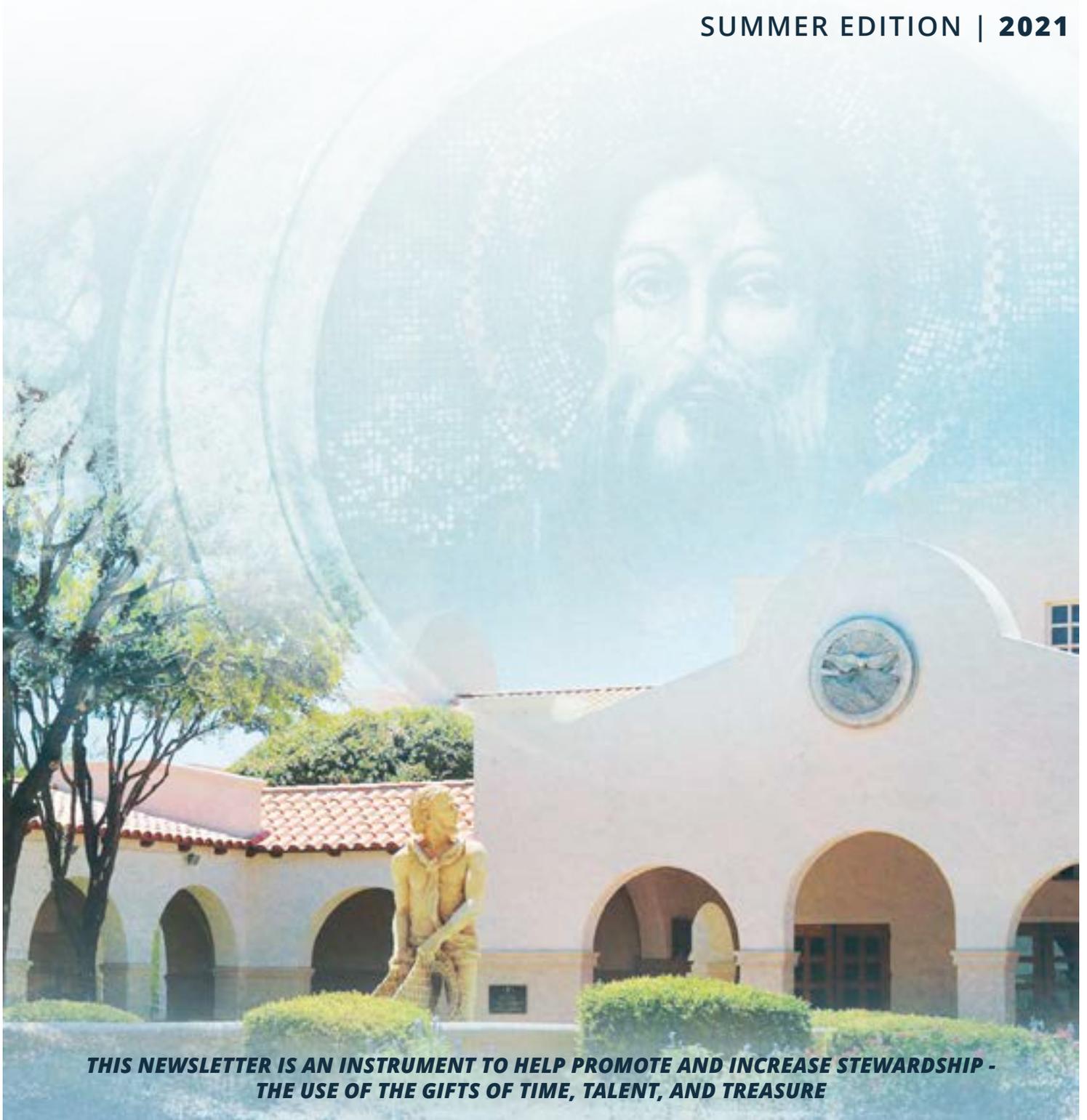




# ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE

# “GOOD NEWS”

SUMMER EDITION | 2021



***THIS NEWSLETTER IS AN INSTRUMENT TO HELP PROMOTE AND INCREASE STEWARDSHIP -  
THE USE OF THE GIFTS OF TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE***

## PASTORAL INTRODUCTION

Dear St. Andrew and Friends,

Happy and blessed Easter Season to you all! Welcome to this Summer Edition of our celebrated Newsletter. As usual, since its inception, our diligent Editors and brilliant writers have done an excellent job. Much gratitude goes to them and to our Stewardship Council for initiating this form of communication with our Parish three years ago.

It is now an over repeated reality that the pandemic has challenged us and how we do things in ways we never envisaged a little over a year ago. This includes how we do ministry in general and express the fundamental tenets of our faith in particular, here in our own Parish. One of the areas we were challenged to re-evaluate and re-articulate during this pandemic is our five year Strategic Pastoral Plan, paying particular attention to our four strategic goals. The fourth goal in this strategy is improving (Internal) Communication.

As you may recall, one of the earliest casualties of the pandemic was our weekly printed bulletin which was the main conduit for communicating details of events and important issues to our parishioners. As a result, we had to creatively initiate a robust communication plan, which included a revamped weekly Friday Flash, Candid Monday Video Messages and Live-streaming of some of our weekly and weekend Masses. It was in such an atmosphere that our Newsletter initiated by our foresighted Stewardship Council came in handy to, not only supplement our communication efforts, but also provide articles on very topical issues ranging from moral, doctrinal and pastoral challenges faced by our Church. It also provided me, your pastor, with the opportunity to publish for you my Annual State of the Parish.

