

OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Creating a Community of Faith for Our Youngest Members

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When it comes to our many God-given gifts, none is more precious than our children. Entrusted to us by God, it is our job as Catholic parents to raise these precious little ones in the faith so that one day, we can return them to Him. And though this is an ongoing process, it's important that we begin from our child's earliest stages of development.

"A child is a true blessing from God," says Christine Saliba, Director of Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool. "That's why it's important that we begin teaching our children as early as possible about our Catholic faith.

Here at the preschool, they learn how to show God's love to others by examples of helping someone when they are hurt, giving a push to a friend on a swing, and by thanking Him for our families."

Offering programs for 1 through 4-year-olds, Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool's mission is to provide a Christ-centered educational environment that immerses our young ones in the truths of the Catholic faith and inspires them to reach their full "spiritual and academic potential." This is done in a variety of ways such as through the loving instruction of its teachers, the hands-on learning experiences, and through the Catholicity which permeates throughout the school.

"Preschool is a place for children to begin learning," Ms. Saliba says. "Children love to explore their world and to play with their peers. When teachers look into a child's eyes and see their wonderment when learning to say, 'I can do it,' or 'look what I did,' there is no better place to be. It's beautiful, too,



At Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool, faculty and teachers work hard to ensure that each student reaches their highest academic, spiritual and personal potential.



Keeping Our Stewardship Commitments in the Summertime

The kids are out of school and our fast-paced lives centered on school and youth sports activities have slowed down. Our own internal clocks are now on summer time. We're ready for a break from our hectic lives.

And while we take vacations and enjoy the leisurely pace of the season, we need to remember that summer is not the time to take a vacation from God. In fact, summer can serve as the perfect opportunity to grow in our relationship with God, especially since most of us have considerably more free time.

So, instead of neglecting our faith due to busy days and late nights, try these simple steps to embrace God during the quieter summer months and during your vacation.

Don't Take a Vacation from Mass

Often while on a vacation away from our parish family, we are not familiar with where to attend Mass. Don't let that be an obstacle for you. Check out masstimes.org in order to find out where and when to go to Mass. In addition, if you are lodging at a hotel, the concierge will assist you with directions to the nearest Catholic Church.

Get More Active in a Parish Ministry

The summer is actually a perfect time to get more involved in a parish ministry. Because we no longer have to get the kids to and from school, or get them to sporting events or other activities that normally occur during the school year, our schedules are a bit less cluttered. Summer is indeed a perfect time to fill some downtime with service to God through ministry and giving of your talents. Take a look through the parish ministries to find something that suits your particular interest or talent.

Vacation Bible School, for Kids and Adults

Vacation Bible School is a great way for younger children to learn about God through songs, activities and fellowship. The fun-filled lessons build upon Gospel teachings while keeping kids' attention. For older children, it is a great opportunity to offer service by being a team leader or assistant. Adults can also help plan, decorate, organize, and teach during the week. It's a wonderful activity for the entire family!

Summertime Stewardship of Treasure

The prime reason for keeping up our pledge all summer is that God doesn't go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family, even during our vacation time.

Give Thanks for the Sun

Praise God for the sun, time off from school, and easygoing days by visiting the church to say a quick prayer. Bring a journal or rosary along to help stay focused. Little children can even bring a religious coloring book to give thanks to God on their terms. Or, before heading to the pool, why not attend daily Mass with the kids? It's a perfect way to start the day and set the tone that – vacation or not – God is still an important part of your family life.

So, enjoy the warmer temperatures and the relaxed atmosphere. Just don't forget who provides the sun and the sand! And most importantly, remember to take God with you wherever you go on vacation!



A Letter from Our Pastor

Time Is Limitless... Or Is It?

Dear Parishioners,

Some years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June. In thinking about that, it made me realize that we all like to measure time – not necessarily in minutes and hours, but certainly in terms of what happens at particular times of the year. In the Church, we celebrate so many occasions that measure time – Easter, Christmas, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, the feast days of our saints, and much more, all of which give us that sense of moving forward.

In our own lives and the lives of our families, we mark birthdays, anniversaries, Baptism days, and more dates than we can possibly remember. These dates commemorate or remind us of a point in time. Time is also one of those gifts from God that we attach to the idea and life of stewardship.

We are fond of saying that time is the one thing given to all of us in equal amounts. However, we all know that is not necessarily true. Does a mother with several children have the same amount of time as a person with no family? Does a company manager who is expected to be available seven days a week have the same amount of time as someone who works a 9-to-5 job?

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.

Another thing that June brings to mind is how life slows down for most of us. Young people are on summer vacation from school. Families and individuals take vacations. Unfortunately, some see it as a time to take a bit of vacation from worship. We can see it in declining Mass attendance and in the reduced number of activities within ministries and organizations.

