

THE MAGAZINE

OF THE CATHOLIC

DIOCESE OF

SAGINAW

Issue 3, 2022

faith *Saginaw*

IN THE KNOW WITH FATHER JOE

Sometimes our faith seems so complicated

SPECIAL REPORT

Protecting children and vulnerable adults

PARENTING

How to create a strong Catholic home



Peace *amidst heartache*

The Volls find solace and strength from Jesus in Adoration Chapel

Coffee
GETS ME
STARTED
Jesus
KEEPS ME GOING

I can't remember exactly when I began drinking coffee, but over the years it has become part of my a.m. routine ... it helps get me going. Of course, if I don't get enough sleep or I've veered away from a balanced diet, no amount of coffee can give me the energy I am desperately looking for during the day.

When it comes to spiritual energy and strength, there is no substitute for the Eucharist. Like food, water and sleep for the body, the Eucharist provides nourishment for our soul. It is the source and summit of our faith.

How often do we think about the gift of the Eucharist in our lives? Like those things we depend upon to fuel our bodies, what fuels our souls? Like reaching for a coffee for energy, do we sometimes seek out counterfeit means to find the love, belonging and healing we are longing for?

Over the course of the next three years, we are invited to rediscover anew the gift of the Eucharist in our lives as part of the national Eucharistic Revival. There will be opportunities for us to be drawn into deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist (read more in Bishop Gruss' column beginning on page 4).

Please pray about the ways in which the Lord is reaching out to you right now as you are reading this and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how you are being called to respond.

The Lord gives himself to us in the Eucharist so that we can become more like him whom we receive. Imagine if we all take to heart this invitation. Imagine a life more fully alive in Him!

Come Holy Spirit! †



ERIN LOOBY CARLSON

is editor of FAITH Saginaw magazine and director of communications for the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

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Regina Toljyest / iStock / Getty Images Plus



Levi Voll, 3, likes to “sit by Jesus,” says his mother Monica.

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"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." JOHN 6:51

of the Christian Life" (*Lumen Gentium 11*). Because it is the source and summit, the Eucharist is not a mere symbol or a representation of something. The Holy Eucharist is a person, Jesus Christ himself, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The more Catholics come to realize and believe this reality, the more this renewed and/or deeper faith will build up the Body of Christ, the Church. This is why this Eucharistic Revival is so important for our diocese and the Church. It is designed to impact every level of the Church, from the home and parish to the national arena.

The Holy Eucharist brings us into communion with him, enabling us to live with him in the life of the Trinity, and to not only be transformed by this love but, with him, to transform the world through our lives made holy by this union.

The five pillars of the Eucharistic Revival are:

- Foster encounters with Jesus through kerygmatic proclamation and experiences of eucharistic devotion. *[Kerygma refers to the heart of the Gospel message.]*
- Contemplate and proclaim the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist through the truth of our teaching, beauty of our worship, and goodness of our accompaniment of persons in poverty and those who are vulnerable.
- Empower grassroots creativity by partnering with movements, apostolates, parishes and educational institutions.
- Reach the smallest units: parish small groups and families.

Eucharistic Revival will strengthen families, parishes and the Church

As has been already shared, one of the priorities in 2022 and beyond for the Diocese of Saginaw is a movement of Eucharistic Revival. This national Revival is intended to be far more than a series of events. It aims to be a movement that renews the Church by enkindling a living relationship with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. When the bishops of the United States began to plan the Eucharistic Revival, they envisioned a true revival to rediscover the source and summit of our faith through a deep commitment to prayer, pilgrimage and worship on the part of the entire Church in the United States.



THE MOST REV. ROBERT D. GRUSS
is the seventh bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

The mission of this three-year grassroots Revival is to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord through devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The vision is to create a movement of Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist—and then sent out in mission “for the life of the world.”

As shepherd of the Diocese of Saginaw, I long to help others come to know and experience Jesus in a more personal and life-changing way, especially through the celebration of the Sunday Mass. The Eucharist, the Church’s greatest treasure, “is the source and summit

- Embrace and learn from the various rich intercultural eucharistic traditions.

By the time you are reading this, we will have celebrated the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ with Mass and a Eucharistic procession.

We'll have more on that in the next issue. Throughout this next year, there will be other events which bring an emphasis to the importance of the Holy Eucharist in the life of all Catholics, as well.

This Revival also encourages parishes to increase opportunities or to begin opportunities for eucharistic adoration. Therefore, my vision is to include monthly opportunities for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the form of Holy Hours in parishes across the Diocese, whereby I would personally attend and pray with your local parish communities. Realizing the great need for vocations, the focus for these Holy Hours would be for an increase of vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life within our Diocese, while at the same time deepening our own love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

When this Holy Hour comes to your parish, I can envision a great gathering of local disciples around our Lord Jesus who seeks to renew in each of us his divine love and mercy. This will lead to a beautiful conversion of our hearts and a deeper conversion of our diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What a wonderful gift the Lord desires to share with us!

In conclusion, I share with you the closing paragraphs of the recent document on the Eucharist from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Mystery of The Eucharist in the Life of the Church*:

“Let us all ask the Lord to call us into a time of eucharistic

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS WITH BISHOP GRUSS

Bishop Gruss will lead a Holy Hour for vocations twice each month at parishes across the diocese. The first will be:

Thursday, July 14 at 7 p.m.

Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw

The Bishop has reached out to all parish leaders and is welcoming invitations to lead a Holy Hour in your parishes. All are welcome!

renewal, a time of prayer and reflection, of acts of charity and sincere repentance. The Lord is with us in the Eucharistic Mystery celebrated in our parishes and missions, in our beautiful cathedrals and in our poorest chapels. He is present and he draws near to us, so that we can draw nearer to him. The Lord is generous to us with his grace; and so we, by his grace, should always humbly ask him to give us what we need. [#58]

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Risen Christ says to us, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water (Rev 21:6). Brothers and sisters, let us thirst for the Lord who first suffered thirst for us (Jn 19:28).

Let us adore Jesus who ever remains with us, on all the altars of the world, and lead others to share in our joy!” [#59] †

JUNE 19: LAUNCH OF THE EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

JUNE 19, 2022 - JUNE 11, 2023

Diocesan leaders and priests participate in diocesan-level formation events and prepare for training Eucharistic missionaries for the parish revivals that begin in June 2023.

JUNE 11, 2023 - JULY 17, 2024

The revival happens in parishes, with the assistance of “Eucharistic missionaries” who Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of the Diocese of Crookston, Minn., chairman of the USCCB on Evangelization and Catechesis, described as “parish lay leaders who help to organize and carry out the revival at the parish level.”

JULY 17-21, 2024: NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS - INDIANAPOLIS

Thousands of Catholics will journey on pilgrimage to Indianapolis. The goal is to “animate and strengthen” them through a personal encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist.

JULY 17, 2024 - PENTECOST 2025

The pilgrims who attend the National Congress are sent as missionaries to their dioceses and parishes and “out to the margins to invite people into our ‘Eucharistic communities,’” according to Bishop Cozzens.

Prayer for the Eucharistic Revival

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love you! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, nor adore, nor hope, nor love you.

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore you profoundly. I offer you the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which he is offended. And, through the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of you the conversion of sinners. - OUR LADY OF FATIMA

DEAR FATHER JOE,

Sometimes our faith seems so complicated. I listen to different people insist that I have to do certain things to be a good Catholic. I feel like I need a basic understanding of how to be holy: How does God want me to serve him and do his will? Can you help me?

Good heavens, I hope I can help. I type that because I know this fight. I have a busy, busy brain. I have a busy, busy life, and I have no shortage of experts all around me telling me how a priest should be, what a priest should preach on, how a priest should act. I often tell people that everyone is an expert on priesthood except me.

For years, I've wrestled with this. I have spent so much time in prayer and reading and thinking, trying to figure out how to be holy – how to be the priest that Jesus wants me to be.

To me, your question is exactly what all of us who want to love Jesus struggle with, and so I'm blessed to share with you what I've learned so far.

The foundation of the answer is in remembering that God is your judge.

Humans look at you and see what you are doing. The only information they know about you is the information you give them. God looks at you and sees it all: your intention, your desire, your struggles. He sees you at the deepest part of you and he will be the one to judge you. You will not be judged by that gal who wrote a book. You will not be judged by the opinionated person with a podcast. You will be judged by God and God alone. This is who you want to make happy. This is who you want to approve of you.

And here is the good news: God approves of you. He delights in you. He has stacked the deck in favor of you getting to heaven. Your goal is to pray for the grace to be humble, prayerful and concerned with the poor and vulnerable. Your goal is to make sure you call on the Holy Spirit to help you live like Jesus.

It's also important to remember that you are not called to every fight. The reason God made so many of us and made us all so different is because one person can't do it all. Some are called to pro-life ministry, some are called to visit the sick or imprisoned. I've noticed that some folks take their personal call from God and assume it should apply to everyone. Be careful of those who do so; they usually mean well, but they can also make it seem as though their specific pursuit is the only one that truly matters. This leads me to my next point: Passion does not equal rightness.

I love passionate people: I'm one of them! But if I have learned anything



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about us passionate people it's that we need to be careful of pretending that just because we feel strongly about something, everyone else should. Passionate people can convince us that their call should be ours as well, and we want to be sure and keep our eyes on that.

It's a balance between challenging ourselves to be holy, and not confusing holiness with pretending we are God's Only Answer to each and every problem.

In terms of what we believe and how it all works, the crazy part is this: In the end, it's pretty simple. When you strip away the layers, quiet the noise and immerse yourself in Scripture and the catechism, you can soak in the core of it all and the core of it all is this:

We believe that God is a community of life and love. We believe that this community of life and love created the human race. This Trinity of Persons made humans for one purpose – to love. You could quite literally say that we were created by Love, for love, to love.

This is the core of our existence: love.

The problem is that at some point, we humans “broke rank” and decided that we would go our own way. We decided to disobey God and in the process, our human nature was broken.

In the breaking of our human nature, we became self-obsessed. We moved God off his throne and placed ourselves there.

Jesus came to take on that human nature, restore it and give us victory over the two primary fruits of the breaking of human nature: sin and death.

He took on our sin and put it to death with him on the cross.

He rose from the dead and made heaven a possibility for us.

He did this because he is Love and could quite literally do no other.

For you and me, then, our life is a response to this incredible love. It's an



Rediscover the Book of Ruth

Ruth in Boaz's Field, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, 1794-1872 Wikipedia, public domain

Recently, Pope Francis invited us to “rediscover the Book of Ruth, especially in the meditation on love and in catechesis on the family.”¹

awareness of how we can distort what love is and in the process, draw ourselves away from God.

For we who long to love God, the noise can drown out the simple truth: Our faith is a response of Love to love. We are called each day to think of and act on the word Love, growing in our understanding of how God loves, how we love and how the gap between that is filled with mercy and grace. We can never, at any point, grow content with our understanding of love. We can never say “I’ve done it!” There is more of love and less of us to throw into every equation.

