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ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

VANDERBURGH COUNTY EVANSVILLE, INDIANA ESTABLISHED IN 1841

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JANUARY 2026



SEEKING THE COURAGE TO STAND WITH THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFER

Fr. Gene Schroeder
PASTOR

Where is God in all this? That's a question that is often asked, especially in challenging times—a weather related disaster, a medical, financial or even family challenges. Whenever we feel the stress of life increase we are apt to wonder where God is.

No time could have been worse than being imprisoned in one of the concentration camps run by the Germans in World War II. Eli Wiesel, a German Jew who survived this terrible ordeal, recalls an experience of watching a child hanging from the gallows in the camp. One of the prisoners asked, "Where is God now?" And he heard another inmate exclaim, "God is hanging on the gallows with the child."

Where is God? God is found wherever there is suffering. God is with the young soldier whose leg has been blown off by a terrorist bomb. And God is with the parents of the children who have been killed because of some collateral damage from one of the bombs dropped by our planes.

Where is God in all the Suffering?

God is with the suffering parents whose daughter has been brutally raped and murdered. And God is also with the parents who are wondering how the son they raised could have done something like this.

God is with the tiny fetus that was just aborted and God is with the young girl, suffering and confused, who

thought that an abortion was the only way out.

God is where suffering is. God does not take sides. There are no good people and bad people in his eyes, no group that is

right and no group that is wrong. He is with the suffering people on all sides, in every situation.

For many people, God can seem to be pretty inconsistent. He doesn't fit very easily in our categories.

What God wants from us is to be his witnesses in the world. This means that we, too, are called to stand with all those who are suffering. It means setting aside our judgments and our tendency to put people into categories and be his compassionate presence to all who are suffering. To

stand with all who are suffering is to have the heart and mind of Jesus in all that we say and do.

Trying to have this kind of heart gets pretty hard when you think about all the things that are happening in the world. On going wars in Gaza and Israel, Ukraine, Yemen, South Sudan, to name just a few of the 32 active conflicts going on in the world today. Add to that stories of our friends in Haiti who are living in a country that seems to be falling apart. Those people and so many others are facing the effects of violence, famine and starvation every day.

But it doesn't stop there. Look around at friends and neighbors, and you see lots of people going through difficult

times—the loss of a loved one, a health challenge that came out of nowhere, dealing with the end of a relationship that at one time was the glue that held life together for you. Or, maybe it is just the daily financial challenges of keeping the life and limb together.

In the face of all this, it is easy to understand how hard it can be to stand with others in their suffering.. Sometimes just putting one foot in front of the other is hard enough, let alone trying to muster the courage to be present to all that is happening with an open heart.

Flight seems a pretty understandable response. I just want to shut the world off. I don't want to hear anymore. Sometimes, "taking a break" from all that is happening can be very healthy and necessary. Saint Pope John XXIII, in response to a question asking how he coped with everything, said, "every night I tell God, well I did all that I could today, so now I'm going to go to bed and let you handle everything."

That is pretty healthy. It's remembering the last words of the Our Father, "for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours." God is God and we are not God. And we do not have to make everything right.

Sometimes we forget this and then we find ourselves "fighting" against all that we see. When we are in this place, it is easy for us to be seduced by people who give us simple answers to the complicated situations we find in the world. "It is these people who are the bad ones. They are the ones who are causing all the problems. If people would just do this or that, everything would be better."

Sometimes it is just easier to find someone or something to be angry at. Feelings like grief, for example, are often too hard to be present to because they seem overwhelming. It's just much easier to be angry at someone or something than it is to just feel the grief.

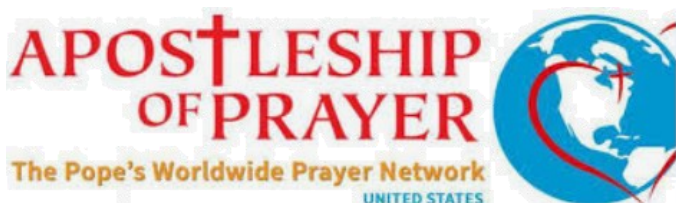
It takes courage to have a heart that can be present to all the suffering around us. But when we do, we can, like Jesus, transform the suffering. No doubt about it. And when we are willing to do that, we become a great blessing to others and to our world.

**BE KIND.....FOR
EVERYONE IS
FIGHTING A
HARD BATTLE**



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In 1844, a Jesuit priest in Vals-près-le-Puy, France was confronted with a group of restless seminarians who were burning with missionary zeal and impatient with their studies. The priest, Francis Xavier Gautrelet, S.J., told the Jesuits in formation they could evangelize the world right where they were. "Don't wait to be an apostle!" he said. "Be an apostle of prayer! Turn everything into a prayer for the work of the missions, for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of souls."

So began the Apostleship of Prayer, a long-time mission of the Jesuits now known as the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. It is the world's largest organized prayer group and advances a threefold mission: to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart, prayer for the pope's intentions and spiritual communion with Christ in the daily offering of one's life for the salvation of the world. In 1890, Pope Leo XIII began the tradition of entrusting his particular prayer intentions to the organization. In 2018, Pope Francis elevated the Apostleship of Prayer from being solely a Jesuit mission to a pontifical work and approved its new name.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I offer you my prayers, works,
joys, and sufferings of this day
for all the intentions
of your Sacred Heart
in union with the Holy Sacrifice of
the Mass throughout the world,
for the salvation of souls, the
reparation of sins, the reunion
of all Christians, and in particular
for the intentions of the Holy Father
this month. Amen.