In this Spring edition, you will have the opportunity to enjoy articles on ***"The Year of St. Joseph"*** declared by Pope Francis on December 8, 2020 ending on December 8, 2021, another one on one of our key staff members, Barb Lishko, and some others on our Lenten and Palm Sunday activities this past Season. Also included in this edition is a corner on our Knights of Columbus and an article on abortion, which is no doubt, a sensitive moral issue our Church takes seriously. While an article on an issue such as abortion may not cover in depth the teaching and stand of the Catholic Church, I hope it at least provokes some honest and informed discussion on the topic among us. We hope to continue including discussions and teachings of the Church on such eminent moral issues in future articles.

Please, I now present to you the ***St. Andrew the Apostle, "Good News", Summer Edition 2021***. Enjoy!

Fr. Robert Seraph Aliunzi, AJ  
Pastor



## PARISH PROFILE: BARB LISHKO

**Parish Profile: Barb Lishko**

**by Brian J. Tindell**

"Marriage is not 50/50, it is 100/100." This bit of wisdom comes from Barb Lishko who has worked in marriage preparation at St. Andrew the Apostle for the past 10 years. She speaks from hard-earned experience, having been married for 41 years to her husband Mark (who is one of our deacons). Together they raised a large family. She previously spent many years working in youth ministry at Corpus Christi and St. Andrew. She has become a noted speaker and writer, starting with short articles on various Catholic platforms and now writing her own online blog.

Barb moved to Arizona from Colorado just before high school. Her father had suddenly become paralyzed by an illness but it did not shake the family's strong Catholic faith. One Friday after school, her parents surprisingly dropped her off at a weekend youth retreat. Barb wasn't happy at all, but by Sunday she didn't want to go home. That weekend her encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ became very personal. She was no longer viewing the Catholic faith through her family's devotion, but her own. "You love me, you care about me," she recalls thinking about the Lord. "I want to know you."

"Marriage is a blank check," she says. "You never know what you are going to get." She learned this from her parents' marriage and her own. Her husband Mark was an Air Force pilot and they spent their newlywed years at stations in South Korea and Great Britain. Barb suffered a miscarriage and years of infertility. They longed to start a family.

Barb's parents came to visit and the four of them planned to tour Europe, but first make a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Barb's father was in a wheelchair and had difficulty visiting the Stations of the Cross at the shrine. He was helped by some African priests, ironic because he had spent years hand-making rosaries and sending them to Africa. The family spent three days at Lourdes and Barb prayed devotedly for a child. Soon afterwards, she was expecting their first baby. She credits the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Today, she is the mother of five children and grandmother to seven.



What is the key to a successful marriage? Barb Lishko says communication and understanding are critical, but most important is to understand what real love is. "Love is a choice, not an emotion or feeling," she says. She quotes St. Thomas Aquinas: "Love is to will the good of the other for their own good." A real loving relationship can be painful and involve a lot of work. That turns off some people. But, she notes that making wine is a lot of work and people still drink wine.

Men and women are wired differently, she believes. They think, feel, and communicate in different ways. Why do so many marriages fail? People give up on the hard work. Their expectations are never met. Communication breaks down. "People go on autopilot," she says. She also thinks that the prevalence of divorced families and cohabitation before marriage have hurt couples' chances. She counsels married couples, but often they show up too late to be helped.

Barb does not see the Catholic Church ever blessing same sex marriages. She believes God created marriage for men and women who were destined to unite and become one flesh. Marriage is supposed to reflect the sharing of love between the three persons of the Trinity. Yet, she hastens to add that gay people are welcomed at St. Andrew and serve a valuable purpose for the church. She believes no one should be defined only by his or her sexual identity.

Barb was asked if, as a devout Catholic, she was shaken by the clergy sex abuse scandal. "It didn't rock my faith on any level," she says. "The human side of the church is the messy side." When the scandal was breaking, she was inspired by the homily of her parish priest who

cautioned that their faith was not about a priest. Humans are prone to sin and pride. She points out that even Jesus selected Judas as an apostle, knowing from the beginning that Judas would betray him.

Life was cruising along quite well for Barb several years ago when she was hit by a car while riding her bike. She landed in the ICU with seventeen broken bones. "That's the only way God can get my attention," she says. As she recovered, she thought frequently of her own father's steadfast faith as he lived with paralysis. She became a believer in redemptive suffering, the concept that a person's pain can be united with the suffering of Christ for the salvation of others. Suffering can be an opportunity, not a tragedy, she believes.

Barb was tested again last year when her family gathered in Utah and she fell while ice-skating and landed back in the ICU with a fractured skull. This time pandemic restrictions allowed no visitors. God had her attention again. "So many lessons God was teaching me," she recalls. "You feel alone in your suffering. No one can enter into it, but God can."

Her experiences with pain and difficulty have given her "street cred" on the subject of suffering. She can speak from a position of some authority on the subject. While alone in the hospital in Utah, she faced the prospect of brain surgery and had to fight the hospital's rules to have a priest visit and provide her the sacrament of anointing. She later counseled a friend whose father was dying in the hospital. Barb urged her to have a priest visit despite restrictions, and the sacrament provided a great deal of comfort.

Today, Barb is kind of St. Andrew's answer to Erma Bombeck, the famed Arizona housewife and mom who entertained readers with her humorous takes on family life. Barb's blog posts reflect her faith that God has gotten her through everything, along with the prayers of many people she's never met. She shares what she's learned about family and marriage. "The purpose of marriage isn't to make you happy," she says. "It's to make you holy." Happiness is a byproduct. You can read Barb Lishko's observations on life, love, theology, and motherhood at [www.pouredmyselfoutingift.com](http://www.pouredmyselfoutingift.com).

