



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



Welcome to Our New Pastor, Fr. John Blum

Courageously Witnessing the Gospel

After a springtime full of changes at St. Timothy, this month marks the beginning of a new chapter for our parish as we welcome our new Pastor Fr. John Blum.

Fr. Blum, who began his pastoral assignment here on July 1, is excited to be a part of our parish and school community!

"My hope is to be a good spiritual father to the people of God here," Fr. Blum says.

Fr. Blum grew up attending St. Patrick Parish and School in Largo. The oldest of eight children in a family of active Catholics, he first had an inkling

that he may have a vocation in the Church at a very young age. From the time he began altar serving in third grade and through his high school years, Fr. Blum became more and more aware of his call to the priesthood. He entered seminary immediately following his



Fr. John Blum on the Camino de Santiago in 2017

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Welcome to Our New Pastor, Fr. John Blum

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graduation from high school and was ordained a priest in the Diocese of St. Petersburg on May 18, 1996.

Fr. Blum has been blessed in a special way by each of the four parishes he has served — from his very first assignment at St. Ignatius of Antioch in Tarpon Springs to his last assignment before joining us, at St. John Vianney in St. Pete Beach.

“At St. Ignatius, I was just learning to be a parish priest,” Fr. Blum says. “I was blessed with a great Pastor who is still there, Msgr. Pellegrino, and I had a great Franciscan priest there who was a mentor to me during those years of being a new priest. The wonderful community there helped me grow into my priestly identity. And I have just spent 13 years as pastor of St. John Vianney. It’s been wonderful, with a lot of graces and a lot of blessings at the parish and the school. They helped me grow in my identity as Pastor, embracing the role of spiritual father in a very loving and welcoming community.”

In his 24 years of priesthood, Fr. Blum has discovered that God always has a plan for the day — and it may or may not resemble what is actually written on the calendar! As a result, Fr. Blum has developed a spirit of abandonment and surrender, trusting in anything that the Lord may have in store for him on a particular day. Each of those days brings new blessings as he joyfully serves the Church and her people.

“The heart and the center of my priestly ministry is just being able to bring Jesus to people in the Eucharist, offering the holy sacrament of Mass, and celebrating the holy sacraments with the people of God,” Fr. Blum says. “Everything flows out of that and returns to that. Baptizing children, bringing the RCIA people into the Church, First Communions, even ministering to people when they are grieving or things are challenging and journeying with them — those moments are just very special.”

For Fr. Blum, the key to a healthy and vibrant faith life is to stay close to Christ, especially in the Eucharist, and to our Blessed Mother. Just as St. John Bosco once saw in a dream, the Eucharist and Our Lady are the guideposts that will always keep us safe in a storm. As

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pastor, Fr. Blum hopes to provide a strong support to our parish’s continued efforts to share that vibrant faith with one another and with the wider community.

“I’m looking forward to working with all of the ministries and organizations,” he says. “As in any household, you have to be a good steward of all of your gifts, spiritual and temporal, so I’ve come to see the diocesan priest as a general practitioner in bringing ministries and organizations together to courageously witness the Gospel and to be that love in society in the ways that we serve.”

While “free time” is often rare for the Pastor of a thriving parish and school, when Fr. Blum does have time to unwind, you will likely find him outside. His father gave him a great love of fishing, and he also enjoys kayaking and exploring walking trails.

Fr. Blum is excited about the opportunity to serve the diocese here at St. Timothy and Mother Teresa School, and looks forward to getting to know all of our parishioners.

“We’re in the saint-making business, helping people to grow in holiness and become the saint that God has called all of us to be, so those are my hopes and desires for St. Timothy and Mother Teresa School,” Fr. Blum says. “I’m excited to be with the people of God here, and I ask for their prayers and want them to know that I’m praying for them as well.”

SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Letter From Our Pastor

Understanding God's Gift of Time

Dear Friends in Christ,

With the arrival of August, I find it hard to believe that summer is just about over! Of course, some of us are trying to squeeze in that last vacation, or just simply enjoying a “staycation” at home, soaking in the glorious summer season for a few more weeks. But for the most part, we’re starting to transition back into the swing of our fall routines.

