



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



A Lifetime Together Made Great Through the Marriage Enrichment Series

Between work responsibilities, our children's activities, and the general hustle and bustle of the modern world, life is busy. Unfortunately, this often means that our relationships with both God and our spouse get put on the backburner, waiting for that elusive day when we'll have "more time." That's why programs like St. Timothy's annual Lenten Marriage Enrichment Series are so important. According to parishioners Roger and Michele Caruso, this upcoming event is designed to pull us away from the distractions of daily life and help us refocus on our sacramental vocation as married persons.

"During Lent, you're preparing for Jesus' resurrection," Roger says. "It's a time of preparation for the joy of Easter. Similarly, this series gives you an opportunity to look at your life as a couple, really examining your marriage, to see how you are communicating with one another or how effectively you're raising your children."

Beginning March 8, the series will provide six successive Friday evenings of reflection and rejuvenation for married couples. Topics include communication, finances, the five love languages, and how to maintain friendship in your marriage. The evening is intentionally designed to last only one hour, beginning directly after Stations of the Cross.

"Each evening stands alone, so people can choose to participate in however many or few they wish," Michele says. "We make sure that we are in and out in one hour so as to be sensitive to people's time."



Parishioners Roger and Michele Caruso have been happily married for nearly 40 years.

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FORMATION

Transformed Through Christ

“Jesus not only calls people to him but also forms them and sends them out in his service.”

From Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response

This month, we are emphasizing the third pillar of parish stewardship — formation. Formation is the process of studying Christ’s teachings and incorporating them deeply into our lives. It is a lifelong effort by which we “put on Christ” (Rom 13:14) and are “transformed by the renewal of our minds” (Rom 12:2).

Above all, our formation should include studying Scripture and Church teaching. It should also include discussion with other Catholics and honest self-assessment. Its goal is to “discern the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

Because formation helps us understand God’s will, it therefore leads naturally to good stewardship. When our minds are transformed through Christ, we become like Him — as Christ gave His life for us, so we give our lives to others.

Formation is not just an individual task. Instead, it is a communal responsibility that, when applied, will further help St. Timothy to grow as a stewardship parish. Each one of us has an inherent need to give — to move from “selfishness to selflessness,” as the Diocese of Wichita’s document *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* aptly states. Formation is a process of

spiritual growth, and it leads to a deeper understanding of loving others as God loves us.

Naturally, then, our Catholic formation should not end upon celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation, or turning 18 years old. Formation is a formidable task that we as Catholics should participate in for the duration of our lives. It involves “education of the mind and conversion of the heart” (*The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*), and helps us to actually lead the stewardship way of life rather than just understand it.

As we approach the season of Lent, why not make formation a part of your penitential renewal to Christ?

Start off by reading 10 minutes of Sacred Scripture a day, or by studying a chapter of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on a daily basis. Read a biography of your favorite saint for an example of an individual who lived as a disciple of Christ, and use this person as a role model when tending to your daily tasks. Keep an eye on our weekly parish bulletin for faith formation opportunities at the parish. Before long, your commitment to formation will lead you to naturally live the Catholic faith and understand stewardship in ways that you never imagined.





CELEBRATING GOD'S LOVE

Dear Friends in Christ,

What is the most widely observed Saint's day in February — the one that is kept even by those who aren't Catholics? Undoubtedly, it would be St. Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.

So who was St. Valentine? The saint we celebrate was a priest of Rome martyred in the late third century. But that doesn't explain how his feast came to be celebrated as the day for sending letters, cards and presents as expressions of romantic love.

The truth is that the custom of sending tokens of love comes not from any direct connection with St. Valentine, but from the ancient belief that birds begin to pair off on Feb. 14. And if courtship in the natural world occurred then, it must be appropriate for humans, as well. The association between St. Valentine and love notes is a later development.

Nevertheless, it's not wrong to connect the two. Love has many aspects, and our conception of it is richer if we keep more than one of them in mind. Martyrdom is the result of loving God more than our earthly life. St. Valentine was a martyr because of his love — his love for Jesus Christ and the Church. If he had not loved God so much, he could have repudiated his Lord and saved his life. We, in turn, express our love by sending cards and gifts on St. Valentine's Day.



But isn't that what stewardship as a way of life is, a little martyrdom? Not to push the image too far, but when we are faithful stewards, we give up a little portion of our lives out of our own love for Christ. Most Christians will not be called on to be martyrs, in the sense of forfeiting our physical lives for God. But we are called to give up some of our comforts, indulgences and riches because of our love for Him.

So, as you prepare to celebrate and share your love with your valentine this month, remember St. Valentine and his love for Christ. As well, keep in mind that God loves us, and return that love with your own toward Him. Loving God will be reflected in how you prioritize your use of the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted to you. As St. John wrote (1 Jn 4:19), "We love because he first loved us."

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley



Courageously Living the Gospel:

ANSWERING OUR

When it comes to your faith, where are you, and where are you going? These are not only important questions to ask, but they are also questions for which we should really contemplate our answers.

