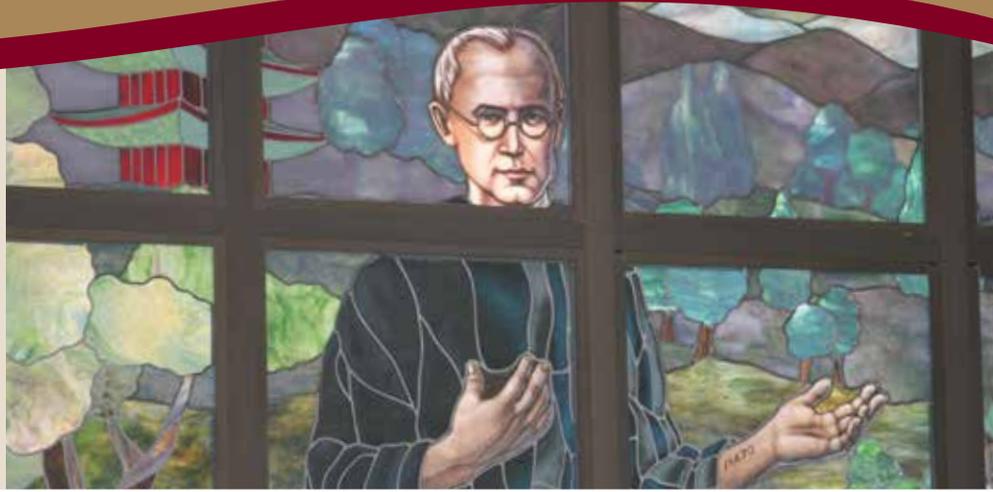


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

FORMED™

Bringing the Richness of the Faith Home

When thinking about the “time” component of stewardship, we may focus heavily on the time we spend serving others. Yet, there is another equally important aspect of stewardship of time. That is, time spent cultivating our relationship with God.

“In my belief, an important element of being a good steward is giving our time back to God,” says Zack Hinger, Pastoral Associate for Evangelization and Catechesis, as well as the High School and Young Adult Minister for St. Maximilian Kolbe. “Time isn’t always about serving others – it’s also about spending time in conversation with God, drawing closer to Him and learning more about Him.”

Making an effort to spend time alone with God can sometimes be one of the more challenging aspects

of stewardship due to our busy lives. Seemingly pulled in a hundred different directions, many of us struggle to carve out the needed time for prayer, reflection and formation. This is why St. Maximilian Kolbe is excited about its new parish-wide subscription to FORMED, an online gateway to some of the best Catholic books, studies and videos that can be accessed from any device – at any time, anywhere.

“A lot of people can’t make it when we offer studies at specific times,” Zack says. “This website allows people to dive deeper into their faith wherever they are. They don’t have to come to the church to learn more about their Catholic faith.”

Through the FORMED website, parishioners will be able to utilize a wide variety of resources – from Bishop Robert Barron’s *Catholicism*, to *33 Days to Morning Glory*, to numerous digital and audio books, to spiritually enriching films. No matter what your particular interests or needs, FORMED

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*Zack Hinger, Coordinator
of Evangelization and
Catechesis*



The MODERN SAINT

A Letter From Our Pastor



FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It goes without saying that 2016 is an election year!

For those of us old enough to remember the several past presidential elections, who can forget the elections of 1992, 1996 and 2000, when the winner received less than 50 percent of the vote (for the first time since 1968!)? Or 2000, when one presidential candidate received the majority of the Electoral College votes but not the majority of the popular vote? Or 2008, when for the first time since 1952, neither of our two major political parties nominated a sitting president or sitting vice-president as their presidential nominee? (Yes, I am a history nerd!) And as has been the case for the past few presidential elections (at least it is the case as I write this article in early January!) there are more candidates who themselves are much more diverse. And the “presidential election season,” normally less than a year long in generations past, continues

to start earlier and earlier and earlier. I actually saw a bumper sticker over the Christmas holidays endorsing a presidential candidate for 2020!

Voting is one of the many responsibilities and duties we have in exercising our citizenship. As Catholic Christians, exercising this right takes on a unique dimension. Since 1975, the bishops of the United States have approved statements about “faithful citizenship.” I encourage everyone to be attentive to how our Catholic bishops nationally (the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) and what our Catholic bishops on the state level (the Ohio Catholic Conference) are helping us and leading us to exercise *faithful and faith-filled* citizenship in this election year.

Our bishops do not tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Their purpose is to help Catholics form consciences in accordance with God’s truth and Catholic doctrine.

Obviously, having a well-formed conscience goes beyond voting in a particular election! But the Church’s role in helping Catholics to form their consciences is a central theme in exercising faithful citizenship. Only with well-formed consciences can we, as Catholics, properly evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates’ promises and actions. All of these must be considered in the light of the Gospel and through the lens of the teachings of our Church.

