



Our Lady of HOPE

CATHOLIC CHURCH

MEET THE MEN'S CLUB:

*Growing in Fraternity,
Strengthening Faith and Family*

Fellowship and community are essential tenets of the Catholic faith. But men don't always have an easy time with forming these communities. A new ministry at Our Lady of Hope is helping create an intentional community of men. The Men's Club has hosted one event thus far, and member Grant Swartzentruber hopes to continue to build this ministry.

This group partially grew from Exodus 90, in which a group of men, including Grant, participated during Lent 2023.

"It's had a positive impact on me, and it was nice to build that fraternity," Grant says. "We focused on prayer, asceticism, and fraternity. I wanted to see that continue."

During the first weekend in September, Grant and his family hosted a Man Camp event north of Washington. This was the first year for the event, which was a fundraiser for the youth group. About 20 to 25 men, women, and children participated in an outdoor Mass and dinner. Men and boys stayed for a talk by Deacon Gary Keepes, MD on how to be a Catholic gentleman.

"He's a great speaker," Grant says. "He spoke on the Cardinal and Theological Virtues and how one can



counteract the seven deadly sins with virtues."

About 20 men and boys spent the night and enjoyed fishing, biking, and a campfire. In the morning, they enjoyed breakfast together.

"It was a good time," Grant says. "Of course, more people are invited next year."

Thanks to sponsors, the event raised money for youth group activities, which is a primary focus of the Men's Club.

"I'd say it was a big hit because attendees asked to do this again, at least annually," Grant says.

All men of the parish are invited to get involved as the Men's Club continues to grow. This group will be a great way to grow the fraternity and form deeper

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friendships. Grant wants this club to be a place for men to grow in faith together.

“Fraternity is a critical part of our faith, specifically for men,” Grant says. “We all go through trials in life. It’s important for family units to have strong, faithful men.”

Men of faith lead the family and can make a significant impact. Opportunities for men to grow in faith are necessary.

“A father has a crucial impact on his children and family lives,” Grant says. “We want men to have a positive influence and be positive male remodels.”

Grant hopes to set a positive example, especially for younger men and new fathers. He has been impacted by such examples in the past and wants to be able to pay it forward through the Men’s Club.

The Men’s Club members are planning future gatherings and events. Stay tuned!

For more information, watch the bulletin or contact Grant Swartzentruber at geswartzentruber@gmail.com.



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— Grant Swartzentruber

Honoring Our Lady of the Rosary

Dear Parishioners,

As we enter the month of October, our thoughts and prayers turn to the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, celebrated on Oct. 7. This feast, rich in history and spiritual significance, invites us to deepen our devotion to Mary and to reflect on the power of the Rosary in our lives.

The origins of this feast date back to 1571, when Pope Pius V instituted it in thanksgiving for the decisive victory of the Christian fleet over the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto. This victory was attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoked through the praying of the Rosary by Christians throughout Europe. The triumph was seen as a powerful reminder of the efficacy of the Rosary and the protection of Our Lady.

The Rosary is not merely a series of prayers but a profound meditation on the mysteries of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. As we recite the familiar prayers — the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be — we are invited to enter into the sacred mysteries of our faith. Each decade brings us closer to the heart of Jesus through the loving intercession of His mother, Mary.

In our daily lives, the Rosary serves as a source of comfort, guidance, and strength. It is a prayer that we can turn to in times of joy and sorrow, in moments of gratitude



and need. The repetitive nature of the prayers can bring a sense of peace and stillness, allowing us to focus our minds and hearts on the divine.

During this month of October, I encourage you to make the Rosary a part of your daily routine. Whether you pray it alone, with your family, or in a group, let it be a moment to pause and reconnect with God. Consider setting aside a specific time each day to pray the Rosary, perhaps in the morning as you begin your day or in the evening as you prepare for rest.

As we honor Our Lady of the Rosary, let us also remember the many intentions we hold in our hearts and the needs of our parish community. Let us pray for peace in our world, for the healing of the sick, for the comfort of the grieving, and for the strength to live out our faith with courage and conviction.

May Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary, intercede for us and guide us ever closer to her Son, Jesus Christ.

In Christ,

Fr. Paul Ferguson

Fr. Paul Ferguson
Pastor

Celebrating the Sacrament of *Confirmation*

On Sept. 15, our parish celebrated as our students received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Congratulations to all those who received this sacrament — we continue to pray for you as you proceed on your faith journeys!



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Sealed With the Gifts of the Holy Spirit



The Feast of the *Guardian Angels*:

OUR PROTECTORS IN FAITH

On Oct. 2, the Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of the Guardian Angels, a day dedicated to recognizing and honoring these celestial companions who watch over us. Guardian angels hold a special place in Catholic belief, providing comfort, protection, and guidance. But who are these ethereal beings, and why are they so significant in the Catholic Church?

