



DIVINE CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2026

Volume 20

Issue 2

DIVINE MERCY
CATHOLIC PARISH

Growing Together In Faith



Saint Anthony of Padua Church
4444 Ohio Street/PO Box 98
Saint Anthony, IN 47575



Sacred Heart of Jesus Church
2504 S Walnut Street
Schnellville, IN 47580



First Communion in Divine Mercy Parish



Caption on Page 15

SUMMER issue

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CONTACT US!

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Tues/Wed/Thurs - 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday - Closed

From the Desk of Fr. Jose...

Dear friends,

We live in a remarkable time. Every day we witness new advances in science and technology that would have seemed impossible just a few years ago. Technology has helped us communicate instantly, access information quickly and make many aspects of daily life easier. We are grateful for these blessings and the many ways human creativity reflects God's gift of intelligence.

At the same time, rapid technological progress brings new challenges and concerns. Not everyone is able to keep pace with these changes. I hear from many people their worry about losing jobs, protecting their privacy, or becoming victims of cyberattacks. There is also growing concern about how technology is shaping our relationships, our families, and especially our children.

One of the most important discussions taking place today concerns Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Recognizing both the good and the dangers of AI, Pope Leo XIV recently issued his first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, published on May 25, 2026. In this important document, the Holy Father reflects on how humanity can safeguard human dignity in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. He reminds us that technology itself is not evil, but neither is it neutral. Rather, it reflects the values and intentions of those who create and use it.

One of the Pope's most powerful warnings is that technological progress must never come at the expense of our humanity. He writes that we must allow technology to advance "without allowing the heart to regress." In other words, as our machines become smarter, we must ensure that our hearts remain compassionate, loving, and rooted in God.

The Holy Father reminds us that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. Our dignity does not come from our efficiency, productivity, or technological abilities. It comes from God Himself. Technology should always serve the human person and the common good, never the other way around.

One of the beautiful biblical reflections Pope Leo XIV offers in *Magnifica Humanitas* is his comparison between the stories of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) and the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2–6). At Babel, human beings sought greatness through their own power and ambition, forgetting their dependence on God. Their achievements became a source of pride, division, and confusion. In contrast, Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem were guided by faith, prayer, cooperation, and concern for the common good. The Holy Father reminds us that technology and human resourcefulness can either become instruments of self-glorification or tools that serve God and strengthen the human family. The choice depends on the values that guide us.

I encourage all of you to take time to read this important encyclical. Our Diocesan newspaper "Message" gives a good reflection on the encyclical. The questions surrounding artificial intelligence are not only technical questions; they are moral and spiritual questions about what it means to be human, how we relate to one another, and how we remain faithful disciples of Christ in a rapidly changing world. Reading *Magnifica Humanitas* can help us reflect more deeply on these issues and prepare us to guide the next generation with faith, wisdom, and hope.

As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our nation's Independence, let us give thanks to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon our country throughout these years. I wish each of you and your families a joyful and blessed 250th Anniversary of American Independence. May God continue to bless our nation, and may He bless you and your loved ones with peace, happiness, and hope.

Happy Independence Day!
Fr. Jose Thomas, Pastor



40 Hours Devotion in SAP Church



Holy Week

Palm Sunday

at SAP



at SHJ



Holy Week

Holy Thursday



Good Friday



Holy Week

Holy Saturday



Easter Sunday in SHJ Church

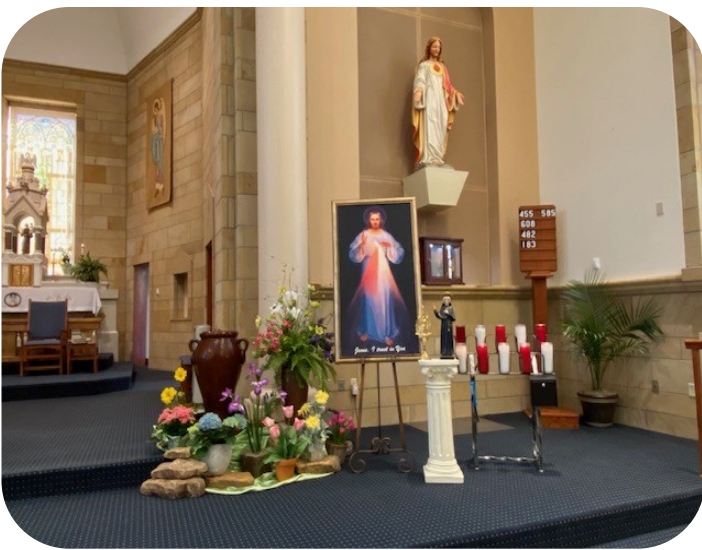


He is Risen Alleluia! Alleluia!



