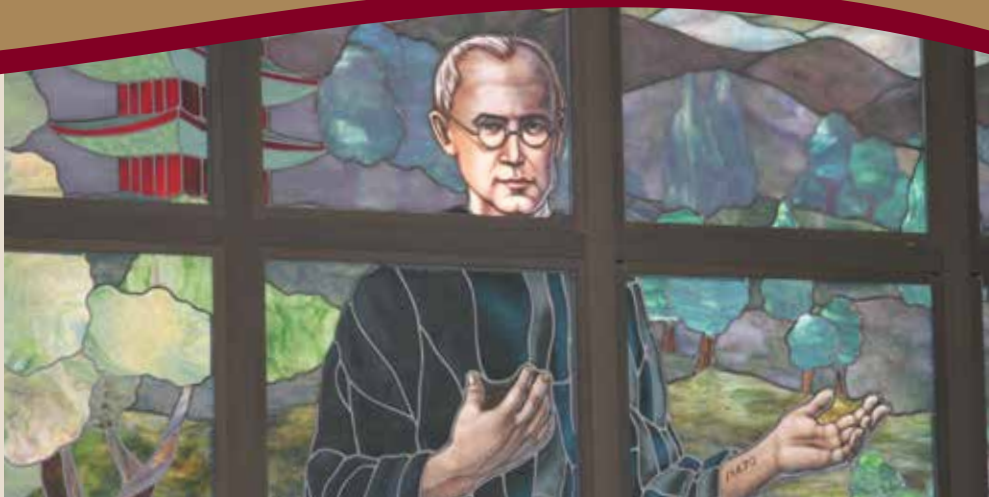


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The St. Max Art and Environment Team Ministry Creating a Visual Experience That Gives Reverence to the Lord

The Church's rich liturgy draws us into the experience of the Mass through the intentional use of colors, scents, plants, and other decorations in our worship space.

"People learn and observe through the different senses," says Christine Guerin. "St. Max's physical environment is a way to give honor to Christ, to deepen the experience of the Mass and to offer a learning opportunity about the liturgy."

St. Max's Art and Environment Team Ministry consists of a group of parishioners who come together to coordinate the decoration of the physical church space according to the corresponding liturgical season and feast days.

"The main focus is to create a visual experience that gives reverence to the Lord," Christine says. "We discuss what the parish has historically done and consider how to create a visual example of what we're spiritually going through during each time of the year."

After years of working as a realtor, Christine realized the Art and Environment Ministry Team might be a way to use her decorating talents, as well as observing how people react according to their environment.

"I joined about three years ago and think of it not as a chore, but an honor," Christine says. "It is a privilege to think about how parishioners will experience the parish and how they could learn or enhance their faith through what they see."

Christine describes the decorations of the church as "a learning experience," or a type of catechesis through color. During Lent, the ministry team creates the feeling of a desert or sparse environment that leads to the Easter season, when a sense of new life fills the church through



St. Max decorated for the Lenten season

"People learn and observe through the different senses. St. Max's physical environment is a way to give honor to Christ, to deepen the experience of the Mass and to offer a learning opportunity about the liturgy."

– Christine Guerin

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A Letter From Our Pastor

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING: *The Best Things in Life Are Usually Not Achieved by the Easiest Way*



My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

If you were asked the question, “Is the Catholic Church against birth control?” what would your answer be? The correct answer is a “no” (with an asterisk)! The Catholic Church is against *artificial* birth control and supportive of *natural* birth control. In fact, Blessed Paul VI’s controversial 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Latin for *Of Human Life*) is actually subtitled *On the Regulation of Birth*. This encyclical re-affirms the traditional moral teaching of the Church regarding the sanctity of life, the inseparable procreative and unitive natures of married conjugal love, responsible parenthood and the rejection of artificial contraception.

As we commemorate the 49th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* this month and since National Natural Family Planning (NFP) Awareness Week is annually observed in late July, it seems appropriate that we take some time to reflect on this all-natural way of regulating births in families.

