



# SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Phone Ministry Members Offer a Friendly Call and Conversation During Uncertain Times

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us — yet, we've all found blessings during the past year and a half, no matter how small. For example, the stay-at-home orders may have kept us from attending Mass, but they also helped many of us realize the blessings we have right here in our parish community.

The Phone Ministry was created last August for the sole purpose of letting parishioners know the people of St. Timothy are there for them and that they are missed. While currently inactive, volunteers are ready should the need arise. Chris Lichte helped organize the ministry, and Trudy Chleboski was very excited to assist with the calls. The parish center was changed to serve as a socially distanced, makeshift phone center. Every registered family received a call between August and September 2020 and also in February 2021.

"People were so happy that the parish was thinking about them," Trudy says. "They were happy to speak to someone and I was happy to hear a little about how they were doing. We prayed together, and this helped all of us feel better and added to our day."

There were 21 people who stepped forward in the first round to make calls. They gathered at different times and days and kept calling until everyone had received a call.



*Trudy Chleboski enjoyed the Phone Ministry last summer.*

*continued on back cover*

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# Living According to God's Will

## Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

**A**s Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong

challenge of continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming our thoughts to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. In turn, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have ever thought possible.

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# SAINT TIMOTHY

## CATHOLIC CHURCH

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

### THIS MONTH, WE REFLECT ON THE LIFE AND WITNESS OF *St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*

Dear Friends in Christ,

**D**uring the month of August, we celebrate the feast day of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross — Aug. 9.

Edith Stein was born into a Jewish family in Breslau, Germany — today part of Poland — in 1891. By the age of 14, she was a professed atheist, but her sincere search for the truth as a scholar of philosophy led her to the threshold of the Catholic Church. After reading the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, she knew in her heart that she must embrace the eternal truths of Catholicism. Ten years later, she entered a Carmelite community and was given the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. On Aug. 2, 1942, she was seized from her convent in the Netherlands by Nazi soldiers and died at the Auschwitz concentration camp seven days later. St. Teresa is venerated as a “martyr for love” who consciously offered her life for the salvation of her people.

The heroic witness of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross reminds me of these words from Christ that are so apropos on her feast day: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me... for whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross “found” her life by “losing” it for Christ’s sake. She understood well that one must willingly and lovingly embrace the Cross if one is to experience the joy of resurrected glory.

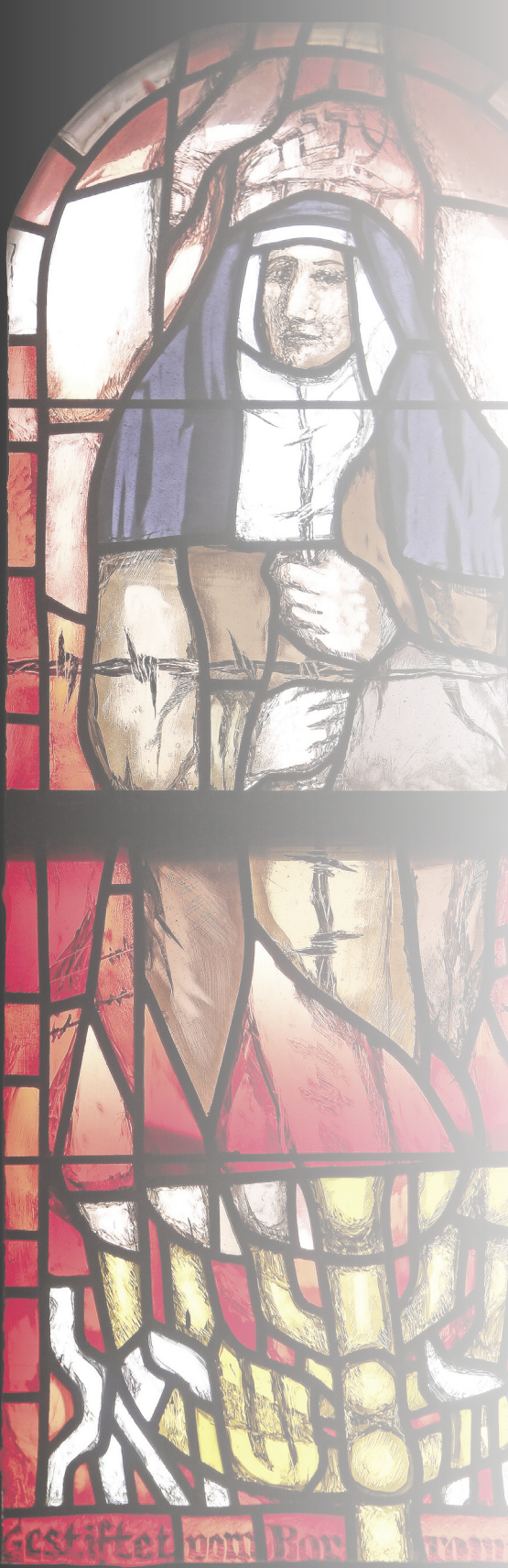
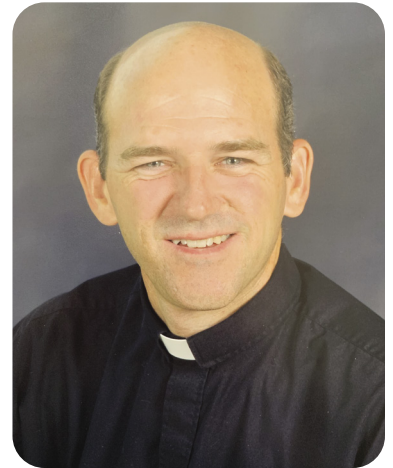
She prophetically said, “Christ gives up His life in order to open the way to eternal life for humanity. However, to win eternal life, they too must give up their earthly life. They must die with Christ in order to rise with Him.”

