this is what Jesus was talking about when he

told his disciples: "try to enter through the narrow gate."

What do we mean by the second half of our spiritual journey? Here is how Fr. Richard Rohr describes it. *People in the second half of life are not preoccupied with collecting more goods and services; quite simply, their desire and effort—every day—is to give back to the world a bit of what they have received. They now realize that they have been gratuitously given to—from the universe, from society, and from God. They try now to "live simply*

SUPER SUNDAY DAY OF CELEBRATION Sunday, February 11, 2024

Mass of Thanksgiving 9 am

Reception 10 am

Catered Luncheon 11 am



Giving thanks to God for the work of so many people who have made it possible for us to rebuild our church after the destruction caused by the tornado in March, 2023 that tore the roof off of our church.

so that others can simply live."

Erik Erikson calls someone at this stage a "generative" person, one who is eager and able to generate life from his or her own abundance and for the benefit of following generations. Because such people have built a good container, they are able to "contain" more and more truth, more and more neighbors, more and broader vision, more and more of a mysterious and outpouring God.

In the second half of life, we do not have strong and final opinions about everything, every event, or most people, as much as we allow things and people to delight us, sadden us, and truly influence us. We no longer need to change or adjust other people to be happy ourselves. We have moved from doing to being to an utterly new kind of doing that flows almost organically, quietly, and by osmosis. Our actions are less compulsive. We do what we are called to do and then let go of the consequences.

It's true that the second half of life is a certain kind of weight to carry, but no other way of being makes sense or gives us the deep satisfaction our soul now demands and even enjoys. This new and deeper passion is what people mean when they say, "I must do this particular thing or my life will not make sense" or "It is no longer a choice." Our life and our delivery system are now one, whereas before, our life and our occupation

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THANKS FOR HELPING US MEET OUR GOAL

PARISH GOAL	\$130,270.00
PLEGDED TO DATE	\$126,006.00
NUMBER OF PLEDGES:	330
AVERAGE PLEDGE	\$ 381.83

Thank You!



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LIKE A CITY SET ON A HILL (cont.)

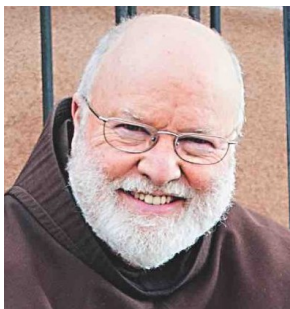
seemed like two different things. Our concern is not so much to have what we love anymore, but to love what we have—right now. This is a monumental change from the first half of life, so much so that it is almost the litmus test of whether we are in the second half of life at all.

God's goal is always union, which is very different from any private perfection (which is merely a goal of the small ego). Our carefully constructed ego container must gradually crack open (see John 12:24) as we realize that we are not separate from God, from others, or from our True Selves. We see that we have an eternal soul. Our ego slowly learns to become the servant of the soul instead of its master.

Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio describes spiritual maturation as a growth in consciousness and a radical surrender into divine love. The first half of our lives is spent building an identity, establishing our security, defining our boundaries, creating a zone of safety, and having controllable order. We can liken this first stage of life to operating on lower levels of consciousness. Many religious people get stuck on the level of mythic consciousness, with a narrow, ethnocentric, law-and-order mentality. God is a superior being outside oneself, and fidelity to God means abiding by the laws of religion and church. Wholeness means nothing more than obeying the rules. Looking for one's center always outside oneself inculcates a basic sense of unworthiness, distrust of self, and subservience to those "better," "more qualified," or "superior" to counsel and guide.

What creates a breakthrough in consciousness, whereby authentic growth shifts from attention to authority outside ourselves to the inner law of the heart, is not simply growing old but, rather, it is growing inward in freedom: "If you make my Word your home," Jesus said, "you will learn the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). Freedom requires a breakthrough into unitive consciousness, a radical surrender and complete letting go, trusting the spiritual impulses of life....

Life still breaks down as matter weakens and expectations fail, but the one who lives on the level of integrated consciousness lives in moments of failure or disruption with a lightness of spirit, a sense of openness to divine love, which appears like light shining through the cracks of darkness. Suffering is where divine love radiates in hidden darkness, where God is fully human; the power of life itself in the midst of disruption. We [live into our divine nature] when we cling to this power of life, finding that this power within liberates us beyond the threat of death because "fear is driven out by perfect love" (1 John 4:18). Living into our divine nature is the source of our freedom and happiness.



We cannot know this deeper divine reality if we live only on levels of mediocrity and self-preservation. We are created out of love and are made to energize the world in love.... Aging can be either a life of nostalgia or a wholehearted engagement with the future. It is a disruptive process as things break down, friends and pets die, houses are sold, and memories of the past haunt the present. Months melt into years, and we find ourselves in the flow of life.

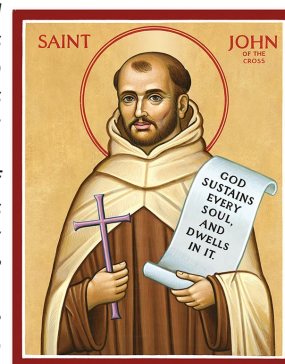
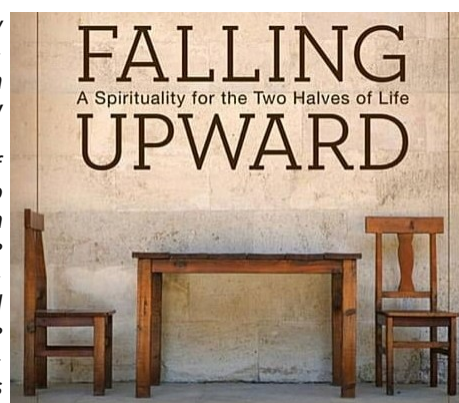
Growing inward by falling upward means learning from our mistakes.... Even if the felt experience of life dims, we are invited to let go and surrender to the wild love of God, living into the endless vitality of life itself. Letting go into God is coming home to our true selves, where we discover that our root reality is infinite divine love, and in love, we are eternally free.

