



St. John's Women's Guild

Celebrating 50 Years of Community Support and Service

The Women's Guild is celebrating 50 years of active participation and support of the St. John Apostle & Evangelist community. For half a century, the guild has served four main purposes — promoting fellowship among all the women in the parish, helping the parish with its functions, providing support to the parish priests, and performing spiritual and charitable works for the parish and wider community.

“Women's Guild is important because it is meant to bring women of the parish together, as do the Knights of Columbus bring the men together,” says Abbie Castaneda, President of the Women's Guild. “It focuses on answering the question, 'What can I do for my church and community?' Women's Guild helps to create a help or support line. It gives members an opportunity to share in many different events by donating their time, talent, and treasure.”

The guild participates and supports the SJAE community in many different ways throughout the year, including Aloha Sunday, Share the Love – Food Drive, May



Two-hundred handmade paper leis were put together for the guild's 50th anniversary.

Crowning, celebrating the priest's birthday, a bake sale, decorating the church for special holidays, and cleaning the linens. They also take a yearly pilgrimage and assist other ministries at the parish.

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Our Stewardship Response to the Eucharist.



God's Ultimate Gift

The Eucharist, often referred to as the "Source and Summit of the Christian life" in Catholic theology, stands as the ultimate gift from God to His people. It is in this sacred sacrament that Catholics partake in the Real Presence of Christ, an encounter that nourishes our souls and strengthens our faith. In light of this profound gift, stewardship emerges as the natural response to God's boundless love.

Stewardship is not merely a call to manage our resources wisely; it is a way of life, a spiritual path that reflects our gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist and our commitment to live in accordance with its transformative power.

The Eucharist, at its core, is a divine act of selflessness. In the Last Supper, Jesus took ordinary bread and wine and offered them as His Body and Blood to His disciples. This selfless act, which is mirrored in His ultimate sacrifice on the cross, serves as an enduring reminder of the depth of God's love for humanity. In response, stewardship compels us to emulate this selflessness. By recognizing that all we have ultimately belongs to God, we are called to use our resources, time, and talents to serve others selflessly. Stewardship, then, is a living testament to the selfless love embodied in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist fosters a deep sense of community among Catholics. As we partake in the Body and Blood of Christ, we become part of a global and timeless family of believers. This sense of community, born in the Eucharist, parallels the essence of stewardship. Stewardship is not a solitary endeavor, but a collective one. It calls us to work together, to join hands with our fellow Catholics and, indeed, all people of goodwill, to address the needs of

our communities. In this spirit of togetherness, we seek to build God's kingdom on earth, just as we share in the divine communion of the Eucharist.

Moreover, the Eucharist teaches us to be grateful. When we approach the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we do so in an attitude of profound thanksgiving. Stewardship, as an expression of gratitude, is our way of giving back to God for the countless blessings we have received. We recognize that all we have, whether it's material wealth, skills, or time, are gifts from God. In gratitude, we commit to using these gifts wisely and for the betterment of others.

The Eucharist is a celebration of transformation. As Catholics, we believe that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, ordinary bread and wine are transformed into the divine. Similarly, our response to the Eucharist should lead to a personal transformation. Stewardship is a means by which we become more Christ-like, more selfless, and more compassionate. It is through stewardship that we, as individuals and as a faith community, seek to live out the teachings of Christ, becoming beacons of love, justice, and hope in a world that often hungers for such transformation.

As the Eucharist is the ultimate gift from God, stewardship is our heartfelt response to that gift. By embracing stewardship, we acknowledge the selflessness, community, gratitude, and transformation inherent in the Eucharist. Stewardship is not a burden, but a joyous calling — an opportunity to reflect God's love and to bring Christ's message to life. In the spirit of the Eucharist, let us strive to be faithful stewards, sharing our blessings and transforming the world with God's love.

A Letter from Our Pastor

Celebrating Easter with Gratitude

Dear Parishioners,

Easter Sunday falls on April 20 this year, a date determined centuries ago using a fascinating formula tied to the spring equinox and the phases of the moon. While the specifics can be complex, most of us simply check the liturgical calendar! What matters most is the joy we feel as we gather to celebrate Christ's Resurrection.

This Easter also brings a noticeable change from the winter months — the days are longer, and the world feels brighter. Interestingly, the word "Lent" is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "to lengthen," referring to the lengthening of daylight during spring. Even though most of us no longer live in agricultural settings, we share the joy of creation coming back to life after the stillness of winter.

But make no mistake — Easter is not merely a celebration of spring. It is first and foremost a proclamation of the event that changed the course of history: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Over 2,000 years ago, during the Jewish Passover, Jesus offered His life on the cross and rose on the third day, conquering sin and death for all time. This is the heart of our faith and the reason we rejoice.

