

Dear Friends in Christ,

#### The Lord is Risen! Alleluia!

May this truth take root in your heart and with the eyes of faith may you experience the Risen Lord's presence in your life. Look beyond the ordinary and experience the Good Shepherd leading you. Many of Jesus' teachings and parables use ordinary situations to help the listeners to experience the Divine. The Angel says to the women at the tomb, see the place where they laid Him. This invitation is asking them to move beyond the obvious and see the miracle God is doing for them.

Three keys to help you experience our risen Lord Jesus daily are: solitude, silence, and prayer. A solitude that is not about being alone and empty, but alone with the God who wants to be with you. This is done by inviting Jesus to be with you in that moment. Two tools which can help are reading a Scripture passage or reciting a prayer slowly. Silence is about being quiet so you can hear God's voice. Prayer is about allowing yourself to be totally present to God with all your heart, mind and soul.

Fr. Joseph Gatto, Msgr. Paul Litwin, Fr. Moses, the deacons who serve you, and the staffs of our family and I would like to wish you a Blessed and Holy Easter Season. A Season that brings you and those you care about peace, healings and special blessings. May the Lord turn your loneliness into a solitude of being alone with Him, create a silence that helps you hear His loving voice, and prayer time that renews and refreshes you with His presence and peace.

In Christ's peace,

Fr. David



SIX PARISHES ONE MISSION
Christ the King, Infant of Prague, St. Aloysius, St. Benedicts,
St. Leo the Great, Ss. Peter and Paul

As we come together as a Family of parishes, we are grateful to so many parishioners who have stepped into leadership roles to strengthen all areas of parish/family life. The following 6 Pillars will help us build vibrant faith communities throughout our Family.

<u>Administration</u> – This Pillar addresses the business components of how our parishes operate and looks at creating efficiencies that respond to the challenges of resources and personnel as we move forward.

Mike Bradley (St. Benedict) Scott DeRose (Ss. Peter & Paul) **Brian Evers** (Christ the King) Tina Evers (SS Peter & Paul) Tom Gaulin (St Aloysius Gonzaga) Patricia Herweg (Ss. Peter & Paul) Debbie Hoak (Infant of Prague) James Maher (St. Benedict) Michael Maute (Infant of Prague) Elizabeth Zurowski (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) Deacon Bob Warner (Bread of Life)

<u>Forming Disciples</u> – This Pillar supports Faith Formations for parishioners of all ages, infants, children, teens, mid-life, and seniors.

Heather Danner (Christ the King)
Casey Hanley (Ss. Peter & Paul)
Fran Mackowiak (Infant of Prague)
Pam Rankin (Christ the King)
Roberta Spencer (Ss. Peter and Paul)
William Tixier (St. Benedict)
Carol Wojtkowski (St. Leo the Great)

In Reach/Out Reach — This pillar involves how we respond to the needs of other people, both in and outside the family of parishes, with specific outreach such as St Vincent de Paul, food pantries, etc. This pillar also focuses on serving those who have physical or spiritual needs.

Jan Bell (St. Leo the Great) Camille Boczar (Infant of Prague) Joseph Butwin (Christ the King) Michelle DeRose (Ss. Peter & Paul) Giovanna Ferraina (St. Leo the Great) Cynthia Harder (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) Christa Harder-Stepien Joanne Jarmusz (Christ the King) (Infant of Prague) Tom Militello Harold Murphy (Christ the King) Mary Nicholson (Infant of Prague) Andrew Pitisi (St. Benedict) Kate Ruminski (St. Benedict) Laurie Schlosser (Ss. Peter & Paul) (St. Leo the Great) Marcy Steiner Cathi Ullenbruch (Christ the King) Eileen Warner (Bread of Life)

<u>Liturgy</u> – Liturgy is the primary way in which we worship God. This pillar makes sure we have the very best worship taking place within our Family of parishes. Priority is to be given to the dignity of each celebration, focusing on good ministry, music, and participation.