The dignity and respect of every human being, especially the most vulnerable, is a foundation for Catholic teaching and faithful citizenship. People must oppose actions that are intrinsically evil, such as abortion and euthanasia, because these directly and intentionally end innocent human life. We must also affirm the obligation to promote the common good by combating all threats to

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To stay up to date and informed on Vatican news, check out the Official Vatican Network at www.news.va.

FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP *continued from page 2*

human life and dignity – hunger, poverty, racism, unfair immigration policies, healthcare which violates religious liberty and unjust war.

Catholic voters may feel “politically disenfranchised,” sensing that no party and too few candidates fully share the Church’s comprehensive commitment to the dignity of the human person. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet, a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead voters to disqualify a candidate

from receiving their support.

Catholics are called to a different kind of political engagement – namely an active involvement which is shaped by well-formed consciences, focused on the dignity of every human being, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable. Participation in political life, but only in light of the Gospel and the Church’s moral and social teachings, is an essential duty for every Catholic. Much to think about indeed!

Some may wonder why I am sharing this with you eight months before the election! Basically, because

it takes sufficient time and deliberate commitment to form our consciences, to be informed, and to be prepared about what we “look for” in those running for office, in party platforms and other ballot issues. If we are truly going to be *faithful and faith-filled citizens* this election year, we need to start preparing now!

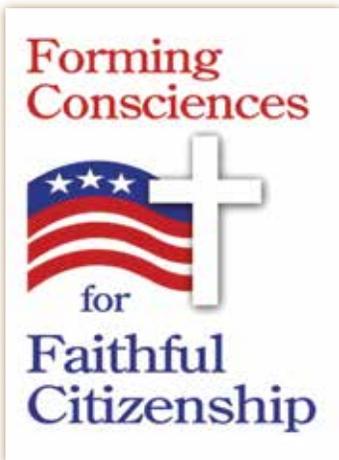
God bless one and all!



Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor

A CALL TO POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The 2015 limited revision of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* provides key guidance to help Catholics exercise their political responsibility efficiently. This critical teaching document integrates new policy developments in the United States as well as new papal teachings, including that of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis to date. This resource presents to the Catholic faithful an up-to-date guide for forming their consciences as they participate in the civil order. Copies that can be borrowed are available in our parish library, and you can also order your own copy (for less than \$5.00!) at www.usccb.org.



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!*



YEAR OF *Sheltering the*

“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.

Sheltering the homeless, a corporal work of mercy, is an act of love to help others find shelter and to assist in preserving buildings used for housing. Accepting others into your home when visiting or in times of need, as well as taking care of our homes through maintenance and cleaning are ways to practice this work of mercy. From both the Gospel (Matthew 25:40) and the Rule of St. Benedict (53.1) we remember, “Let all guests who arrive be treated like Christ, for He is going to say, ‘I came as a guest, and you received me.’”

@ St. Max

FAMILY PROMISE

This month is the exciting kickoff of Family Promise at St. Max, a network program that unites religious communities to assist children and their families experiencing homelessness. St. Max, along with 12 other local churches, is a host site for Family Promise of Butler County. A national organization, Family Promise has been active in neighboring counties for years. Butler County officially opened this network the end of last year.

As a host site, we will be providing overnight lodging, meals and hospitality for three to five families – up to 14 individuals – for one week at a time, four times per year. Guests stay at each host church from suppertime to early morning seven days a week. Volunteers cook and serve meals, play with children, help with homework, and stay overnight. They interact with the guests, treating them with respect and responding with compassion. Each morning, a van transports guests to the day center where they meet with the director, care for preschool children, bathe, do laundry, and make appointments to seek housing

and employment. They are transported back to the host church around 5 p.m. each night.

Many guests are employed and go to work during the day. During the school year, children go to school. The day center provides guests with a mailing address and a home base. The network director and volunteers help guests find housing, jobs, and government assistance. Guests are screened for active substance abuse and psychiatric problems before they are accepted into the program. Local agencies screen guests and refer families to the network.

St. Max will host our first week beginning Easter Sunday, March 27 through April 3. Guests will make themselves at home in our classrooms and will dine and play in the gym. Additional weeks for 2016 are June 26 through July 3, Sept. 11 through 18, and Nov. 13 through 20.

For more information – including some sad but true statistics – and to volunteer your time, talent and treasure, please visit www.saint-max.org, click “Outreach” and then click “Family Promise.”

EMERGENCY

for the Homeless



SACRAMENT OF PENANCE – MARCH 2016

Individual Confessions

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

Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. (not on Holy Thursday, March 24)

Saturday mornings after the 8:30 a.m. Mass (until noon on March 19)

Saturday afternoons at 3 p.m. (not on Holy Saturday, March 26)

Monday, March 21 – 4-6 p.m. & 7-9 p.m.

