



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



EMBRACING FAITH AND HOPE During a Time of Uncertainty

Though we tend to associate the Easter story and the journey of the early disciples as one of hope and joy, we forget that theirs was also a time of great uncertainty and fear. There were seasons of painful waiting, first for the risen Lord to reveal Himself and then later for the Holy Spirit to descend upon them, enabling them to fulfill their mission. Fr. Kenneth Malley says this is a powerful lesson for us as a parish as we continue to navigate through the fear and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“For many of us, the struggle of this experience has been the uncertainty,” Fr. Malley says. “How do you get comfortable with the uncomfortable? I think this is where we need to lean into that Pentecost story, crying out, “Come, Holy Spirit, come!” Sometimes we think we’re going to come up with all the answers, but Jesus said He was going to send us the teacher so that we would know what we need to know, *when* we

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During the COVID-19 crisis, many parishioners took advantage of St. Timothy's grounds, walking and enjoying the serenity.



The church decorated for Easter, which was live-streamed for parishioners.

June 2020

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17512 Lakeshore Rd.
Lutz, FL 33558
www.sainttims.org



Embracing Faith and Hope During a Time of Uncertainty

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need to know it. God can work in this, when and *if* we allow Him.”

Fr. Malley says he’s already seen God at work in many ways over the past months. Priests everywhere — Fr. Malley included — have found new ways to connect with and minister to the people. From livestreamed Masses and devotional prayers, to personal phone calls, it’s pushed us all to reconsider what church means and how it takes shape in our individual lives.

“The message we’ve tried to communicate throughout this experience is we are still here serving you, just in different ways,” Fr. Malley says. “We have our food pantry, are streaming the Mass daily, and [have] drive-up confessions. Part of it is for us to become more creative in ministry. Even in the case of our online streaming of Masses, we are reaching out to a whole lot of people. We are learning to use these new tools for evangelization, and I think it can become a springboard for that new evangelization.”

Another blessing has been within the domestic church. Though working and schooling from home has undoubtedly had its challenges, there has also been a calming and uniting amongst many families — an opportunity to reconnect and grow in familial relationships.

“For families to have meals together again and to be able to do things like play a board game — I think it’s helping people be open to how to share that time together again,” Fr. Malley says.

Another blessing has been a renewal of faith. Deprived of Mass and their normal interactions, many have expressed a greater appreciation of and holy hunger for the sacraments. Others have taken a great leap of faith, continuing to tithe and live out stewardship faithfully, despite financial uncertainty.

“We’ve been working on stewardship for a couple of years now, making it something we just do as a community,” Fr. Malley. “A time of crisis is a test — asking God, ‘What are You asking me to do?’ People have been so generous and faithful with their tithe. I see many people, too, asking how they can serve their family and community — going out of their way to perform outreach and care for those in need.”

While the future is always unclear and subject to change, there remains tremendous hope and opportunity — hope for the new springtime spoken of frequently by St. John Paul II, and an opportunity to enter more fully into the church narrative as, like the apostles, we surrender ourselves to God’s will.

“We’ve seen that church is not an organization — it’s an organism,” Fr. Malley says. “There is always dynamic movement, whether we see it or not. There is always forward movement toward God. I think we can really learn from those early followers of Christ and the heartbreaking uncertainty when following Christ. Things were never going to be the same for them, but look at all the amazing things that unfolded.”

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A Letter From Our Pastor

The *Light* at the End of the Tunnel

Dear Friends in Christ,

As this unprecedented crisis for our Church, nation and world continues to unfold, we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel. As we begin a return to our “new normal,” we have so much for which to be grateful.

I have witnessed so many of you continuing to actively live out stewardship during these past few months while our parish family has been apart, and that is truly a blessing. But with the uncertainty of what this “new normal” will be like in the days, weeks and months ahead, I ask you all to again consider how you are living out your call to stewardship.

Regardless of whether or not we can physically gather in our church or come together for ministry activities and events, our faith always lives on.

Remember that stewardship is a way of life, meaning that we are called to live as intentional disciples of Christ through the practice of stewardship in all circumstances.

Have you been giving God your Time? I encourage you to pray every day. Use this time as an opportunity to develop or strengthen your prayer life.

How can you serve the Lord right now with your Talents? Serve your family and friends in the ways that



you can. Use your talents wisely to grow in relationship with others near or far.

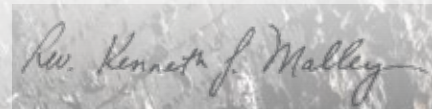
Finally, is God still a priority in your Treasure? Despite the hardships, are you still keeping God at the heart of all your financial decisions. I encourage you to give God a portion of your treasure out of gratitude, no matter how big or small.

