



SAINT TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH



Get to Know Jesus at Vacation Bible School

St. Timothy's Vacation Bible School (VBS) has been a beloved parish tradition for close to 30 years. This summer, VBS will be exploring the theme "Shipwrecked: Rescued by Jesus." Through VBS, children will not only have fun with their peers, but they will also get to know Jesus Christ and His boundless love and mercy.

"It is important for kids to experience Jesus in a fun way because it helps them learn more about [their faith]," says Lisa Gaspar. "They will learn about friendship,

that Jesus loves them, and that Jesus will always be there for them no matter what. I believe that a strong connection with Jesus at a younger age builds a strong foundation for a Christ-filled life."

VBS will take place over two one-week sessions in June, and is open to children entering kindergarten up to rising sixth-grade students.

"Each day, we will share a Bible point as our focus, review a Bible verse and introduce a Bible Buddy," Lisa says. "All of these pieces will be reiterated in each of the stations for the kids. For example, this year, day one's Bible point is 'When you're lonely...Jesus Rescues!' The Bible verse is "The Lord will hold me close" (Psalm 27:10). And the Bible Buddy is Hope, the Jaguar.

"The Bible points are short and sweet, and that will help kids understand and relate to the message," she adds. "The Bible Buddies are cute and adorable and will help the kids make a connection between Jesus' teachings and their own lives."



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April 2018

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Get to Know Jesus at Vacation Bible School

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The children will all begin and end the day together in “Sing and Play,” where they will be introduced to the day’s theme, and then sing and dance. They will then be placed into multi-age groups of 10, and rotate through six stations throughout the day. These stations will include acting out Bible stories, learning songs



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and dance moves, playing outdoor games, watching videos of real kids talking about God, participating in fun science activities and enjoying a themed snack. The schedule will change the order of the stations each day in order to keep children engaged, and at the end of each day VBS volunteers will put together and screen a photo slideshow that reviews the day’s activities.



Lisa Gaspar



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Volunteers are integral to a successful VBS session, and each week requires the help of approximately 50 adult and teen volunteers. For our children’s safety, all volunteers are background checked, fingerprinted and Safe Environment-trained. During a typical VBS day, they guide children through stations, as well as lead and assist stations.

“The kids also encounter Christ through our many volunteers,” Lisa says. “These dedicated individuals bring the children closer to God by sharing their love of Jesus.”



Sharing in a fun group activity at VBS.

VBS 2018 takes place in two one-week sessions — June 4-8 and June 11-15. Registration begins in March of each year, and families have the option to place their students on a wait list once the sessions reach capacity. The cost to attend is \$50 for the first child, and \$45 for each additional sibling. Included in the cost is a T-shirt for each participant, as well as a music CD for each family. For more information about VBS, or if you’d like to volunteer, please send an email to gina@sainttims.org or call the parish office at 813-968-1077.

Where Are Our Priorities?

Dear Friends in Christ,

I am in hopes that you are aware that we are completing and will continue to celebrate the holiest time of the year in our Church. Easter Sunday, April 1, is the high point of the year for us as Catholics. We will, of course, continue to celebrate this holy time until Pentecost Sunday, which is May 20 this year. That is correct — our Easter season continues until then.

St. Paul provided some sage advice. He said, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Regardless of your opinions on what happens after resurrection, we can agree that it will be something “above” this life. Paul might be asking us if we put God first in all things. Life can become very encumbered with possessions, money, power, and even our egos.

Our goal should be to put God at the top of our lists. If that is not what we do, we may need to adjust our priorities. If we have not moved in that direction during Lent or in the past, now is the time to do it. We must constantly strive to not allow earthly things to become our gods.

It was St. Gregory the Great who said, “God made us to be the gardeners of paradise.” Some stewardship people have maintained that God has given each of us a garden — and when we are judged, we only hear one question, “What have you done with the garden I gave you?”



What have we done? What are we doing? First, we must recognize and acknowledge that we are all gifted, admittedly in different and varied ways. Despite what we see as our gifts or how we measure them, we need to ensure that we are using them in ways that serve God and others — ways that show good discipleship and stewardship on our parts.

Were you aware that the month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit in the Church? The term “spirit” translates from the Hebrew word *ruah*, which means “breath.” Truly, as Catholics, the Holy Spirit has been breathed into each of us, and is part of the garden we have received. Do we turn to Him? Do we rely on Him for strength? Do we even grant that He is part of our very being? We should. We need to, as St. Paul advised, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth.”

