



**SAINT TIMOTHY**  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Reaching Out, Comforting, Caring *Opportunities at St. Timothy Parish to Help Others During Advent and Christmas*

**A**dvent is, of course, a time of preparation for Christmas, and Christmas itself is a time for great celebration. What are we celebrating? Perhaps the greatest gift we will ever receive! Our loving God gave us the greatest gift possible – His own Son. God gave us a Savior, the Prince of Peace, the promise of eternal life – and all the wisdom, peace, and comfort the little child Jesus would grow to give us as a very way of life and a pathway to God.

Stewardship is our way of responding to that incredible gift we have received in Jesus, and in all those other blessings and gifts each of us has received. At this joyous time, we need to seek ways to give back and find opportunities to serve others. Our St. Timothy Parish Family offers many opportunities to give back during Advent and Christmas. Here are some of the most significant ones.

“God calls us to reach out to those in need throughout the year,” says Deacon J. Peter Burns, who serves as Parish Life Di-



rector for St. Timothy. “However, during the holiday season, from Thanksgiving through and including Christmas, we need to be especially conscious of the poor while also understanding our own need to reach out and share our gifts. Jesus made it quite clear to us that we need to love our neighbor by reaching out and comforting them and caring for them. His words as reported in Matthew 25, ‘Whatever you did for one of these least ones, you did for me,’ ring very plainly to us.”

For more than 40 years, Metropolitan Ministries has served poor and homeless in the Tampa area. For several years, St. Timothy has supported and participated in the

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# "The Joy Needed to Rediscover and Make Fruitful the Mercy of God" *The Jubilee Year of Mercy*

Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy, which will commence on Dec. 8, 2015 (the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) and culminate on Nov. 20, 2016 (Christ the King-Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe).

Jubilee Years are not unique, as this will be the 29th such Jubilee Year since the first one in 1300. Our most recent Jubilee Years have been in 2000, 1983, and 1975. In the Catholic Church, the concept of the Jubilee is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon. In the Book of Leviticus, a Jubilee year is mentioned to occur every 50th year, in which slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest.

However, this particular Jubilee is unique in many ways. As in the past, it involves the establishment of Holy Doors.

These are doors located at the four major Basilicas in Rome – St. Peter Basilica, the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the Basilica of St. John Lateran, and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Usually, Catholics are invited to make a pilgrimage to Rome and to enter through these

doors during the Holy Year. Christ identified Himself as "the door." In his announcement, the Holy Father pointed out that the Holy Doors "...evoke the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. Jesus is the one and absolute way to salvation. To pass through a Holy Door is to confess with firm conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Lord, the Savior who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation."

Pope Francis encourages every Catholic to make a pilgrimage to a Holy Door. He has recognized that pilgrimages will be taken to Rome and to other chosen churches with Holy Doors spread around the world – there are three others designated in the world, with the only one in North America in Quebec City's Basilica of Notre-Dame de Quebec in Canada. Thus, in an unprecedented move, Pope Francis has directed that every diocese and archdiocese in the world specify a church or shrine with a Holy Door to encourage and make it easier for vast numbers of people to make pilgrimages in keeping with the Holy Year and to pass through a Holy Door. To put that in perspective, there are almost 6,000 dioceses and archdioceses in the world, and nearly 200 in the United States alone.

Therefore, every Catholic has an opportunity to fulfill this pilgrimage and to pass through a Holy Door. The churches and shrines designated as having Holy Doors will be announced soon. Of course, there is much more involved in this Holy Year of Mercy. Each Catholic needs to strive to learn about the Jubilee Year and to fulfill its stipulations. As Pope Francis said in his Bull of Indiction, "Doors speak to us of welcome, hospitality, openness. I am convinced that the whole Church will find in this Jubilee the joy needed to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God."