Divine Mercy Sunday

in St. Anthony of Padua Church



in Sacred Heart of Jesus Church

Hello, Spirit!

By: Deacon Charlie Johnson

(A simple mind's introduction to the Holy Spirit)

I know what a father is because I had one. I know what a son is because I am one. But the third person of the Holy Trinity has always been a puzzle to me.

A father puts order to things. He makes the rules. He builds things. He fixes things. He provides what we need.

A son obeys and tries to make his dad proud. He turns to his Dad for guidance, support, and permission. What a son does can glorify his father or shame him.

But a spirit goes unseen. Its workings are a mystery. It can hide from you. It can sneak up on you. Still, it can hold significant power over you—and *for* you.

More than ever before in my life, I was introduced to the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures of this most recent Easter Season.

When Jesus addressed His apostles on their last night together before He died, He had a lot to say about the Spirit, mainly because He knew the Holy Spirit well, and He knew the Apostles didn't. He knew that once He was gone, they would have no one else to rely on. Both He and the Father would be in heaven.

By that time Jesus had revealed the close relationship that He had with His Father. The two were One (Jn 10:30). If they had seen Jesus, they had seen the Father (Jn 14:9). Jesus was God in human form, Emmanuel. God. Perfect in Love, yet human. Existing on earth for a period while the Father was in heaven—He was, in fact, the only way *to* the Father (Jn 14:6).

Now that Jesus has gone to be with the Father, how could we ever find our way to either one of them?

The Holy Spirit was the Plan all along! Jesus intended from the start to send the Holy Spirit to us. And then He did!

If we think of the Holy Spirit in terms of the Spirit of the Father or the Spirit of Jesus, it is easier to

understand how we were not abandoned when Jesus ascended into heaven. Both the Father and the Son are with us always in the Spirit. Neither of them have to be here in body if their Spirit is here. Their Will and Their Word is here because the Spirit is here. We can hear Jesus

speaking to us through the Spirit. We can know the Father's Will through the Spirit. Even Jesus's Real Presence in the Eucharist is here through the Holy Spirit. All this is what Jesus meant when He said, "It is better that I go (Jn 16:7)."

Still, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, so we envision Him in things that we can see: water, fire, cloud, light, dove, anointing hands, anointing oils. These things help us to know when we are likely to encounter the Spirit. They are the stuff of sacramentals and the matter of the Sacraments.

We also try to understand the Holy Spirit by how it works in our lives—by how it moves us to the Good. Our Catholic tradition has given us lists of seven gifts and nine fruits of the Holy Spirit.

I have always disliked lists. They promote memorization instead of understanding.

A simple mind just looks at what is. If it is good, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. If it is bad, it is not.

If we can tell the difference, that is the **fruit** of the Holy Spirit! —And we can be led by the Spirit to the Father through the Son no matter where we are.





May Crowning



In
St. Anthony of Padua Church

In
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church



Our Graduates



A Mass for the 2026 graduates was celebrated on Sunday, May 17 during the 10:00 a.m. Mass, at St. Anthony. A lunch of turkey tenders and haystack potatoes prepared by the Knights of Columbus was served in the Parish Center for the graduates and their families. The high school graduates who attended were:

Front Row: Olivia Wehr, Grace Weigel, Mya Wehr, Aubree Gogel, Grace Hulsman

Second Row; Camden Cole, Alex Fischer, Ben Rasche, Lucas Grieshaber

Third Row: Christopher Verkamp, Carson Jacob, Kade Welp, Kale Wissel, Carson Fleck



The college graduates in attendance were:
Ethan Hall, Emma Hall and Beau Rasche

Divine Mercy Catholic Parish

52-Week Raffle Winners - March 2, thru May 26, 2026

March 2 - John Lampert, St. Anthony, IN (Ticket #296)

March 9 - Ernie Brames, Huntingburg, IN (Ticket #116)

March 16 - Jesse Uebelhor, Ferdinand, IN (Ticket #133)

March 23 - Mark Fischer, Birdseye, IN (Ticket #389)