A psychologist once said that time seems to pass more quickly as we get older because we’re experiencing fewer “firsts.” When we’re continually experiencing new things, time tends to stand still while we’re living them. After we’ve repeated those events numerous times, they don’t faze us much anymore — and before we know it, months have passed, seasons have changed, and it’s time to start the annual cycle again.

Yet, we should not allow our time to be something that simply evades our grasp, trickling through our fingers. After all, time itself — every moment on this earth — is a gift from God. We each have 24 hours today and seven days this week to use however we please.

At the end of this summer, we have the opportunity to reflect on how we chose to use our time these last



few months. Did we set aside time to pray? Have we allowed for time to serve others? Did we devote time each day to serve God?

When we assess the use of our time, we must make a spiritual examination — “Have I been a good steward of the time given to me?” Maybe now is a good time to make some changes in our lives and get more involved. There is no better time than right now to seek out ways to serve God, our parish, and those around us. This is what it means to be

a good steward!

As the lazy days of summer give way to the routine and activity of fall, remember to keep God in your hearts, in your minds, and on your tongue as we continue our stewardship journey as a parish family.

Please pray for me as I continue to pray for you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. John Blum". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Fr. John Blum
Pastor



St. Timothy Welcomes New Parochial Vicar

"I Want to See the Church Grow"

In addition to welcoming our new Pastor, Fr. John Blum, we are also pleased to have another new smiling face join him on the altar this summer — our new Parochial Vicar, Deacon Drew Woodke, who will be ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of St. Petersburg on Aug. 15 and officially become Fr. Drew.

Deacon Drew is thrilled to be beginning his first diocesan assignment here at St. Timothy.

Born and raised in the Tampa area, Deacon Drew attended Nativity Catholic School. As early as third grade, he began talking about the priesthood. That year, his teacher asked the class to draw pictures of what they wanted to be

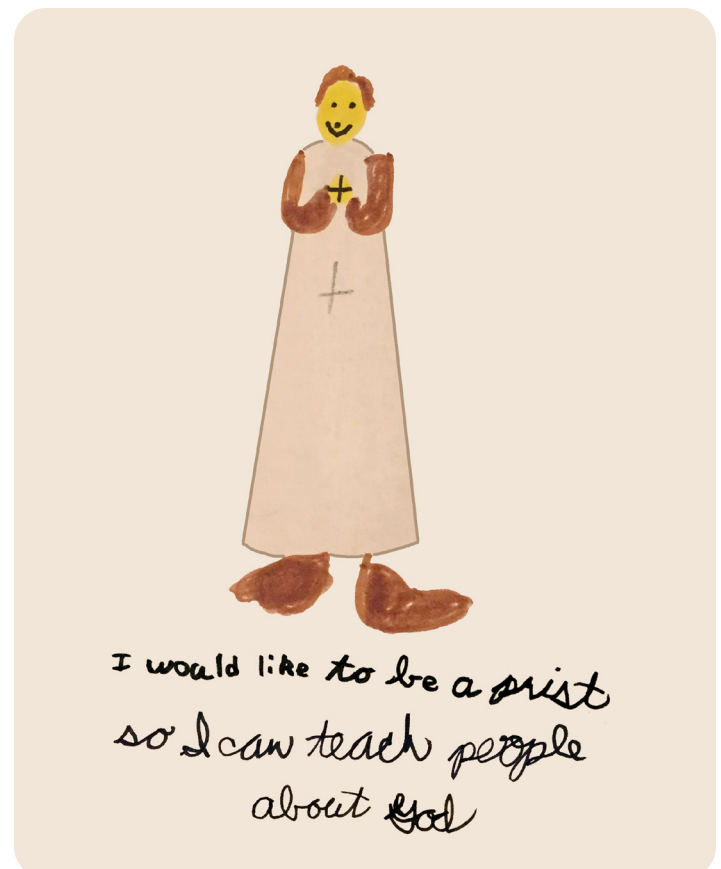
when they grew up, and, without hesitation, Dcn. Drew sketched a picture of a priest. Now, that picture is featured on the prayer card that will be used for his ordination!