*"I have decided to call an extraordinary Jubilee that is to have the mercy of God at its center. It shall be a Holy Year of Mercy." – His Holiness Pope Francis*



## December: A Time for Mercy and Tenderness

Dear Friends in Christ,

**A**dvent and Christmas are upon us. This is a busy time for me, for our parish, for priests, and certainly for most of you. We all know that our homes, schools, offices, and churches will soon be overflowing with many holiday events, and our pews will be overflowing with all of those present for Christmas Masses.

We all know why – there is something special about the Church and about our faith during these holidays. First of all, you and I need to remember that fact – and we need to be grateful for it. For those of us who are here every Sunday, this is a time not to resent those who fill our pews and our parking lots. Rather, it is a time to be the loving and welcoming people Christ calls us to be. Hospitality is an important part of being a good steward, and this is a perfect time to practice it.

For those of us who may only come every once in a while, or for these special occasions, you are welcome here! We hope you like what you see, and we want you to know that you always have a home and family here, any time you need it.

You may have heard of the term “the New Evangelization.” It is something Pope Francis has emphasized, in particular through his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, which he wrote and issued two years ago. The pope’s letter, with the title that means “The Joy of



the Gospel,” has advice for all Catholics relating to how we should all view and treat each other, as sons and daughters of God and members of the Church.

The pope said, “There is a need for Christians who help show God’s mercy and tenderness toward every creature. We all know that today’s humanity is facing a deep crisis. This is why the new evangelization must necessarily use the language of mercy, which is more about gestures and attitudes than words.” It is appropriate that the Year of Mercy proclaimed by the pope begins this Dec. 8.

As the Holy Father reminds us, this is a time for “mercy and tenderness.” This is a time for us to show love for everyone, to our brothers and sisters in the next pew or on the other side of the globe. This is a time to share the Good News of Emmanuel, God-with-us, with all we meet.

May you and your families have a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Rev. Kenneth J. Malley*

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# Gus and Michelle Lloyd

One of the most beautiful things about our Catholic faith is that it is constant, there for us in all stages of our lives. The prayers, the Mass, and the traditions are the same all over the world, and while there is comfort in the familiar, this constant presence also serves to beckon us back home when we have been away for a while. Such is the case with Gus and Michelle Lloyd, who strayed from their Catholic roots, became lost, but eventually found their way back to a faith that never left them and one which welcomed them home.

“I like to explain that we made our way back to the Catholic Church because of what I like to call *seeds of grace*,” explains Gus, who is the radio talk show host of *Seize the Day* on Sirius XM Radio. “As parents, we try to make sure that our children are educated in the faith and that they take part in the sacramental life of the Church. So even if one day they stray, the seeds are still there and when they’re ready to come back, they know where to go.”

Growing up in Ohio, those seeds of grace were definitely instilled in both Gus and Michelle’s childhood. They were both raised with a strong, Catholic foundation. Michelle’s mother had strong faith and was devoted to the Sacred Heart. Gus attended Catholic school and was an altar server – and Gus’ family even had a family choir which sang at their local parish. But something happened toward the end of high school when they both started to see the Church as something they didn’t need anymore.

For Michelle, drifting away from the faith didn’t happen overnight. Rather, it occurred gradually and over time. She remembers in high school skipping church and going to K-Mart instead. Later, when she was in the Air National Guard, she did attend Church, but admits that it was mainly for the respite it offered from the vigorous training. Eventually, though, she reached a point in her life in which she stopped going altogether.



*Parishioners Gus and Michelle Lloyd have been married 35 years.*

Gus’ falling away from the Church was, by his own admission, due in large part to the distractions of the 1970s.

“I drifted away because of three things – sex, drugs, and rock and roll,” Gus says. “I was a young guy in the ’70s and I didn’t have a need for either the Church or for God.”

Interestingly, after Gus and Michelle started dating and eventually decided to marry, those seeds of grace were still present – to the point that they both knew it was important to marry in a Catholic Church. Even then, though, Michelle remembers being impatient for the ceremony to end so they could get to the reception. Although in their minds Gus and Michelle felt they had done the right thing by marrying in the Church, their faith did not go beyond that day and as a young, married couple, they all but abandoned it. But then they became parents for the first time, and those seeds of grace were rediscovered when they were at a party and, in the confusion of everyone having a good time, their daughter, Emily, was discovered face down at the bottom of the swimming pool.

