



St. John

BEFORE THE LATIN GATE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

CONTENTS

- 3 Easter: *The Foundation of Christian Stewardship*
- 4 Always Room to Grow: *Meet Jim and Rosalie Fangmeier*
- 6 Cultivate Your Personal Garden for Christ this Spring
- 6 Monthly Leisure Club *An Opportunity for Parishioners to Share in Fun and Fellowship*

BLESSED TO CONTINUE THE LEGACY OF THE PARISH GIFT SHOP

Parishioner Karen Franco was a young girl at the time, but she can remember when our parish Gift Shop opened in the early 1970s — the store was run by a close family friend named Helen Willis. So, when Karen was given the opportunity to take over the Gift Shop’s management for the Women’s Association about a year ago, she says she felt honored, seeing it as a unique way to serve the parish and carry on Helen’s legacy.

“I just thought it was such an honor to keep her legacy going,” Karen says. “I also used to own a florist and a gift shop here in town for 22 years. It was something that I really enjoyed and so I felt like this would be a special way for me to use my personal experience in service of the church.”

Currently, the St. John Before the Latin Gate Gift Shop is open both before and after the weekend Masses. The shop can be found in the gathering area of the church just outside of the sanctuary. It’s a place where parishioners



St. John Before the Latin Gate Gift Shop volunteers happily serve — (from left) Annette Walker, Kathy King, Loretta Blizzard, Pat Gray and Karen Franco.

BLESSED TO CONTINUE THE LEGACY OF THE
PARISH GIFT SHOP *continued from front cover*

can conveniently purchase seasonal and year-round religious items such as rosaries, statues, Bibles and religious books.

“Sometimes people just go to the parish office and ask if they can be let in, but generally the idea is for people to shop before and after Mass,” Karen says. “We always have things like Bibles, *Catechisms* and rosaries, but then we also carry seasonal items like Advent wreaths and Holy Family figurines. It’s a great place for parishioners to get gifts for First Communion, Confirmations and Easter.”

Not only does the Gift Shop make shopping convenient for parishioners, but any money spent there ends up going back into the parish and community through the Women’s Association. Funds are used to cover things like buying the priests and deacons Christmas and birthday gifts, funeral dinners, and contributing to the various repairs needed in the church and chapel. The association also provides support for various community organizations. Thus, shopping at the Gift Shop becomes a good way to give as well as receive.

Making this possible are a handful of dedicated volunteers who donate their time each Sunday to help open and close the store. These volunteers also assist with the maintenance and inventory of the store when needed. Together, they help ensure that this unique parish legacy continues for many more years to come.



Whether it's a crucifix, First Communion gift or simply a book for one's personal growth, the St. John Before the Latin Gate Gift Shop is here to conveniently provide for your religious item needs.

We invite all parishioners to consider blessing our Gift Shop with their patronage.
If you are interested in joining the ministry's team of volunteers, please contact
Karen Franco at kmfranco@cableone.net or 918-914-2916.

EASTER:
The Foundation of Christian Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

How do you feel at the end of the Palm Sunday Mass each year? Have you ever noticed the abrupt shift of tone during the course of that liturgy? It begins with great joy as we celebrate Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem to the acclamation of the crowds. But, then, the mood swings to sorrow when the Passion Gospel is read, for we hear those same crowds shouting, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” a few days later.

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. The confusion of conflicting moods is spread through the week, especially during the Easter Triduum from sundown Holy Thursday to sundown Easter Sunday.

Holy Thursday offers us the glorious Mass of the Lord’s Supper celebrating the institution of the Eucharist before we pass to the sadness of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The next day brings us the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion with our recognition of what our sins did to the Incarnate Son of God. Then, after a day of waiting as we mourn Jesus’ burial and repose in the tomb, we celebrate His victory over sin, Satan and death at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or at the Masses the next day. If we have participated in all the main services of the Triduum, we arrive at Sunday evening exhausted, but joyful.

This year Palm Sunday falls on the first Sunday in April, so we observe Holy Week and Easter Sunday early in the month. That means we will spend most of April in the Easter Season, a period filled with joy and thanksgiving. Our gladness comes not only because Christ rose from the dead, but also because we benefit from it. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, “The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by



his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life” (CCC, 654).

In other words, Christ’s Resurrection is the source of our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans in the following words: “For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” (Rom 6:5).

