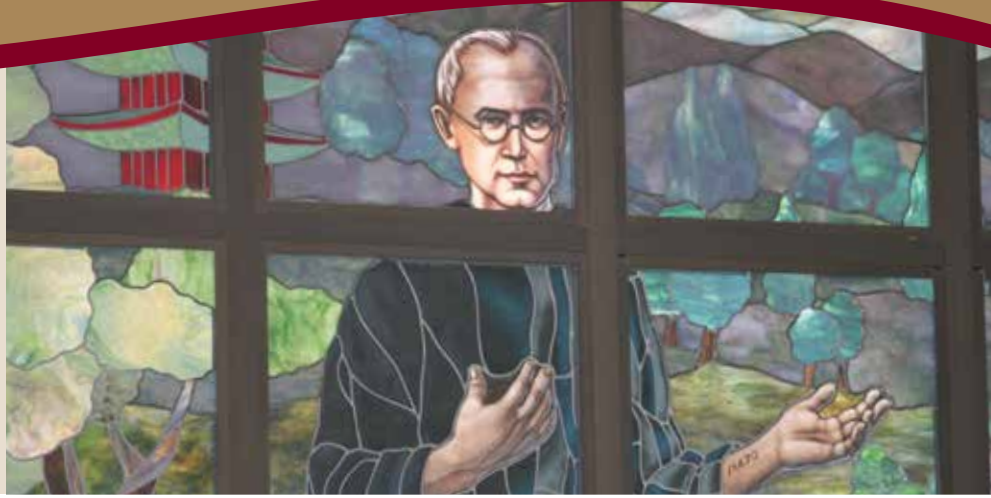


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Ministry for All Ages: NURSING HOME BINGO

As a boy, parishioner Glenn Algie frequently traveled to the nursing home to see his aging grandfather, who was also blind. Glenn would go almost weekly with his dad, visiting with his grandfather and working hard to “cheer him up.” Then later as a young adult, Glenn visited his childless uncle, who was also blind and consequently living in a nursing home.

These experiences left a deep impression on Glenn, teaching him at a young age the importance and value of caring for the elderly. Seeking to provide a similar experience for his own young daughter, Glenn knew he had discovered the perfect avenue through St. Maximilian Kolbe’s Nursing Home Bingo Ministry.

“Caring for the elderly has always held a special place in my heart,” Glenn says. “When I came across this ministry, I saw it as a wonderful way to teach my daughter the importance of helping others unable to care for themselves – the perfect way for us to do this together.”

Taking place the first and third Saturday of each month from 2 to 3 p.m., the Nursing Home Bingo Ministry is an opportunity for parishioners to spread Christ’s love to the lonely and oftentimes forgotten in a very simple, yet concrete way.

Similar to Glenn, Melissa Hard had a special family memory that initially attracted her to the ministry – that of playing bingo with her grandmother as a child. So, she was eager to share a similar experience with her own young daughters, leading the entire Hard family to become regular volunteers. Since then, the Hards have



For the Hard family, serving with the Nursing Home Bingo Ministry is a tremendous source of joy.

been amazed during each and every visit by the tremendous amount of joy and peace they experience.

“Every time we leave, my husband and I say how much fun it is and just how good we feel,” Melissa says. “I don’t know if it is anything tangible – we just leave with a tremendous feeling of goodness. It is just such a blessing to be with people who are so appreciative and grateful to us for just coming and playing a game with them.”

“As a community, we are pulling together to fill in the gap,” adds longtime ministry coordinator Brenda Tenley. “In modern-day society, families are so much more spread out, making it difficult for us to care for our aging loved ones like in olden days. This ministry allows us to continue caring for those members of the Church.”

Brenda explains that by giving of their time in this simple way, the Nursing Home Bingo Ministry becomes a vehicle for spreading God’s love to others, while also further engaging individuals and families into the Church. The nursing home residents are always so grateful for their visitors, breaking up the

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Why Doesn't St. Max Have Its Own Catholic Grade School?



My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Week, I will reflect on a third question – why St. Max doesn't have its own Catholic grade school?

In 1989, St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish was founded with 500 families from St. John the Evangelist Parish in West Chester, a parish that never had its own Catholic grade school. Over the years, those parishioners at St. John who sought a Catholic education for their children went to other Catholic grade schools in the area. Back in the early 1990s, five parishes – St. John in West Chester, St. Martin de Porres in Lincoln Heights (now closed), St. Matthias in Forest Park, St. Gabriel in Glendale, and St. Maximilian Kolbe in Liberty Township – entered into a formal agreement that St. Gabriel Catholic Grade School become the consolidated parish school for all five parishes under the name St. Gabriel Consolidated School (SGCS).

