



# SAINT TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Meet Visiting Seminarian **Zach Brasseur** *A Learning Experience with Our Faith Community*

**T**his year, our parish is blessed to have a seminarian with us for his pastoral year. Zach Brasseur, in his fifth year of study at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Boynton Beach, joined us at the end of August. He will spend the year here at St. Timothy, learning by experience the many facets of priestly life in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Immediately upon his arrival in our parish, Zach felt that he was right where the Lord wants him to be this year.

“The pastoral year is a time for us [seminarians] to witness and learn,” he says. “We witness to the love of Jesus in our lives, and learn how to be a priest. I’m living with Fr. Malley and Fr. Lou, working alongside the parish staff, and just seeing what day-to-day life in the parish is like. I’ve really been struck by how welcoming St. Timothy is, with people excited to meet me and inviting me to their ministries. I feel like I’ve won the jackpot being sent here!”

Zach grew up attending St. Paul’s Catholic Church in St. Petersburg with his parents and three sisters. The Brasseurs  
*continued on page 2*



*Seminarian Zach Brasseur is spending his pastoral year here at St. Timothy.*

December 2019

### In this Issue

- 3** A Steward’s Response to the Ultimate Christmas Gift
- 4** Transformed by the Sacraments: Meet Parishioner *Dubrey Black*
- 6** Recognizing the Season of Advent, We Can Create Faithful and Loving Traditions
- 7** Out of the Classroom, Into the World: *Laura Gleason Reflects on the Stewardship Way of Life*

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## Meet Visiting Seminarian Zach Brasseur

*continued from front cover*

were active in their parish, with Zach's mother serving as the Director of Religious Education and his father participating with the Knights of Columbus. As a result, Zach formed close ties to church life and the parish priests from a young age.

From the time he made his First Communion, Zach already knew there was something about the priesthood that was very special and appealing to him.

"I knew a lot of priests growing up who had an influence on me," he says. "I saw their joy, and their commitment — not just to the ministry, but to the priestly way of life. They were prayerful, they were kind, and they were really enthusiastic about what they were doing. So it was very attractive to me, and just kind of stuck."

Throughout high school and college, the inkling of a vocation to the priesthood would come and go for Zach. He pursued a bachelor's degree in history at St. Leo University and considered becoming a youth minister or teacher. Yet, something continued to pull him toward the idea of priesthood, and finally, in March of his junior year, he attended a "come and see" weekend at seminary.

When Zach then decided to apply for seminary, his family wasn't the least bit surprised.

"My parents and sisters all said they couldn't see me doing anything else," Zach says. "My parents never pushed anything. I just soaked up what was in my environment, and whatever the Lord put in my heart, and came to the conclusion that it was the right environment for me to grow."

In his four years of seminarian studies thus far, Zach feels he has already learned so much. He loves that the seminary is a very "human" place where everyone is striving to understand the Lord's will in their lives. Far from having it "all figured out" when they first arrive, the seminarians mature and grow in their faith together.

This year, Zach is enjoying the opportunity to learn firsthand about the daily life of a diocesan priest. During his time at St. Timothy, he is helping with liturgy, RCIA and Life Teen, in addition to dropping in on various ministries and simply being a friendly face around the parish. He also has a presence at Mother Teresa Catholic School.

While the pastoral year is a busy one, Zach hopes to continue to make time for a few of his favorite pastimes — following the Tampa Bay Rays, reading and listening to podcasts on historical topics, and even catching up on some favorite television series with Fr. Malley and Fr. Lou!

As he looks forward to the next months of his pastoral year, Zach hopes to continue getting to know all of our parishioners well, and he humbly asks them for their prayers and support on his path to the priesthood.

Feeling incredibly blessed with the vocation the Lord has chosen for him, Zach would encourage any young man who may have a call to the priesthood to discern God's will in his life.

"Don't be afraid to explore a possible vocation," he says. "If it is from the Lord, you will know, and there will be peace."

*"I'm living with Fr. Malley and Fr. Lou, working alongside the parish staff, and just seeing what day-to-day life in the parish is like. I've really been struck by how welcoming St. Timothy is, with people excited to meet me and inviting me to their ministries. I feel like I've won the jackpot being sent here!"*

— ZACH BRASSEUR

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## A Steward's Response to the Ultimate Christmas Gift

Dear Friends in Christ,

Christmas is America's favorite holiday. Consider for a moment the amount of effort we put into the holiday — decorating our homes with ornate light displays, buying boxes upon boxes of presents, addressing Christmas cards and attending seasonal get-togethers. When taken all together, it staggers the imagination. Whatever might happen to be next on the list of “favorite holidays” — Valentine's Day, Halloween or Thanksgiving — it can't hold a candle to our investment in Christmas.

Don't get me wrong — I love Christmas, too. But I'm afraid that many of us somehow miss the main reason for our Christmas celebrations.