If we spend our life doing nothing but reflecting on what love is and how to love like God, we will be saints.

In the end, I hope that you can take a breath today and be at peace, knowing that God sees you. He sees what you do, and why you do it. He sees how much you want to follow him and love him well, and this is all he needs to get you closer to him each day.

Love God, grow in love and be at peace. †

This short book also contains valuable teaching on the alliance of the generations: where youth shows itself to be capable of restoring enthusiasm to mature age — this is essential: when youth restores enthusiasm to the elderly — and old age discovers it is capable of reopening the future to wounded youth.

What an exquisite endorsement of the Old Testament story of Naomi, who had moved with her husband and two sons to Moab from Bethlehem of Judah in a time of famine. Naomi’s two sons married Moabite women, then Naomi’s husband and both sons died. Naomi decided to return to her homeland as the famine in Bethlehem ended. She was accompanied by her two daughters-in-law until Naomi insisted that these young

women abandon her, declaring that she could do nothing for them. One daughter-in-law returned to her own people. But Ruth refused to abandon Naomi, proclaiming:

*Wherever you go I will go,
wherever you lodge I will lodge.
Your people shall be my people
and your God, my God.²*

Resettled in Bethlehem, Ruth provided for Naomi by gleaning in the fields during the harvest. Pope Francis spoke of Naomi emerging from pessimism as she encountered the affectionate presence of Ruth. “The young Ruth is obstinate in her fidelity to a bond exposed to ethnic and religious prejudice.”

Individuals go through dark periods in which they believe they have nothing to give. In these moments, we encounter our own fear and even despair, with contrasting efforts to retreat from others or, alternatively, to cling to others – sometimes with unrealistic expectations of time or attention. Ruth exemplifies the youthful one sacrificing her own homeland and people for the people and God of Naomi. Families sometimes experience a similar circumstance when caring for the elderly. Or perhaps the opposite occurs when grandparents provide stability and encouragement to the young.

Whose intergenerational generosity is greater? That question can never be answered in human terms, as these relationships are mutually beneficial. The gracious self-gift for the sake of the other, even in a foreign land, is rewarded with the blessing of the Lord.

Yes, Naomi even later plays matchmaker, but I hope I have enticed you to read the Book of Ruth. †



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¹ Pope Francis General Audience, April 27, 2022

² Ruth 1:16

Synod inspires changes

IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

STORY BY DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SCHRIER AND
DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH



Students participate in a listening session at Nouvel Catholic Central Elementary School in Saginaw. *Photo by Danielle McGrew Tenbusch.*

Long before local synod data makes its way to the Vatican at the 2023 Synod of Bishops, the feedback provided can begin making an impact in the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw.

This is true not just for parishes, but also for Catholic schools, which are benefitting from data collected in 16 listening sessions in eight schools.

“Our Catholic schools are treasures for faith and academics,” said Deacon Gary Patelski, who also serves as the Catholic school synod coordinator. “Our students have a lot to contribute to both the school and our Church. It is important to listen to their ideas and contributions, as they are the next generation of the faith.”

Deacon Gary visited each of the diocesan high schools and those that included an eighth grade. Our Lady of

Lake Huron School Principal Michael Cavanaugh conducted the listening sessions with the eighth graders in Harbor Beach.

Discussions were based on two questions, asking for examples of what students like and what suggestions they have for their school, parish and the Catholic Church.

“Almost all of the input was positive. There were very few complaints. [Students expressed they] looked forward to making changes that would help them improve their faith and educational experience,” Deacon Gary said.

In analyzing the responses of about 500 students, clear themes emerged.

Students desired strong, authentic and relevant messages at school and Mass using their own language. They also like energetic, focused messages and testimonies from a variety of people. They especially liked homilies by younger priests.

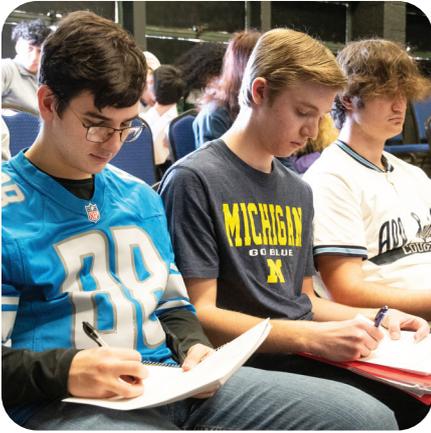
Most youth expressed the need for the music and homilies to speak to them more personally, to be upbeat and to inspire them.

Students want to have practical application of faith to life situations and to understand the reasons behind Catholic teachings.

They also want to learn the faith with interactive, engaging, project-based activities that touch the heart. They want to grow in faith, not just knowledge.

Youth desire more opportunities to experience the sacraments, including multiple Masses each week and frequent confession availability and more time for private prayer in the church or chapel.

Youth want to be a part of the church and have an active part in liturgies.



Seniors Zach Kontes, Caleb Adcock and Eli Wall fill out questionnaires for a synod listening session at All Saints Central Middle and High School in Bay City. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*



Alec Lipinski, a senior at Nouvel Catholic Central High School, raises his hand during a listening session with Deacon Gary Patelski. *Photo by Danielle McGrew Tenbusch.*



Students participate in a listening session with Deacon Gary Patelski at All Saints Central Middle and High School in Bay City. *Photo by Jeff Schrier.*

Less common opinions voiced included a desire to see both women and men leading Church gatherings, for women to have a greater role in Church leadership, a more welcoming environment and giving voice to marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community.

“It is my hope that the input gathered will be used, first, to influence what happens at our individual schools. Our students have a lot of enthusiasm for the faith throughout our diocese. We can easily put into practice some of the input received from our schools,” Deacon Gary said.

After the listening sessions, some schools reported to Deacon Gary they were already considering implementing changes based on the feedback.

“We have been discussing [the students’] input together and have had conversations with both the students and administration, thinking about ways to respond to their insights and experiences,” said Laura Wilkowski, principal of St. Brigid of Kildare School.

Responding to students’ desire to see women in Church leadership, St. Brigid staff will ensure students experience both male and female speakers, authors and saints. They are also discussing how to balance a variety of prayer experiences and Scriptural reading with students.

Several schools are adapting the Mass music as well.

“At all grade levels polled, students said that music at our school Masses need to be more upbeat, contemporary and energetic. While students want a blend of music—some traditional and some contemporary, they want music that speaks to their lives,” said Debbie Stanolis of All Saints Central Middle and High School. “We have brought in [an advisor] to help our campus minister bring more upbeat hymns into the Mass celebration. He is working from a list of suggested hymns.”

At St. Elizabeth Area School in Reese, principal Gabriela Marguery plans to respond to students’ desires for greater unity. Students suggested a social time after Mass, similar to the coffee and donuts offered by some parishes. St. Elizabeth staff is considering doing this monthly.

Students also appreciated spiritual outings and learning about saints, but wanted more.

“As COVID-19 subsides, we can have more field trips, and they can definitely be spiritual,” Gabriela said. “We can organize trips to other shrines and have retreats [off campus].”

At Our Lady of Lake Huron in Harbor Beach, principal Michael Cavanaugh hopes to respond to student requests for more opportunities for retreats and service projects. A retreat day for the kindergarten through fourth graders, including games, Scripture

reading and prayer time facilitated by the older students is also being considered, and a Christian Service Program is in the works.

As data continues to be analyzed, school administrators will continue to look for ways to improve what they are already doing well, and address opportunities for further improvement.

The Office of Catholic Schools is doing the same. The incoming director of Catholic identity and curriculum (who had not been announced at press time) will use the synod summary to address student desires at each school. The input was also discussed with Sarah Messing, coordinator of youth and young adult ministry, who can use the synod findings to inform youth ministry.

The Office of Catholic Schools is also considering working with the Office of Liturgy to develop music recommendations that may be more appealing to students, welcoming religious sisters to lead prayer services and other ways to model women serving in the Church and coordinate school visits with young adults discerning the priesthood or religious life.

In the sessions, Deacon Gary remarked on the “sense of Catholicity” in the schools.

“We can be proud of our students,” he said. †

CREATING STRONG CATHOLIC HOMES

Home is where the seeds of Christ's love are planted and nurtured. In a culture that often works against Christian values, the home becomes the greenhouse for growing strong, thriving, bold disciples who are equipped with the sturdy roots that allow them to live their lives according to the Father's plan. In this column, we will offer some ideas to create Catholic homes that foster strong roots of faith and discipleship.

Because our faith stretches far beyond Sunday Mass, as Catholic Christians we are called to believe and be visible signs of Jesus in action all the days of the week. This begins in the home. If we want our family lives to foster these strong roots of faith, let us consider how we can bring that about.

SEEING CHRIST IN OUR HOMES

Nearly every home has family pictures; they serve as witnesses to our belonging. They are a visual reminder of "our people" and the love we have for each other. Since we need to make sure there is a reminder of who loves us most and whose family we

truly belong to, every Catholic home needs a crucifix. I used to tell my kids that the crucifix showed the greatest story of sacrifice and love ever known. On a hard day, it reminds us the hardest work has already been done. On a lonely, disappointing day, it reminds us that we are loved beyond measure and it always gives us cause to be grateful. Gratitude produces joy, and our homes can always use more joy!

Holy heroes should have a place in our homes. Pictures or statues of saints remind us that we have powerful, heavenly help just waiting to intercede for us. The world is quick to put role models before our children, but

they don't often point them heavenward. The saints not only intercede for us and cheer us on toward holiness, but their stories offer us hope, inspiration and direction. These are stories our children need to hear.

Great grace and protection come from blessing your family daily with holy water. Visible signs of prayer such as the Bible, prayer books and rosaries are great reminders to include family prayer in our busy days. Age-appropriate versions of these reminders are ideal in every bedroom. Seeing parents that read Scripture and spend quiet time in prayer will inspire children to spend time doing likewise.

HEARING CHRIST IN OUR HOMES

Any parent can relate to the sometimes exhausting sound of "MOM" or "DAD" called over and over again like it was stuck on repeat, but how many times do we hear our heavenly Father's name in our homes? We ask each other for help and we pour out our frustrations, successes and challenges to each other, but do our homes echo with the sound of speaking our thanks, our needs and our joys to God? There is no greater sound in a Christian home than the sound of voices calling out the name of Jesus in prayer and conversation.

The world would change if the sound of the Father's name was spoken more often. Praying before meals should be as automatic as picking up a fork. Hearing family voices praying in the morning and at night fills the home with grace. When our children are fretful and worried, peaceful Scripture reading or quiet prayer together not only brings sweeter sleep but a calmer mind. Phrases such as, "I'm sorry," "I love you," "please forgive me," "thank you" and "Jesus we trust in you" fill our hearts and ears with the love and mercy of the Father.