Richard Rohr describes how people in the second half of life have an inner freedom that simultaneously holds joy and suffering. There is a gravitas in the second half of life, but it is held up by a much deeper lightness or "okayness." Our mature years are characterized by a kind of bright sadness and a sober happiness, if that makes any sense. I am just grabbing for words to describe many wonderful older people I have met. There is still suffering in the second half of life—in fact maybe even more. But there is now a changed capacity to hold it creatively and with less anxiety.

It is what John of the Cross called "luminous darkness," and it explains the simultaneous existence of deep suffering and intense joy in the saints and mystics—something that is almost impossible for most of us to imagine. Eastern Orthodoxy believed that if something was authentic religious art, it would always have a bright sadness to it. I think I am saying the same of an authentic life.

In the second half of life, one has less and less need or interest in eliminating the negative or fearful, making again those old rash judgments, holding on to old hurts, or feeling any need to punish other people. Our superiority complexes have gradually departed in all directions. We learn to positively ignore and withdraw our energy from evil or stupid things rather than fight them directly. We fight things only when we are directly called and equipped to do so. We all become a well-disguised mirror image of anything that we fight too long or too directly. That which we oppose determines the energy and frames the questions after a while, and we lose our inner freedom.

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Daily life now requires prayer and discernment more than knee-jerk responses toward either end of the political and cultural spectrum. We have a spectrum of responses now, and they are not all predictable. Law is still necessary, of course, but it is not our guiding star, or even close. It has been wrong and cruel too many times. The Eight Beatitudes speak to us much more than the Ten Commandments.

When we are young, we define ourselves by differentiating ourselves from others; now we look for the things we all share in common. We find happiness in likeness, which has become much more obvious to us now; and we do not need to dwell on the differences between people or exaggerate the problems. Creating dramas has become boring.

In the second half of life, it is good just to be a part of the general dance. We do not have to stand out, make defining moves, or be better than anyone else on the dance floor. Life is more participatory than assertive, and there is no need for strong or further self-definition.



Michelle Scheidt, staff member of the Fetzer Institute, observes that for some people the process of discovering their sexuality and identity invites them to “fall upward”:

The shift to the second [half of life] is usually catalyzed by a life event or series of experiences that touch us at the core, unsettling us and forcing us to reorder and make meaning in a new way. These destabilizing events might bring deep pain or intense joy.... Negotiating this and reordering can

shift us into the second half of life, a shift which is about our inner work, not our chronological age.

For queer people, this process [of “falling upward”] can be catalyzed by the discovery of our sexuality or gender identity and subsequent learning to navigate the world with that identity. This discovery, at whatever age, is often destabilizing, even traumatizing, as we learn to embody an identity that transgresses the boundaries of socially accepted norms. We discover that the dominant social rules do not work for us because we have a radically different experience of family or gender or love.

Pastor and New York Fire Department chaplain Ann Kansfield describes trying to “fit in” when she was young, until she chose to live more authentically.

As a kid, I didn’t fit in well at school. I was awkward. I was gender messy, even as early as the third grade. So, as you might expect, I was bullied mercilessly. I tried to be authentic, but ... being authentic was always the wrong answer. My classmates wanted conformity, ... yet, even at the age when peer pressure reigned supreme, I couldn’t do it. I was different in so many wild and wonderful ways. For one, I liked church....

I tried so hard to fit in with the others, but I was decid-



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COME AND SEE NIGHT ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL FEBRUARY 1st 5-7 PM



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32 Dedicated Staff Members.....
Affordable TuitionParticipates

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edly not cool. No amount of trendy makeup or fashionable dresses could hide the fact that femininity eluded me. Hiding myself meant playing a small game, and it wasn’t a fun game. As a result, I wasn’t a party to be around. My lack of authenticity kept people at arm’s length. It’s only when I began to embrace who I really was—the honest, fraught, vulnerable, and deeply human person—that I began truly experiencing life. As I practiced sharing my authentic self with others, I noticed people sharing more of themselves with me. If I shared my real self, others would share their real selves with me. And in this process, life around me became ... well ... more alive....

In his book *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton observed that a tree gives glory to God by being a tree. I often recite this phrase like a mantra in my head as a reminder that my only job is to be my most authentic self. I’ve discovered that the more I embrace the person God made me, the more I’m able to love God. And, really, that’s the only thing I can offer to God and to the world.

Second-half-of-life people soulfully create room to honor the needs of the first. Father Richard writes: *If we are on course at all, our world grows much larger in the second half of life. But I must say that, in yet another paradox, our circle of real confidants and truly close friends will normally grow smaller, but also more intimate. We are no longer surprised or angered when most people—and even most institutions—are doing first-half-of-life tasks. In fact, that is what most groups and institutions, and young people, are programmed to do! We shouldn’t hate them for it.*

Institutions must by necessity be concerned with membership requirements, policies, procedures, protocols, and precedents. If they are working organizations, they need to have very clear criteria for hiring and firing, for supervision and management, and have rules for promotion and salaries. It’s necessary that they do these things well, but they are nevertheless ego

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REMEMBERING
Cathy Crowdus
 September 13, 1949
 December 14, 2023

*Above all, let your love for another
 be intense because love covers
 a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)*

For almost fifty years our parish community was blessed with Cathy's kind, soft spoken, and compassionate presence. It would be a rare moment when we did not see Cathy without a smile. Cathy (Siemers) was born on September 13, 1949 and was welcomed into the home of Jack and Kate Siemers, along with her older brother, Chris, and her sisters Jane (Weinszapfel) and Judith (Schneider).

