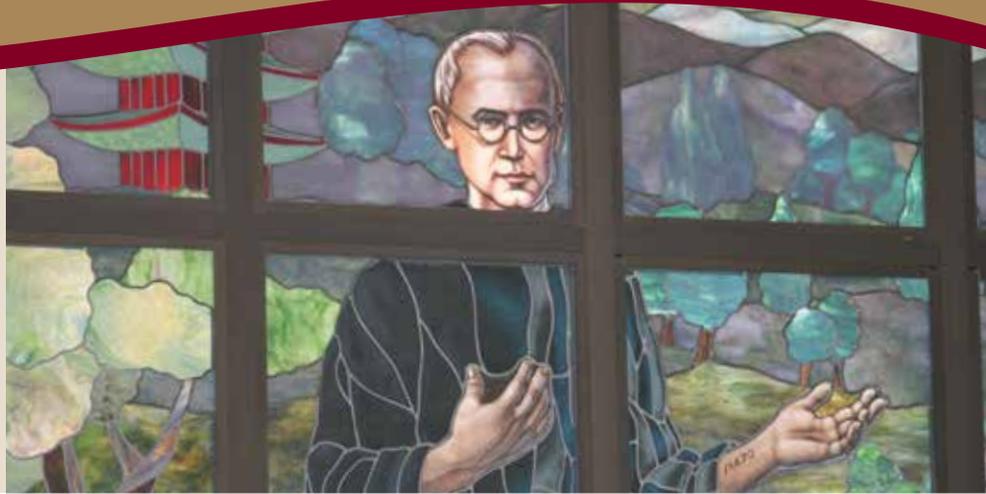


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner An Evening of Fun and Fellowship

On Feb. 28, the Parish Life and Stewardship Committee will sponsor the wildly popular Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner. It's every parishioner's yearly chance to partake in an enjoyable, filling meal before the season of Lent begins.

"We will serve about 400 dinners that night," says committee member Jane Rowland. "They serve pancakes on one side of the gym and ice cream on the other. In the center is our indulgence bar, where all of the exciting activities happen."

The famous indulgence bar will feature the pancake toppings you've come to expect, like butter and syrup, but will also include fun items like brownies, gummy bears, hot apple topping, cherry topping, and whipped cream.

"You go through with your pancake and you load it up with goodies, and then you go through with your ice cream and load it up with more goodies," Jane laughs.

King Cake, a New Orleans tradition that features sugary icing in the Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold, will also be served. Those who find a tiny plastic baby inside their slice of cake – traditionally meant to symbolize good luck in the coming year – will be eligible to win a special prize.

"Another fun thing we have is the pancake eating contest," Jane says. "We divide the contest into age groups and give everybody one pancake loaded with whipped cream, and you have to eat it with no hands. Whoever finishes first wins. It's very entertaining because it's very goopy. It's as much fun to watch as it is to participate in."

Jane says the most important part of the evening is giving parishioners a

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The MODERN SAINT

A Letter From Our Pastor

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: *A Sacrament for the Living*

*“Father in heaven, through
this holy anointing, grant our
brothers and sisters comfort in their
suffering. When they are afraid, give
them patience, when dejected, afford
them hope, and when alone, assure them
of the support of your holy people.”*
– Pastoral Care of the Sick, #125,
Prayer after Anointing

My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“Are there any who are sick among you? Let them send for the priests of the Church, and let the priests pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick persons, and the Lord will raise them up; and if they have committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them.” – James 5:14-15



I can't begin to count in 13 years of priesthood how many times I have spoken these consoling words as I prepared to anoint a sick person. In this beautiful sacrament of healing, those who suffer encounter the true and real presence of Christ, the living God, who is the healer of every ill.

This month marks 25 years since Pope St. John Paul II proclaimed Feb. 11 as the World Day of the Sick. Chosen to coincide with the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, the French Marian apparition site where countless sick (including John Paul II himself on his last pilgrimage outside of Italy less than eight months before his death) have come to be healed for over 100 years, it seems very apropos that we reflect

on the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick this month.