The world can be filled with some ugly sounds, so the truth of Jesus and his unending, unconditional love for us should be heard loud enough and often enough to counterbalance the noises that are not of the Father. ✚



SHERI WOHLFERT

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What's the story?



FATHER ANDY LAFRAMBOISE

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Have you ever walked into a room halfway through a movie? You don't know what is going on. Who is this character? What is the conflict? Where is the story going? It is hard to watch a movie or read a book beginning at the halfway point. We have no interest in it. Even worse, imagine being in a play and you are told to go on stage halfway through, but you have no idea about anything that happened before. You don't know your role. You don't know your lines or anybody else's. You are just on stage. You know it is your time, but you don't know what to do or what to say. That sounds like a nightmare for some!

I believe that the scenario I just described is a common one for many Christians living today. Many do not know the story of Jesus and of our Catholic faith. In other words, they don't know their own story. What is going on? What is the conflict? What is the resolution? What is my role to play? Many Catholics may not have a sense of why they come to Mass, of God's plan for the world, of God's plan for their lives.

But when you know the story—when you know the beginning, the conflict and where the story is progressing—you become intrigued. Even more so, when you are the one on stage, you are all in. We are called to know the story; we are called to live the story. But what is it? How can we know it? How can we live it? This year, Father's Day falls on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord. The Church throughout the United States is beginning a Eucharistic Revival. In the Eucharist, we receive our "daily bread." Jesus is our source and summit. At the Mass, we follow the words of Jesus: "Do this in memory of me." The Mass helps us know the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, making it ever present for us in an unbloody way.

In his book, *Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Family*, Joseph Atkinson says that the Hebrew word for male, zachar, is related to the word for remember, zahar, implying that the man's mission is rooted in remembering the covenant with

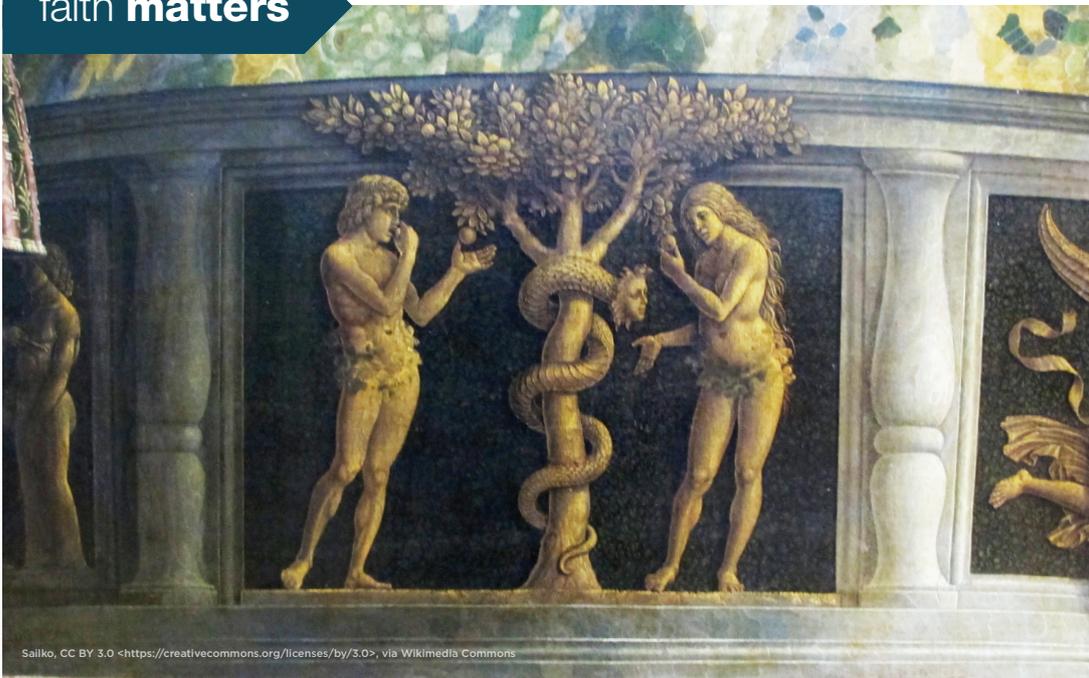
God and being a spiritual link between generations. Part of being a man of God is knowing the story and passing on the story. Our fathers teach us how to play ball, how to work with our hands, etc. They pass along what they have received. The same happens with the spiritual mission of a father. He has a mission of remembrance.

So, men of God, I have two encouragements for you.

First, learn the story. Many of you may know it already, or at least much of it. But we are in constant need of hearing and learning it anew. We refer to the core of the Gospel message as the kerygma. A great explanation of the kerygma is in Father John Riccardo's book, *Rescued*, which I encourage you to read. It's an easy read that will help you learn the story so that you don't feel like you are walking into a movie with no idea what is going on.

Just as you don't need to be a film critic to tell others about a movie, you don't need to be a Scripture scholar to tell others about Jesus. You must simply know the story.

Second, live the story. Jesus in the Eucharist shows us how to live the story. He says, "This is my body given for you." We each have our role to play in the unfolding drama of our lives. It is a beautiful story. Jesus teaches us how to act and how to speak. Like him, we offer ourselves to the Father and to those around us. †



A detail of the altar piece
Adam and Eve from
Madonna della Vittoria

The devil hates duality ... *but why?*

One of the graces God gave me at the time of my spiritual awakening in my 20s was a desire to read every good Catholic book I could get my hands on. I had been in Catholic schools for 13 years, but still did not know the Faith very well. I came across an unusual book in a library one day – a collection of true-life cases of victims of demonic possession who were then set free during exorcisms. One particular case has haunted me over the years, and it is coming to mind again because of a growing trend in our culture.



DR. DAN OSBORN
*Diocesan
Theologian and
Coordinator
of Permanent
Diaconate
Formation &
Ministry.*

The case had to do with a young woman who was finally liberated by an exorcism in 1965. As the possession was worsening, she found herself drawing inverted crosses next to traditional crosses. She had a brief, illicit encounter with a young man – but terrified him when she said that they should both love and hate each other at the same time, such that their hatred

and love would “become one.” Looking back, she described this time of her life as a “marriage to nothingness” – a phrase that two great saints would agree with. St. Thomas Aquinas defined evil as an absence, “the absence of the good, which is natural and due to a thing.” And St. Augustine taught that God cannot be the author of evil because, as Infinite Being, he cannot

be the cause of a tendency towards “not-being.”

I was especially struck by an early sign of this poor woman’s possession. In college, she started picking more and more fights with faculty members. She was especially belligerent with her philosophy professor – a nun who was adept at showing the flaws in many modern philosophies. One day, this professor explained one of the most foundational of all truths, the principle of noncontradiction. This is a self-evident “first principle” upon which all knowledge is built. It states that something cannot be and not-be in the same respect at the same place and time. The professor gave an example: A piece of furniture is here. While it is here, it cannot not be here. Being and non-being cannot be identified as the same thing.

The possessed student protested fiercely along these lines: “Why can’t they be one? You cannot prove your statement. You are just presuming it!” The nun tried to continue, but was cut off by the agitated student. “Why can’t I have my own first principle? Let’s say: being and non-being are inseparable. The piece of furniture is here because it isn’t here. God exists because he doesn’t exist at the same time.”

Clearly, the demon possessing this poor student was – forgive the expression – hell-bent on

attacking the principle of noncontradiction, which Aristotle considered to be “the most certain of all principles.” The devil clearly hates God-given dualities and therefore attacks them with nefarious rage. “Duality” in this context refers to the difference between two opposite things (life vs. death) or two distinct things that complement each other (male vs. female).

Current assault on God-given dualities

In our culture, we see that this attack has widened in scope and strengthened in intensity. The most basic dualities that are woven into reality, and which are key for living as disciples of Christ, are disappearing before our eyes:

* Instead of having recourse to the classic dualities of right vs. wrong (or good vs. bad), the accepted language has now shifted to a sense of “appropriateness.”

* We are seeing a constant erosion of the duality of male vs. female. The field of study called “queer theory,” for example, seeks to do away with traditional thinking about the duality of gender. Proponents of this theory tend to assert that we can be both male and female at the same time.

* It is increasingly common to hear people say “the universe” instead of “God” – a term flowing from eastern religions such as Buddhism that erases the duality of Creator vs. creation; the euphemism

“universe” actually reflects a pre-Christian worldview called pantheism, which makes no distinction between the dual realities of the supernatural (God) and the natural realm (what God has created).

Speaking of Buddhism, its influence is clearly on the rise. A 2015 Pew Research study indicates that in North America, the Buddhist population is projected to grow in the coming decades. Buddhism is now frequently celebrated in animated films for children. Meditation practices rooted in Buddhism, often promoted under the heading of “mindfulness,” are taking root in many school systems, corporate settings, et cetera. (In a coming article, I will look more deeply at the relationship between mindfulness and Catholic spirituality, since I cannot do the topic justice here.)

In some branches of Buddhism, a key goal is to overcome dualistic ways of thinking, as we see in this quote from Yoga Journal: “As my meditation teacher says, ‘Judgment is a form of violence to yourself as well as others. It creates duality and separates you from others.’” From the Christian point of view, judgment is actually a gift from God. I judge that my family should go to Mass, or that my child should not eat peanuts because of her allergy. It is specifically the sin of being judgmental towards others – not forming a judgment – that Christians are required to avoid.

I want to be clear that we should not view all

Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous: The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.

(From the Easter Sequence, Victimae paschali laudes)

elements of Buddhism in a negative light. Buddha’s encouragement not to be enslaved by the things of this world is not far off from similar teachings in the Gospel and the writings of St. John of the Cross. But Christians are emphatically called to resist the ideal of transcending duality that some Buddhists embrace. In fact, the Christian Faith joyfully proclaims the importance of the dualities that God has established. “God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say, ‘We have fellowship with him,’ while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth” (1 John 1:5-6). The Bible repeatedly upholds the principle of noncontradiction and highlights the importance of holding onto the dualities that God himself has willed.

The Devil, duality and Christ

So why does the devil hate duality? There are perhaps several possible perspectives on this question, but I will offer one. The devil hates duality because he is trapped in duality. More precisely, he is eternally imprisoned in the

duality he has freely chosen, embracing darkness rather than light, hatred rather than love, and non-being (evil) rather than Infinite Being (God).

As mentioned, Catholic teaching views evil as fundamentally an absence – an absence of the good. In the deepest sense, evil is actually “non-being.” It is therefore fitting that Jesus calls the devil “the father of lies” (Jn 8:44), since a lie is all about the absence of a crucial good: the truth. And one of the most diabolical lies in these times is convincing people that many of the dualities God has established – dualities like “male vs. female” and “good vs. bad” – should be cast aside.