May God bless you in all you do, and strive to do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rev. Kenneth J. Malley". The signature is written over a light blue background that is part of a larger image of a man with his arms raised in prayer.

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley



Meet the Tollett Family: Embracing an

No matter where you are in the world, a sense of belonging is important — which is something that parishioner Jon Tollett and his family have recognized.

“I think that’s what a lot of the world has lost — that sense of community,” Jon says.

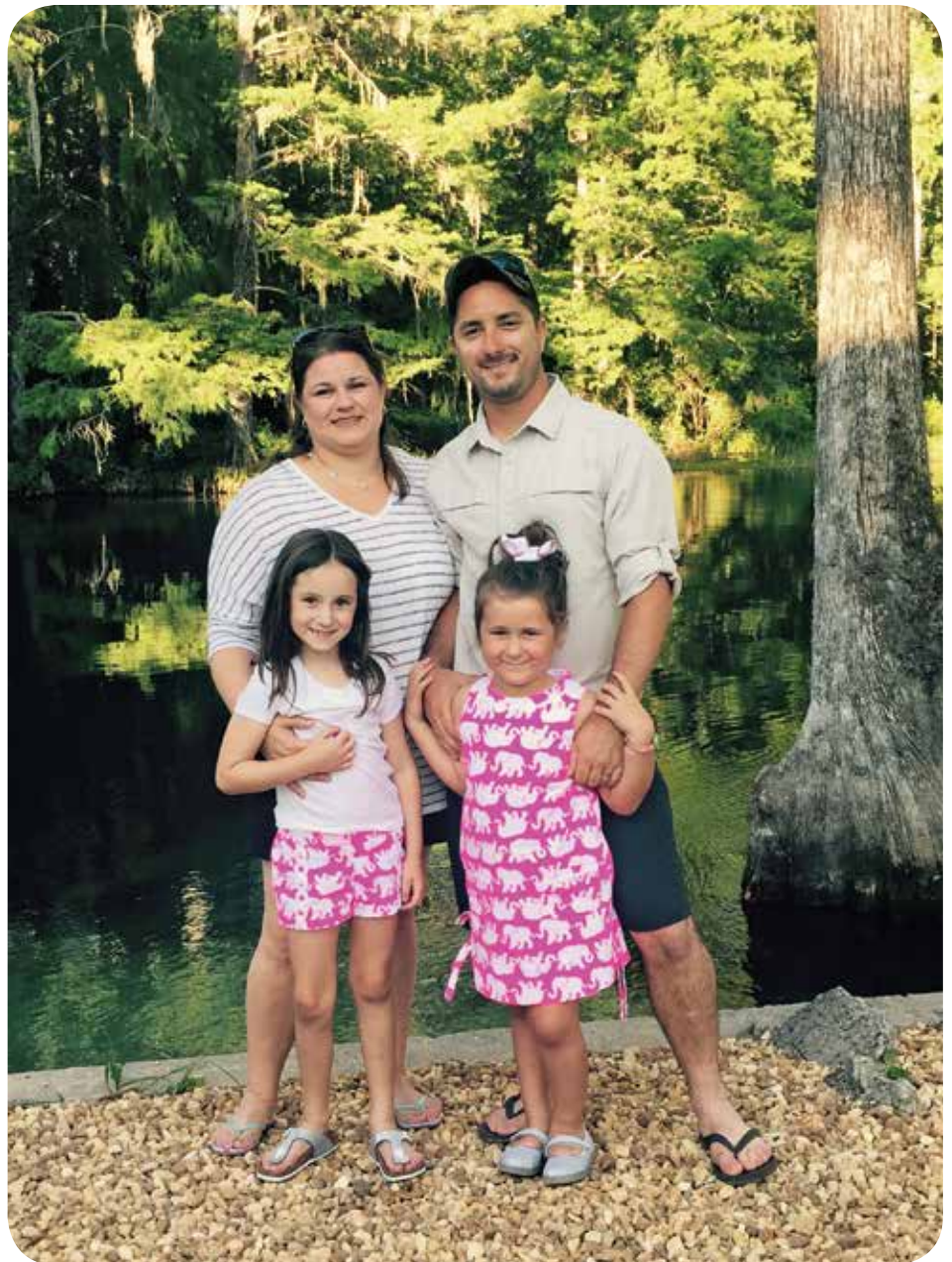
Jon and his wife, Jenny, first experienced that sense of belonging and community in Italy, where they met. Originally from Atlanta and south Tampa respectively, Jon and Jenny each spent several years as part of Comunita Cenacolo, a community with locations all across the globe, focused on helping people find hope and healing through developing their faith and a relationship with Christ.

