

The
BREAD OF LIFE
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
Family Newsletter

Family Newsletter | Issue No. 5

November 2025 | Fall Edition



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A Letter from our Pastor

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The holidays are upon us. Here are some suggestions to help us make them more enjoyable. Don't let time become your master. On many occasions, we become frazzled or irritated because time is running out and we have more to accomplish. Plan an extra fifteen minutes to each task, and you are less likely to become irritated. Give yourself permission not to accomplish everything. Make sure your goals are realistic. Set your priorities toward having holidays that are filled with good times with family and friends. Also, focus on times that are filled with laughter, love, and remembering good memories. It is not about having a picture-perfect holiday; it is about spending time with those you care about. Plan on watching a movie together, or better yet, decorate something, make a homemade gift, or make cookies together. It is time to stop trying to do everything yourself and ask others to assist you in making the holidays special. Everybody has a special role in making the holidays unique. Create some new traditions. Most importantly, find time to pray each day, even if it is as little as five minutes. Praying as a family is a great gift to give each other.

I, Fr. Joe, Fr. Moses, and Fr. Paul wish all of you holidays overflowing with God's blessings of love, laughter, good food, family, and friends.

Peace and healings,
Fr. David Bellittiere




**Bread of Life Catholic Community Spiritual Life
Pillar Presents**


Advent with

THE CHOSEN

Episodes & discussion focusing on
Hope, Peace & Joy



| | |
|---|---------|
| Wednesdays Dec. 3, 10 & 17 | 6:30 PM |
| Christ the King Church 30 Lamarck Drive Amherst, NY 14226 | |



Our Family Newsletter:

The purpose of our newsletter is to celebrate the life of our parish community by sharing stories, milestones, and events that foster connection and joy. We encourage deeper participation in parish life through communication and invitations to gather. We extend a warm welcome to our family, our neighbors, and our friends.

Have the next newsletter emailed to you, and follow us on social media!

Scan the QR Code or go to
linktr.ee/BreadofLifeCatholicCommunity



Calendars

Advent & Christmas

Musical Evening - "Grieving with Hope":

Nov. 17 - 7 p.m. at Christ the King
with Msgr. Paul Litwin

Thanksgiving Vigil Mass:

Wed Nov. 26th - 5 p.m. at Christ the King

Thanksgiving Day Masses - Nov. 27:

Infant of Prague - 10:00 a.m.
Christ the King - 8:00 a.m.
St. Leo the Great - 10:00 a.m.
St. Benedict's - 9:00 a.m.
St. Aloysius - 9:00 a.m.
SS Peter and Paul - 10:00 a.m.

"The Chosen" Watch Night:

Dec. 3, 10, 17th - 6:30 p.m. at Christ the King

Advent Evening of Recollection:

Dec. 9th - 7 p.m. at St. Leo the Great with Fr. Gatto

Advent Penance Services:

Thur, Dec. 11 - 3 p.m. at SS Peter and Paul
Tues, Dec. 16 - 7 p.m. at Infant of Prague
Mon, Dec. 22 - 7 p.m. at St. Benedict's

Bambinelli Sunday:

Dec. 14 at all Masses - Families bring Baby Jesus from Nativity set to Church to be blessed and wrapped. Placed under tree, to be first gift that is opened.

Christmas Eve Masses - Dec. 24:

St. Aloysius - 5 p.m., 12 Midnight
St. Benedict's - 5 p.m., 10 p.m.
Christ the King - 4:30 p.m., 10 p.m.
Infant of Prague - 4 p.m., 10 p.m.
St. Leo the Great - 4 p.m., 12 Midnight
SS. Peter & Paul - 4:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Day Masses - Dec. 25:

St. Aloysius - 10 a.m.
St. Benedict's - 10 a.m.
Christ the King - 8 a.m., 10 a.m.
Infant of Prague - 9 a.m.
St. Leo the Great - 11 a.m.
SS. Peter & Paul - 11:30 a.m.