She attended Sacred Heart Grade School. Later, her family became one of the founding families of Corpus Christi Parish. Cathy went on to graduate from Mater Dei High School. She then went to USI (know as ISUE at the time) where she graduated.

It was at USI that she was introduced to a fellow student—a young man from a farm family near Morganfield, Kentucky. His name was Joe Crowdus. "I didn't like her at first," Joe recalled. And she didn't like me at first either." But, first impressions are not always accurate. And that was certainly the case for Joe and Cathy. It became apparent to all that a deep bond had begun to develop between them. They got married on June 23, 1973 at Corpus Christi. Cathy's good friend, Msgr. Clarence Schlacter, witnessed their marriage.

In time they would welcome three daughters into their lives: Keli, Kira and Kerri. Kerri was quick to point out that her two older sisters were born in Kentucky, where Joe and Cathy lived for the first years of their marriage. She, however, waited till her parents moved to Evansville, just down the road from St. Joe, until she made her appearance.

Family life was central to Cathy's life. She devoted her considerable talents and energies to raising her children. She was big on creating many family traditions with her daughters and later with her grandchildren. Making Christmas cookies was just one of these traditions.

Over the years, Joe and Cathy would become an instrumental part of our parish. It became the place where their daughters were educated in grade school and during this time Cathy could always be counted on to offer her time as room mother, PTO volunteer and member of the school board.

Cathy would also offer her time at numerous parish events from funeral dinners to the summer social. For many years Cathy was instrumental in the development of our parish newsletter, putting it together in the very beginning to preparing it to be mailed. She also found time to lead exercise classes.

Through the years, Cathy and Joe became close friends with many people through their involvement in the Christian Family Movement (CFM) and through various faith sharing groups. It was easy to become friends with Cathy. Her kind and gentle way had a way of making people feel at ease. And while she was often very soft spoken, (one of her good friends even gave her the nick name "mumbles") she had an inner strength that was willing to take on any challenge. Cathy and Joe were recognized for the example of their stewardship in the parish by being inducted into the Brute Society in 2015.

Her family and our parish were not the only places that benefited from Cathy's talents. For many years, she served the people of our diocese. It began with working her friend, Msgr. Schlachter in his work as head of the Mission Office for our diocese. But most folks will remember Cathy from her service as a

secretary at the Catholic Center. For much of that time she served as the secretary for the vocation office where she worked with Fr. Bernie Etienne who became a good friend with the family.

Over the last few years Cathy dealt with the early onset of dementia. But even this did not dim her spirits. Last June, she and Joe celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Their love for each other and their faithfulness was truly a blessing for our parish. For most of us, it was hard to think of them as individuals. It was always Joe and Cathy. They became good friends with each other and that friendship blessed their children and grandchildren. They were a blessing to their extended family, to their neighbors and to our parish. We are all better people because of them.

We give thanks for the gift that Cathy has been to all of us and we pray that she will now share in the fullness of life that God has prepared for all of us. Grant her eternal rest, O Lord, and let your perpetual light shine upon her.

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LIKE A CITY SET ON A HILL (cont.)

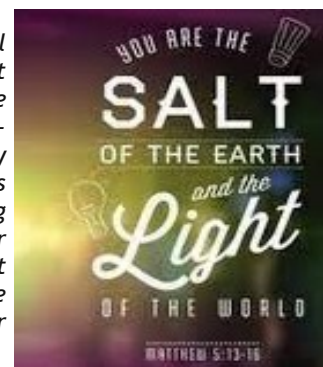
needs and not soul needs.

The bottom line of the gospel is that most of us have to hit some kind of bottom before we even start the real spiritual journey. Up to that point, it is mostly religion. At the bottom, there is little time or interest in being totally practical, efficient, or revenue generating. We just want to breathe fresh air. The true gospel is always fresh air and spacious breathing room.

The ego and most institutions demand a tit-for-tat universe, while the soul swims in a sea of abundance, grace, and freedom, which cannot always be organized. Remember the gospel: at the end of the day, the employer pays those who worked part of a day just as much as those who worked the whole day (Matthew 20:1-16). This does not compute except at the level of soul. Soulful people temper our tantrums by their calm, lessen our urgency by their peace, exhibit a world of options and alternatives when conversation turns into dualistic bickering.

Soulful people are the necessary salt, yeast, and light needed to grow groups up (see Matthew 5:13-16, 13:33). Jesus does not demand that we be the whole meal, the full loaf, or the illuminated city itself, but we are to be the quiet undertow and overflow that makes all of these happen. This is why all institutions need second-half-of-life people in their ranks; just "two or three" in each organization are enough to keep them from total self-interest.

Our question now becomes, "How can I honor the legitimate needs of the first half of life, while creating space, vision, time, and grace for the second?" The holding of this tension is the very shape of wisdom. Only hermits and some retired people can almost totally forget the first and devote themselves totally to the second, but even they must eat, drink, and find housing and clothing! The art of being human is in uniting fruitful activity with a contemplative stance—not one or the other, but always both at the same time.