In the mid-1990s, the feasibility of a parish grade school here at St. Max was explored. Eventually with the support of the archdiocesan Catholic Schools Office, the dreams of those who favored the establishment of a Catholic grade school in our area became a reality when Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School (MTCES), a private Catholic elementary school, opened its doors to its first students in the basement of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Monroe. As their student body grew, MTCES was relocated to its current (and expanding!) campus in Liberty Township.

Over the years, St. Max parish families have also enrolled their children in other Catholic grade schools, as well – Good Shepherd Montessori in Madison Place, John XXIII in Middletown, Royalmont Academy in Mason, St. Ann, St. Joseph and

St. Peter in Chains all in Hamilton, St. Michael in Sharonville, and St. William in Price Hill (due to their fine program for autistic children). I suspect there are probably some other Catholic grade schools St. Max parishioners have attended of which I am unaware!

Some still question if we should consider building our own parish grade school. Quite frankly, the answer would be multifaceted! But in general, I would think it is not an idea we should pursue. I would hope no one would want to do anything that would jeopardize the future successes of St. Gabriel Consolidated School, Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School or Royalmont Academy, where we have a significant percentage of these student populations. Similarly, our campus doesn't have the capacity to build a school, not to mention the

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For more Catholic news and current events check out the websites of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.USCCB.org and of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at www.catholiccincinnati.org.

Why Doesn't St. Max Have Its Own Catholic Grade School?

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enormous financial undertaking. In today's world, a new Catholic parochial school would have to be primarily self-supporting like other Catholic consolidated or private grade schools.

In the past, we have also twice looked into the possibility of a Catholic preschool here at St. Max, or even an off-campus site

for a Catholic preschool. Unfortunately, our classrooms and facilities are not ideal for preschoolers, and an off-site preschool would have meant offering day care to make it fiscally feasible. The most recent committee to look at this issue, which consisted of members of our parish staff and representatives from the archdiocesan Catholic

schools office, SGCS, MT-CES and Royalmont Academy, recommended that a Catholic pre-school at St. Max – on or off campus – should not be an endeavor to be actively pursued.

I am happy to occasionally address such questions in my monthly pastor's letter. If anyone has other such questions, please let me know and

I will see how these, too, can best be addressed occasionally in future issues of *The Modern Saint*.

God bless one and all!

Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew,
Pastor

MASS REVERENCE AND ETIQUETTE

For many of us, when we are invited to a wedding, one of our first considerations is "what am I going to wear?" We wouldn't think of showing up at a formal event in our workout clothes. How many of us search for just the right outfit to wear to our annual office party or on a date? Compare that to how much thought we put into what we wear to Mass on Sunday.

How we dress for an occasion indicates the importance that we place upon that particular celebration. At Mass, we encounter God through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Dressing appropriately for Mass is one way that we show respect both for God and for our faith family. And this respect is important at all Masses – no matter what time of day or night.

Think about what you are teaching your children when you all wear your "Sunday clothes" to Mass. You are reminding them that Mass is a special celebration. After all, we are going to Jesus' house.

Some people may quickly point out that Mass shouldn't be a fashion show – a place to show off your finery – and they are right! We also know that some parishioners come to Mass on their way home from work, and they certainly should not feel embarrassed about arriving at Mass in their work clothes. And no one should ever stay away from Mass because of simplicity of clothing.

But one rule should apply in all instances – our attire at Mass should always be modest. Our clothing should never distract others from what we are gathered together to celebrate – the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The celebration of Mass is always a holy occasion and thus should be treated in the most holy manner – in body, mind and spirit.

A Chance to Slow Down FELLOWSHIP WEEKENDS AT ST. MAX

It is a common complaint of the modern age that people always seem to be in a hurry. More often than not, we have too many places to be and too many things to do, with too little time to do it all. At times, we may find ourselves looking back on a day and finding that everything seems a blur, from getting the kids to school and dashing to work, to rushing through meetings and emails, and then shopping and preparing meals – the list goes on! All too often, we focus on getting from Point A to Point B without stopping to catch our breath, let alone stopping to catch up with a friend or meet someone new. And yet, our faith calls us to live differently – to reach out to others, make connections, and take the time to act as Christ to one another.

Luckily, there is a ministry here at St. Max that provides us the perfect opportunity to slow down, take a breath, and connect with others in our faith community. Coordinated by the Welcome Ministry, Fellowship Weekends bring parishioners together after Mass at least once a month, to enjoy some refreshments and the chance to get to know one another.



Fellowship Weekends give parishioners the opportunity to enjoy food and fellowship together.

