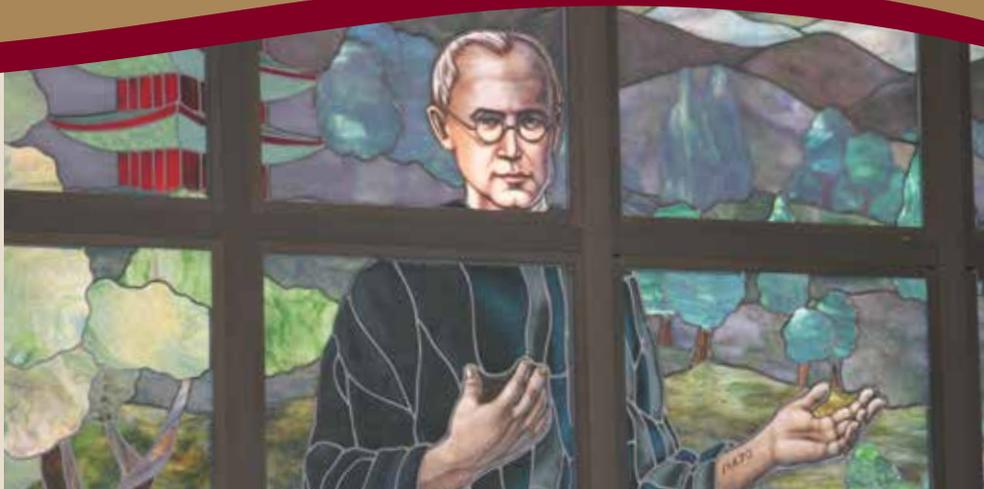


The MODERN SAINT



SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CATHOLIC CHURCH

“Our Goal Is to Enhance People’s Understanding of the Word of God”

The St. Benedict Bible Study Ministry

St. Benedict (480-543) is perhaps best known for founding his Benedictine Monastic Communities and writing the *Rule of St. Benedict*, a guide for religious life still used many centuries later. However, Benedict is also the patron of prayer and Scriptural study. Benedict always maintained that the “strongest and truest foundation for the power of words was the Word of God itself, for what page or word of the bible is not a perfect rule for temporal life.”

With St. Benedict and his commitment to the Word of God in mind, a group of St. Maximilian Kolbe parishioners established a ministry eight years ago called the St. Benedict Bible Study. The purpose of the ministry is for small-group study and discussion of the readings for each Sunday Mass. One of the people who was instrumental in the beginnings of the ministry and who remains as a key facilitator for the group is parishioner, Paul Groh.

“Our goal is to enhance people’s understanding of the Word of God,” Paul says. “We make an effort to reach out to people no matter where they may be personally on



their individual faith journey. We meet on Saturday mornings at the parish from 9:30 until 11 a.m. Normally, we have fewer than 10 people, but we certainly have room to accommodate more. We always open and close with a prayer to our patron, St. Benedict, and then we process through the readings for that weekend, with discussion and comments and questions after each reading.”

The group meets every Saturday throughout the year in one of the classrooms at the parish. Paul says the size and the make-up of the group is fluid.

“It is, of course, totally voluntary to be involved,” he says. “Some people come almost every week; others just on occasion. The point is that all are welcome, regardless of where their personal understanding of Scripture may be. Our meetings and discussions tend to be vibrant and energetic, just like our parish. We not only talk about what the Word for that week may mean, but we also make an effort to identify how it applies today in our current world and in our lives right here.”

continued on back cover

OUR SACRISTANS

Serving the Parish in a Special Way

Before each weekday Mass, and before anyone — including the clergy — arrives, sacristans such as John Stengel or Jack Latzy quietly enter the church to prepare the altar for Mass. There, in the stillness of a mostly empty church, they walk back to the sacristy and carry out their duties of setting out the sacred vessels, determining the amount of hosts needed, pouring the wine, lighting the candles, and setting out the worship aids. Afterwards, they may sit quietly and pray.

“Serving as a sacristan is such a special ministry that has given me so much,” Jack says. “It’s a blessing to help prepare for the Liturgy of the Mass; to be able to get to know the priests and deacons in a special way and, especially with the weekday Mass, to be able to be present in the church when it’s quiet and peaceful. I especially like it during the winter months, when it’s dark outside.”

As one of the original parishioners who attended Mass in the gym before our church was built, Jack remembers how the duties of a sacristan used to be a little more involved. In fact, sometimes there was manual labor involved preparing for Mass, which meant setting up folding chairs, moving the piano into place, and cleaning and draining the baptismal font. Even then, Jack knew

this was a ministry that he enjoyed, and he has been serving as sacristan ever since.