Robert Freeman (Ss. Peter & Paul) Cindy Havas (Christ the King) Melissa Herr (St. Leo the Great) (Infant of Prague) Ken Kopacz Kim Newton (St. Leo the Great) Paul O'Farrell (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) Sue Pelletterie (Infant of Prague) Bob Rybarczyk (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) Barb Wyse (Infant of Prague)

Spiritual Life – Spiritual Life works hand in hand with Liturgy. This pillar focuses on fostering a relationship with Jesus Christ through para-liturgical experiences, retreats, devotions, and any activity within the family that will help bring people closer to Jesus.

Juliet Alfonso (St. Leo the Great) Joe Byrne (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) **Eduardo Cortes** (St. Leo the Great) Gina Cutrona (Ss. Peter & Paul) Tony Deaville (St. Leo the Great) Kathy Gallson (Christ the King) Linda Gianturco (St. Benedict) Bill Hynes (Bread of Life) John Jerzewski (Infant of Prague) Marion Kopin (St. Benedict) Rosemary Metz (Infant of Prague) Rick Paolini (Christ the King Church) Patricia Sneck (St. Aloysius Gonzaga)

Stewardship – This Pillar looks at how we utilize time, talent, and treasure among our parishes for the good of our parishes and people. This includes coordinating the family fundraising schedule, determining how volunteers get involved in ministries between parishes within the family, and ways that people can get involved in the family.

Greg Abbott (Christ the King) Tina Boyd (St. Aloysius Gonzaga) Patricia Freeman (Ss. Peter & Paul) Joyce Grinewich (Ss. Peter & Paul) Colleen Juliano (St Leo the Great) Joyce Knoll (St. Leo the Great) Amy Morris (St. Benedict) Sharon Mulqueen (St. Aloysius Gonzaga)

Shelly Reidy (St. Benedict)

Allen Richter (St. Aloysius Gonzaga)
Cathy Schultz (Infant of Prague)
Brian Sintau (Infant of Prague)

### Suffering, Science and Religion By Deacon John Coughlin

Recently in my battle with cancer, I received some good news. The Car T cell therapy, which I have received seems to be working. The T-cells that were taken from my body, re-engined and infused in me seem to be destroying the cancer cells in me. This therapy, offered to me because chemotherapy was not working, seems to be working.

When I shared this good news with my family and friends, those who have provided me with all kinds of love and support (offers of assistance, visits, notes, cards, phone calls and prayers) it struck me that all these profound expressions of love might have never been expressed absent my suffering. And perhaps God, whose only will is His love for all He created, allows suffering to cause the expressions of love we might otherwise resist or overlook as needed.

It was interesting that when I shared this good news, I received very different reactions. Some said, "Be thankful to God or give God the glory"; others said, "Isn't science wonderful". I guess because our culture sees science and religion opposed to each other. However, aren't these responses saying the same thing. Because science and its wonderful discoveries would not be possible without the order and harmony, the intelligent design, that God put into all He created, the patterns God placed in creation.

As religious people we can trust and believe in God's intelligent design of the universe which we human beings discover little by little. We can realize science is not the only way of knowing because we come to know things through the arts (poetry, literature, theater, music, philosophy, etc.) as well. And science is not opposed to religion but a consequence of our religious knowing, our faith. This is why so many of the early scientists were priests or religious people who trusted there to be an intelligent design to all creation. So let us be ever thankful to God for the revelation of His love in Christ, Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection, and the intelligent design He placed in all He created.

## Health and Wellness Corner A Heart Healthy Diet

We hear how important it is to eat healthy.

And about a heart healthy diet. Why? Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United State for both men and women. One person dies every 33 seconds from cardiovascular (heart) disease. Diet plays a huge role in our health. Not just cardiac health but our over all health.

You may have heard the DASH and Mediterranean diets are good for your heart. A true cardiac diet emphasizes fruits, vegetables, lean poultry, whole grains and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids like salmon. Limit process foods ( cold cuts, bread, cake, salty snacks are a few) as they are high in saturated fats (bad for you). Also red wine has not proven to protect the heart.

