



Our Lady of HOPE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Meet the Men's Choir

Building a Culture of Fellowship and Prayerful Worship During Mass

Music is an incredibly powerful kind of prayer, showing God's love for us and our love for Him. In *Sing to the Lord a New Song: Music in Divine Worship*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops put forth what music should be like during the Mass: "God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises".

Or, as St. Augustine once said, "Singing is for the one who loves."

Both writings are perfect for those men who sing in the Our Lady of Hope Men's Choir. Tim Cox directs this choir, which has been in existence on and off since the 1970s. The current group has been together since 2021.

The Men's Choir sings at Mass on the second Saturday of the month and practices together an hour before Mass.

If you are a man with musical talents, Tim would love for you to step up and use them. It's unique to have an all-male ensemble, so this is a fantastic opportunity to share your talents for the glory of God. Holy Week is Tim's

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— Sam Mattingly, Men's Choir

EMBRACING STEWARDSHIP DURING *Lent*

Lent, the 40-day season of reflection and preparation leading up to Easter, is a time of spiritual growth, self-examination, and deepening one's relationship with God. Central to the Lenten experience is the connection to stewardship and recommitting to our commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, so that we can truly embody the spirit of this season of sacrifice and renewal.

Time is one of God's most precious gifts to us. During Lent, consider how you can commit more of your time to prayer and service. This could involve setting aside a specific time each day for prayer and reflection, attending daily Mass, or participating in additional religious activities such as Stations of the Cross or adoration. By dedicating more of your time to God during Lent, you deepen your connection with Him and grow in your understanding of what it means to be a steward of the gift of time.

When it comes to talent, each of us possesses unique skills, and these gifts are to be used for the greater good. Lent is an excellent time to reflect on how you can commit your talents to serve others and glorify God. Consider volunteering at your parish or a local charitable organization, sharing your skills with those in need, or using your talents to enhance your church community. This act of giving not only benefits those you serve, but also strengthens your own sense of purpose and connection to your faith.

Stewardship of treasure is also an integral part of living a faithful life. Lent provides an opportunity to evaluate how you use your financial resources and make commitments to give generously. You might choose to increase your contributions to your parish or donate to a charitable cause that aligns with your values. Also, consider making financial sacrifices during Lent, such as giving up a luxury or non-essential expense, and redirecting those funds towards acts of charity and kindness. These financial commitments reflect your understanding that all your material wealth is a gift from God, and you are called to use it responsibly and generously.

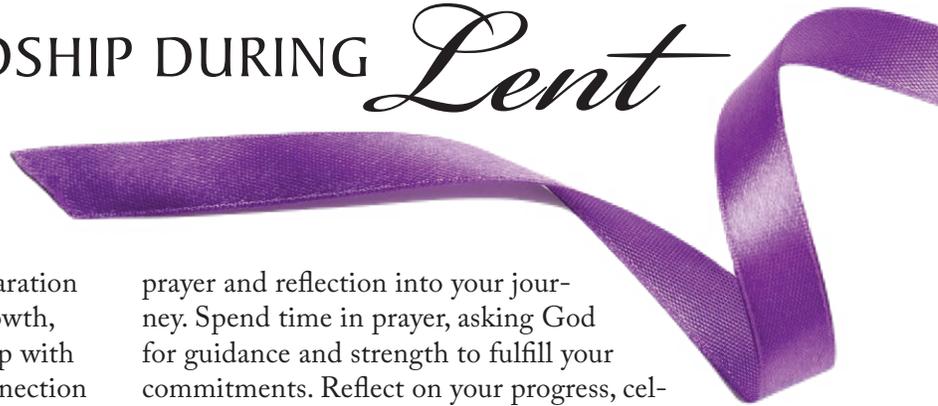
As you make these Lenten commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, it's crucial to incorporate

prayer and reflection into your journey. Spend time in prayer, asking God for guidance and strength to fulfill your commitments. Reflect on your progress, celebrate your successes, and acknowledge areas where you can improve. This self-examination is a fundamental aspect of Catholic stewardship and is an integral part of the Lenten experience.

