



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



Allowing the Church Environment and Liturgy to Teach Us About Our Faith

Helping us enter more deeply into the liturgy, the Church provides us with liturgical seasons. These seasons, kept cyclically, unite us to the birth, ministry, passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. As humans, however, we can relate to the fact that our busy lifestyles make us easily distracted, often causing us to lose sight of the liturgical year. This is what makes the church environment so important. Each carefully placed plant, flower arrangement and decoration is meant to symbolically represent each season and focus our minds and hearts on that particular phase of Christ's life.

For Linda Mooney, who has been involved with coordinating the Liturgical Environment Ministry for 23 years, this ministry has been a way for her to learn about the faith following her conversion to Catholicism.

"I felt the Lord tapping me on my shoulder, inviting me to get involved with decorating," Linda says. "The priest told me which books I needed to get with information, and that's how I started. People ask me if I am a trained interior designer, but I'm not. I started out by doing



Linda Mooney, longtime volunteer and coordinator for the Liturgical Environment Ministry, has learned about the liturgical seasons and deepened her faith through being involved with this ministry.

a lot on my own, but now we have a great team of volunteers."

The Liturgical Environment Ministry at St. Timothy's exists to draw us into deeper worship and invite parishioners and guests to grow in faith through their visual experience of Mass. Along with preparing the church with decorations for the major liturgical celebrations of Christmas and Easter, this ministry also changes linens and banners for special feast days and the seasons of Lent and Advent. The ministry is also

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December 2016

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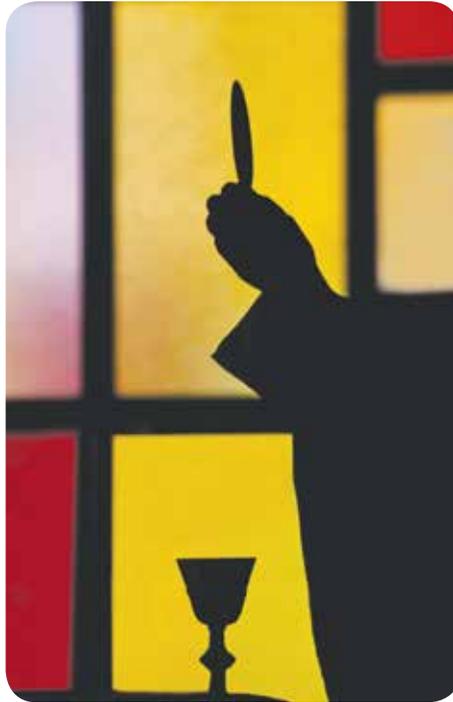
The Eucharist and Stewardship as a Way of Life

More than 20 years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. This document was an invitation to follow Christ Who gave of Himself for us. Each of us is called to serve our neighbors and to be stewards of God's creation and of all that has been entrusted to us. However, to truly understand stewardship, we must look to the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the total gift of our loving Savior to us. Stewardship is our response to that gift.

Even the word "Eucharist" implies stewardship. The word "Eucharist" finds its roots in the Latin word *eucharistia*, which in turn came from the Greek word *eukaristos*, which meant, quite simply, "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." How fitting that we, who are called to be a stewardship people, celebrate at the focal point of every Mass an act of thanksgiving and gratitude — namely, the reception of Jesus' gift to us — the Eucharist.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the bishops speak of the Eucharist in this way: "The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity... we enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in Him, with one another. Here His love — indeed, His very Self — flows into us as disciples and, through us and our practice of stewardship to the entire human race."

When we receive Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, we hear the minister say, "The Body of Christ." To this, we respond, "Amen" — which means in Hebrew, "Yes; it is so." This is the essence of stewardship. We should enter



the Church for Mass out of "gratitude." We recognize the presence of the Lord in Holy Communion, and then we truly receive the Lord. What is left for us to do is the fulfillment of stewardship — that is, sharing what we have received in love of God and neighbor. Our entire experience speaks to stewardship — we are grateful; we recognize the real presence of the Lord; we receive the Lord; and then we share what we have received.

