



St. John BEFORE THE LATIN GATE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

CELEBRATING FAITH AND EDUCATION DURING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK *ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY GETS READY FOR WEEKLONG CELEBRATION*

Since 1974, Catholic Schools Week has been a special time for Catholic school students, staff and administrators across the United States to truly celebrate what it means to have a Catholic education. It's a week to learn, have fun and grow in faith with the wide network of those involved in our school in some way.

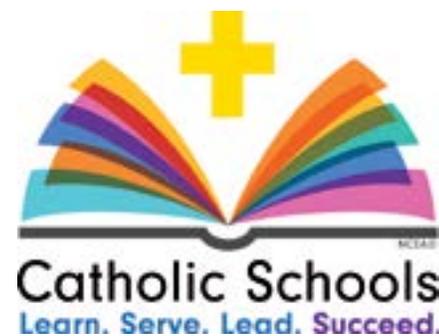
This year at St. John Catholic School, we are celebrating Catholic Schools Week from Sunday, Jan. 26 to Saturday, Feb. 1.

"This is a great week to celebrate our faith," says Mrs. Lexie Radebaugh, Principal. "We remind the kids through our theme and service how important our faith is. We try to make it not only fun for the kids, but informative as well."

A breakfast will kick off the week as a way to thank the parishioners for supporting the school.

In particular, Mrs. Radebaugh looks forward to hosting live performance painter, Mike Debus, who will kick off the fun on Monday, Jan. 27. The week will also include a door-decorating contest and special dress-up days, two favorites for the students.

"The kids think it is great fun to be out of uniform for a few days," Mrs. Radebaugh says. "They also love to walk around and see the different doors, as each class puts their own spin on the theme."



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Celebrating Faith and Education During Catholic Schools Week *continued from front cover*

Mrs. Radebaugh agrees this is a great time to highlight the importance of Catholic education. Importantly, it also allows teachers, administration, students, parents and parishioners to focus on the purpose and mission of St. John Catholic School — to “educate young men and women in the Christian faith who will enrich the community through their actions to LOVE others, GROW in faith, LEARN about the world, and BELIEVE in God’s plan for salvation.”

For Mrs. Radebaugh, the opportunity to spend a week celebrating Catholic education is a cause near and dear to her. And of course, growing in faith doesn’t just happen during Catholic Schools Week. It is something to celebrate for a lifetime.

“We work diligently to impress upon our teachers and students that we are interested in helping them grow not only academically, but spiritually,” she says. “It is great to be able to watch the kids grow in their faith.”



As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week this month, we remember parishioner Helen Heady. This past Nov. 22, the anniversary of Helen’s passing, our community gathered to remember her encouraging spirit and generosity to our parish and school. We are so appreciative of Helen’s gifts, which have continued to foster the wonderful gift of Catholic education in our community.

JOIN US AT THE ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL GALA — FEB. 1

As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close, we have a wonderful opportunity to support St. John Catholic School with a very special event! The Annual Gala, held at St. John Catholic School on Feb. 1 this year, is open to the public, and the theme of the event is “Empowering Minds, Enriching the Spirit.” The night includes games, a catered dinner, a cash bar, live music, a live auction and dancing. Tickets are \$75 and there are multiple sponsorship opportunities from \$250 to \$3,500. This benefit is a special time for celebrating and honoring St. John Catholic School families, patrons, and community members.

It is through the community’s very generous donations and continued support that St. John Catholic School continues to grow and serve its community.

If you have any questions about Catholic Schools Week at St. John Catholic School, please call 918-336-0603.

START A NEW LIFE, NOT JUST A NEW YEAR

A Letter From Our Pastor

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 large or small — 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.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. John O’Neill
Pastor

FINDING THE “MISSING PIECE” IN FAITH: *Meet Parishioner Kim Barbour*

Sometimes in life, things might be going along just fine — and then you just get a sense that there’s something missing. Or perhaps it’s just a feeling that maybe God has something more for you; that He wants to invite you into something bigger.