For 130 years, the Apostleship has offered spiritual companionship to Catholics the world over. It mailed out devotional leaflets and prayer cards to

millions of people throughout the world.

In times past, many Catholic homes had this "Morning Offering" prayer attached to the mirror of their bathroom cabinet so that they could pray this prayer as they brushed their teeth and got ready for the day.

That work continues to this day. Each month this Apostleship of Prayer promotes the pope's monthly prayer inten-

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR PARISH FISH FRYS



**FEBRUARY 27
MARCH 13**

It's time to make plans for "the best fish fry in the Evansville area,"—Friday February 27 and Friday, March 13. We will be serving our fish dinners **DRIVE THRU ONLY** from 5-7 PM. We'll be scheduling some work days to help prepare all the food for the fish fry on the Wednesday and Thursday before each fish fry. Check the bulletin and future newsletters for details.

Teens Encounter Christ

2026

FEBRUARY 14-16 JULY 18-20

St. Mary's Ireland, 2829 N 500 W, Jasper, IN

For Ages 17 (or High School Junior) to Adult

TEC is a 3-day retreat based on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. Participants have an opportunity to meet youth and young adults from all over the diocese as they encounter Christ through a wide variety of activities with a marvelous blend of social and spiritual interactions. Led primarily by fellow youth and young adults, TEC offers participants an experience that is both relevant and engaging. For an inspiring opportunity to grow in your relationship with Christ and build lasting Christian friendship, register today at www.switec.org. For more questions, contact Jessica Reckelhoff (812-598-1151 or email her at jreckelhoff@evdio.org).



tion, which includes a prayer video by the pope. You can access this video at www.thepopevideo.org. In August, in a world torn by war in Ukraine, Gaza and numerous other places, the pope's prayer intention was for "mutual co-existence: that societies avoid internal conflicts due to ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons."

In September, the pope's prayer intention was "for our relationship with all creation." In the video, Pope Leo eloquently notes that "...the world is infinitely more than a problem to be solved. It is a mystery to be contemplated with gratitude and hope."

In October the pope's prayer was "for collaboration between different spiritual traditions." In November the pope's prayer intention was for those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life. His intention for December was that those Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

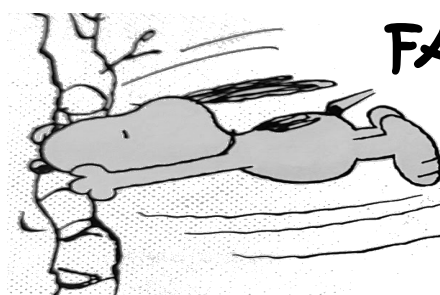
Pope Leo's prayer intention for January is that all of us pray with the word of God, that this prayer will provide nourishment, hope for all believers and that this effort help build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

We believe that prayer is meaningful and effective; our continued prayers for mutual coexistence matter. Praying with the pope makes a difference in the world and in our hearts. We ask Jesus to make our hearts more like his, transforming the world one heart at a time. When our hearts are connected to the heart of Christ, we treat others differently.



POPE'S WORLDWIDE PRAYER NETWORK

www.popesprayerusa.net



**FAITH IS....
hanging on
TIGHT
when things
get WINDY**

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.



Last summer at the National Catholic Youth Conference, Pope Leo spoke to those attending and shared some of his thoughts on the uses of technology and artificial intelligence in the world today. Here are some of his remarks.

Technology does many good things. It lets us stay connected with people who are far away, and there are amazing tools for prayer, for reading the Bible, for learning more about what we believe, and it allows us to share the Gospel with people we may never meet in person.

But even with all that, technology can never replace real, in-person relationships; simple things like a hug, a handshake, a smile—all those things are essential to being human and it is important to have those things in a real way, not through a screen. Follow the example of St. Carlo Acutis, who used technology to spread devotion to the Eucharistic but limited his time online and made sure he went to Mass, spent time in Eucharistic adoration and served the poor. Be intentional with your screen time. Make sure technology serves your life and not the other way around.



Ethical guidelines and controls with regard to the use of AI are important. Safety is not only about rules; it is about education, and it is about personal responsibility. Filters and guidelines can help you, but they cannot make choices for you; only you can do that. Using AI responsibly means using it in ways that help you grow, never in ways that distract you from your dignity or your call to holiness. AI can process information quickly, but it cannot replace human intelligence—and don't ask it to do your homework for you.

AI will not judge between what is truly right and wrong. And it won't stand in wonder, in authentic wonder, before the beauty, the beauty of God's creation. So be prudent. Be wise. Be careful that your use of AI does not limit your true human growth. Use it in such a way that if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think how to create, how to act on your own, how to form authentic friendships. AI can never replace the unique gift that you are to the world.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ICE SKATING PARTY



Students in grades 6-8 are invited to a youth Ice Skating Night at Swonders Ice Arena on **Saturday, January 17th from 4-6 pm**. \$10.00 per person. Call/text Jessica Reckelhoff (812-598-1151) or email jreckelhoff@evdio.org for details.

