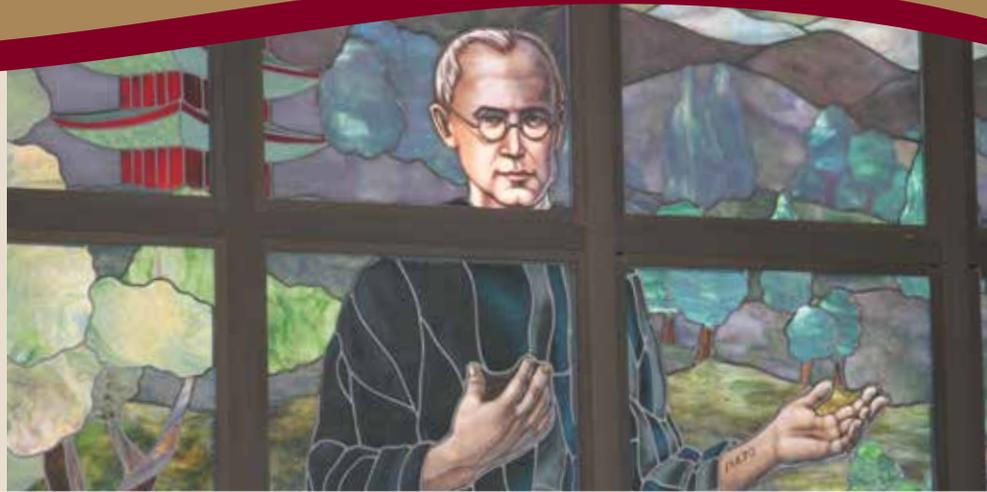


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

FAMILY PROMISE: Answering the Pope's Call to Corporal Works of Mercy

With his declaration of the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis reminds us of a core Gospel message by urging us to turn our attention to the poor.

"[The Year of Mercy] will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty," the pope writes in his *Misericordiae Vultus*, the Papal Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. "And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy."

During this Jubilee Year, parishioners will have a special opportunity to answer Christ's call to serve the poor as St. Maximilian Kolbe participates as a host church for Family Promise of Butler County. Kathy McGill, Coordinator of Family Promise for St. Maximilian Kolbe, welcomes the opportunity for the parish to serve these families in need and help them on the path back to a stable living situation.

"The reason [we describe these families as] 'experiencing homelessness' is because for them, this is brand-new," Kathy explains. "There is an event that precipitated their situation, either an illness or job loss. It was very sudden, and the goal of Family Promise is to make it very temporary and to get them back on their feet and in their own homes."

"One of the things about Family Promise that is so awesome is that these are people who desire to do better, and that we provide them an environment in which they can succeed," Kathy adds.

With a presence in 41 states, Family Promise is a national organization that coordinates over 5,000 church congregations to provide temporary shelter for families experiencing homelessness. As one of 12 host churches for



*Kathy McGill
sharing a laugh
with Eric while
volunteering at
Prince of Peace
Lutheran Church
in OTR*

Butler County's branch of the organization, St. Maximilian Kolbe will provide overnight shelter for homeless families four times throughout the year. Families being served by

continued on page 2

PROMISE FAMILY PROMISE

continued from front cover

the program will arrive at 6 p.m. on a Sunday night and depart for another church location at 7 a.m. the following Sunday morning. Each day, Family Promise of Butler County will provide the families with transportation to and from its day center in Hanover Township, where they will receive mentoring, job counseling, and skill training, while school-aged children can continue to attend their regular school.

According to the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition, 3.5 million Americans experience homelessness in a given year, and 30 percent of the homeless are families with children, constituting the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. The ability to keep these families together in their time of need is one of the greatest gifts offered by Family Promise.



Parishioner Molly Ziska sharing a snack with a guest at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in OTR

“One of the things I like about this [ministry] is that the family really is the promise,” Kathy says. “The goal of Family Promise is to keep the families together, so that the families sleep together in one room. That is a little bit unique because a lot of facilities separate the men, women and children. And then

our families can come and minister with them and be with them – not only our nuclear families, but the parish family, as well. For me, that is the promise.”

