



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

NATIVITY OF THE BVM PARISH

PARISH NEWSLETTER

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By Nathan Frankart

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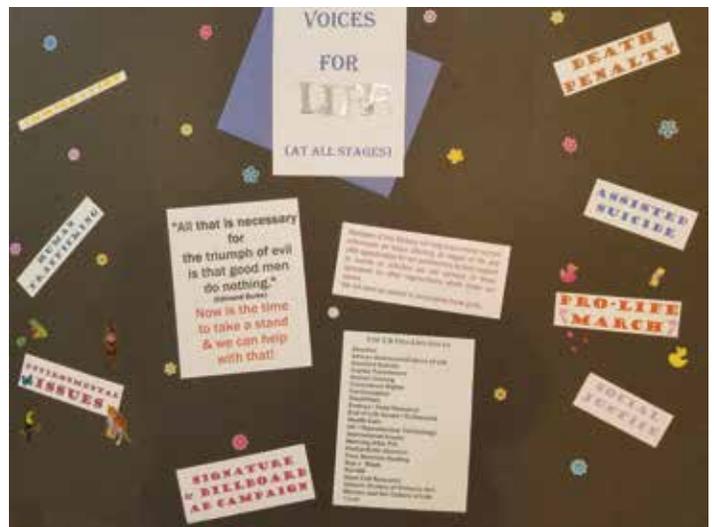
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October 2019

Voices for Life Ministry

Prompting Action Through Awareness and Prayer

Many of us hear about the horrors of abortion, and the pain it causes for all involved. It troubles and saddens us deeply, but we often don't know where to turn, or what to do to help. Thanks to the Voices for Life Ministry, our parishioners will have some guidance as to how they can stand up courageously for the Gospel of Life.



“This ministry will show our parish family ways to share our Christian values and influence in the midst of our society,” says Evelyn Caffarel, Coordinator of the Voices for Life Ministry. “Its members will present information regarding local, diocesan and national activities for which we can pray and in which we can participate, often without leaving the community in which we live.”

And as the saying goes, “Knowing is half the battle.”

“Awareness can prompt action,” Evelyn says. “As individuals we have power to change the way the people in our culture think and live. St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was only one woman in a gigantic world who made a difference by doing small things with great love, which is what she asks us to do, as well. She began with one

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Voices for Life Ministry *continued from front cover*

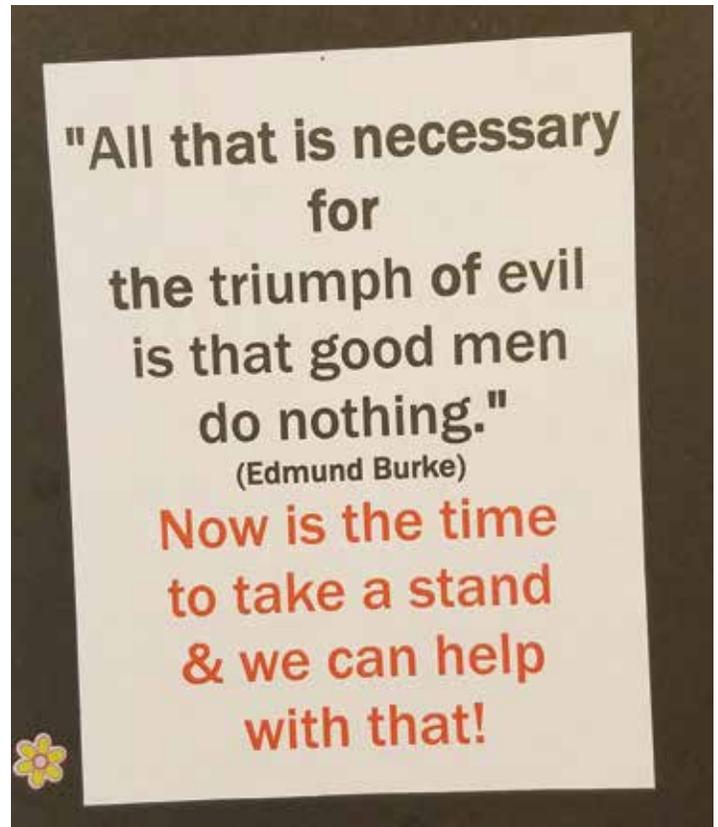
thing — her own conviction to follow Jesus. His kind of love is contagious. All we need are a few good folks willing to take that leap of faith with us.”