Communal Penance Services

Saturday, March 5 – 10 a.m.

Thursday, March 17 – 7 p.m.

@ Home

- Invite others into your home in times of fire, floods or other disasters
- Find out where homeless shelters are in our community – then support or volunteer at one!
- Help take care of your house by dusting the furniture, making the beds, cleaning the floors, and cutting the grass
- Encourage elected leaders to advocate for the homeless and to support fair housing and low-income housing issues
- Go on a mission trip and help maintain existing homes and keep those in need in their homes
- Become a foster family
- Send a care package with special treats to an orphanage
- Sponsor a child through an appropriate agency
- Educate yourself on the causes of homelessness
- Make a conscious effort to see each homeless person as a human being worthy of dignity and respect
- Look around our homes and be grateful for what we have
- Clear the clutter from our homes and donate usable items for someone else's home – have a garage sale!
- Volunteer to build a home through Habitat for Humanity or a similar program
- Support appropriate immigration and refugee settlement initiatives
- Help neighbors, especially the elderly, to care for their homes and do repairs
- Assemble and keep "Blessing Bags" in your car or have available restaurant coupons to give to a homeless person at the end of the freeway exit
- Send a card or go personally welcome a new neighbor
- Let your home (with parental permissions) be a welcome place for your child's friends who would otherwise go home to their empty houses

SAINT of the HOMELESS – St. Benedict Joseph Labre

St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the oldest of more than a dozen siblings, was born in France in 1748. He studied under his uncle, a parish priest, but because of poor health and lack of academic ability, he was unsuccessful in his many attempts to enter religious life. Inspired by both the fifth century beggar St. Alexius of Rome and the 14th century Franciscan tertiary, St. Roch, Benedict abandoned his former earthly life and began a "new life" devoutly visiting as a pilgrim and beggar, the Christian shrines of Europe, living off alms and sharing what little he had with the poor. He did eventually become a Franciscan tertiary. Legend relates that he was once sheltered at the farmhouse of Matthieu and Marie Vianney, who would later become the parents of St. John Vianney, the Curé d'Ars. He is reported to have talked rarely, prayed often (especially before the Blessed Sacrament) and accepted quietly any mistreatment he received as a beggar. He was also said to have cured some of the homeless he met and to have multiplied bread for them. Immediately after his death in 1783, he was popularly acclaimed a saint, but was not officially canonized until 1881. His feast day is celebrated April 16.

“The People of Our Parish Are Interested in One Another and in Serving Others”

OUR ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST ON PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 20

There are many examples of good stewardship in our parish. For instance, we can look to our Knights of Columbus Council #11355, and its members who represent stewardship in their goals and the ways they strive to serve. The annual Pancake Breakfast, sponsored by our Knights Council, is one of those stewardship instances.

“The Pancake Breakfast well fulfills the precepts of stewardship, including building community, hospitality and service to others,” says Knight Bernie Tobergte, who serves as Co-Chair of the event, along with Dave Starr. “The Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast was created by members of the parish office staff, in particular Lakmé Kodros. Lakmé approached the Knights to see if we would be interested in planning, organizing and carrying out a Palm Sunday breakfast.

Of course, the Knights responded with a ‘yes,’ and Dave Starr and I stepped forward to be Co-Chairs of the event. We continue in those roles. As we were planning for the first breakfast, we made the decision that if it was truly going to be a community builder, rather than have a predetermined cost, it should be a free-will offering to help defray the costs.”

Not only is the breakfast offered to the people with no set cost, but it also provides an excellent menu, including pancakes, bacon, sausage, granola, yogurt, and bananas.

There is also a host of great toppings like syrup, butter, chocolate chips, whipped cream, cherry pie filling, and blueberries. Beverages include milk, orange juice, and coffee.

The breakfast will be held in the Fr. John Porter Family Life Complex beginning after the 8 a.m. Mass and continuing until noon.

The co-chairs reflected on what the breakfast means to the parish and why they continue to be responsible for it along with the other Knights.

“I really like the aspect that through the Pancake Breakfast, our Knights of Columbus Council offers

yet another way for our parish community to come together,” Dave says. “The increased success of this event shows that the people of our parish are interested in one another and in serving others.”

Bernie agrees with Dave’s assessment.

“I thought having the Pancake Breakfast as a community builder was a great idea,” he says. “Not only does it offer the opportunity of community to our parishioners, it also offers the opportunity for others to show hospitality and service. It is more than just the Knights, as their families also get involved. The greatest satisfaction I have is in the number of our youth – the sons and daughters of the Knights – who volunteer their time to offer hospitality and service to others. They are awesome! I sincerely appreciate their help and hope they enjoy their service to our parish community.”