## PRAYERS TO SAINT JOSEPH



**All the saints in glory assuredly merit honor and particular respect, but it is evident that, next to the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph possesses a just title to a more sweet, more intimate and penetrating place in our hearts, belonging to him alone.**

- St. Pope John XXIII

**O glorious St. Joseph, pray for me, assist me and defend me from Satan.**

- St. Anthony Mary Claret

**St. Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God, teach us unceasingly all the divine truths and all the human dignity contained in the vocations of spouses and parents!**

- St. John Paul II

## YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH

### **A Year of St. Joseph**

**by Susan Zeck**

On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis announced a "Year of St. Joseph." He chose that date to honor the 150th Anniversary of the proclamation by Blessed Pope Pius IX, which established St. Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church in 1870. Pope Francis offers us a whole year to seek out St. Joseph, promising "that each of us can discover in St. Joseph an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble."

In his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis shared his personal reflections about Saint Joseph and encouraged devotion to him saying, "Our world needs fathers!" He explained how because of his role in salvation history, St. Joseph had always been venerated as a father by the Christian people. Pope Francis then gave detailed examples of St. Joseph's virtues as a father. He called him a beloved father, tender and loving, obedient, accepting, creatively courageous, a working father, and a father in the shadows.

Pope Francis has promoted devotion to St. Joseph throughout his papacy, stating, "I have a great love for him because he is a man of silence and strength." Joseph quietly protected Mary and Jesus. The coronavirus pandemic also influenced the Pope in his declaration as he saw ordinary patient people offering hope and felt that they resembled St. Joseph.

The Apostolic Penitentiary issued a Decree granting a plenary indulgence in the "Year of St. Joseph," provided that usual sacramental and prayerful conditions are met. In addition, specific devotions, meditations, or imitations of St. Joseph must be performed, such as making a Consecration to St. Joseph.

While there are no spoken words by St. Joseph recorded in the New Testament, his influence and protection within the Holy Family has been documented. Saints and popes have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak for him and praise his quietness. We do know that God entrusted Joseph with the care of His only begotten Son. Pope Francis wrote in *Patris Corde* that for Jesus, Joseph was the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.

St. Joseph is well known as the patron of a happy death because it is said that he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. He is also known as the patron saint of workers, families, fathers, travelers, immigrants, and of the unborn.

In January 2020, Father Donald Calloway, MIC, published his

book *Total Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father*. It is noteworthy that he wrote to Pope Francis in 2019 asking him to consider declaring a "Year of St. Joseph." A tremendous amount of research went into writing this book and it contains an abundance of information about this quiet saint.

Father Calloway said that we need St. Joseph today! "I pray that you come to know and love your spiritual father more and more," he pleaded. *Total Consecration to St. Joseph* is based on a comprehensive 33-day program with daily readings, prayers, and meditations. Father Calloway explained, "it means that you make a final act of filial entrustment to your spiritual father so that he can take care of your spiritual well-being and lead you to God."

Several parishioners at St. Andrew's took up his challenge and pledged to consecrate to St. Joseph. Margie Kesler (volunteer facilitator) arranged a weekly Zoom meeting for about 30 people. They prayed together and studied St. Joseph as they read and discussed Father Calloway's book over a six week period. This group formally consecrated at St. Andrew's on March 19th, the Feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph.

Patty Sutton, who made her Consecration, said, "This study enabled me to embrace St. Joseph's paternal love for me as my spiritual father. Father Calloway's book led me on a wonderful spiritual journey with the Holy Family while enlightening me on the many virtues of this very special saint." Bunnie Williams also learned a lot and reported, "I didn't know that Wednesdays were dedicated to St. Joseph, so now I'm saying his Litany and the St. Joseph's Rosary on Wednesdays." Sharon Tanquary has now included St. Joseph in her morning prayers and exclaimed, "I love St. Joseph!"

The Marians of the Immaculate Conception/St Joseph website claims that, so far, over 19,200 people worldwide have pledged to consecrate to St. Joseph on March 19th or May 1st (the feast of St. Joseph the Worker). It is exciting to be part of a group honoring such a great saint. There is definitely an increase in devotion to him as you can find information about him on just about every Catholic website and there is an increase in availability of St. Joseph sacramentals.

As an expression of trust, one quote has become especially popular in this "Year of St. Joseph" and you may have seen it on tee-shirts or coffee mugs. *Ite ad Ioseph!* Go to Joseph! It is good advice!



**Pictured**  
Consecration  
of St. Joseph

## LENTEN ACTIVITIES



### **Lenten Activities at St. Andrews** by Susan Zeck

Lent 2021 has been over weeks now, but those new spiritually healthy habits we tried out while we renewed our relationship with God can remain with us. St. Andrews offered many opportunities to improve our spiritual lives during those 40 days. Here are some highlights.

### **Journey Toward Holiness**



The Journey Toward Holiness Lenten campaign was launched by Father Robert on the weekend of

February 6th and 7th. Barb Lishko, Coordinator of Marriage Ministries and Adult Faith Formation, also coordinated this program which included a commitment to daily prayer and several other specific faith based actions. Barb reported that 293 parishioners signed up to participate. Everyone received two weekly emails which provided additional devotional readings, meditations, assignments, and special videos with featured speakers such as Bishop Robert Barron, Scott Hahn, and Father Mike Schmitz. Barb received very positive feedback about the ways God was moving in the hearts of the participants.