In our contemporary culture, there is a great tendency to exalt only what is healthy, striving to preserve youth and beauty, sometimes at all costs. There is also a tragic tendency to marginalize (and in some part of our world, even euthanize) the sick because they no longer appear “useful” to society. Quite countercultural in the Christian tradition, those who are sick have an important and honored place. *“The role of the sick in the Church is to be a reminder to others of the essential or higher things. By their witness the sick show that our mortal life must be redeemed through the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection”* (General Introduction to Pastoral Care of the Sick, #3).

Unfortunately, this Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick still remains widely misunderstood and is still wrongly thought to exclusively be a sacrament only for the dying. Following Vatican II, the Church made clear that this sacrament – once called “extreme unction” or “last rites” – was not only for those in imminent danger of death, but for all those weakened by advancing age or

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ANOINTING OF THE SICK *continued from page 2*

suffering serious physical, psychological or emotional illness. The Anointing of the Sick is still a component of the Church's care for the dying, along with confession and reception of Holy Communion (called Viaticum). But the Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament for the living, providing hope and healing so that the sick person can someday return to the table of the Lord. Even when a person is approaching death, this sacrament provides that same hope and healing that awaits us at the heavenly banquet table.

All who are sick and suffering – due to weakness of advancing age, serious long-term illness or upcoming surgery – are strongly encouraged to celebrate this sacrament. We celebrate this sacrament communally at the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass on most fifth Saturdays and can celebrate it as well at a 8:30 a.m. weekday Mass – but please give us a day or two notice

before! The sacrament can also be celebrated at other times, before or after Mass as well as in homes, hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Please call the parish office and let us know when you or a loved one would like to be anointed. And of special note, with this year being the 25th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II's declaration of the Word Day of the Sick, we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, Feb. 11. Whether you will be anointed or not, plan to join us for this special celebration of God's healing and care for His people.

God bless one and all!



Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor



Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner

continued from front cover

chance to get together simply to have fun in a family setting.

"Kids of all ages love it," she says. "There's something for everyone. I love it when events at the church draw families together so kids can learn to connect with each other at their parish. It's a way to get your kids into a church setting in a way that's fun. They get to know people they see in a worship situation, so it makes that more familiar and more comfortable. Plus, it's chocolate and whipped cream!"

Following the dinner, guests are invited outside to witness last year's palms being burned to create the ashes that will be used the following day for Ash Wednesday. Though the evening is mostly about fun and frivolity, Jane says the palm burning helps set the tone for a solemn transition.

"It helps set the stage for the night," she says. "It's a time of celebration, but we're entering into a time that's more reflective, so you can use it as an education tool with your family as well."

While the American Heritage Girls lend their time to help set up and operate the indulgence bar every year, Jane says volunteers of all ages are welcome to help out.

*Interested volunteers
should visit*

*www.saint-max.org
and look for the link
to Sign-Up Genius.*

*The event will be held
from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.*

*Admission is \$5 for
adults, \$3 for kids, or
\$20 per family.*

Include Me! Reaches Out

Seven years ago, Debi LaFrankie was working as an elementary school principal when she got into an intriguing conversation with one of the school's moms – who happened to have a child with special needs.

"We both went to the same church, and she was excited because she had learned that her son could receive his First Communion," Debi says. "She told me all about these special materials that could be used. I had taught children with special needs in the past, and though it had been a while, I found myself asking her, 'Do you want me to do [the catechesis]?'"

By helping this mom out, Debi soon got to know other school moms who also had children with special needs. These moms had an idea to create a group at the parish that would provide a hub for catechesis and a support

system for families with special needs. They asked Debi to help facilitate the ministry, and thus, Include Me! was born.