“Even with no faith, and even though we did not go to church, God was called upon in that moment,” Michelle says. “The week after the near-drowning, I

# oyd Seeds of Grace

*“The Eucharist called us back. That first Mass we attended was like a child’s pop-up book – all our senses opened and we were finally able to hear God’s Word. We were experiencing a whole new world and our hearts were changed.”*  
– Michelle Lloyd

told Gus that we needed to thank God that our daughter was safe. I remember we lit a candle in Church and even attended Mass that following Sunday.”

But habits are hard to break, and Gus and Michelle slowly went back to their old ways.

Time went by, and then one day Michelle was invited to a jewelry party where she overheard a woman talking about the near-drowning of her own child. Because Michelle had never met another parent who had gone through a similar experience, she introduced herself and the two began talking. The woman was Protestant, and in the course of giving her testimony, something moved Michelle – and right there in the back bedroom at the jewelry party, Michelle gave her life to God. She began attending a non-denominational church, and a few months later Gus started going with her.

By all accounts, they were happy – they were attending church, they had a prayer life, they loved the fellowship – and yet, every time the grape juice and wafers were passed around during communion, those seeds of grace reminded them of what they were missing. So, as a couple, they decided to attend a Catholic Mass – and from that moment, everything changed.

“The Eucharist called us back,” Michelle says. “That first Mass we attended was like a child’s pop-

up book – all our senses opened and we were finally able to hear God’s Word. We were experiencing a whole new world and our hearts were changed.”

In the wonderful way God works, Gus and Michelle’s return to their Catholic roots inspired them in ways they could have never imagined. When Gus felt called to become a Catholic evangelist, he attended the Catholic School of Lay Evangelization during which two themes stood out for him – the importance of using our passions and our gifts in service to God’s Kingdom, and the sense of being a child of God. And radio became the means for Gus to live out both themes. After hosting different morning talk shows, the Archdiocese of New York called asking Gus to host the morning show on the new Catholic Channel on Sirius Satellite Radio, and his morning show, *Seize the Day*, first aired Dec. 4, 2006.

“After coming back to the Church, I became immersed in apologetics and Scripture,” Gus says. “I felt a real calling to clear up misconceptions that Catholics and non-Catholics have about the Catholic faith.”

Today, Gus and Michelle have been married 35 years and have four grown children – Emily, 32, married to Josh; Carly, 27; Patrick, 21; John, 20 – and two grandchildren, Beckett and Wyatt. They have been active members of our parish for the past 10 years, and after having experienced life without Christ, now put Him in the center of everything. Gus continues to host *Seize the Day*, and is the author of *Magnetic Christianity: Using Your God-Given Gifts to Build the Kingdom*, *A Minute in the Church Volume I* and *A Minute in the Church Volume II*.

Finally, at the top of every hour during his *Seize the Day* radio broadcast, Gus plays a recording of his son, Patrick, at age 4 saying, “Good morning, child of God.” The sweet voice is a reminder how we are all children in God’s kingdom, and how planting seeds of grace can provide exactly what we need in order to hear God’s voice calling us back to Him.



# Be Stewards, Not Consumers During the Advent and Christmas Seasons

The secularization of the Advent and Christmas seasons celebrates the “holidays” with full fury all the way up to the 25th of December. Between the gift buying, partying and rushed errands, we miss the true purpose of the Advent season, which was meant to be more austere, contemplative and penitential.

Indeed, through our hectic schedules, we often fail to properly grasp the significance of this season, due in large part to the successful secularization of our Catholic “holy day,” which is now simply reduced to “the holiday season.” This fact serves as a metaphor for our examination of conscience and confession of sins in the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Advent.