More and more couples today are talking about Natural Family Planning and giving it a serious look. Why? Because NFP is not only as equally effective as artificial contraception in delaying pregnancy, but also because NFP has so many more benefits that artificial contraception does not offer.

NFP is a way of following God’s plan for *achieving* or *delaying* pregnancy by using the natural means that God has built into human nature. By observing a woman’s natural fertility cycle, couples can decide when they wish to achieve or delay pregnancy. If they have decided to space out the birth of children, the couple abstains from sexual intercourse during the fertile time in the woman’s natural fertility cycle. When used correctly, NFP has a 99 percent effectiveness rate! Because NFP cooperates with a woman’s natural fertility cycle, there is no need for drugs, chemicals or devices that are potentially dangerous to the woman.

NFP has many other benefits for married couples. Couples who practice NFP have a divorce rate well below 10 percent. NFP, because it requires some temporary periods of abstinence if couples wish to delay pregnancy, encourages a couple to learn non-sexual ways of showing affection towards one another. Many couples describe this as keeping the “spark” in their marriage! Communication skills also increase as couples learn to evaluate and talk each month about their own relationship, responsible parenthood, the state of their financial affairs, etc., as they decide when it is a good time to conceive another child. NFP is a shared responsibility in which



NATIONAL NFP
AWARENESS WEEK

July 23-29, 2017

*This year’s theme:
It’s Time!*

*Say “Yes” to God’s Plan
for Married Love*

*“Celebrate and reverence
God’s vision of human
sexuality.”*



both husband and wife participate, making this the only method in which each spouse simultaneously has a role to play, making it a truly shared commitment.

Some still may wonder why the Church is against artificial birth control. In each sacrament, we have an intimate encounter with our Lord. In the Sacrament of Matrimony, God's love becomes uniquely present and is witnessed in the conjugal love of husband and wife. God's love for us is total and unconditional. God would never say, "I would love you *if...*" or "I would love you *but...*" Thus, when artificial contraception is employed between husband and wife, their love ceases to reflect God's love, since they are not loving each other totally, nor are they loving each other unconditionally. (NB The Church also teaches that sexual intimacy should only occur in a married relationship between one man and one woman, i.e. no pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activity, since each act of sexual intimacy should be open to the transmission of life, and since life starts at conception, the baby conceived has dignity and the right

to be born into a stable married relationship with both father and mother present.)

Without a doubt, artificial birth control is easy and convenient... but the best things in life are usually not! The best things in life are usually those towards which we work and put in effort. NFP is well worth the work and effort in making marriages stronger and stronger. If you would like to learn more about Natural Family Planning and the role it can play in your marriage, please visit the Marriage and Family Life page at www.catholiccincinnati.org. You'll be glad you did!

God bless one and all!

Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor

To the Parish Family of St. Max

An Open Letter from Kathleen Wojciechowski's Family

Many of you know that our Lord took Kathy Wojciechowski, dear wife, mother and grandmother, home on April 9, 2017, after a courageous battle with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Kathy played an important role in our St. Max family in 1990 as our first parish employee, serving as secretary-office manager until her retirement in 2011.

As the symptoms of the disease gradually appeared over a number of years, eventually impacting her ability to walk, eat and talk, many of you supported her with your visits, love and prayers. When she was finally diagnosed, members of the St. Max family were with

Kathy almost on a daily basis, bringing her much needed cheer, friendship and laughter. Kathy's death came 12 months after her diagnosis by the Cleveland Clinic. It was her request to die at home, and because of the help of the St. Max family, she was welcomed into heaven by our Lord with her family at her bedside in her home.

Please know how grateful we are for your prayers, kind and thoughtful gestures of love, and support. Our family has been blessed and deeply touched by your generosity and humbled by the visible presence of our Savior through your dedication to Kathy and our family during this time of great need.

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.

Answering the Gospel Call to Serve: The CHOSEN Ministry



Serving dinner at Serve City with St. Max's CHOSEN Ministry

Just ask parishioner Paul Groh why he has volunteered with Hamilton's Serve City CHOSEN for over six years, and Matthew 25:35 comes immediately to his mind – "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink."