For further information about the Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast, please contact Bernie Tobergte at 513-874-9605. We look forward to seeing you at the breakfast!

"It Gave Me My Life Back"

Project Rachel



Another woman recognized her suffering and mentioned Project Rachel. Prompted by the pain of not mourning the loss of her child, she reached out to the ministry.

"Project Rachel has given me my life back," an anonymous post-abortive woman says. "I am able to be the person God created me to be, to let go of the guilt and shame, to let my heart feel love again and to a better wife, mother, sister, and friend."

"Abortion crosses all boundaries of religion, race, age and socio-economic position. We work to communicate God's forgiveness and mercy in order to restore and empower these lives."

— Noreen Wendeln, Dayton Area Coordinator of the Family & Respect Life Office

Project Rachel is a confidential, compassionate ministry for anyone who desires healing after being impacted by abortion. This includes the mothers and fathers of children lost to abortion, grandparents, relatives, friends, health care providers, and many others.

"Abortion crosses all boundaries of religion, race, age and socio-economic position," says Noreen Wendeln, Dayton Area Coordinator of the Family & Respect Life Office. "We work to communicate God's forgiveness and mercy in order to restore and empower these lives."

Project Rachel's mission is to offer resources for spiritual, emotional and psychological healing to anyone who

has been affected by abortion. Many men and women seeking healing are referred to Project Rachel through the archdiocesan website, the Internet, a pregnancy center, or a priest. All are welcome to call one of the confidential hotlines.

"Many seek counseling because of the distress an abortion causes," Noreen says. "For many, the abortion experience has never been shared with anyone, and it is a very heavy burden which they often have carried for years."

Men and women in our community have access to confidential support groups, retreats, days of reflection and one-on-one mentoring through Project Rachel. There is also a contact list of priests that can be called for pastoral help. Each opportunity or resource might offer a place where they can begin to forgive and love themselves.

"God's unconditional love and healing is always there for them to accept, though it might seem unattainable because of the extreme guilt and shame that they carry," Noreen says.

One post-abortive woman urges others to connect with Project Rachel because, quite simply, each of us is a child of God.

"I would encourage others to reach out to Project Rachel to let them know they are forgiven, to allow them the opportunity to claim and name their baby and to accept their baby's love and forgiveness," an anonymous post-abortive woman says.

Within our very community, we can help those affected by abortion by praying, withholding judgment and choosing our language intentionally.

"Many want forgiveness and healing, but they are desperately afraid," Noreen says. "When they hear language filled with hate and intolerance, they are shoved right back into their dark despair."

The St. Max community is always seeking ways to support those affected by abortion, for many desire a renewed relationship with God but might be unable to forgive themselves. Mary Jo Suer notes that if anyone has ideas about reaching out to those in the St. Max faith community affected by abortion, they may contact her at respectlife@saint-max.org.

"Particularly in this Year of Mercy, let's remember that no matter how great our sin is, God loves us," Mary Jo says. "There are so many wounded people, and we just need to go to Him for forgiveness."

For more information about Project Rachel in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, please contact Noreen Wendeln at NWendeln@CatholicCincinnati.org, 937-222-0227 or 513-421-3131 ext. 5027. For confidential communication, please reach out to ProjectRachel@CatholicCincinnati.org, 513-784-0531 or 1-800-456-HOPE (4673).

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Saint Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Church

FORMED

continued from front cover

has it, allowing individuals to dive into their Catholic faith in the convenience of their own homes and schedules.

“Many of the studies focus on the importance of understanding and living out your faith, which in turn enables you to become a better steward,” Zack says. “The way the subscription works is that as a parish, we subscribe to it and anyone within our parish boundaries, even if they aren’t actual registered parishioners, can create an online account using our code, allowing them to access everything for free.”

Zack goes on to explain that the catechetical program *Symbolon* and the newly adopted YDisciple program used by the high school youth ministry are both offered through the FORMED website. Already, the fruits from these programs have been tremendous within the parish.

“The change from what I see within our youth group, I have really loved,” Zack says. “The videos are filmed in

a way that is both engaging and interesting; YDisciple is designed to help young people understand what Christ is calling them to. Your whole life changes when you are following Christ, and I have already seen that the teens are getting a lot out of it.”

Time spent with God is the most important part of stewardship, since He is the wellspring of all other gifts. Only by growing in our love for God can we truly become active disciples, discerning how best to use our God-given time, talents and treasures with others. Our hope is that through this new and accessible resource, parishioners will more deeply dive into the richness of our Catholic faith.

Please consider spending some of your time to visit FORMED.org. To create a personal account and begin unlocking the website’s treasures, use the parish code: 5d9243. If you would like more information on FORMED, please contact Zack Hinger at 513-777-4322, ext. 107, or by email at zhinger@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.