Thank you for your continued support by way of prayers, service and generous financial giving during these challenging times. I have been overwhelmed with a new sense of gratitude and dependence

on our Lord during this crisis, and continue praying for each of you. I look forward to the day our parish and our church is bustling with life again, and I pray that day is coming soon.

Let us live with the joy of the Resurrection each day of our lives!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Kenneth J. Malley





The McClendon Family Reflects on “Bour



Ludi McClendon joined her kids on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic organized by youth minister Justin Lantz.



Wherever the McClendon family serves, they do so with open hearts and hands

Over 30 years ago, Gary McClendon was stationed in Guatemala with the United States Marine Corps. There he met Ludi, who was working as a civilian on the military base. Little did the two of them know that their meeting would lead to a long marriage, three children, and the bringing together of two worlds.

In addition to the cultural differences in the McClendons' upbringings, Ludi and Gary came from very different religious backgrounds. When Gary was a child, he sometimes accompanied his grandparents to their Baptist church, but his attendance at those services eventually tapered off. Ludi, on the other hand, grew up in Guatemala at a time when 99 percent of the country's population, including her own family, was Catholic. Many of her childhood memories center on the faith, the saints, and the celebration of Catholic holidays.

When the couple started dating, Ludi introduced Gary to the Catholic Church.

“I had always felt like something was missing,” Gary says. “Then I went to a few Masses with Ludi, and even though they were in Spanish and I didn't really understand everything, I started to feel overwhelmed by the love of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Everything had brought me there, and it was something I was meant to receive. I converted on my 22nd birthday.”

Eventually, the McClendon family returned to Gary's hometown of Plant City, Fla., where they were active in the parish of St. Clement Catholic Church. When they moved to Tampa 15 years ago, they were excited to find the vibrant, family-friendly faith community here at St. Timothy. Ludi soon began helping as a catechist in our Religious Education program. As their children got older, the McClendons both volunteered with the Youth Ministry. Ludi became a Eucharistic Minister and joined the Women's Club, and Gary enjoys attending the occasional Men's Club meeting.

While the McClendons feel blessed to be able to help out around our parish, they began to feel the pull to serve God's people abroad several years ago. Their first opportunity to do so came when youth minister Justin

Endless" Stewardship at Home and Abroad

Lantz arrived at St. Timothy and began taking groups from the parish to do mission work in the Dominican Republic.

"I went to the Dominican Republic with the kids and it was such a great experience," Ludi says. "It was incredible spiritually, and the ways we were able to serve these people were so humbling. We enjoyed it so much, we wanted to go every year."

One day, the McClendon's daughter, Michelle, suggested to Ludi that they plan a trip to serve in her native Guatemala. Knowing the situation in Guatemala well, Ludi agreed that a mission trip to the country would be a great blessing for all.

"When I moved here, 99 percent of the population in Guatemala was Catholic, and now it is down to about 45 percent," she says. "It always put a knot in my heart that all these people going on mission trips there weren't Catholic, and I felt like we needed to do something more. And not only from the Catholic perspective, because in Guatemala, you see two worlds — the people that have, and those that don't. Poverty in the third world is very different from poverty in the U.S., and it's incredible how much you can help and change their lives."

This month, Ludi and Justin Lantz had plans to bring a group from our parish to do mission work in Guatemala for the first time. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this trip was canceled. Despite this cancellation, service remains a family affair for the McClendons — they hope to make the trip next year and look forward to serving God's people abroad.

"For me personally, being in the Marine Corps opened my eyes to a lot of things that go on outside



For Gary and Ludi McClendon, service is a family affair.

of the U.S.," Gary says. "These trips are an opportunity for people to experience and see that there is so much we can do in this world to help others, and to not be so focused on the things that we take for granted here."

Wherever the McClendons are serving, they do so with open hearts and hands. However they serve — whether in big or small ways — the rewards are always great indeed.

"Giving of my time, talent and treasure is very important to me," Ludi says. "It's very important to share God's love with everybody. At St. Timothy, we have many opportunities to get involved, using the resources God has given us, and bringing them to other people for His glory. That's what it's all about."

"And even if you just help one person, there is no telling if they might go on to help hundreds or thousands," Gary says. "You just hope it snowballs and carries on from there."

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Stewardship and Faith During Tough Times

These are uncertain and frightening times. At press time of this newsletter, we are unable to come together for Mass and the sacraments, and we're wondering, "How can we be a church when we can't come to celebrate Mass together?"

During this and any other crisis, one thing that remains constant is the Catholic Church and the unwavering support the Church offers. Throughout history, Catholics have sustained their communities in their homes during countless seasons of persecution or hardship, and living through a modern crisis is no different.

Now, more than ever, we must remember our parish truly is a community. The physical building in which we worship and pray is not the Church. *We* are the Church.

During a crisis, prayer is more important than ever. Though we may be isolated, through prayer, we can embrace the unity of faith we all share as Catholics.