Eternal life in union with Christ — a hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven — is the result of Jesus’ Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope?

How do we show our joy and gratitude to God for this amazing gift? We join in worship and we praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus’ victory over death with our family, friends and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us. Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ’s Resurrection is the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

A special note regarding our Easter Vigil celebration — we are happy to announce that this year’s Easter Vigil Mass will be a bilingual celebration, so that all members of our faith family may share in the joy of the Risen Christ together.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. John O’Neill
Pastor

ALWAYS ROOM TO GROW: *Meet Jim and Rosalie Fangmeier*



Jim and Rosalie Fangmeier have served our parish community in many different ways over the years, from serving as Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers at Mass and bringing Holy Communion to the homebound, to Jim serving as a lector, and more. Bringing the Eucharist to those who cannot attend Mass has always been one of their favorite ways to be involved.

Parishioner Jim Fangmeier grew up not far from Bartlesville, in Coffeyville, Kan.

Originally from Missouri, his future wife, Rosalie's family moved to Coffeyville in the early 1950s, just down the street from where Jim lived. Although the pair went to high school together and knew of one another, it wasn't until college that they became friends. As one of the only people with a car, Jim would often drive Rosalie and others home each weekend, to work their part-time jobs.

What started out naively enough, soon turned into more — and the rest is history. The couple, who has two daughters and three grandchildren, will celebrate 54 years of marriage this August.

And Jim's love for the "girl next door" isn't the only thing that has grown deeper and stronger over the years. Much like his love story with Rosalie, his faith began at a young age, and has only become more meaningful with time. Born and raised Catholic, Jim grew up very involved in his faith, even attending Catholic grade school. Although he always felt close to God as he attended Mass each week, at some point, he realized he desired even more.

"I'm what you would call a 'cradle Catholic,'" Jim says, with a smile. "But as an adult, at one point, I made a comment to our pastor that I haven't had any real religious education, other than Mass, since I was a kid. I wanted adult instruction, a different level of instruction."

Jim and Rosalie started attending an adult Bible Study in the 1980s and have been leading the Monday night adult Bible study for nearly two decades.

"There's something there — it just calls us," Jim says. "There's always more and I finally got to the point where I realized that, even though I knew more and more, I was always kind of

startled by the fact that there was still so much more that I didn't know. The excitement and intrigue goes up — the faith is not boring or flat."

Jim and Rosalie have been involved in the parish in many different ways over the years, from serving as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass and bringing Holy Communion to the homebound, to Jim serving as a lector, and more. Bringing the Eucharist to those who cannot attend Mass has always been one of their favorite ways to be involved.

"That's probably the most wonderful duty I've had at church, being a homebound minister," says Jim, who coordinated the ministry for a while and created a training program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the parish. "That you could have permission from the Church and your pastor to take Holy Communion to people who couldn't come to the Sacrifice of the Mass, that's a real great thing for me."

Jim encourages his fellow parishioners to prioritize spending time with God in prayer if they want to deepen their relationship with Him.

"What I try to do is set aside at least 30 minutes a day to spend with God," Jim says. "It doesn't mean I'm saying prayers all the time, but maybe I'm just sitting in this chair and I say, 'Let's talk God.' It's amazing what kinds of thoughts cross your mind when you're doing that kind of meditation. You'll get the greatest inspirations."

"Give some time every day to God," he adds. "And if you can, go to Mass more than once a week."

He reminds people to reflect on their lives in gratitude and consider the ways in which God may be inviting them to give back in service to the Church and others.

"Over the years, we've had some bumps in the road, but looking back, God has been good to me, always," Jim says. "I ask, 'Am I returning the favor adequately?' When much is given, much is expected. I think that should be a concern of all of us."

Thank you, Jim and Rosalie, for all the ways you've served our parish. We're so grateful you're part of our community!

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— JIM FANGMEIER



Cultivate Your Personal Garden for Christ this Spring

Everyone loves springtime. The weather is warmer and beautiful flowers are blooming all around us.

But anyone with a beautiful garden will attest that the flowers do not magically appear as if the season change itself miraculously makes the flowers bloom. Beautiful flowers and lush gardens are the result of the gardener's hard work.