I've sometimes heard people say things like, “Getting everything ready for Christmas becomes so hectic, I don't want to do it every year. But, you know, Christmas is really for the children.” And occasionally, I've heard or read in a letter to the editor that Christmas is about the hope that a newborn baby brings to the world. Even in the early winter, when the days are short, we can celebrate babyhood, a new human life.

Both those sentiments are wrong because they're too limited. Of course, it's true that many of our Christmas customs are for the children — we might not get to hang our stockings to be filled by Santa Claus otherwise. And it's true that the birth of a baby, any baby, brings joy and hope to all those around. Yes, many of our Christmas celebrations are centered on the children, and the birth of a child offers a promise for the future.

At Christmas, we celebrate not just any baby, but a particular baby. We celebrate His birth not because it's cute to see a baby in a manger filled with hay and surrounded by farm animals — instead, we celebrate this birth because of Who this baby is and what He did as an adult, for *all* of us.

A human baby is certainly a wonderful creation, made in the image of God. But Jesus is more than that, not less,



for He is God the Son who took on human nature in order to redeem us from the results of the sin into which we had fallen. He didn't stay a baby. He grew up and taught and preached and healed. Finally, He was put to death “for our sake” as the Creed affirms and rose from the dead. That's why we celebrate His birth more than 2,000 years later. That's why normal routines are suspended for a few joyful days each year.

In response to the gift the Father gave us with the birth of His Son, we joyfully exchange gifts with each other, share with the poor, and offer our gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Church. God gives to us — and as stewards, we must do our best to faithfully use those gifts.

A joyful and blessed Christmas to all of you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Kenneth J. Malley". The ink is dark and the signature is written over a light background.

Rev. Kenneth J. Malley





# Transformed by the Sacraments

## MEET PARISHIONERS

**W**hen parishioner Dubrey Black first attended a Catholic Mass with his wife more than 18 years ago, he was instantly intrigued by the faith. Something about the liturgy itself, as well as his wife's deep faith, captivated him, leading him to faithfully attend Sunday Mass with her and, later, their children ever since. Yet even still, Dubrey says that something held him back from taking the leap to full conversion.

"My wife is a cradle Catholic and I think our second date was at church," Dubrey says. "From that point on, Catholicism was just very intriguing to me. It led me to really make it a point to go to Church with her every

Sunday. She comes from a big family, and they are all very into their faith as well. Over time, my wife would try to convince me to convert, but I always felt that I wasn't quite ready."

This all changed, however, when the Blacks' middle child, Melia, began sacramental preparation here at St. Timothy for her First Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Eager to share her experience with her father, Melia convinced Dubrey to enter RCIA, allowing them to uniquely share the sacramental journey.

"I really felt like it was God using her to lead me to Him," Dubrey says. "She came up to me one day and



*Dubrey and Melia celebrate their sacramental journey with their family.*

## Sacraments: PRISONER DUBREY BLACK



*Dubrey Black received our Eucharistic Lord for the first time after more than 18 years of Mass attendance.*



*Melia Black received her First Holy Communion on May 4, 2019.*

said, ‘Dad, I’m about to receive my First Reconciliation and Holy Communion and I think it would be really cool if you would do that with me.’ Well, when she said that to me it just felt like a no-brainer. I wanted to be there for her and to support her through the journey, and vice versa. And so in a really special way, we got to do it all together.”

As Melia continued her sacramental preparation classes each Sunday, Dubrey simultaneously began attending RCIA classes. Then, the two would share what they had learned during their classes and prepare their hearts for their approaching sacraments together.

“It allowed us to kind of become each other’s support system,” Dubrey says.

Melia received her First Reconciliation in early November 2018, while Dubrey followed on Feb. 24, 2019. Then in May they were each able to receive our Eucharistic Lord for the first time. Describing the experience as truly transformative, Dubrey has been amazed to witness the changes in both himself and his daughter, as well as their entire family growing in faith through their commitment to a full life of Christian discipleship.

“It was an emotional and life-changing experience,” Dubrey says. “Although I had been going to the Church for 18 years, I had never confessed my sins to a priest before, and never accepted the Body and Blood of Christ. Every Mass was like a new experience for me. It was very intriguing to me and I always wanted to learn more — not only about Catholicism but also how to live my life more according to the way of Jesus Christ. So in going through the RCIA program, it really gave me a profound outlook on the next steps in my journey — an opportunity to look back and a road map of where to go from here.”

Dubrey is deeply thankful to his wife for her continued support over the years and to his daughter, Melia, for giving him the final nudge needed to enter the Church. He is deeply thankful for God’s merciful love poured out through the sacraments, and the sacramental graces which continue to bless and transform his life.

“This is something I’ll never forget — an experience that I will always treasure,” Dubrey says. “It’s amazing to see what my life has become since giving my heart to the Lord more fully.”



## Recognizing the Season of Advent, We Can Create Faithful and Loving Traditions

As the season of Christmas approaches, it is all too easy to get swept up in the frantic commercialism that tells us that Christmas is already happening — from now up until the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, and not a day more. To combat this misguided understanding, and to embrace what this time of year truly means, we might consider how to enter into the sacred quiet and careful preparation of the Advent season with our families.