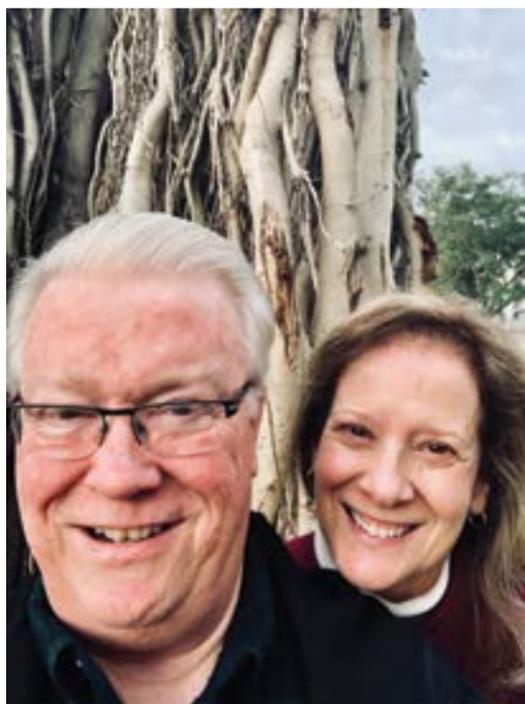
Several years ago, something similar began happening in parishioner, Kim Barbour’s, life. She was born and raised in the Episcopal faith, with an Episcopalian father and a mother who was raised Catholic, but converted to the Episcopal Church. From a young age, she was drawn to Christianity and developed a strong relationship with Christ.

“I knew at a young age that God was a part of my life,” Kim says. “I had a very strong faith, a very prayerful discipline that I had from middle school on. But there were certain brick walls I had up against the Catholic Church.”

In college, Kim met her husband, John, who was born and raised Catholic, although his formation in understanding the faith was somewhat limited.

“I told him I could never be a Catholic and he went along with that,” Kim says.

The couple, who was married in the Episcopal Church in 1985, raised their daughters in the faith and were always active members of their church community, with Kim being involved in prayer groups, and serving in hospice and children’s hospitals. Moving 15 times in the course of their marriage, Kim and John were involved with various Christian denominations over the years — their relationship



John and Kim Barbour on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, February 2019

with God remaining steadfast.

“We would glance at the Catholic Church and then choose something else,” Kim says. “I just couldn’t get past Mary, the saints, the Eucharist — I just couldn’t get my head around it at all.”

In spite of all of this, she continued to feel a void, thinking that God was calling her to something more. She considered being ordained a priest in the Methodist Church, began praying the Liturgy of the Hours, learning about the rule of St. Benedict, spending time in contemplative prayer each day — even exploring the idea of a Protestant Rosary. Yet, none of these things seemed to fill the hole.

“I think I was always meant to be a Catholic,” Kim says, with a smile. “I was always searching,

asking, ‘What am I missing? Why do I not feel fulfilled?’ I knew I was happy in my relationship with God and Jesus, but what was missing?”

When the couple moved to Bartlesville last year, they looked at several churches, and ended up joining St. John’s. When Kim’s husband suggested they participate in the RCIA — Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults — class, she decided to investigate the faith from a journalistic perspective.

“My heart was open and I was so surprised how the pieces started falling into place and a void of sorts was slowly starting to be filled,” Kim says. “The information was like water, filling me up. I was like, ‘I’ve got to learn more.’”

Kim and John also went on a transformative pilgrimage to the Holy Land during this time, along

with Fr. John and others from the parish.

This past Easter, Kim was fully initiated into the Catholic Church, receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

“It was so exciting,” Kim says. “I looked up into Fr. John’s eyes and he said the words, ‘the Body of Christ,’ and I could not stop smiling — I was so excited about receiving Jesus into me.”

Since entering the Church, Kim has jumped all in — joining the Rosarians, a group which meets regularly to pray for priests and seminarians, and becoming part of the RCIA team. She loves the ritual and practices of the faith, and finds great comfort in 2,000 years of Catholic history and tradition.

For Kim, watching her husband, John, a “cradle Catholic,” grow in his understanding and depth of faith as he accompanied her through the RCIA process was inspiring.

“Watching John transform — to watch him light up, it was great watching his heart open again to his faith,” Kim says.

Kim also loves the opportunity to be part of other people’s faith journeys as part of the RCIA team. She hopes that those seeking to know God in the Catholic



Barbara Hiatt (RCIA volunteer), Pat Netzer (RCIA Leader) and Kim Barbour just before Easter Vigil Mass, April 2019

Church will come to know God’s love and mercy through the Church and sacraments, as well.

“I hope that they can discover their faith,” Kim says. “I want them to feel the mercy of God and how much He wants to love us, if we can just open our arms and let Him in.”