Kathy knows from personal experience that even the smallest, simplest act on our part can make a tremendous difference in the life of another.

“I had the opportunity to volunteer down in Over-the-Rhine, and once there was one individual who had been living on the streets,” she says. “And he had found a permanent job that was contingent on providing a copy of his GED. To obtain a copy of the GED, he needed a computer and a credit card, which he didn’t have. So I sat down with him and spent five minutes on the computer to get a copy of his GED for him. It was so simple for me – five minutes of my time – but for him, it was huge.

“The beautiful part about that is that I’ve never seen him [come for help] again,” Kathy continues. “Reports



Kathy McGill and the Stoltz family serving lunch at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in OTR

I’ve heard are that he is still at that job, living in his own apartment. Something that is so simple and easy for us can be so very hard to overcome for someone who doesn’t have the resources.”

Experiences such as these have inspired Kathy during her volunteer work in Over-the-Rhine, and she is excited that St. Maximilian Kolbe’s participation in Family Promise will give parishioners the chance to help the needy “in our own front yard”. Indeed, the four weeks throughout the year that the parish will be hosting families will offer parishioners numerous opportunities to be involved in both big and small ways.

“[We’ll need parishioners’] time – just being present, spending the night there, playing with the children,” Kathy explains. “And talent – we are looking for tutors, nurses and doctors who can be there, people to provide encouragement to the families, to prepare and serve dinner. There will also be many ways to donate treasures. Things we will need to start up include things like sheets and blankets, towels and washcloths, coloring books and toys. Then, there are the continuing needs, such as breakfast and lunch foods, diapers, and so on.”

It is fitting that St. Maximilian Kolbe’s first week as a host church for Family Promise of Butler County will begin the evening of Easter Sunday on March 27. As the Church celebrates Christ’s resurrection, with its promise of rebirth and life everlasting, our parish will embark on a ministry that uplifts families experiencing homelessness with the promise of renewal.

This parish ministry will give us a precious opportunity during the Jubilee Year of Mercy to follow the call of Pope Francis in his *Misericordiae Vultus* to “rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger.”

For more information about helping with Family Promise, please contact Kathy McGill at familypromise@saint-max.org. You can also volunteer time, talent and treasure through the online form at www.saint-max.org/Outreach/FamilyPromise.

For more parish news and current events visit our website at

www.saint-max.org or follow us on Facebook

(St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church) and on Twitter @saintmaxcinci!

Where Grace Moves In, Guilt Moves Out

My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Where grace moves in, guilt moves out. I saw this saying on a sign in front of a Protestant church last October. As soon as I was at a stoplight and my car was not moving I took out my cell-phone and made a memo with these words so I would not forget them! There are many wonderful reflective tidbits of note whenever passing by Protestant churches. As I have said in homilies and meetings in the past, more often than not when you pass a Catholic church and read the sign in front, it says "Bingo – Friday at 7 p.m.!"

Not knowing where the saying came from, I Googled it and found a few references and YouTube videos by Christian authors and preachers. But where it came from is really not as important as what it means for us, especially during the upcoming season of Lent.

Unlike God who is *infinite* – endless power, endless time, endless love, endless mercy – we as human beings are *finite*, i.e. we only have so much power, time and energy. And as I sometimes counsel in the confessional, if we are going to make more room for God in our lives, we who are finite are probably going to have to do some "internal housecleaning," i.e. pitch out a few things and make room for God to be more and more and more a part of our lives.

And I believe in a unique way, when God moves in – i.e. when grace moves in – the ungodly things in our life, including guilt, move out.

I have found this to be very real in



my priesthood when I am called to administer last rites to dying people and their families join me in praying the beautiful Prayers of Commendation of the Dying. Many times, family members share with me that they have been away from Church for a while, even a very long time. In many of these cases, those same family members share

with me (after the funeral of a loved one) that they are back at church and wish they had made that step to "come home" with their deceased relative a long time ago. But for a variety of reasons, they just couldn't make that first step.