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SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In his message for World Day of Peace this past January 1, Pope Francis shared some reflections on the growing use of artificial intelligence. Below, is a portion of these reflections. You can view the entire message on the Vatican website [vatican.va](https://www.vatican.va). The specific link is <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20231208-messaggio-57giornatamondiale-pace2024.html>

Progress in information technology and the development of digital technologies in recent decades have already begun to effect profound transformations in our world. New digital tools are even now changing the face of countless aspects of our daily lives.

Moreover technologies employing a variety of algorithms can extract data that enable developers to control mental and relational habits for commercial or political purposes, often without our knowledge. In a space like the Web they can structure the flow of data according to criteria of selection that are not always perceived by the user.

We need to remember that scientific research and technological innovations are not “neutral”, but subject to cultural influences. The directions they take reflect choices conditioned by personal, social and cultural values in any given age. The same must be said of the results they produce. These results always have an ethical dimension, closely linked to decisions made by those who design them.

The impact of any artificial intelligence device...depends not only on its technical design, but also on the aims and interests of its owners and developers, and on the situations

in which it will be employed.

We cannot presume that its development will make a beneficial contribution to the future of humanity and to

peace among peoples. That positive outcome will only be achieved if we show ourselves capable of acting responsibly and respect such fundamental human values as inclusion, transparency, security, equity, privacy and reliability.

Nor is it sufficient simply to presume a commitment on the part of those who design algorithms and digital technologies to act ethically and responsibly. There is a need to strengthen or, if necessary, to establish bodies charged with examining the ethical issues arising in this field and protecting the rights of those who employ forms of artificial intelligence or are affected by them.

The immense expansion of technology thus needs to be accompanied by an appropriate formation in responsibility for its future development. Freedom and peaceful coexistence are threatened whenever human beings yield to the temptation to selfishness, self-interest, the desire for profit and the thirst for power.

We have a duty to direct techno-scientific research towards the pursuit of peace and the common good, in the service of the integral development of individuals and communities. The inherent dignity of each human being and the fraternity that binds us together as members of the one human family must undergird the development of new technologies.

Artificial intelligence will become increasingly important. The challenges it poses are technical, but also anthropological, educational, social and political. It promises, for instance, liberation from drudgery, more efficient manufacturing, easier transport and more ready markets, as well as a

revolution in processes of accumulating, organizing and confirming data. We need to be aware of the rapid transformations now taking place and to manage them in ways that safeguard fundamental human rights and respect the institutions and laws that promote integral human development. Artificial intelligence ought to serve our best human potential and our highest aspirations, not compete with them.

Artificial intelligence based on machine learning techniques is already introducing considerable changes to the fabric of societies and exerting a profound influence on cultures, societal behaviors and peace building.

Developments such as machine learning or deep learning, raise questions that transcend the realms of technology and engineering, and have to do with the deeper understanding of the meaning of human life, the construction of knowledge, and the capacity of the mind to attain truth.

The ability of certain devices to produce syntactically and semantically coherent texts, for example, is no guarantee of their reliability. They are said to create statements that at first glance appear plausible but are unfounded or betray biases. This poses a serious problem when artificial intelligence is deployed in campaigns of disinformation that spread false news and lead to a growing distrust of the communications media. Privacy, data ownership and intellectual property are other areas where these technologies engender grave risks. We can add other negative consequences of the misuse of these technologies, such as discrimination, interference in elections, the rise of a surveillance society, digital exclusion and the exacerbation of an individualism increasingly disconnected from society. All these factors risk fueling conflicts and hindering peace.

Our world is too vast, varied and complex ever to be fully known and categorized. The human mind can never exhaust its richness, even with the aid of the most advanced algorithms. Such algorithms do not offer guaranteed predictions of the future, but only statistical approximations. Not everything can be

(Continued on page 6)



**SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 11**

*World
Marriage
Day*

Lord, help us to remember when we first met and
the strong love that grew between us.
Help us love in *practical ways* so that nothing can divide us. May our *words be kind* and our thoughts be *gracious*. May we remain humble enough to ask for *forgiveness* and wise enough to *freely give it*.

(Continued from page 5)

REFLECTIONS ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (cont.)

predicted, not everything can be calculated; in the end, realities are greater than ideas. No matter how prodigious our calculating power may be, there will always be an inaccessible residue that evades any attempt at quantification.

In addition, the vast amount of data analyzed by artificial intelligences is in itself no guarantee of impartiality. When algorithms extrapolate information, they always run the risk of distortion, replicating the injustices and prejudices of the environments where they originate. The faster and more complex they become, the more difficult it proves to understand why they produced a particular result.

"Intelligent" machines may perform the tasks assigned to them with ever greater efficiency, but the purpose and the meaning of their operations will continue to be determined or enabled by human beings possessed of their own universe of values.

This should lead us to reflect on something frequently overlooked in our current technocratic and efficiency-oriented mentality: the "sense of limit". Human beings are, by definition, mortal; by proposing to overcome every limit through technology, in an obsessive desire to control everything, we risk losing control over ourselves; in the quest for an absolute freedom, we risk falling into the spiral of a "technological dictatorship".

Recognizing and accepting our limits as creatures is an indispensable condition for reaching, or better, welcoming fulfillment as a gift. In the ideological context of a technocratic paradigm inspired by a presumption of self-sufficiency, inequalities could grow out of proportion, knowledge and wealth accumulate in the hands of a few, and grave risks ensue for democratic societies and peaceful coexistence.

It is my prayer at the start of the New Year that the rapid development of forms of artificial intelligence will not increase cases of inequality and injustice all too present in today's world, but will help put an end to wars and conflicts, and alleviate many forms of suffering that afflict our human family. May Christian believers, followers of various religions and men and women of good will work together in harmony to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges posed by the digital revolution and thus hand on to future generations a world of greater solidarity, justice and peace.