New Year's Eve Masses - Dec. 31:

St. Aloysius - 5 p.m.
St. Benedict's - 5 p.m.
Christ the King - 4:30 p.m.
Infant of Prague - 4 p.m.
St. Leo the Great - 4 p.m.
SS. Peter & Paul - 4:30 p.m.

New Year's Day Masses - Jan. 1:

St. Aloysius - 10 a.m.
St. Benedict's - 10 a.m.
Christ the King - 10 a.m.
Infant of Prague - 8:30 a.m.
St. Leo the Great - 11 a.m.
SS. Peter & Paul - 11:30 a.m.

Other Dates & Social Events

November 2025

Young Adult Meeting (18+)

Nov. 19 - 6:30 p.m. at CTK Lower Church

St. Ben's School Meat Raffle

Nov. 22 - 6 p.m. at St. Leo's Parish Center

SSPP School Open House

Nov. 23 - 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. at SSPP

SSPP/Bishop Neuman Alumni Mass & Reception

Nov. 29 - 3 p.m. at SSPP

First Sunday of Advent! Nov. 30

December 2025

Christmas Fair Dec. 6 - 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Al's

Christmas Festival Dec. 7 - 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at IOP

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception Dec. 8

Cookie Exchange & Outreach Dec. 10 - 6 p.m. at IOP

Breakfast with Santa Dec. 14 - 9 a.m. at St. Leo's

Mitten Tree Sorting Dec. 14 - 11:30 a.m. at SSPP

Key

CTK: Christ the King

SSPP: Ss. Peter & Paul

St. Ben's: St. Benedict

IOP: Infant of Prague

St. Al's: St. Aloysius Gonzaga

St. Leo's: St. Leo the Great



Bread of Life Catholic Community

MASS, CONFESSION, & ADORATION SCHEDULE

| | ST. AL'S | ST. BEN'S | CTK | IOP | ST LEO'S | SSPP |
|------------|--|----------------|--|---|-------------------|--|
| ADORATION | T, W: 1 PM - 7 PM Th: 3 PM - 8 PM | - | DAILY: 7 AM- 7 PM 24 hour Scheduled | First Fridays: 9 AM-6 PM Benediction to follow | - | - |
| DAILY | M - F: 8 AM Sat: 8:30 AM | M - F: 7 AM | M-F: 8 AM | M - W, & F: 8:30 AM | M - F: 8 AM | School Year M, T, Th, F: 12:05 PM Wed: 8 AM |
| CONFESSION | Sat: 4-4:30 PM | Sat: 4 PM | Wed: after 5 PM Mass | Sat: 3 PM | Sat: 3-3:45 PM | Sat: 3:30-4:15 PM |
| SAT VIGIL | 5 PM | 5 PM | 4:30 PM | 4 PM | 4 PM | 4:30 PM |
| SUNDAY | 10 AM 5 PM | 8 AM 10 AM | 8 AM 10 AM | 8:30 AM 10:30 AM | 9 AM 11 AM | 9:30 AM 11:30 AM |

Finding Mass Times when Traveling *By Patricia Herweg*


Traveling for the holidays? As Catholic Travelers, it is important to us to be able to attend Mass, no matter what city, state or country we are visiting. There are numerous websites and apps that offer times, locations, and languages where the mass is offered, providing us a sense of home away from home. Even if one does not understand the language of that country, the celebration and rituals of the Mass are universal throughout the world.

Website:

MassTimes.org helps Catholics get to Mass by helping them find churches and worship times worldwide. It makes it much easier to search for a Mass by presenting all the possibilities in a geographical area on one page. Maps are also included, with directions to the specific church. There are 116,000 churches in 201 countries/territories.

Phone Apps:



MassTimes and  **Catholic Mass Times** are two apps that provide access to updated information about churches and Mass schedules, and are free to download from the Google Play Store.

May St. Christopher guide your adventures.



Learning About the Advent Wreath



“Advent” comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “arrival” or “coming.” The Advent wreath has four outer candles and a center Christ candle. A new candle is lit each week, with the white Christ candle lit on Christmas to represent Jesus, the light of the world. Advent, like Christmas, is a season of expectation, hope, and celebration of the Messiah’s birth, and the promise of Christ’s subsequent ministry.

