



Our Lady of HOPE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Weekend Mass *Rosary* *A Valuable Chance to Ready Our Hearts and Petition the Blessed Mother*

In Marian apparitions over the decades, Mary has consistently asked people to pray the Rosary. There are many beautiful stories about the Rosary saving someone or a group from death or danger. During the 1871 Peshtigo fire in Wisconsin, a group gathered at the Our Lady of Good Help shrine in Champion, Wis. They began praying the Rosary. Rain stopped the fire, and the campus around the shrine was completely spared.

Here at Our Lady of Hope, praying the Rosary before Mass is a powerful way to fulfill what Mary asks of us. Kitty Lawson is one of three parishioners who leads the Rosary before 9 a.m. Sunday Mass. She often leads the Rosary before daily Mass, as well. Those wishing to pray the Rosary arrive 30 minutes prior to Mass. This particular prayer devotion is relatively new, as the leaders have been doing

this for about a year.

“Connie Gray wanted to get a daily Rosary going,” Kitty says. “We started it before daily Mass and added it for Sunday Mass too.”

A small group gathers before Mass to pray, and as people start to come in, they join in the prayers.

Kitty recently joined the third order of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate. Upon joining, she started praying a daily Rosary. This has become an essential part of her life.

“I’ve noticed a change in my life since I started a daily Rosary,” she says.

Don’t underestimate the power of the Rosary. Consider attending Mass 30 minutes early or even stepping forward to lead. It will help you enter Mass with a more prayerful heart.

“Praying the Rosary before Mass gets you in a prayerful state,” Kitty says. “Otherwise, you might come in thinking of what you need to do that



Members of the Weekend Mass Rosary group gather for prayer.

day or be stressed from what you were doing before you came. This way, you are already quieted down in a prayerful state to participate in the highest prayer — the Mass.”

Yet, it’s not just about being ready for Mass. Praying a Rosary is also a powerful intercessory prayer.

“When you take your petitions to the Blessed Mother, she helps you through the times you need her,” Kitty says. “She is the sure way to Jesus — a straight path to Jesus.”

Kitty has some recommendations for staying focused while praying a Rosary. First, get your own personal rosary — as time passes, you will start

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The *Digital* Apostolate: *Sharing Catholic Stewardship in the Age of Social Media*

In our increasingly interconnected world, the digital realm has become a powerful tool for Catholics to live as active disciples of Christ and express their stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. The internet and social media platforms have transformed the way we communicate, learn, and engage with our faith communities. How can modern Catholics harness the power of technology to give back in gratitude to God and the Church, living out their faith as digital disciples?

Sharing the Word of God: Social media provides a vast platform for Catholics to share the Word of God with a global audience. Whether it's posting a daily Scripture verse, sharing reflections on the Sunday readings, or participating in online Bible study groups, the internet allows us to spread the message of Christ to people far and wide. By doing so, we use our time to nurture our faith and that of others.

Supporting Charitable Causes: The digital landscape offers numerous opportunities to contribute to charitable causes. Online fundraising platforms, crowdfunding websites, and charity organizations all have a significant online presence. Catholics can use their financial resources to support these causes and organizations, aligning their treasure with the call to care for those in need.

Volunteering and Advocacy: Social media is an excellent tool for promoting volunteering opportunities and advocating for various social justice issues. Whether it's sharing information about local volunteer events, supporting organizations working for positive change, or advocating for the sanctity of life and human dignity, the digital space allows us to use our talents to make a difference.

Online Ministry and Evangelization: The internet has opened new avenues for online ministry and evangelization. Many Catholics have created blogs, YouTube channels, and social media profiles dedicated to discussing faith, spirituality, and theology. These platforms serve as a valuable resource for fellow believers and those exploring the Catholic faith. By sharing their talents and knowledge, they actively contribute to the spiritual growth of others.



Catholic Community Building: Social media and the internet enable us to form and nurture Catholic communities in the digital world. Online forums, social groups, and virtual events facilitate fellowship, prayer, and support. By connecting with like-minded individuals online, we can strengthen our faith, learn from others, and share our time with a community of believers.

Leveraging Technology for Prayer: Various apps and websites offer resources for prayer, meditation, and devotions. Modern Catholics can use these tools to enhance their prayer lives and grow spiritually. By incorporating technology into their prayer routines, they steward their time effectively, deepening their relationship with God.

Promoting Catholic Stewardship: Catholics can use their online presence to promote the principles of stewardship — time, talent, and treasure. Sharing stories of their experiences in giving back, emphasizing the importance of responsible financial stewardship, and encouraging others to volunteer and serve their communities are all ways to live out Catholic stewardship in the digital world.