Look to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and reflect upon the “Infancy Narratives” concerning the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ. If

we only had the “Infancy Narratives” of these Gospels and no other information, we would have the Gospel of Christ in miniature. The angelic choir makes clear that Jesus is God and Man, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The message to the shepherds makes clear that Jesus came for the outcast and rejected – for the sinner. The adoration of the Magi shows that conversion is for all people and Jesus’ message is universal. It makes clear that Jesus will suffer and eventually die, but by way of paradox, this will fulfill His mission to redeem the world from sin and death. The wood of the manger and the swaddling clothes anticipate the wood of the cross and the burial shroud. Jesus is placed into a “feeding trough” for animals, symbolizing the Risen Lord who will become the Eucharistic Food for the world at Mass.

As stewards, we should have no anxiety that is rooted in buying gifts or being “ready” in the secular sense. We can ease our anxieties by focusing on our relationship to God, Church and one another. Am I right with God? Do I use His many gifts of Grace for conversion and true stewardship and discipleship? Do I repent of my sins and make a firm purpose of amendment? Do I go to confession regularly, especially when I am in a state of mortal sin? Am I ready to meet my Lord and Savior either at my particular judgment at the hour of my death, or at the General Judgment when Christ will return in glory at the end of time?

Pray that this season will truly be a season of “holy days,” not just a holiday. Let us not be consumers of religion, but true stewards of God’s manifold gifts.

## Advent/Christmas Schedule

**Advent Penance Service**  
Thursday, December 17 – 7 p.m.

Friday, December 25 – Christmas Day  
*Masses at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.*

**Choir Concert**  
Friday, December 18 – 7 p.m.

**Solemnity of Mary The Mother of God**  
Thursday, December 31 – New Year’s Eve  
*Mass at 7 p.m.*

**Christmas Schedule**  
Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve  
*Masses at 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and Midnight*

Friday, January 1, 2016 – New Year’s Day  
*Mass at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.*

## A Look Back on Recent Parish Community Events and Activities

As we proceeded through the fall season, our St. Timothy parish family shared in plenty of special events, activities and celebrations. From the 40 Days of Life campaign and Deacon Glenn Smith's ordination, to the Green Team Work Day and the Holiday Boutique, as well as the continuing journey of those in our RCIA program, it has been a busy time of prayer, formation and fellowship throughout our community.





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## Reaching Out, Comforting, Caring *continued from front cover*

efforts of that ministry. Founded by a group of churches, Metropolitan Ministries states, “We are committed to providing hope.”

“Our parishioners collect and provide food, Christmas gifts, and a variety of other things to show our care for the marginalized in our communities,” Deacon Peter says. “The truth is that where we live, although there are needs, they are small compared to some in our metropolitan area. People can be as involved as they want from collecting, donating, and purchasing to preparing gifts by wrapping them, to actually distributing gifts to those in need. Saturday, Dec. 12, is in particular a day when the people of St. Timothy are invited to serve at Metropolitan Ministries in Tampa.”

If someone is interested in being a part of our efforts relating to this ministry, or if they want to learn about the many ways they can be involved, Deacon Peter encourages them to check the parish bulletin, sign up through the link on the parish website (<http://www.sainttims.org/>), or call the parish office at 813-968-1077.

Another active ministry to help others is the Adopt a Family program. Under the auspices of our St. Vincent dePaul Society, with help and support from the Men’s and Women’s Clubs and others, this is a way for parish individuals and families to literally align with a family in need in the area.

“This is a wonderful way for people to share and live out stewardship through the love of Christ. It makes our own Christmas more special,” says Cindy Vinal, who serves as our Parish Manager.

If people want more information or wish to get involved in this ministry, they should contact the President of our St. Vincent dePaul Society, Angela Kent, at 813-968-1077 ext 261.

Cindy also notes other opportunities offered through the parish.

“We work with Liberty Manor, a home for homeless veterans,” she says. “Jim Magee is the contact for that at [jmagee260@gmail.com](mailto:jmagee260@gmail.com). In addition, we have an ongoing commitment to Santa Maria Mission.”

### • *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.