“I’ve heard it said that if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there,” says Fr. Malley, quoting Bishop Gregory L. Parkes.

It was with this idea in mind that Bishop Parkes introduced a diocesan-wide initiative to bring clarity and purpose to our mission.

Prior to the formation of this initiative, our bishop traveled through all five counties of our diocese to participate in “listening sessions.” From these listening sessions came what our bishop calls a “mutually shared vision” or “sacred purpose,” a plan to help move us forward in living and sharing our faith.

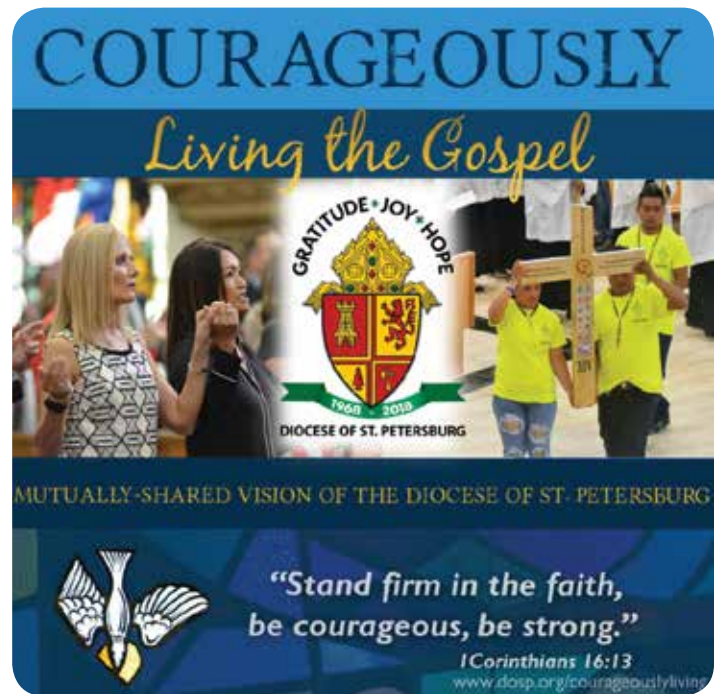
“Businesses or corporations have a mission statement, but Bishop Parkes refers to this as our ‘sacred purpose,’” Fr. Malley says.

“Courageously Living the Gospel” is the theme of this vision, based on 1 Corinthians 16:13, which says, “Stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong.”

“It’s a great calling,” Fr. Malley says, “to rise above the fear and the division that’s amidst us culturally, politically and in the Church, to live out our sacred purpose.”

This sacred purpose will be fulfilled as Catholics in the diocese seek to live the acronym PIE — “Proclaim, Invite and Encounter.”

“I’d like to be known as a Church that welcomes newcomers and non-Catholics,” Fr. Malley says. “It’s asking the question, ‘What does that look like?’ I hope to have people begin to ask the question, ‘How do you encounter the Lord?’ It’s not just going through the motions, it’s about an encounter — not just with an idea or theory, but with a Person, with God.”



As part of the initiative, the particular areas of focus are serving the poor, accompanying youth and young adults, and sharing our faith. The diocese hopes to establish eight to ten affordable housing opportunities by 2021. Our parish recently built new facilities for youth and families, and we will soon be looking to hire regional directors for youth and young adult ministry.

“For sharing our faith, we’re looking at how we equip people as missionary disciples, who are inspired to invite and accompany others to that encounter with Christ,” Fr. Malley says.

Each parish in the diocese will focus on implementing these priorities in a way specific to their local needs.

Here at St. Timothy, some of the primary ways that people can begin to experience or deepen their encounter with Christ is through the Alpha course, which will be of-

R HIGHER CALLING AND SACRED PURPOSE

ferred several times throughout the year, as well as through spending time with the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration, which is offered every weekday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

“I hope to see a new freedom to be able to receive God’s love, and a courage and freedom to share God’s love,” Fr. Malley says. “God loves us first, and growing as missionary disciples is an appropriate response to God’s love. It’s first of all making time to listen and being receptive because you can’t give what you don’t have.”

Fr. Malley hopes that this initiative will inspire parishioners to become more active and involved, both in deepening their own faith, as well as in serving others.

“My greatest excitement and our main goal is for people to encounter the authentic love of God for them — that’s primary, everything else flows from that,” Fr. Malley says.

“It’s God’s love that will move us into the next steps,” he adds. “It’s not just about projects and programs — it’s about this authentic encounter. That’s what’s lasting.”

If you would like more information about the Courageously Living the Gospel initiative, please visit www.dosp.org/courageouslyliving. To become involved in activities related to this vision, or to become part of the Courageously Living the Gospel team, within our own parish, please contact the parish office at 813-968-1077.