“We look at it as just a little bit longer that we’re staying together – not just a rush in and rush out,” says Cathie Lower, our Welcome Ministry Chairperson. “It’s just about slowing down and trying to connect or reconnect with parishioners in a meaningful way. The more time we spend at church together, the more fellowship we have, and the more we know each other and can pray for each other.”

On a Fellowship Weekend — usually held on the third weekend of each month — parishioners gather after each Mass to enjoy coffee and donuts together. Often, they end up sharing much more than refreshments. You just never know when a casual conversation in the donut line may lead to a connection you otherwise would not have experienced!

“Once, I was talking to a couple that I knew and they found out I was a nurse,” Cathie says. “And it turns out their son

“We look at it as just a little bit longer that we’re staying together – not just a rush in and rush out. It’s just about slowing down and trying to connect or reconnect with parishioners in a meaningful way. The more time we spend at church together, the more fellowship we have, and the more we know each other and can pray for each other.”

– Cathie Lower, Welcome Ministry Chairperson

and Reconnect: FELLOWSHIP

was in search of a job in the medical field, and I was able to give them information about the agency I work for and connect him to that. So, it opened up an opportunity for him, because I hadn't realized their son was looking in that field, and they had never known that I was a nurse!"

This special time for fellowship is beneficial both to current parishioners looking to build on existing relationships and new parishioners seeking to meet people.

"We really encourage everyone to turn around and introduce themselves and say 'hello' to someone they know or haven't seen in awhile," Cathie says. "New parishioners will sometimes plan to meet up with someone after Mass so they can get to know each other a little better. It's a little less intimidating [for newcomers] to be hanging out after Mass when there's a reason for it."

In addition to providing an opportunity for fellowship, Fellowship Weekends also give parishioners a chance to learn about various parish ministries, as each weekend is hosted by a different ministry. Obviously, this is helpful for newcomers, but many "seasoned" parishioners would probably be surprised to find that there are more ministries out there than they realize!

"Each week, the ministry that is hosting has to get volunteers to make the coffee, man the tables, and set up," Cathie explains. "Also, they put out literature about what their ministry does. We have so many ministries at our church that people often say, 'I didn't even know that existed.' There is so much that goes on every day that people don't know about. This really helps with



Donuts are a hit with parishioners of all ages!

awareness for all the ministries. I know that St. Vincent de Paul and the Respect Life group have both had an increase in sign ups and people getting on board since they hosted."

How great it is that St. Max provides us with this rare opportunity to take a break from the hectic pace of daily life and spend time building friendships in the faith community! If you haven't already become a regular at our Fellowship Weekends, we hope you will join us next time for some local Stan the Donut Man donuts and a chance to connect and reconnect with fellow parishioners. It's never too late to make fellowship a valued part of your faith life!

Have you moved, or do you have a new phone number or new email address?

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Please contact the office at 777-4322 ext. 101 or cgroh@saint-max.org to give us an update!

The MODERN SAINT

A PLACE FOR THE LITTLE ONES *Children's Liturgy of the Word*

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If you're a parent, there probably has been at least a Sunday or two when you have felt uneasy about going to Mass. Maybe it's after a particularly difficult week with an ornery kindergartener, or maybe it happens when you start to doubt that your 7-year-old is getting anything out of the liturgy each week. But, sooner or later, if you have children, it'll probably happen to you.

It can be a challenging and sometimes daunting task to keep young children engaged, or even just limit the fidgeting for an hour in the pew.

Here at St. Max, we want Sunday Mass to be an opportunity for all our parishioners to pray and grow closer to God and their parish community. We're aware that, for many children, trying to sit still for an hour may not be the best way to do that.

With this in mind, our young parishioners are invited to join us for Children's Liturgy of the Word, each Sunday – with the exception of the fifth Sunday of the month – at the 10 a.m. Mass, as well as many Sundays at the 8 a.m. Mass. Children's Liturgy of the Word is designed to give young children, generally ages 6-8, an opportunity to listen to the Mass readings and learn about them at their level. Children's Liturgy of the Word meets in the large conference room, just outside the church, where catechists lead them in age-appropriate reflections, prayers and activities, all designed to help them understand and apply Scripture in their lives, while gaining a positive experience of Mass.

Leaving the church after the opening songs and prayers, children participate in an opening prayer and listen to the Scripture readings. After the readings, children have the opportunity to learn more about Scripture in an interactive discussion, designed to answer their questions and help them understand God's Word.

"We really try to include the kids, ask questions, ask for their input and what they think," says Debbie Hoffer, who serves as the Coordinator of Children's Liturgy of the Word, "I hope that they will get more out of Mass, because the language is on a level more appropriate to their age. And when they hear something that they're not quite sure about, they can immediately ask questions, and I hope they'll engage more and feel more a part of the Church."