“We both went there for our different reasons and ended up meeting in community there,” Jon says. “We stayed there to serve more time and give back because it did so much for our faith.”

“After struggling and getting to a point in my life where I knew I needed something more, I went over to Europe and I realized God was what was missing in my life — first and foremost, I had to have a relationship with Him,” Jenny says. “Comunita Cenacolo is people who have been there, done that with different struggles, helping you. First and foremost is the focus on your faith, that God can help you through anything.”

The couple returned to the U.S. just over a decade ago, and will soon celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary, with their

two daughters, Avery, 9, and Leanne, 6. They moved to the area six years ago to be closer to family, and it wasn’t long before they



Jenny and Jon Tollett, along with their daughters, Avery and Leanne, love being involved in the community at St. Timothy's.

and Promoting the Strength of Community

found a home and community at St. Timothy.

“At first we were looking at different parishes, but St. Timothy really felt youthful,” Jenny says, “There were a lot of young families, and that’s what drew us here.”

Although they are still involved with the Comunita house in St. Augustine, St. Timothy has become their primary source of support in the faith, along with the families they’ve met through their daughter attending Mother Teresa of Calcutta School.

“We have tried to make our community here at St. Timothy a bigger part of our lives, because that’s where we are on a day-to-day basis,” Jenny says. “This is our community now, in our parish. For me, just having that support of like-minded people who share my faith has been very important to me, and it’s a huge reason why we send our children to Catholic school.”

“It’s good for our kids, as well, to grow up in that kind of environment, with good people around them,” Jon adds.

Even in the midst of running their own business, Blue Wave Irrigation, and caring for their daughters, the Tolletts find ways to serve and give back to the community and parish. Jon spent some time serving in youth ministry, and currently

donates his professional skills to help with various sprinkler maintenance and repair projects around the parish and school. Jenny was instrumental in founding A Mom’s Life, a parish outreach designed to provide support, resources and fellowship for moms.

“We’re so blessed in our life, we’ve got to give back,” Jon says. “It’s a no-brainer to me — when you have so much, it’s selfish

and giving back to the community.

“Just start small,” Jon says. “It’s one thing to put money in the offering plate, but it’s another to give your actual time and it builds you as a person. We get more out of it, probably than the person receiving. You think you’re helping people but you’re really helping yourself to be better.”

“We live in a selfish world and putting others first is very

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“We’re so blessed in our life, we’ve got to give back. It’s a no-brainer to me — when you have so much, it’s selfish not to spend time to help others. It takes a lot of people to make a community work and everybody needs to do their part, so we’re just trying to do our part.”

— Jon Tollett

.....

not to spend time to help others. It takes a lot of people to make a community work and everybody needs to do their part, so we’re just trying to do our part.”

“I really enjoy giving back,” Jenny adds. “It really fills me way more than I’m sure it fills the person I’m serving. It’s filled me with joy to give back and do things for other people.”

Jon and Jenny encourage other parishioners to find ways to become involved in serving

fulfilling,” Jenny says. “Every little drop in the bucket helps. There are so many opportunities in your parish and community to serve.”

“People are always asking, ‘Why is the world like this, can we make a difference?’” Jon adds. “I think you make a difference by doing little things. Doing something small in your community might seem small, but it has a ripple effect and does a lot more than you might think.”



Hospitality: The Cornerstone of Stewardship

The dictionary defines “hospitality” as “the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.”

A Christian worldview can refer to hospitality as “Christian kindness.”

We see the effects of hospitality – or the lack thereof – time and time again through out the Bible. Christ speaks of hospitality in Matthew’s Gospel when He says, “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Old Testament told of the Israelites, as they wandered the desert for 40 years in search of hospitable environs. Even the Holy Family spent ample time searching for shelter before the birth of Our Lord.

It is safe to say that hospitality is, and most likely has always been, of great importance to people everywhere. Modern hotels and hostels often use the image of a pineapple to advertise their special brand of hospitality. There is no doubt that in ancient times, the distant lights of an inn or tavern struck a chord of hope within weary travelers’ hearts.