As faithful stewards, we must remember everything we have is a gift from God and, in turn, we must be grateful and offer all that we do back to Him. We may be physically distanced from others, but we still have an opportunity to spiritually unite each day. A simple prayer such as the Morning Offering — a prayer said by an individual at the start of the day in order to consecrate oneself to Christ — is a great way to unite daily with Catholics around the world and claim our homes and our daily living for Christ. What's more, as you devote more time to personal and family prayer, remember to lift up in prayer all of our civil and religious leaders during this time, as well as our parishioners and community members.

There are other ways through which we can stay connected as a parish family. Call a friend from our parish community. Ask how they're doing, how they are living their faith during this time, and how they might need help. You can also keep in touch with each other and our pastor and parish leaders and staff on our various media platforms, including our parish website at www.sainttims.org, and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sttimothyultz/.

Stewardship, at its roots, also teaches that we are not supposed to give God our leftovers. We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our first fruits — giving to God

first and then using the rest for our other needs. This idea can be worrisome for many, especially during a crisis. Taking the correct steps toward good stewardship in every aspect of our lives boils down to trust and believing that God, who takes care of all His creation, will take care of us.

Prayerfully consider continuing to give a portion of your treasure back to God and our parish by making your regular gift to the offertory if you are able to do so. You can give at our online giving portal at www.osvonlinegiving.com/860, or you can drop a check in the mail to the parish office. Our mailing address is:

St. Timothy Catholic Church
17512 Lakeshore Road
Lutz FL, 33558

There will come a day, soon, when we will worship together again. Remain hopeful and pray unceasingly. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, remember there is hope. Our God is a great God, and He will not abandon us.

Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the salvation of souls, the reparation of sins, the reunion of all Christians, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father this month.
Amen.

An Inside Look at The Alpha Program *Answering the Big Questions*

Who is God? What is the meaning of life? What is my purpose?

At some point, these are things we are all drawn to ponder and reflect on. If only the answers came as easily as the questions!

Here at St. Timothy, we hope to journey alongside people who are asking these big questions. Whether you're a cradle Catholic who is wrestling with these ideas for the first time, or an atheist who has never felt drawn to go deeper, Alpha offers an opportunity to consider these realities in the company of others who are walking the same path.

"Alpha is a program that helps you answer life's big questions and helps you understand your relationship with Christ," says parishioner Joe LaMacchia, who coordinates the ministry, along with his wife, Mary.

This August will begin the third year of the program being offered at our parish. There are two different opportunities to participate — one that takes place on Thursday, during the day, and another, that takes place on Thursday evenings. Typically, there is one session that runs in the fall, followed by another beginning in January. The gatherings include a meal, a short video teaching, and a time for small-group discussion.

"People come in and sometimes initially have their arms crossed, but by the third week, everyone is leaning in and sharing their story and you can see that community," Joe says. "What did Christ do when He was with His Apostles or anybody? He said, 'Let's eat.' By having that dinner, that small group is building their 'Alpha table family.' They're building relationships with

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For those who serve on the Alpha team, it's a chance to grow in faith, along with those they serve.



Alpha is an opportunity to explore life's big questions alongside others on the same journey.



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17512 Lakeshore Road
Lutz, FL 33558
813-968-1077
www.sainttims.org

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each other, so they can feel more comfortable opening up and sharing their own stories.”

Rather than pushing the faith on people, the goal of Alpha is to invite people into a conversation, to create space for questions, and encourage people to reflect on their own journeys. The program is designed to meet people wherever they are, and help them take the next step in their faith.

“Whether you’re an atheist or a cradle Catholic, what we see is transformation,” Joe says. “It’s about your story — the story of your relationship with Christ.”

Alpha is also an opportunity to grow in one’s relationship with the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Halfway through the sessions, there is a weekend retreat centered on inviting the Holy Spirit into your life.

“During that weekend, we get to know Who the Holy Spirit is,” Joe says. “We have the Holy Spirit in us,

burning, like a pilot light — but when you go to Alpha, it’s like the furnace kicks on. It changes everything.”

Those who are involved on the Alpha team often find their own faith grows as a result of walking alongside others and witnessing God work in their lives.

“For me, it’s been amazing,” Joe says. “I’ve seen transformations, gifts of the Holy Spirit being imparted to people and even healing taking place.”

“When you experience that, you grow in your faith,” Mary adds.

Joe and Mary encourage their fellow parishioners to consider attending Alpha, or encouraging others that they think would benefit from the experience.

“Everybody’s welcome,” Joe says.

“Ask your family, your friends,” Mary adds. “Everybody knows somebody who they want to get closer to Jesus. Just come check out the Alpha program.”

If you would like more information, or to become involved in the ALPHA session that will begin in late summer, please check out the website — www.sainttims.org/Alpha — or contact Alpha@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.