LEARNING AGAIN TO DEVELOP A WAY OF BEING THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR WORLD

Lent is soon upon us. In this sacred season, we renew our efforts to follow the way of Christ Jesus. Or, if we want to put it other terms, it is a time when we once again focus on just what it means to be a Catholic. What we come to know is that being Catholic is not just about trying to live our lives so that one day we will be able to go to heaven. It is attempting to have a faith that is a way of seeking to have a spiritual transformation in our own lives that will express itself in change and transformation in our world. We're on a quest to find out how to have an engaged expression of deep spiritual life that makes a difference in a world on fire.

From the beginning of time, people of good will have been seeking to live such a life. And they have offered us guides along the way. In our Catholic tradition we might be familiar with things like The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. It is amazing how the wisdom we find in these "guides" is similar to the wisdom found in such things as The Fourteen Steps of Engaged Buddhism that Thich Nath Hang, a noted Buddhist monk spoke of. He lived in Vietnam during the 1960's and 1970's when war was raging in Vietnam. He wanted to find a way to live an authentic life and was engaged with the world around him. And his world was ravaged with death and destruction that happens in war. Here are some of the things that he spoke about as "guides" for living.

Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology. Sounds a bit like "I am the Lord, your God, you shall not worship any false gods."

Truth is found in life and merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to

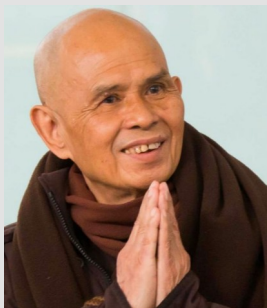
learn throughout your entire life. Sounds a bit like Jesus who said, "Blessed are those who are humble, who are childlike and willing to learn for they shall find God."

Do not force others, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness. Sounds a bit like Jesus who said "Let your light shine so that others may see goodness in your acts and give praise to God."

Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering, including personal contact, visits, images, and sounds. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world. Sounds a bit like Jesus who said "whatever you did for these least of your brothers and sisters, you did for me."

Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. Sounds a bit like Jesus who said "seek first the kingdom of God and all else will be granted to you."

Do not maintain anger or hatred. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. Make every effort to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread news that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things of which you are not sure. Always speak truthfully and constructively. Sounds a bit like Jesus who said "Do not judge and you will not be judged. Why do you look at the speck in another person's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye." These thoughts are often summed up in the wisdom saying: Today I will speak only what is kind, true and necessary." St. Paul put it another way in his letter to the Colossians: "Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord, Jesus."



Up Close and Personal



Brylee Delano

When we sat down to talk to Brylee, she was coming from basketball practice. "I've played basketball all four years of high school. It's going to be a sad day when it all ends." Brylee is the daughter of Lindsey (Meyer) and Ben Mehringer. She is a senior at Mater Dei and older sister to Bryce, Brexton and Brenley.

How's the season going? "It's been ok. We got moved up to Class 3A this year so we've faced some pretty good competition. But it has been great being part of the team."

Basketball has taught me a lot about the importance of leadership, especially how important it is for the older team members to set a good example for the younger members of the team. It has also taught me about the importance of time management when you try to balance sports with school work."

Brylee played soccer her freshman year and the for the next two years served as the manager for the soccer team. She has also been a member of the Pep Club and the Spanish Club and has worked with the dance marathon helping to raise money for Riley Children's Hospital. She has also been inducted into the National Honor Society.

Brylee has also put a lot of work into her academic studies for the past four years. She has taken several AP (Advanced Placement) classes which has earned her some college credits. "The hardest course I have taken is AP Statistics." She credits a lot of her success academically to having good teachers. Among the teachers that stand out are Mrs. Abigail Whicker, her English teacher. "She was a good teacher but what I really remember is that you knew she cared about you and wanted to teach you not just English but about life. She is the kind of person you could talk about any of the issues in life you were dealing with. I also remember taking a Biology Class with Mr. Carl Vogel. He pushed me harder than any teacher I have had. I don't know that I always appreciated his efforts at the time, but I'm really glad I took that class because it was such good preparation for me."

Next year, Brylee plans to attend the University of Evansville. "I really hadn't considered going to U of E, because I thought it would be too expensive. But when I visited the place and talked to some of the students I felt so comfortable there that I knew this was the place for me." She has been awarded a Presidential Scholarship which will go along way to paying for her schooling. Her plan is to get a degree in exercise science which she hoped to complete in three years. Then she will be applying for admission to the Physician Assistant School. "Right now I don't know what area I will focus on, but I'm sure that will become more clear in the years ahead."

When she isn't busy with school and sports, Brylee has also found time to work in the food service industry. "I worked at Lic's Ice Cream on the west side and also at Harmony Pizza, but both of those places have closed. Not sure their closing had anything to do with me! This summer I plan on working at St. Vincent Hospital in the medical transport section."

Brylee graduated from St. Joe Grade School. "I really loved me time there. We had a great class and some really great teachers."



SALUTING OUR DECEMBER, 2023 COLLEGE GRADUATES
 Olivia Cody - The Salon Professional Academy She is now working at Shannon Aleksandr's Salon and Spa
 Alexa Elpers - Marian University - Graphic Design
 Charlie Hobbs - IU - Recreational Therapy
 Danielle Humm - USI - Liberal Arts/Professional Writing
 Eric Ondash - USI - BS in Finance
 Clay Titzer - USI - BS in Finance
 Christiana Wolfe - USI - BS in Marketing/Marketing Management-Minor in Psychology. Graduating with Honors

INTRODUCING OUR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

"Mrs. Will, Mrs. Daugherty, Mrs. Ntewo...they were all great. And, of course, the school lunches were great. you just gotta love the lunch ladies!" Being a small school and being a good athlete meant that Brylee participated in pretty much all the different sports that were offered. "What I will especially remember from my time at St. Joe was that all the people there were trying to teach us how to be a good person."

