



ST. PAUL *the* APOSTLE CHURCH

Celebrate our Catholic Faith,
Share the Good News, Serve the Needs of Others



PASTOR'S PEN

I keep reminding myself that life begins nine months before it actually makes its appearance to the rest of us impatiently awaiting the blessed event. In a similar way, metaphorically speaking, even now as we begin the first stages of the exit from the corona virus lockdown there are hints of life just below the surface, just about to emerge...

For a start (though this could change at any time in the light of developing events), the Governor has given clearance for our office to open this coming week, and the Bishops of Ohio, as I'm sure you've seen, have as of today set Pentecost, the weekend of May 31, as the goal for which we will be able to resume public Mass, at least in some form. So the staff has been meeting, (virtually, of course!), to determine how we will do this, based on whatever requirements and protocols Governor DeWine and our Huron County Health Department enact. It's an extremely complicated thing to do because there are so many possibilities, but we cannot wait until we find out what the concrete parameters are to plan or else the delay will be even longer. So we have to go with plans A to Q, depending, trying to be as creative and imaginative as we can be! But it is so gratifying to at least have a set of scenarios that we can plan provisionally around!

Secondly, I can use this venue to announce several upcoming changes in our staff. First of all, hearty congratulations to Jim Tokarsky who in June is becoming the Pastoral Associate at St. Mary Parish in Vermilion, where Fr. Paul is now the pastor. This is a step up the ladder for him and will be excellent experience for him as he continues his studies in preparation for the Permanent Diaconate. We all wish him well in this new adventure.

Jim is irreplaceable – so we are not going to. Instead, Jen Sanders, our Pastoral Associate for Evangelization and *Faith Formation* is going to subsume under that second part of her job title all our various apostolates that have as their thrust the passing on and strengthening of our faith – so RCIA and RCIC, ALPHA, PSR and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and Sacramental preparation, both of children (First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation) and adults (marriage prep, baptismal prep). No one could possibly do all this by herself, even such a highly creative and hard-working person like Jen, so her job is not to *do* all these things but to coordinate the efforts of all those hard-working heroes who carry out these apostolates every day. Right off the bat, she will be working closely with Jim this next month to finally accomplish our painfully delayed programs of First Reconciliation, First Communion and entrance into the Church by baptism or profession of faith – these special people have had to wait so long to receive the sacraments for which they yearn!

Finally, I can announce the good news that we will be having a seminarian joining us for eight weeks this summer, Kory Wise, of Tiffin, Ohio. Kory will be coming June 8 and what his responsibilities will be will depend a great deal on what restrictions will still be in place on our ministry. But in the meantime we look forward to having him with us to see an amazing parish working together even in the most challenging of times to celebrate the faith, share the good news, and serve the needs of others in the most creative of ways!



May. Ken



We miss you!

Members of our parish staff share their reflections on this time of social distancing. We look forward to celebrating together the birthday of the Church on Pentecost!

FROM OUR LITURGICAL DIRECTOR

I have been involved in parish music ministry for 39 years and cannot ever remember anything like what we are experiencing right now with the coronavirus pandemic. It all seems so strange and unreal. Leading the music during Holy Week, with a limited number of ministers in a church with empty pews, had its challenges but we did our best.

For me this current situation underscores the importance of community worship where we pray together, sing together, listen together, respond together, and share together, forming the Body of Christ. In this time of isolation, it helps me to appreciate the presence of each and every parishioner. It challenges me to practice the virtue of patience and the need to slow down and smell the roses. Perhaps this is God's way of telling me that he is the one in control and not myself. My wish for all of you is to stay healthy and be safe and I look forward to the day when we can once again gather as a faith community in praise and worship of our ever-loving God.

Mark



FROM OUR PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR EVANGELIZATION & FAITH FORMATION

This certainly was the “Lentiest” Lent in a while, and the promise of Easter this year didn’t burst forth like it usually does with full churches, adorable kids, and the smell of lilies and incense. Instead it came quietly, much like the very first Easter. I was reminded of this as I sat reading the Easter story with one of my kids, and they asked about the first Easter “parties.” I paused, explaining, yes, there was rejoicing in those who knew about the resurrection, but they were still huddled at home, not out celebrating. “Like us?” the question came. “Like us.” But like us, the apostles waited, prayed, hoped and eventually emerged and thrived sharing the Good News! And we will too!

Fortunately for us, we know the “whole story,” and as St. Augustine reminds us, “We are an Easter people!” While it sure looks different this year, we are reminded it’s STILL Easter, and to joyfully celebrate all 50 days of it! At our house that means special Sunday desserts, and this year adding things to enrich our domestic church. (If you haven’t checked out Formed.org you need to!) I would love to hear what you are doing at home. Feel free to send me an email with how you are experiencing this unique time – you can reach me at jens@stpaulchurch.org.