As so often happens with teenagers, Dcn. Drew became busy with everyday life in high school and set aside the idea of a vocation in the Church. A talented cross country runner, he ultimately decided to forego competing in college, and instead accepted a job as the youth minister at St. Stephen Parish in Valrico.

It wasn't until he transferred to Franciscan University in Steubenville that he once more heard a call to the priesthood.



Deacon Drew Woodke, who began his assignment here at St. Timothy last month, will be ordained to the priesthood on Aug. 15.



When Deacon Drew Woodke was in third grade, his class was asked to draw a picture of what they wanted to be when they grew up. Drew's drawing from that day is featured on his ordination card.

Vicar — "Soon to Be" Fr. Drew Woodke Go Forward as I Go Forward"

"At Franciscan, I was getting used to praying more frequently and doing holy hours and things like that," Dcn. Drew says. "I had started to feel a call to priesthood, but it wasn't something I was willing to accept. I thought, 'I'll work with the Church, but I'll only do this much.'"

"Then the winter of my first year there, I was on a Born of the Spirit retreat led by Zach Kleinberg," he adds. "At the end of the retreat, there is time for people to pray over you, and somewhere along the way in prayer, Zach took his hands off my shoulder and said, 'You know, Drew, the Lord is calling you to something much deeper than what you are willing to give Him.'"

Returning to his room that night, Dcn. Drew reflected on Zach's words and realized that he was right. He promised the Lord that he would try to follow His call and was immediately filled with an overwhelming feeling of peace.

Dcn. Drew went on to finish his theology degree in Steubenville and then, with what he describes as a "consistent call on his heart," headed to St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami.

In addition to the vast training and knowledge he received in seminary, Dcn. Drew brings to St. Timothy the experience of his pastoral year at St. Ignatius of Antioch in Tarpon Springs, where he was able to immerse himself in the rhythm of parish life. Now, he is excited to jump into life here in our parish as Parochial Vicar.

"I look forward to saying Mass, hearing confessions, and just being with the people in their greatest joys and greatest sorrows," he says.

Thankful for the wonderful youth group that kept his faith alive through his high school years, Dcn. Drew is particularly happy to be at a parish with a vibrant school and youth ministry.



Dcn. Drew Woodke (front, center) and his family — (front, from left) brother Robby with niece, Rylee, and brother Zach; (back, from left) sister-in-law Brooke with nephew, Bert, and parents, Barbara and Bob.

"I wanted to be at a parish with a school and youth group because those ministries are very natural to me, and I enjoy them," Dcn. Drew says. "Working with young adults is a passion of mine. I've also worked with Life Teen, summer camps, and things like that. I want to be a part of young adult ministry because those are my peers, and I want to see the Church go forward as I go forward."

With great hope and trust in the Lord's plans for him as a newly ordained diocesan priest, Dcn. Drew is happy to begin his vocation here in the loving faith community of St. Timothy.

"I'm very excited to work with Fr. Blum," Dcn. Drew says. "We've known each other for about five years. He's a very, very kind person and he'll be my first 'on the job' teacher, so I'm looking forward to learning from him. It's a great parish, and I'm excited to be here!"

"I'm very excited to work with Fr. Blum. We've known each other for about five years. He's a very, very kind person and he'll be my first 'on the job' teacher, so I'm looking forward to learning from him. It's a great parish, and I'm excited to be here!" — DCN. DREW WOODKE



The Assumption of Mary:

A TIME TO CELEBRATE! AUG. 15

Can a pile of bones really be that exciting?

Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, eager to glimpse the spot in which the alleged bones of St. Peter, our first pope, remain to this day.

The relics of saints have been venerated throughout the ages in every corner of the world — yet, the bones of the very first Christian, the Mystical Rose, are nowhere to be found.

When it comes to the day, manner or year of the Blessed Virgin Mary's death, nothing is certain. No account is given in Scripture. The Church turns instead to Tradition for an answer.

Since the birth of the Church, no Marian relics have ever been venerated — nor can they ever be — because her body was *assumed*, or taken up, into heaven. There exist, therefore, no remains of the Blessed Virgin's body on this earth. She lives, right now, body and soul, in heavenly glory.