Symbolism of the Wreath

- **Circle Shape**—Represents God’s eternal love, mercy, and the unending cycle of seasons.
- **Evergreen Branches** – Do not lose their leaves in winter, represent the everlasting life found in Christ. Symbolizing hope and renewal, pointing to the promise of eternal life through Jesus.
- **Candles** – Each week’s candle reflects growing anticipation and preparation for Christ’s coming, and His light coming into the world.

The Four Sundays of Advent

- **Hope (Prophecy Candle, purple):** Remembers the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold Christ’s birth. Purple reminds us of the royalty of God’s kingship and reign, as we anticipate the Lord’s coming.
- **Peace (Bethlehem Candle, purple):** Honors Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem, reminding us that through the birth of Jesus, we can find reconciliation with God and experience inner peace.
- **Joy (Shepherd’s Candle, pink):** Pink reflects joy, the joy of the shepherds at the angels’ message of Jesus’ birth, signifying happiness and excitement of the world as it receives the long-awaited Messiah. It reminds the faithful at mid-Advent to rejoice (Gaudete Sunday).
- **Love (Angel Candle, purple):** Celebrates the love in the Christmas story. There’s Joseph’s love for Mary, Mary’s natural motherly love for Jesus, and God’s love for everyone by sending His Son for us.
- **The Christ Candle (white):** Lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, symbolizes Christ’s purity, and represents the light and hope Jesus brings into the world.

Displaying the Advent Wreath in our homes reminds us to gather around it (especially on Sundays) to take time to pray and focus ourselves on preparing our hearts, minds, and relationships for the coming of Christ. Families with young children often have each child take turns lighting the candles each week as they pray for the coming of the Christ child.

Adapted from articles by Joel Ryan, Hope Bolinger, and Justin Holcomb, Christianity.com

Bambinelli Sunday

On the Third Sunday of Advent, many churches celebrate a tradition called Bambinelli Sunday. The name comes from the Italian word *bambinelli*, meaning “little baby,” and refers to the small figures of the Baby Jesus that families place in their Nativity scenes. On this day, families bring their Bambinelli to Mass for a special blessing, symbolizing the joyful anticipation of Christ’s coming. The blessed figure is then wrapped in Christmas paper, and becomes the first gift unwrapped on Christmas Day, before being placed in the manger. This simple, beautiful custom helps remind us that Advent is a time of preparing our hearts to welcome the newborn Christ. Please bring your Baby Jesus figure to one of our Masses on Dec. 14, for a blessing!



Pilgrimage to France

Words can never capture or pictures embrace the full beauty of centuries of faith that we experienced on our pilgrimage to France. From the Basilica of Lourdes to the home of Therese of Lisieux; the grandeur of Notre Dame and the lights of the Eiffel Tower, all proclaim the living majesty of history both yesterday and today. We walked the ground where brave soldiers landed to liberate Europe from the tyranny of oppression and felt the solemn nobility of the cemetery and beaches of Normandy, bespeaking the dedication of those who gave their lives for our freedom. We are thankful to all who held us up in prayer during our sojourn and assure you that you were remembered in all the Masses we celebrated. ~ Fr. Joe Gatto



Photos by Fr. Joe Gatto

Saint's Corner *By Carol Mathner*

Saint Christopher | Patron Saint of Travelers | Feast day July 25



With a name meaning “Christ bearer”, St. Christopher is the patron saint of traveling, transportation, bachelors, storms, epilepsy, and gardeners. While the early church listed him as a martyr, there are no primary sources referring to St. Christopher, only stories and traditions that have been passed down. It is said he died under the Roman Emperor Decius in 251 AD.

The stories of St. Christopher say he was extremely tall, with some accounts calling him a giant of a man. He surely was a man of significant stature. But more importantly, he was a spiritual giant, a model and inspiration of the Christian faithful.