See you soon!



“WE ARE
THE EASTER
PEOPLE AND
hallelujah IS
OUR SONG.”

ST. JOHN PAUL II



FROM DEACON JIM

During this unprecedented time as we are all feeling the pain of deprivation, fear, and isolation, could it be that God has permitted this in order to bring us back to Him? Do we realize how much we miss Him in our sacraments and that He is our greatest need? Certainly, it is a time that He has given each of us to personally examine our own lives and see where we are, in our relationship with Him.

My wife and I just watched the movie *Jeremiah* on FORMED last night about the prophet whom God prepared from his youth to speak the Word of the Lord to the Jewish people, warning them their cities would be destroyed and they would be taken into slavery by the Babylonians. God had called Jeremiah to speak to them about their sin and the idols they had embraced; and if they would turn away from their idols and come back to Him, He would bless them and protect their land. As we know from Scripture, they chose to trust in their idols and continue in their sin and all that Jeremiah prophesied came to pass.

The book of Jeremiah is applicable for us today and always. In Jeremiah’s day, God’s people were very conflicted about their faith and the one true God. The indifference and insincerity to God led them into great confusion, idolatry, and inability to listen and hear God’s word. Many false prophets were speaking only of peace. Jeremiah, anointed to speak “the Word of the Lord” to His people, was scorned. He suffered at their hands because of his message to turn from sin and live in harmony with God’s commandments. God wanted then, and still wants today, to guide His people.

Our day is not unlike those times in many ways. Our culture, nation, and world are confused and distracted by sin and many idols. The message God has given us today is this: “In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days He spoke to us through a Son, whom He made heir of all things and through whom He created the universe.” [Heb 1:1-2]

There is no doubt this is a time to give our full attention to God and prayer. His Word to us is Jesus, who is Divine Mercy. His Word is still “Repent” as we heard perhaps more loudly this Lent than ever before! I know that multitudes are praying and offering up sacrifices to the Lord for the good of all mankind. To that I say, continue to make these efforts and to obey the two great commandments that Jesus gave us!

“The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” [Mark 12:29-31]

Jesus said if we do that, we will fulfill the whole law of God and the prophets. Jesus, the Merciful Savior, through the blood and water that flows from His side, desires to heal all of mankind. May we take Him at His word and pray for His precious blood to bring us complete healing, Spiritual first, and the rest will follow!



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Jim Reckart

Blessings on our Confirmands 2020!

*"The Holy Spirit gives you gifts,
everything you need to be a Holy Disciple."*

- Bishop Thomas



*Benjamín Burger
Brady Daley
Brianna Fabella
Alexa Garcia
Thomas Gocsik
Kelsi Guerrier
Elaina Herrig
Isabel Howerton
Vivica Jordan
Abby Juby
Isaac Kieffer
Drew Khunle*

*Kole Maxwell
Kathleen McKinney
Anthony Meyer
Geralyn Mutchler
Maddox Mynarsky
Patrick O'Brien
Bowen Olcott
Josh Pocos
Monika Podvoiskis
Benjamín Rospert
Katherine Rospert
Jazmine Saucedo*

*Samuel Scavuzzo
Aaron Schaffer
Chloe Smith
Xavier Smith
Jessica Sprague
Aiden Stang
Ashton Stang
Noah Sumpter
Olivia Switalski
Miguel Torres
Evan Wangler
Hannah Wheeler
Gretchen Wise*

FROM OUR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

When St. Paul's Business Manager, Kate McKinney, sent me a list of 100 parishioners to call (to check on their well-being during the quarantine), I was prepared to hear about people's fears, frustration, worries, financial hardships, loneliness – all justified under the circumstances.

I could not have predicted what I **did** hear: stories of courage, selflessness, compassion, cheerfulness, gratitude, faith, and love.

At first I thought people were simply giving the polite response: "I'm fine" or signaling that the conversation was over: "We're good – goodbye." But it didn't take long before I sensed that people were being authentic. That in spite of difficult circumstances, they were really okay!

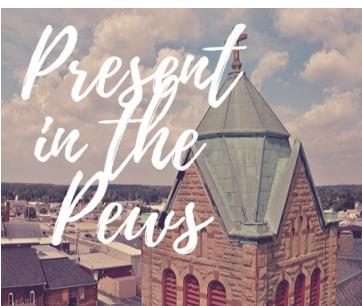


I heard many stories of families taking care of each other – parents being lovingly cared for by their children, and children being patiently home-schooled by their parents. Several women were making masks to donate. Many folks asked about the welfare of the priests and staff. Did we need anything? A number of people broke the longtime habit of placing their contributions in the basket and gave online for the very first time!

