



ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA

CULTIVATE YOUR PERSONAL GARDEN FOR CHRIST THIS SPRING [PAGE 2](#)

EASTER: THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP [PAGE 3](#)

BRINGING SOULS TO KNOW GOD'S TRUTH AND MERCY THROUGH RCIA [PAGE 4](#)

A WORD FROM OUR YOUTH [PAGE 6](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMATION OFFER PROFOUND BLESSINGS TO OUR FAITH COMMUNITY
"LET THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKE THE LEAD" [PAGE 7](#)

Where Stewardship Begins: *The Life Advocacy Group*

When parishioner Michelle Thompson was asked to join her daughter, Mandy — then a junior at Quincy Notre Dame — as a chaperone for the 2019 March for Life in Washington, D.C., she felt hesitant, unsure of what she would experience. Yet, what she experienced there changed Michelle's life forever, transforming her understanding of the pro-life movement and filling her heart with a burning desire to do more for this important cause.

"What I witnessed in those days has forever changed my life," Michelle says. "I saw that hundreds of thousands — not the mere thousands claimed by the media — believed in what I did. The march was peaceful and full of prayer, not protest. People of all ages, religion and culture were represented. Mostly, I noticed the enthusiasm of the

continued on page 5



Michelle Thompson and her fellow March for Life pilgrims during the trip, which transformed Michelle's understanding of the pro-life movement



Our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. It is only then that will we see them for what they are — wonderful gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Cultivate Your Personal Garden for Christ this Spring

Everyone loves springtime. The weather is warmer and beautiful flowers are blooming all around us.

But anyone with a beautiful garden will attest that the flowers do not magically appear as if the season change itself miraculously makes the flowers bloom. Beautiful flowers and lush gardens are the result of the gardener's hard work.

Imagine that a man is given some flower seeds. The man then buries the seeds in the ground and leaves them on their own. As the months pass and rain falls, some seeds may receive enough nourishment to bloom. But simply burying seeds in the ground will hardly make for a gorgeous garden. Rather, if the man truly wants to enjoy many beautiful flowers, there is much care and work ahead. Recognizing the hidden beauty within these simple seeds, he must cultivate the ground, plant the seeds in a solid foundation, then water and fertilize them throughout the year — only then will he see the proper fruit these seeds were made to bear.

This simple illustration speaks to the heart of us this season — not only as we look around at the flowers, but more importantly as we reflect on the springtime of the Church. We are celebrating the great feast of Easter when, through His death and Resurrection, Christ offers us the greatest gift of all — eternal life with Him forever. This celebration leads us to reflect on the many gifts God has

given us in this life and the fruit they will bear, especially as we look to life eternal.

He has given each of us a multitude of gifts so that we can better serve Him and bring others to Him. Do we notice the hidden potential of our gifts? Do we see them, like the seed — as seemingly small, yet so full of fruit? Everything we have — our time, talents and treasure — is a gift from the Lord. Do we accept gifts in gratitude, then put them to use by cultivating and nourishing them so they will bear the proper fruit?

Just like springtime flowers that we enjoy, our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. It is only then that will we see them for what they are — wonderful gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Like the seeds, if we use our gifts flippantly, we may see some fruits here and there. But we are called to so much more — we are called to build a beautiful garden. We are called to offer God the most beautiful flowers of all.

This season, as we look at all the beautiful flowers around us and enjoy God's creation, let us think about the seeds in our own lives. Ask yourself if you have accepted the gifts God has given you — your time, talents and treasure — and have cultivated and cared for them properly. Or, do they just sit dormant within you yearning to bloom?

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Easter:

The Foundation of Christian Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

How do you feel at the end of the Palm Sunday Mass each year? Have you ever noticed the abrupt shift of tone during the course of that liturgy? It begins with great joy as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the acclamation of the crowds. But, then, the mood swings to sorrow when the Passion Gospel is read, for we hear those same crowds shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later.