Christ's gift to us through the Eucharist is an invitation to us. We are called to give beyond what is convenient or what may be comfortable. We are called to forgive even when forgiveness may not be deserved; we are called to love even when that love is not returned. We are called to love

as God loves us.

The Eucharist is stewardship celebrated. The Mass is more than a ritual. It is an actual encounter with God, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to the Eucharist with our complete selves. What we experience in the Eucharist should, in turn, translate into our daily lives. We are committed to the Church, which is Christ's body. We show our love for His body by acts of charity and generosity. We spend time in prayer, expressing our gratitude and our love.

God's greatest gift to us is Christ's great love for us — this was shown when He was crucified on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sins and to give us eternal life. God's love for us is without limit, and He offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Stewardship is how we respond to that gift.

"The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.' 'The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and the works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church.'" — *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324*

Advent: Moving Toward a Time of Fulfilled Hope

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is never a time during the year when we cannot pause and reflect on who and what we are and how we conduct our lives, both as a parish and as people of God. But this time of year in particular lends itself to just that.

Advent is often called “a season of hope.” However, it is more than that. We have choices and decisions to make at this time. This is the time when we must acknowledge the need for us to change attitudes and to welcome the light of Christ’s presence. In this way, we can contribute to bringing hope to a world that is starved for hope.

Of course, we approach this time of year with a spirit of confident expectation, but now is the time for us to be awake to Christ, Whose presence is revealed as forgiveness, Whose peace reconciles our differences, and Whose hope should strengthen and lift up our hearts.

We have pointed out that each and every day is an opportunity for a new beginning. Our new Church liturgical year began on the First Sunday of Advent. We understand that Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of our Lord – Christmas – but I would remind you that it is much more than that for us Catholics and Christians.

It is a time for us to prepare for Christ’s Second Coming, as well. Much of what we do, our Scripture readings, our prayers, our traditions are built on that reality. One of the traditions in our Church and in many of our homes is an Advent wreath. That custom is filled with meaning. The wreath tends to be circular in shape with four candles – three purple and one rose. The color purple is very evident at this time of year, just as it is during Lent. Purple represents prayer, penance, sacrifice, and good works.



On the Third Sunday of Advent, though, we light the rose candle. That is Gaudete Sunday, a day of rejoicing. Throughout Advent, the candles are lit in progression each week. This builds on the idea of expectation and hope that we may see as Christ’s first coming into the world, but we must also keep in mind that, at the same time, we are anticipating His Second Coming. We cannot ask ourselves often enough, “Are we ready?” Jesus and St. Paul and others remind us often that we do not and cannot know the time and the place.

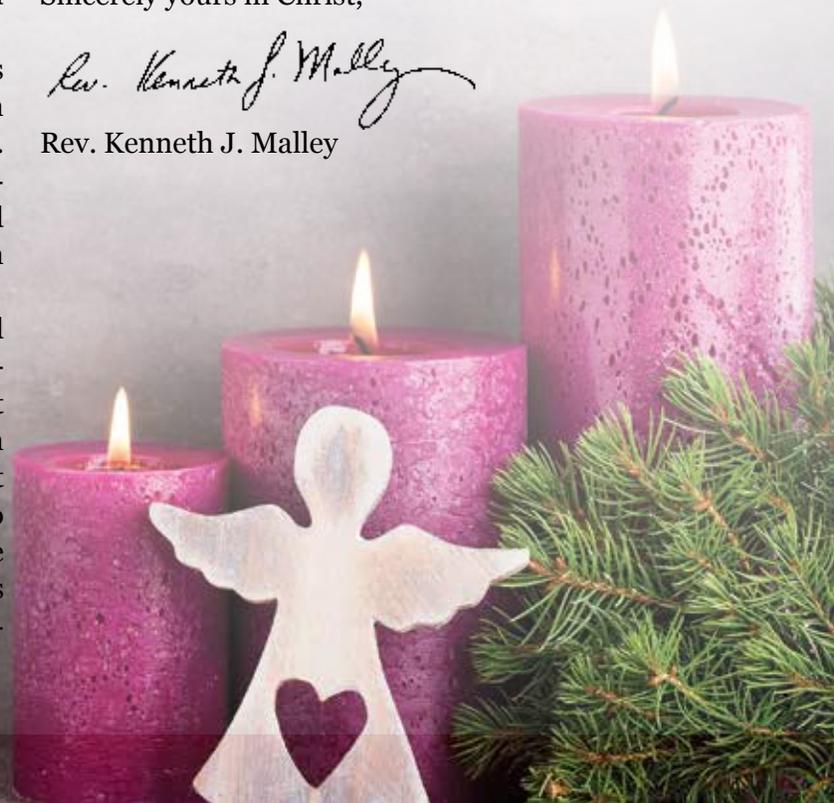
ten that we do not and cannot know the time and the place.