A thread of gratitude ran throughout the calls – appreciation for St. Paul's live-streamed Masses and Facebook programs; appreciation for the nurses, doctors, and others working on the front lines; appreciation for the slowed pace of life and time to meditate on the Lenten readings.

Among all these phone calls, one thing stood out and that was the importance – no, the **necessity** – of prayer. The people who were experiencing an illness are now on our prayer list. The rest were praying for others and for an end to the pandemic.

Making these calls inspires and gladdens me and confirms my love for Catholicism. In this time of rapid change and uncertainty, St. Paul parishioners are turning to faith – to our Lord – and they really mean it when they say, "We're doing okay. How can we help?"



Thank you for sending us your photos! Msgr. Ken and Fr. Andrew see your smiling faces when they celebrate Mass. We have room for more pics! Please send to frandrew@stpaulchurch.org.

When this quarantine began back in March, I was pessimistic about how this was going to affect our lives. The cancellations, the disappointments, the change of plans, the "unknowns," etc. I was a little emotional and even frightened at times, not knowing what was going to happen next. But I do know one thing for certain... I will never take anything for granted ever again!

I truly have enjoyed spending this extra time with my family. One day, I will look back at this and say "I sure do wish I could be stuck in the house with my family again."

Years from now when both of our kids are on their own, I will wish I had this time back with them.

I've had a lot of time to think lately, about what our priorities should be in life. I'm so glad I've had this time to reflect and spend more time praying and growing my relationship with God. We've had endless opportunities over the past six weeks to continue to grow in our faith, from watching the Masses on social media, joining in with Morning Prayer, listening to ChurChat in the afternoons, etc. It has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience!

God always has a plan. Trust it, live it, enjoy it! He will never let you down. Trust in Him, as His plans are always bigger than the ones we have planned for ourselves. So if your plans have been canceled or rescheduled, such as a concert you were looking forward to, or a long vacation, or even just an appointment to get your hair done, remember... you'll still get to do all of these things. It will be better than ever, because you will appreciate them even more! It's all good! God is good!



Denise



FROM OUR BUSINESS MANAGER

A Church in the Time of Corona

I suspect most of you are much farther along on the road to becoming saints than I; even so, perhaps you remember a time when you, too, suffered from too much exposure to people and failed to see them with loving eyes. Truth be told, sometimes the people around me get on my nerves, and when they do, it turns out I can pretty quickly stop being the best-version-of-myself.

I was reminded of this when Lisa asked us all to write a bit for the upcoming newsletter. I started thinking about how I have been in a unique position in our parish the last few weeks. While others were quarantined and all of you were prevented from coming to Mass, I had the privilege of being there in person as someone was needed to man the cameras for our live stream of the services. Other than being very chilly (we had turned off the heating system to save money), I had what most would call 'the best seat in the house' for all the Holy Week liturgies. And I was very thankful to have this role to fill – it meant I could be physically present for Mass while the rest of you were limited to watching from home.

The first Mass I covered I found myself thinking "how nice to be here without any *people*."

I mean, no getting annoyed when people showed up late and came in noisily, seemingly heedless of the fact that they were disrupting my quiet time.

No feelings of impatience with crying babies – and their parents who were too distraught themselves to worry if they were bothering me.

No feelings of envy when noticing a young family arriving on time and dressed impeccably – right down to the babies! – knowing I had never been able to accomplish that when my kids were little; heck, I can't even accomplish that now.

You get the picture. I was feeling fairly self-satisfied about being able to enjoy the Mass in peace.

That lasted for one whole Mass. During the next liturgy I started to feel...

... **lonely** for someone to share a welcome with; for a hand to shake at the sign of peace; for the sound of a child's voice crying out during a quiet moment in the service, "Look Mommy, there's Jesus;"

... **lonely** for the sight of a young father noticing his kids growing restless and picking up his son and encouraging him to focus on the celebrant; for the sight of a large extended family scurrying in at the last minute and finding the perfect seats with the help of an attentive usher; for a smile and a wave from a friend I had not seen in awhile;

... **lonely** for the heartwarming vision of an elderly couple coming to worship together, for probably the 2500th time – and possibly the last; for the giggles of two toddlers, who have never even met, making eye contact and sharing a secret communication across the aisles; for voices joined in praise and worship; for the uplifting sound of hundreds of voices singing the Great Amen;

... **lonely** – for *You people!* I was lonely for you! You who each have helped me in some way on my journey, whether you know it or not. You beautiful, precious, brothers and sisters in the Lord- I was – I AM – lonely for you!

I am so looking forward to the time we can again worship together as one big happy family. I **will** remember what it was like to be the only person in the church – cold and lonely – and I will appreciate you all the more!