Lent is traditionally a season of sacrifice, symbolizing the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. By committing your time, talent, and treasure, you are making a conscious choice to embrace sacrifice as a path to renewal. The sacrifices you make during this season help you grow closer to God, and in the process, you experience a spiritual rebirth that prepares you for the celebration of Easter.

Acts of mercy and kindness are a tangible expression of your commitments during Lent. By giving your time in prayer, sharing your talents with others, and sharing your treasure with the parish and those in need, you embody the love and compassion of Christ. Your actions become a testament to the principles of stewardship, and they have a positive impact on your community and the world at large.

By focusing on stewardship with your commitments of time, talent, and treasure, you can fully embrace the spirit of Lent and grow in your faith. This approach transforms the season into a time of deeper self-examination, spiritual growth, and a genuine connection to God's gifts. It is a reminder that living as a faithful steward is not a one-time commitment, but a way of life — one that extends far beyond the Lenten season.



Celebrating *Valentine's Day* Through Acts of Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I hope this letter finds you well as we approach a unique and spiritually significant moment in our faith journey. Feb. 14 not only marks Valentine's Day, but also Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, a time of reflection and renewal. As we navigate this intersection of love and penance, I want to shed light on the Catholic teachings behind Valentine's Day and how we can celebrate it with a focus on stewardship.

Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, a third-century Roman martyr who upheld the values of love, self-sacrifice, and Christian faith. He defied the Roman Empire's ban on marriage for young soldiers, believing in the sanctity of love and the Sacrament of Marriage. His devotion to love, even in the face of persecution, serves as an inspiration to us all.

This year, Valentine's Day coincides with Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, prayer, and repentance. We can celebrate this unique alignment of love and devotion by embracing Catholic stewardship. Here are ways to do so:

- **Lenten Sacrifice of Love:** Instead of traditional Valentine's Day gifts, consider giving something more meaningful. Make a Lenten sacrifice, such as giving up a favorite treat, luxury, or habit, and donate the money saved to a charitable cause. This act of almsgiving, rooted in love, reflects St. Valentine's commitment to those in need.
- **Acts of Love and Kindness:** Throughout Lent, perform daily acts of love and kindness. These gestures need not be grand; a simple act like calling a friend in need, helping a neighbor, or showing appreciation to a family member can be a profound expression of love and stewardship.
- **Prayer and Reflection:** On this Ash Wednesday, attend Mass and receive ashes as a visible sign of



your commitment to repentance and renewal. Dedicate time to prayer and reflection, considering the ways you can deepen your relationship with God and with one another.

- **Service to the Community:** Serve our community by participating in charitable activities or volunteering your time. Lent is a time for selflessness and giving. Join initiatives in our parish or engage in community service to extend your love to those in need.

- **Marriage and Family**

Enrichment: On this day of love, focus on enriching your marriage and

family relationships. Attend marriage counseling, pray together as a couple, or engage in family activities that promote unity and love.

- **Renewal of Stewardship Commitments:** Use this time to review and renew your stewardship commitments of time, talent, and treasure to our parish community. Reflect on how you can contribute to the growth and vibrancy of our faith family.

By celebrating Valentine's Day on Ash Wednesday through acts of stewardship, we can infuse this day with the deep love and commitment that our faith encourages. This unique confluence reminds us that love and self-sacrifice are at the heart of our faith, as exemplified by St. Valentine's dedication to love and Christian values.

May this Valentine's Day be a profound and spiritually rich experience, allowing us to renew our love for God, one another, and our commitment to stewardship as a way of life.