It's Debbie's hope that Children's Liturgy of the Word will just be one of the first steps for children in a lifelong journey of faith and love for the Mass.

"I just hope that it fosters a love of Christ in the children and in some way helps them on their faith journey and progress through life," Debbie says. "I feel like maybe, if they look forward to coming to Children's Liturgy because it's something they get something out of, they won't hate coming to Mass."

Debbie, who has served with the ministry for over 20 years, finds that not only does it help the children grow in their faith, but it has also strengthened her relationship with God.

"Sometimes, you forget some of the awesome things, because you have known them for so long," Debbie says. "But sometimes, seeing the ways kids react to the stories, it makes you realize, 'this is pretty awesome.'"

Debbie encourages those who enjoy working with children to consider serving as a catechist for Children's Liturgy of the Word. With enough catechists, she hopes to make it available to children at the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass, as well as the noon Mass on Sundays.



Children have the opportunity to engage with Scripture and have their questions answered.



Children's Liturgy of the Word is an opportunity for children to hear the Word of God on their level.

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If you would like more information, or to become involved serving with this ministry, please contact Debbie Hoffer at 513-860-3854 or clow@saint-max.org

To Commit, to Pray, to Partner

St. Max's 1% CHALLENGE RECOMMIT

Though Zack Hinger has studied the bible in an academic context for years, he experienced the Word of God in a deeply personal way when practicing Lectio Divina this past year with St. Max's 1% Challenge.

"Doing the challenge has really given me the opportunity to listen to how Christ is speaking through His Word and talking to me on a personal level," says Zack, Pastoral Associate for Evangelization and Catechesis. "Each day, I'm seeing the importance of giving this time to God."

The 1% Challenge began in January 2016, and Zack is one of many faith community members who have shared what an impact it has had on their prayer lives.

"It is an initiative to encourage all of our parishioners to take 1% of their day, approximately 15 minutes, and commit it to spending time with Scripture," Zack says. "We're encouraging them to pray using Lectio Divina – reading, reflecting, responding, and resting in the Word."

Parishioners have the option to subscribe to receive a daily email with a Scripture passage to help

them foster the practice of praying each day with the Word. Over 600 parishioners have signed up to receive the email.

"We've chosen different themes for the Scripture passages, and we did one month of mercy-themed passages during the Year of Mercy," Zack says. "The email is just a tool, and parishioners are welcome to use it if it helps them do the challenge."

The results of a survey shared with challenge participants revealed the overwhelmingly positive effects of the challenge in the lives of parishioners.

"They love that we're promoting the importance of Scripture because a lot of times people feel like that personal connection to Scripture is missing in the Church," Zack says.

Participants have also shared ways that they've found to integrate these 15 minutes into their daily lives.

"For many people, the morning is the best time for the challenge," Zack says. "We now send the email out around 5 a.m."

In anticipation of the New Year, a 1% Challenge continuation team was formed to keep this culture of the

prayerful reading of Scripture alive. On the weekend of Jan. 7 and Jan. 8, parishioners will be invited to commit or recommit to spending 15 minutes a day with Scripture.

"It will be Epiphany weekend, which we thought was appropriate," Zack says. "We're inviting parishioners to come and spend time with the Word as the Wise Men came and visited with the Word incarnate."

Everyone is invited to participate in the challenge or, if already participating, to recommit and to take a further step. Recent changes to the email, including reflection questions and tips, have also been implemented to further support parishioners.

"Invite someone else to do the challenge, or maybe increase your time with the Word to 20 minutes," Zack says. "We're asking people to commit, to pray, and to partner with someone to talk about your challenge, the graces and the struggles."

When deciding on our New Year resolutions, consider taking this intentional step, alongside hundreds of other members in the faith community, to deepen your relationship with Christ through His Word.

If you would like more information about the 1% Challenge Recommit, please visit www.saint-max.org/takethechallenge



1% CHALLENGE

Daily Encounter with God's Word

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St. Max's 1% Challenge Recommit

A Ministry for All Ages:

NURSING HOME BINGO

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monotony of their days and reminding them that they are not forgotten by the Church. And, in the case of volunteers, you walk away with a deep sense of joy knowing that you helped share Christ's love with someone in need.

"Many of them have no one in their lives – by us being there for them, I see us really becoming an extension of Christ," Glenn says. "The longer I go, the more I come to know names and to really come to know them. It allows us to make them feel loved by us and by God."

"It is all about making others feel better and doing what you can to bring a smile to someone, making them feel loved and wanted," Melissa adds.

If you are interested in becoming involved with the Nursing Home Bingo Ministry, please contact new ministry coordinators Melissa Hard at 513-378-7911 or Glenn Algie at 513-847-8030.

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.