Family life has been a key part of Brylee's life. "When I was born, my mom and I lived with my grandparents, Jeff and Cindy Meyer. They all raised me. My uncle, Aaron took me under his wings and taught me a lot about playing basketball. My mom got married to Ben Mehringer when I was eight years old. I remember that he bought me a special necklace that I wore for the wedding. And I remember him asking for my permission to marry my mom. That was special. I enjoy hanging out with me family. Since I'm older than Bryce, Brexton and Brenley, it's a little like being another parent for them."

Spending time with the Meyer and Martin families especially around the holidays is always special. And traveling to Jasper to be with my dad's side of the family are highlights of the years. "My family has been my biggest supporters. My mom has always been there for me. People say we think a lot alike. I've had several of my teachers at Mater Dei tell me, "you sound just like your mom!" What I have appreciated from Ben is that he has become a good father for me. He's pretty laid back and has taught me not too get too anxious about things in life."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "I think the biggest challenge I have had in my life is dealing with the surgeries I have had on my back. Going through the surgery was hard and then going through rehab therapy after the surgery was also challenging. For a while I couldn't do much walking and couldn't get up and down stairs. What was great was having family and friends who kept checking in on me. I remember a bunch of them were there to welcome me home from the hospital. Going through all this has reminded my how important it is to just keep moving forward each day. That can be hard because there are a lot of days when you don't want to do this and you don't think you are going to get better. It's taught me a great deal about the value of friendship. You don't want to change yourself just so you can fit into the "in" crowd. Good friends allow you to be who you are and accept you for that. You have to be willing to put in the time to be good friends as well. And if there is any other advice I can give, it would be, don't procrastinate!"



JOIN US AT THE ALTAR SOCIETY MEETING....

The St. Anne Altar Society meets on the second Thursday of each month. Next meeting is February 8 at 6:30 pm in the meeting room. New members are always welcomed. Yearly dues of \$5 can be paid at the meeting or can be put in the weekly collection.

JOIN US FOR OUR WOMEN'S RETREAT

YOU ARE *enough* **REGISTER NOW**
MARK YOUR CALENDAR
March 2 and 3

Looking for a great retreat this coming Lent? Join in the St. Joe Women's retreat March 2-3, 2024. There will be many dynamic speakers, beautiful live music, time for adoration and confession, a spa hour, Mass at 5:00 pm on Saturday, food, snacks, and lots of time with fellow women friends! The retreat will run Saturday, March 2 from 9:00am-10:00pm through Sunday, March 3 from 7:00am-10:15am. Overnight accommodations are available.

Contact Jessica Reckelhoff (812-598-1151 or jreckelhoff@evdio.org) for information and/or to register.

MID YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT July 1, 2023--December 31, 2023

With the end of December, we have reached the half way point of our fiscal year. In our effort to help us own the financial responsibility for providing the money needed to do the various ministries in our parish, we are providing you with a condensed financial report.



2023 FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

By this time you should have received your contribution statements for 2023. It should reflect the contributions you have to the parish as well as your contributions to our work in Haiti. Please take the time to review your statement. We make every effort to be accurate in the records we keep, but there is always the chance that we have made a mistake. So, if you find some inconsistencies in your report, please let us know so that we can make the necessary corrections.



You should be receiving a separate statement from our diocesan office which will give you a record of your contributions to the Catholic Ministries Appeal.

The majority of the money we receive comes from our Sunday collections and grade school tuition. As of the end of December we are running slightly ahead of budgeted needs for this period. Overall, our year to date parish income is slightly higher than our budgeted projections.

With regard to our expenses, we have been able to keep our actual expenses pretty much in line with our budgeted figures for this period. When we plan our budget, we tend to budget our expenses on the high side in the hopes that expenses will be less than that. That way, if expenses are less than we anticipated and our income is less than we anticipated, we hope things will even out.

We have also wrapped up our annual Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA), what we used to call our Catholic Parishes Campaign. So far we have received pledges in the amount of 126,006.00 toward our goal of \$130,270.00. The total pledges are right at the amount that was pledged last year. The average pledge made to the CMA is slightly higher than last year, although the total number of people making a pledge is slightly less than last year. While we are a bit short of reaching our goal (\$5,064), this is still pretty good considering that we have conducted a major building campaign to fund the repairs to our church.

Your love for our parish has enabled us to conduct a very successful capital campaign to help rebuild our church, conduct our annual Catholic Ministries Campaign to do our part to support the work of our diocese, all the while providing for the financial needs of our day to day operations in the parish. We are indeed blessed.