It is best to plan your menu (and shopping) ahead of time. It's certainly ok to treat yourself at times but don't overindulge. If you would like more diet info; help with diet planning call Catholic Health and ask to speak with a nutritionist at 716-706-2112.

# Saint Spotlight Saint Anselm 1033-1109 Feast day April 21st.

Saint Anselm, monk, abbot, philosopher, theologian, Archbishop of Canterbury, Doctor of the Church. "Father of Scholasticism". Anselm

was born into a noble family in Aosata, in the Italian Alps. He entered the Benedictine Order at the monastery of Bee in France. There he taught theology to his fellow monks and students. He was sent to England where he became the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was exiled twice during his fight for religious freedom in England. He was declared a Doctor of the Catholic Church by Pope Clement XI in 1720.

"Come now little man, get away from your worldly occupations for awhile. Lay aside your burdensome cares. Give yourself over to God for a little while and rest for while in Him. Say to God 'I seek your face; your face Lord, I seek'"

from Chapter 1 of Proslogios by St Anselm

## Interview with Father Joe By Patricia Herweg



"I love being a parish priest; it gives me the opportunity to be with people at all stages of their spiritual life and the vibrancy of the parish brings life into the Church."

Fr. Gatto is the middle child of Joseph and Dorothy Gatto who grew up between two sisters in Dunkirk, New York. His Polish and Italian heritage included a very Catholic environment, going to Catholic grammar school through college and beyond.

Fr. Joe relates that it was the diocesan priests, who taught him at Cardinal Mindszenty High School, that inspired him to join the priesthood. Those hardworking religious men set a wonderful example that he wanted to follow.

July 9, 2025 marks the forty-second year of Fr. Joe's priesthood. He attended Wadhams Hall Seminary in Ogdensburg and continued his studies in Rome, where he earned several degrees in theology from North American College, Gregorian University and Casa Santa Maria.

Fr. Gatto, an avid reader, said his favorite author, who has greatly influenced his ministry, is German theologian Karl Rahner, one of the most significant theologians of the 20th century.

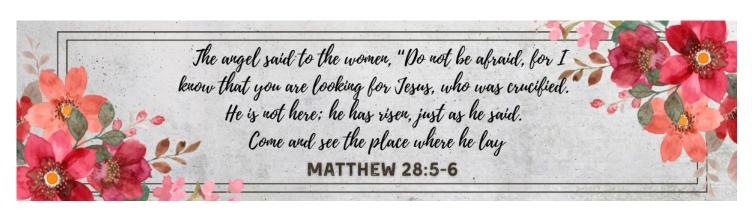
Throughout Fr. Gatto's ministry as a Pastor in Lockport and Williamsville parishes, he found great joy in raising up lay leaders and empowering them to assume strategic roles in ministry and leadership within the parish. He avidly encouraged vocations for priesthood, diaconate and lay ecclesial ministry.

Fr. Gatto is also a sports enthusiast who has attended countless Bills games, and travels to Cleveland for his favorite baseball team, the Cleveland Guardians. As spring approaches, he will be out enjoying one of his favorite places to eat, Ted's Hotdogs (only onions on his hot dog.)

He is a lifelong learner and loves to travel. Father Gatto and Msgr. Zapfel are leading a group pilgrimage trip to France this fall.

He is enthusiastic about the "Road to Renewal", Fr. Joe feels it brings more opportunities for members of our parish communities to take part in Church life as they engage in ministry. The Renewal encourages roles of leadership and liturgical ministries for the laity to help move our Church forward and continue the good work of reaching out and ministering to God's people. It is evident that Fr. Gatto has a great love of our Lord, and truly lives out his vocational calling to minister in God's name as he continues to serve God's people in so many capacities as a parish priest.

Thank you, Fr. Joe, for letting us get to know you!



