



OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AT PALMER CATHOLIC ACADEMY

*Celebrating Catholic Education and
a Community of Faith*

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As our Palmer Catholic Academy prepares to celebrate Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 26 to Feb. 1, the week's activities will be acclaiming the values of Catholic education that strongly prepare our students to engage with the world as disciples of Christ.

"We live by Christ's teaching," says Monica Begeman, Palmer Catholic Academy Business Operations and Admissions Director. "We incorporate it into our education. We prepare the kids for making key decisions in their lives and giving them an education to ready them as they

are going into the world. It's an amazing way to outfit our kids for success. It's a great place for a child to get a start in life."

Palmer Catholic Academy's observation of Catholic Schools Week will be a celebrating of all the community members who are part of our school.

On Jan. 26, all students will attend the 9 a.m. Mass in their uniforms, and assist in the liturgy by carrying the gifts and serving as ushers. Since the school is not on the church campus, an "open house" will be held after Mass in the back of the church where the students can share information about the school. A similar "open house" will be held the following Sunday at our mission parish, St. John Paul II.

During the week, the Palmer students will be free of homework assignments and allowed to "dress down." They also will be asked to bring in



Students from Palmer Catholic Academy lift their voices in song during Mass.



Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool

A Holistic and Christ-Centered Environment for Your Child

It's easy to become overwhelmed by the abundance of choices when first considering educational options for your child. *Do I enroll my child at age 3 or 4? Should they attend full-time or part-time? In a Catholic or private institute?* In weighing all of these important considerations and deciding what's best for your child, Director of Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool Christine Saliba says it's important to choose an institute that will educate the entire child and allow your child to blossom into who they were created to be — academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically. This, she adds, is the great benefit of choosing our parish preschool for your family's educational beginnings.

"Our mission is to provide a Catholic and Christ-centered educational environment that inspires all students to reach their full spiritual and academic potential," Ms. Saliba says. "We provide early learning and developmentally oriented programs which promote enrichment and growth for our parish children. The programs provide a comfortable, warm and positive environment that allows each child to grow physically, mentally, socially and spiritually."

Open to children who are 12 months by Sept. 1 through 4 years of age, Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool offers



Deacon Don DeLorenzo blessing the animals in honor of St. Francis' feast day.

an educationally rich, accredited learning environment that is founded on the values of Jesus Christ. Learning through play, the children receive important lessons on social skills and sharing. They also enjoy opportunities for music, art, physical education and, for our 4-year-olds, Spanish, as well as educational instruction that fully prepares them for kindergarten.

"We try daily to find ways to help our children grow in their love of Jesus and knowledge of their faith — to find new ways for them to grow socially, academically and spiritually," Ms. Saliba says. "We give them opportunities to explore, experiment and play. We want them to feel confident in their social and educational centers. Everything is taught through play and that's how they retain it."

This rich, faith-filled and loving environment allows the children to receive an intimate knowledge of God from their earliest years. It makes faith an integral part of their lives rather than merely an activity they attend one hour a week with their families. This, in turn, blesses the students' families who are often-times drawn into the life of the community through the school.

"Our school helps make faith an integral part of the children's growing up," Ms. Saliba says. "They will learn songs and prayers, and then go home and share that with their families. This ends up impacting their families as well, who are pushed to become a greater part of the church family now that their children are coming home so excited about the faith. Then, too, we have such an inviting parish here where young families can easily feel connected. So the school really becomes a community within a community — a beautiful time for families to become connected and to build those new friendships."

Currently consisting of approximately 143 students, Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool offers two, three, and five days a week options, providing families the flexibility to choose what works best for them. And though it's a 10-month program, occurring between the months of August through May, summer camps and child care are also offered during the off months for families.

Open enrollments officially begins for the school in early January, with spots typically filling up by early February. To register your child or learn more about Palmer Catholic Academy Preschool, please contact the Admissions Director Beth McCarthy at bmccarthy@pcapvb.org, or the school office at pcapoffice@pcapvb.org.



A Letter from Our Pastor

Start a New Life, Not Just a New Year

Dear Parishioners,

It's January and that means it's time for New Year's resolutions — at least that's the widespread perception in our culture. So, I want us to reflect on resolutions for a few minutes.

Often, New Year's resolutions are intended simply to undo the harm we did to ourselves by overindulging in food and drink between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. Some resolutions are changes we know we should make, but aren't really committed to making — thus, they don't last very long.

Reflecting on this in broader terms, when should we make a resolution to eliminate a sinful practice from our life? That question has a simple answer — the moment we realize we're engaging in a sinful practice. In other words, as soon as we realize we're doing something wrong, we should stop. It doesn't matter whether that sin is as "large" as stealing or as "small" as sharing vicious gossip — we should stop immediately when we recognize it's a sinful behavior.

Now, I admit that making the changes we need in order to grow closer to Christ is easier said than done. All too often, we fool ourselves into thinking we can make all the changes we need under our own strength and on a convenient timetable. For real change, we need guidance and we need help — a new life, in fact. St. Paul addressed this when he wrote to the Romans (6:4), "We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life."