Although the work of our sacristans is done mostly behind the scenes, both Jack and John appreciate the anonymity of being able to do the Lord’s work in a very private way. The ministry itself is truly rooted in our Catholic faith. The very word “sacristan” comes from a Latin term, *sacer*, which means “holy” or “sacred.” And, in the bible, Jesus sends His apostles ahead to Jerusalem in order to find a room and prepare it to celebrate the Passover meal — much like our sacristans when they ready the altar for the Eucharistic celebration.

These tenets of the sacristan ministry are something John takes very seriously. When Jack invited John to serve as sacristan three years ago, John knew it would be something he could easily incorporate into his schedule. Besides, since he tried to attend daily Mass anyway, serving as sacristan would just mean arriving a little earlier. And, like Jack, he soon discovered that not only was he physically preparing the altar for Mass, but his duties as sacristan also helped him prepare spiritually for the Sacred Liturgy.

“Preparing the altar and going about all the duties of a sacristan makes me more aware of what is

about to happen,” John says. “We are about to witness a miracle, and I want to prepare for that in every way. So, I set the altar, prepare the linens, pour the wine, and I will even pick up dead leaves that may have fallen from the plants around the altar — whatever it takes, really, to prepare for that miracle and to make sure that every aspect of the Mass runs smoothly.”

Ultimately, our sacristans serve an important role in our parish. Since the Eucharist is both the Source and the Summit of our faith, not only do sacristans help the priest celebrate Mass in a seamless fashion, but they also help all members of the faith community, so that when they enter the church, everything is ready for them to experience the Eucharist.

In a sense, parishioners come to a table that has already been set for them by our sacristans.

Serving as a sacristan is a rewarding and impactful way to be involved in the parish. If you are interested in participating in this ministry, please contact Jeremy in the parish office at 513-777-4322 ext. 103, jhelmes@saint-max.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!



HOLY ORDERS – A Sacrament We Will Witness and Celebrate in 2016... and 2017 and 2018!

My dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

I suspect most of us have personally experienced the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, and the Anointing of the Sick. But, wait, that is only six of seven sacraments! Of the seven sacraments celebrated by our Church, the one that is probably least familiar to many Catholics is Holy Orders.

But here at St. Max, that could change quickly!

This spring of 2016, two of our parishioners will be ordained:

❖ Hans Schade was ordained a permanent deacon on Saturday, April 30.

❖ Thomas Reagan will be ordained a priest for the Fathers of Mercy on Saturday, June 4. He will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving here on Sunday, June 12, at noon.

And if these are not enough to celebrate this spring, we also have another very special ordination to celebrate — our founding pastor, Fr. John Porter, will celebrate his 60th anniversary of priesthood ordination in May! Please see the weekly Sunday bulletin for more details about Fr. Porter's Anniversary Mass on Sunday, May 22 at the noon Mass.

And, looking ahead, our seminarian intern, Craig Best, will be ordained a transitional deacon in April 2017 and a priest in May 2018.

Like the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the Sacrament of Holy Orders puts an indelible "mark" or "character" on the recipient's soul. Once the sacrament is received, the mark is "there for good!" In fact, most

theologians agree that this sacramental character remains with the individual not only during this life, but forever in the life to come.

Unlike other jobs or careers, no man calls himself to the Sacrament of Holy Orders, nor does any man have a "right" to be ordained. Properly understood, a vocation is a calling from God, to which the individual is invited to respond. In my personal vocation story, I felt called to priesthood in grade school, high school, college, and midway through my professional career. But it was only after a *Called By Name* program in my home parish (where fellow parishioners could submit names of people they thought could be a good priest, deacon or religious, and I was recommended by dozens of people) that I felt God's call *through the*

Church. That was a powerful turning point for me in taking steps to enter the seminary to begin studies and discernment towards the priesthood.

Vocations to the priesthood are vitally important to the spiritual state of the whole world. Without priests, there would be no Mass, which means there would be no Eucharist – the true and living presence of Jesus Christ on earth. While the transmission of the Faith could continue without ordained ministers, the sacraments of the Church are the ordinary means God has chosen to bestow grace on the faithful – deacons, priests and bishops can baptize and witness marriages; priests and bishops can hear confessions, preside at Mass and anoint the sick; only bishops can (normally) confirm and ordain men to the diaconate or priesthood.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (12th century French abbot and Doctor of the Church) is said to have estimated that one out of every three Catholics has a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Today, less than one in 20,000 is a priest or religious!