IT'S LOTTERY TIME--HAVE YOU BOUGHT YOUR ST. JOE LOTTERY TICKET? FIRST DRAWING IN JANUARY

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES FRIDAY MORNINGS BEGINNING JANUARY 9



Acts of the Apostles The Friday Morning Women's Bible Study will be meeting again!! We will be reading through the Acts of the Apostles starting Friday, January 9th at 8:30 am. This study will go through 8 sessions, skipping February 13, and ending on March 6th. The cost is \$5 to attend. Contact Jessica Reckelhoff (812-598-1151) or email jreckelhoff@evdio.org to reserve your booklet.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS January 18, 2025--February 9, 2025

DATE	EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS	READERS
Saturday January 17, 2026 5 PM	Mary Loehrlein Carolyn Hutchinson Donald & Brandon Werner	Sis Jarboe
Sunday January 18, 2026 8 AM	Brian and Ann Craney Marcia Frey Terry Drone	Dave Schmitt
Sunday January 18, 2026 10:30 AM	Debra Baumgart Sally Kempf Cecelia Koch Kitty Deig	Jane Scheller
Saturday January 24 2026 5 PM	Mary Kay Fehrenbacher Donna Niemeier Eric and Karen McDonald	Toni Askins
Sunday January 25, 2026 8 AM	Rodney and Paula Baehl Lisa Cook Darlene Appler	Josh Baehl
Sunday January 25, 2026 10:30 AM	Paul Hillenbrand Jena Wessel Rachael Schnaus Becky Doshier	Chad Martin
Saturday January 31, 2026 5 PM	Butch and Linda Feulner Diane Woods Eric Reffett	Susie Schapker
Sunday February 1, 2026 8 AM	Kylie & Stephanie Frey Tom and Dolores Folz	Marcia Frey
Sunday February 1, 2026 10:30 AM	Jane Scheller Steve Jung Al Debes Rachel Schnaus	Shane Wessel
Saturday February 7, 2026 5:00 PM	Peter and Jodi Fehrenbacher Donald & Brandon Werner	Sis Jarboe
Sunday February 8, 2026 8:00 AM	Imogene Baehl Michael Elpers Randy and Kathy Fehrenbacher	Jalane Weber
Sunday February 8, 2026 10:30 AM	Danielle Weledge Doris Taylor Diane Bassemier, Debra Baumgart	Steve Jung
Saturday February 14, 2026 5:00 PM	Mary Loehrlein Carolyn Hutchinson Donald & Brandon Werner	Jim Hermann
Sunday February 15, 2026 8:00 AM	Brian and Ann Craney Marcia Frey Terry Drone	Tom Blythe
Sunday February 15, 2026 10:30 AM	Debra Baumgart Sally Kempf Cecelia Koch Kitty Deig	Chad Martin

Up Close and Personal

Introducing our High School Seniors



Mallory Luigs

When she came into the world eighteen years ago, she weighed a mere one pound and eleven ounces. But since then, Mallory Luigs has become an active and energetic young woman. She is the daughter of Kevin and Michelle (Maurer) Luigs and the younger sister of Easton Luigs. She is a senior at North Posey High School.

It's been a busy four years of high school. She has put a lot of time and effort into her academic classes and was recognized for her efforts by being inducted into the National Honor Society. She has also been a member of the Spanish Club and served on the Student Council. As a part of this, she has spent a number of volunteer hours working at the Food Bank and working at St. Vincent's Hospital.

Each day, Mallory attends the Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center for half the school day. She is a member of HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America). She attended the State Leadership Conference during her freshman year and the Fall Leadership Conference during her junior year. Through these various efforts, she has learned a number of different aspects of the health care profession. This coming February, Mallory will be doing an internship through HOSA where she will be observing different working aspects of hospital work.

Mallory has also been a member of the Spanish Club and FAC (Fellowship of Christian Athletes). She meets with other athletes from North Posey where they reflect upon different passages from the bible and how they impact their lives as student-athletes.

Mallory has also been involved with sports during her grade school and high school years. She has been a member of the volleyball team at North Posey throughout her high school years. Here she played as the "libero," a defensive specialist for the team. She also plays on a volleyball travel team.

Mallory has also played basketball since the fourth grade and is currently on the girls varsity team at North Posey. Last year they won the sectional tourney and with a number of returned players, they are hoping for another good season. "You have to be willing to put the time and effort into training and practice. It's important to develop a good attitude both on and off the court. You spend a lot of time with teammates at practices and games so it's pretty natural that you would form a lot of great friendships with them." When asked about people who have had a big influence on her, it is no surprise that several of her coaches made the list. Having good friends was also important.

Next year, Mallory plans on attending college at USI or perhaps UE to pursue a degree in the health care field. As to the future, having a job, getting married and raising a family are sure to be part of the mix. Living locally around family and living in the country are also important.

Family is a big key for Mallory. Gathering with Luigs family, especially for the holidays, is always important. It's a time to gather with cousins and to share some great food. Gathering with her mom's family is important as well. Being a member of the Luigs, Maurer and Adler families means there are always lots of people around. She has enjoyed fam-

ily gatherings for butchering and most recently, traveled to Notre Dame with many of them for the football game against Navy.

Mallory reflected that she has learned the value of hard work and dedication from both her mom and dad. Coming with them to Mass each Sunday has also been a big anchor in her life. She can count on the support of her parents and their guidance in making important life decisions. "Dad is such a good model of working hard. Mom is a great person to talk to."

Mallory has also enjoyed going deer hunting with her dad. She is into hunting with a bow and arrow. She also enjoys drawing and painting. And there is also time to learn about cooking especially from her Grandma Maurer. "We have some great homemade meals with her."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "One of the things I have learned about life is that it is not always going to be perfect or go the way you want it to go. But things happen for a reason. Sometimes things that happen may be difficult to understand, especially when you don't feel very much in control of things, You have to learn how to stay focused and live in the present moment. And it is always important to count the blessings in life."