Father Robert also invited us to a deeper commitment to prayer by viewing the Daily Lenten Reflections found on the Children's Faith Formation web page. These short inspiring reflections were especially geared towards families and children. Jacob Dhaenens, a long-time parishioner, was charged by Father Teilo to write the scripts for these reflections. Four topics were included: Call to Prayer, Saints, Mass, and Forgiveness. These were presented by the young leaders in Religious Education and videoed by Father Teilo with hope that the spark of faith would be ignited in everyone tuning in to listen. The kiddos did a fantastic job!

### **Stations of the Cross**



The Stations of the Cross are familiar Lenten traditions at St. Andrew's. They are usually led by a different ministry each Friday. This year, two new presentations were added. The Respect Life Ministry led the Stations of the Cross for Life, which included The Scriptural Way of the Cross, as first

## LENTEN ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

presented by St. John Paul II on Good Friday in 1991. The prayers after each Scripture reading were added by the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities to give voice to the most vulnerable.

These stations are alternatives to the traditional ones and only include events in Christ's Passion that were specifically documented in the Scriptures. This necessitated the addition of several stations, such as "Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane" and "Jesus, betrayed by Judas, is Arrested." These stations replace those that are omitted because they lacked precise biblical reference, such as, the three falls of Jesus. The Stations were read from the ambo with a backdrop of artwork showing the action for each particular station described. It was a very reverent and moving presentation.



The Drive-thru Stations were a unique spiritual experience with an interesting back story. Near the end of 2020, the Parish Council was looking for ways to bring people physically back to church activities safely, as many parishioners were still reluctant to return due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Angelica Hernandez, a Council member, suggested incorporating lights or candles somehow since Jesus is the light of the world. Julie Dworaczyk, a Journey Religious Education ("RE") teacher and a mechanical drafter, instead thought of reflections of the light, shadows and, ultimately, silhouettes. The idea for the Drive-thru Silhouette Stations of the Cross was

born, and the project was set for Lent.

So many hands touched this project as it all came to fulfillment. Julie created it, the Journey RE students traced the patterns, the Knights of Columbus contributed financially and cut the images, and adult and child lectors read the scripts. Barb Lishko coordinated with Father Robert and arranged for the use of Father Mark Toup's (Ascension Press) "Way of the Cross, Praying the Psalms with Jesus." Father Teilo jumped in and used his amazing audio skills to record the lectors and set up the pre-recorded meditations for each station. You could listen to the entire program on your car radio while stopped in front of each station set up along the perimeter of the parking lot, which provided a safe and socially distanced environment. It was a private and meaningful experience. You could also walk by the stations and listen to the meditations on your phone. They held up well even with wind and rain.

### **No Greater Love**

No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion by Edward Sri of Ascension Press was offered as a five week course held here on campus. The lessons incorporated the Old Testament prophecies, biblical symbolism, and historical content, and covered Jesus' passion from His agony in the garden through His death and burial. There were 30 participants who met weekly in two groups. Kim Doyle, Coordinator of Special Needs Religious Education and Coordinator of RCIA, was the facilitator. The course included readings, workbook assignments, group discussion, and videos filmed on location in the Holy Land with the simple objective to know Jesus better.

Kim fell in love with the course when it was offered here two years ago and had a strong desire to share how beautiful scripture is and how much it can help us grow our love for God and the Trinity. Andrea Dade, who attended for the second time said, "I find it always very rewarding to my soul when I listen to the discussions about the love He has for us."

***Preach the truth as if you had a million voices. It is silence that kills the world.***

- St. Catherine of Siena

## LENTEN ACTIVITIES (CONT.)

### Jesse Romero - Lenten Mission



Jesse Romero, a retired Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy now a full-time lay Catholic evangelist, presented our Lenten Mission over three days during the last week in Lent. He was a dynamic speaker and people in attendance described him as energizing, passionate, uplifting, and inspiring. Over 500 people attended at the church over the three days with another 55-60 live streaming each of those days. He gave permission to leave his videos on St. Andrew's website and hundreds more have tuned in since. The videos are still there for your viewing!



Jesse spoke on a different topic each day, but they all overlapped. His main focus, touched on daily, was all about living a holy life in the state of grace in order to get to heaven. He told us to imitate Christ. He also cautioned us to know our enemy and know how to protect ourselves from these spiritual predators. Jesse stressed the importance of deliverance prayers, such as the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel and the Our Father. He said, "Grace is the power God gives you to resist the devil.

So, the first state of protection against demons is to live in a state of grace."

Jesse talked about the power of prayer, describing prayer as conversations with God and that it is a weapon more powerful than demons. He listed 12 points to help us get to heaven, which included many of the basics of our Catholic faith such as the Mass, Confession, the Eucharist, Adoration, the Rosary, Scriptures, and the Chaplet. He also added watching EWTN and listening to holy music!

Parishioners were excited to listen to him and readily engaged with him during his presentations. Chuck and Libby Bender both enjoyed his talks. Libby said, "Jesse's straightforward, high energy approach to Catholicism is refreshing and his memory of Scripture is impressive. We look forward to implementing as many of the steps to remain in the state of grace as we possibly can."

Ted and Martha Gonzalez attended the last two sessions and found him to be a powerful speaker. Martha described him as a Catholic warrior and a true disciple of Christ. She especially liked him stressing the importance of living in a state of grace and how we are called to live a life of holiness. She adds, "He proclaims, preaches and practices his Catholic faith!" Ted enjoyed his testimonials on the power of prayer.

Joe Schmidt was totally impressed. He used to listen to him on his lunch hour on Catholic radio and says "Jesse used to describe himself as a low information Catholic. He cannot say that now!"

Jesse has written several books and has his own website. If you are interested in getting more information about him or his work, go to [www.jesseromero.com](http://www.jesseromero.com).