My brothers and sisters, allow the Lord to enter your hearts anew this Lent. Maybe taking just a few minutes of prayer, maybe reading Sacred Scripture for a few minutes, maybe extending a hand of reconciliation to an estranged relative or friend, maybe doing that deliberate random act of kindness for that crazy neighbor or bothersome co-worker, maybe celebrating the Sacrament of Penance... let some grace move in to your heart and, rest assured, some guilt will move out. And once some grace moves in, be ready for the Lord to embrace you, forgive you, and love you more and more and more!

God bless one and all!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Drew". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor

ARCHDIOCESAN CAMPAIGN CONTINUES!

The archdiocesan *One Faith, One Hope, One Love* campaign – a comprehensive, extraordinary and exciting outreach – to raise \$130 million toward securing and growing the vitality of its parishes, schools, social services, and other ministries for decades to come is almost complete! St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish, along with a handful of other parishes, will be the last to conduct this campaign in the first half of 2016. St. Max and some of these other parishes are contemplating a "combined campaign," where in addition to raising their funding goal for the archdiocese, we would also be looking at executing a capital campaign for the immediate and future needs of the parish. During January, we conducted a feasibility study to see if such a "combined campaign" is possible for us here at St. Max. We thank everyone in advance for your participation in this feasibility study. Let us continue to pray for our parish and all other parishes who are participating in this last phase of the archdiocesan campaign. May a true and sacrificial spirit of generosity come upon all of us for the successful completion of this most important work!



YEAR OF *Admonish*

“The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2447). Throughout the Holy Year of Mercy, each month a work of mercy will be highlighted for both reflection and action.

Admonishing the sinner, a spiritual work of mercy, is an act of love to make another realize how bad sin is. Through encouragement and example – not judgement – we give good witness and implicitly discourage sinful behavior. This work of mercy might also be accomplished by inviting someone to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance – perhaps even going with you to church for confession! Emphasis on this work of mercy should always be pastoral and inviting, always addressing each other as brothers and sisters in Christ – it should never be legalistic or accusatory. It should build a person up and not tear a person down.

@ St. Max

GO ENJOY THAT GRACE!

The Light Is On For You – Tuesday, February 23 – 7-9 p.m.

For the third year in a row, on the Tuesday of the second week of Lent, Catholic churches throughout the archdiocese will all be open during these hours for individual confessions. Why go to confession? Simply put, to “go enjoy that grace!”

(The following is based on a personal witness written in 2013 by Joshua Danis, the northern regional director of the archdiocesan Family and Respect Life Office.)

I just went months without going to confession. When I awoke that last morning, I was haunted by feelings of unworthiness, feelings of bitterness, and feelings that the weight of the world was closing in on me. I was chock-full of good excuses on why I should not go to confession: One, the priest is really busy. Two, what if I have to interact with this priest on a professional level in the future? Three and the best excuse of all, “I haven’t done anything like really terrible!” So, it is not that important that I go, right? Thank goodness, God didn’t

*let me buy my own excuses. Sure, the priest was busy, but he had already made it perfectly clear that he would always make time to hear confessions. When it was over, he even thanked me for remembering to take care of my own soul! The excuse that I might have to interact with a priest in the future is hogwash. They aren’t fooled by some rosy illusion that we are all perfect. They know we are all sinners in need of mercy. Our sins don’t scandalize priests. But our refusal to go to confession might cause our sins to go on scandalizing ourselves. My third excuse was wrong on so many levels – that it is difficult to cover them all. To assume that my sins aren’t that bad is to judge for myself how good is good enough. God does not want **me** to excuse my sin. He wants to remove it from me, **Himself**. Most of all, to turn down an opportunity for confession is pass up the GRACE that makes me more holy, more happy, more myself! As I left confession with a bright smile on my face, the priest waved to me and said, “Go enjoy that GRACE.” The next morning, I awoke with a prayer on my lips and new hope in my heart.*

EMERGENCY

the Sinner

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE – FEBRUARY 2016

Individual Confessions

Thursday mornings after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

Thursday evenings at 6 p.m.

Saturday mornings after the 8:30 a.m. Mass

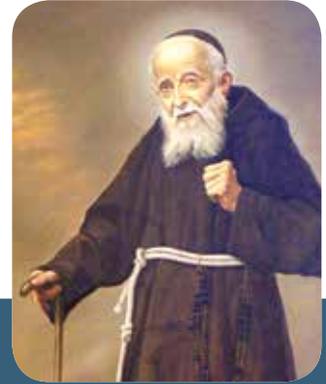
Saturday afternoons at 3 p.m.