As modern Catholics, our digital presence offers a unique opportunity to actively live out our faith, share our stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, and give back in gratitude to God and the Church. By using social media and the internet responsibly and intentionally, we can be digital disciples, reaching a vast audience and making a positive impact on our faith communities and the world.

During Summer Travels, Remember St. Christopher Is Along for the Ride

Dear Parishioners,

As we enter the month of July, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significance of this month in the Catholic calendar, particularly in relation to the feast day of St. Christopher. St. Christopher, whose feast day falls on July 25, is a revered figure in our faith, and his life offers us valuable lessons on how we can emulate his virtues and strengthen our connection with God.

St. Christopher is known as the patron saint of travelers, and his story has been a source of inspiration for countless individuals throughout history. His life was a testament to selflessness and devotion to Christ, which ultimately led to his recognition as a saint by the Catholic Church.

The most famous aspect of St. Christopher's life is his role as a ferryman who helped people cross a treacherous river. He would carry travelers, including a child who, unknown to him at first, was the Christ Child, on his shoulders. His selfless act of service, despite the physical hardship it caused him, reminds us of the importance of helping others on their journey. During the month of July, we can reflect on how we, too, can be "Christophers" to those in need, offering our assistance and support to fellow travelers on the path of life.

St. Christopher's life teaches us that our Christian faith should be an active and living faith. His simple yet profound act of service exemplifies the Gospel message of loving one's neighbor and carrying the burdens of others. As we celebrate his feast day this month, let us strive to emulate his selflessness by engaging in acts of kindness and charity, especially towards those who are less fortunate.

St. Christopher's name, which means "Christ-bearer," symbolizes his mission. During July, we can reflect on how we can become bearers of Christ's light in our daily lives. This may involve spreading the message of the Gospel through our words and actions, being a source of hope and inspiration for others, and carrying Christ's love in our



hearts as we interact with our neighbors and loved ones.

St. Christopher's story also teaches us the importance of perseverance in our faith journey. He faced many challenges and dangers while carrying out his mission, but his unwavering commitment to helping others, even at the risk of his own life, serves as a powerful example. As we honor him this month, let us renew our commitment to following Christ faithfully, no matter the obstacles or trials we may encounter.

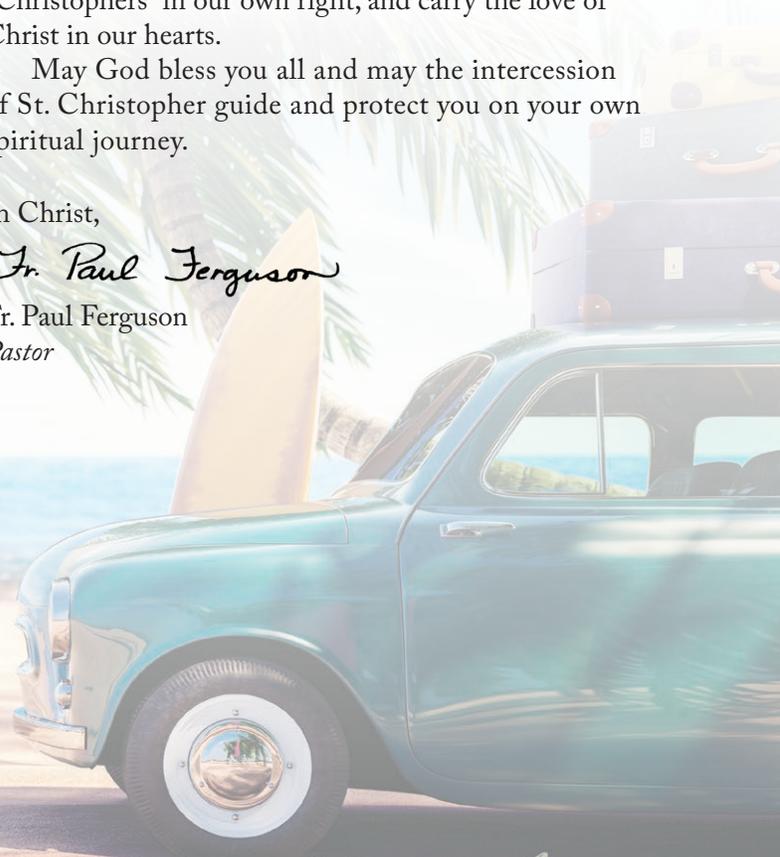
In conclusion, St. Christopher's feast day in July provides us with an opportunity to reflect on his life and the virtues he embodied. Let us strive to emulate his selflessness, become "Christophers" in our own right, and carry the love of Christ in our hearts.

May God bless you all and may the intercession of St. Christopher guide and protect you on your own spiritual journey.