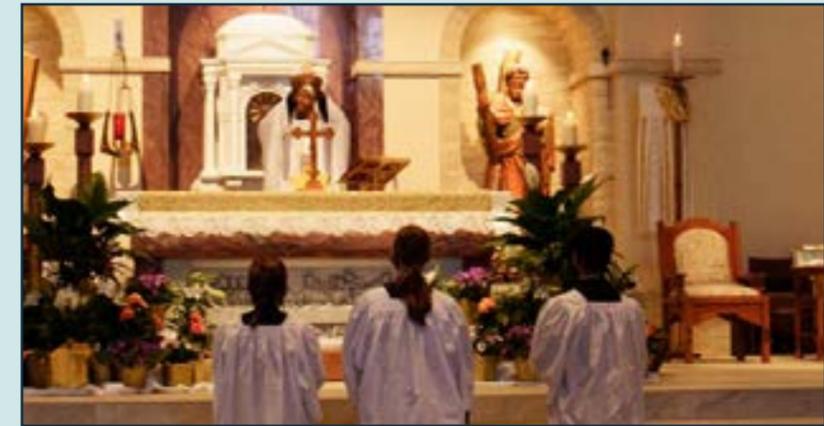


There was a lot going on here at St. Andrews over those 40 days of Lent 2021. Hopefully, everyone grew closer to Christ in some way.

## ZOOMING IN



### EASTER SERVICES



### BLOOD DRIVE



## FATHER TEILO - PALM SUNDAY HOMILY

*Father Teilo's Palm Sunday Homily Transcript - March 28, 2021*

*Transcribed by Gabriel Tito*

Good morning,

Every year, we celebrate Palm Sunday or the Passion Sunday whereby we, intentionally and deliberately, reflect on the passion of Christ and Good Friday. We are going to do the same reflection on the passion of Christ and we focus more on the passion, suffering, and death as we await the resurrection. So, in this Sunday's readings, I want us to reflect on four things: the passion on the cross; the nails; the wounds and scars; and death and the resurrection.

### **The Passion on the Cross:**

You know, all of us undergo difficulties and as we saw Jesus going through the pain. One thing that is clear, when we are in pain, when we are going through struggles, that is when we know who our friends are. You know, and there is one man who said that a hungry stomach and an empty wallet will let you know who really loves you and does not love you. Just get broke, if a man is dating and he gets broke he'll really know if his girlfriend loves him or not. You know, just saying.

So, we are invited to really reflect deeply on our journey of life and to invest more on those whom we love. Because sometimes, those whom we think are closer to us, may be far away from us. They may be too close yet too far from us. And, those whom we think are not close to us are actually the people who are closest to us. You know, there will always be that person who is praying for you and secretly following your moves just to make sure you are okay.

Unfortunately, those are the people whom we chase away from us. Today's reading reminds us that you may always be keen and intentional, and aware of those who really love us, vis-a-vis those who don't really love us. We all have crosses to carry and as Christians it is clear that everyone has to take their own cross. The world is not fair; we all know that. But Christian discipleship calls every human race at any single time to try and make the world a better place. So, we are called upon to make the world that we live in a better place. We have the history for those who made the world the worst place for a particular people and we have the opportunity to make the world a better place. Not like what happened before but what we want to leave and what we want to happen later on in life.

But, before we do that, as we work on making the world a better place, I always ask myself this question: what if we make ourselves better people for the world? What if we leave better people for the world to come? What if our parents left better people for this current world, and we are the better people and we are not taking it seriously? Maybe we are taking it for granted. The current generation seems to be entitled because we have everything we want. I can call Africa in just snip of a second, I can video call my mom. Kiddos have iPhones and all that kind of stuff. You just press order and amazon sends you stuff, you know. Those who were born before the computer know how long it took. So, all these technological advancements has made us become an entitled generation. And the more we become entitled, the more we take things for granted because we are privileged and as a privileged society, when we undergo pains and process come along our way, we

blame everything and anything. Only because we have not realised the effort that was put by the generation that came before us.

So, as we undergo through passion, as we carry our crosses, let us always be grateful for those who lived before us, who prepared the way for us, who made us to have a better life, so that we may be able to carry our crosses with gratefulness, with love, with charity. Let us make our sufferings an opportunity to make us become better people. You know, we can never control what is happening. We can never control that. But we can always control how we react and respond to whatever is happening around us.

***"So, as we undergo through passion, as we carry our crosses, let us always be grateful for those who lived before us, who prepared the way for us, who made us to have a better life, so that we may be able to carry our crosses with gratefulness, with love, with charity. Let us make our sufferings an opportunity to make us better people."***

### **The Nails:**

Jesus was nailed on the cross. It was not fun, you know. And after dying the nails were removed and later on he was resurrected. But I want us to focus on the nails. What are the nails in our lives? What are those burdens that hold us back? What are the struggles we are going through? If you are married, are you struggling in your marriage? If you are divorced, what really made you get divorced? Have you sought healing for your current situation? Have you even applied to go through annulment? For the healing of you as a person, do you take time to help your kiddos heal through the pain? You know, everybody knows I hang out with kiddos every week, like three hundred kids and they tell me stuff and some of the most painful stuff they say is that they are tired of bouncing back and forth from one house to the other.

Kids are a victim or a consequence of our egos as adults. So, for those of you adults who are struggling, do you really think about your kiddos? Maybe those are the nails that you have and the nails are burdening your kiddos. What if you remove the nails? What if you let go of your ego? What if you accept to go through the healing, so that your kiddo may also have a healing of themselves? Kids who are brought up in a divorced family, if not well brought up, they'll continue to inflict that very wound to their family and it keeps going on and on and on.