Indeed, hospitality’s meaning has not diminished at all over the years, decades and millennia.

Christians view the presence of hospitality as meaning the difference between calling others “guests” and “strangers.” Guests are welcomed with open arms and warm smiles, but strangers aren’t. Guests feel the genuine love present in a hearty welcome, but

strangers don’t. Guests often return for second or third visits, while strangers don’t.

As a parish, do we find ourselves surrounded by guests, or burdened by strangers?

Hospitality is, in many respects, a mindset. The same person may be treated as a guest at the church just down the road, but as a stranger here.

Matthew’s Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality: “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” That is, “I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me.” It’s a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

Stewardship holds hospitality as an immensely important concept. Remember the “three Ts” of stewardship – Time, Talent, and Treasure? Well, there are also “four Ps,” the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Hospitality is mentioned first. Why? If not for hospitality, none of the other pillars will ever take hold. Hospitality is the cornerstone of stewardship, because it opens the door to a person’s heart and allows them to receive joy, grace, and love.

Hospitality must become second nature, if stewardship is to truly take hold within a parish. So, when a stranger visits our parish, welcome them as a guest. Perhaps one day, they’ll pay us a second visit.



Gratitude for Dedication and Service: The Blue Mass

In the Catholic Church, we celebrate our first responders — those who have passed away in the line of duty, as well as those who currently serve our communities — during the Blue Mass. It is an opportunity for us, as Catholics, to honor the service of — and show our gratitude for — police officers, firefighters, 911 dispatchers, correctional officers and EMS personnel in our community and throughout our country.

Major Ciro Dominguez is an officer in the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. He is also a parishioner at St. Timothy, and it is through his efforts that the Blue Mass will be held at St. Timothy.

"I am proud to be an officer in the Sheriff's Department here in Hillsborough County," Major Dominguez says. "St. Timothy is my parish, and I am equally proud that we are the hosts for the annual diocesan Blue Mass."

The first Blue Mass was celebrated by Fr. Thomas Dade — of the Archdiocese of Baltimore and founder of the Catholic Police and Firemen's Society — on Sept. 29, 1934, at St. Patrick Church in Washington, D.C. The tradition of showing gratitude to emergency responders and their families in this way has continued throughout the United States, especially since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.



The 2016 Blue Mass, with former Bishop Lynch.

"There was a time when a Blue Mass was held in the diocese every year, but for some reason that ceased happening a few years ago," Major Dominguez says. "I have always found this uplifting and affirming, especially because of my Catholic faith. It was reinstated three years ago, and we at St. Timothy have been honored to host it last year and again this year."

The Mass is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, May 2, beginning at 1:30 p.m. Most Reverend Gregory Parkes, Bishop of St. Petersburg, will be the principal celebrant.

"We will have several hundred first responders there, not all of whom are Catholic," Major Dominguez says. "My past experiences with Blue Masses have always been most rewarding. There is something unique and special about the way we do it at St. Timothy. Because it is during the week and during the day, we invited the children from Mother Teresa Catholic School to participate. Not only did the children attend the Mass, but their choir provided the music, and older students served as the readers. The result is that our Blue Mass has a very different flavor. It is so uplifting for me to see adult men and women in uniform along with the children in a worship setting."

Major Dominguez has been with the Sheriff's Office since 2013, and serves as the Commander of Jail Division II, the Falkenburg Road Jail, in the Department of Detention Services. Major Dominguez has been a law



The Blue Mass is a tradition of showing gratitude to emergency responders and their families.

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Gratitude for Dedication and Service: The Blue Mass

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enforcement professional since 1982, and has held leadership positions in municipal, county and state agencies. Throughout his career, he has worked a variety of assignments to include patrol, investigations, training, internal affairs, tactical response and domestic security.

“Our St. Timothy community has been so supportive in our efforts to have the Blue Mass here,” he says. “The Mass and everything involved with it are really a great experience. I would encourage people to join us on that day, especially as this is an effort to show our thanks and appreciation to those involved for their dedication and service.”



Major Ciro Dominquez (second row, second from left) is an officer in the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. He is also a parishioner at St. Timothy, and it is through his efforts that the Blue Mass will be held at St. Timothy.

If you would like more information, please contact the St. Timothy parish office at 813-968-1077.

• **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.