Although the particular dogma of the Assumption cannot be found in the writings of Scripture, if we look at many other writings by the early Christians, it is clear that the Church has always held this dogma to be true. Even more, though there is no statement of fact in the Bible itself that Mary was assumed body and soul, the truths that we do know about Mary from Scripture simply serve to back up the reality that she was assumed into heaven. She gave herself wholly to the Lord and followed His will for her life, perfectly, to the end.

The Assumption of Mary reveals that the promises of the Lord — including the resurrection of the body — were fulfilled in Mary. She shared most intimately in the life, death and resurrection of her Son, and was free from original sin and its effects — including corruption of the body at death.

Therefore, it was no surprise when, in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic faith

with these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory" (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44).

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is observed on the liturgical calendar as a solemnity — of higher importance than a feast. On Aug. 15, this wonderful celebration is accompanied by great hope in the resurrection of the body and everlasting union with God in heaven.



A Fond Farewell to Fr. Lou Turcotte

"Parishes and Places Woven Together"

It was with thankful hearts that we wished Fr. Lou Turcotte a fond farewell last month as he moved on to his next assignment at St. Raphael in St. Petersburg. The move was a bittersweet one for Fr. Lou — as he looked to the future with enthusiasm, he reflected on the past two years here at St. Timothy with a deep sense of gratitude for the many blessings he experienced in our parish.

Having arrived at St. Timothy as a brand-new priest in 2018, Fr. Lou felt immediately welcome.

"The first parish you're assigned to will always be special, but there is a certain nature here at St. Timothy," he says. "There is obviously a deep faith and spirituality, a hospitality and a spirit of welcoming, so I felt accepted with a lot of joy right from the get-go. These were the best staff and volunteers I have ever worked with, and it made my first assignment very easy in a lot of ways."

As Fr. Lou reflects on his time in our parish, there are many highlights that come to mind — the group activities



St. Timothy parishioners will certainly miss Fr. Lou Turcotte's joyful heart and smile!

and events celebrated throughout the year, the beauty of each Sunday Mass and watching people come flowing through the church doors, and the great privilege of sharing in the joys and sorrows of parishioners.

In addition to these treasured memories, Fr. Lou's time at St.

Timothy has also given him a greater understanding of what stewardship in action looks like on the parish level.

"You don't really know what it means to be a stewardship parish until you try to live it out," he says. "That's an adventure that St. Timothy is continuing to dive into. From

continued on back cover

"There is a sadness but also an excitement for what is coming," Fr. Lou says. "I'm only a half hour away, and this diocese is so closely knit that, in a sense, I don't really feel like I'm leaving. These parishes and places will continue to be woven together. There are still stories to be told." — Fr. Lou Turcotte



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A Fond Farewell to Fr. Lou Turcotte *continued from page 7*

what I've seen, people seem to be in on the process. It's been beautiful, and I'm hoping it can continue to evolve and grow. St. Timothy is a beautiful place of refuge and formation for parishioners, but there is also a responsibility there in how we will go out of these walls and care for others, and how we will become leaders in mission, in the diocese, and in charitable works. I'm really hopeful for what's to come."

Grateful for the encouragement he received during his first years of priesthood here, Fr. Lou is excited that his good friend from seminary, Fr. Drew Woodke, has the opportunity to begin his priesthood in our supportive parish.

"This is St. Timothy's third newly ordained priest in a row," Fr. Lou says. "It's a good place for someone to come in and grow and be loved and see how parishes are supposed to be, so I encourage the parishioners to see this as part of their responsibility and spirituality, to just

continue being the parish the Holy Spirit is calling them to be — a place of growth, welcoming and mentorship."

While goodbyes are never easy, Fr. Lou assures our parishioners that he will always feel a close connection with our faith community. He thanks the people of St. Timothy for a wonderful two years and looks to the future with great hope and enthusiasm for the many blessings God surely has in store for all of us!

"There is a sadness but also an excitement for what is coming," Fr. Lou says. "I'm only a half hour away, and this diocese is so closely knit that, in a sense, I don't really feel like I'm leaving. These parishes and places will continue to be woven together. There are still stories to be told. The Lord has been so good to me — pouring out that love in my life — and I'm trying to do the same. Every time I try to give back to Him, He turns it around. We can never get even, but only dive more deeply in His love."

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.