"The group is really supportive of each other, because everyone understands how each other feels – they know the challenges that they all face," Debi says. "The three moms came up with the name 'Include Me!' because they wanted to be included in the parish, in worship, in the sacraments, in everything. They wanted to be included in the St. Max community."

One of the ways that the ministry does this is by providing a sensory-friendly Mass for families with special needs.

"We found that one of the families' biggest needs was to be able to worship together as a family," Debi explains. "That was one thing that was really hard with the children, especially those

with autism. We have a sensory-friendly Mass every week during the noon Mass. We have several volunteers who set everything up for the families in the conference room where we meet, and it's a safe place for the whole family to worship together."

Many individuals with special needs are very sensitive to certain stimuli, such as sound and smell. For this reason, the sensory-friendly Mass takes place in a room separate from the church. Families are able to watch the Mass and worship in an environment where these individuals will not be affected by these stimuli.

"We have volume control in the room, that the room coordinator can turn up or down when needed," Debi says. "For example, if the room coordinator thinks that the congregation is going to start clapping, they can turn the audio off. We have the Eucharistic Ministers come to us, and we also provide a gluten-free host, because many kids have allergies. Also, a lot of them just have to calm their bodies during that time, so we have things like body pillows around the room if they need that to soothe themselves. Sometimes, it is easier to calm their bodies if they are laying down or walking around – pretty much anything is acceptable in the room, and the parents can allow their child to do what they need to do.

"The sign of peace is a very touching part of the Mass for us," she adds. "They really reach out

"It's a very nice little community, and they love to celebrate each other's special occasions. I really think they feel safe with each other, and it's always great to see how the adults with special needs are nurturing with the younger children. I really want to invite people to come and see what it's all about – for the people who are standing in the gathering space, or who are just staying home because coming to church is too hard. We are here to help them!" – Debi LaFrankie

to Families With Special Needs

to one another, and the parents too. The first couple of times, it really brought tears to my eyes!”

In addition, the ministry helps families who would like to become further involved in the Mass, and serves as a transitional space for some families and individuals.

“A couple of kids will go out and help their parents usher – that is a very solemn time during Mass, so there’s not going to be any loud noises or anything,” Debi says. “In that way, we try to help them be a part of the whole community. We hope that many of these children and young adults will eventually be able to participate with the whole community. It’s not going to happen for everyone, but definitely for some! One of our young adults goes into the church sometimes, and other times she comes and helps us. It gives her a purpose, and she is included by being a leader in our group.”

Include Me! also facilitates catechesis for those children who are set to receive the sacraments.

“We help to prepare children and young adults for the sacraments, and also give them general catechesis based on the child’s needs,” Debi says. “The coordinator for each program will let me know if someone has a special need, and then I meet with the parent and we decide how we want to engage. Our parish program is for the parents and child together. Often, the child can participate with the larger community in bits and pieces. We’ll talk about what parts they think

they can handle, and what parts they’d need adapted or need alternate materials for.”

The ministry uses hands-on materials from Loyola Press to help the children adequately learn what they need to know. These materials make it easy for even a non-verbal child to communicate and indicate their level of understanding. Debi can meet with the student and the parent at their own home or at the church, and she can often help them to participate in sacramental preparation activities, such as prayer services or retreats.

Through Include Me!, families with special needs have truly found a home within the parish. Whether they use it as a stepping stone to connect with the greater parish community, or to connect with others to share similar experiences, the ministry welcomes one and all.

“I have seen many strong friendships and bonds grow between these families,” Debi says. “Through social events and the sensory-friendly Mass, volunteers can give the parents time with each other while we help watch the kids. The parents still have to be there, but they are able to spend time together and talk with each other.

“It’s a very nice little community, and they love to celebrate each other’s special occasions,” she adds. “I really think they feel safe with each other, and it’s always great to see how the adults with special needs are nurturing with the younger children. I really

want to invite people to come and see what it’s all about – for the people who are standing in the gathering space, or who are just staying home because coming to church is too hard. We are here to help them!”