At the same time, Easter reminds us of the blessings

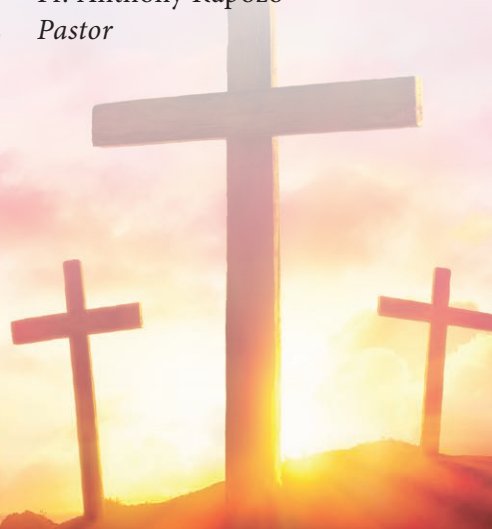


God pours into our lives — both spiritual and material. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, teaches that a Christian steward is someone who "receives God's gifts gratefully." These gifts include not only our faith and hope of eternal life but also the beauty of creation, the relationships we cherish, and the talents and resources entrusted to us.

As we celebrate this Easter season, let us take time to reflect on all that God has given us. Gratitude is the first step toward living as faithful stewards. When we acknowledge our blessings and use them for God's glory and the good of others, we participate in building His Kingdom here on earth.

May this Easter be a time of renewal, joy, and gratitude for you and your family. Together, let us give thanks for Christ's victory over death and for the beauty of new life, both in nature and in our hearts.

Sincerely,
Fr. Anthony Rapozo
Fr. Anthony Rapozo
Pastor



Join Us for Encounter Nights and Spe

The inspiration for our Wednesday Encounter Nights came from the National Eucharistic Congress in July. Thanks to the profound impact this experience had on Fr. Anthony and Deacon Mike Browning, we now are offered the grace-giving opportunity to experience a personal encounter with Jesus.

"Fr. Anthony and myself went to the 10th annual Eucharistic Congress held in Indianapolis in July," Deacon Mike says. "After attending, we made the decision to host Encounter Nights to open in the middle of the National Eucharistic Revival."

The Encounter Nights are held from 7 to 8 p.m. at the church. They are held in addition to the adoration hour held after the 8:30 a.m. Friday Masses. As the new Encounter

Nights were being planned, Deacon Mike asked Fr. Anthony how long the Encounter Nights would continue.

"He had a question mark on his face, and then said, 'We're never going to stop!'" Deacon Mike says. "I believe him! We see it as continuing the mission in what we do."

An aspect of the Congress's adoration has been incorporated in our Encounter Nights that Deacon Mike sees as a way to make Christ's presence even closer to the participants. During the Congress, adoration began with a procession that focused on the monstrance containing the Eucharist entering the convention center. The celebrant offered a prayer reflection once the monstrance was placed on the altar.

"We incorporated that," Deacon Mike says. "We process to the altar from the back of the church as they did in Indiana.



The Blessed Sacrament, the presence of Jesus in the host, is displayed in the monstrance during the Encounter Nights for adoration. A period of silence during the service invites us to sit and listen as Jesus speaks to us.



On Jan. 22, the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Deacon Mike led parishioners outside to pray and hold a candlelight vigil at the Memorial for the Unborn. This was a portion of that evening's Encounter Night.

nd Time in the Real Presence of Jesus

We alternate among our clergy and myself for four weeks. We all have different approaches. My focus is using St. John Vianney's *Meditation on the Eucharist* — I'll read from it. This is in preparation for a half hour of silence. When we're done, we have benediction, then recess through the aisles of the church.

"I found this to be a very profound walk with Jesus," he adds. "You see the people fall to their knees in reverence. I'm reminded it's not me — this is Jesus and profound care for the Eucharist. It's very touching and moving to bring the monstrance closer to the faithful. After the parishioners leave, we put Jesus back in the tabernacle."

The Encounter Night held on Jan. 22 was a special observance when Deacon Mike led parishioners in celebrating the Rite of the Unborn. During the event, Deacon Mike read the statement by the Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas, Bishop of Toledo, chair of the U.S. Conference of Bishops, on the 52nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

"The reading was held during our period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament along with a Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Life," Deacon Mike says. "The parishioners processed behind the monstrance to the courtyard and the Memorial to the Unborn, where there was a silent candlelight vigil with Jesus present at the memorial. We prayed silently, then I returned Jesus to the tabernacle. I could see all kinds of emotions and hearts touched."

Although Deacon Mike says he cannot speak for our parishioners regarding the graces they receive during the Encounter Nights, he has heard comments that those taking part feel a warmth and love, a connection to Jesus.