The Light Is On For You – Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 – 7-9 p.m.

@ Home

Admonishing a person, especially someone we know and love, may be among the most difficult tasks we ever do! So, how do we prepare to witness this act of mercy? First, look at a situation and ask how serious it is and if the person involved is unable to make a change on their own. Second, pray for charity and wisdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to stir in you all those graces needed to be compassionate and sincere, and to find the right moment to bring a subject up. And third, speak appropriately with calmness and gentleness. Act completely lovingly no matter what! Fourth, if you feel hesitant, remember, God does not call the equipped – He equips the called. Trust in the Lord to be with you and guide you!

- In humility, recognize our own sinfulness and weakness.
- A daily examination of conscience at the end of the day and regular celebration of the Sacrament of Penance admonishes ourselves as sinners.
- “Call someone to conversion” through our own witness – good examples have great power!
- Lovingly caution, or even warn, a person if it looks like they are going to do something wrong.
- If you “correct” someone, always do this as an expression of charity, not as an act of judgment.
- Encourage or even urge someone to greater efforts or to persevere in their struggle to break from bad habits.
- Always intervene in situations in which a person is clearly doing harm to themselves or others and don’t be afraid to call in “professionals” for severe cases.
- Respond to negative and prejudicial comments with positive statements.
- Remember, majority opinion does not mean something is morally correct.
- Mercy demands – in fact, at times even obliges – us to speak, even when we’d prefer to keep stay quiet. Silence can become a sin of omission.



THE APOSTLE of CONFESSION – St. Leopold Mandic

St. Leopold Mandic was born into a noble Croatian family in 1866. As a teenager, he entered Capuchin religious life and was ordained a priest in 1890. Physically malformed causing a clumsy walk (he was barely four and a half feet tall) he also stuttered and suffered from stomach ailments, poor eyesight and arthritis. Although he felt called to missionary work in eastern Europe, he lived in Italy from 1906 until his death, even spending a year in prison during World War I for not renouncing his Croatian nationality. St. Leopold spent countless hours hearing confessions and was known for being a compassionate confessor! He died in 1942. The church and the friary where St. Leopold lived were greatly damaged during World War II – but his cell and confessional were spared! Leopold had predicted this, saying, “The church and the friary will be hit by the bombs, but not this little cell. Here, God exercised so much mercy for people, it must remain as a monument to God’s goodness.” The remains of St. Leopold will be brought to the Vatican for veneration during the Holy Year of Mercy to inspire people to become reconciled to the Church and to God through confession of their sins. His feast is celebrated on May 12.

“I Hope It Draws People

Deeper Into Their Faith” Celebrating the Re-Opening of Our Parish Library



For Marlene Doughman, books have been a big part of her faith walk. Whether it was just curiosity or knowing something was missing in her faith, a lot of the answers she received were through books.

“I think it’s really cool to have a book, because you have [an author] who’s an expert in an area,” says Marlene, the Coordinator of Adult Faith & Family Life at St. Max. “You can pick out one that appeals to you and there’s a sense of the Holy Spirit involved in the whole thing. You can read it at your own pace, you can just take it home and absorb it.”

This love of books is what inspired Marlene to coordinate the reorganization and grand re-opening of the Msgr. Whalen Library. With the help of parishioners who have donated hundred of books over the years, as well as the Library Committee and a number of other volunteers who worked to organize and re-catalog the donations, the library grand re-opening ceremony took place after all the Masses on the weekend on Jan. 16 and 17.

“I’ve been a parishioner since the parish was founded and the library was always something that I thought, ‘Oh, this is really cool that we have a library,’” Marlene says. “I want it to be there for our parishioners, the way that I would use a library like that.”

Marlene and the other volunteers worked to categorize and label all of the books, sorting them into easy-to-navigate sections within the library. They have also added a couple of comfortable chairs and a table, in hopes of making the library more welcoming, as well as easy to access.