Early in his life he wanted to serve the greatest, most powerful king. He noticed that this king crossed himself at the mention of the devil, believing the devil was very powerful. Christopher started to serve the devil. One day, he saw the leader of a band of thieves avoid a Christian cross out of fear. St. Christopher learned there was someone more powerful than the devil. St. Christopher found a hermit who taught him about Christ, the King of Kings.

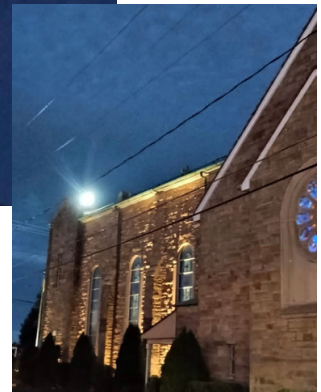
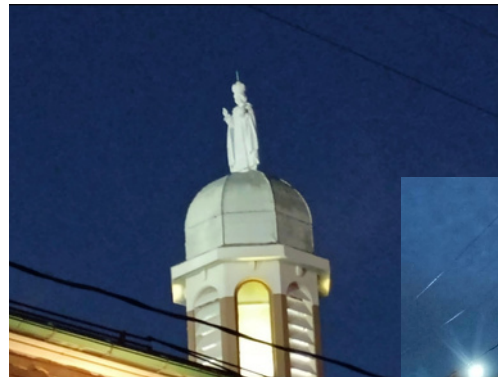
The hermit suggested St. Christopher spend his life in prayer and fasting. Being a large man, he found fasting difficult. The hermit told St. Christopher to find something else that would please Christ. So he devoted his life to carrying travelers across a river.

One day, a child approached St. Christopher and asked for help crossing the river. St. Christopher placed the child on his back, and as he crossed at midstream, the river rose, and the child's weight grew and became extremely heavy. With great exertion, St. Christopher was able to get the child to the other side. When he asked the child why he was so heavy, the child explained he was Christ, and by carrying him, he carried the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. The child then vanished. After this, St. Christopher traveled and evangelized thousands of people.

He arrived in Lycia in Asia Minor and witnessed Christians being martyred. Authorities tried to get him to offer sacrifice to the emperor, but he refused. He was finally arrested and beheaded.

A Light in the Darkness!

The lights at Infant of Prague are shining once again as a “beacon of hope” to travelers!



Meet Deacon Bob Warner

Submitted by: Patricia Herweg

A deacon in the Catholic Church is an ordained minister who serves both at the altar and in the wider community. Deacons are called to be living signs of Christ the Servant—and Deacon Bob Warner embraces that call with humility, energy, and a deep love for God's people.

Deacon Bob grew up in the Town of Tonawanda and attended St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute and Canisius University, where he earned both a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Business Administration. He met his wife, Eileen, during their senior year of high school, and together they have shared 39 years of marriage, raised four children, and now delight in the company of their eight grandchildren.

Ordained seven years ago, Deacon Bob completed a five-year formation program at Christ the King Seminary, which culminated in a Master's in Pastoral Ministry. His journey to the diaconate was shaped by years of service through the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the encouragement of Deacon John Leardon, who first suggested he consider a vocation to ordained ministry. After prayerful reflection, Bob answered the call to serve the Church in a deeper way. Deacon Bob currently serves as the Spiritual Advisor to the Buffalo Council of St. Vincent de Paul as his Ministry of Charity.

Professionally, Bob enjoyed a successful career in banking before transitioning into ministry-related work as the business manager at St. Amelia's Parish in the final years before his retirement. Outside of ministry, Deacon Bob is an avid cyclist. One of his more memorable adventures was biking the entire Erie Canal Trail from Buffalo to Albany with his son. He also has a passion for good homemade Italian food—especially when it's shared with family.



“Bringing the presence of God to others—especially during baptisms—is one of the most beautiful and humbling parts of this calling.”

Remember. Rediscover. Recommit.

Praying the Rosary for America.
Please join us!



**Join us at Infant of Prague
to pray the Rosary Every
Monday night at 6 PM.**

**921 Cleveland Drive.
All are welcome!**

As human efforts fail to solve America's key problems, we turn to God, through His Holy Mother, asking His urgent help.