"Sometimes we're living separate lives, but they find hope in that silence, offering their prayers and intentions," he says. "We give thanksgiving but we also ask for our intentions and celebrate our joys. I've been a deacon for better than one year, and I've met wonderful people. In working with those



When the Blessed Sacrament is displayed in the monstrance during adoration, the consecrated host is secured in the luna, a fitted container that is placed within the monstrance for all to see.

who are struggling, we see the presence of Jesus. But they don't see it themselves."

Deacon Mike recalled working with a young man dealing with addiction. After they talked, Deacon Mike invited the young man to come to an Encounter Night.

"I said, just come," Deacon Mike says. "Just come and sit and empty your head. Welcome the silence, the retreat from the world, and listen. Many bring prayer books or rosaries. Our altar has a triptych of Mary, John the Apostle, and Jesus on the cross. I told him to come, sit at the foot of the cross in the presence of the Eucharist, and listen. You see emotions start. There's a saying in Hawai'i that we call 'chicken skin.' It's God bumps — it bypasses the brain and hits the heart. These are their encounter moments."

There is a message Deacon Mike would like to share with those who come only one time to an Encounter Night.

"I want them to get the sense they're missing something," he says. "They miss the sense of grace and the great opportunity to have it. This is that moment you can have a personal relationship with God, one-on-one with Him and present with him in the community. We're all working to the same goal — to see God face to face someday."

Those attending the Encounter Nights can find they become better stewards of their time.

"Coming to adoration lets us reflect and ask God, 'What are You calling me for? What more can I do?'" Deacon Mike says. "Sit and listen. So many opportunities are given to us. These things happen to all of us. We need a quiet time to reflect on those times to ask Jesus to be more present in our lives. 'What do You want me to do?' When we open our minds, ears, and hearts He'll talk to us.

"Come to adoration," he adds. "It puts us in a place that allows the healing power to come. 'Help me be in stewardship, Your feet, eyes, hands, and ears.' That's the integral part of our stewardship."

Celebrating the 2025 Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church

*Pope Francis Declares
Theme, “Pilgrims of Hope”*



The Catholic Church’s 2025 Jubilee Year, themed “Pilgrims of Hope,” offers Catholics worldwide a profound opportunity to deepen their faith and rekindle their relationship with Christ. A Jubilee Year, rooted in the biblical tradition of restoration and renewal, is a special time set aside by the Church to foster spiritual growth, encourage reconciliation, and celebrate God’s abundant mercy. Declared by Pope Francis, this Holy Year is an invitation for all Catholics to embrace hope as a guiding light in their spiritual journey.

At the heart of the Jubilee Year are pilgrimages, particularly to Rome, where the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica will be opened as a symbol of God’s grace. Walking through the Holy Door signifies a passage into a renewed life with Christ. In his apostolic letter introducing the Jubilee, Pope Francis emphasizes the need for hope in a world marked by challenges, encouraging the faithful to rediscover their role as witnesses of Christ’s love and mercy.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) echoes this sentiment, urging American Catholics to see the Jubilee Year as an opportunity for renewal and a deeper commitment to discipleship. The bishops have outlined several ways for Catholics to participate in the Jubilee, including pilgrimages to designated shrines across the United States, special liturgical celebrations, and communal acts of prayer and service. The USCCB also encourages parishes to focus on Eucharistic devotion, as the Jubilee aligns with the National Eucharistic Revival, emphasizing

the transformative power of the Eucharist in Catholic life.

Special events and devotions will highlight the year. Many dioceses will host local pilgrimages, mission retreats, and reconciliation services to inspire spiritual renewal. Parishes are encouraged to organize events fostering community and prayer, such as Eucharistic processions, adoration, and acts of charity. These activities aim to remind the faithful of their call to stewardship and their role in building up the Body of Christ.

Catholics across the United States can celebrate the Jubilee Year in their daily lives by embracing discipleship and stewardship. Engaging in regular prayer, receiving the sacraments, and participating in acts of service and charity can deepen their connection to Christ. Families might consider creating home altars, praying the Rosary together, or reading Scripture to mark this holy time. Small groups or parish ministries can focus on themes of hope and renewal through study and discussion.

Ultimately, the 2025 Jubilee Year is a call for all Catholics to walk as “Pilgrims of Hope” — to rediscover the joy of the Gospel, renew their faith, and strengthen their commitment to Christ. By participating in the Jubilee’s spiritual and communal opportunities, the faithful can grow closer to God and embrace their mission as stewards of His hope in the world.

For more information on Jubilee 2025, visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Jubilee page at www.usccb.org/jubilee2025.