INCOME	Current YTD	YTD Budget	Total Budget
Sunday Collections	\$389,860.75	\$384,562.00	\$769,124.00
Other Ordinary Income	\$22,208.83	\$5,000.00	\$47,300.00
Summer Social Income	\$113,844.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00
Religious Education Income	\$1,470.38	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
School Income (Pre-School, Supplies, Tuition, Grants, Tuition Vouchers, Fees, etc.)	\$506,348.49	\$592,881.00	\$1,013,841.00
TOTAL ORDINARY INCOME	\$1,033,732.45	1,023,443.00	\$1,872,265.00
EXPENSES	Current YTD	YTD Budget	Total Budget
Parish Staff Salaries and Benefits	\$114,293.82	\$125,550.00	\$251,100.00
Parish Office & Related Expenses	\$9,518.97	\$12,400.00	\$34,200.00
Church and Worship	\$4,725.79	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00
Parish Buildings/Ground Maintenance	\$21,923.74	\$24,150.00	\$48,300.00
Summer Social Expenses	\$28,151.32	\$32,200.00	\$32,200.00
Parish Assessment For Mater Dei High School	\$48,484.98	\$49,000.00	\$98,000.00
School Expenses	\$699,094.93	\$683,712.50	\$1,329,725.00
Religious Education Expenses	\$25,086.38	\$35,140.00	\$68,740.00
TOTAL ORDINARY EXPENSES	\$951,279.93	\$967,152.50	\$1,872,265.00

If you would like to see a more detailed report, stop by the Parish Office and we will make a copy for you.

LOTTERY THANKS Thanks to all who bought tickets and thanks especially to all our great ticket sellers! Not only will we be able to give away \$16,200 to 48 lucky winners, we have also made \$21,300.00 for our parish.

WE WANT YOU IN THE PICTURE!

Plans are in the work to have a new parish pictorial directory. It's been several years since our last parish directory was published. A big thanks to Amelia (Reckelhoff) Hartz for agreeing to coordinate this effort.

We will be taking pictures for our new church directory on June 20th - June 30th. Please save the date and keep an eye out for more information in the coming months!

If your contact information has changed since 2020, or if you are new to our parish, please send your updated contact information to the parish office or Amelia Hartz. This is especially so, if you have dropped your land line or changed your email address. We don't want to miss you!



For any questions, contact Amelia Hartz, text/call 812-228-0282, or via e-mail, ameliamhartz@gmail.com.

MISSION OUTREACH

Be an island of mercy in
a sea of indifference.

Pope Francis

Not all of us can do great things,
but all of us can do small things with
great love. *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

THANK YOU FROM THE CHILDREN OF HAITI

This past Christmas, instead of buying gifts for people, we invited people to make contributions to our ministry in Haiti in their name. Through this Haiti Gifts of Compassion, you helped us raise over \$7,000 for the children of Haiti. That's enough money to feed the children for about one hundred days. What a blessing! Haiti.



THANKS....to the members of the St. Anne Altar Society and the parishioners of St. Joseph for the Christmas gifts you provided for the patients at the Evansville State Hospital. In such a simple way you helped to remember people who are so often forgotten. Thanks for all you did this holiday season to bring some comfort and joy to people.

Theresa Arvin Community Service Director



We continue to accept donations for the St. Vincent dePaul Food Pantry each weekend.just a jar of peanut butter, a bag of beans or a box of oatmeal or cereal.....that's all.

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS THIS MONTH
AID FOR THE CHURCH IN EASTERN EUROPE**


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Since 1991, the collection has provided more than \$75 million to Catholics in post-communist Russia and Central and Eastern Europe, including communities in Ukraine. These funds have supported more than 3,500 church projects in many Eastern Europe Countries. Visit their website: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/church-central-eastern-europe>

**SUPPORTING BLACK AND NATIVE
AMERICAN PARISHES IN NEED
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT FEBRUARY 17-18**

The Black and Indian Mission Collection exists to help local African American and Native American Diocesan Communities throughout the United States spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and respond to real and pressing needs on the ground. This collection is held annual on the First Sunday of Lent. For more information visit their website: www.blackandindianmission.org



**BLOOD DRIVE
SUNDAY FEB. 4
8 -- NOON
IN THE GYM**

**RUMMAGE
SALE
JUNE 7-8**

It's time to start planning for our rummage sale. The dates for the rummage sale are June 7 and 8. Right now we are inviting you to save your gently used items for the rummage sale.

Rule of thumb—if you wouldn't buy it at a rummage sale, then don't bring it. We regret that we cannot accept electronic items, old computers, TV's and the like. More information to be coming in the weeks ahead. Got any suggestions or questions? Contact Imogene (812) 963-5221. Thanks for your continued support!

**LITURGICAL MINISTERS
February 17, 2024--March 10, 2024**

DATE	EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS	READERS
Saturday February 17, 2024 5 PM	Donald & Brandon Werner Mary Kay Fehrenbacher Donna Niemeier	Mike Reffett
Sunday February 18, 2024 8 AM	Kylie Frey Stephanie Frey Tom Folz Dolores Folz	Josh Baehl
Sunday February 18, 2024 10:30 AM	Angie Will Jane Scheller Diane Bassemier Danielle Weledge	Shane Wessel
Saturday February 24, 2024 5 PM	Eric and Karen McDonald Butch & Linda Feulner	Sis Jarboe
Sunday February 25, 2024 8 AM	Imogene Baehl Michael Elpers Rodney & Paula Baehl	Marcia Frey
Sunday February 25, 2024 10:30 AM	Paul Hillenbrand Al Debes Jena & Shane Wessel	Jane Scheller
Saturday March 2, 2024 5 PM	Donald & Brandon Werner Eric and Karen McDonald	Toni Askins
Sunday March 3, 2024 8 AM	Joan Inkenbrandt Michael Elpers Randy and Kathy Fehrenbacher	Tom Blythe
Sunday March 3, 2024 10:30 AM	Rachael Schnaus Becky Doshier Steve Jung Amy Cody	Julie Forcum
Saturday March 9, 2024 5:00 PM	Donald & Brandon Werner Mary Kay Fehrenbacher Donna Niemeier	Mike Reffett
Sunday March 10, 2024 8:00 AM	Brian & Ann Craney Chick Duncan Lisa Cook	Dave Schmitt
Sunday March 10, 2024 10:30 AM	Al Debes Kitty Deig Doris Taylor Cecelia Koch	Shane Wessel