The point is that the time is now for us. Yes, this is a time of hope, but we are heading toward a time of fulfilled hope. God bless you and yours at this special time of year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Kenneth J. Malley".

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley





It Is Never The Adult Confir

As Michelle Sissel puts it, she always felt a strong connection with God, but not always a strong connection with the Church.

"I always felt like I was missing out on something," she says.

Michelle was raised Catholic and grew up in the Church, but did not receive the Sacrament of Confirmation as a child. Recently when her son, who is attending middle school, began going through sacramental preparation in Catholic school, she felt inspired to go through the process as well.

"When he was going through it, I thought, 'Why am I not doing it?'" Michelle says. "What example am I setting by saying, 'You have to go through all these sacraments,' when I haven't completed all of mine?"

And so, this past May, Michelle was confirmed, along with other adults in varying but similar situations.

The Adult Confirmation Program is designed for adult parishioners of St. Timothy's who have already been baptized and received their First Communion, but never received the Sacrament of Confirmation. While similar topics may be covered, the Adult Confirmation program is different from the RCIA program, in that those going through RCIA have not been baptized and have no formation in the faith, while those in the Adult Confirmation Program are completing



(From left) Michelle Sissel, who was confirmed this past year, with Fr. Malley and her sponsor, Michelle Clifford.

"Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. I'm sure some people think, 'Because I haven't done it in this order, I'm not a good Catholic.' But I didn't feel like anybody judged me – I felt that they were glad I was there and encouraged me. What I gained it was so worth it, instead of always having that feeling of being incomplete." – Michelle Sissel

their initiation and coming into full communion with the Church.

The Adult Confirmation Program meets weekly for six sessions. The preparation also includes a half-day retreat and an interview with a priest or deacon in preparation for Confirmation, which usually takes place in May. Topics range from Scripture and prayer, to living as a Catholic, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"Sessions are designed to present to the confirmandi Catholic teachings and doctrine regarding the previous Sacraments of Initiation that they have received, such as Baptism and the Eucharist, and prepare them for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation," says Rick Hogan, who serves on the Adult Confirmation team, "I hope they come away with a better understanding of their faith and the role of the Holy Spirit in their life."

Too Late Confirmation Program

For Michelle, the experience has profoundly deepened her faith.

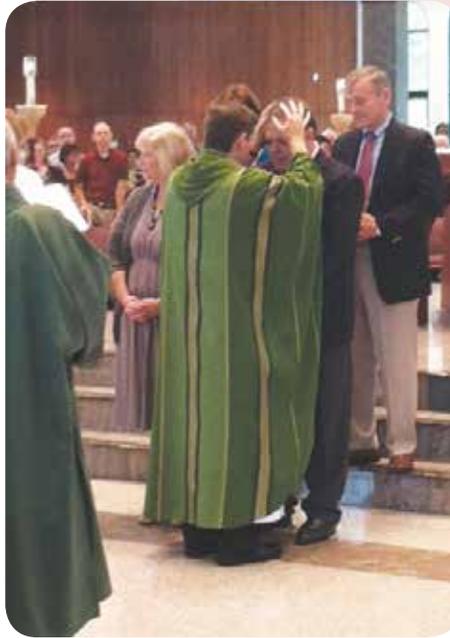
“Once I [was confirmed], I felt whole with the Church,” she says. “As an adult, I got so much out of it. It was a really great experience. I’ve tried to carry the different things we’ve gone over in the classes into my everyday life. I feel like I have more faith in general.”