Words of Gratitude: Ash Wednesday witnessed an outpouring of countless graces; from the 100 volunteers from all the parishes in our family, to the priests who heard confessions throughout the day, and those who welcomed people back home to the church. In truth this year saw record numbers; nearly 2,700 people! Without your help we would never have been able to minister to everyone the way we did!

We saw tears, joy, thankfulness, and so much love. Volunteers make these ministries successful and more importantly, bring Christ to those who may not otherwise experience the heart and hands of Christ.

These experiences are just the beginning of what awaits us during this Holy Season; the power of grace working through so many is truly a sign of the vibrance of our parish family.

Thank you!

- Andrew Pitisi













Thank you to all who helped to make it happen!









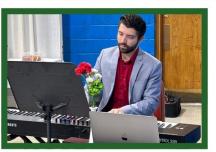












### The History of "The Mission at Williamsville" by Rose Quebral

What is the "Mission at Williamsville"? Well, it was the earliest name for the Saints Peter and Paul Faith Community, and this is its history:

In the beginning of the 19th century, a few Catholic immigrants began to settle in the area of "William's Mills", found at Ellicott Creek and the "old Indian trail" of Main Street. After the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, more Catholic immigrants flowed into the Williamsville area - many of them from the Alsace region of Europe. This community of Catholic settlers became a mission outpost of the first church in Buffalo, the Lamb of God Church (now St Louis Church).

In 1834, the "Mission at Williamsville" began building a stone church at the corner of Main and Grove Streets. The building was partially financed with a donation from Philipp Jakob Wirtz who kept a tavern and grocery store in the village. Wirtz's generosity extended beyond his donation - he even provided a place in his home for the mission school.

In those days, a mission church remained a mission until a resident pastor arrived and it became a parish. That blessed event occurred on July 13, 1836 with the arrival of Father John Neumann, our beloved Saint John Neumann. His arrival marked the founding of Saints Peter and Paul Parish and School.

Father Neumann held his first Masses at Saints Peter and Paul in the floorless and roofless stone church. He himself taught in the school for seven months (after dismissing the teacher of the mission school for drunkenness!)

After four years of tending to his sprawling mission territory surrounding Williamsville, Father Neumann left WNY to join the Redemptorist Order. His life of service continued in the Philadelphia area and he was canonized on June 19,1977.

The population of Williamsville continued to grow after the departure of Saint John Neumann and a new and larger church was needed. In 1857, the land next to the original stone church was purchased and a new stone church began to rise on that lot in 1862. It was fashioned with Onondaga limestone from the Fogelsonger Quarry, the remnants of which can still be clearly seen at the modern intersection of the New York State Thruway and Main Street.

Construction of the church continued throughout the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Can you imagine the unshakeable faith needed to forge ahead in erecting a new church in the face of such doubt and uncertainty in our country? Working alongside the professional stonemasons and craftsmen were numerous volunteer parishioners, some of whom were returning Civil War veterans. The building was completed in 1866 and dedicated by the first bishop of Buffalo, Bishop John Timon.

The original structure, solidly constructed of 4 foot thick walls, has been updated over the years with the additions of a choir loft and interior gothic arches in 1901, electricity in 1912, and three entryway porticos in 1962.

Just as Saints Peter and Paul Church had more than one location, so did the parish school. Ever since the early days in the Wirtz home, the school has been found in various spots on or near the current parish property. After the new stone church was completed, grammar school classes were held in the "old" stone church. In 1871, the stone of the "old" church was purchased to be used for an addition to the Our Lady Help of Christians Chapel in Cheektowaga, so classes were moved to the basement of the "new" church. The school was finally given its own new space in 1893 - a traditional two room wooden schoolhouse. That wooden schoolhouse was expanded in 1920 to make room for high school students.

Eventually, the school outgrew the expanded wooden schoolhouse and in 1929, one wing of the eventual three wing, three story brick school was built to accommodate the high school. The remaining two wings of the current school were built in 1952 and once again all of the grades were united. That reunion would only last 10 years until the high school students were moved to a new diocesan high school, Bishop Neumann High School, on Park Club Lane.