FEBRUARY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <p>Be it known to all who enter our school that <i>Christ</i> is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but every present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students</p>				1 NO MASS COME AND SEE NIGHT AT ST. JOE SCHOOL 5-7 PM KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP 6:30 PM	2 7:30 am Mass Communion to the Homebound	3 Confessions 4-4:40 pm Food Pantry and Haiti Collection 5 pm Mass
4 8 & 10:30 Mass Coffee & Donuts 9:00 am Family Religion Class & RCIA 9 am Children's Liturgy of the Word 10:30 Food Pantry and Haiti Collection BLOOD DRIVE 8 AM — NOON	5 7 am-7pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 pm Mass	6 7:30 am Mass Choir Practice 7 pm DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TUESDAY 6 AM — WEDNESDAY 6 AM	7 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm	8 NO MASS Altar Society Meeting 6:30 pm HAITI MISSION TRIP FEBRUARY 8-15	9 7:30 am Mass Senior Citizen Gathering 1 pm Communion to the Homebound	10 Altar Society Making Kuchens 7 am Confessions 4-4:40 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection
11 SUPER SUNDAY DAY OF CELEBRATION 9 AM MASS 10 AM RECEPTION 11 AM LUNCHEON	12 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 pm Mass Knights of St. John Mtg 7 pm	13 7:30 am Mass Choir Practice 7 pm	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 7:30 am Mass with distribution of Ashes 11 am & 7 pm Service with Distribution of Ashes That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm	15 NO MASS	16 7:30 AM MASS NO SCHOOL Communion to the Homebound	17 Confessions 4-4:40 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection
						
18 8 & 10:30 Mass RCIA Rite of Enrollment 8 am Family Religion Class & RCIA 9 am Children's Liturgy of the Word 10:30 Food Pantry Collection	19 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration NO SCHOOL 6:30 PM Mass Men's Club Meeting 7 pm	20 7:30 am Mass Family Stations of the Cross 6 PM Choir Practice 7 pm	21 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon FISH FRY PREPARATIONS 1 PM That Man Is You 5:30 pm Bible Study 6:30 pm	22 NO MASS 6 pm Haiti Ministry Meeting PTO Meeting 6 pm Men's Cursillo February 22-25	23 7:30 AM MASS FISH FRY 5-7 PM CARRYOUT ONLY 	24 Confessions 4-4:30 pm 5 pm Mass Food Pantry Collection Youth Skating Party at Swonder Ice Area 4—6 pm
25 8 & 10:30 Masses Family Religion Class 9 am RCIA 9 am Food Pantry Collection Confirmation Session 6 11:30-1	26 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration 6:30 PM Mass	27 7:30 am Mass Family Stations of the Cross 6 PM Choir Practice 7 pm	28 7:30 am Mass Parish Staff Meeting 12 Noon Bible Study 6:30 pm That Man Is You 7:30 pm	29 NO MASS 6 pm Haiti Ministry Meeting NEXT FISH FRY FRIDAY MARCH 8 SERVING 5-7 PM CARRYOUT ONLY	1 7:30 AM MASS	2 Confessions 4-4:30 pm 5 pm Mass Haiti & Food Pantry Collection 

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Mrs. Kelsey Meier—Principal
E-mail kmeier@evdio.org
Mrs. Julie Kempf—Secretary
E-mail jkempf@evdio.org
Mrs. Jessica Reckelhoff
E-mail jreckelhoff@evdio.org
Coordinator of Religious Education

WEEKEND MASSES: Saturday 5pm
Sunday 8 and 10:30 am

IT'S FISH FRY TIME

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

SERVING 5-7 PM DRIVE THRU ONLY

It's time to make plans for the best fish fry in the area. We will be serving carryout dinners only. You can pick them up at our drive thru carryout.



ON THE MENU: Fried Fish Filets, German Potato Salad, Slaw, Baked Beans and Cornbread
Our 8th grade students will also be offering special dessert cookies for sale.

We'll need help preparing all the ingredients for the potato salad and slaw. (Tentative dates for this work are Wednesday, February 21 and Wednesday March, March 6) We'll also need help making the slaw, preparing and frying the fish and putting the carryout meals together. Check the bulletin and your emails for special times we are getting together to do all these things. You can also volunteer by calling the parish office (812-963-3273).

In the meantime, spread the word and invite your friends and neighbors to join us for a great meal!

SPREAD THE WORD ...ENJOY A GREAT FISH DINNER

LENT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 14

Ash Wednesday February 14

Mass at 7:30 am

with distribution of Ashes

Penance Service

with distribution of Ashes

11:00 am and 7:00 pm

This year, we will be following a much older Catholic tradition of having ashes sprinkled on our heads.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS DURING LENT

One of the ancient and traditional prayers during the season of Lent is The Stations of the Cross, also know as *Via Crucis—The Way of the Cross*. This prayer calls us to remember Jesus' Passion Death and Resurrection and to reflect on what it means for us to "take up our cross and follow Jesus."

Each Tuesday during Lent, we will gather for Family Stations of the Cross from 6:00-6:30 at St. Joe Church. Bring the whole family to pray and reflect on Jesus' passion. On Wednesday, March 20 (7 pm) and again on Friday, March 22 (11 am) we will have a communal penance service based upon the stations of the cross.

LENTEN COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

Wednesday, March 20 at 7 pm

Friday, March 22 at 11 am