Nobody loves that. I cannot blame anybody who gets divorced, but I can blame them for the responsibility they take for that action. We are all called as Christians, to help fellow Christians peel off their nails. If our friends are struggling, especially in marital relationships, do we help them become better people, or do we help them become twice fit for hell? My invitation is for all of us to help to remove each other's nails so that we can heal and become resurrected.

## FATHER TEILO - PALM SUNDAY HOMILY (CONT.)

### **The Wounds and Scars:**

After being nailed, we get wounds, but after a while the wounds healed, and we remain with scars. But, as adults, we have a choice to make. Do we concentrate on the wounds we had when we got the pain, or do we look at the scars that have healed and use them to make us make better choices? How many of us are suffering because we fear to let go of our past pains? We fear to let go of what really made us suffer. How many of us are wounded and are refusing to get healed only because we are used to our comfort zone? We like the attention that comes when we say we are suffering, and we put that attention on our kiddos you know.

My dad loves physics. I know my dad is watching so, the good thing he's far away, but I dislike physics at all costs, but I love the benefits. So, my dad wanted me to be a physicist like him physics and that kind of mathematics. So, my dad would always get mad because he could not understand why I don't like mathematics. My dad was trying to infuse his knowledge to me and it was not working. I loved tailoring like my mom it made him sad you know, but my mom was like "way to go son." I loved cooking then, you know.

So, my dad was forcing his knowledge on me and it was not working. That was a good way. Now let us put it the other way round. What if you hate your spouse and you force that hate to your kiddo and your kiddo is burdened with your hate and your kiddo joins you in hating your ex for no reason just because you say so? Can you see how that can be dangerous? Let us not transfer our wounds to those whom we love. Let us not force those who love us to carry our wounds and propagate it more and more.

We are invited to look at our scars and allow ourselves to heal. Let us become wounded healers. I think it's Henry Newman who wrote a book, The Wounded Healer. We can be wounded,

in whatever reason but we need to allow ourselves to heal and use our pain, which becomes our scars to help those whom we love to avoid going through the same pain.

### **Death and the Resurrection:**

The bitter truth is that we will never stop bad people from doing bad things. That's the sad reality, but we have a choice of controlling the damage that is done by bad people. Even if we assign police officers to each and every person in the world, be sure, there'll be bad people who will go around and cause havoc. Look at the countries, which are heavily guarded. Even countries like North Korea, still bad people exist and kill other people. Countries with many rules than the rest of the world, like U.S., people are committing evil. So, what can we do?

We have the opportunity to control the damage that is done by bad people and we can only do that if we take personal responsibility, if we help people understand and accept their situations and work out of it. Every society has the Christian discipleship and the responsibility to make sure that they work through their challenges. If we throw the responsibility from one side to the other of the society, we lose because we don't deal with the pain. We are invited to deal with those thorny issues that affect us as a society not ignore them, not go around them and call each other names but work through them and remove the pains, the nails from the society.

We are invited, in today's readings that as we reflect on the Passion and the Cross, on the nails that put Jesus on the Cross, on the wounds and scars of Jesus, and on his death and resurrection, that we may allow ourselves to heal and become better Christians day in day out. Whether we like it or not because we know the benefits of taking personal responsibility and how it can help the world become a better society.

In the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

## KNIGHT'S CORNER

*by Darren Weninger*

As restrictions continue to be lifted, ever so slightly, the Knights of Columbus have started to bring back some of the services that were offered prior to the shutdown. The Knights resumed the offering of the Pancake Breakfast on the third Sunday of every month. While this breakfast is not a sit-down serving as it has been in the past, it is at least good to interact with the members of the Parish again. In January, we offered the breakfast as a takeout only and even though we were interrupted by a much-needed storm it was successful. We have continued to offer this in February and March and will do so for April and May. The dates for the breakfast will be April 18th and May 16th, and we are serving from 7:00 AM until after the 10:00 AM Mass. The menu includes plain and blueberry buttermilk pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, and breakfast burritos. More importantly, since we have started the breakfast up again the Knights are able to donate back to the various ministries in the church.

In addition to the Pancake Breakfasts, the Knights resumed the Friday Fish Fry during Lent. Prior to the praying of the Stations of the Cross, we served fish, hushpuppies, fries, coleslaw,

and grilled cheese sandwiches by drive up/carry out only. In February, the first two Fridays started out slowly, but by the end of Lent there were over 140 meals served to the Parish each night. Thanks to the members of the Parish for making this a very successful event! We may continue next year with a drive through offering as well as a sit down as many members commented on the ease of driving through after work to pick up Friday dinner.

The Knights also supported the parish to help create a "drive through" Stations of the Cross, much like the outdoor Nativity scene. Each of the stations were depicted with a cutout and a recorded praying of the station was played. This will be expanded on with more permanent cutouts as the response to this was very favorable. This just shows that in spite of the restrictions we have all learned how to adapt; however, it will be nice to get back to normal very soon, hopefully. The Knights want to thank St. Andrews Parishioners for their support as we continue to expand what we are able to do for the Parish!



## ABORTION

### Abortion

by Charlie Johnston



In the time that I've been writing, on my site, for this parish newsletter, and on several Catholic websites, I've tried to stay away from controversial topics. I've never taken a public position on communion in the hand versus on the tongue, Ordinary Form vs Extraordinary Form, Gregorian chant versus guitar masses, and so on. This is partly because I don't want to turn anyone off from learning about our faith. All of these topics having ardent supporters on both sides, but also partly because these are all issues that are up to each individual to decide for themselves.