Brayden Jones

Family is a big part of Brayden Jones' life. Brayden is senior at Mater Dei and the son of Eric and Lori (Bittner) Jones and the older brother to Briley who is a freshman at Mater Dei. "We try to have dinner each Sunday evening. They have been great and I am trying to appreciate them because with me going off to college next year, we won't be able to do this anymore." The tradition of family meals also can be found in gathering with at his Great Grandmother Bittner's house each Sunday for noon meal. "She always has a lot of good food to eat." There has also been some family trips to Cincinnati to support the Bengals football team.



Brayden has put a lot of effort into his high school classes taking a number of AP classes. His efforts have been recognized with his induction into the National Honor Society. One of the most significant classes that he has taken was an anatomy class with Mrs. Wannemuehler. "That class changed me. It ignited my interest in science and biology. That has made me interested in pursuing a career in medicine." He's been able to do a health internship at St. Vincent's where, among many other things, he learned about radiology in the operating room and in the intensive care units. He also participated in a Health Science Internship at Deaconess Hospital. "It was a pretty intense two week program beginning at 5 am. We had the chance to attend some medical lectures and were able to shadow some of the hospital personnel in the various jobs, especially in the operating room."

Next year Brayden plans to pursue a degree in medicine leading to a career as an anesthesiologist. He's been accepted at USI but is also looking at other universities—IU, Ohio State and Notre Dame.

High school has also been a chance for Brayden to pursue his athletic interests and his leadership skills. He's been a member of the Mater Dei Soccer team throughout his four years of high school. He has played soccer since third grade and also been a member of several soccer travel teams. He has been a member

of the boys varsity soccer team at Mater Dei playing the center defensive and middle field positions. Their year ended with a tough loss against their rival, Heritage Hills, in the sectional championship game. "You learn a lot from playing, especially how to be a team and support one another. Guys on the team become some of your best friends since you spend so much time together practicing, playing games and sharing a team meal before the game."

Brayden has also developed a lot of leadership skills through his involvement with student government and other organizations during his four years of high school. He served as president of his freshman class and has served as a homeroom representative the past three years. He also serves as the clerk affiliate for Mater Dei this year in which his main job is taking care of student parking permits. Through his involvement in student government he had the opportunity to attend several state wide conferences with student government leaders from other high schools throughout the state. "It's been a great way to develop organizational skills, learning how to take the initiative in different issues and then following through with what you planned."

Bryaden has also used these skills as Vice-President of the National Honor Society. "A lot of our work is trying to help other students prepare for final exams." Brayden is also a member of the Teen Advisory Council, working with students from other schools in the Evansville area. With them he has helped plan Teen Power Programs, helping to create an awareness of drug and alcohol related issues. He has worked with other members to plan the Big Man on Campus event and Trivia Night, which are held each semester. This work involves planning the event and raising the money for the event.

Brayden attended grade school here at St. Joe and has some great memories of this time. "I have a lot of good friends from grade school days. The school lunches were great and the cafeteria ladies were amazing. We had some great teachers as well. Math class was one I will especially remember. Mrs. Daugherty was a tough teacher who really pushed you hard. But her efforts really paid off for me. Being part of the school and being part of the parish gave me a sense of the what community is like. Helping out at the fish fries and the summer social were good reminders to me of how people support each other here."

Brayden counts his parents as being his biggest supporters. "My dad has taught me about the importance of a good work

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SCHOOL
HAS TO
OFFER
TO YOU
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ethic. We get the chance to talk about a lot of things and he has reminded me about how important it is to put all your effort into the things you are doing. My mom has helped me appreciate the importance of family connections." Brayden also appreciates the relationship he has with his younger sister. "I'm glad we had one year of high school together, because it gave me the opportunity to help ease her path into high school. I'll be going off to college next year and I'm going to miss being around her."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "I think it is important to get involved in things during high school. I've done a lot of different things these past four years and they have all benefitted me. Sometimes it may be hard to make the first step of getting involved, but I don't think you will ever regret doing it. I think you have to be willing to push yourself out of your comfort zone and try things that are new and different for you. I think it is important to appreciate the time you have with your friends. I say that from the perspective of probably moving away for college. Learning how to live in the present and appreciate what is there is pretty important."

Piper Fehrenbacher

Words like determination and compassion would be some of the ways you would describe Piper Fehrenbacher, a senior at Mater Dei. She is the daughter of Jodi (Metzger) and Peter Fehrenbacher and sister of Finley and Lilly Fehrenbacher. She has had some very active years at Mater Dei. She is very conscientious about her studies reflected in the fact that she was chosen for membership in the National Honor Society and was selected as one of the representatives to the Tomorrow's Workforce Luncheon sponsored each year by Memorial and Mater Dei High School. They recognize



ENROLLMENT AT MATER DEI

Mater Dei High School is now accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. Discover a faith-filled community here students grow in knowledge, service, and spirit. Apply today at materdeiwildcats.com or scan the code. For questions or to schedule a visit, contact Jill Seiller at 812-426-2268 or jseiler@evdio.org.



Applications for tuition assistance are now available for parents wishing to apply for Mater Dei High School tuition assistance for the 2025-2026 school year. Hard copies of applications are available at Mater Dei. To download and complete the application online go to www.materdeiwildcats.com. Select "Enrollment", then "Tuition and Financial Assistance". The priority deadline for applying this year is March 1, 2025. Questions? Please contact Jill Seiler at Mater Dei (812-426-2268, ext. 322) or email jseiler@evdio.org.