"It really comes down to serving our brothers and sisters in need," says Paul, CHOSEN Ministry leader for St. Max. "I recite the verse from Matthew 25 quite often when we pray before a meal at the shelter house, to let the people know that this why we are here – because Jesus instructed us to do so. And I've got to tell you, it's been very rewarding."

Every third Saturday of the month, families and ministry groups from St. Max prepare and serve a meal to people staying at CHOSEN, a 52-bed temporary shelter for the homeless. When serving is finished, there is often enough food left for the volunteers to make themselves plates and join everyone at the table for conversation. While the meals obviously provide for a physical need, these evenings of fellowship feed the souls of all who are present, including the volunteers.

In addition to providing a hot meal at the shelter, the St. Max volunteers also bring copies of the church bulletin, so those being served can see the upcoming events in the parish, as well as the Sunday readings.

"We're hoping that they take the opportunity to get back into church and find Christ in their life again, and often we may not see how many people we actually touch," Paul says. "But once there was a gentleman

named Tony that I talked with for awhile. He was Catholic and had fallen away from the Church and was turning his life around in alcohol rehab. I invited him to Mass at St. Maximilian Kolbe, just to come back and find peace in the Catholic Church.

"Well, after Mass one day a few weeks later, I heard someone call my name and it was Tony," he continues. "It just put a smile on my face and was so rewarding to think maybe I touched him enough to bring Christ back as the focus in his life. Later, we had a church festival and I saw him there with his granddaughter, and he had found work and gotten shelter."

If it weren't for the St. Max parishioners who happily give of their time, our parish's involvement with CHOSEN would not be possible. Many of the parishioners who have served at the shelter have found volunteering with this ministry to be a richly rewarding experience.

Sue and Bob Bruns started out by helping Paul here and there with the preparation and serving of meals at CHOSEN. They were so touched by this ministry that they have now become Paul's "backup."

"We always say 'yes' because it's such a small thing we can do and it makes a really big difference in their lives," Sue says. "The people are always so appreciative. Once, a woman came up to me, took my hand and asked if I would pray with her. She said she really didn't know how to pray, but was living in the shelter and about to find out if she was approved for an apartment. So, we stood there, held hands and prayed. It was one of the most uplifting things I have ever experienced."

Paul hopes that more and more parishioners will take this opportunity to serve and live out the words of Jesus in a truly life-changing way.

"They don't have to feel like they have a special gift in order to serve," Paul says. "Christ uses each and every one of us as an instrument. Come as you are – as a layperson – with the intention to serve."

Are you interested in learning more about living out the Gospel through serving with CHOSEN? If so, please contact Paul Groh by telephone at 513-324-2937 or by email at CHOSEN@saint-max.org.



God's Word: Ever Ancient, Ever New

“The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God’s word and Christ’s body.”

Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), 18 November 1965, #21

PREPARING to HEAR the GOSPELS



July 2, 2017 – Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Matthew 10:37-42

True discipleship is more than occasional inconvenience. It will be costly and must be consistent. Loyalty to Jesus even takes precedence over family ties.

July 9, 2017 – Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Matthew 11:25-30

Jesus’ message is often misunderstood and even sometimes totally rejected. The wise and the learned – the leaders of the Jewish people – who ought to readily accept Jesus’ message do not accept it. The childlike – the simple, ordinary disciples of Jesus – who would seem less capable of understanding His message actually seem to understand it better.

July 16, 2017 – Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Matthew 13:1-23

The well-known parable of the sower may sound odd to our ears. But first-century Palestinian farming procedures preceded plowing. So, seed was sown everywhere, so that somewhere, it would fall on fertile ground. The amount of seed growth and yield is directly related to the type of soil on which the seed falls.