If you would like more information about the

Include Me!

Ministry,
please call

Debi LaFrankie at
513-623-8449

or email

includeme@saint-max.org



“LIFE IS LOVING AND CARING FOR OTHERS”

Archdiocesan White Mass Award Winner JoAnn Staab



*The Staab family – (standing) daughter
Lisa Sizemore; (seated, from left)
JoAnn Staab, Nick Staab and daughter
Laura Latham*



*Nick Staab (left) with his daughters, (from left)
Laura Latham and Lisa Sizemore, and wife
JoAnn Staab (right)*

About eight years ago, Nick and JoAnn Staab were living in Florida when Nick suffered a stroke, and received the life-changing diagnosis of dementia. Today JoAnn, his wife of over 54 years, is Nick's constant caregiver.

"I thank God I have been given the ability to take care of him," JoAnn says. "The situation is hard to accept, but this is what life is, loving and caring for others."

Nick and JoAnn met in the 1960s when they were working together at Merrell, a pharmaceutical company that was located in downtown Cincinnati. Both raised in Catholic families, they used to go to church during their lunch hour on Holy Days.

"We actually met in church," JoAnn says. "Nick saw me in Mass one day and asked his boss to introduce us."

They began dating and were married at St. John's. Over the years, Nick and JoAnn have lived in many different places, from Kalamazoo, Mich., to Houston, Texas. Together they have two daughters, both of whom are nurses.

"Our daughter, Lisa, has lived here for around 20 years, and when we visited her, we would go to St. Max," JoAnn says. "When Nick's dementia started, we put our house in Florida on the market and moved to be here with Lisa."

When JoAnn was a senior in high school, her mother was diagnosed with bone cancer. She was cared for at a nursing home, and the experience of her suffering stayed with JoAnn.

"I promised Nick I would never put him in a nursing home," JoAnn says. "It has been difficult, but Lisa and I work together, and I now have help from hospice. With him home, I can control his care."

Every Sunday, a parishioner from St. Max visits with JoAnn and Nick, bringing the Eucharist to them.

"We read the gospel and say prayers together," JoAnn says. "We let Nick spray us with holy water, which he loves doing. A lot of the time he knows what he is doing, but sometimes he is unaware."

It was this parishioner who nominated JoAnn to receive the 2016 Outstanding Caregiver Award at the Archdiocesan White Mass on Nov. 6 at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral.

At this Mass each year, individuals from across the archdiocese who model compassionate caregiving are recognized and receive a special blessing.

"I am amazed that God has given me the health and the ability to continue to care for Nick," JoAnn says. "It was an honor to receive this recognition."

For JoAnn, kindness is at the heart of caregiving. She encourages all caregivers to ask for God's grace to continue their work of compassion.

"I think the most important thing in this situation is kindness," JoAnn says. "You have to talk softly and be kind and laugh with him, even though it is sometimes hard to. Always continue to pray for God's help."

"I am amazed that God has given me the health and the ability to continue to care for Nick. It was an honor to receive this recognition." – JoAnn Staab

Anointing of the Sick: Sacrament for the Community

By Jeremy Helmes, Pastoral Associate For Worship

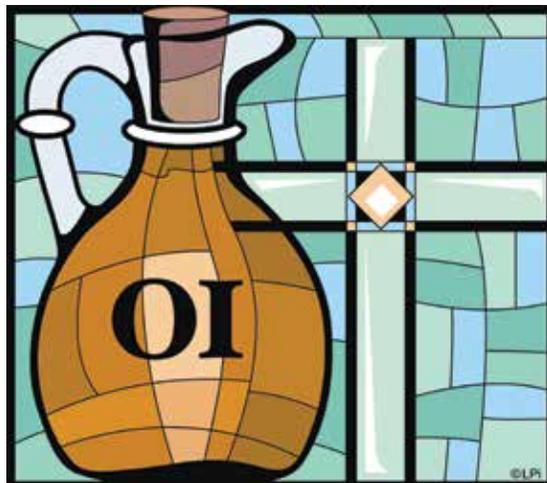


Sacraments, by their very nature, are celebrations for the whole Christian community. They are celebrated in and with the Church. While deeply *personal*, sacraments are never *individual*. Anointing of the Sick is no exception – while often celebrated with only a small group of the faithful present, even this sacrament of God’s healing grace is for the whole community.