Imagine that a man is given some flower seeds. The man then buries the seeds in the ground and leaves them on their own. As the months pass and rain falls, some seeds may receive enough nourishment to bloom. But simply burying seeds in the ground will hardly make for a gorgeous garden. Rather, if the man truly wants to enjoy many beautiful flowers, there is much care and work ahead. Recognizing the hidden beauty within these simple seeds, he must cultivate the ground, plant the seeds in a solid foundation, then water and fertilize them throughout the year — only then will he see the proper fruit these seeds were made to bear.

This simple illustration speaks to the heart of us this season — not only as we look around at the flowers, but more importantly as we reflect on the springtime of the Church. We are celebrating the great feast of Easter when, through His death and Resurrection, Christ offers us the greatest gift of all — eternal life with Him forever. This celebration

leads us to reflect on the many gifts God has given us in this life and the fruit they will bear, especially as we look to life eternal.

He has given each of us a multitude of gifts so that we can better serve Him and bring others to Him. Do we notice the hidden potential of our gifts? Do we see them, like the seed, as seemingly small, yet so full of fruit? Everything we have — our time, talents and treasure — is a gift from the Lord. Do we accept gifts in gratitude, then put them to use by cultivating and nourishing them so they will bear the proper fruit?

Just like springtime flowers that we enjoy, our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. It is only then that will we see them for what they are — gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Like the seeds, if we use our gifts flippantly, we may see some fruits here and there. But we are called to so much more — we are called to build a beautiful garden. We are called to offer God the most beautiful flowers of all.

This season, as we look at all the beautiful flowers around us and enjoy God's creation, let us think about the seeds in our own lives. Ask yourself if you have accepted the gifts God has given you — your time, talents and treasure — and have cultivated and cared for them properly. Or, do they just sit dormant within you yearning to bloom?

Monthly Leisure Club AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARISHIONERS TO SHARE IN FUN AND FELLOWSHIP

A dish to share and a few dollars are all you need at the monthly Leisure Club.

A potluck, time for fellowship and Bingo are all part of the monthly gatherings at noon on the first Tuesday of the month in a parish conference room.

Thanks to Jane Call and Elizabeth Verdin, this tradition that dates back at least 34 years lives on at St. John Before the Latin Gate.

"This is a great option for elderly people, but all adults are welcome," Elizabeth says. "It's just being together and having something fun to do."

Sal DeMarco calls Bingo each month. He makes sure there is plenty of time to joke around with the players.

"He teases them and they all laugh," Elizabeth says. "That's good, because we all need to laugh."

Bingo cards are a nickel each and when blackout begins, the cost goes up to 10 or 25 cents each. The winner receives the pot, often one dollar or so.

"The cards aren't checked," Elizabeth says with a chuckle. "It's all the honor system."

But no one is there for the money. Elizabeth says events like Leisure Club are important so that people don't feel isolated. In turn, Leisure Club attendees have formed their own community.

"They have gotten to know each other, and they start caring about one another," Elizabeth says. "They keep up with each other and want to know about people's health, if they aren't able to attend on a given month."

A few years ago, Elizabeth heard there would no longer be Leisure Club, because there was no one to take it over. She wanted to make sure an important gathering like this may continue. So, she called her friend, Jane Moberly, and asked if

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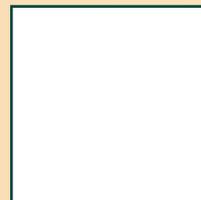
Parishioners gathered for Bingo and a meal at the March Leisure Club meeting.



ALL ADULTS WELCOME AT NOON ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF MONTH

St. John

BEFORE THE LATIN GATE



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Monthly Leisure Club *continued from page 7*

she wanted to take it over with her.

Jane passed away last year, so Elizabeth asked her friend, Jane Call, to help. Elizabeth and Jane keep this ministry going because they realize the value of togetherness.

“The ones that come on a regular basis really look forward to this,” Elizabeth says.

There is always plenty of food to enjoy — Elizabeth says first-timers need not bring a dish to share.

A lot of people have contributed to this

ministry over the years, although no one seems to know how it got started. But Elizabeth would like to see this ministry grow and continue for years to come.

Elizabeth is thankful for those who attend, as well as for all those who have led the Leisure Club in the past. She also appreciates all those who pitch in each month. Typically, one of the deacons, Fr. John, and some of the office staff will join for the potluck portion.

Elizabeth Verdin invites all adults to attend Leisure Club — the gatherings take place on the first Tuesday of the month at noon in conference room 2. There is no registration.

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)*, 7 p.m. *(en Español)*

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.