The Voices for Life Ministry is currently expanding its mission. In the past, it mainly focused on issues affecting infants, children and their parents, such as abortion. Moving forward, the ministry plans to promote the cause of life in many other areas, including human trafficking and doctor-assisted suicide

“Pope Francis is directing disciples to develop an awareness of these pro-life issues, as well as many more issues affecting life in all segments of the population,” Evelyn says. “It is a call to action! In response, Voices for Life must become a vehicle to help disciples become aware of issues and opportunities that can influence how we go about living out our roles within culture as it now is, more than 2,000 years after the death and rising of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Recently, Voices for Life reached out to our local Knights of Columbus council, and they agreed to pray for a pro-life issue each time they meet for their Fifth Sunday Rosary, beginning on Dec. 29.

In the future, Voices for Life hopes to take action in a powerful, influential way through efforts such as organizing pro-life letter writing campaigns with regard to upcoming legislative bills; having Holy Hours in front of the Most Blessed Sacrament to intercede for pro-life intentions; coordinating a bus trip to the March for Life in Washington, D.C.; and encouraging families, school children and the homebound to pray for current pro-life issues and priests. The ministry may also sponsor trips



to local events and bring in dynamic pro-life speakers from various organizations.

“We have a very active Lorain County Right to Life group, and I really want to help Voices for Life become part of what they are already doing,” Evelyn says. “I plan to inform our parishioners about the many pro-life events that occur in our local area by putting things in our parish bulletin and posting flyers.”

If you would like more information on how to promote the Culture of Life through this beautiful ministry of mercy, please contact Evelyn Caffarel at 440-452-4361 or ecaff543@yahoo.com. You may also visit the Voices for Life booth at the Ministry Fair this October.

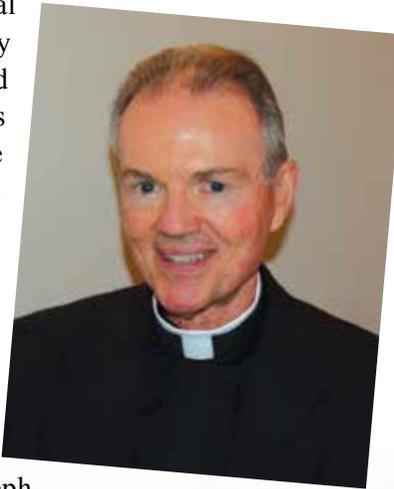
A Letter from Our Pastor

May We Embrace and Grow in Our Calling as Disciples of Jesus

Dear Members of St. Joseph and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parishes,

It is already time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Our Ministry Fair will take place on the weekend of Oct. 5-6, and it will give all of us a chance to see what activities are taking place in our two parishes and to make our involvement decisions. Stewardship Commitment Weekend follows on Oct. 12-13, during which we will turn in our completed cards with our commitments of time, talent and treasure for the next 12 months.

I see so many fruits of our stewardship in the life of our St. Joseph and Nativity Parish Families. My dream is that every one of our households would be active in our parish life. Stewardship helps us to this goal by inviting the participation of everyone in our parish families in whatever capacity each person is able. We each have something to offer, and every commitment has value and is needed. As in family life, when we all do what we can in the spirit of love, amazing things can happen.



Please be thinking about both renewing past commitments in the realm of time, talent and treasure, as well as perhaps trying something new this year.

I invite the participation of every parishioner in the life and prayer of our Saint Joseph and Nativity Parish Families. Let us continue to pray for and support one another as we embrace and grow in our calling as disciples of Jesus to be good and faithful stewards of God's bountiful blessings.