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. The confusion of conflicting moods is spread through the week, especially during the Easter Triduum from sundown Holy Thursday to sundown Easter Sunday.

Holy Thursday offers us the glorious Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrating the institution of the Eucharist before we pass to the sadness of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The next day brings us the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion with our recognition of what our sins did to the Incarnate Son of God. Then, after a day of waiting as we mourn Jesus' burial and repose in the tomb, we celebrate His victory over sin, Satan and death at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or at the Masses the next day. If we have participated in all the

main services of the Triduum, we arrive at Sunday evening exhausted, but joyful.

This year Palm Sunday falls on the first Sunday in April, so we observe Holy Week and Easter Sunday early in the month. That means we will spend most of April in the Easter Season, a period filled with joy and thanksgiving. Our gladness comes not only because Christ rose from the dead, but also because we benefit from it. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, "The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his

Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life" (CCC, 654).

In other words, Christ's Resurrection is the source of our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans in the following words: "For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection" (Rom 6:5).

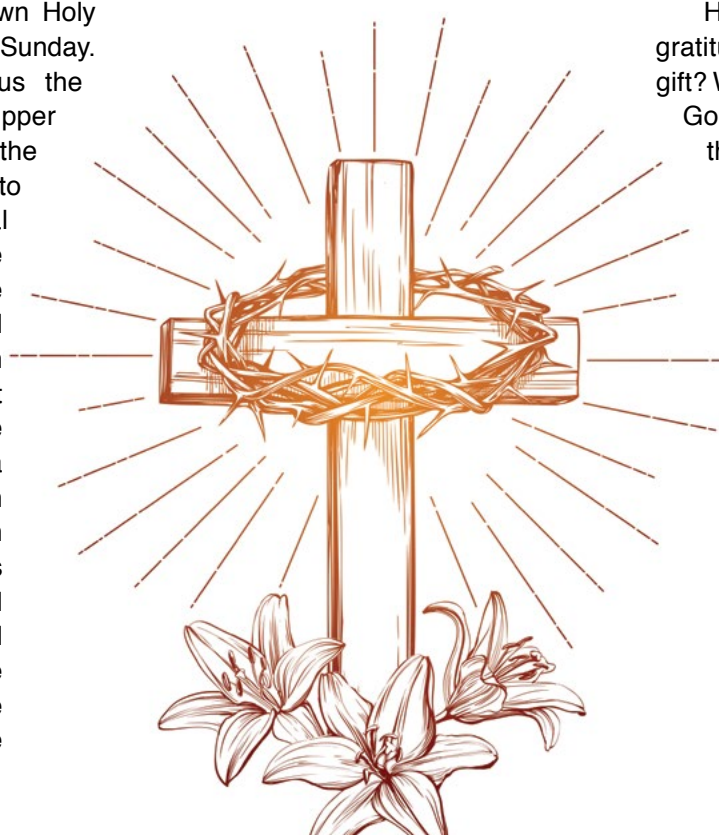
Eternal life in union with Christ — a hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven — is the result of Jesus' Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope?

How do we show our joy and gratitude to God for this amazing gift? We join in worship and we praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus' victory over death with our family, friends and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us. Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ's Resurrection is the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Donovan
Pastor



Bringing Souls to Know God's Truth and Mercy Through RCIA

"RCIA is not only important for the obvious reason that it prepares people to become members of the Catholic Church, but it also helps everyone who is involved in the ministry to grow in faith. It binds together the members of the Body of Christ and encourages us to grow and become more involved!"
— Bonnie Nytes, Director of Religious Education

Through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults process, or RCIA, God's grace works wonders — searching souls come "home" to the loving embrace of Mother Church, inquisitive minds are enlightened with eternal truths, and hearts are inspired by the traditions of our sacred faith.