Adoration

In our Family

Imagine! 24 Hour adoration is available to you!

Three Family Parishes offer places to adore:

- **Christ the King 7 AM - 7 PM with 24 hours to scheduled adorers**
- **Infant of Prague - First Friday after 8:30 AM Mass until 6 PM**
- **St Aloysius Gonzaga - Tue & Wed 1-7 PM, Thurs 3-8 PM**



Perpetual Adoration Chapel at Christ the King

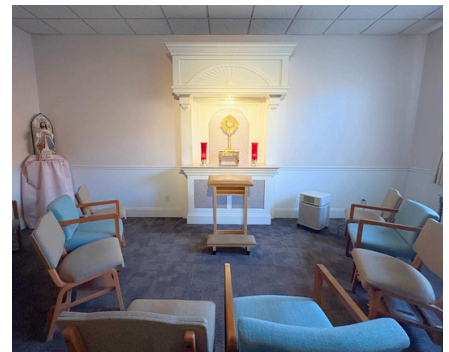
The Perpetual Adoration Chapel at Christ the King was established in June 2000, thanks to the dedication of parishioner Martha Johns. Faith-filled and humble, Martha worked tirelessly to bring 24/7 Adoration to the parish. Over time, the number of Adorers and visitors grew, and the Chapel moved to its larger, current site in the former convent.

Today, the Chapel welcomes everyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but is in need of more Adorers. It is open to all from 7AM to 7PM while the Church is unlocked. At 7 PM, the Church is locked, so only scheduled adorers can access the Chapel from 7PM–7AM. The Blessed Sacrament may not be left alone; so during unscheduled hours, the Monstrance sadly must be veiled.

Many find that praying in the Adoration Chapel helps them through difficult times. Kathy Gallson and Mary Voglmayr, Adorers who also help coordinate the Chapel, shared some personal insights and experiences. Mary's parents, who have passed away, were also Adorers. Together, they committed to praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet during Adoration. Her father, the 3 AM adorer, passed at exactly 3 PM, the Hour of Great Mercy. Mary and her siblings also found comfort in praying the Chaplet as their mother passed this February, knowing prayers had been offered on her behalf.

Kathy notes that prayer is often all we can offer. "Receiving a card that says someone has prayed for you in the Chapel is such a loving and thoughtful gift. You are not alone; you have been prayed for." Both women say they never run out of things to pray or thank God for. For Kathy, Adoration is a relief from life's busyness. Mary says, "This 'appointment' with Jesus commits me to spending this beautiful hour with Him - something that may not occur without the commitment." Adoration can be that same appointment for you—a time to spend with our Heavenly Father and grow in love for Him.

We hope you feel inspired to spend time in the Chapel in the presence of our Lord. Bulletin listings show hours of need, but you can choose any time that works for you. Currently, 170 adorers serve, with Saturdays and Sundays being hardest to fill. If a weekly commitment isn't possible, try visiting during open hours, or you can share an hour with someone. Come find the peace and quiet that'll draw you closer to our Lord. For more information or to become an Adorer, call Christ the King at 716-839-1430, or contact Kathy or Mary.



We need you. Please consider becoming an Adorer. You will receive so much more than you give!

Family Photos

See the fun our Family had this Fall! If you'd like to share photos from upcoming Family Events for possible inclusion in our Winter Newsletter, please email Melinda at Communications@saintbenedicts.com

Blessing of the Animals



Christ the King

10/4/2025

St. Benedict



Book Clubs!

"33 Days to Eucharistic Glory" at Christ the King



"The Rocking Chair Prophet"
at Ss. Peter & Paul



Infant of Prague
10/11/2025



St. Aloysius
Spaghetti
Dinner
10/19/2025



Giving Back

Submitted by: Patricia Herweg and Carol Mathner

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
— Matthew 25:40

The Bread of Life Catholic Community embraces the spirit of Christ by giving generously—especially during the Thanksgiving & Christmas seasons. Learn about opportunities to give back through our Family of Parishes.