We all mark time. We all know that it is limited, and can be fleeting. That is why even countries celebrate special days that mark time – throughout the summer season, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. How do we mark



time as individuals, as families, and as a parish? That may say more about our understanding of stewardship than anything else. Maybe now, as summer is upon us, is the perfect time to concentrate more on our spiritual habits, rather than less.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor

The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?”



Seminarian Joshua Burch

Things to know about Joshua Burch, the seminarian who will be spending the summer with us:

He loves music and reading.

He has played classical violin since the age of 4.

He loves art and architecture.

He is a horse person.

And he really would appreciate it if we keep him in our prayers as he prepares for the priesthood.

“Prayers mean a lot,” Joshua says. “I can feel people praying for me. Knowing that my parish at home and others are praying is really encouraging.”

Joshua is a rising senior at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, La., but his home parish is Epiphany in Lake City. He will be spending the summer with us here at Our Lady Star of the Sea.

For Joshua, priesthood is still six years away. But God is patient – He began calling Joshua when he was a young boy.

“It started when I was really young,” Joshua says. “It was during adoration with my mom. I felt it one day when I was at adoration, and I grew up with the mindset to be a priest until high school. I was real good at math and science, and girls were a thing. But I wanted to be something else.”

Joshua enrolled at Ave Maria University, where he had decided to become a doctor.



Seminarian Joshua Burch will be spending the summer with us here at Our Lady Star of the Sea.

“I wasn’t happy,” he recalls. “I had a good time, but there was something else. I felt this pull to the priesthood during Mass. But I kept putting it off. I even had friends tell me that I’d be a good priest. I was kind of scared about the responsibility of what God was asking me to do. It

was a big leap. I ended up by taking a gap year after my first year at Ave Maria. I wasn’t sure if I was meant to be a doctor. During that year, I felt the pull and I was more open to it.”

During a visit to family in Malta, Joshua had the opportunity to go to St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican.

“There I felt – I guess I realized I’d been running for a long time,” Joshua says. “I was ready to accept God’s plans for me. There was a light I’d suppressed. Finally, I said, ‘Let it

“I guess I realized I’d been running for a long time. I was ready to accept God’s plans for me. There was a light I’d suppressed. Finally, I said, ‘Let it shine.’ I’d had that light in me. Even then, I knew God was calling me.”

– Joshua Burch



Talks About His Calling

shine.' I'd had that light in me. Even then, I knew God was calling me."

But still... but still... Joshua needed to talk about his calling with someone in the religious life, and he had his opportunity when he attended a Confirmation at home and heard the bishop talk about his own calling.

"It touched me," Joshua says. "I asked for his guidance."

After that encounter, Joshua had no doubts of God's calling him to the priesthood.

"That's it in a nutshell," he says.

Once Joshua graduates from the seminary college, he will be going to a major seminary. He believes he may go to St. Vincent de Paul, but he still must discuss his direction with his bishop.

As of this writing, Joshua was not sure what his duties will be with us. But in the meantime, as we welcome him to Our Lady Star of the Sea, may we keep him in our prayers as he continues his journey toward ordination!

Creating a Community of Faith for Our Youngest Members

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to see their understanding of God blossom as they visit the church for 'behind-the-scenes' tours, listen to Bible stories, and learn the prayers."

Ms. Saliba describes the school as a place of perpetual giggles and smiles – an intimate community within the larger parish community.

"I tell Msgr. Brennan all the time that we have the best job in the world," Ms. Saliba says. "Oftentimes, it's hard to tell who is having more fun learning, the teachers or the children. And the parents are always thrilled when their child comes home with prayers or singing religious songs. Preschool is really a time where parents and children begin making lifetime friendships."

Through visiting the preschool and volunteering, parents are drawn more deeply into the school and parish community. Oftentimes, this expands to other parish involvement as families become more invested in their Catholic faith.

"It is such a blessing to be part of such a welcoming and supportive parish," Ms. Saliba says. "We encourage our parishioners to visit the school any time and to see the great things happening here. And once cleared through both the



Pre-K 4 students working in small groups with their teacher.

Department of Children and Families and diocese, parishioners can volunteer in the classrooms. Currently, we also have a few parishioners who support the school by donating items for our creative art tables. We always look forward to these items."

Registration for the preschool begins each year in late November to early December for in-house students, and then becomes open to parishioners and later the public in January. Although classes tend to fill up quickly, parishioners are always encouraged to get on the waiting list. To learn more about the preschool itself, class openings, or how to get more involved, please contact Ms. Christine Saliba at 904-567-1970 or csaliba@pcapvb.org.



Celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus June 23

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is probably the most widely recognized representation of Christ's divine love and unwavering compassion for all of humanity. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been practiced for centuries, and this devotion continues to play an important role in today's Catholic faith. As we celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 23, we have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about this essential Catholic devotion and its role in Church history.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart extends as far back as the 11th or 12th centuries. While there are no definitive texts or histories that verify initial devotees, it is understood that the devotion grew out of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of the time. By the 16th century, documented devotional prayers and exercises had been formulated, and the ascetic writers began making more extensive reference to the Sacred Heart. But it was not until the 17th century that devotion to the Sacred Heart moved beyond being practiced on a private, individual basis. St. Jean Eudes established the first feast of the Sacred Heart, and this was shared with devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It was then that the devotional feast of the Sacred Heart began to spread to other dioceses and religious communities.

However, the devotion as we know and understand it today largely stems from the visions of Jesus Christ to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. While these visions were numerous, the most remarkable revelation, known as "the great apparition," occurred during the octave of Corpus Christi in 1675. As Jesus said to Margaret Mary, "Behold the Heart

that has so loved men... instead of gratitude I receive from the greater part (of mankind) only ingratitude."

Reporting her vision to Fr. Claude de la Colombière, Margaret Mary was then directed to write an account of the apparition. Despite her initial reluctance to do so, as well as her misgivings upon its completion, this written account would soon be published and widely read among both clergy and laymen, thus playing an instrumental role in spreading the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Another book, *The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, was written by Jesuit Father Croiset after Jesus told Margaret Mary to have Fr. Croiset write it. Following Margaret Mary's death in 1690, Fr. Croiset would compose a short biography of her life that was amended to his book, which served to further increase interest and practice of the devotion.

Over the course of the next century, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus would continue to spread. By the latter half of the 18th century, a Mass of the Sacred Heart was given papal approval for Poland and Portugal, followed two decades later by Venice, Austria and Spain. Then, in 1856, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was officially established by Pope Pius IX.

While the specific readings and exercises for the feast day have been changed and replaced over the years, the basic tenets that extend back to the visions of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque remain the same – the acknowledgment of and devotion to Christ's unending compassion and love for all of us.



The Vocations Committee at Our Lady Star of the Sea

In recent years, the question has often been posed: what kind of future is in store for the Catholic Church? According to a 2015 report commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the future is looking very bright! Ordinations to the priesthood have increased by 25 percent – and young men are becoming ordained at an earlier age – when compared with preceding years. And if you wonder whether the prayers and words of encouragement from parishioners really make a difference, take this to heart – men who were ordained in 2015 say they were encouraged to do so by an average of *four* different people. As Catholics, our support of vocations is essential, and here at Our Lady Star of the Sea, we are blessed to have a group of parishioners dedicated to raising awareness about vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Vocations Committee got its start several months ago when Msgr. Brennan enlisted the help of Sr. Lucy Clynes and parishioners Ernie and Rita Bono to start a group dedicated to the mission of increasing vocations. The committee's approach is two-fold, seeking to pray for vocations while also encouraging young men and women to be open to a possible call to religious life.

"We are all committed to praying regularly, and we have a prayer that we say for vocations once a month at Nocturnal Adoration," Ernie says. "I, for one, believe that prayer is efficacious. Also, just observing young men and women [can help]. For example, when you see a young man come into church praying by himself, you can talk to him about it. And we try to encourage parents to look at the priesthood. We hope that all of this will bring more vocations to the parish."

The Vocations Committee is currently made of six couples covering a diverse age range, and Ernie feels blessed to be a part of this special group.

"I think anything you do in your parish brings you along spiritually – whether it's simple participation in Mass or on a committee," he says. "We bring a bunch of people together and they are able to come up with ideas that help us accomplish what we want to do with vocations. These are holy couples who are young and vibrant

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**"Pray to the Lord of the Harvest to
send workers into his fields"**



Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish

**First Friday Mass for Vocations at 8:30am
Holy Hour for Vocations 9:00pm - 10:00pm**

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and really participate – they give me hope and get me to dig deep and see where we can go from here.”

By praying for vocations and encouraging young people to consider religious life and the priesthood, the members of the Vocations Committee are planting the seeds that will allow our Church to continue to flourish in the years to come. For Ernie, the reasons to encourage vocations is clear.

“I’ve been in the parish for 33 years, trying to live a stewardship life, and I believe that vocations are a part of that,” Ernie says. “It’s a part of understanding that if we don’t have priests in the future, we don’t have the Eucharist. Right now, I’d say that I’m very optimistic about where we are and the great increases we have seen in young men entering the seminary.”

“I also believe that a lot of this has happened because of Bishop Estevez’s vision for the diocese and for the seminary,” he continues. “I’m very proud of our seminarians. They are bright young men that are very impressive – they are holy young men and they understand the world, and what it means to be in the world and not of the world. And I think with that blend, the future for our diocese and our parish is very, very exciting.”

If you would like more information, whether about the committee or to learn more about vocations, please contact Msgr. Brennan in the parish office.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.

Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.