"It is great to see people grow into the realization that RCIA is not just about 'joining a church' and fulfilling a commitment to attend meetings," says Bonnie Nytes, Director of Religious Education. "It is a wonderful personal journey which helps you understand how amazing our God is and how we can truly encounter Him through the Catholic Church!"

During RCIA sessions, catechumens (non-baptized persons seeking full communion with the Catholic Church) and candidates (baptized persons seeking full communion) listen to enriching presentations offered by Fr. Tom Donovan, Deacon Harry Cramer and Bonnie. RCIA Team members help during the sessions and volunteer as sponsors, as well.

Together, they dive into a host of topics — Church history; the symbols and order of the Sacrifice of the Mass; the Seven Sacraments; the saints; how to pray the Rosary and its history; the Church Year; Holy Days of Obligation

and feasts; and the hierarchy of the Church/the pope.

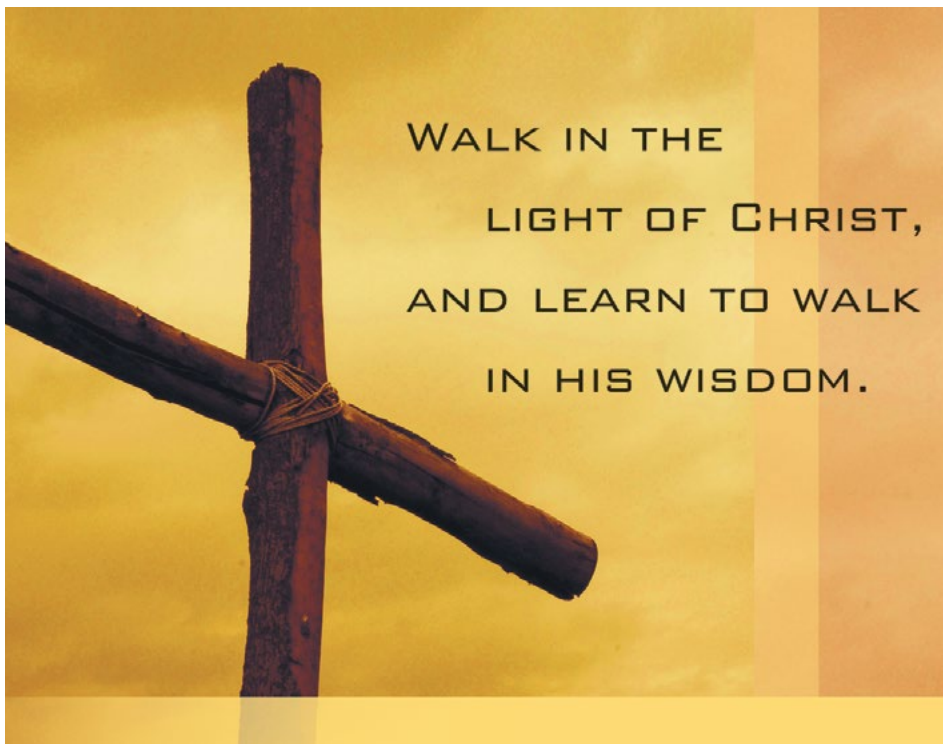
"We enjoy studying Scripture and learning how to best use it in our prayer life," Bonnie says. "We also discuss some of the more controversial topics surrounding our Catholic faith."

Generally, the RCIA process follows the following stages — Inquiry; the Period of the Catechumenate (which begins with the Rite of Acceptance); Period of Purification and/or Illumination (which begins with the Rite of Election); the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation (which takes place on Holy Saturday); and the Mystagogy, an informal stage that encourages the newly initiated Catholics to continue to study, actively participate in the life of the Church, receive the sacraments and grow closer to God.

"I believe that the most important goal of RCIA is to strengthen and renew one's relationship with God, and my greatest hope is that each member will do so," Bonnie says. "My favorite part of working with the RCIA ministry is to see the people who have come through the program in past years at Mass each week! I've been doing RCIA at St. Anthony's for over 10 years, and when I see past candidates/catechumens at Mass my heart soars and I think, 'There's one of my RCIA babies!'"