Starting new Advent-centered traditions within our homes is a simple way to differentiate between the two seasons and embrace the grace that comes with this season of preparation. While hanging up the stockings, consider hanging up a stocking for Jesus. Family members can place their “gifts” for Jesus there. These can be sacrifices like giving up desserts during the week or committing to doing one extra chore for another family member. Advent can be as much of a time for fasting and almsgiving as the season of Lent — after all, both seasons are preparing our hearts for a great feast of the Church.

A similar activity is to create a manger bed for Jesus. For every good deed that a family member does, have them place a little straw in a small manger in a prominent place in the house. By Christmas, there will be a fluffy bed in which the Christ Child can be placed.

If your parish has an angel tree or participates in a gift outreach, be sure that the whole family is included in the shopping by making it a family outing, or make a

card for the child together. It’s easy to see those activities simply as a quick good deed, but anything that helps emphasize there is another person on the receiving end helps to make the act much more meaningful.

While there are lots of activities that can help to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas, nothing centers us securely in this season of Advent quite like participating in the liturgy already prepared for us. As you are able, go to any penance services or live nativities, or take part in service opportunities on offer in our parish. Spend some time with your kids in the adoration chapel or in front of the Blessed Sacrament, reminding them that the Christ Who dwells there in the monstrance is the same Christ Who came to this world as a tiny baby — for it will be there in the presence of Christ that we can truly sing, with hearts ready to receive Him, “Oh come let us adore Him, oh come let us adore Him.”

### **PENANCE SERVICE & CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES**

#### **Advent Penance Service**

Thursday, December 19 at 7 p.m.

#### **Christmas Eve**

Tuesday, December 24

Masses at 3:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Music at 11:30 p.m., Mass at Midnight

#### **Christmas Day**

Wednesday, December 25

Masses at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

#### **Solemnity of Mary, The Mother of God**

Tuesday, December 31 - Vigil Mass at 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

Mass at 9 a.m.



## Out of the Classroom, Into the World: *Laura Gleason Reflects on the Stewardship Way of Life*

If you ask Laura Gleason how pursuing a degree in theology most changed her life, her answer may surprise you. While the book learning and research that took place in the classroom made for a fulfilling college experience, what Laura remembers most about her time as a student at the Franciscan University of Steubenville is the example of wholehearted Catholic living that she witnessed in her professors and fellow students.

“There was just something about the people there,” Laura says. “It wasn’t only in the classrooms, but in the whole environment on campus. The professors would invite you to their homes and it was a very well-rounded experience of what life could be when you put God in the center.”

Prior to attending Franciscan University of Steubenville, Laura had spent a year serving as a NET minister in Australia. There, she discovered that many young people do not fully know or understand their Catholic faith. This realization inspired her to earn a bachelor’s degree in theology with a concentration in religious education.

Working and studying theology with professors and classmates who modeled such a strong passion for the Catholic faith gave Laura an increased sense of gratitude.

“It changed my perspective on the faith, helping me see it as a gift,” she says. “It wasn’t just the books I read or the people I studied. For me, so much of it was the people who taught me and people who witnessed the message. I could have read theology all day long by myself, but Steubenville had a culture that encourages attending daily Mass, preparing for the Sabbath together and making retreats. And you don’t have to go study theology for these things — they are also happening here [at St. Timothy]!”

Currently, Laura’s theology and religious education studies are coming in handy in yet another way, as she is homeschooling her three children — John, Quintin and



*The Gleason family — Laura and her husband, Travis, with their children, John, Quintin and Anna*

Anna — for the year. Anna is a second-grader, so Laura is preparing her to receive the Sacrament of First Communion. Laura and her husband, Travis, are also taking advantage of the opportunity for their family to connect and pray together more often during this year of homeschool.

With a newly flexible schedule, the Gleasons have been traveling throughout the United States and

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## Out of the Classroom, Into the World *continued from page 7*

abroad. In addition to the enriching experience of visiting pilgrimage sites and churches around the world, Laura feels that her children are also receiving valuable exposure to life on a global scale.

“I think their worldview is growing, and they are recognizing more reflections of God and His image in places and people and their cultures and traditions,” Laura says. “I hope this deepens their faith and challenges them as they grow and discern what they will do with their lives and vocations.”

With a strong commitment to stewardship stemming largely from her time as a theology student and the dynamic faith lives she witnessed at Steubenville, Laura enjoys being a part of parish life here at St. Timothy. She

has found that A Mom’s Life Ministry suits her stage of life perfectly. And keeping in mind all that she learned as a student at Franciscan University, she seeks to share her love of the faith beyond parish walls as well.

“The biggest thing I got [from my theological studies] was learning to not keep those relationships and ministries only in the church, but to invite people into my home and my family,” Laura says. “I see that as a big part of stewardship when you talk about time, talent and treasure — the idea of opening your home and lives to other people and having Christ at the center of those relationships. I feel like that is a richness of faith in our lives, to share it with other people.”

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### *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.