(Continued on page 6)




JOIN US ON WEDNESDAYS FROM 5:30 - 6:45 PM BEGINNING JAN. 21

That Man Is You! combines scripture, solid secular research, and a little fun to address the pressures and temptations facing men in our modern culture. It seeks to form authentic leaders who will be capable of transforming homes and society. For questions please contact Rodney (912-598-9066) or Jessica (812-598-1151)

At each session, we will pray, read

JOIN US FOR "THE CHOSEN" A BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITY WEDNESDAYS 6:45 - 8 pm BEGINNING JANUARY 21st



scripture, and view an episode. There is no cost to attend. We will meet in the school meeting room on Wednesday evening from 6:45 - 8 pm for eight weeks beginning January 21. Please bring a bible with you. Contact Jessica Reckelhoff (812-598-1151) or jreckelhoff@evdio.org to register for this free study.

(Continued from page 5)

students for their academic achievements and their involvements in community service.

Throughout her years in school, Piper feels blessed by some great teachers both at Mater Dei and at St. Joe where she graduated from grade school. "I took a class in human anatomy with Mrs. Wannemuehler which was very demanding but really got me interested in the field of medicine. And I have enjoyed my classes with Mrs. Whicker who teaches AP Literature. Aside from teaching, she is really a good person to talk with about all kinds of things. I will always appreciate Mrs. Daugherty for teaching us math in grade school. Without that background I would never have made it through my AP calculus class. And I really enjoyed my time with Mrs. Will in grade school. She made learning fun and exciting."

Aside from her academic pursuits, Piper has been active in sports as well. She's been on the Mater Dei volleyball team where she was the libero, a defensive specialist. They made it all the way to the sectional finals before falling to their rivals from Tecumseh High School. Piper was also a member of the softball team in her freshman year. She has also been a member of the girls tennis team and helped lead them to the sectional title last year. With a number of returning players, the prospects look good for this year's squad. "Being involved in sports gives you the opportunity to develop some great friendships."

Piper has also been involved in student government at Mater Dei where she serves as the clerk of MaterDeville. She is also a member of the Pep Club. One of their big functions is to pick a special theme and then use it to decorate the senior hallway in school. This year's theme was "Dr. Seuss." As part of the Pep Club she also helps to plan the different pep rallies throughout the year.

Piper has some great memories of her time at St. Joe Grade School. "The lunches were great. Can't say enough about all the lunch ladies did. We were a pretty close class and pretty competitive. There were only six girls in our class

Saluting our Recent Graduates

Ella Freeman graduated from Medical School at Butler University
Jill Happe graduated from UE with a Physician's Assistant Degree
Lyla Laugel graduated from IU with a degree in Informatics
Zack Schneider graduated from Ivy Tech with a degree in HVAC

so we got pretty tight with each other." Being part of St. Joe Parish also has some great memories. "I've been going here since I was born. I really liked helping out at the fish fries and our big chicken dinner in the summer. I remember the Children's Mass at Christmas when we got to helped bring all the statues for the Christmas Crib. And I enjoy the music at Mass that Ms. Gilles does."

Next year Piper is planning to pursue a career in the medical field. She has applied to several different colleges but exactly where she will be going is still undecided. She's been able to do a medical internship at St. Vincent's and attend a weeklong Health Camp also at St Vincent's. "I got to see a lot of different aspects of the hospital and also got to the chance to observe a surgery."

WORDS OF WISDOM: "I have been blessed with great parents and a great extended family. My mom is a great example of a strong and determined person. She can talk to anyone. She's been a big support and also helped me to understand the importance of having a direction and focus in life. I've enjoyed going deer hunting with my dad. He's been a great example of what a good work ethic is all about. And he has taught me the importance of giving back to the community. They have both been a good example of being a Christian, not just in coming to church for Mass, but learning how to be kind and compassionate."

They have both been a big support to me as I try to find out what I want to do in life. Trying to figure this out has been one of the biggest challenges that I have faced. I think the other big challenge I have had is spending time with my mom's mom as she was dealing with ALS. She was such a strong and independent person and it was hard to see her so helpless and not able to do anything for herself. That was so different from all the times we spent with her growing up. Seeing all of that can make you feel pretty helpless. But at the same time, it helped me appreciate the gift of people. You don't want to take friendships for granted."



INTERESTED IN CURSILLO? COMPLETED YOUR CURSILLO? WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Cursillo is a Catholic movement that aims to help people discover their personal relationship with Christ and live out their faith joyfully and authentically.

The method of the movement is to form small groups of Christians who meet in a friendship group to share their lives as Christians. A four-day encounter is a part of the movement that prepares the Christian to live out his or her faith. They are held in the spring and fall each year and last from Thursday evening through Sunday evening.

If you are interested in making a Cursillo, have questions, or are looking for a sponsor, please contact Cale Schnaus at 812-774-0732 or Rachael Schnaus at 812-499-8248.

If you have completed your Cursillo, we would love to know if you are grouping. If so, where and when are you grouping and if you are willing to accept any new Cursillistas? If you are not grouping, but would like to find a group to join, we will help get you into a group. Thank you for your help in keeping the Cursillo movement alive!



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO BE A CHURCH?

*Sermon of Pope Leo at the Mass for the Jubilee of the Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies
October 26, 2025*

As we celebrate the Jubilee of the Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies, we are invited to contemplate and rediscover the mystery of the Church. She is not merely a religious institution, nor is she simply identified with hierarchies and structures. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that the Church is the visible sign of the union between God and humanity, where God intends to bring us all together into one family of brothers and sisters and make us his people: a people made up of beloved children, all united in the one embrace of his love.