In Christ,

Fr. Paul Ferguson

Fr. Paul Ferguson
Pastor



Adult

Shares Many Stewardship Gifts



Director Sharon Carie



(From left) Marietta Foster, Lynn Smith, Karen Streicher, and Mary Jeanne Bassler

Music soothes the soul — so what better way to lift your soul than to sing to the Lord? Sharon Carie, the director of the Adult Choir at Our Lady of Hope, has been involved with the choir for over 20 years.

“I’d been an organist at the cathedral in Vincennes before we moved to Washington in 1995,” Sharon says. “I got involved with the choir and helped with the Children’s Choir. I’m now just with the Adult Choir. I fell into the position of directing, and I’ve been directing for many years since.”

The Adult Choir sings once a month, as well as for liturgies around Christmas and Easter.

“Usually it’s the first Sunday of the month at the 9 a.m. Mass,” Sharon says. “We sing for Christmas. At Easter, we do the Holy Thursday service and Easter morning.

“We usually have about ten or so,” she adds. “When it’s the Christmas season, we may get four or five more people. We get a few more people added for the holidays.”

Music Director Laura Litwiler helps guide hymn selections.

“Laura gives us information from the liturgy booklet,” Sharon says. “It has suggestions on hymns for each Sunday. I choose hymns the choir would like and the congregation would enjoy. There are special songs for Christmas and Easter and the various liturgical seasons. I try to make it meaningful for that particular Mass.”

Sharon leads with not only her experience in music but as a teacher as well.

“I’ve taught school for about 40 years,” she says. “Half of it was first grade. Our music teacher retired around 1990. I took her place because I had a music minor. I taught music for the next 24 years. I retired from South Knox Elementary School in 2014.”

For Sharon and the choir members, using their musical talents is an act of stewardship shared with God and the congregation.

“I think it’s important if you have a talent, to project

Choir

and Sings Joyfully to Our Lord

that in your congregation,” Sharon says. “Sometimes I play the organ. I believe my knowledge of music helps. The choir members love to sing, so they look to me to help guide them and get good expression.”

Sharon occasionally steps in as an organist, but we have a regular organist.

“Carol Decker was an organist at St. Mary’s Church before we consolidated into Our Lady of Hope,” Sharon says. “She’s been our loyal organist for many years. Her dedication is unwavering and has made music special and meaningful for those attending Mass. We are so blessed to have her!”

Many choir members have been sharing their talents for years.

“We have several loyal members who’ve been with the choir over 20 years,” Sharon says. “They get a lot of joy from singing, a sense of fulfillment. They love to sing and get a feeling of accomplishment singing for the Lord, being together, and sharing their talents.”

A number of the choir members sing locally as well.

“Several of our members performed with the Southwest Indiana Cantata Choir,” Sharon says. “That’s a larger group of surrounding area singers. We’ve sung a cantata for our Christmas Eve service and it’s very meaningful. We’ve even gotten some participants from other churches that joined us and sung a cantata.”

But sharing one’s voice isn’t just for those musically talented — it’s a valuable part of worship.

“Music is an important part of our religious faith,” Sharon says. “It makes us feel closer to God. You don’t have to be the world’s best singer. You just have to have it in your heart to share your joy for the Lord.”

The Adult Choir is always looking for more

participants, both men and women.

“We’d love to have many more,” Sharon says. “We’re a good group to be with. If anyone is interested, just for the love of singing, we would love to have them. We could use some more men in the choir.”

“We would be thrilled to get more members who are passionate about singing in the Our Lady of Hope Adult Choir,” she adds. “Music has a way of pulling at the heart and is so fulfilling!”



(Back row, from left) Hannah Freyberger, Mari Kubota, Peggy Holland; (front) Sandy Queen



Organist Carol Decker



(From left) John Wilson, Kyle Freyberger

Those interested may contact Sharon Carie at slcarie@hotmail.com or Laura Litwiler at llitwiler@evdio.org.



HABEMUS PAPAM:

Pope Leo XIV

A Faithful Steward for a New Chapter in the Church

The Catholic Church entered a new chapter on May 8 with the election of Pope Leo XIV — formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, O.S.A. — as the 267th successor to St. Peter. A Chicago native and member of the Augustinian order, Pope Leo XIV is now the first American pope in the Church's history. His election is a powerful reminder of the Church's global reach and the vital role of the Americas in its future.

He follows Pope Francis, who died in April after more than 11 years as our Holy Father. Pope Francis made a lasting mark through his deep concern for the poor and marginalized and his call for a “Church that goes out.” His papacy inspired many, though at times it also stirred controversy, especially in how he pushed boundaries around certain pastoral and doctrinal issues.