The good news is that Christ offers victory over all such falsehoods. In the face of the obstacles, confusing lies, culture of death and despair which the devil seeks to impose, we disciples can turn with confidence to the Way, the Truth and the Life – Jesus. Ultimately, the devil cannot escape the “reality of the duality” that he is the eternal loser. The Risen Christ is Victor. †

Peace

amidst heartache

The Volls find
solace and
strength from
Jesus in
Adoration
Chapel



Monica, Andrew and Levi Voll
are members of Our Lady of
Czestochowa Parish in Bay City.

Throughout Andrew and Monica Voll's relationship, there has been one constant: their Holy Hour of eucharistic adoration. When they first began dating, when they were discerning marriage, welcoming their son and, then, mourning their daughter: Jesus was there, present for their joys and sorrows, in the Blessed Sacrament.

"No matter what's going around, no matter what trauma or turmoil is going on in our lives, that is a constant," Andrew said.

An unexpected peace

Monica grew up accompanying her parents, Dan and Carol Dorion, to the Adoration Chapel at St. Joseph Church in Bay City. She recalled that they would pray together, read books about saints and walk around the chapel, praying the Stations of the Cross while taking turns illuminating each image with a flashlight.

When she moved out of her parents' home, she chose her own hour: 10 to 11 a.m. on Sundays, right before Mass at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish (St. Stanislaus Kostka at that time). She still has that hour, and Andrew and their son Levi join her each week before Mass.

"It's kind of like a full circle thing," she remarked. "I'm hoping that (Levi) can carry those types of memories with him when he gets older."

The Volls' family Holy Hour

became a cornerstone of their faith lives, to Andrew's surprise.

"When I started going, I found it really helpful for its sense of peace," Andrew said. Lutheran at the time, he didn't believe that Jesus is truly present in the Host in the monstrance. "I understood that there was something very peaceful and very special about it. I think that it was an integral part in my conversion into Catholicism, as well."

When Andrew first accompanied Monica to the Adoration Chapel, he didn't know what to do. He found it strange—yet peaceful.

"I think that that's a very special space. You can feel that closeness," he said. "The peace that I received there was just an instant, everytime occurrence."

In addition to his own Lutheran church service, Andrew joined Monica for a Holy Hour and Mass each Sunday. He researched,

prayed, read and discussed the many questions he had about the faith he was beginning to understand. During that time, he proposed to Monica. She said yes, but still felt uneasy due to their different faiths.

With that issue weighing heavily on her heart, Monica went to the Adoration Chapel.

"I'm crying to Jesus. I was like, 'Are you trying to tell me I can't marry him? Because I'm freaking out.' I'm feeling all this on my heart," she said. After weeping and praying, Monica wrote Andrew a letter explaining all her concerns, heartache and uncertainties and brought it to him.

"I'm bawling my eyes out," she said, recalling the moment she handed him the letter. "He's reading it— and he's laughing!"

She was confused.

"He whips out this letter. He's like, 'Read this, Monica. Don't worry. Just read it,'" she said.

STORY AND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DANIELLE MCGREW
TENBUSCH



Andrew, Monica and Levi Voll pray together each week at the Adoration Chapel in Bay City.

Andrew's letter explained that he was feeling called to become Catholic. He had all the answers he needed. God had even answered his prayer for a sign— or, in his case, several.

"I was like, 'I'm so beyond frustrated, because nothing makes sense anymore. Nothing is clear. I can't figure it out,'" he recalled. "So I said, 'I'm done trying to figure out what I'm supposed to do. You tell me.' I said, 'Give me a sign.'"

Then he went to the Adoration Chapel, where an older gentleman gave Andrew his first rosary—a black beaded rosary he had made by hand. It's the rosary Andrew still uses.

The man joked that "your girlfriend said to give this to you," but Monica knew nothing of it.

The couple then went to Mass, where Father Rick Filary was introducing catechumens who would be coming into the Catholic Church. This stood out, because it was not the Lenten season. Andrew knew without a doubt that he, too, was called to join the Catholic Church.

"I think God was just working

"You look up at that monstrance and it pierces your soul." - ANDREW VOLL

through us during adoration," Monica said.

The two married on Nov. 11, 2017. Spending time in eucharistic adoration also inspired a longing to receive Jesus, Andrew said.

"I grew much more intense into wanting to go to a Holy Hour and enjoying my time there," he said. "My unease happened at Mass because I couldn't receive the Eucharist."

Father Rick Filary, pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, welcomed Andrew into the Catholic Church on Feb. 11, 2018.

Praying as a family

Adoration continued to be a key part of their life together, and Andrew signed up for an evening hour at the chapel. The Adoration Chapel moved from St. Joseph to All Saints Parish,

St. James Church, and they moved with it. Sometimes they would stop in for a few minutes while on a date, or while out with their son Levi, who was born Aug. 28, 2018.

"It gives us opportunity for both individual prayer and couple's prayer—and both of those things are key," Andrew said.

During their family Holy Hour, they pray together—Levi, 3, has learned the Divine Mercy Chaplet—and Levi likes to sit near the altar, close to Jesus, or walk around the chairs. Even though he doesn't fully understand the meaning of eucharistic adoration, Monica and Andrew said he's expressed wanting to go and enjoying it.

Other adorers encourage them and express joy at seeing a child in the chapel.

"It's a good way to help feed your family (and) grow spiritually," Monica

said. “I know that Levi’s getting something from it. He’s feeling Christ’s love, his peace. There’s something touching Levi and helping him grow spiritually. I may not understand it fully. I don’t understand fully how (Jesus) has worked in my life for adoration. I just know that he has.”

Monica sees evidence of Christ working in their lives.

“I know that we’ve gone to Holy Hour and we’ve come back and we’ve been able to work through things better with each other or pray together better,” Monica said. “Things are brought to light in adoration. And I think that that is really true for us whenever we’re struggling.”

“I feel let down by you, but you’re still here.”

The Volls are no strangers to suffering. After a difficult pregnancy with Levi followed by challenges conceiving their next child, their daughter Felicity Rose was born prematurely at 23 weeks gestation on May 3, 2021. She lived outside the womb for one day.

The loss was shattering.

“If we didn’t have, if we didn’t have Christ, I can’t imagine—I can’t imagine going through what we went through without our faith,” Monica said.

That isn’t to say they don’t feel upset with God as they work through their grief.

“I just was like, ‘(God,) I feel let down by you. But you’re still there. And I know you’re going to get me through this, because you’re always there,’” she said.

That reliability of God’s presence, particularly in the quiet of the Adoration Chapel, provided both of them, but especially Andrew, the opportunity to process their grief.

“When I went, there was a time of vulnerability for me where I could work through those emotions,” he explained. Sometimes, he would simply sit and tell God how he felt, making notes of whatever comes to mind during his conversational prayer

with the Lord.

“I know (eucharistic adoration) was essential.”

One day, as he was in the chapel, Andrew said he was blessed with an image in his mind’s eye.

“I could mentally visualize Jesus at my right side, putting his hand on my shoulder. And for whatever reason, it was an adult version of Felicity that was putting her hand on my other shoulder,” he recalled.

Monica’s experience over the past year has been one of fidelity to God, and to their Holy Hour. After Felicity’s death, she struggled with spiritual dryness and panic attacks during prayer. And yet, she comes back to the “peace that surpasses all understanding,” as Philippians 4:6 puts it.

“Despite me even having those feelings and thoughts, like, there is still a peace that you feel amidst the turmoil in my mind I’m going through. There’s still a presence—this peaceful presence that touches me in my heart that I can’t explain. So I know it’s real. Just by that,” she said.

Finding God in the quiet

Though their prayer time is different now, and sometimes it takes some encouragement to go, Monica never regrets the time spent in the chapel, whether during their scheduled Holy Hours or a quick visit.

“The opportunity to just stop in whenever, that’s a blessing,” she said, adding that sometimes they come by for just a few minutes to pray and provide a spiritual “reset.”

“In the busy world that we’re in right now ... noise is everywhere,” Andrew said. “It’s like a safe space for quiet, for me to be able to hear ... God in the quiet whisper in the wind.”

Holding a St. Joseph doll, Levi Voll, 3, touches the beads of a rosary as his parents Andrew and Monica softly pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet.



The opportunity to see Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is also a powerful aspect of eucharistic adoration.

“It’s a visual reminder of how constantly Jesus is at our side,” Andrew said. “No matter what’s going on—you know, we spent time in the hospital, we were away from anything and everything for a while—and as soon as we got back, there were our Holy Hours for us. There was Mass.”

There was, in other words, Jesus.

“You look up at that monstrance and it pierces your soul,” Andrew said.

After spending most of her 31 years praying regularly in eucharistic adoration, Monica has no doubt that it is critical for her spiritual health—even when she doesn’t feel like reciting formal prayers or reading Scripture or spiritual books.

“I’m helping my soul. I’m feeding it just by showing up,” she said. “And I think (God’s) happy with that. ... If you’re going to go to adoration, you’re going to grow, even if you just sit there and just be in his presence.”

“I think sometimes Jesus has to be happy with us just visiting him and sitting with him,” she continued. “I really think that sometimes Jesus says, ‘I know this is hard for you. And you just coming in, seeing me and being with me is enough.’ And that’s all you need.” †

The only 24/7 Adoration Chapel in the Diocese

Eucharistic adorers share experiences and encourage others to visit Jesus

Over the past almost 35 years, the Adoration Chapel in Bay City has been a sacred space, a place of calm and quiet in the midst of a chaotic world. There, the faithful approach Jesus, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament. Atop the altar, a golden monstrance holds a small consecrated Host in which Jesus is truly present, waiting for us to visit him.

Eucharistic adoration outside of Mass is the devotion of praying before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, whether near a tabernacle containing consecrated Hosts from a previous Mass or before a Host displayed in a monstrance. A monstrance is a special vessel used for this purpose. This time of prayer may be a full hour, called a “holy hour,” or it can be a few minutes.

While many parishes throughout the Diocese of Saginaw offer times for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass, and some churches are open for people to pray before the tabernacle, there is also a special Adoration Chapel in Bay City, which is open 24/7. The Adoration Chapel began in August 1987 at St. Joseph Church in Bay City and moved to All Saints Parish, St. James Church in July 2018.

The opportunity to spend time with Jesus “face-to-face” (under the

appearance of bread in the Host) is what makes eucharistic adoration special, said Father José María Cabrera, pastor of All Saints Parish.

“We are so overwhelmed with information and devices, the chapel provides an oasis of quiet to sit in (Jesus’) presence,” he said. Father José has witnessed a great diversity of individuals coming to visit Jesus.

“I have seen people praying the Stations of the Cross or their rosaries, doing spiritual reading or speaking directly to Jesus in the Host exposed in the monstrance. I have seen people very much at peace. I have seen people in great sadness and pouring their tears before Jesus,” he said. “I even saw a lady bringing her own vacuum and duster and cleaning ‘Jesus’ home’ at 1 a.m. I had a big smile when I saw that— so beautiful.”