Contemplating the mystery of ecclesial communion, generated and preserved by the Holy Spirit, we can also understand the meaning of synodal teams and participatory bodies. They express what occurs within the Church, where relationships do not respond to the logic of power but to that of love. The former—to recall a constant warning from Pope Francis—is a “worldly” logic. Conversely, in the Christian community, primacy belongs to the spiritual life, which reveals to us that we are all children of God, brothers and sisters, called to serve one another.

The supreme rule in the Church is love. No one is called to dominate; all are called to serve. No one should impose his or her own ideas; we must all listen to one another. No one is excluded; we are all called to participate. No one possesses the whole truth; we must all humbly seek it and seek it together.

The very word “together” expresses the call to communion in the Church. Pope Francis reminded us of this in his final

**The supreme rule
in the Church is love.
We are called to serve.
No one is excluded.**

Message for Lent:
“...to journey together. The Church is called to walk together, to be synodal. Christians are called to walk at the side of others, and never as lone travelers. The Holy Spirit impels us not to remain self-absorbed, but to leave ourselves behind and keep walking towards God and our brothers and sisters. Journeying together means consolidating the unity grounded in our common dignity as children of God”

Walking together: this is apparently what the two characters neglect to do in the parable we have just heard in the Gospel. Both the Pharisee and the tax collector go up to the Temple to pray. We could say that they “go up together” or, at least, they find themselves together in the sacred place. Yet they are divided; and there is no communication between them. Both take the same path, but they do not walk together. Both are in the Temple; but one takes the first place, and the other remains behind. Both pray to the Father, but without being brothers and without having anything in common.

This division depends above all on the Pharisee’s atti-

tude. His prayer, though seemingly addressed to God, is only a mirror in which he looks at, justifies and praises himself. As Saint Augustine writes, he “went up to pray: he had no mind to pray to God, but to laud himself” (*Discourse 115, 2*). Feeling superior, he judges the other with contempt and looks down on him. The Pharisee is obsessed with his own ego and, in this way, ends up focused on himself without having a relationship with either God or others.

Brothers and sisters, this can also happen in the Christian community. It happens when the ego prevails over the collective, causing an individualism that prevents authentic and fraternal relationships. It also occurs when the claim to be better than others, as the Pharisee does with the tax collector, creates division and turns the community into a judgmental and exclusionary place; and when one leverages one’s role to exert power, rather than to serve.

We should, however, focus our attention on the tax collector. With the same humility that he showed, we too must recognize within the Church that we are all in need of God and of one another, which leads us to practice reciprocal love, listen to each other and enjoy walking together. It is based on the knowledge that Christ belongs to those who are humble, not to those who elevate themselves above the flock.

The synodal teams and participatory bodies are an image of this Church that lives in communion. Please trust me when I tell you that by listening to the Spirit in dialogue, fraternity and parrhesia, you will help us to understand that, prior to any differences, we are called in the Church to walk together in the pursuit of God. By clothing ourselves with the sentiments of Christ, we expand the ecclesial space so that it becomes collegial and welcoming.

This will enable us to live with confidence and a new spirit amid the tensions that run through the life of the Church: between unity and diversity, tradition and novelty, authority and participation. We must allow the Spirit to transform them, so that they do not become ideological contrapositions and harmful polarizations. It is not a question of resolving them by reducing one to the other, but of allowing them to be purified by the Spirit, so that they may be harmonized and oriented toward a common discernment. As synodal teams and members of participatory bodies, you know that ecclesial discernment requires “interior freedom, humility, prayer, mutual trust, an openness to the new and a surrender to the will of God. It is never just a setting out of one’s own personal or group point of view or a summing up of differing individual opinions” Being a synodal Church means recognizing that truth is not possessed, but sought together, allowing ourselves to be guided by a restless heart in love with Love.

Dear friends, we must dream of and build a more humble

(Continued on page 12)



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A TRADITION OF THE HEART--CATHOLIC DEVOTIONS

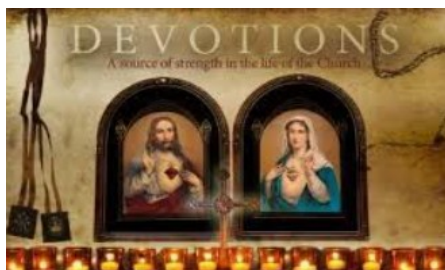
Fr. Ron Rohlheiser, OMI



Growing up in a Roman Catholic home, devotions were always a vital part of our religious diet. While our family saw the Eucharist as more important than devotions, we nourished our spiritual lives a lot on devotions, as did many Roman Catholics back then.

Among other things, we prayed the rosary every day, prayed the Angelus daily, prayed special litanies (St. Joseph in March, Mary in May and October, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus in June), prayed the Stations of the Cross each Friday in Lent, were anxious to attend Eucharist on First Fridays and First Saturdays to obtain special promises from God, and said special prayers to obtain indulgences.

As well, there were pilgrimages to Marian shrines for those who could afford them and most everyone wore medals from Lourdes or Fatima and had a special devotion to those shrines (with a special devotion in my own family and parish to *Our Lady of the Cape*, at Cap De Madeleine, Quebec). Devotions were a big part of our spiritual lives.



What's to be said about devotions from a theological view and from the view of a culture that mostly distrusts them? We might begin with the reaction of Martin Luther and the great Protestant

reformers. They were fearful of two things in devotions. First, at that time, some devotions were too unbridled and were simply bad theology (famously, selling indulgences). Second, they saw devotions, not as necessarily bad in themselves, but as often displacing Jesus and God's Word as our center and main focus. And so, they distanced themselves from basically all Roman Catholic devotions, the unbridled as well as the healthy.