In Christ,

Fr. Paul Ferguson

Fr. Paul Ferguson
Pastor

The Ladies *Fostering Community, Supporting Education*



Ladies field trip to St. Meinrad Seminary



The Euchre Tournament

Our community is blessed to not only have a strong Knights of Columbus council, but also a thriving Ladies Auxiliary. The group is open to any adult woman of Our Lady of Hope or St. Peter's and is the perfect opportunity to enjoy fellowship with other women while serving the greater community.

"Our primary mission is to support the Knights of Columbus with their efforts," says Anita Ash, president of the Ladies Auxiliary. "We also fundraise for our own efforts, including education and vocations. We support the local Robotics Teams at Washington Community High School and Washington Catholic School. Our ladies value education in Daviess County and those pursuing religious vocations to the priesthood or religious life."

Each school year, the Ladies Auxiliary awards two scholarships to senior girls to apply to their first year of college. In April, the group will begin the process of selecting the next two recipients who will apply the scholarships to the 2024-2025 school year. One female senior from Our Lady of Hope Church and one from

St. Peter's are eligible as the Ladies Auxiliary awards one for each church.

Melanie Stone, Ladies Auxiliary member and past secretary, appreciates the efforts of the group to serve the community, as well as the social engagements that bring the women together.

"We have over 90 members who gather together for our regular meetings," Melanie says. "The socializing and friendships from these ladies are just as memorable as the work of the ministry. That's what drew me in to this ministry so many years ago and why I continue to be so involved."

Annual events with the Ladies Auxiliary include the Euchre Tournament, volunteering with the Knights of Columbus' Treasure Hunt and selling 50/50 tickets, a clergy appreciation dinner benefiting our seminarians, and the annual Christmas party. Last year also included a Ladies Auxiliary field trip to St. Meinrad Seminary, as well as a Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive that filled a truck with non-perishable food items for Feed My Sheep Food Bank.

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s Auxiliary

Education and the Knights of Columbus

one of the more memorable aspects of our year,” Melanie says. “I remember a few years ago, the Treasure Hunt reached over \$2 million! An annual event this big would not be possible without the community’s support and the help of so many volunteers.”

Both Anita and Melanie encourage any woman in the community not already in the Ladies Auxiliary to join them for their next meeting. Annual membership dues are only \$35. New in 2024, the Ladies Auxiliary is meeting during the even-numbered months. Meetings occur on the first Tuesday of the month at the Knights of Columbus at 6:30 p.m.

For further questions about getting involved with the Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary, contact Melanie Stone at 812-887-8473.



Ladies volunteering at the Treasure Hunt, selling 50/50 tickets

Men's Choir *continued from front cover*

favorite time of year for singing at Mass. He especially enjoys the music on Good Friday.

“Singing is not only a great communal experience, with lots of physical and spiritual benefits, but it also helps to enrich the worship of the Church and provide a spirit of reflective prayer,” Tim says.

Sam Mattingly has been a member of the choir for about two years and has always enjoyed singing. After encouragement from some of the choir members, he finally joined. It’s been a great way for him to share his musical talents with other men and the parish. Sam is also glad he joined because he has developed solid

friendships with other members.

“It is so important for Catholic men to have that fellowship and support,” Sam says. “Fraternity is a vital part of building a strong faith community, and these are men I know I can rely on when I am struggling with my faith.”

Having other men who share the same faith is so important. Sam says the Men’s Choir is a way to develop those strong relationships.

Even if you don’t have a strong singing voice, consider joining the choir. Sam and Tim both agree that you won’t regret it!

To get involved in the Men's Choir, contact Tim Cox at 765-490-9147 or tfox@evdio.org.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE *Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle:*

FEB. 22

On the liturgical calendar, the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle on Feb. 22 commemorates the foundational role of St. Peter in the establishment of the Church and the unbroken apostolic succession. It is a day to reflect on the authority and leadership entrusted to St. Peter and his successors, the popes, in guiding the Church.

The term “Cathedra” is derived from the Latin word for “chair” and symbolizes the seat of authority, making this feast a unique and meaningful celebration, as it is a celebration of the authority given to St. Peter by Jesus Himself.