Today, we all still worship in that sturdy stone church. We stand on the shoulders of generations of parishioners of undying faith who settled in our area, built Saints Peter and Paul Church and School, and steadfastly believed in God's promise. The parish school continues to educate God's littlest ones from PreK age three through 8th grade, and beginning this school year, is offering a classical Catholic education curriculum - returning to the seeds of instruction sown by Saint John Neumann back in 1836.

While it may be interesting to look back at the almost 200 year history of "The Mission at Williamsville", we are called to look forward in courageous anticipation to the future of our Bread of Life Parish Family. Together, let us write the next 200 years of that journey!

#### **APRIL 2025**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 6:30 PM Lenten Retreat "A Journey of the Heart" at St. Al's	4 4 PM Fish Fry at St Leo's 5 PM Lenten Soup & Sandwich at IOP 7 PM Stations of the Cross IOP	5
6 10:30 AM Catholic Principles – Families, & Christian Living for teens at SSPP	7 6:30 PM Penace service at SSPP	8	9	10 6:30 PM Lenten Retreat "A Journey of the Heart" at IOP	11 4 PM Fish Fry at St Leo's	4 PM Palm Sunday Vigil at regular Saturday Mass times
Palm Sunday 13 Adult Confirmation Classes Begin. See below for more details	14	15	16	Holy Thursday 17  NOTE: All Holy wee	Good Friday 18 4 PM Fish Fry at St Leo's ek schedules are listed o	Holy Saturday 19
and sign-up information  Easter Sunday 20	21	22	23	24	25 7:30 PM Bingo at St. Al's	2.6 11 AM Feel the Spirit 5k at IOP. For info visit BuffaloRunners.com 6 PM Polish Night at St Leo's
27	28	29	30	Church Abbre CTK—Christ tl	he King f Prague	
				St Al's—St Alc St Ben's—St E		

#### Are You an Adult Who Never Received Confirmation?

Our Bread of Life Catholic Community warmly welcomes those who have reached adulthood and never received the sacrament of Confirmation to a process of spiritual formation that leads to the reception of Confirmation.

The program begins on Sunday, April 13, 2025 with six weeks of classes on Sunday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Participants also attend the Easter Triduum (April 17th-20th). Meetings take place in the Christ the King Chapel meeting room.

Call Deacon John Coughlin at 516-330-4892 to speak about registering.



We're pleased to announce that Melinda Montaperto is our new Family Communications Coordinator! Melinda previously served as the Faith Formation administrative assistant for St Benedict's & St Leo's. Some projects she will include are our family website, newsletter, and social media. If you are interested in being part of our social media ministry please email Melinda at communications@saintbenedicts.com.

St Leo's—St Leo the Great SSPP—SS Peter & Paul

### **Holy Week Schedule**

#### We would love to see you!

#### **Holy Thursday**

8 AM Morning Prayer, 7 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper at CTK

8:30 AM Morning Prayer at IOP

9 AM Morning Prayer at St Ben's

9 AM Morning Prayer, 7 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper at SSPP

9 AM Morning Prayer, 7 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper at St Al's

5:30 PM Shared Potluck, 7 PM Mass of the Lord's Supper at St Leo's



#### **Good Friday**

8 AM Morning Prayer, 1 PM Passion of the Lord at CTK 8:30 AM Morning Prayer, 7 PM Prayer Service "Seven Last Words of Christ" at IOP 9 AM Morning Prayer at St Ben's

9 AM Morning Prayer, 3 PM Passion of the Lord at SSPP 9 AM Morning Prayer, 3 PM Passion of the Lord, 7 PM Stations of the Cross at St Al's

3 PM Passion of the Lord, 7 PM Stations of the Cross at St Leo's

#### **Holy Saturday**

8 AM Morning Prayer at CTK
8:30 AM Morning Prayer at IOP
9 AM Morning Prayer at St Al's, St Ben's, and SSPP
7:30 PM Easter Vigil Mass at St Ben's
8 PM Easter Vigil Mass at IOP
8:15 PM Easter Vigil Mass at SSPP