With the attentive care of their sponsors, each RCIA member can come to a more profound realization

continued on page 5



ST. ANTHONY *of* PADUA



Bringing Souls to Know **God's Truth and Mercy** Through RCIA *continued from page 4*

of God's love for them. And as they come to know His mercy and truth, the sponsor usually does as well.

"A sponsor is someone who journeys with the candidate/ catechumen through the process," Bonnie says. "The sponsor may be a godparent, but usually is not. Often, in a married couple, one of the spouses will become a sponsor for the other. The idea is that this person helps them to learn about the Catholic faith — but one of the really neat things that usually happens is the sponsor, who is often a 'cradle Catholic,' learns so much too! I have served as a sponsor, and it was an amazing experience!"

This Easter, our parish community will welcome one candidate into the Church. Let us keep them in our prayers

as we grow closer to Our Lord together, as one family in His love.

"RCIA is not only important for the obvious reason that it prepares people to become members of the Catholic Church, but it also helps everyone who is involved in the ministry to grow in faith," Bonnie says. "It binds together the members of the Body of Christ and encourages us to grow and become more involved!"

If you would like to help with RCIA or join the process yourself, please contact the Church Office at 217-222-5996.

Where Stewardship Begins: The Life Advocacy Group

continued from front cover

young adults who have deemed themselves the 'Pro-Life Generation.' If ever there was a hope that we can reverse *Roe v Wade*, they are it. On the bus ride back, I vowed to myself to not forget the gifts I was given on the trip and to become more active in this ministry."

This was the inspiration for St. Anthony of Padua's newly formed Life Advocacy Group. Dedicated to promoting the sanctity of life from the moment of conception to natural death, this ministry works to coordinate parish participation in pro-life activities such as the annual 40 Days for Life, trips to Springfield for legislative days, and the Walk for Life gatherings in Chicago and Washington, D.C., as well as to increase an overall awareness of pro-life matters.

"We also have several organizations here in Quincy that we could partner with and support more regularly, such as Birthright, Care Net Pregnancy Center and Right to Life of Adams County," Michelle says.

Though still in the early days of its existence, the Life Advocacy Group has hosted a private showing of the

movie *Unplanned* for the faith community. It's the story of Abby Johnson, an anti-abortion activist who previously worked at Planned Parenthood as a clinic director but resigned after watching an abortion on ultrasound.

"The movie was shocking and got people talking about abortion again," Michelle says.

While the group does not currently meet regularly due to its small numbers, Michelle would love to grow the ministry's membership and overall activism so as to be part of what she describes as a "pivotal point" in the pro-life movement. For her, this is where stewardship truly begins.

"There is more momentum in the pro-life movement now than ever before," Michelle says. "I feel it is so important to be involved, especially as a woman. At some point in recent years, to be a pro-life woman meant that you were a traitor to the feminist movement. Yet, Alice Paul, who originally proposed the Equal Rights Amendment, stated, 'Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women.' We need to help empower women to choose life. I know personally that I will never be complacent again."

If you are interested in learning more, or would like to join the Life Advocacy Group, please contact Michelle Thompson at life@stanthonypadua.org or 217-257-9094.

St. Anthony's Ladies Society

Easter Egg Hunt

April 18

following 4 p.m. Mass



Lenten Project Garage Sale



St. Dominic School Gym
4100 Columbus Road
Quincy, IL 62305

Starry Starry Night

Friday May 1, 2020

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Come join us under the stars at
St. Dominic School.**

**We will learn about stars,
use a telescope and
go in the star lab.**

**We will have snacks & crafts too!
Come star gazing with us!**



**Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Do you know how SMART you are!**

Questions please contact a PTO member

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA



Opportunities for Formation Offer Profound Blessings to Our Faith Community

“Let the Holy Spirit Take the Lead”

For many of us, continual growth and improvement is an important part of our lives — in our careers, our health and our relationships. But all too often, when it comes to the faith, we stop growing and learning after Confirmation — or, if we attended Catholic schools, graduation.