In the Gospel of Matthew (16:18-19), Jesus tells Peter, “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This passage underscores Peter’s unique role as the Rock upon which the Church is built and his authority to guide the faithful.

The feast also serves as a symbol of unity. St. Peter, as the first pope, is seen as the unifying figure who connects the Church’s past, present, and future. The Chair of St. Peter represents the unbroken line of apostolic succession, linking the current pope to the authority given to Peter by Jesus. This continuity is a powerful reminder that the Church is one body, guided by a line of spiritual fathers who share the same faith and teachings.

On this day, Catholics are encouraged to reflect on

the role of St. Peter and his successors in the life of the Church. It is a time to consider the impact of the pope’s leadership and teaching on the global Catholic community. Many also offer prayers of gratitude for the guidance provided by the pope and for the Church’s unity.

The Chair of St. Peter is not an actual physical chair, but a symbol of the papal office and its spiritual authority. This symbol, typically adorned with sculptures and artwork, can be found in St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City, where the pope presides over significant liturgical celebrations. The chair is often associated with teaching, as the pope is considered the chief teacher of the faith.

While the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter highlights the authority of the pope, it also serves as a reminder of the pope’s role as a servant leader. Just as Jesus washed the feet of His disciples as a sign of humility and service, the pope is called to lead with humility and serve the Church with love and compassion. This feast encourages Catholics to pray for the pope as he carries out his challenging responsibilities.

Let us be mindful of this special day, as the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle is a significant celebration, commemorating the authority and leadership entrusted to St. Peter by Jesus, the unbroken apostolic succession, and the unity of the Church. It also serves as a time for reflection, prayer, and gratitude for the pope’s role as the spiritual leader of the Church. As Catholics celebrate this feast, they are reminded of the foundational role of St. Peter and the enduring importance of the papal office in guiding the Church.

Holy Arts from the Holy Land

A Chance to Purchase Beautiful Religious Artwork to Support Brothers and Sisters in Need

For the past few years, we have welcomed the Holy Arts team to our parish, and we are thrilled to welcome them again this year. They will be here after all of the Masses on March 2 and 3 offering their wide array of olive wood carvings for sale.

The team members come to us from the Holy Land. A family of Palestinian Christians, their mission is to offset the effect that tourism dwindling in the area is having on many Palestinian families' incomes.

"We live in a poor country where people depend on tourism for their livelihood," says Raad Qumsieh, the current owner of Holy Arts. "Many families make these olive wood carvings and depend on the sale of them to make a living. But because of constant conflict in the area, tourists have stayed away, and people aren't able to make a living as a result."

With this in mind, Raad's great-uncle started Holy Arts back in 2000. Together, the Holy Arts team collects a multitude of olive wood carvings from the Holy Land locals. They bring them over to the U.S. and offer them for sale in parishes around our country year after year. It is a beautiful ministry, offering us the opportunity to own some beautiful handmade religious art and offering the residents of the Holy Land an opportunity to make money they otherwise wouldn't have.

"Ninety percent of the Christians work in this industry," Raad says. "This is how they make their living."

While it has been the case for years now that tourism is down in the area, today, as the war rages on in the Holy Land, the desperation of the people is at an all-time high.

"Parishioners look forward to this every year," Fr. Paul says. "And this year, with

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Holy Arts from the Holy Land

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everything going on in the Holy Land, I hope people will consider purchasing their items. Many pilgrims can't get over there now, and this is one way we can help them."

But it's not just an act of compassionate service to the people of the Holy Land for which we welcome Raad and his team. The art they offer is gorgeous! They will have crucifixes and nativity scenes, statues, and more. The work of the artists is unmatched, and the pieces are beautiful sacramentals that we are blessed to display in our homes.

Raad and his team will have their items displayed in the narthex after every Mass the weekend of March 2 and 3. Make time to peruse their items and consider adding into your budget the ability to purchase something from them. You will surely be blessed by whatever you procure!