For the most part that Protestant and Evangelical distrust of Roman Catholic devotions has come down right to our own day. While that distrust is breaking down today in some non-Roman churches today, it is still the prevalent attitude inside most Protestant and Evangelical circles. In brief, they distrust most devotions because they are seen not just as deflecting our focus from the centrality of Jesus and the Word, but also as potentially unhealthy contaminants, as junk food in our spiritual diet.

What's to be said about that? It's a fair and needed warning to Roman Catholics (and others) who nourish their spiritual lives with devotions. Bottom line, devotions can easily ground themselves on shaky theology and can be a junk food contaminating our spiritual diet: where devotions replace scripture, Mary replaces Jesus as center, and certain ritual practices make God seem like a puppet on a string.

Consider story that tells of an old man, intent on receiving a special favor, who prayed fervently every day at a shrine of Mary. Impressed by such devotion, Jesus himself, the story con-

tinues, decided to reward such

faith by appearing in person to assure the man of the blessings that would come to him. Seeing the Christ Child standing above the altar where he was accustomed to seeing the statue of Mary, the old man, intent on his prayers and irritated by the interruption, barked, "Go away, little boy. I wanna talk to your mama."

However, all this being admitted, as Goethe once said, *the dangers of life are many and safety is one of those dangers*. Yes, devotions can be a danger, but they can also be a rich healthy supplement in our essential diet of Word and Eucharist.

Here's how Eric Mascall (the renowned Anglican theologian at Oxford with C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Dorothy Sayers, and Austin Farrar) spells out both the danger of devotions and the danger of not having devotions as part of your spiritual life: *The protestant reformers (Luther, Calvin, Zwingli) were so afraid of contamination by Roman Catholic devotions, that they put us on a diet of antiseptics.*

When you're on a diet of antiseptics, you won't suffer from food poisoning, but you can suffer from malnutrition.

That's an equal challenge to both those who practice devotions and those who fear them. The theology undergirding certain devotions admittedly can be sloppy (for example, Mary is not a co-redeemer with Jesus). However, inside many devotions (to Mary, to the saints, to Eucharist adoration, to the Sacred Heart) there can be a rich nutrition which helps nourish the center, namely, God's Word and the Eucharist.

The late Wendy Wright in her book *Sacred Heart: Gateway to God* makes a wonderful apologia for Catholic devotional practices, particularly devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For her, Catholic devotional practices are *a tradition of the heart*. While Jesus remains central and his resurrection remains the real anchor for our faith, devotions can give us something beyond just this raw essential.

Using devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as an example, she writes: "In this devotion, we, and Jesus and the saints, exist in some essential way outside the chronology of historical time. The tradition of the heart makes this vividly, even grotesquely, clear. The divine-human correspondence is intimate. It is discovered in the flesh. Our fleshy hearts are fitted for all that is beyond flesh by conforming to the heart of Jesus. That divine-human heart is the passageway between earth and heaven. That heart is the tactile tracings of divine love on the created order. That heart is the widest, wildest longing of humankind's own love." *The dangers of life are many and safety is one of those dangers.*

Devotions can deflect us from what's more central and can take their root in some questionable theology, but they can also, in Wendy Wright's words, be a blessed passageway for the heart between heaven and earth.



MISSION OUTREACH



Be an island of mercy in
a sea of indifference.

Pope Leo

Not all of us can do great things, but
we can do small things with great love.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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Your gift helps fellow Catholics in Latin America and the Caribbean who are rich in spirit but lacking in material resources to participate more fully in the life of the Church.

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richer than 75% of this world.*

*If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare
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top 8% of the world's wealthy.*

*If you woke up this morning with more health than
illness ... you are more blessed than the million
who will not survive this week.*

*If you have never experienced the danger of battle,
the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture,
or the pangs of starvation ... you are ahead of 500
million people in the world.*

*If you can attend a church meeting without fear of
harassment, arrest, torture or death ... you are more
blessed than three billion people in the world.*

*If you hold up your head with a smile on your face
and are truly thankful ... you are blessed
because the majority can, but most do not.*

*If you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch
them on the shoulder ... you are blessed because
you can offer the healing touch.*

*If you can read this message, you just received a double
blessing in that someone was thinking of you, and
furthermore, you are more blessed than over two
billion people in the world who cannot read at all.*



Thank you so much for the many ways you support the St. Vincent dePaul Food Pantry ministry. This past fall we received 280 lbs of ground pork as well as several boxes of braut burgers and over 40 gallons of burgoo. Amazing! In addition, thanks so much for the weekly donations of food which you bring in so faithfully. In addition to all this, we are grateful for the faithful volunteers from your parish: Terry Drone, Martha Baehl, Ruth Burk and Dolores Folz. Without a doubt, you are helping us give a 4-day supply of groceries (including fresh milk, eggs, meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, potatoes) along with cereal, canned and dry goods, personal hygiene and cleaning items to those facing hard times. Thank you for acting on the inspiration to help those in need.

Manager, SVDP Food Pantry

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We pray constantly for an end to senseless violence in our world and we all hope that it will happen. But we can do more than hope, we can begin by being bearers of peace in our own lives. We can do that by...