July 23, 2017 – Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Matthew 13:24-43

Three more parables enlighten us about the kingdom of heaven. First, only the Master at the harvest will judge what is wheat and what is weed – no one else. Second, the kingdom is related to the very common and ordinary mustard seed and bush, perhaps overturning anticipation of the kingdom’s grandeur. And third, a little yeast goes a long way – the kingdom has meager beginnings (in us) but can grow to monumental size.

July 30, 2017 – Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Matthew 13:44-52

Three more parables conclude this chapter in Matthew’s Gospel – a treasure buried in a field, a fine pearl and a net thrown into the sea. That which is of value (a treasure and a pearl) will often be sought out no matter what the cost. The net thrown into the sea parallels last week’s parable of the wheat and the weed – in the kingdom of heaven there will be accountability.

Small Groups Growing in Popularity and Faith Following Parish Mission

“I love the different perspective that everyone comes from. Some of us are married, some are not, one guy is a religion teacher, but some have hardly read the bible themselves – having that dynamic leads to a lot of great perspectives. I also love the openness that the group has to share experiences and opinions with each other, and their willingness to invite anyone else to join us.” – Carl Kindel

In April, our parish mission asked us to look at three things – God’s love for us, the universal call to holiness, and our mission as Catholics. Now, nearly 100 parishioners are continuing in the spirit of that mission as members of small faith-sharing groups who seek to grow together as they respond to the mission’s call.

Pastoral Associate for Evangelization and Catechesis, Zack Hinger, reports that more than a dozen small groups are now meeting on a weekly basis as the groups have grown.

“We had some groups that started last fall, but then we launched it at the parish mission at the end of April,” Zack says of the groups’ growing popularity. “We pretty much doubled what we had coming out of the mission. We’re going from in the 40s to 80 people in a quick period of time.”

Each group consists of a number of adult men or women from similar age groups and backgrounds who meet at a member’s home or a coffee shop for fellowship and discussion of scripture in a relaxed setting. A new couples group also recently began.

Carl Kindel, a men’s group member in his late 20s, describes what a typical meeting looks like.

“We get together at someone’s house,” he says. “We spend a little time at the beginning just catching up, maybe sharing some beers, then whoever is leading that week leads us to a passage in the bible. We read and then spend time discussing it and we close in prayer.”

Carl says his group has been discussing parables that relate to their daily lives, and each meeting ends with a challenge to carry them over into the next week.

Another parishioner, Kate Szczap, has been involved since the first groups began to form last fall. She says her group shares a sense of flexibility that helps busy parents like her stay involved.

6 “We meet once a week, as our schedules permit,”

she says. “It’s wonderful to be able to skip a week or two if I’m busy and then drop right back in. I did not have a faith-sharing group in my life at the time this began, and I really missed connecting with other adults. This is a low-pressure group with no ‘homework,’ so it fits well into my busy schedule.”

Though her group is currently taking time to look a little deeper into each Sunday’s readings, Kate notes that they have also spent time reading other faith-based literature such as a Lenten reflection book.

Both group members say their small groups have enhanced their faith lives in a positive way as they seek to grow deeper in faith.

“I love the different perspective that everyone comes from,” Carl says. “Some of us are married, some are not, one guy is a religion teacher, but some have hardly read the bible themselves – having that dynamic leads to a lot of great perspectives. I also love the openness that the group has to share experiences and opinions with each other, and their willingness to invite anyone else to join us.”

“We all bring something different to the table,” Kate explains. “No one is knowledgeable in all areas, but we all learn something from each other. We are all from very different walks of life, and our families are all different, so our perspectives are so beautifully varied. It’s never boring!”

If you are interested in joining a small group or have questions about getting involved, please contact Zack Hinger at zhinger@saint-max.org, or 513-777-4322, ext. 107.

Seeing the World and Staying “Young at Heart”



Each year, our Young at Heart group provides the opportunity for our seniors to travel together, building community and friendship.

Visiting new places, meeting new people and engaging in new experiences – these are the exciting adventures of travel. And, for many of the seniors of our parish, these “new” experiences are what truly keep them “Young at Heart.”