Guardian angels are considered to be heavenly spirits, assigned by God to protect, guide, and watch over individuals from birth to death. The belief in guardian angels dates to biblical times, with references in both the Old and New Testaments. In the book of Psalms, it is written, “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (Psalm 91:11).

The concept of guardian angels is deeply rooted in Catholic theology. St. Augustine, one of the early Church Fathers, wrote about their existence and role in guiding and protecting individuals. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also affirms the belief in guardian angels, stating that “From infancy to death, human life is surrounded by their watchful care and intercession” (CCC 336).

Guardian angels serve several vital functions in the Catholic faith:

Protection: They protect us from physical and spiritual harm, guarding against accidents, illness, and temptations.

Guidance: Guardian angels provide spiritual guidance, inspiring us to make virtuous choices and leading us on the path of righteousness.

Comfort: These celestial companions offer solace in times of trouble, consoling us in moments of sadness, anxiety, or despair.

Intercession: Guardian angels intercede on our behalf, praying for our well-being and offering our petitions to God.

The Feast of the Guardian Angels is an occasion for Catholics to acknowledge and express gratitude for these divine protectors. It serves as a reminder of the intimate relationship between heaven and earth, emphasizing God’s loving care and concern for everyone.

On this day, Catholics may attend Mass, where the role of guardian angels is often highlighted in homilies and prayers. Families can take the opportunity to teach children about the significance of guardian angels and encourage them to develop a personal relationship with their heavenly protectors.

In addition to attending Mass, individuals can reflect on their own experiences of divine guidance and protection. It’s a moment to express gratitude for the times when guardian angels may have intervened in one’s life, whether in averting danger, providing comfort, or offering wisdom in challenging situations.

The Feast of the Guardian Angels underscores the belief that God’s love and care extend beyond the earthly realm. Guardian angels remind us that we are never alone on our spiritual journey, and their presence is a source of comfort and assurance. As we celebrate this feast day, let us be mindful of the guidance and protection provided by our guardian angels and express our gratitude for their unwavering companionship on our path of faith.



Faith Study

Offers a Great Place to Grow in Knowledge of God and Our Faith

“These studies are being offered because people are hungry to learn more about their faith. We are overwhelmed with the world and looking for peace and tranquility. People are looking to our faith which is a correct response to that desire.” — Julie Bassler

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that God put us on this earth to know, love, and serve Him. What this looks like individually can vary because we all have unique gifts and talents. However, we are still all called to cultivate these three things in our lives. Here at Our Lady of Hope, we work diligently to provide opportunities for the whole community to grow.

This last year, two important things happened to provide this opportunity — first, a significant number of parishioners said they were interested in a faith study on our stewardship forms; and second, the parish signed up for a subscription to FORMED.org. With this subscription, the parish has access to high-quality studies that cover many different topics of our Catholic faith.

“Putting together this study has been a work in progress that has been worth waiting for,” says Connie Gray, who has been working with Julie Bassler to get this study up and running.

Beginning in September, between 15 and 20 parishioners began meeting in the Wicke Room in the parish office to watch the videos of the study *Symbolon* and discuss the questions that go along with it. These parishioners vary in age from their 20s to their 90s.

“Faith formation is not just for the children of the parish,” Julie says. “We want to utilize this subscription to FORMED and use it throughout the entire parish. It is a great resource to help people grow in their faith.”



The *Symbolon* program is an updated version that leads you through the Catholic faith with the Creed as the guide. This production was put together by the Augustine Institute and features Dr. Edward Sri, a renowned Catholic theologian, author, and speaker.

The benefit of learning more about our faith and who God is truly deepens your prayer life and faith in our good and loving God. While the study is set up to be a part of a series, those attending can watch the videos at home if they are unable to attend that week. Also, this particular study can be utilized with individual sessions. The videos are programmed in a way that you can get something out of it no matter when you come.

“Our group is so diverse in their backgrounds,” Julie says. “We have cradle Catholics and converts and people from all different walks of life. We learn from each other. It is beautiful to see how we all experience the liturgy

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Faith Study Offers a Great Place to Grow in Knowledge of God and Our Faith *continued from page 7*

together, but this study allows us to share our different perspectives and prayer lives together. It reminds me of the early Christian community where they were growing together, learning, and supporting each other.”

With enough interest from current attendees and anyone else who wants to join, this study plans to run through December. The group meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. immediately following the evening Mass. Each session begins with prayer and a brief discussion followed by the 30-minute video. After the video, participants go through the study questions and engage in conversation about the video.

“We can always come up with a reason to not be involved in something, usually because of our busy schedules,” Julie says. “But we would like to strongly encourage

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ON DEMAND.

everyone to consider making this a priority. These studies are being offered because people are hungry to learn more about their faith. We are overwhelmed with the world and looking for peace and tranquility. People are looking to our faith which is a correct response to that desire.”

Parishioners are welcome to join the rest of this study. Additionally a new study will be starting sometime in January. Please watch the bulletin for announcements on the next study.