In other words, we need a new life, not a new year. We find this new life in union with Christ within His Body, the Church. The Church can provide you with



guidance. She has 2,000 years of accumulated wisdom and experience, beginning with God's own revelation. The Ten Commandments provide a brief, incisive outline for ethical behavior. Help comes from God's grace, available to us in the sacraments and through prayer.

A new life means we have new priorities and a new viewpoint when we look at every aspect of the way we live. It impacts the use of the time we have, the talents God has given us, and the treasure with which He has blessed us. With God's grace and guidance, lived in union with the Church, we find that "in newness of life" we can "cease doing evil" and "learn to do good." That's a resolution worth making.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor





Questions & Answers About Our Annual

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence — part of the rhythm of parish life at Our Lady Star of the Sea. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year?

*Commitment Weekend is
January 25-26. Don't forget to bring
your Commitment Card to Mass!*

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Except for the ill and homebound, everyone should be able to check "Come to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days." Try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to Our Lady Star of the Sea.

My age or physical limitations prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a Commitment Card?

Yes! The first section of the card — Stewardship of Time — is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to *prayer*. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your Commitment Card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At Our Lady Star of the Sea, we ask that you give five percent to our parish, one percent to the diocese, and four percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change — if you lose your job, for instance — then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too. Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill



Stewardship Renewal

their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed.

I don't even go to Mass very frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday, and then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you! Signing up for Faith Direct is another way to stay connected while you are away.

What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

We will mail you a reminder letter that includes an extra Commitment Card (in case you misplaced yours). Make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes Our Lady Star of the Sea a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.

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

Our Lady Star of the Sea
TRANSFORMED THROUGH
Christ

2020 Commitment Card

First & Last Name

Phone

Email

Spouse: First & Last Name

Spouse: Phone

Spouse: Email

Address

City **State** **ZIP**



SUPERHERO DAY *Brings Children and*

What young boy or girl doesn't want to wear a cape and be a superhero for a day? Children had the chance to do just that, as their families at our parish shared in fun and fellowship at the Family Life Ministry's first Superhero Day in early November.

Elaine Mitchell, one of the Superhero Day planners and Family Life Ministry member, hopes events like these will help those young families feel a sense of belonging at our parish. She volunteers for the simple reason that she loves our parish and wants more people and families to get involved.

"I love our Church and I want more people to be a part of it," Elaine says. "Personally, I felt some families

were leaving to go to other churches because they offered more 'family events.' Being able to offer events helps families become more comfortable as they meet more parishioners and hopefully will become disciples."

About 50 people enjoyed obstacles, finding their superhero powers and the "ant-man challenge," where they moved fake ants between two bowls using chopsticks.

The Family Life Ministry also plans Family Fun Day — the second annual event took place last September. Other upcoming events include a Mommy and Me Spa Day on Feb. 8, an Easter Egg Hunt on April 11, and a Father-Daughter Dinner and Dance on April 24.





Their Families Together for Fun and Fellowship

“Because of the wonderful support of Msgr. Brennan, we’re able to offer many of the Family Life Ministry events free of charge,” Elaine says.

“We are always looking for new ideas to bring our parish family together,” she adds.

Elaine offers her thanks to those who have volunteered their time and talents during past Family Life Ministry events. According to Elaine, they come early to set up and stay late to clean up. She wants to thank the Youth Ministry kids, Act1V8 and the Boy Scout units T291 and T288. She also wants to thank Mary Ann Miller who leads the Family Life Ministry and Sister Lucy for all of their work.



The Family Life Ministry is looking for adult, young adult and high school volunteers who would like to be involved in planning and implementing future Family Life Ministry events. If interested, please contact Mary Ann Miller at maryannmiller64@icloud.com or Elaine Mitchell at elainemitchell426@gmail.com.

Please join us for the free Mommy and Me Spa Day on Feb. 8, Easter Egg Hunt and more from 10 a.m. to noon on April 11 and the Father-Daughter Dinner and Dance from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on April 24. More information can be found in the bulletin.



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Catholic Schools Week *continued from front cover*

donations for various social agencies. The students will write letters to our seminarians, and will send “thank you” notes to our priests. There will be flowers for the teachers, as well.

“The week will be a celebration of our Catholic faith, and how we develop and help the students continue on their journey of faith,” Monica says. “It has been found that when students attend Catholic school, from pre-K on up, they are most likely to remain in their faith. This makes a substantial difference for their eternity — helping them get to heaven. It makes a difference.”

All through the week, the students’ parents are celebrated, as well, for starting their children’s education at home with strong values training. This training melds into the

solid Catholic values that are so much a part of Palmer Catholic Academy.

“Personally, and I can speak for the staff, this is not just our job, it’s our vocation,” Monica says. “We serve in our community. We want the best for the kids in the program. The teachers have the force of faith and they want to share that with the kids. It makes a huge difference. We have top academics, and in St. John County, it’s a necessity. What we bring also, is the tried and true parochial education.”

A statement made by St. John Paul II to Catholic educators in 1987 illustrates Palmer Academy’s role in teaching our children: “Yours is a great gift to the Church, a great gift to your nation.”

If you have any questions, or if you would like further information about enrolling a child at Palmer Catholic Academy, please call 904-543-8515.

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.