Kim encourages her fellow parishioners who have grown up in the Catholic faith to take a step back and reflect on the gift of faith that they’ve received. She hopes that those who have always been Catholic will take time to deepen their knowledge of their beliefs — and as they do, grow in love for the Church of which they are a part.

“If you look at the *Catechism*, it just explains things so beautifully,” Kim says. “If you just started with

the ‘Our Father’ section of the *Catechism*, and you read why we pray it, you’d be so proud of your Church. Ask yourself, ‘Why do I do the things I do in this Church?’ That’s where I would start — stop doing it because it’s ritual, do it because your heart is involved.

“Your heart can only get involved if you understand it,” she adds. “Embrace all that this Church has to offer you.”

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THE PATRON OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN AMERICA ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON

As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774, just months after the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth's childhood witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country — the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering.

Elizabeth's biological mother died when she was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. A spark of faith, however, was visible even in her early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded, "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy — it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the faith. In a letter



to her sister, Elizabeth wrote, "My sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches..."

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, and she began to investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly, "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored intensely, explaining how "from half past five in the morning until nine at night, every moment is full — no space even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system — along with hospitals and orphanages.

Before her death in January 1821, she was the active mother of five — although two of her daughters died young — and the spiritual mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress and all-American saint.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON ROSARY GROUP A LEGACY OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER

It's hard to believe that our parish's Thursday Afternoon Rosary Group has been gathering together for over 40 years! Marge Harrison, one of the original founders, recalls the ministry's simple beginnings, taking place at different stints in parishioners Pat Meyers', Ann Phillip's, and Helen McCourt's homes. Over time, thanks to the urging of people like Mary Walker and Victor Delappo, our community was blessed with the Adoration and Marian Chapel. So, the weekly gatherings were moved there so as to pray in front of our Eucharistic Lord.

"The group moved there for the increased joy of being before the Blessed Sacrament, which we at St. John's are so blessed to have," Deacon Charlie Moomaw says. "Still meeting faithfully, today's group ranges in age from those in their early 30s to, well, people way up there. Devoted parishioners Bea Sanbrano and Lou Bearer, for

example, rarely missed a Thursday despite both being close to 100 years old. Now deceased, they continue to pray with us and for us from heaven."

Today's Rosary Group is led by Marge Harrison, Deacon Charlie and his wife, Tracey, working to continue this beautiful legacy of intercessory prayer. Gathering Thursdays at 1:15 p.m., the group begins by meditating together on the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

"Initiated by St. Pope John Paul II in 2002, these Luminous Mysteries have us meditating on Christ's life with a mini Gospel, starting with the Wedding Feast at Cana," Deacon Charlie says. "One of the beauties of the Rosary we say is that each Hail Mary is preceded by a passage from Luke about its particular Mystery. So at Cana we hear Mother Mary tell the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' So great was her trust in His love.

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The weekly Thursday Afternoon Rosary gathering



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Thursday Afternoon Rosary Group *continued from page 7*

Our Lady truly always points us to her Son.”

The group also prays and sings the Divine Mercy Chaplet, as well as a similar chaplet for the sanctity of our priests. This includes a prayer for priests written by Fr. Mark Kirby, who was the Spiritual Director for priests in our diocese.

Currently an intimate group of nine members, these dedicated prayer warriors have been repeatedly amazed by the power of intercessory prayer. Their hour of prayer always

lightens their burdens and fills their hearts with a greater sense of peace. Over the years, it has also blessed them with a special closeness with one another.

“When we are all able to attend it is truly powerful — powerful in the intercessions granted by Mary and Jesus and powerful for us, as we grow closer to our Lord and Lady and to each other as the water of our prayers are transformed into the wine of His presence,” Deacon Charlie says.

All parishioners are welcome to join the Thursday Rosary Group for their intercessory prayer. Simply come any Thursday afternoon or contact Deacon Charlie Moomaw at either 918-336-0333 or cpmoo@juno.com.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday: 5 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. *(en Español)*

Tuesday: 7 a.m. *(chapel)* | **Wednesday:** 5:15 p.m. *(church)* | **Thursday:** 7 a.m. *(chapel)*

Friday: 8:15 a.m. *(church during school year/non-school days in chapel)*

Reconciliation: Saturday: 4-4:45 p.m. | Sunday: 12:30-1:15 p.m.