The Church teaches this clearly in the *General Introduction to Pastoral Care of the Sick*, #33, which states: “It is thus especially fitting that all baptized Christians share in this ministry of mutual charity within the Body of Christ by doing all that they can to help the sick return to health, by showing love for the sick, and by celebrating the sacraments with them. **Like the other sacraments, these too have a community aspect, which should be brought out as much as possible when they are celebrated.**”

As we know, our understanding of this sacrament has changed in light of the teaching following Vatican II. No longer called “extreme unction” or “last rites,” Anointing of the Sick is not a sacrament only for the dying, and definitely not for the dead. Anointing of the Sick is for anyone suffering from long-term serious

illness, advanced old age, or preparing for serious surgery. Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament that gives hope and strength to the living. While it should not be received without just consideration – e.g. a cold or stomach bug won’t usually qualify! – the faithful shouldn’t delay reception of the sacrament when dealing with serious illness.



“Because of its very nature as a sign, the sacrament of the anointing of the sick should be celebrated with members of the family and other representatives of the Christian community whenever this is possible.”
(GIPCS, # 99)

All the sacraments relate to one another, but all relate especially to the Eucharist. For example, Baptism is our gateway to the Christian life, which gives us the right and responsibility of participating in the Eucharist each and every Sunday. Penance restores our right relationship with God, bringing us back to the Eucharistic community. So, too, does anointing give us strength to return to the table of the Lord, whether here on earth at Sunday Mass, or maybe only to the heavenly banquet.

There is more to the rite of Anointing of the Sick than simply the use of oil. Let’s examine the ritual, and look carefully at what it reveals about Christ’s true and real presence in its celebration.

It begins with a simple introduction and greeting exchanged between the minister and the community gathered, including those to be anointed. Like all sacramental rituals, it includes a Liturgy of the Word, no matter how brief.

In the Liturgy of Anointing, a litany is prayed in which the community appeals to God to heal and strengthen the sick. After this litany, the priest lays hands on the head of the sick. This ancient gesture symbolizes our prayer for the Holy Spirit to move within the sick, to give grace.

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Anointing of the Sick *continued from page 7*

Since the Oil of the Infirm was most likely blessed at the annual Chrism Mass by the bishop (along with the Oil of Catechumens and the Sacred Chrism), the priest leads a brief prayer of thanksgiving over the blessed oil, giving praise to the Triune God and asking for comfort and healing among the sick.

Then a sick person is anointed on the forehead, while the priest says, "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." The hands are then anointed, while the priest concludes, "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up." A simple prayer concludes the Liturgy of Anointing, which is fol-

lowed either by the Lord's Prayer and a simple concluding rite, or the remainder of Mass.

Through our presence at this ritual, through our sung and spoken prayer, through our accompaniment of the sick and suffering, our community shows forth our care and attention to our brothers and sisters who are in need of God's healing grace. This is why we celebrate the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick every few months at Sunday Mass, and why we're always happy to celebrate it within the 8:30 a.m. Mass – just call the office and let us know if you desire to receive God's grace in this sacrament.

Let us be a community of healing and hope, of comfort and strength for the sick and suffering among us.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sat. Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sun.:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. | **Mon. - Sat.:** 8:30 a.m.
Sacrament of Penance: Saturdays after the 8:30 a.m. Mass & 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.,
Thursdays after the 8:30 a.m. Mass & 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.