Since the Adoration Chapel is open around the clock, the faithful can approach Jesus even at times

when churches are closed. Father José recalled one instance when a family came there around 10 p.m. after learning a loved one had died by suicide.

The Adoration Chapel, like Mass, is one of the few places the faithful can encounter Jesus in the Host. Still, this private devotion is distinct from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass itself, when Catholics receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus in Holy Communion.

“Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament comes from the Mass and leads to the Mass,” said Father José.

“The highest form of adoration is the Mass itself. Adoration is an extension of the Mass.”

He added that eucharistic adoration flows from the Catholic belief that the Real Presence of Jesus in the Host remains beyond the Mass itself. All are welcome to come and pray during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at parishes throughout the Diocese or visit the Adoration Chapel in Bay City.

STORY BY DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SCHRIER AND
DANIELLE MCGREW TENBUSCH

“The chapel is a refuge.”

PATRICK MCFARLAND | PRINCE OF PEACE PARISH

When Patrick McFarland looks back at his faith journey, he can see clearly when there was “a complete turnaround.” It was when he began stopping by the Adoration Chapel at St. Joseph Church, Bay City, nearly two decades ago ... for peaceful, quiet prayer time.

“I was sitting with (my brother recently) and he said, ‘you know, you’ve changed in these last 10 years or so—a dramatic change in your life.’ He says, ‘I think the Holy Spirit’s sitting on your shoulder.’ I told him that any changes probably are from visitations to the Blessed Sacrament,” Patrick said.

What began as infrequent, brief visits during his lunch break grew to regular holy hours.

“The immediate feeling is your blood pressure goes down, your head clears, and you start to just communicate silently. ... But as you begin to

try to reform your life, things change,” he said. “I react differently with my family ... My interaction with people is completely different. As I look at things that happen in life, I can clearly see divine intervention.”

Eucharistic adoration has also given Patrick a greater longing to receive the Eucharist at Mass.

“You’re in awe when you go in there and you sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament. It’s not like sitting at your kitchen table,” he said. “You develop a real sense of wonder and adoration for the Blessed Sacrament.”

After he’d been visiting the chapel for a while, Patrick signed up to commit to an hour of prayer each week. At first, he felt a bit intimidated by the length of time.

“Within just a few visits, you realize that your hour goes by so fast,” he said.



Patrick’s holy hour generally includes informal prayers, reading and meditating on a Bible verse and reciting the Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet. Sometimes, he comes to pray for specific needs, such as a loved one’s illness. No matter what’s going on in life, Jesus is there in the chapel.

“The chapel is a refuge,” he said. “If you’ve got a problem, if you need help, if you need some counseling, there (the chapel) is.”

Eucharistic adoration and Adoration Chapel FAQs

WHERE IS THE ADORATION CHAPEL?

The Adoration Chapel is at All Saints Parish, St. James Church, at 710 Columbus Ave. in Bay City. Enter the doors facing the intersection of Columbus Avenue and Monroe Street. The entrance and chapel are handicap accessible. The Adoration Chapel is supported by the six Bay City/Essexville parishes and is open to all.

WHEN CAN I VISIT THE ADORATION CHAPEL? WHAT ABOUT ADORATION AT MY PARISH?

You can visit the chapel at any time, day or night, to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Many parishes have eucharistic exposition and/or open-door hours for prayer. Please check with your parish for these times.

WHAT DO I DO THERE?

You can pray silently in the way that is best for you: sharing your heart with the Lord and allowing him to speak to you, praying the rosary and/or Divine Mercy Chaplet, writing in a prayer journal or reading the Bible or a spiritual book are all great places to start. Eucharistic adoration also gives you the opportunity for contemplative prayer, to simply gaze at Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and love him, and know his deep love for you. The chapel’s silence facilitates contemplative prayer. You can stop in for five minutes or stay for an hour or more. Most importantly, be patient as the Lord works on your heart.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MAKING TIME FOR EUCHARISTIC ADORATION OUTSIDE OF MASS?

While we praise and adore God in many ways, eucharistic adoration outside of Mass allows us to specifically adore Jesus who is truly present in the Eucharist. Eucharistic adoration, whether at the Adoration Chapel or at your parish, allows us to pray in the Real Presence of the resurrected Christ. It’s like spending time with a friend or loved one. Sometimes you don’t even need to talk; you simply sit and enjoy the Lord’s presence.

Praying before Jesus in the Eucharist gives graces to your soul!

“The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus will deepen your union with him and make your soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in heaven and will help bring about an everlasting peace on earth.”

—ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA

“You don’t have anxiety when you rest in the Lord.”

ELAINE MCPHAIL | PRINCE OF PEACE PARISH

Elaine McPhail describes herself as someone who’s always “go-go-go.” The Adoration Chapel, however, provides her with the opportunity to pause, quiet her mind and spend some time with Jesus.

“That’s why I took the holy hour—to slow down, relax, rest and trust in (the Lord), because he has the answers to everything,” she said. “I would never give up my holy hours.”

Elaine has committed to three hours a week, including a midnight to 2 a.m. slot, which she particularly loves. She plans her day around that time with Christ, just as she plans her Sundays around Mass. During her time in the chapel, she prays the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet and litanies, reads Scripture or other spiritual books, and spends time simply looking at Jesus.

“He’s the King of Kings. Sometimes

you don’t need to say (anything), he can read your soul. Just lay your heart on the altar, and he will take care of the rest,” she said. “Sometimes it’s like these graces pouring on you, and you have no idea where it’s coming from. . . . When you need it the most, it’s there.”

“You don’t have anxiety when you rest in the Lord,” she said.

Elaine said that along with frequently receiving the sacrament of Confession, praying in the Adoration Chapel has “made Communion even sweeter” by drawing her closer to Christ.

Eucharistic adoration is a powerful devotion, but you don’t have to commit to a whole hour right away, she said.

“At first, come in and rest in the Lord. You can just sit there. Don’t say a word . . . and just come in five or 10 minutes,” she said. After gradually increasing the



time spent in the chapel, “You find yourself desiring to come. . . . (God) draws you closer and closer to himself.”

The spiritual benefits affect more than just the individual praying, too, she said.

“You go out with graces and your family’s blessed. I’ve just seen so many blessings poured out on my family,” she said. In the chapel, she prays not only for her family, but also for people all over the world whom she will never meet but knows they are family in Christ. She offers their needs, too. “It’s like an audience with God.”



“There’s power in the Eucharist.”

JANET HAMLING | PRINCE OF PEACE PARISH AND HOLY FAMILY PARISH

Janet Hamling has been bringing her needs to the Adoration Chapel ever since it opened in August 1987. In fact, she even met her husband there.

She was about 30 years old, her mother had recently passed away, and Janet was single yet longing to be married and

have a family. Recent relationships hadn’t worked out, and she was frustrated.

“I just said, ‘Okay, Lord, you want me to meet somebody? You’re gonna have to bring him to this chapel,’” she recalled. “Three or four months later, my future husband . . . came into the chapel.”

After seeing each other at the chapel and other church events for a while, he eventually introduced himself. They were married a year and a half later.

“God brought us together,” she said.

Coming to the Lord with her needs and petitions has continued throughout her life.

“You have to believe that [in the Host in the monstrance] is God. And no man can do what God can do,” she said, explaining that she will bring God the problems of others she has tried to help. “You can only take them so far, and then you just give it to God. I’d go sit there and cry my eyeballs out: ‘God, you took me to the end of the rope. I can’t do any more for these people.’ And God has given me answers.”

For example, a family member with mental illness was homeless, and after pouring her prayers out in the chapel, an

unexpected housing solution fell into place.

“I’ve had many, many miracles,” she said. “You’ve got to believe that this is the true God that walked the earth and died on the cross. He’s there.”

Janet has relied on her holy hours through marriage and homeschooling her children. She also brought her children to the chapel, where they would spend 10 minutes when they were young.

Now, she goes to the Adoration Chapel whenever she can, even if it’s only for a few minutes.

“That’s where I get my strength. I’ll tell you, there’s power in the Eucharist,” she said.

Janet sees the Eucharist as continuing nourishment for the soul, and adoration is a way to receive that nourishment. It’s also a way to get to know God. Just as a person wants to spend time with someone they love—in order to come to know that person more—we should want to spend time with God to grow closer to him, she said.

“Honestly, it’s simple,” she said. “Love is simple.” †

CCFMM announces scholarship winners

DANIELLE MCGREW
TENBUSCH

As students are beginning their summer breaks, high school graduates are looking ahead to their college plans. The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan and its donor partners are pleased to support Catholic graduates' continuing education.

Thank you to our generous donors and the scholarship committees who reviewed more than 225 student applications. This year, the CCFMM is awarding more than \$60,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors, current college students and seminarians.

The CCFMM manages funds for numerous scholarships. Some scholarships are for students from specific schools and/or parishes, while others are open to all applicants.

The CCFMM congratulates the following scholarship award winners:

NOUVEL CATHOLIC CENTRAL RECIPIENTS:

Berberovich Memorial Scholarship

Marianna Collison
Jonathan Tunney
Joseph Tunney

Cesario Hernandez Memorial Scholarship

Christian Zamora

Father Robert Navarre Scholarship

Alec Lipinski
Colette McConnell
Alexis Yatch

Timothy Horny Baseball Scholarship

Sam Bartels

Father E.C. LeFevre Scholarship

Alec Lipinski
Colette McConnell
Carl Schmidt
Joseph Tunney
Jonathan Tunney

Craig Siler Scholarship

Joseph Tunney

Larry J. Oswald Memorial Scholarship

Carl Schmidt

Northwest Kiwanis Scholarship

Alec Lipinski

Patrick Ackerman Scholarship

Carl Schmidt

Rod Luplow Scholarship

Sam Bartels
Alec Lipinski
Jeamy Pascual II

Scott Dangel Scholarship

Grace Buckingham

Shannan Marie Thompson Memorial Scholarship

Riley Hirschenberger

St. Thomas Aquinas Slominski Scholarship

Alec Lipinski

Anthony and Elizabeth Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Sam Bartels
Faith Buckingham
Grace Buckingham
Marianna Collison
Clara Gross
Alec Lipinski
Sophie Lubbe
Colette McConnell
Jeamy Pascual II
Carl Schmidt
Malinda Schmidt
Sterling Solek
Mackenzie Sprague
Alexis Yatch
Ava Yatch
Christian Zamora

Cyril William Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Caleb Adcock
Sam Bartels
Grace Buckingham
Faith Buckingham
Marianna Collison
Clara Gross
Alec Lipinski
Sophie Lubbe
Colette McConnell
Jeamy Pascual II
Sterling Solek
Carl Schmidt
Malinda Schmidt
Mackenzie Sprague
Alexis Yatch
Ava Yatch
Christian Zamora