Each fall, our Young at Heart group takes a trip. This year, they will venture to New Orleans. The trip is designed to make travel comfortable and relaxing for seniors – 50 and up – who may no longer enjoy the work of planning their own adventures.

“Many people say they like the carefree way of traveling – leaving the driving to someone else, which allows you to enjoy the landscape sites along the road and enjoying talking to other travelers, reading or sleeping,” says Verlaine Gray, who organizes the excursion each year. “Also, not having to make reservations for hotels or restaurants, meals are all pre-chosen ahead of time, there are no taxes or tips to worry about, very few out of pocket expenses – they can just enjoy themselves with some really wonderful people.”

In past years, the group has visited Gatlinburg, Nashville, Branson, Memphis, and the Finger Lakes of New York.

The trip, from Sept. 24-30, includes seven days/six nights, bus transportation, hotels, six breakfasts, four lunches, six dinners, and entrance to all attractions. The estimated cost is \$1,150.

“It’s such a friendly group, and you can enjoy a very carefree trip because we plan everything,” Verlaine says. “You can just come and enjoy yourself.”

Sights to visit in New Orleans will include tours of the Oak Alley Plantation, a rum distillery, the National World War II Museum, St. Louis Cathedral Basilica, St. Louis Cemetery, Mardi Gras World Parade Floats, a swamp tour by boat and crossing the 25-mile Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, famous as the longest bridge in the world. The group will also enjoy a dinner and jazz cruise on the Natchez Steamboat, the French Quarter, Jackson Square, Bourbon Street, beignets, and chicory coffee.

“The lunches and dinners will provide local flavor, in addition to entertainment, watching local dancing, jazz and Cajun music, as well as a visit to a cooking school, where they will provide a private dinner for us,” Verlaine says.

Verlaine, who initiated the annual trips six years ago, works with a dedicated planning committee, working for months to research and create an itinerary that will be enjoyable for those who participate.

“It is hard work and follow-up to be our own travel agents,” Verlaine says. “But it is also very rewarding and a labor of love for our fellow members.”

According to Verlaine, the best part of the trip is getting to spend time with fellow parishioners, exploring and experiencing new things together.

“The really great part of the trip is enjoying each other’s company, being helpful to each other, laughing together, praying together, and getting to know each other much better,” she says. “Our single individuals enjoy traveling with friends and not having to travel or eat alone.

For more information about the upcoming trip to New Orleans, or to book your spot on the trip, please contact Verlaine Gray at 513-779-3251 or youngatheart@saint-max.org.

Even if you are not interested in traveling to New Orleans this fall, seniors are encouraged to join the community of Young at Heart. The group meets the second Monday of every month, in the parish conference room at 7 p.m. for an informative or fun program, desserts and socializing. They also gather for a monthly dinner night and a pizza night. For more information, please see the bulletin.

5720 Hamilton-Mason Rd. | Liberty Township, OH 45011
513.777.4322 | www.saint-max.org

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Saint Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Church



HAVE YOU MOVED,
OR DO YOU HAVE
A NEW PHONE
NUMBER OR NEW
EMAIL ADDRESS?

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

The St. Max Art and Environment Team Ministry

continued from front cover

greenery and the use of white decorations and floral arrangements.

"We want to give an understanding of what the Lord was going through during the Lenten season and then the Easter season," Christine says. "We use the environment to give that visual and to draw on the senses."

Everyone is welcome to become a part of the Art and Environment Team Ministry. Families are particularly encouraged to serve during the Christmas season.

"Look at it as a fun family experience or a Christmas tradition," Christine says. "You don't need any previous experience

or knowledge. It simply takes the desire to serve, and we'd really welcome more volunteers."

Come join a ministry dedicated to designing a physical environment that enhances the spiritual environment of each liturgical season.

"The more people who are involved, the more ideas and experiences we can draw from to enhance people's experience," Christine says. "You will learn more about the liturgy and grow in your own faith by doing this."

*For more information about St. Max's Art and Environment Team Ministry,
please contact Christine Guerin at ae@saint-max.org.*

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.