Thank you for being the wonderful people that you are. It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve you.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. Timothy J. O'Connor,
Pastor

Stewardship

The Church is More than a Building — It is Our Spiritual Home

Where do you go to church? We've all answered that question hundreds of times before. But have you ever stopped to think about what it truly means?

"I go to our parish," is the usual response, and rightly so, because we do "go to" the church to celebrate Mass together. But as Catholics and as stewards of God's gifts, the Church is much more than a building within which we worship. The Church, as we understand it, is the universal body of believers, the society that Christ established to help us grow in holiness, to bring us closer to Him through the giving of our time, talent, and treasure, and to lead the world to the truth.

Before Jesus ascended to the Father, He commissioned the disciples, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). That is the Church's mission in the world today — to make disciples of all nations, to bring all people to Christ.

Our St. Joseph and Nativity of the BVM parishes play a key part in that. As members of our parishes, we are local representatives of the universal Church. Together, as members of our parish families, we work to carry out the Church's mission on a local level. We worship the Lord at Mass, offering Him our praise and thanksgiving, and then we go forth on a mission to make disciples — to encourage our fellow parishioners in their lives of faith and to bring unbelievers into knowledge of the truth.

In addition to being a "local representation of the universal Church," the parish is much like a family. We are communal beings, and we are created to live with others. So, as Catholics, we are members of the Church and, on a more immediate level, of the parish. As such, we gather together for the Eucharistic meal and we grow in faith together throughout the week, supporting one another



through our participation in many parish ministries, through prayer, and through the friendships that many of us share.

In a letter written to parish priests throughout the nation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops explained the important place of the parish in the lives of Catholic faithful: "The parish is a privileged place to announce the Word of God. It includes a variety of forms and each of the faithful is called to take an active part, especially with the witness of a Christian life and the explicit proclamation of the Gospel to non-believers to lead them to the faith, or to believers to instruct them, confirm them and encourage them to a more fervent life."

So, we ought to feel truly blessed to be a part of our St. Joseph and Nativity parish families. We ought to make a conscious effort to be actively involved, to build relationships with our fellow parishioners and to celebrate the Mass together as often as possible — most especially every Sunday. We are then bound to grow closer to others, to grow deeper in faith and closer to Christ. Then, together as parish families, we are bound to proclaim the Gospel to others, inviting them to a life of discipleship, thereby, building the kingdom of God.

The Return of Our Golden Agers Ministry *Creating Opportunities for Seniors to Engage in Parish Life*

The elderly of our faith community are essential to the life of our parish.

As Pope Francis said in an address to commemorate National Grandparent's Day celebrations in Italy, "They represent the roots and memory of a people... (their) experience is a precious treasure."

For our parishes, these sentiments are what inspired parishioner Joyce Nye to take charge of the revival of our Golden Agers Ministry, which had gone dormant recently.

"I feel like this ministry is such an important part of our parish life," says Joyce. "Making our more elderly parishioners feel welcome, letting them know that we love and care for them, and providing a space for them to come together and enjoy fellowship."

Currently meeting at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the third Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m., the Golden Agers Ministry is designed to provide fellowship and enrichment for our faith community's more seasoned parishioners. Gatherings typically include a catered or potluck meal, an educational presentation or other form of entertainment, opportunities for socialization, and a 50/50 raffle.



"It's really just an opportunity for them to get together, to talk together, and to enjoy friendship," says Joyce. "I usually plan for a 20 to 30-minute segment of education or music; some kind of entertainment. Then there is usually a lunch and then they are free to go."

Recent presenters have included representatives from the Amherst Manor retirement community, as well as officers from the Amherst Police Department, who have spoken on topics such as senior scams.

Golden Agers meetings are advertised each month in the parish bulletin, providing information on that month's specific topic and details. Encouraged by the turnout so far, Joyce is excited to continue providing this service to elderly parishioners as a concrete way to show our faith community's love and appreciation for them.

Ultimately, she sees it as a way to keep our seniors connected to parish life, and to each other.