March 30 - Matt Eckert, Schnellville, IN (Ticket #218)

April 6 - Ruth Voegel, Wadesville, IN (Ticket #815)

April 13 - Lisa Hohler, Jasper, IN (Ticket #839)

April 20 - Barbara Gehlhausen, Ferdinand, IN (Ticket #865)

April 27 - Rhonda Oeding, Jasper, IN (Ticket #572)

May 4 - Eric Blessinger, St. Anthony, IN (Ticket #358)

May 11 - Elaine Brames, Huntingburg, IN (Ticket #117)

May 18 - Birnie Jeffries, St. Anthony, IN (Ticket #880)

May 26 - Natalie Combs, Birdseye, IN (Ticket #201)

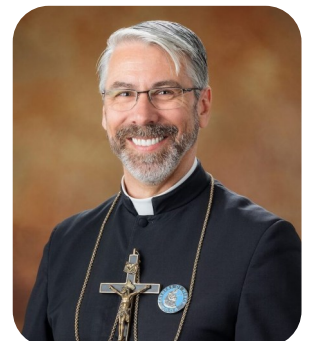


Congratulations!
to our Lucky Winners



Reminder to Mark Your Calendar!!

Divine Mercy Catholic Parish will be having a Parish Mission, in the Parish Center, from October 25 - 28, 2026. Father Ken Geraci from Auburn, Kentucky will be the presenter. Father Geraci was ordained to the Fathers of Mercy in 2012 and is described as a modern day Prodigal Son. Please plan to attend. You will be glad you did!!



Happy Birthday to: Our 80+ Parishioners

Parish News

July

Othmar Striegel	7/1
Eugene Gehlhausen	7/7
Harold Kempf	7/9
Larry Wagner	7/14
Dan Wendholt	7/20

Cathy Fleck	8/23
Beverly Giesler	8/24
Mary Faye Welp	8/25

September

Betty Spanbauer	9/19
Carol Stemle	9/21
Vince Gish	9/23
Rita Kunkler	9/27

August

Barbara Klem	8/2
Fidelis "Duke" Herbig	8/6
Norma Begle	8/7
Rose Blessinger	8/8
Delmar Verkamp	8/8
Ann Welp	8/10
Alvin Klem	8/18
Andrea Wagner	8/18
Ralph Bromm	8/20
Norman Waninger	8/20



Laney Elizabeth Welp, daughter of Colin & Megan Welp - Baptized April 12, 2026
 Zelie Mary Verkamp, daughter of Jeff & Lindsay Verkamp - Baptized April 26, 2026
 Harper Mae Betz, daughter of Caden & Aliese Betz - Baptized May 10, 2026
 Eleanor Jo Wendholt, daughter of Kyle & Sarah Wendholt - Baptized May 31, 2026



Marriages

Kennedy Sermersheim & Corbin Bell - Married on April 11, 2026
 Austin Rothgerber & Jayden Bonifer - Married on April 18, 2026
 Aaron Meyer & Sarah Ewigleben - Married on April 25, 2026
 Logan Englert & Alison Welp - Married on May 9, 2026



Our Family Members Who Entered Eternity

Lila Buechler - on March 20, 2026
 William Rohl - on April 12, 2026
 James Stenftenagel - on April 12, 2026



Religious Education Update...

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation)

Kaya Froman who is married to Brandon, received the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation during the 10:00

a.m. Mass, on Sunday May 31.

She is also the granddaughter-in-law of Monica Schneider, who served as her sponsor. A reception of cookies and punch was held in the Narthex immediately following Mass. Congratulations to Kaya and we wish you the very best!



Fr. Jose Thomas voted in the May 5, 2026 Primary, in the St. Anthony Community Center, for the very first time in his life, after becoming a U.S. citizen. "Congratulations!"

Bible Study Update

Our Parish completed the 5th season of the "Chosen" for our Lenten Bible Study. Fifty adults joined together in 5 locations for the 8-week study. It has not been decided on the Bible Study for the Fall since the Chosen VI will not be available at that time. Details will follow in the bulletin.



Reflection

Hope is some extraordinary spiritual grace that God gives us to control our fears, not to oust them.

—Vincent McNabb

Divine Mercy Parish Health Ministry

Staying Hydrated During the Summer Months

As temperatures rise and we spend more time outdoors, staying hydrated becomes especially important. Our bodies rely on water for nearly every function, and even mild dehydration can leave us feeling tired and unwell. Being mindful of hydration is a simple way to support our health throughout the summer.