Sure, there's some who say the Mass since Vatican II is illicit, but that is not the position of the Church, and they are a relatively small minority. I can receive the Eucharist on my tongue, and you can receive in your hand, I will think no less of you and you will think no more of me, because both are permitted ways of receiving Our Lord. I can prefer guitars, chant, or organ music, and it doesn't invalidate the Sacrifice of the Mass. These are all matters of personal taste and opinion; I try to deal only in facts and doctrines.

There are also things that the Church says we must do, like take care of the poor, but the "how" is left up to us. We can support local charities, we can advocate for smaller government so people have more money to give to charity, we can also support a large welfare state that theoretically takes care of the poor. How the poor are cared for is a matter of prudential judgment, the Church just says that it must be done and leaves us free to figure out the details.

Then there are issues in the Church that are not matters left to each person to decide. These revolve around principles and teachings that are often called "non-negotiables" in our contemporary conversations. One of these non-negotiables is abortion. The teachings of the Church that touch on issues of life are often a hard pill to swallow for some converts, for me it was one of the easiest. I've always been pro-life, and very outspoken about my beliefs that life begins at conception and should be protected. My beliefs weren't so much based on religious convictions or church teachings, but on what I always considered common sense and a basis for a civilized people: You don't kill children.

Considering the Church's firm teachings on this issue, what I didn't expect when becoming Catholic was the amount of dissent I'd encounter from my co-religionists. Some mistakenly believe that the Church has "softened its stance on this issue," but that just shows a severe lack of catechesis in the Church

today. The Church can't suddenly allow an intrinsic evil as a way to "get with the times." If something is gravely evil it can never be allowed.

Others think that their conscience is supreme, and since they aren't bothered by the thought of abortion, then it's not a sin for them to support it. But once again, abortion is intrinsically evil, so if your conscience has no problem with it, then there is a problem with your conscience.

#### Three positions

When it comes to abortion, opinions among your everyday Catholics, and most of society, fall into one of three categories:

#### 1. Abortion is the ending of an innocent life and we must actively work to end this tragedy.

This is the majority position of the laity in the Church, and most importantly, it is the position of the Church itself. This position is founded upon scripture, tradition and science. First, there is the biblical prohibition against murder that can be found in the Fifth Commandment, among other places. This commandment is commonly misquoted as "thou shall not kill" but a more accurate rendering would be "thou shall not murder." What would constitute murder? Murder is the intentional taking of an innocent human life. This is exactly what takes place with abortion.

Abortion supporters try to tell us that a fetus is not a human and, therefore, it's ok to kill them. But if a fetus is not a human, it begs the question of what is it? Does an unborn child only become human at some point decided by the mother? By the doctor? When it becomes sentient? Is there a magical moment when it becomes human?

Often, Christians are accused of being "anti-science," but I think that saying an unborn human is not actually human unless people agree that it is, is the epitome of the anti-scientific attitude of the day (in close second would be the belief that one can choose their own gender). But more on that in the next section.

One of the biggest pieces of evidence for the psychopathy of this postmodern society is the idea that an unborn child's worth is entirely dependent on whether it was "wanted." As an example, if a pregnant woman were to get into a car accident and lose her baby as a result, the baby would be mourned, and it would be mourned by the public if the woman was a public figure. But if this same public figure were to announce she had aborted the life inside of her, she'd be called "brave and bold," but the child wouldn't be mourned by society. Nobody would offer her their condolences. Society would celebrate the "empowering decision of *Roe v. Wade*" that allowed this person to exercise their choice. An unborn human being's worth is solely determined by its value in the eyes of the one responsible for its wellbeing. If that person doesn't value the life within her it has no value, if she desires to keep the child it has immeasurable value.

The unborn child was a human person and its death is a tragedy, regardless of if it was a wanted child or was unwanted. This is obvious to a person with common sense, but when blinded by modern morality, a person is unable to see these logical inconsistencies.

## ABORTION (CONT.)

There's also this trope that "Jesus never mentions abortion" as if He needed to leave us a list of dos and don'ts. Never mind that this undercuts the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Trinity (because Jesus is co-eternal with the Father, and so existed and was active in the world in the age of the Old Testament), it just doesn't comport with what Jesus called the "New Commandment."

*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* John 13:34

And later Saint Paul expands on this, in his letter to the Galatians he writes,

*For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Galatians 5:14

It's understandable that these Bible passages would carry no weight with non-believers, but for a Christian, how does murdering the unborn child line up with this law to love? Some might say it's more compassionate, therefore more loving, to kill a child rather than letting them be born and live a potentially difficult life. Only in our Orwellian culture could killing be equivalent to love and death be preferable to existence.

Second, there are the teachings of the Church. These teachings, founded in the Church's magisterial authority, would be of no consequence to a non-Catholic Christian, but should never be casually dismissed by those calling themselves Catholic. Unfortunately, this is all too common.

CCC 2270 Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.

Human life must be "respected and protected" because we are all made in the image and likeness of God. We are all children of God and have inalienable rights, that don't just exist on paper or in the philosophical principles of America's Founders. The right to life is inherent to all humans from the moment God creates our souls at conception.

This right to life is the most basic of all rights. Without that right, none other matters. My rights that come from God, and are protected by the US constitution, are of zero worth if I first don't have life. Without life, my right to free speech, free association, to practice my religion or any other enumerated or unenumerated right, means absolutely nothing. Since life is the foundation of all the rest, it must be protected more stringently and with more diligence than all the rest. We must do this in word and deed, we must work towards building a "culture of life" as Pope Saint John Paul II called it, to counter this prevailing culture of death. This prohibition against abortion is not some new invention by the Church magisterium either, it has been part of our tradition since the earliest days of the Church. In the *Didache*, an early catechism from the second century, there is a clear teaching that abortion is forbidden.