"I was very encouraged to have 48 people attend our last meeting, and my challenge and excitement moving forward is to ensure that there are 48 people there each time," says Joyce. "I hope to keep finding things that will interest and educate them. To give them a chance just to visit and get together."

Parishioners interested in helping with or learning more about the Golden Agers Ministry may contact Joyce Nye at 440-988-3565.

Questions and Answers About

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence – part of the rhythm of parish life in our St. Joseph and Nativity community. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year? The following Q&A about our Stewardship Renewal should help you discern your commitments this year.

*Commitment Weekend is **Oct. 12-13.***

Don't forget to bring your Commitment Card to Mass!

I feel like my life is already too full with family obligations and work obligations. I barely even have time to relax. How can I possibly share my time and talents in the parish?

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Before you fill out your Commitment Card, take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your day-to-day life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?

As part of the renewal process, it is important that we consider our current level of participation in parish life at St. Joseph and Nativity. Sometimes, the call to stew-

ardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share of your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.

Even if you end up continuing to participate in the exact same ministries as you have in the past, marking and turning in a Commitment Card means you have reviewed your present ministries and recommitted yourself to them.

I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey. Begin by checking the box that says, "Attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation," and take some time to discern additional ways in which God is calling you from that starting point.

I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out its mission as ministry participation and financial contributions. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.

Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

I'm reluctant to make a financial pledge for the year in case my circumstances change and I'm unable to fulfill it. Should I?

Your Commitment Card is not a legally binding contract; it is a pledge of intentions. Make your pledge based on what you are setting out to do to give back to God, and do your best to fulfill that pledge. If your financial circumstances change, your gift will likely change as well, but it is still important to prioritize God first. Nobody is going to send the bill collector to your house if you can't fulfill your pledge due to a change in your financial situation! But we've all got to start somewhere, and it's important that we begin our commitment by writing down our goals for giving back of our gifts to God.

I've expressed interest in a ministry in the past through filling out a Commitment Card, but nobody from the parish ever followed up with me about it.

While we do our best to consistently follow up with everyone who has shown interest in the opportunities for ministry at St. Joseph and Nativity, we are human, and we sometimes fall short in our follow-up. If this has happened to you in the past, we sincerely apologize, and we encourage you to renew your interest in any activities in which you might like to participate by filling out a Commitment Card this year. Every year, we go into the renewal with every intention of making sure that everyone who has expressed interest is contacted with more information, and we will do so again this year.

I don't agree with everything that goes on in my parish. I feel like when I fill out a Commitment Card, it condones the things I disagree with.

In filling out a Commitment Card, you are not making a pledge between yourself and St. Joseph or Nativity; you are making a pledge between yourself and God. Disagreements occur in life. This is a part of being human, and we respect the opinions of each and every member of our parish family. But it

is of utmost importance that each of us fulfills our discipleship of Christ by growing in our relationship with Him and utilizing the gifts He has given us to carry out His mission on Earth, regardless of disagreements or misunderstandings. Beyond helping the parish, filling out a Commitment Card expresses a devotion to spiritual growth and a strong belief in the Catholic faith.

FORMED IN THE HEART
Stewardship Renewal 2019



St. Joseph Parish & Nativity of the BVM Parish

Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF *St. Francis of Assisi*

He was born as Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone in Assisi, Italy, in 1181 or 1182 and died at the age of 44 in 1226. In spite of his given name, his father was traveling in France at the time of his birth, so he opted to call him Francesco, which means “the Frenchman.” We, of course, know him as St. Francis of Assisi, whose feast day we celebrate on Oct. 4. To say that he is among the most revered of our Catholic saints would be an understatement.

In their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops states, “After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward.” Our Catholic saints also provide us examples of what it means to be a steward, but perhaps none more than St. Francis of Assisi. Like the Lord and His Blessed Mother, St. Francis exemplified stewardship.