Let's not let this crisis go to waste: let's embrace our neighbors and judge them a little less harshly; let's remember we are all on the same journey, all facing our own struggles. Let's come through this, together, with a deeper love and appreciation for all.

Kate



FACEBOOK LIVE STREAM Through May 29, 2020

Monday, Tuesday

6:15 am Mass

8:30 am Morning Prayer

3:30 pm ChurChat

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

6:15 am & 9:00 am Masses

8:30 am Morning Prayer

3:30 pm ChurChat

Saturday

8:00 am Mass

3:30 pm ChurChat

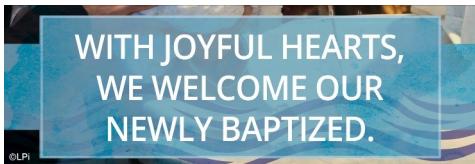
Sunday

9:00 am Mass (English)

10:00 am (Spanish)



PARISH FAMILY BLESSINGS



Parker James
 Son of Sam & Nichole Groves
 Warren Joseph
 Son of Shawn & Heather Hemenway
 Lillian Patricia
 Daughter of Andrew & Courtney Hipp
 Reagan Lee
 Daughter of Joe & Kaylee Longo
 Patrick Raymond
 Son of Shawn & Elizabeth Rutledge
 Austyn Ann
 Daughter of Aaron & Ashley Schoen
 Isaac Samuel
 Son of Samuel & Alexis Strayer
 Ashlynn Kaye
 Daughter of Tyler & Kristen Wickham
 Walker James
 Son of Justin & Hannah Wilde



Mr. & Mrs. Logan & Lilian (DeLeon) Stoll



Larry Cloud
 Carol Comyns
 Barbara Might
 Louise Montgomery
 Salvatore Oliva
 Mary Orth
 Alvin Timbs
 Gerald Weisenberger

Please continue to pray for our second graders who will be receiving the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and for our RCIA elect and catechumens. Two eighth grades students will be confirmed in the coming weeks as well. Blessings!

ST. VINCENT De PAUL

Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP)

Norwalk St. Paul Conference

Annual Fiscal Report

October 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020, Reported April 20, 2020

Rent	\$25,715	Adults assisted - 233
Electric	\$ 7,836	Children assisted - 197
Gas	\$ 1,612	Total Applications - 213
Propane	\$ 1,662	
Water	\$ 1,327	
Food (1)	\$ 3,600	
Lodging	\$ 0	
Gasoline	\$ 260	
Comm/SVDP ⁽²⁾	\$ 2,801	
Office Exp.	\$ 764	

	\$45,577	

(1) Large portions of this line item are regular and seasonal donations to the Norwalk Area Food Bank (NAFB). While we do some direct aid in the form of food vouchers, most of our food needs are referred to NAFB.

(2) This line item is normally comprised of donations: SVdP International Disaster Fund, other SVdP conferences affected by hurricanes and fires, Abigail Pregnancy Services, Salvation Army, Non-Food Bank, and other community donations. We feel these programs address community and national SVdP type needs that we do not, which are very worthwhile.

It should be noted that **over 98% of your donations go directly to people in need.**

Vincentians can provide immediate help with food, rent, the threat of a utility disconnection, eviction and other related needs. We offer hope to individuals, giving them a chance to recover from their financial problems. In addition, we refer them to other agencies for additional temporary and longer term assistance, which is also a very important part of our mission.

We call ourselves Vincentians in tribute to St. Vincent de Paul. What Vincentians have in common is a desire to serve those who are poor and suffering. In other words, Vincentians embrace the lonely, forgotten, and alienated by providing services to anyone in need. Our motto is: **"There is no work of charity that is foreign to the society."**

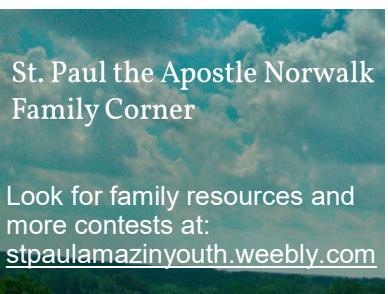
To respect the wishes of those who donate to us and support our work, we do our best to verify the legitimacy of our clients' claims of need before providing any assistance. We also have to have to keep in mind the spirit of Christ, who leads our ministry, which means **we help our neighbors based on need without judging** them. St. Vincent de Paul committee would like to thank our generous parishioners for the financial support you have given us.

As an additional show of our appreciation, SVdP has a Mass offered every quarter for the intentions of our donors.

Many blessings to you,

Vincentian Members

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Norwalk St. Paul Conference



St. Paul Catholic Church

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a parish contest!