Pope Leo XIV brings with him a different tone and style — one that emphasizes continuity with the Church's teachings and a strong sense of doctrinal clarity. While he shares Pope Francis' pastoral heart, Leo XIV is considered more traditional in his approach, and many see his election as a signal of the Church's desire to reaffirm timeless truths in a world that often rejects them.

But don't mistake tradition for rigidity. Pope Leo's background tells a story of missionary zeal and service. He spent years in Peru, walking with the people, building community, and forming future priests. He knows the importance of meeting people where they are, but he also knows

that truth and charity must always go hand in hand.

His choice of the name “Leo” reflects inspiration from Pope Leo XIII, known for his teachings on social justice and the dignity of work. It's a name that signals a pope who wants to lead the Church with wisdom, courage, and deep concern for the common good.

For those of us committed to stewardship as a way of life, there's much to admire in our new Holy Father. From his years of missionary service to his humble leadership style, Pope Leo XIV has lived the call to stewardship — receiving God's gifts gratefully, nurturing them faithfully, and sharing them generously.

In one of his first public messages, he said, “The mission of the Church is Christ's, not ours. We are stewards, not owners.” That simple statement gets to the heart of what stewardship is all about. It's not about control, but trust. It's about placing our time, gifts, and resources in God's hands and using them for His glory.

Pope Leo XIV's emphasis on fidelity, reverence, and responsibility offers a fresh and steady voice for today's Church. He's a reminder that living our faith fully — with truth, charity, and courage — is the best witness we can give in a divided world.

Let's pray for our new Holy Father as he begins this sacred mission. And let's follow his lead — living as good stewards, grounded in the Gospel, and ready to serve the Church and the world with joyful hearts.

Becoming *One* in Christ:

Integrating Our Local Hispanic and Haitian Communities

The Catholic Church is made up of innumerable diverse cultures, each with its own unique, reverent expression of faith. While this diversity is a gift to the Church, it can be lost if unity isn't a priority. In the Diocese of Evansville, parishes are making a concerted effort to unite the different cultures present in their churches.

"We are in the early stages of integration," says Kande Batz, who is serving as a liaison between the two communities at the parish.

The Hispanic and Haitian communities have a strong presence at Our Lady of Hope, as well as other parishes nearby.

"One great initiative our diocese has made to welcome the Haitian community is to have a Haitian priest, Fr. Johnson," Kande says. "This is an important step because he knows the language and the culture. Language is one of our big challenges."

Challenges arise because of language barriers, but also because the communities are accustomed to living out the faith in their own ways. Kande stresses the importance of taking small steps to integrate two vibrant, committed communities.

"It is going to take a lot of time," she says. "With Fr. Johnson's help, I think our communication is only going to improve."

Small steps taken so far include offering catechesis classes from Spanish into Creole.

"It was hard to find somebody to help us translate from Spanish to Creole," Kande says. "Now that Fr. Johnson is here, he is helping with sacramental preparation."

Kande has also supported Fr. Johnson celebrating Mass in Creole, with a steadily growing attendance.

"It's grown a lot since he began saying it," she says. "They've even organized a really lovely choir."

Kande and the Hispanic community have also placed effort on inviting the Haitian community to some of their celebrations, such as the Day of the Dead and Hispanic Heritage Day. While the communities don't currently have any joint celebrations, Kande is hopeful that they will in the future.

"Again, the process is slow so we can be respectful," she says.

Kande shares that the journey of integrating the two communities has encouraged her spiritually.

"Even the challenges have been opportunities for my own spiritual journey," she says. "I love to think about our Church like Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 'May the Church be the place of God's mercy and love, where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel.'"

Whether you're a part of the Hispanic, Haitian, or other community, you can also take a small step to promote unity in your local parish.

"We must all open our hearts and learn from each other and welcome each other as Jesus taught us," Kande says.

In uniting different cultures, our one community of the Church only grows stronger.



"We must all open our hearts and learn from each other and welcome each other as Jesus taught us." — Kande Batz

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to recognize the feel of the beads, and it will become part of you.

“When you meditate on the mysteries, put Jesus in the picture,” Kitty says. “It’s all about His life. His mother is teaching you about her Son through the Rosary.”

Those praying the Rosary should always bring personal intentions, too.

“Mary wants to help you,” Kitty says.

As Kitty prays the Rosary, she will often close her eyes to stay more focused. She recommends that people continually remind themselves to focus. It’s not always easy, but

praying a daily Rosary is rewarding.

“She’s our strongest intercessor for our prayers,” Kitty says. “She will help you accept the answer.”

“When you take your petitions to the Blessed Mother, she helps you through the times you need her. She is the sure way to Jesus — a straight path to Jesus.” — *Kitty Lawson*

Join in the Weekend Mass Rosary. If you'd like to lead the Rosary, contact Kitty Lawson at 812-698-0834.