- **Respecting our self and others** and avoiding uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks and self-destructive behavior.
- **Communicating better** by sharing feelings honestly, and looking for safe ways to express anger, and working at solving problems peacefully.
- **Listening** carefully to one another, especially to those who disagree with me, and considering other's feelings and needs rather than insisting on having our own way.
- **Learning to forgive** and to apologize and make amends when we have hurt others, learning to forgive others and keep from holding grudges.
- **Respecting nature** and treating the environment and all living things, including our pets, with care and respect.
- **Playing creatively** by selecting entertainment and toys that support our family's values and avoiding entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny or acceptable.
- **Being courageous** by challenging violence in all of its forms when we encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and standing with others who are treated unfairly.



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JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Be it known to all who enter our school that</i></p> <p>Christ</p> <p><i>is the reason for our school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students.</i></p> <p>Catholic Schools Week January 26–30</p>				<p>1 8 am Mass</p> 	<p>2 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Communion to the Homebound</p> <p>TAKE A BIG OL' BITE OUT OF LIFE THIS YEAR!</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Confessions 4-4:40 pm</p> <p>5 pm Mass</p> <p>Food Drive Collection</p> <p>Haiti Collection</p>
<p>4 8 & 10:30 am Masses</p> <p>Children's Liturgy 10:30 am</p> <p>Food Drive and Haiti Collection</p>	<p>5 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration</p> <p>School Resumes</p> <p>6:30 PM Mass</p>	<p>6 7:30 am Mass</p>	<p>7 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Parish Staff Meeting Noon</p> <p>Bible Study 6:45 pm</p>	<p>8 NO MASS</p>	<p>9 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Communion to The Homebound</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Confessions 4-4:40 pm</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p> <p>5 pm Mass</p>
<p>11 8 & 10:30 am Masses</p> <p>Family Religious Education</p> <p>Children's Liturgy 10:30 am</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p> <p>Confirmation Session 11-1</p>	<p>12 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration</p> <p>6:30 pm Mass</p> <p>7 pm Knights of St. John Meeting</p>	<p>13 7:30 am Mass</p>	<p>14 7:30 am Mass in church</p> <p>Parish Staff Meeting Noon</p>	<p>15 NO MASS</p> <p>7 pm Haiti Ministry Meeting</p>	<p>16 7:30 Mass</p> <p>Communion to The Homebound</p>	<p>17 Altar Society Making Kuchens</p> <p>Confessions 4-4:40 pm</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p> <p>Youth Group</p> <p>Outing to Swonder Ice Rink 4-6 pm</p> <p>5 pm Mass</p>
<p>18 8 & 10:30 Masses</p> <p>Family Religious Education</p> <p>Children's Liturgy 10:30 am</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p>	<p>19 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration</p> <p>NO SCHOOL</p> <p>6:30 pm Mass</p> <p>7 pm Men's Club Meeting</p>	<p>20 7:30 am Mass</p>	<p>21 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Parish Staff Meeting</p> <p>That Man is You 5:30 pm</p> <p>Bible Study 6:45 pm</p>	<p>22 NO MASS</p>	<p>23 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Communion to The Homebound</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Confessions 4-4:40 pm</p> <p>5 PM Mass</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p>
<p>25 8 & 10:30 am Masses</p> <p>Family Religious Education</p> <p>Children's Liturgy 10:30 am</p> <p>Food Pantry Collection</p>	<p>26 7 am-7 pm Eucharistic Adoration</p> <p>6:30 pm Mass</p>	<p>27 7:30 am Mass</p>	<p>28 7:30am Mass</p> <p>Parish Staff Meeting 12-2</p> <p>That Man is You 5:30 pm</p> <p>Bible Study 6:45 pm</p>	<p>29 NO MASS</p> <p>School Come and See Night 5-7 pm</p>	<p>30 7:30 am Mass</p> <p>Communion to The Homebound</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Confessions 4-4:40 pm</p> <p>Mass 5 pm</p>
<p>Catholic Schools Week January 26--30</p>						



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WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday—5 PM

Sunday—8 & 10:30 AM

Fr. Gene Schroeder—Pastor

E-mail gschroeder@evdio.org

Ms. Kristan Gilles—Director of Liturgy

E-mail kgilles@evdio.org

Mrs. Kelsey Meier—Principal

E-mail kmeier@evdio.org

Mrs. Julie Kempf—Secretary

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(Continued from page 7) **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHURCH? (cont)**

Church; a Church that does not stand upright like the Pharisee, triumphant and inflated with pride, but bends down to wash the feet of humanity; a Church that does not judge as the Pharisee does the tax collector, but becomes a welcoming place for all; a Church that does not close in on itself, but remains attentive to God so that it can similarly listen to everyone. Let us commit ourselves to building a Church that is entirely synodal, ministerial and attracted to Christ and therefore committed to serving the world.

Upon all of us, and the Church spread throughout the world, I invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary with the words of the Servant of God Don Tonino Bello: “Holy Mary, woman of conviviality, nourish in our Churches the desire for communion ... Help them to overcome internal divisions. Intervene when the demon of discord creeps into their midst. Extinguish the fires of factionalism. Reconcile mutual disputes. Defuse their rivalries. Stop them when they decide to go their own way, neglecting convergence on common projects” (*Maria, Donna dei Nostri Giorni*, 99).

May the Lord grant us this grace: to be rooted in God's love so that we may live in communion with one another and be, as a Church, witnesses of unity and love.

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL (CPC)

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

PARISH GOAL	\$ 131,040.00	
PLEDGED TO DATE	\$ 137,951.00	105%
NUMBER OF PLEDGES:	318	68%
AVERAGE PLEDGE	\$433.81	

Thank you.