Edward and Marie Abele Memorial Scholarship

Sam Bartels
William Buchalski
Alec Lipinski
Jeamy Pascual II

Lefevre and Rokita Families Catholic College Scholarship

Clara Gross
Colette McConnell
Jeamy Pascual II

ALL SAINTS CENTRAL RECIPIENTS:

Lori Stillwell Memorial Scholarship

Lyndsay Hammel

Anthony and Elizabeth Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Caleb Adcock

Lefevre and Rokita Families Catholic College Scholarship

Caleb Adcock

OTHER SCHOOLS RECIPIENTS:

Anthony and Elizabeth Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Grant Bouvy, Reese High School
Brooke DuRussel, Millington High School

Cyril William Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Grant Bouvy, Reese High School
Brooke DuRussel, Millington High School

Edward and Marie Abele Memorial Scholarship

Molly Hugo, homeschool

Lefevre and Rokita Families Catholic College Scholarship

Molly Hugo, homeschool
Amelia Molitor, homeschool

CONTINUING COLLEGE STUDENT AND SEMINARIAN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Anthony and Elizabeth Brenske Memorial Scholarship | Cyril William Brenske Memorial Scholarship

Grace Giroux, Aquinas College

Edward and Marie Abele Memorial Scholarship

Grace Giroux, St. Thomas Aquinas College
Joshua High, Sacred Heart Major Seminary
Charles Warner, Sacred Heart Major Seminary

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Atonement: Healing wounds and rebuilding trust

Healing can be a long, hard journey— especially when the hurt cuts so deep that lives are changed forever, such as the suffering experienced by victim-survivors of sexual abuse by clergy. The act of atonement is a crucial step in the journey toward healing those wounds. More than asking for forgiveness, atonement acknowledges the horrific wrong, recognizes the immense loss of trust and faith and seeks to guide those who hurt back into a life-affirming relationship with God.

BY MARIBETH GALLIGAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE
MCGREW TENBUSCH

Main image: Roses in the crown of thorns represent the new life from Christ's Passion, the suffering of the Innocent One.

As a victim-survivor from the Diocese of Saginaw said of atonement, “Can we take our pain and our hurts to Jesus’ merciful heart? The Church knows how difficult this can be, and so she offers the Mass of Atonement.”

On March 29 at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption in Saginaw, Bishop Robert Gruss celebrated a Mass of Atonement for the sins of clergy whose actions allowed children and vulnerable adults to be harmed. Striving to reflect the atonement of Jesus as the infinite gift to take away our sins, Bishop Gruss invited the faithful to pray for the healing of those who have been hurt and for a renewal of vigilance and compassion.

First removing the symbols of his office – his episcopal ring, zucchetto, mitre, crozier and pectoral cross – Bishop Gruss lay prostrate facing the ground before the altar and crucifix during the penitential rite. The prostration signified remorse, humility, reverence and deep anguish for the suffering Body of Christ, and the grief and sorrow of the Church.

Hold us in your mercy

In May 2020, Bishop Gruss wrote that the abuse of one child is a tragedy that cries out to heaven. Matthew 10:18 states: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.” He wrote these words just months before holding the first Mass of Atonement in September 2020.

During this year’s Mass, Bishop Gruss spoke from his heart and for all the Church to those gathered. His homily shared profound repentance, as well as a resolute commitment to make amends for the sins of priests and bishops who misused their power and authority. The congregation joined Bishop Gruss in



Clockwise from upper left.

Bishop Robert Gruss removes the symbols of his office, including the pectoral cross.

Bishop Robert Gruss prostrates before the altar during the penitential rite.



Deacon Richard Warner of Nativity of the Lord Parish, Alma and St. Louis, proclaims the Gospel.

Handbells played by Pam Bourscheidt solemnly ring out during the penitential rite at the Mass of Atonement.

lifting up in prayer all who suffered abuse at the hands of the clergy and church personnel.

“I want to express my deepest sorrow to those who have been victims of abuse by members of the clergy. Please accept my sincere apology for the pain and suffering you have had to endure as a result of your own experiences. None of us will ever know the depth of the pain that survivors endure. I am deeply saddened by it all and I apologize to you on behalf of the Church,” Bishop Gruss said.

Understanding that more than forgiveness is needed, Bishop Gruss asked for atonement, seeking God’s mercy and wisdom to help heal the wounded. “We entrust for healing all who have been impacted by sexual abuse in any way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We pray for the healing of memories, for the rebuilding of lives, for the recovery of a lost sense of worth and dignity, for reconciliation and redemption that comes through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

“As I have said before, no single statement or event like this Mass can ever make up for the painful abuse of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. But as people of faith, we know that through Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection, we can find hope and healing beyond all measure as we move toward a brighter future,” said Bishop Gruss.

During his homily, Bishop Gruss also described finding strength in our relationships with God.

“We trust that God never abandons us no matter how we might feel – that he is ever present to his Church, seeking to pour out his divine love on our misery. That’s what we call mercy.”

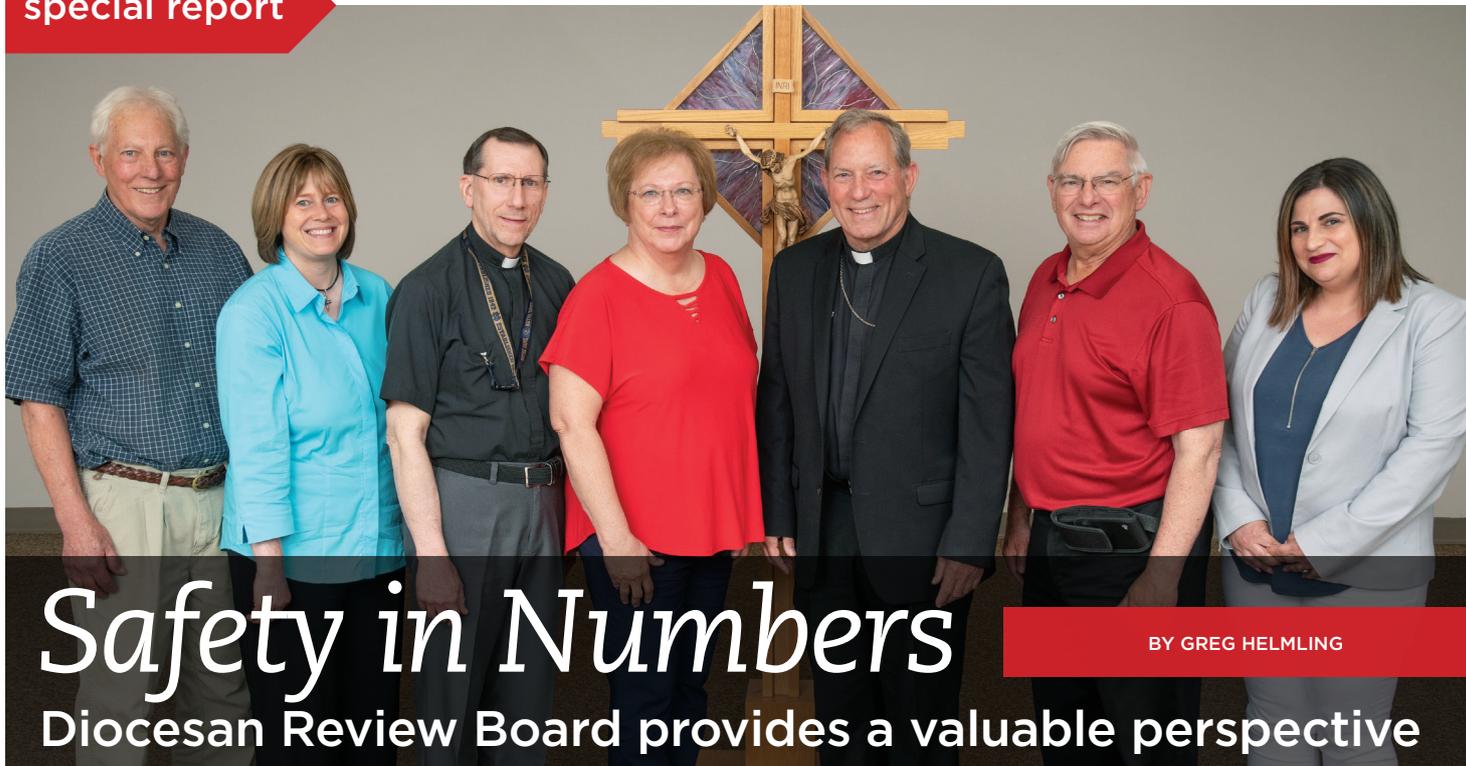
Bring light to those in darkness

Easter reminds us that Jesus’ light replaces darkness in the world. The Diocese of Saginaw is shining his light as we welcome the difficult work and sacrifice needed to bring healing and rebuild trust in the Church. The Mass of

Atonement is part of our commitment to victim-survivors of sexual abuse.

Traveling from hurt to healing, a victim-survivor from our diocese shared, “On my journey of healing these many years, I have needed the support of my church community. Support is not just in words, but in presence. It is a smile, a handshake, a thank you, a ‘let me help you.’ Support is kneeling together, praying for one another and for healing. It is asking God for his love, mercy and forgiveness. With a very grateful heart, I thank our Bishop for once again placing the Mass of Atonement on the Diocesan calendar.”

Atonement continues long after the Mass of Atonement when the Church and its faithful pray together. As one we ask for healing for all who have suffered and for our Bishop, priests, nuns and church personnel to find the wisdom and compassion to actively safeguard children and other vulnerable members of the church community. †



Safety in Numbers

Diocesan Review Board provides a valuable perspective

BY GREG HELMLING

No single person could possibly amass the training and experience necessary to expertly deal with every situation.

Because decisions tied to protecting minors and other vulnerable people from sexual abuse are so important, every diocese in the United States is required to have a Diocesan Review Board made up of people suited to providing recommendations.

“The board is purposely made up of a variety of people with different backgrounds,” said Steve Kin, who has been chairman of the Diocese of Saginaw Review Board since 2019. “We’re there to help the bishop in addressing these issues and making decisions about them.”

National standards require that a Diocesan Review Board include at least five members. While one is a parish priest, the other members are lay people who are not employed by the diocese. Guidelines recommend that Review Board members provide expertise in such fields as law enforcement, counseling, and similar fields.

“We are advisory. The bishop has the final say on all decisions,” Steve said. “When he attends our meetings, he’s

there listening, but it’s really our meeting. It’s useful for him to hear the background before determining what to do.”

The Diocesan Review Board meets four times a year, more often if necessary, with two primary mandates. The first Diocesan Review Board responsibility is to review the facts when there is an allegation of sexual misconduct by a priest or deacon against a minor or vulnerable adult and to advise the Bishop regarding their judgment of credibility. Recently, this responsibility was expanded to include evaluating allegations of boundary violations by clergy against minors, which may be interpreted as inappropriate or grooming behavior. The Review Board also advises the Bishop regarding other misconduct of a ministerial relationship by clergy against minors and vulnerable adults.