Why Hydration Matters

Water helps regulate body temperature, supports digestion, and keeps our joints and muscles working properly. In warmer weather, we lose more fluids through sweating, which means we need to drink more to stay balanced.

Signs and Risks of Dehydration

It's not always obvious when we need more fluids. Common signs of dehydration include thirst, dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, and dark-colored urine. If dehydration is not addressed, it can lead to more serious complications. These may include heat exhaustion, heat stroke, urinary and kidney problems, and low blood pressure that can cause fainting. In severe cases, dehydration may require medical treatment, especially for older adults, young children, and those with chronic health conditions.

Simple Ways to Stay Hydrated

Keeping hydrated doesn't have to be complicated. A few simple habits can make a big difference:

- Drink water regularly throughout the day, even before you feel thirsty
- Carry a reusable water bottle when you're on the go
- Eat foods with high water content, such as fruits and vegetables
- Limit drinks that can dehydrate you, like those with caffeine or alcohol
- Increase your fluid intake when spending time outdoors or being active
- Make it a habit to drink water with meals and snacks

When to Seek Care

Seek medical attention if you or someone else experiences signs of more serious dehydration. These may include confusion, fainting, rapid heartbeat, very little or no urination, or inability to keep fluids down. It's especially important to act quickly for young children, older adults, and anyone with underlying health conditions.

A Caring Reminder

Good hydration supports both body and mind, helping us feel more energetic and focused. As we care for ourselves this summer, let us also remember to check in on others—especially older adults and children—who may need a gentle reminder to drink enough water. Wishing you a healthy and refreshing summer season!

Spring Senior Dinner

Submitted by: Eileen Hauser

A Spring Senior Dinner for parishioners 55+ years young was held on Thursday, May 7, 2026, in the Divine Mercy Parish Center, beginning at 6:00 p.m. 109 parishioners were in attendance.

Before the meal we were accompanied in song by Gary Schueler (with his guitar) as he led "On This Day, O Beautiful Mother".

Deacon Charlie Johnson welcomed everyone and led the "Meal Prayer for Senior Luncheon/Dinner".

After a delicious meal of fried chicken (prepared by Arnie's Catering) and all the sides plus desserts provided by volunteers of the parish, the guest speaker Kathy Luegers from Heart to Heart Hospice was introduced.

Heart to Heart Hospice's mission is to provide compassionate care from their heart to enhance the quality of life for those with life-limiting illnesses and their love ones.

Their Specially Trained Care Team consists of:

- Physicians
- Nurses
- Certified Nursing Assistants & Hospice Aides
- Social Workers
- Chaplains/Spiritual Care Coordinators
- Bereavement Coordinators
- Volunteers
- Hospice Dietitians
- Therapists - Physical, Occupational, Speech

Their Core Hospice Services Include:

- Help manage the patient's pain & symptoms
- Provide medications, equipment & supplies related to the hospice diagnosis
- Assess & maintain the patient's comfort level
- Meet emotional, spiritual & practical needs
- Assist in personal care & activities of daily living
- Instruct families on proper patient care
- Deliver therapeutic services, as needed
- Provide companionship & local resources
- Offer bereavement services & grief counseling



They also provide Individualized Levels of Care such as:

- Routine Home Hospice Care - regular visits by the care team to wherever a patient calls home
- Continuous Home Hospice Care - when close attention is needed during a medical crisis & may include 24 hour care
- Inpatient Hospice Care - when a patient is transferred to a contracted hospital or Hospice House for short-term management of pain or symptoms that cannot be managed at home
- Respite Care - when caregivers need a break from their caregiver duties, a patient may receive care in a contracted facility or Hospice House for up to five days

Hospice services are available to anyone with an end-stage illness and a life expectancy of six-months or less, should the disease run its normal course.

Payment for services are accepted from Medicare, Medicaid, VA, and most private insurance plans.

The evening ended with the group singing the song "Sing of Mary" accompanied by Gary Schueler.

Fr. Jose Thomas closed with prayer at 7:15 p.m.