“We have something for everyone!” Marlene says of the collection, which consists of over 1,200 resources designed for children, teens, parenting, prayer, learning about our Catholic faith, and much more.



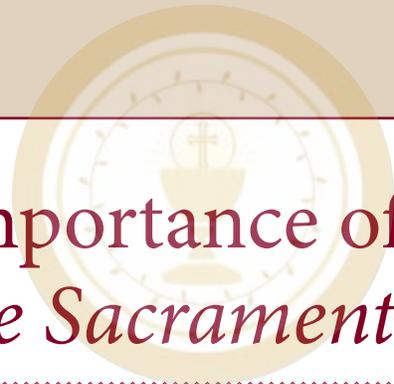
The library also offers an ever-expanding collection of CDs and DVDs available to borrow and a small “for sale” section with Bibles and *Catechisms* available for purchase.

“If you’re waiting for your child, you can go into the library and pick something up, find a prayer book, take it into the Church, sit for a little while, bring it back,” Marlene says. “We have a different monthly display, so when you walk into the library, straight ahead is the feature items. Stop by monthly to see the new display.”

The library is generally open anytime that the church is open, and is located to the right of the parish office doors, within the main lobby of the church. In order to borrow a book, simply sign the book out at the clipboard found in the library.

“I just hope it gives an extra resource for people to use – something of quality and value, a nice place to quietly congregate, to prepare to go into prayer or reorganize your thoughts, get questions answered,” Marlene says. “I hope it draws people deeper into their faith.”

If you’re interested in serving on the Library Committee or volunteering to help keep the library organized, please contact Marlene Doughman in the parish office at 513-777-4322 ext. 118, or mdoughman@saint-max.org.



“Value the Importance of Forgiveness” *Preparing for the Sacrament of First Penance*

Conversion is a daily journey. Through Confession, we turn our hearts again and again towards our Lord, and yet we first learn of forgiveness and mercy within the very context of our family, our domestic church.

“By the witness of the parents, the children will value the importance of ‘I’m sorry’ and forgiveness for themselves and others. It is important for family and friends to forgive one another. The children model the example of their parents.”
– Carol Heuser, Pastoral Associate of Initiation

“By the witness of the parents, the children will value the importance of ‘I’m sorry’ and forgiveness for themselves and others,” says Carol Heuser, Pastoral Associate of Initiation. “It is important for family and friends to forgive one another. The children model the example of their parents.”

Each fall and winter, dozens of our young people prepare to receive First Penance, to experience the love and mercy of Christ through the sacrament. Carol has a long history of preparing families for this vital step in a young disciple’s life.

“I have only worked for three years with the sacramental preparation of second-graders – however, I have worked with children through the Rite of Christian Initiation for many years,” Carol says. “I love not only working with the children, but also with the parents and helping them to appreciate the Sacrament of Reconciliation more fully.”

At St. Maximilian Kolbe, students receive their First Confession in second or third grade after they have completed preparation.

“Parents may choose to bring their child for an individual confession or for a communal penance service during Advent or Lent,” Carol says.

Penance Preparation, which is offered twice a year, consists of three sessions. The first is for the parents. During this session, they are given a brief history of the sacrament and the importance of forgiveness within the

familial context. A parent from a previous year also shares information that helped his or her family prepare at home for the sacrament.

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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 culm@saint-max.org to give us an update!

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Saint Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Church

Preparing for the Sacrament of First Penance continued from page 7

"Time is saved to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at the end of the presentation," Carol says. "This



gives the parents the opportunity to pray and experience the sacrament if it has been a long time since they have received it themselves."

At the other two sessions, parents and the children come together.

"These sessions include prayer, reflection, faith sharing, a service project and ritual celebration with other children and parents," Carol says.

Whether or not you have a child receiving his or her First Confession,

parishioners are all welcome to support our young disciples on their journey. We can lift them up in our prayers and offer them an example of faithfully receiving the sacraments and of forgiving each other!

"Pray for them and their families," Carol says. "Also, join them in receiving the sacrament together and make it a good experience and celebration for them."

For more information about the Sacrament of First Penance, please reach out to Carol Heuser at 513-777-4322 ext. 104 or at cheuser@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.