However, as Catholics, we believe that deepening our relationship with Christ and His Church is a lifelong journey, something that begins with our Baptism and shouldn't end until we pass from this life into the next. Here at St. Anthony of Padua, we hope to give our adult parishioners opportunities to go deeper in their understanding of what the Church teaches, as well as their relationship with God.

Deacon Harry Cramer reminds parishioners that this formation should first and foremost begin with the Mass, celebrating the Sunday liturgy each week along with our parish family.

“The first place to start is the Mass,” Deacon Harry says. “Formation begins at Mass, with the readings and the Eucharist, and to receive the blessings that are there is important.”

From there, a plethora of opportunity is available to continue one's growth in faith. In our broader Quincy Catholic community, people are encouraged to experience their faith in a variety of ways, from Cursillo weekends and small groups, to other studies and parish missions.

“Quincy is really blessed in that regard,” Deacon Harry says. “We have, within the community, fairly rich opportunities for faith formation and missions across all the parishes, and we all support each other in that regard.”

At St. Anthony of Padua, we have also offered a number of different classes for adults to grow in faith — from the *Bible Timeline* and the *Catholicism* series to, most recently, a series studying the Wisdom Literature in Scripture, and another focusing on end-of-life issues. Our Grief Share Ministry provides a chance for those suffering the loss of a loved one, and this summer, we will also begin hosting a group to provide support for those who have gone or are going through a divorce.

In addition to the opportunities that currently exist within the parish and the diocese, Fr. Tom Donovan and Deacon Harry hope to assist parishioners in beginning faith-based small groups. Perhaps it's a Bible or book study, or perhaps a prayer group with a particular focus, or it could be a group that gathers for a regular meal and fellowship. Both Fr. Tom and Deacon Harry hope that people will take the initiative to pursue an area of interest and invite others to join them.



continued on back cover

ST. ANTHONY of PADUA

2223 St. Anthony Rd.
Quincy, IL 62305
217-222-5996

Return Service Requested

WWW.STANTHONYPADUA.ORG

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.

Mother/Daughter Banquet

Sunday May 3, 2020 12-2 p.m.

Catered Meal
Free Will Donation

Opportunities for Formation Offer Profound Blessings to Our Faith Community

“Let the Holy Spirit Take the Lead” continued from page 7

In order to aid those who would like to begin a small group, our new parish library will have extensive resources available. Fr. Tom and Deacon Harry also look forward to assisting in any way they are able.

“A lot of people are intimidated by the thought of leading a group or Bible study, but we can help people with that,” Deacon Harry says. “We’ll provide guidance. Talk to Father or talk to me and let’s get it going. Let us know what you need and we’ll try to make it available to you.”

Deacon Harry encourages parishioners to consider whether God may be calling them to take a leap of faith and begin hosting a faith-based small group.

“If it comes to mind, that’s probably the Holy Spirit calling,” Deacon Harry says. “Just do it. [Our staff], we can’t do it all — we need people who are willing to take the ball and run with it.”

“The Holy Spirit will take the lead, if you open yourself up,” he adds. “You just have to follow, let the Spirit take the lead.”

For more information on upcoming adult faith formation opportunities, please contact Deacon Harry Cramer at deacon@stanthonypadua.org. If you are interested in learning more about facilitating a small-group Bible study, prayer group or other faith-based gathering, please contact Fr. Tom Donovan at 217-222-5996 or tdonovan@dio.org, or Deacon Harry Cramer at deacon@stanthonypadua.org.

To learn more about stewardship at St. Anthony of Padua, please contact the Stewardship Committee at stewardship@stanthonypadua.org