The second predominant responsibility is to recommend diocesan policies, programs, and procedures to protect children and vulnerable people. Policies have been revised and improved

The Diocesan Review Board includes Steve Kin, retired corporate attorney; Nicole Boyd, director of clinical services who works with at-risk youth and holds master’s degrees in social work and counseling; Father Richard Filary, pastor and judicial vicar; Ilene Dowling, retired special education teacher who worked with the Department of Human Services and Child Protective Services; Bishop Robert Gruss; Tom McIntyre, former Saginaw County sheriff with nearly 50 years of experience in public safety and Nayatt Castelein, Michigan Department of Corrections Sex Offender Management Unit and parole/probation agent.

Photo by Jeff Schrier.

throughout the years.

The first category can be a heart-wrenching process, Steve said, but it is satisfying to know that the Diocesan Review Board is an improvement over how situations were handled in the past.

“In the past, even when priests were sent someplace to be, supposedly, rehabilitated, they weren’t always rehabilitated,” Steve said. “That can’t happen now. There’s no way to sweep things under the rug anymore. It doesn’t work to just move a priest from one place to another without dealing with the issue.”

Steve, a longtime parishioner at Blessed Sacrament in Midland, retired a few years ago after a career as a corporate attorney, and he also has experience working with legal services.

A time of healing

Diocese awaits report from Attorney General's investigation

BY GREG HELMLING

“When this whole business about abuse of kids came to the fore, I got involved within my parish,” Steve said. “A lot of us were very upset with the Church, and the bishops, and the way it was being handled or not being handled. A group of people started meeting to talk about it, and what we can do about it. ... (When invited to join the Review Board), I thought maybe this is a way I can help out a bit.”

Any allegation of abuse is first reported to law enforcement and the State of Michigan Attorney General's Office. A dedicated diocesan victim assistance coordinator (VAC) provides immediate support to victim-survivors and can arrange counseling services and other resources. The VAC is an employee of Catholic Family Service and is chosen based on professional qualifications in behavioral health.

Once the civil authorities conclude their investigation or decide not to investigate, the details are presented to the Review Board. Typically, the Diocese then arranges for its own independent professional investigation. Once all the needed facts are in hand, the Diocesan Review Board makes recommendation to the Bishop regarding further steps.

“It's an open conversation,” said Ilene Dowling, the Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Review Board, a retired special education teacher, who worked with Department of Human Services and Child Protective Services. Ilene is a parishioner at St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Bay City. “Each of us sitting around the table comes from a different place. We have law enforcement at the table, a priest, social workers, people from the criminal justice system. Everybody has a different perspective, and we are able to share our perspectives openly.

“After I retired, I was wondering what I was going to do, what my next passion was going to be,” Ilene said. “Someone passed my name on to Sister (Mary Judith), and we talked, and eventually she asked me to join. I do believe that was the hand of God moving me toward the Review Board.” Ilene also serves as a facilitator of safe environment training for adults.

The Diocese of Saginaw Review Board was established in 2003. †

In the early 1990s, the clergy sex abuse scandal began making headlines around the world. As news continued to surface about long-term and ongoing abuses, it was a time of immense suffering and pain for victims of abuse. Catholics globally joined in humiliation and anger, as did faithful priests whose hearts broke with every new allegation that came forth.

In 2018, the Michigan Attorney General joined other state Attorneys General (AG) in exploring potential abuses when it launched a formal investigation of each of the seven Catholic dioceses in Michigan. Months later in 2019, Bishop Robert Gruss was installed as the seventh bishop of the Diocese of Saginaw.

“Safeguarding children is our highest priority,” said Bishop Robert Gruss, who has promised his commitment to victim-survivors since he was installed as the leader of the Diocese. “I want this to be the safest diocese in the world for children.”

As part of their investigation, the AG's office issued search warrants simultaneously for all seven diocesan facilities including Saginaw. Over the next several months, the investigation resulted in criminal sexual conduct charges against six priests, none of whom were from the Diocese of Saginaw.

“We sincerely appreciate the work of the Attorney General on this vital issue. We consider these abuses unconscionable, and we respect the criminal justice system for its focus on this reprehensible matter,” Bishop Gruss said. “I urge all people of faith to join with me in praying for victims of misconduct and their families.”

Since the beginning of the investigation, workers in the Attorney General's office have reviewed millions of paper and electronic documents, including boxes of files retrieved from the Diocese of Saginaw. The Office of the Attorney General has not announced when the investigation will be concluded.

Bishop Gruss noted the efforts by the diocese to safeguard against the abuse of children and young people. The diocese's website includes resources on reporting abuse, protecting children, accountability and also finding healing and reconciliation. The site also contains a full list of those clergy accused of sexual abuse, along with a comprehensive set of procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors, training and communications policies. (See related stories).

“The pain resulting from what has happened will never go away, but the Attorney General's investigation will be most successful if it serves as the beginning of a new era of awareness, a time of safety and security for everyone within our Church, and a time of healing,” Bishop Gruss said.



Safe Environment for Everyone

Diocese is committed to protection of children and vulnerable adults

Significant progress has been achieved over the past several years in helping to make the Diocese of Saginaw a safer place for everyone, especially children and vulnerable adults.

The work is not done, however. It never will be. It never can be.

“Protecting vulnerable people is an ongoing task,” explained Bishop Robert Gruss. “It is not something that can ever be completed. We remain vigilant. We are committed to making this the safest diocese in the world for children, and I truly believe we can be successful if we maintain the focus that has gotten us to this point.”

A comprehensive system of protective measures has guided the Diocese of Saginaw to the present day. Procedures are in place to make certain that allegations of child sexual abuse by clergy, either recent or from the past, are handled appropriately. Every allegation of child sexual abuse, including any allegation from years ago, is immediately reported to the State of Michigan Attorney General’s Office so it can be reviewed and, if necessary, investigated.

At the same time, work continues to build on the rigorous steps in

place to stop future misconduct from taking place.

The Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection is charged with the responsibility that the Diocese meets both the letter and the spirit of *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The Charter was approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002 and is codified in the diocese’s Policy for the Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults. There are three essential and interrelated components for the Safe Environment program: screening and ministerial standards, training and outreach and victim assistance.

• Screening and ministerial standards

The first component in preventing abuse is to do everything possible to determine the suitability of any individual offering service within the diocese. Toward that goal, the Diocese of Saginaw conducts

Elizabeth and Richard Kindermann of Harrison teach people about safe environments for children, elderly and the homebound. They use printed material and a video when teaching people about how to recognize warning signs of abuse. They are pictured at their church, St. Athanasius Parish in Harrison.

criminal background checks for all employees and for all church volunteers who have contact, in person or virtually, with minor(s) for whom they are responsible. These background checks are periodically updated. Criminal history background checks go back to the age of 18 for any cleric who receives an assignment in the diocese and for seminarians. School employees also undergo fingerprint scanning.

School employees and volunteers also have a Michigan State Police/FBI fingerprint background check.

• Training

One of the most effective ways to protect children and young people is to enlighten everyone about situations that could lead to abuse. Safe Environment training is required for all diocesan, parish and school employees and all volunteers who have contact with minors. Training, the second essential component of the Safe Environment program, teaches the signs of possible grooming behaviors and abuse, as well as the diocesan safe environment policy. Training sessions for adults are open to all who wish to receive the training.

Additionally, the diocese maintains and enforces its *Standards of Ministerial Behavior for Those Working with Children and Young People*, which detail, for example, the number of chaperones for school or parish trips, use of appropriate language and so forth. The *Standards* have recently been revised, with the input and support of the Review Board, and will be renamed *The Code of Conduct*.

A separate program for safe environment education is being reviewed for students in Catholic schools and in parish religious education programs. Because of the challenges that our youth encounter today, the Review Board has endorsed an assessment of the current education. A committee of educators has formed under the guidance of Peg McEvoy, coordinator of faith and catechist formation for the Diocese of Saginaw.

• Outreach and victim assistance

Outreach to victims of child sexual abuse by clergy is the third essential component of the Safe Environment program. *The Policy for the Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults* provides for a Victim Assistance Coordinator who assists and advocates for victim-survivors. The Victim Assistance Coordinator has specialized behavior health skills and is an employee of Catholic Family Service, a separately incorporated professional service agency.

Civil authorities, including police agencies and the state Attorney General's Office, review and, when need be, investigate allegations. When civil authorities complete their work, results are presented to the Diocesan Review Board, a group of volunteer professionals with relevant expertise. The Diocesan Review Board assesses and makes recommendations to Bishop Robert Gruss regarding their assessment of credibility of an allegation. (See related story, page 24.)

"When I was a child, no one

talked about any kind of abuse. I'm sure it happened, it just wasn't talked about, and if someone saw it, I'm not sure they would know what to do about it," said Ilene Dowling, a retired special education teacher who has been a parishioner at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, now St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Bay City, for the past 42 years. Ilene joined the DRB in 2019.

"Now, I think the Church has truly stepped up to the plate. I believe we are now more transparent; we have better guidelines. And there is a better understanding among people."

Ilene also has joined the ranks of people who facilitate Safe Environment training around the diocese. These two-hour sessions provide a wealth of information about what to look for to help protect all people within the diocese.

In 2021, more than 900 people completed the training, with 25 in-person and 30 virtual sessions held around the diocese.

"The main objective of the Safe Environment sessions is for people to recognize the signs, the things that would lead you to suspect that someone is being abused or neglected or taken advantage of, and to have the courage to speak up, to report your suspicions," said Richard Kindermann, who serves as a facilitator for many of the sessions along with his wife, Elizabeth. "They can make a difference. They can save a life."

The Kindermanns have facilitated dozens of the sessions over the past several years, and they are well suited for it. Richard has a master's degree in social work and retired

after a 40-year career that included roles in social work, psychology and hospice operations. Elizabeth is a retired teacher and principal; she has two master's degrees, and currently serves as faith formation director for St. Athanasius Parish, Harrison, and Sacred Heart Parish, Gladwin.

In addition to discussing the signs that abuse might be taking place, the Safe Environment facilitators provide guidance on how to report suspicions to Child Protective Services. Facilitators assure attendees that reporting will not create more problems than it solves.

"It's not your job to investigate it. It's your job to say, 'I think something's wrong. I think someone should look at this.' Your only responsibility is to report it if you are concerned," Elizabeth said. "We need to trust our instincts and listen to our gut."

That is true, she said, even if the situation involves a member of the clergy.

"Sin affects everyone. We are all human beings. A priest is a human being," she said. "You have to call it out. You have to say something. You can't let the collar keep you from speaking up."