Nicole Cotner, who was also confirmed this past year, shares that she grew in her relationship with God, as well as her ability to understand and explain her faith.

“Even through I was going to Mass [before], I listen more now, and am less distracted,” Nicole says. “I’m listening more with my heart and not just my ears. I really enjoyed learning the history and traditions and why we do the things we do. Before, I couldn’t really answer questions as to why we do things. I feel like I learned so much. Now, when people start to talk badly, I know how to respond better.”

Camilo Trujillo, who grew up Catholic, in Colombia, was also recently confirmed. Although he initially began the process at his now-wife’s insistence, he grew to love the faith as he learned more and grew in his relationship with God, throughout the process.

“[Confirmation] changed my life, actually,” he says. “I believed in God, but I was okay doing it my way,” he



Each year, adults who were not previously confirmed go through the Adult Confirmation Program, in order to become fully initiated into the Church.

says. “At first, it was ‘her [his wife’s] way,’ I was okay with it, I didn’t mind, but now I have motivation of my own. I feel like I’m committed to [God].”

Michelle encourages other adult parishioners who have not been confirmed to pray and consider it.

“Don’t be afraid to step out of your comfort zone,” she says. “I’m sure some people think, ‘Because I haven’t done it in this order, I’m not a good Catholic,’ but I didn’t feel like anybody judged me – I felt that they were glad I was there and encouraged me. I feel that the process was well worth it. I no longer have that feeling of being incomplete.”

Rick also encourages those who would be willing to serve on the team, or as sponsors, to step forward and walk alongside a brother or sister in Christ as they continue their journey. In particular, he notes that serving as a sponsor often helps people deepen their own faith.

“It’s a two-fold thing – you’re helping someone come into full communion with the Church, and most of the sponsors will find that it’s a wonderful process for them also,” he says. “When they’ve completed it, they realize ‘I didn’t know that, that was really great information!’ It really opens their eyes and they see the Holy Spirit working deeply.”

For more information on the Adult Confirmation Program, or if you would like to volunteer on the team or as a sponsor, please call the parish office at 813-968-1077 to speak with Deacon Peter.

*The Adult Confirmation Program will begin on Thursday, Jan. 26.
Classes will be held on Thursdays from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.*



“We’re Not in This



Congratulations to parishioner Pat Paradiso for receiving this year’s St. Jude the Apostle Award in recognition of his many years of outstanding and selfless service to our parish! On the feast day of Christ the King, Bishop Lynch presented Pat and other diocesan recipients with this special award, in thanks for the many ways in which they give of their time and talent to the Church.

Like many past recipients, Pat will be quick to tell you how honored he feels to be selected for this award, and give credit to the work of so many other parishioners.

“So many people do so much more than I do,” he says. “So many people are behind the lines, constantly serving and living their faith. It’s so humbling. I know some of the people who have received the award previously, and just to be in that circle with them is mind-blowing. I’ve always wanted to be like those people when I grow up!”

While Pat humbly points to the service of others, there is no denying that he has contributed invaluable to our parish since he first came to St. Timothy in 1989. Over the years, he has been active with the Knights of Columbus and the Men’s Club. Pat and his wife Barbara have both also served as Eucharistic Ministers and Religious Education teachers. They have also been involved with Marriage Encounter weekends and the Life Choice Ministry. In addition, Pat was an employee of the diocese as the maintenance man for St. Timothy, from 1993 to 2002. Reflecting on that list of activities, it is easy to wonder if there is anything Pat has *not* done for our parish!

Though Pat deeply appreciates and enjoys all of the ministries and parish groups in

Alone” Pat Paradiso

which he has participated, several stand out to him as experiences that have truly shaped and strengthened his faith. One of these is the service work done by the Men’s Club.

