



# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

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## NEW YEAR OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STEWARDS TO GROW IN FAITH

**T**he start of the New Year — it's the perfect time to reflect on where you've been and where you hope to go. It's a time of hope and excitement, a time of dreaming and setting goals for the future. As members of our parish family, we hope that people will not only look ahead, making plans in their own personal lives, but that they will also join us in helping our community of St. Anthony of Padua enter into the New Year, moving forward in following God's plan.

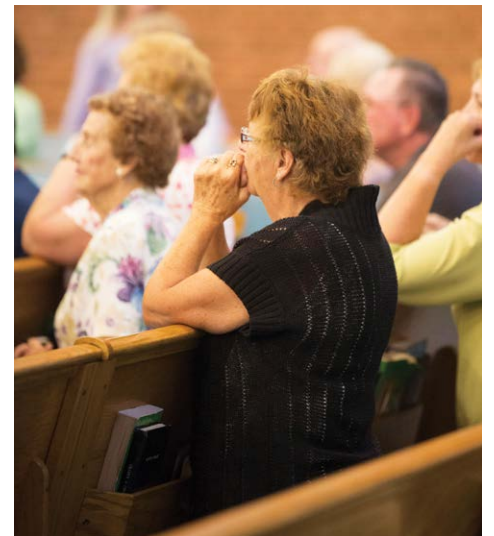
For Fr. Tom Donovan, one of the most important things to do when looking forward into a New Year is to take time for reflection and gratitude on the past year. From having a seminarian serve our community, to celebrating 13 weddings, to welcoming our new school principal and more, 2019 was a year filled with blessings.

"It's been a big year here at the parish and I personally have a lot to be thankful for, and as a parish, we have a lot to be thankful for as well," Fr. Tom says.

As always, there are things to be overcome in the new year. However, Fr. Tom encourages us to look ahead with hope.

"Looking ahead we do see challenges, but it's a matter of living as people of hope, instead of people of fear, and moving forward," Fr. Tom says. "Those moments of slowing down and taking stock are so necessary, so we realize who we are and where we're going, how we're doing spiritually, how God has helped us and how God has invited us to take on greater challenges."

And at a time of year when people are thinking about their goals and resolutions — perhaps in health, money



or relationships — Fr. Tom invites us to set goals for spiritual growth, as well. He hopes that people will consider attending daily Mass once, to see how God might speak to them, or to consider adding different types of prayer to one's routine.

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# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA

## NEW YEAR OPPORTUNITIES *continued from front cover*

*“My hope and prayer is that one day we’ll all be sitting there in heaven, looking back and thinking, ‘In 2020, this is what God was able to do among His people.’ I hope we are all able to witness it and it increases our faith, hope and joy.” — Fr. Tom Donovan*

“Find things that are nourishing the mind, the body, and the soul,” Fr. Tom says. “If you’re not trying to keep all of them healthy, then one of them is going to fail you.”

“When we make resolutions, we often have tangible signs that we’ve been successful,” he adds. “However, in the spiritual life, it’s a little bit different — you have to look at it with the eyes of faith. You have to look with the eyes of faith to see where God is taking you on this journey.”

In the coming year, Fr. Tom hopes to focus on our Faith Formation program, giving both children and adults increased opportunities to deepen their relationships with God and knowledge of the faith. He is also looking to improve our parish communications. Fr. Tom’s desire is that people will turn to God, in prayer, and follow His direction as to how they’re called to grow and how they’re called to give of themselves in service, in the new year.

“If God places a weight on your heart, don’t sit on it,” Fr. Tom says. “Don’t wait for the perfect time — ‘If today, you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ Don’t be indifferent to that inspiration that God puts into you.”

As we proceed toward 2020, Fr. Tom encourages us to dream big and be open to the ways that God wants to work in our lives as individuals, families and a parish community.

“My hope and prayer is that one day we’ll all be sitting there in heaven, looking back and thinking, ‘In 2020, this is what God was able to do among His people,’” Fr. Tom

says. “I hope we are all able to witness it and it increases our faith, hope and joy.

“Don’t sell yourself short,” he adds. “But realize how big God’s plans really are for us.”



*Please take time to pray and ask God where He may be calling you to grow in your faith and prayer in the coming year, as well as where He may be asking you to use your gifts in service to our parish community of St. Anthony.*



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

# Start a *New Life*, Not Just a *New Year*

Dear Parishioners,

It's January and that means it's time for New Year's resolutions — at least that's the widespread perception in our culture. So, I want us to reflect on resolutions for a few minutes.

Often, New Year's resolutions are intended simply to undo the harm we did to ourselves by overindulging in food and drink between Thanksgiving and the end of the year. Some resolutions are changes we know we should make, but aren't really committed to making — thus, they don't last very long.