Thus, I encourage everyone to not only pray for vocations to ordained ministry and religious life but promote, nurture and encourage vocations in your family. Who knows, there may be a future priest, deacon, religious brother or religious sister sitting right across from you at your own kitchen table!

God bless one and all!

Fr. Geoffrey D. Drew, Pastor 3

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Almighty Father,

You have created us for some definite purpose.

Grant us the grace to know the path

You have planned for us in this life

and to respond with a generous "Yes."

*Make our archdiocese, parishes, homes, and hearts
fruitful ground for Your gift of vocations.*

*May our young people respond to Your call
with courage and zeal.*

*Stir among our men a desire and the strength
to be good and holy priests.*

*Bless us with consecrated religious and those called to a
chaste single life, permanent deacons,
and faithful husbands and wives,*

who are a sign of Christ's love for His Church.

*We commend our prayer for vocations to You, Father,
through the intercession of Mary our Mother,
in the Holy Spirit,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

YEAR OF

Praying for the Living



“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.

All of us are part of the great communion of saints – thus, we should pray for everyone! *Praying for the living and for the dead*, a spiritual work of mercy, is an act of love in which we spread the fire of God’s love to others – in this world and in the next. Whenever we pray for someone, we place them before God Himself. To a certain extent, *praying for the living and for the dead* is the foundation, synthesis and aspiration of all other works of mercy for in our prayer, we, as well as those for whom we pray, encounter God.

@ St. Max

PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER BY NAME

By Fr. Geoff

Without a doubt, prayer is powerful! There are many dynamics in the lives of our parishioners — parishioners whom you sit next to in church or at a meeting, whom you see at the grocery store or in the neighborhood — that are unbeknownst to most others, dynamics of illness and unemployment and other troubles and challenges we all face at one time or another. For two years now, our *Praying for Each Other by Name* initiative allows all of our parish families to be prayed for by name individually on a regular basis.

So how does it work? As you enter the Eucharistic chapel, to the left on the front wall is a binder, which has all registered parish family names listed. This binder is updated periodically as new families register and “old” families move away. Each page in the binder has approximately 25 parish families listed. Whenever anyone comes into the chapel, you are encouraged to take a moment to read (aloud or to yourself) the names listed on the open page of the binder. Then simply mark the date and

time (e.g. 5/1/16, 1 p.m.) you prayed for the families on that page and turn to the next page so that next person who enters the chapel can pray for the next set of names. It really is that simple!

A few months ago, a parish family shared with me about a very difficult situation they were experiencing. I encouraged them to pray before the Blessed Sacrament as often as they could, since the situation had progressed to the point where it was “out of their hands.” A few weeks later, as they entered the Eucharistic chapel they read the names on the open page of the binder. Providentially, there was their own family name! And even more providentially, before they left the chapel, they received a text message that the very difficult situation they were facing had been unexpectedly resolved... during the exact hour they were in the chapel!! Obviously, God answers all of our prayers in His way and in His time, but in this case, God’s answer was really in sync with this family’s time spent in prayer! Yes, indeed, prayer is powerful!

MERCY

ng and the Dead

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE – MAY 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.

@ Home (and around!)

- Treat every encounter with someone — at the grocery store, at a ballgame, at work, or in your own neighborhood or home — as an opportunity to pray for that person.
- When you hear a police car, ambulance, or fire truck siren, pray a *Hail Mary* for the officers, paramedics and anyone involved.
- When you pass a funeral home with a parking lot full of cars, pray for the soul of the deceased person as well as that person's family and friends.
- When you do laundry, prepare a meal, take a shower, or go to bed at night, ask God to comfort those who don't have clothes to wash, food to eat, running water to use, or a bed to sleep in.
- When you see a cemetery, pray for the souls of the people who are buried there, as well as the souls of your loved ones who have passed away.
- When you see a sunrise or sunset, smell fresh baked cookies, hear your favorite song, or taste something delicious, pray for those who are blind, deaf or unable to experience life through their senses.
- Pray for the sick and those serving in the military listed in the Sunday bulletin.
- Make a prayer blanket, card, or spiritual bouquet for someone who would be comforted by knowing that someone is praying for them.
- Find out some way you can assist at a local hospice or hospital.
- Pray for our seminarians, clergy and consecrated religious.
- When you are impatient, frustrated or going through a struggle in your life, pray for the poor souls in purgatory who are patiently awaiting their entrance into heaven.



SAINTS of MERCY – Maybe our own patron saints?

Do you know who your patron saint is and the facts of his or her life? Do you know his or her “feast day?” Maybe you have more than one patron saint based on your first, middle or confirmation name or based on place of origin, national background or the work you do.