“We have done a lot of outreach to minority groups through the Men’s Club, and that’s always fulfilling,” he says. “I find it very fulfilling to be able to give something that you’ve had the pleasure of having your whole life, to someone else. I find my needs being met through meeting other people’s needs. It is much more rewarding to give than to receive, any day.”

Pat also looks at the years that he and Barbara spent doing Marriage Encounter weekends as a time of incredible spiritual growth. The two found their faith lives and marital vows so strengthened by their participation in these weekends, that they continued to serve long past their initial two-year commitment, staying active in the ministry for six years!

“It was life-changing when we first went on our Marriage Encounter weekend ourselves, and then it was life-changing because we were asked to consider going into the ministry,” Pat says. “We were very blessed in the ministry, and it kept us together and kept us moving along. It taught us tools of communication and it opened us up to bringing God into our marriage, and that really helped build up and strengthen our family and gave us the opportunity to reach out to help other couples.

“When we went into this, we only had to be able to touch one life, one couple at a time,” he continues.

“It isn’t like going to Yankee Stadium and healing everybody there – but God has still chosen you as a tool for something so you can reach out to others and make their lives better.”

Reflecting on Pat’s years of service to the parish, it is hard to imagine a more worthy recipient of this special diocesan award! The St. Jude medal presented to him last month was designed for our diocese by the famous Italian sculptor, Enrico Manfrini, and cast by the Senesi foundry of Milan. And so it happens that, for Pat Paradiso, the year 2016 opens and closes with another connection to Italy, since the Paradisos happened to travel to Italy early in the year. Their trip, which included being part of a papal audience in St. Peter’s Square, was a true blessing – postponed once the year before when Barbara was being treated for cancer, they were able to complete their pilgrimage to Italy before Pat received a cancer diagnosis later in the year.

In the face of these recent trials, Pat has found a tremendous source of support in our parish family.

“Knowing that there is a faith community that we’re all involved in and that we’re not in this alone, strengthens my faith,” he says. “St. Timothy is a home base for us. In times of struggle and strain, or in good and prosperity, we have always felt that this was our home.”

The faith family of St. Timothy is pleased to congratulate Pat on his receipt of the St. Jude the Apostle Award, and we thank him for being such a model of service to us all!

“I find it very fulfilling to be able to give something that you’ve had the pleasure of having your whole life, to someone else. I find my needs being met through meeting other people’s needs. It is much more rewarding to give than to receive, any day.” – Pat Paradiso



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Allowing the Church Environment and Liturgy to Teach Us About Our Faith *continued from front cover*

responsible for designing and maintaining the plant and floral arrangements within the church.

“The volunteers for this ministry are many,” says volunteer Dan Holsen. “During fall, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time, we use appropriate imagery to reflect the season. It makes us all thank God for the gifts we have been given and puts us in the right mind for the particular time of year.”

While the email to volunteers goes to around 60 people, for major events roughly 25 people make decorating for the big events happen. Almost all of the banners have been hand-sewn over the years by Linda, who has generously and gladly shared her talents with the faith community in this way.

“We decorate because Mass involves all your senses – it’s your hearing, it’s your sight, it’s your heart,” Linda

says. “We water plants and change out banners and floral arrangements. Much of the work is seasonal – everything has a reason and a meaning with symbolism behind it.”

In addition to providing tasteful decorations that draw us into the different seasons, this ministry has been a way for those involved to get to know other parishioners and to learn about other ministries our parish has to offer, as well.

“This ministry will also lead you to other ministries in the parish because of the diverse group involved,” says Dan’s wife, Gail, who serves by his side. “There is a job for everyone, and all you need is a big heart and a willingness to help out! The outcome of joining this team is that you will learn about other groups and activities at our church, and you will be rewarded with many friendships along the way.”

If you would like to get involved with Liturgical Environment Ministry, or if you have any questions, please contact Linda Mooney at 813-920-4847 or mooneyl@aol.com.

• **Mass Schedule** •

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m. • Sunday: 7:30, 9, 11 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. • Daily: Mon-Sat 9 a.m., Wed 6:15 p.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.