Marriage Enrichment Series *continued from front cover*

“People generally show up about 7:45 then there is some sort of little icebreaker,” Roger says. “Then, after about five minutes, there is a brief 10 to 15-minute presentation on the night’s topic. After that, we have the couples break out and have a one-on-one conversation with each other, which is the majority of our time together. Many couples, especially those who have been married a long time with children, will say they don’t have many opportunities to speak with one another and that this is the best part of the evening. Then we come together as a group for a brief discussion.”

Ultimately, say the Carusos, the Marriage Enrichment Series is about helping Catholic couples communicate and become more unified in their sacramental vocation. It helps them reconnect, strengthening their relationship with Christ and one another.

“I think we learned from the very beginning that communication is huge,” Roger says. “Michele and I will have been married 40 years this June, and I can’t say we’ve had that many fights because we learned early on the importance of communicating and discussing things. The Marriage Enrichment Series provides couples with a forum for that conversation — a way to communicate healthily and grow in their vocation.”

The series offers value for people of all different stages in life and situations — those who have a good marriage but want to make it even better, or those who are struggling and need tools to resolve issues and reunite.

This Lent, we invite all married couples be they newly or longtime wed to take advantage of this opportunity.

There is no cost and free childcare is provided in the Preschool rooms. For more information, please contact Roger or Michele Caruso at either 813-962-4556 or mrmrcaruso@msn.com.



Mass Reverence and Etiquette

For many of us, when we are invited to a wedding, one of our first considerations is “what am I going to wear?” We wouldn’t think of showing up at a formal event in our workout clothes. How many of us search for just the right outfit to wear to our annual office party or on a date? Compare that to how much thought we put into what we wear to Mass on Sunday.

How we dress for an occasion indicates the importance that we place upon that particular celebration. At Mass, we encounter God through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Dressing appropriately for Mass is one way that we show respect both for God and for our faith family. And this respect is important at all Masses – no matter what time of day or night.

Think about what you are teaching your children when you all wear your “Sunday clothes” to Mass. You are remind-

ing them that Mass is a special celebration. After all, we are going to Jesus’ house.

Some people may quickly point out that Mass shouldn’t be a fashion show – a place to show off your finery – and they are right! We also know that some parishioners come to Mass on their way home from work, and they certainly should not feel embarrassed about arriving at Mass in their work clothes. And no one should ever stay away from Mass because of simplicity of clothing.

But one rule should apply in all instances – our attire at Mass should always be modest. Our clothing should never distract others from what we are gathered together to celebrate – the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The celebration of Mass is always a holy occasion and thus should be treated in the most holy manner – in body, mind and spirit.



St. Timothy's Lenten Parish Mission Reflects on Transforming Suffering into Hope



Fr. Gabriel Gillen preaching in Poland

It is a timeless question — why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? If God is all good and all powerful, then why does suffering exist?

“The problem of suffering is the number one objection of the atheist to an all-knowing, all-powerful and all-loving God,” says Fr. Gabriel Gillen, O.P. “This is an ancient question that even mystics have asked when immersed in suffering. Christ Himself speaks to this from the cross.”

This year at St. Timothy's Lenten Parish Mission, Fr. Gabriel, a Dominican Friar, will visit with our faith community and explore the history of this question and ultimately offer a compelling response.

“We need to know and understand the answer to this and be able to share this with others,” Fr. Gabriel says. “As a friar in the Order of Preachers, I am always looking forward to sharing the fruits of my contemplation with others through preaching opportunities.”

On March 2 and March 3, Fr. Gabriel will speak at all Masses, and the mission will take place in the evenings of March 3, 4 and 5, ending on the Tuesday immediately before Ash Wednesday.

The sessions will build upon each other, and Fr. Gabriel will share what the Buddhists, the Jewish people and the Greeks, amongst others, have said regarding this question.

“We will answer this question through the teachings of St. John Paul II and St. Thomas Aquinas,” Fr. Gabriel says. “There are natural analogies for how God turns venom into anti-venom. God doesn't defeat suffering with force. He takes on our suffering and transforms it.”

All faith community adult and young adult members are encouraged to attend the Lenten Parish Mission. Fr. Gabriel will also bring relics from Dominican saints and St. John Paul II for veneration in the evening.

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St. Timothy's Lenten Parish Mission *continued from page 7*

"There is so much grace there at a parish mission," Fr. Gabriel says. "Each parish mission is different, but similar in that it is humbling to witness the grace that works and the conversions that occur."

St. Peter tells us to be ready to "give a reason for the hope that is within you," and after attending this mission, we will be able to give an answer to this great question that more people have asked in our age than ever before.

"The Church is in need of renewal, and we can actively participate," Fr. Gabriel says. "When we learn how to turn the venoms we've been stung with into anti-venom, we thrive. The saints did not look for suffering, but their ability to transform that darkness into light set their hearts on fire to rescue others."



Fr. Gabriel Gillen on EWTN

If you would like more information about the St. Timothy Lenten Parish Mission, please contact the office at 813-968-1077 and watch for updates in the bulletin and on our website, www.sainttims.org.

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.