In Catholic tradition, a patron saint is regarded as the heavenly advocate of a place, craft or activity, family or person. Catholics believe that our patron saints, having gone before us marked with the sign of faith, are now interceding for the needs of those under their patronage.

Historically, saints often become patrons of places where they were born, had lived or died. In medieval Europe, a patron saint may have earned that recognition when their remains or relics were transferred to and venerated at a cathedral. In Latin America and the Philippines, Spanish and Portuguese explorers named locations after a saint if they discovered or visited that place on the saint's feast day.

Professions sometimes have a patron saint who was involved with it. And in recent times, “newer” professions have patron saints whose acts or miracles in some way recall the profession. For example, when the profession of photography appeared in the 19th century, St. Veronica was made its patron since her veil miraculously received the imprint of Christ's face when she wiped off His blood and sweat as He bore His Cross to Calvary.

Do you know who your patron saints are? There is no better time than now to discover and pray to our patron saints!

“Opening Our Arms and Bringing the Community Together”

Before St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish was founded, Bill Harkins served as a booth worker at St. John’s festival in West Chester. He remembers how the first St. Max festivals were held in conjunction with St. John on their grounds until our new complex was built.

“As I watched the festival grow over the years, I recognized it was about more than bringing together the families of St. Max,” says Bill, who serves as festival committee chairman. “It is also bringing together the families of all of the communities of West Chester and Liberty Township for fellowship and hospitality amongst each other.”

This year, the parish festival will take place from Friday to Sunday on June 10, 11 and 12. In addition to many annual favorite events and bands, the festival particularly hopes to engage with our community by inviting local dance and cheer teams along with music, instrumental and choir groups to be a part of the festivities.

“I look at it as St. Max opening its arms and bringing the community together in unity,” Bill says. “This

is why we have decided to give back to the community and earmark a portion of the proceeds to local outreach programs.”

In addition to the work of the festival committee, dozens of parish ministries



St. Maximilian’s



and individual volunteers give of their time, talent and treasure each year to this community-wide event.

“The festival is a massive undertaking needing upwards of 1,200 volunteer hours just for the three days it takes place,” Bill says. “If it wasn’t for the volunteers, it would not happen, and I thank them with all my heart.”

Though we all attend different Masses and give in our own ways, the parish festival brings us together as one body in Christ to celebrate our faith community.

“It is a way to meet new parishioners or to be reacquainted with ones you may have lost touch with,” Bill says. “Smile and say ‘hello’ to someone as you pass, or maybe even stop and introduce yourself to someone you may see every week at Mass but not know his or her name.”

Bill began serving at the festival by being a captain of a booth – “Beat the Dealer” – and then, by serving on the food committee. Though a job transfer in 2003 prompted a temporary hiatus from his involvement, he returned in 2010 and has been active with the festival ever since.

“It’s something I just enjoy being a part of,” Bill says.

continued on page 7



Parish Festival



"Hospitality is more than offering someone food or drink. It's an attitude that opens us to others and to receive and accept people for who they are, and not who you want them to be."

Come by the parish festival this year to be a part of this celebration of our community and our unity in Christ.

"God calls us to live in unity with one another, so it is important to make every effort to live together in harmony with other fellow believers," Bill says. "This is one example of that taking place. It's a fun and easy way for parishioners to give back to the church."



For more information about the Parish Festival, please reach out to Bill Harkins at 513-777-8508 or wharkins@cinci.rr.com.

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!

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Saint Maximilian Kolbe
Catholic Church

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Holy Orders – A Sacrament We Will Witness and Celebrate in 2016... and 2017 and 2018!
- 4 Year of Mercy
- 6 “Opening Our Arms and Bringing the Community Together”
St. Maximilian’s Parish Festival

The St. Benedict Bible Study Ministry

continued from front cover

St. Benedict himself was fond of quoting and referring to this passage from the Book of Isaiah: “For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to him who sows and bread to him who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Paul and those dedicated to making the Word come alive every week — to make it more than just something we hear on Sunday — firmly believe those words from God.

“The Word, like the reference in that passage from Isaiah, needs to permeate our minds and our lives,” Paul says. “God gives the Word life, but we are the ones who must take that life and bring it alive for others. That is part of being a steward and a disciple of the Lord.”

If you would like more information about this wonderful opportunity for study, prayer and fellowship, please contact Paul Groh at 513-988-1981 or stbenedictbible@saint-max.org. Those interested may also simply show up to a Saturday morning meeting.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sat. Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sun.:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. | **Wed.:** 6:30 a.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.