We were reminded of that fact when our Holy Father chose the name Francis. The pope explained his choice in this way: “For me he [Francis] is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and safeguards Creation. He is a man who gives us this spirit of peace.” From the time he was a boy, Francis recognized that he was gifted — he also understood that he needed to put his gifts at the service of God and others. One of his followers, Brother Leo, was fond of telling that he could hear Francis praying at night, and that St. Francis used the same prayer over and over. It was, “Oh God, Who are You, and who am I?”

Striving to come to an understanding of his relationship with God, and his role as a disciple of the Lord, St. Francis tried to rid himself of all the things that might prevent him from discovering his role in the Kingdom. Early on, he embraced poverty as a way of life. By eschewing possessions, Francis maintained that his voluntary poverty gave him freedom, freedom from owing anyone other than God, and thus giving him the complete freedom to serve God.

We speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship — Hospitality, Prayer, Formation and Service. The life St. Francis embraced and

the life he lived can almost be defined by those pillars. Francis and the community he developed did not accept money — they worked for enough food to eat for that day, or for water, or for a place to sleep. His example coerces us to ask, “Are there possessions that restrict us, that hinder our ability to be a disciple?”

St. Francis dedicated his entire life to imitating the life of Christ and to carrying out the work of the Lord as he, Francis, perceived Christ would do it. Of course, St. Francis had ultimate love of the Eucharist, and great respect for the priests who carried out this sacrament. As stated, poverty became a way of life for him. In fact, in his last written work, *The Testament*, Francis stated that personal and corporate poverty were essential as the lifestyle for the members of his Order.

Francis was a steward of all creation. He believed that nature and what it represented was the “mirror of God.” Most representations we see of Francis have animals with him and surrounding him. He called all creatures his “sisters” and “brothers.” He had particular love of birds, and was known to preach to them. As a steward and a disciple of Christ, St. Francis viewed all people with love and respect. He said, “How can I be a friend of Christ if I do not cherish those for whom Christ died?”

It is difficult to assess all the ways that St. Francis has influenced our faith and our practice of it. His desire to be Christ-like provides a stewardship example to us that makes clear to us how to move toward holiness. He had the humility of a complete servant. He once said, “If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.” Although the famous prayer attributed to St. Francis is most likely not a direct quote from him, it well represents his philosophy and his sense of stewardship. In part it states, “Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive.” Through stewardship, we give — and what we receive in return, just as was the case with St. Francis of Assisi, is beyond our comprehension.



Be a Man, Be Vulnerable

By NATHAN FRANKART

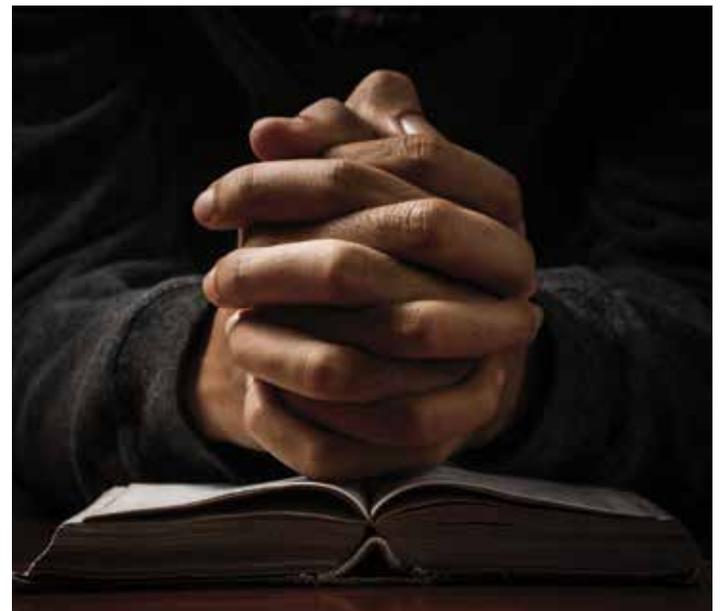
Pease of Christ to you! A short life update — for a multitude of reasons, the faculty at Borromeo and I reached a mutual decision to accelerate my formation as an undergraduate here and at JCU. I am taking two years' worth of courses in the span of one, eliminating my sophomore year, and moving straight on to being a junior, an upperclassman. Although I do have a great deal of gratitude and joy for this particular opportunity, the schoolwork definitely will be more strenuous. So I'll appreciate any prayers for wisdom and discipline. St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Joseph Cupertino, pray for me!