*You shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten.* *Didache* 2:2

All this adds up to the fact that abortion at every stage of fetal development is condemned by the Church. This firm stance for life and resistance against the culture of death is the last speedbump for western civilization's race down the highway to Hell.

#### 2. An unborn child is just a collection of cells and aborting a fetus is no different than having your wisdom teeth removed.

This second position is the coldest of the two pro-abortion positions in my opinion, and completely dehumanizes the unborn. This is a classic tactic for those who want to exterminate a class or group of people. Hardly anyone of good conscience would willing go along with genocide against fellow human beings, but feed those same people enough propaganda that "they aren't fully human after all," and it makes it far easier to march them to the ovens or the killing fields.

People who hold this position will sometimes believe in limits on when a child may be killed based on gestational age. Some say 20 weeks, some 24, sometimes it's up until birth in cases where the mother's health is endangered. But since the child, in their opinion, is not a person until birth, these limits don't really mean anything. Even the "health of the mother" exception can be interpreted so broadly that it can include things like emotional health and financial health. Essentially, meaning that a baby can be killed for any reason and at any time.

One of the common justifications for this position is that the child is "dependent" on the mother for all things, but then what's to stop a court from one day extending the exercise of your "reproductive rights" to the killing of toddlers? They are wholly dependent on their mother as well. Or, what about a missed diagnosis of Down's syndrome? We know that the vast majority of children diagnosed with DS before they are born are aborted, so what if it's discovered after birth? The culture of death claims that it's more "loving and merciful" to terminate a child that would have no quality of life, so how about a 1-year-old with a terminal diagnosis?

In today's world, it feels like every contentious conversation eventually devolves into *Reductio ad Hitlerum* ("playing the Nazi card"), but tell me what other social movement sounds as similar to the ideas of 1930's Germany as the "Reproductive Rights" movement? Go to your local Holocaust museum and read the documents related to Action T-4. This was the start of Nazi Germany's genocide across Europe. It all started with those deemed "Lebensunwertes Leben" or living a life unworthy of life. This included the mentally handicapped, those with hereditary physical handicaps, children with birth defects, and anyone that will have a hard life.

There's also the idea that a child does not gain personhood, and therefore rights, when it gains sentience. This theory of personhood is even more dangerous because it opens the door to the liquidation of all people in comas, persistent vegetative states, or even depending on how you define sentience, children up until 3 or 4 years old. Once again, look up the Nazi policies toward the most vulnerable.

If we can define who is a person, based on nothing more than our subjective opinion, we can include and exclude anyone at will. This is always how genocides begin, whether in Rwanda, Germany, Sudan, Cromwell's campaign in Ireland, or in the United States since *Roe v. Wade*.

## ABORTION (CONT.)

### **3. Abortion is wrong, but we can't outlaw it because that's a personal choice that I don't feel comfortable imposing on someone else.**

Finally, we arrive at the position that is commonly held by "pro-choice Catholics." While it's less cold blooded and genocidal in attitude than the previous one, it is also the one that is most sinful in my opinion. The reason that I say this is because it acknowledges that abortion is "wrong," but then claims that for whatever reason it's not "wrong enough" to challenge someone's choice.

If you are of this opinion, ask yourself this question. Who is more culpable; the man who doesn't believe blacks are human, therefore, it's ok to enslave them, or the man who knows they are just as human as him, but doesn't think he has a right to tell the plantation owner not to enslave them? The one who knows but does nothing. Not that he has to spark a rebellion, but agreeing with the injustice and not voicing any opposition carries the greater sin because he knows right from wrong.

If you believe abortion is wrong, but it doesn't align with your political persuasions, then you need to seriously examine your political persuasions and consider if they're more important and central to your life than your religious convictions.

#### **No Grey Area**

I had a prominent pro-choice catholic tell me that "Catholics struggle with the church's teachings on abortion, and so it's not black and white." While I don't disagree that some may struggle with these teaching, I reject the idea that their difficulty in accepting these teachings in any way make them less clear or authoritative. I'm sure some people struggle with the concept and idea of the Trinity. It's something that's hard to wrap your head around, especially for converts from Islam, but that doesn't

make the doctrine of the Trinity any less true. It only means that those having difficulty with it need to pray about it and do more studying on that doctrine.

I also get asked all the time if I believe everything the Church teaches, if I agree with all those teachings, and if I live by them. The short answer to these is yes, yes, and I try. I do believe everything the Church teaches. When I stood at the foot of the altar in my parish and said, "I believe and profess all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God," I wasn't lying. I do happen to agree with all the teachings, but even if I didn't, that doesn't make them less true. Is the earth not round because some people don't agree that it is? Is gravity less effective on those that deny its existence? Our agreement with a truth isn't necessary for it to be true, it's true by its nature, our agreement notwithstanding.

Do I live by the teachings of the Church? I sure try, and when I fail, there's always confession available to get back on track.

#### **The Good News**

Abortion is an attack on the respect and dignity that we owe to every person because they are made in the image and likeness of God. Abortion is also a direct assault on the law of love that Jesus called us to live. There's no more severe attack on love than a parent killing their child. All children have a right to life because they are persons, regardless of their physical or cognitive defects; a birth defect makes you no less a child of God. Abortion is murder because it is the intentional ending of human life.

Let us all pray to end abortion. Pray for those involved that they may have a change of heart, and those that have repented that they may be healed from this loss they've experienced.

***For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.***

- Psalm 139: 13-16