Ss. Peter and Paul:

- Mitten Tree set up in Church, run by Social Action Committee. Please donate winter items: hats, gloves, scarves, etc. There will also be a list of needs in the bulletin.
- Sponsors needed to shop for needy families. Please see the bulletin for more information.
- Bins set up in the back of the church for donations of non-perishable food items, paper and cleaning products for the food pantry.
- SSPP faith formation and school students are also providing needs for the children at St. Adalbert's Response to Love.

Contact: Diane 716-316-7977



St. Aloysius:

- Sr. Maryann Kolb (St. Al's "retired" pastoral minister and parish outreach coordinator) organizes both Thanksgiving/Christmas.
- Giving Tree set up in Church, filled with stars that have the gender and age of children. Please grab a star to donate an item. Volunteers will then arrange the items in bags, with food and Tops gift cards, to give to the families.
- To support St. Al's Food Pantry, place non-perishable food at the front & side of the Church in bins or bags, or checks marked for Food Pantry can be given at St. Al's Rectory.
- Anyone can come to St. Al's rectory during business hours and receive 2 bags of groceries.

Infant of Prague:

- The St. Vincent de Paul Committee asks for donations for food baskets, including gift cards and turkeys to give out to the needy.
- Reverse Advent Calendar led by The Parish Life Committee: 4 weeks of different food items will be collected. Also accepts drop-in donations.
- A Giving Tree is set up with tags that have needs for children and adults from local agencies, for parishioners to fulfill.

Christ the King:

- Giving Tree set up in Church, organized by the Parish Office. Please take a tag to provide a gift for a resident of Terrace View Nursing Home.
- Also collecting donated winter coats and accessories for the St. Vincent de Paul Society.
- To support St Luke's Mission or the SVDP Dining Room/Saint Aloysius Food Pantry, please drop off non-perishable food donations in the Usher's Room off the Church Vestibule, or the cart next to the Usher's Room.

St. Benedict/St. Leo the Great:

- Combined Thanksgiving food drive, with St. Vincent de Paul Society, collects complete Thanksgiving Dinners for families in need. Please drop off donated food items before November 23.
- **St. Benedict** - Accepts gift cards for Giving Tree, will also have a Mittens/Gloves Drive.
- To support the Tiger's Den Food Pantry, donation bins are located at the doors of St. Ben's.
- **St. Leo the Great** - Giving Tree set up in Church, and accepting Baby Items for Gerard Place
- SVDP Ss. Leo & Benedict Food Pantry has donation bins set up in the St. Leo church lobby for non-perishable food & personal care items.

Do You Need Help?
BREAD OF LIFE
FAMILY RESOURCES



Food insecurity means not always knowing where your next meal will come from. It affects families, seniors, and individuals right here in our community – often through no fault of their own. If you or someone you know is struggling, help is available.

"The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season." – Psalm 145:14-15

Our food pantries are open during the following hours.
 Please call ahead before visiting.

St. Aloysius
 Mon-Fri
 10 AM-12 PM, & 1-4:15 PM
 at Rectory. 716.833.1715

St. Benedict-Tiger's Den
 1st, 3rd, 5th Thurs, 3 – 6:30 PM, and
 2nd & 4th Sats, 9 AM – 12:30 PM
 716.835.0407

Infant of Prague
 Thurs 9 AM-12 PM
 at Door 3 of Church
 716.833.5408 or
 716.634.3600

St. Leo the Great
 Mon 12-2 PM, Wed 9-11 AM,
 Sat 10-11:30 AM
 at St. Leo Event Center
 716.800.8020

Ss. Peter & Paul
 Sat 9-11 AM
 at Corner of School Building
 716.632.2559 Ext. 219

More Support:

- 211 Helpline – Dial 2-1-1 or visit 211.org to find nearby resources, meal programs, and other resources
- <https://www.feedmorewny.org/programs-services/find-food/pantry-locator>

Feed More
 WNY Website:



Directions: After you find all the words in the grid, place the remaining letters on the lines provided, working from left to right. The final solution will spell out a bible verse.