I wanted to share what the formation theme of this particular year will be, now that I am well into the semester. If you recall, last year the community contemplated, prayed with, and did our best to enact the spiritual principle of *Memento Mori* — Remember Death. This theme called us to abandon lives of comfort, personal desire and selfish inclinations to embrace a spirit of charity, reflecting on how our physical death is present in our lives, as well as how dying to ourselves actually breathes new life within our souls and into our communities, a life permeated with and fulfilled by a love of Christ. This year, our faculty chose the formation theme of masculine vulnerability — in Latin, *Virilis Vulneratio*. If any of us thought that dying to oneself and embracing the cross through humble service was difficult, we knew we would be in for a particularly demanding year with this theme.

It's no secret that our Western culture demands a specific set of qualities of the men who live in it, some admirable, some detrimental. One quality of "manhood," more often than not, is the suppression of wounds, struggles, difficulties and a sense of helplessness. Men "should" be strong, capable and powerful. We, as Catholics, call out this negative behavior, and in a special way, men in house this year will focus on emptying themselves, admitting their failures and their struggles. Their formators, and we as brothers, will embrace this sense of

vulnerability, but only through entering into the wounds of Christ that Jesus invites us towards, as well as being inflamed by His Sacred Heart. We, as men, will come to know His healing power, and His sanctifying grace that will transform us into the soldiers of Christ we are called to be.

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200 Saint Joseph Drive, Amherst, OH 44001

Address Service Requested

Fr. Tim O'Connor Serving Both Parishes

Mass:

Monday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*
Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*
Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*
Friday, 9:00 a.m. - *St. Joseph*
Saturday, 4:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*
5:30 p.m. - *Nativity of the BVM*
Sunday, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. - *St. Joseph*

Confession at St. Joseph:

Thursday - Individual Reconciliation 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Saturday - Individual Reconciliation 11:00 a.m. - noon

Eucharistic Adoration (Chapel) at Nativity of the BVM:

Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Upcoming Activities and Events

Coffee and Donuts at Nativity BVM Parish

Tuesday, Oct. 1 — following the 8 a.m. Mass
in Nativity's Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Nativity BVM Altar Rosary Meeting

Tuesday, Oct. 1 — at 6:30 p.m. at Nativity's Parish Hall.

First Saturday Rosary

Oct. 5 — at 9 a.m. in St. Joseph's Parish Chapel.

Pet Blessing

Saturday, October 5th, at 10:00 a.m. in St. Joseph Parish Pavilion

Stewardship Ministry Fair

Weekend of Oct. 5 and 6. Everyone from both parishes are welcome to
come to the Ministry Fair after any Mass.
See the bulletin for details.

Parish Nurses

Oct. 6 — free health screenings, from 8 a.m. to noon.
See the bulletin for details and registering.

Dinners to Go at Nativity BVM in South Amherst

Tuesday, Oct. 8 and Tuesday Oct. 22 — from 5-6:30 p.m.
See the bulletin for details.

Knights of Columbus Clambake

Friday, Oct. 11, from 6-11 p.m.
at the Amherst Eagles, 1161 Milan Ave., Amherst.
Tickets must be purchased by Oct. 4.
Proceeds support seminarians on their vocation journey
to the priesthood. See the bulletin for details.

Stewardship Commitment Weekend

Oct. 12 and 13 — at both parishes.

Candle Light Rosary Service with Benediction

Tuesday, Oct. 15 — at 7 p.m. at Nativity.
Everyone is welcome.
See the bulletin for details.

"Wonderful Women" Women's Fellowship at St. Joseph's in Amherst

Oct. 21 — at 7 p.m. All women from
St. Joseph and Nativity Parishes are invited.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Nativity BVM Parish in South Amherst

Weekdays, Monday through Friday
from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.