Resources, including *The Policy for the Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults*, and a list of clergy credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors, are available at saginaw.org/office-child-and-youth-protection.

"In the spirit of penance that is a foundation of our faith, we acknowledge our failures of the past," Bishop Gruss said. "And in that same spirit, we must accept a firm commitment: Never again." †

Victim assistance coordinator connects survivors to resources

Expertise and experience are extremely important when helping someone who is a victim-survivor of sexual abuse, which is why the Diocese of Saginaw has a designated victim assistance coordinator (VAC) who can help when an allegation is made.

The VAC is a licensed social worker employed by Catholic Family Service, a professional care provider incorporated

separately from the diocese. After an allegation of abuse is reported to civil authorities, the VAC is intended to be the next contact for anyone who has been abused. The VAC assists in obtaining counseling services and other supportive resources.

Contact the VAC at 989.797.6682 or victim.assistance@dioceseofsaginaw.org.

Diocesan Marriage Prep Day

Date: Saturday, July 30

Time: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Location: Center for Ministry

Cost: \$80 per couple

To register: Contact Beth Bauer at 989.797.6655 bbauer@dioceseofsaginaw.org

Registration deadline: July 15

For more information: This marriage preparation day will discuss relevant topics that will directly impact your relationship and marriage and are essential to a covenant marriage with God and each other.

There will be presentations on the sacrament of marriage, the Catholic marriage ceremony, family of origin, conflict resolution, the five love languages, intimacy and natural family planning. There will also be speakers offering personal stories.

First Fridays with Bishop Gruss

Date: Sept. 2

Location: Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption, 615 Hoyt Ave., Saginaw

Time: 11 a.m. Mass, followed by noon luncheon

Cost: \$7 for meatless lunch

Join Bishop Gruss for First Friday Mass followed by an informal presentation and meatless lunch. All are welcome. Registration is required for lunch; visit the diocesan website, Saginaw.org.

Nouvel students mark Good Friday with Cross Walk

Photo by Jeff Schrier.



Members of the Nouvel Spirit Cross, Nouvel Honor Guard, chaplain Father Adam Maher, teachers and parishioners participated in a Cross Walk on Good Friday, April 15. They walked from Nouvel Catholic Central Elementary School to Nouvel Catholic Central High School, praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the Stations of the Cross. The walk ended in prayer at the high school chapel.

Saginaw Township Police provided an escort during the walk.

Sisters celebrate significant anniversaries

Photo by Jeff Schrier.



Bishop Robert Gruss presided at a Religious Jubilee Mass at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption on May 4 to honor five sisters for their lifetimes of service. The honorees, from left to right, were Sister Rose Miriam Doerr, 60 years; Sister Jeanne Wiest, 40 years; Bishop Robert Gruss; Sister Marie Kopin, 60 years; Sister Margo Tafoya, 40 years and Sister Sylvia Wozniak, 60 years.

St. Brigid's Emerald Evening raises funds for school, surprise staff bonuses

By Danielle McGrew Tenbusch.



St. Brigid of Kildare School staff members pose for a photo during the masquerade-themed Emerald Evening. Photo courtesy of Pat Desiderio.

Each year, supporters of St. Brigid of Kildare School in Midland and Catholic education gather for the Emerald Evening fundraiser gala. This year's "Midnight Masquerade" themed event brought 247 attendees to the Midland Country Club.

"It's a very close-knit community, very supportive. Everybody wants to be a part of Emerald Evening," said Jennifer West, who has been organizing the event for five years. "It is a successful event, and every family in the school and parish knows that they can take pride in making that happen."

The Feb. 26 gala included dinner, entertainment, games and both live and silent auctions. The exciting prizes, which included everything from gift cards to jewelry to a fly fishing trip with Bishop Robert Gruss, were often donated from community members.

"We try to run a very tight ship with close to nothing in expenses," said Jennifer. "We even sold our centerpieces!"

Emerald Evening 2022 raised \$220,854. Proceeds support tuition

reduction, the Guardian Angel Scholarship Fund and strategic investments.

"Every student benefits," said Jennifer.

The auction usually ends with a call for "paddles up," when attendees are encouraged to donate for special items the school needs, such as escape ladders. This year, however, "paddles up" benefitted something a little different— it would all go directly to staff bonuses.

"The paddles were flying! We have never had such a successful 'paddles up,'" Jennifer said. "It was amazing. ... We were in shock!"

After a stressful two years of COVID-19, the teachers and staff have "really had to be dynamic and pivot," Jennifer explained.

"We really wanted to show (the staff) how special they are," she said.

Principal Laura Wilkowski demonstrated her support by removing herself from the bonus pool and, along with her husband, donating additional funds.

"The response to our 'paddles up'

shows just how wonderful our community is here at St. Brigid," Laura said. "It means a lot as a teacher to know that we have so much support from our families for what we do. All teachers have worked double-duty during the pandemic to teach students both in-person and at home for those students who had to quarantine. This was not easy."

To make the "paddles up" even more special, teachers were given free event tickets and encouraged to come.

They were able to witness the generosity of the school community firsthand.

"The teachers (were) blown away," Jennifer said, describing the flurry of paddles and emotion. "I couldn't keep track, it was going so fast!"

In the end, \$33,900 was raised to be split between the St. Brigid staff as bonuses.

"The overwhelming show of support brought several teachers to tears. The tears were tears of gratitude, of joy and of a sense of accomplishment, because they know that what they've done has been hard," Laura said. "Both the teachers and I are continuously overwhelmed at the generosity of the families here at St. Brigid. It means so much to us to know that parents recognize the sacrifices that we make to do anything and everything that we can to help our students to succeed."

"Appreciation is a show of support, but also a true understanding of what another does," she continued. "This generous show of support allowed everyone to feel supported and appreciated in every sense of the word."

CELEBRATE JOHN THE BAPTIST'S FEAST WITH

honey chicken

[WE'RE SKIPPING THE LOCUSTS ...]



When we think of John the Baptist, we visualize an unkempt man living in the wilderness, feasting on locusts and wild honey, proclaiming dire warnings of repentance to all who would listen. But of course we know he was so much more. The Gospels describe a prophet who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus' coming and for his ministry here on earth.



MICHELLE DIFRANCO

is a designer and the busy mom of three children.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANE FOLKERTSMA

The people of Jerusalem and the Judean countryside would flock to him to be baptized. During his ministry, he gave witness to holiness and purity, and publicly condemned immorality in all forms. He was humble and understood his role of paving the way for others to follow Jesus: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mk 1:7-8)

John followed a life of simplicity and poverty, which would explain his diet while living in the wilderness. I've often wondered why locusts and honey, but I'm going to skip the locust part for obvious reasons and jump right to the honey. Honey is mentioned more than 60 times in the Bible, and we know today that raw honey is replete with health benefits. It has antiviral and antibacterial properties, and is an excellent source of antioxidants. Perhaps this is what helped sustain John in the wilderness. But since it's also known to aid in detoxing the body of impurities and healing wounds, I can't help but consider it a spiritual metaphor for John's ministry – helping people heal the wounds of sin and purify their hearts through baptism.

Our family loves honey since it is a healthier alternative to sugar, but mostly because it is so wonderful tasting! We like it in baked treats and even add it to some of our savory dishes too, including the following recipe which is a favorite during the summer months. This dish would be a great addition to celebrating the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist, which is June 24, but celebrated June 23 this year because June 24 has been declared the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. †

HONEY GARLIC GRILLED CHICKEN

- 4-6 chicken breasts
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 4-5 cloves garlic (minced)
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 sprigs rosemary (chopped)

In a small mixing bowl, whisk together all listed ingredients. Poke a few fork holes in each chicken breast and place in a large ziplock bag. Pour 2/3 of the marinade over the chicken and store the remaining in an airtight container in fridge. Place the chicken in fridge overnight (or marinate for at least 6 hours).

Heat grill or a grill pan to medium-high heat. Remove the container of remaining honey garlic glaze and chicken breasts from the fridge. Remove chicken from bag and let excess marinade drip off before placing on grill/grill pan. Cook for 6-7 minutes on one side. Flip over and continue to cook. After 2-3 minutes, heavily baste on the remaining glaze and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes or until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees.

BY DR. DAN OSBORN

A great American novelist's take on Holy Communion

QUESTION:

Is Holy Communion just a symbol of Jesus Christ?



jroman / iStock / Getty Images Plus

ANSWER:

In 1955, the remarkable Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor recalled how the topic of the Eucharist came up at a late night party she attended. Her succinct way of defending the Catholic teaching that Jesus is really present in the Holy Eucharist is stunning:

"I was once, five or six years ago, taken by some friends to have dinner with Mary McCarthy and her husband, Mr. Broadwater.... She departed the Church at the age of 15 and is a Big Intellectual.... Well, toward morning the conversation turned on the Eucharist, which I, being the Catholic, was obviously supposed to defend. Mrs. Broadwater said when she was a child and received the Host [she] thought of it as a symbol and implied that it was a pretty good one. I then said, in a very shaky voice, "Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it." That was all the defense I was capable of but I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest is expendable."

"Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it."

The point of O'Connor's strong reaction comes down to this: Either Catholics are worshiping Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, or they are worshiping bread - which if true would be blasphemous. There is no middle ground. And her words about Holy Communion being "the center of existence" are almost prophetic. In just a few short years the Second Vatican Council would be speaking of the Eucharist in similar terms as "the source and summit of the whole Christian life" (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 11).

The reason the Church holds the Eucharist to be in its own category among the seven sacraments is

because it is truly the Risen Lord Jesus, humbly disguised as bread and wine! The same Lord who is the second person of the Holy Trinity and, as we proclaim in the Nicene Creed, the one through whom all things are made... including you and me!

Given this reality, O'Connor's reaction to the thought of Holy Communion being merely a symbol is not only understandable, but actually points to a profound truth that should console and shake up our entire planet. In the Eucharist, the Lord is truly Emmanuel, that ancient name that means "God is with us." †

Vatican II declared that the Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian life" in *Lumen Gentium* (11).

As dioceses across the U.S. embark on a three-year Eucharistic Revival, each issue of *FAITH Saginaw* will explore the Church's doctrine on the Eucharist: faith that the bread and wine actually become the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ at every Mass.



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**To register for either event or for more information, please contact the
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MORNING FLIGHT

7 a.m. – Registration and breakfast

8 a.m. – Shotgun start

12:30 p.m. – Luncheon and awards

AFTERNOON FLIGHT

12:15 p.m. – Registration and luncheon

1:15 p.m. – Shotgun start

Reception and awards following golf

BANQUET AND AUCTION

Thursday, Sept. 15

*DoubleTree by Hilton
One Wenonah Park Place, Bay City*

\$75 per person or
\$560 for a table of eight

5:30 p.m. – Hors d'oeuvres,
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6:45 p.m. – Dinner and program
*The banquet will feature special
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