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| APPLE PIE | PILGRIMS |
| CELEBRATE | PLENTY |
| CORN | PLYMOUTH ROCK |
| CRANBERRY SAUCE | PRAISE |
| DINNER | PRAYER |
| FAMILY | PUMPKIN PIE |
| FOOTBALL | REMEMBER |
| GATHER | SQUASH |
| GRATEFULNESS | STUFFING |
| GRAVY | SWEET POTATOES |
| GREEN BEANS | TABLE |
| MASHED POTATOES | TRADITIONS |
| NATIVE AMERICANS | TURKEY |
| NOVEMBER | YAMS |

GIVING THANKS

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | S | W | E | E | T | P | O | T | A | T | O | E | S | G | I |
| S | E | E | V | E | N | T | H | G | A | N | K | S | C | T | D |
| Y | N | B | O | G | O | R | T | H | N | E | E | R | L | I | O |
| R | V | A | M | T | R | S | O | S | R | I | A | L | N | D | P |
| F | E | A | C | E | A | A | N | C | M | N | F | N | B | L | W |
| O | A | H | R | I | M | T | T | O | B | I | E | F | Y | A | H |
| O | S | M | T | G | R | E | O | E | I | R | R | M | U | A | T |
| T | O | N | I | A | P | E | R | P | F | T | O | G | P | T | E |
| B | C | I | A | L | G | R | M | S | D | U | I | P | L | I | S |
| A | G | E | E | E | Y | N | O | A | T | E | L | D | P | I | O |
| L | D | N | L | S | B | R | O | H | E | E | H | N | A | Y | P |
| L | T | W | A | E | E | N | R | V | P | V | I | S | E | R | H |
| Y | O | U | S | Y | B | O | E | I | E | K | I | K | A | S | T |
| E | C | L | A | O | C | R | E | E | P | M | R | T | M | M | S |
| E | V | R | E | K | E | N | A | M | R | U | B | A | A | D | U |
| R | P | R | A | I | S | E | U | T | T | G | Y | E | E | N | S |
| H | S | A | U | Q | S | P | F | O | E | R | E | V | R | E | R |

Answer: Psalm 118:1 NAB

Submitted by Mary Siedlikowski



St. Benedict's Class '43

History of St. Benedict Parish

The year was 1920. People had only started to recover from World War I and the Spanish Flu, while the Prohibition era and the Roaring 20s were just beginning. In October 1920, 33-year-old Fr. William Tobin received a letter from the Most Reverend William Turner, D.D., Bishop of Buffalo appointing him "rector of the new parish to be organized by him in the vicinity of Eggertsville and Snyder, New York, the boundaries of which will be determined at a later date." So large in fact did those

eventual boundaries prove to be that the original territory of the new parish included all or part of what later became Christ the King (1925), Blessed Sacrament (1929), St. Christopher (1936), St. Aloysius (1940) and St. Leo the Great (1953) parishes.

In Eggertsville and Snyder, an area then dominated by woods and farmlands, Fr. Tobin went about meeting people, ministering to the approximately 30 Catholic families, and looking for a fitting location for a new church and school. The first Holy Mass in the new parish was celebrated on November 21, 1920 in the old Eggertsville Fire Hall, which continued to be used for Sunday Mass and parish events until a temporary church was built. About fifty persons were present for that first Mass, and the collection raised a total of \$52.

Jacob Brunner, the owner of Brunner's Saloon at the corner of Main Street and Eggert Road, was forced to close his saloon and sell his property due to prohibition. He soon found a willing buyer in Fr. Tobin. A deal was struck for the sale of the parcel, complete with saloon, for the sum of \$25,000, payable over 5 years. The first floor of the former saloon was soon converted to a schoolhouse, and the school opened on September 8, 1921 with a total enrollment of 34 pupils and a teaching staff of two Franciscan Sisters. Fr. Tobin occupied the second floor until the permanent rectory was built in 1928.