Reflecting on this in broader terms, when should we make a resolution to eliminate a sinful practice from our life? That question has a simple answer — the moment we realize we're engaging in a sinful practice. In other words, as soon as we realize we're doing something wrong, we should stop. It doesn't matter whether that sin is as "large" as cheating on your spouse or as "small" as sharing vicious gossip — we should stop immediately when we recognize it's a sinful behavior.

Now, I admit that making the changes we need in order to grow closer to Christ is easier said than done. All too often, we fool ourselves into thinking we can make all the changes we need under our own strength and on a convenient timetable. For real change, we need guidance and we need help — a new life, in fact. St. Paul addressed this when he wrote to the Romans (6:4), "We were indeed buried with him through baptism

into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life."

In other words, we need a new life, not a new year. We find this new life in union with Christ within His Body, the Church. The Church can provide you with guidance. She has 2,000 years of accumulated wisdom and experience, beginning with God's own revelation. The Ten Commandments provide a brief, incisive outline for ethical behavior. Help comes from God's grace, available to us in the sacraments and through prayer.

A new life means we have new priorities and a new viewpoint when we look at every aspect of the way we live. It impacts the use of the time we have, the talents God has given us, and the treasure with which He has blessed us. With God's grace and guidance, lived in union with the Church, we find that "in newness of life" we can "cease doing evil" and "learn to do good." That's a resolution worth making.

Happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Donovan  
Pastor



# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

*to Celebrate Valuable Experiences at St. Dominic School*

*"The idea of Holy Moments is really special for me and the kids. Our saints were not perfect and they had Holy Moments and realized that they did. When we identify our Holy Moments, and do what God wants us to do, we'll grow and be the children of God He wants us to be. Holy Moments will propel us to build what can be established in that point. I can predict there will be many Holy Moments during Catholic Schools Week!" — Mrs. Carol Frericks, Principal*

The Catholic Schools Week celebration at St. Dominic School will be filled with special moments enriching our faith — and it will be a week shining a spotlight on the experiences shared by the students, faculty and staff all through the year.

Catholic Schools Week is being observed nationally from Jan. 26 through Feb. 1, with the theme, "Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed."

St. Dominic School will open Catholic Schools Week during the Holy Moments Mass at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 25, at St. Anthony Church.

"Catholic Schools Week will be tied to all we do in the school year," says Principal Carol Frericks. "Once a month at the parish, we have our Holy Moments Mass. Each month we study one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. In January, the Fruit of the Holy Spirit is 'kindness.'"

The eighth-grade students at St. Dominic will lead the Holy Moments Mass.

"They will also lead our school in learning about kindness," Mrs. Frericks says.

The students will put kindness into action with their service project for the Horizon Soup Kitchen



*These three friends are looking forward to a day of fun during the St. Dominic School celebration of Catholic Schools Week.*

— decorating cookies and donating them to the agency.

On Wednesday, School Mass Day, all parents will be invited to an open house that has some special activities planned.

"We plan to do some things that will build on those we had with Grandparents' Day," Mrs. Frericks says. "We held it in October, and we had a Game Day. The grandparents joined us and we celebrated the things grandparents love to do with kids. The kids shared games with them, and the

grandparents taught games that are longtime favorites — checkers and chess and card games."

These activities will be revisited for the open house, including some chess and checkers tournaments.

"These will help the kids understand the value of thinking when they are playing chess and checkers, and sportsmanship while they are playing card games," Mrs. Frericks says. "One of the things that was so clear at Grandparents' Day was that our kids are learning how to be good stewards

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# ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK *continued from page 4*

by the opportunities we provide. The parents are encouraged to recognize the stewardship among the children."

Each grade, from pre-K through eighth, will be taking part in color competitions for their rooms, all reflecting their learning about the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the week, all the activities are geared toward displaying what a Catholic education means and can do for a child.

"We are encouraging the parents to come and experience what their kids are experiencing," Mrs. Frericks says. "We will showcase the wonderful, amazing Catholic

community, and what a dedicated Catholic school can provide."

"Catholic Schools Week also helps to remind us that our faith reaches all aspects of life and can be used in many different ways," says Leah Water, kindergarten teacher.

"I hope the students will learn that they have faith learning at school, home and in church, and it's all connected," says Tara Smith, sixth-grade teacher. "It is all intertwined. My greatest hope is that parents and the community learn to cherish the great opportunity for students in our Catholic schools."

During Catholic Schools Week, parents and visitors will have the

chance to observe the opportunities, care, and devotion that the faculty and staff bring to the children every day at St. Dominic School.

"The idea of Holy Moments is really special for me and the kids," Mrs. Frericks says. "Our saints were not perfect and they had Holy Moments and realized that they did. When we identify our Holy Moments, and do what God wants us to do, we'll grow and be the children of God He wants us to be. Holy Moments will propel us to build what can be established in that point. I can predict there will be many Holy Moments during Catholic Schools Week!"