#### **Easter Sunday**

12 PM Mass at CTK

8 AM Mass at CTK, St Ben's 9 AM Mass at St Leo's 9:30 AM Mass at SSPP 10 AM Mass at St Al's, CTK, St Ben's 10:30 AM Mass at IOP 11 AM Mass at St Leo's 11:30 AM Mass at SSPP



#### **Basket Blessings Holy Saturday**

St. Ben's: 12 PM St. Leo's: 1 PM SSPP: 1 PM CTK: 2 PM IOP: 12 PM St. Al's: 1 PM



#### **Penance Service**

St. Leo's: Monday, March 31 @ 6:30 PM, with a Soup Supper at 5 PM

SSPP: Monday, April 7 @ 6:30 PM CTK: Monday, March 24 @ 3 PM

#### **Holy Thursday Adoration at each Parish**

St Ben's open 7:30 PM—10:30 PM
St Leo's open 8 PM—10:30 PM
SSPP open 8 PM—10:30 PM
CTK open 8 PM—10 PM
IOP open 8:30 PM—11 PM
St Al's open 8 PM—Midnight

### Surprise! It's Empty!

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. Luke 24:2-3 (NIV)

Based on Luke 24:1-12



Α	G	K	Y	T	Q	S	P	I	C	E	S	X	E	F
Α	R	D	Т	Т	C	G	Н	R	J	T	٧	Н	N	F
F	0	F	R	G	N	D	E	Υ	0	G	W	Y	T	R
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Y	T	R	D	S	K	S	Z	В	Н	P	Μ	В	F	C

BOWED	FACES	GROUND	MORNING	RISEN
WOMEN	WEEK	FRIGHT	STONE	LIVING
ROLLED	FIRST	REMEMBER	DAY	DEAD
TOMB	AWAY	SPICES	ENTERED	BODY

#### **Bread of Life Catholic Community Celebrates the Triduum**

The Triduum, meaning "three days" in Latin, is the holiest period in the liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church. It spans from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday and commemorates the pivotal events of Jesus Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection. These three days are a solemn and profound reflection on the core of Christian faith.

The Triduum begins with **Holy Thursday**, also known as the *Mass of the Lord's Supper*. This liturgy commemorates the Last Supper, where Jesus instituted the Eucharist and washed the feet of His disciples, demonstrating His call for humility and service. The evening culminates with the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to a place of repose, symbolizing Christ's time in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Good Friday** follows, marking the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus. This day is a solemn observance of Christ's sacrifice for humanity's salvation. The faithful participate in the **Celebration of the Lord's Passion**, which includes the reading of the Passion narrative, veneration of the Cross, and reception of Communion. This day, focused on suffering and sacrifice, is a stark contrast to the joy of Easter Sunday but is essential for understanding the depth of God's love for humanity.

Finally, the Triduum culminates with **Easter Sunday**, the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. This is the pinnacle of the Church's liturgical year, where the faithful rejoice in Christ's victory over death. The **Easter Vigil**, held on Saturday night, marks the beginning of Easter, with the lighting of the Paschal candle, readings from salvation history, and the celebration of new life through Baptism. During the Vigil Mass at Infant of Prague, our Family will be welcoming over a dozen new Catholics as our RCIA candidates are brought into the fullness of our Catholic Faith.



# Bread of Life Catholic Community













### **Bread of Life Catholic Community-BLCC**

#### Bread of Life Catholic Community-BLCC New Facebook Page!

Stay connected with our Family of Parishes, follow us on Facebook for the latest updates! Use the QR Code to the right, or search for Bread of Life Catholic Community-BLCC



To sign up for an Email copy of our Family Newsletter, scan the QR code to the right, or type the following into your web browser:

Rb.gy/hnws4e





We want to hear from you. With the blending of parishes we understand there are many questions and concerns. Please feel free to email in your questions and we will feature a Q&A section in our future newsletters. You can submit your questions to family16@saintbenedicts.com.