Divine Mercy/800 Club Easter Egg Hunt



47 children were in attendance at the Divine Mercy/800 Club Easter Egg Hunt, on Saturday April 4, 2026. "Congratulations" to the winners: Blakely Allen, Calvin Butkauskas, Evelyn Gilles, Gavin Hopf, Calvin Schepers, Jackson Lane, Layla Lampert, Lydia Peter, Maggie Lueken, Keaton Thomas, Kamilla Kavanaugh, Lucy Uebelhor



First Communion - Caption for Cover Page

Twenty-one of our young parishioners received the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. Congratulations to them and their families!

Row 1: Lyla Merkley, Levi Stetter, Tucker Foll, Everli Welp, Carter Knies, Cohen Bettag, Ethan Applegate, Lyla Weyer, Emily Berg, Oliver Gutgsell

Row 2: Wrenley Cummins, Charlotte Thacker, Jade Hochgesang, Claire Harmon, Ben Merkley, Kora Gehlhausen, Stella Engle, Annabelle Atkins, Stella Verkamp, Carter Pund, Evan Krampe

Row 3: Renee Berg, catechist, Sherry Fischer, Parish Catechetical Assistant, Aubrey Schnell, server, Lexie Hasenour, server, Janie Kempf, Parish Catechetical Leader, Father Jose Thomas, Deacon Charlie Johnson, Emerson Thayer, server, Sophie Miller, server, Anna Schnell, server, Kaylee Merkley, server



Corpus Christi Processions



Knights of Columbus News...

Submitted by:
John Rickelman

Members of our council joined members from our assembly in an honor guard for Confirmation at Holy Family Parish.

We held an exemplification welcoming new members to our council.

Members from our council joined members from our assembly in providing an honor guard for 3 funerals.

Our council held a Tootsie Roll Drive collecting donations for challenged individuals.

Our KofC Council provided a breakfast for our parish community.

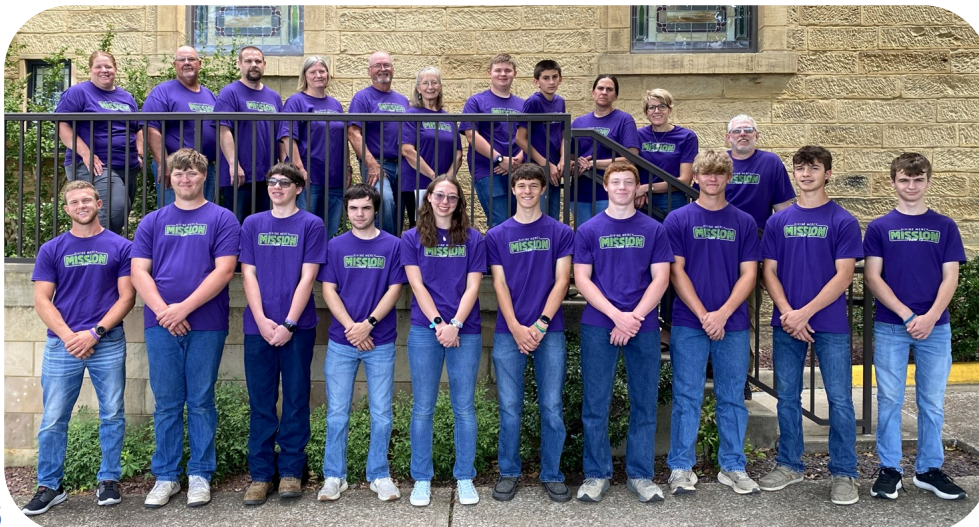
Members of our council joined members of our assembly in providing an honor guard for First Communion, at Ireland and Precious Blood Churches.



Grand Knight Jon Hurst and past Grand Knight John Rickelman attended the Indiana KofC State Convention. While there they participated in the honor guard for the Masses and opening and closing ceremony.

The St. Anthony KofC Council held a Silver Rose Service honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe and Respect for Life.

If you are a man 18 years or older and in good standing in the Church, the KofC would be a great way to join other men in charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism. Contact one of our members, join us at a meeting the second Wednesday of the month in the 800 Clubhouse, at 7:00 p.m., go online to koc.org/join, or scan the QR Code and enter your information. The agent code is `tjarboe` and our council number is 15777.



Mission Team #12

Vacation Bible School 2026



June 1 - 5



Vacation Bible School 2026



Learning About God!



And Having Fun!



Vacation Bible School 2026



Fun!



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# **Memorial Day Services** **in SHJ Cemetery**



## **in SAP Cemetery**