Ground was broken for a church on April 24, 1921. Construction of the wooden structure took about three months, with the men of the parish and other local volunteers contributing almost all of the labor. The men came each evening after work in the factory, store, office or farm and worked until darkness set in. Fr. Tobin proudly referred to them as the "Twilight League." Completed for a cost of \$5,472.55, mostly for materials, the new church was dedicated on August 7, 1921 under the title of St. Benedict, the name chosen by the bishop to honor the then-reigning pope, Benedict XV. The church had a seating capacity of 300 and served the congregation for almost 10 years.

On June 18, 1927 ground was broken for the first permanent building erected on the property, a rectory built to accommodate three priests. Long before taking up residence in his new rectory, Fr. Tobin had begun making plans and raising money for a new, permanent church and school. Ground was broken for this building on May 1, 1930, and construction was completed in less than a year. The new structure consisted of a two-story building of sandstone similar to the rectory. The first floor had a capacity for ten classrooms, while on the second floor was the church, with a choir balcony and a seating capacity for more than 500 persons, an auditorium, a fully-equipped kitchen and a cafeteria.



Breaking of Ground, 1950

History of St. Benedict Parish Contined...

Administration of the school also changed in 1930, with the Sisters of St. Francis of Williamsville passing the reins to the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, with a motherhouse at Stella Niagara and a local residence at their nearby high school, Sacred Heart Academy.

By the time the parish celebrated its Silver Jubilee Year in 1945, the mortgage had been burned, and the school enrollment had exceeded 350. Plans were therefore soon formulated for a new, more beautiful church and a school addition. Ground was broken on June 3, 1950 and the cornerstone was laid on May 13, 1951. The new and present church was built on the corner of Main Street and Eggert Road, in the area where the former saloon had been located.

The parish flourished, as St. Benedict numbered about fifteen hundred families by the early 1950s. In 1957, construction began on the final permanent structure on parish property: a Convent for the approximately 17 Sisters then serving at St. Benedict School, as well as others working at nearby Rosary Hill College, now Daemen University. Over the years, however, the number of Sisters residing at the Convent and working at the school gradually decreased and eventually ended. Finally, in the early 2000s, the building was renovated and leased to Catholic Charities of Buffalo for approximately 15 years.

By the time Msgr. Tobin retired as Pastor of St. Benedict in 1973, his 53 years of service in that capacity earned him recognition as one of the longest-serving pastors in the history of the Diocese. Given the title of Pastor Emeritus, he continued to live in the rectory until illness forced him to move to a nursing home, where he died in 1976 at the age of 88.

Msgr. Tobin was succeeded as pastor in 1973 by Msgr. Bernard McCarthy. Successive pastors were Msgr. John Ryan, Fr. Gary Bagley, Fr. Joseph Porpiglia, Fr. Robert Mock, Msgr. Robert Zapfel and our current pastor, Fr. David Bellittiere. St. Benedict School continues to thrive, with a total enrollment exceeding 450 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Acknowledgements:

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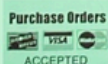
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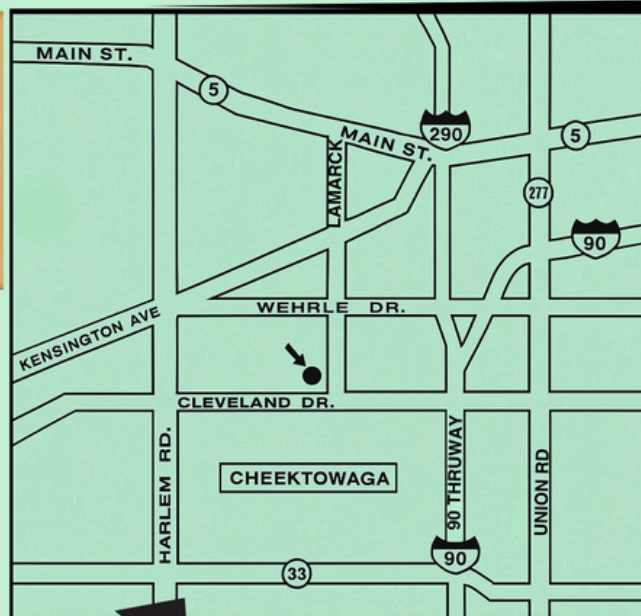
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