Fr. Anthony Leads Upcoming Book Study on Mary and Her Role in Our Faith

Join Us for This Great Formation Opportunity: May 1 to June 19

During Lent 2024, each parishioner had the opportunity to read Brant Pitre's *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper*. After Lent, Fr. Anthony Rapozo, supported by the deacons, offered weekly classes on the book with about 50 to 60 people in attendance. The classes were so successful that Fr. Anthony is again offering this opportunity, from May 1 to June 19.

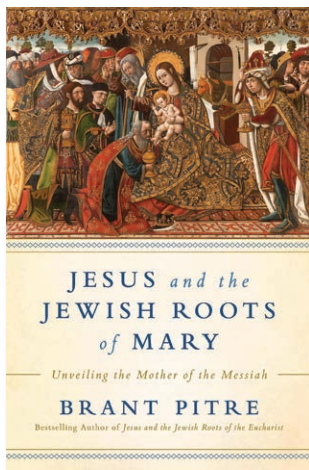
This year, we will study Mary in Brant Pitre's *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah*. Plan to gather at 6:30 p.m. each Thursday to dig deeper into this book.

"As Catholics, we often get challenged on where we get our teachings on Mary and the Eucharist," Fr. Anthony says. "In these books, Brant Pitre shares background and Jewish teachings to help the reader find the deeper meaning."

The book offers insights into the Jewish hopes for the Messiah, why the Eucharist was instituted during Passover, and what Jesus meant when He said, "This is my body... This is my blood." It helps readers understand the meaning to the Jewish people, at that time, of all these teachings.

"We learned why Jesus did what He did and why the Apostles did what they did," Fr. Anthony says. "In the book on the Eucharist, you learn that Jesus truly meant this is His Body and Blood."

Fr. Anthony has read the book on Mary in preparation, and can't wait to share it with parishioners. You can learn the Jewish understanding of the Queen of Heaven. He promises that you won't be disappointed! Through a PowerPoint presentation and other visuals, you will truly learn more about the Jewish people's understanding of Mary during the time of Jesus. You will learn why Catholics pray to Mary and how Mary helps us understand Jesus. You will also learn how Mary is the Ark of the Covenant, the new Eve and the Queen of Heaven. Each parishioner who



This year's study will be based on Brant Pitre's Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary: Unveiling the Mother of the Messiah.

registers will receive a free copy of the book, which contains eight chapters.

For Fr. Anthony, it's exciting that so many parishioners are engaging with the faith formation opportunities that are offered. Deacon Mike Browning has offered a class on the road to Emmaus, which includes videos and small-group time.

"We like to mix up the setup of these faith formation opportunities to keep people interested," Fr. Anthony says.

For those who don't have as much time to attend in-person opportunities, the parish has a subscription to FORMED.org. Through this online platform, there are many accessible learning opportunities, from movies to daily reflections and podcasts. Furthermore, there are people from the parish who have been trained as moderators to help with facilitating

future FORMED.org studies.

Attending Mass is a tenet of the Catholic faith. But there's limited time, in the homily, to learn a lot about the faith. This is why these opportunities are so valuable.

"To learn more, you really need to take a class," Fr. Anthony says. "We want to help people to be disciples of Christ so that they want to have a personal encounter with Jesus."

We still have parishioners who haven't come back to weekly Mass after the pandemic. Fr. Anthony hopes these opportunities will bring people back to the faith.

"Maybe they can come to these as a starting point to come back to church," he says. "We can start small and meet them where they are and work with them."

Attend this upcoming faith formation opportunity to learn more about Mary, from May 1 to June 19 at 6:30 p.m. on Thursdays.



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St. John's Women's Guild *continued from front cover*

"We promote fellowship, spiritual growth, and service to the SJAE Church Community and beyond," Abbie says. "We enrich each other's lives by sharing and caring."

In January, to celebrate its 50th anniversary, the guild held a Luau Celebration in the One Community Center. All parishioners were invited to join the Women's Guild members for a special celebration that included honoring members of 25-plus years, a luau buffet, and entertainment provided by Women's Guild members.

"For those who were honored for being with the Women's Guild for 25-plus years, it was a beautiful recognition of faith and dedication," Abbie says. "For all Women's Guild members, it was a special moment to be appreciated and applauded for being a part of the Women's Guild."

The guild is open to all women, 18 years and older

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— Abbie Castaneda

who attend SJAE. New members are always welcome.

"Women's Guild members come together to share in fellowship, work, and fun," Abbie says. "I recommend that other women join because it gives them the opportunity to meet other women that they may or may not know. More importantly, it's an opportunity to give of their time, talent, and treasure to help others in need. To give of oneself is the greatest gift."

To learn more about the Women's Guild, or to get involved, contact Abbie Castaneda at abbie.99.06@gmail.com.