*Occupations was the theme for this dress-up day during Catholic Schools Week.*

*Anyone interested in enrolling a child at St. Dominic may call 217-224-0041.*

# ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

YOU'RE INVITED!

IT'S OUR ST. DOMINIC



PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR ST. DOMINIC TRIVIA NIGHT!

Jan. 11, 2020 at the St. Dominic Gym.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

General trivia starts at 6 p.m.

There will be an all-you-can-eat Nacho Bar. Beverages are BYOB.

*This event is sponsored by the St. Dominic PTO.*



# The Patron of Catholic Schools in America

## ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON

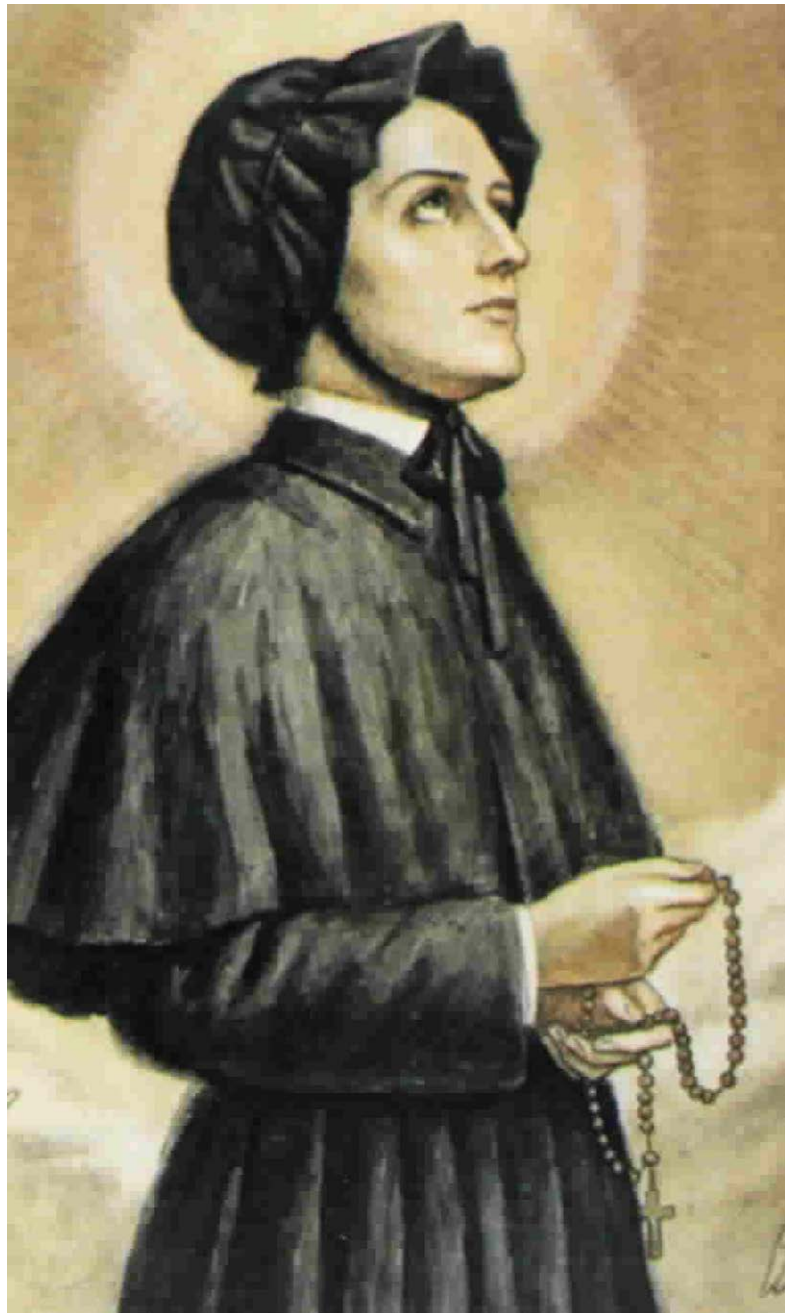
As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774, just months after the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth's childhood witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country — the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering. Elizabeth's biological mother died when she was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. A spark of faith, however, was visible even in her early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded, "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy — it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the faith. In a letter to her sister, Elizabeth wrote, "My sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches..."

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Return Service Requested

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DAILY MASS: MON, TUE, & THU - 7:30 A.M.

SATURDAY: 4:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.

SUNDAY: 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY 5:15 - 6:15 P.M.

## ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON *continued from page 7*

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, and she began to investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly, "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored intensely, explaining how "from half past five in the morning until nine at night, every moment is full — no space

even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system — along with hospitals and orphanages.

Before her death in January 1821, she was the active mother of five — although two of her daughters died young — and the spiritual mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress and all-American saint.

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To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact the Stewardship Committee at [stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com](mailto:stanthonystewardship2015@gmail.com).