Inspired by the life and witness of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, may we faithfully and courageously witness our Catholic faith today, and every day.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. John Blum  
Pastor





MEET PARISHIONER

# LAMAR MITCHELL:

*Building Up the Kingdom of God  
with a Joyful Heart*

When Lamar Mitchell walks into St. Timothy's church building, he can't help but feel a rewarding sense of accomplishment.

"When I was helping to build St. Timothy's in 1999, I was actually going to St. Patrick's in South Tampa," he says. "I helped put up the steel structure, and the building was finished in about 2000. Even though I had been raised Catholic, I didn't even initially realize that it was a Catholic church we were constructing. Now I see that my efforts were helping to build up the Kingdom of God, and this is where He put me."

Years after Lamar helped build the church, he continues to build up his faith life in the very midst of it.

"We started attending St. Timothy's in about 2003, and I received the Sacrament of Confirmation with my daughter, Samantha, here," he says. "Our parish community is so awesome, and there are so many families that go here. It is beautiful! Although it is a huge parish, I still feel like I know everybody. It is tremendous what is going on at our church."

As a faithful steward of God's merciful gifts, Lamar also enjoys sharing with those in need through the Food for the Poor charitable outreach.

"This ministry is very special to me," he says. "I have given to them regularly for a while and they call on me regularly. There are people who are very poor in this world and they are really in need. I have a heart for them. I believe that I need to give back in life — it is so important. God has blessed me, and I have nothing more that I need or want. He has set me up left and right! The more you give, the easier it is to give. To be able to give my little bit to the God of the universe, to me, that is part of history!"



*Years after Lamar Mitchell helped build our church, he continues to build up his faith life in the very midst of it.*

Lamar has a profound love for God's creation, as well, and attends the Tampa Bay Orchid Society meeting at Christ the King Parish every third Thursday of the month.

"I raise 400 different kinds of orchids in my yard," he says. "I have a forest of orchids! They thrive because of the moisture. Working with orchids has been my hobby since 1980. My mom and I went to an orchid show when I was young, and I have loved orchids ever since. I have found that being with nature helps bring me closer to God. It brings me such a calming, relaxing feeling."

*"There are people who are very poor in this world and they are really in need. I have a heart for them. I believe that I need to give back in life — it is so important. God has blessed me, and I have nothing more that I need or want. He has set me up left and right! The more you give, the easier it is to give. To be able to give my little bit to the God of the universe, to me, that is part of history!" — LAMAR MITCHELL*



# *Hospitality:* THE CORNERSTONE OF STEWARDSHIP

**T**he 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 throughout 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” versus “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 one church, but as a stranger at another.

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 that changed 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 may 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.





## The Faith Journey of St. Genesius

Being a performer and a comedian may sound like a fun way to make a living.

St. Genesius, an outstanding actor, playwright and comedian in late Imperial Rome, certainly did have some fun for a while. But his career and life came to an abrupt end when his work ultimately led him to Christ.

Genesius was a comedian of some renown, but in the fourth century, Christians were often discouraged from becoming actors because ancient Roman comedy was highly sexual, crude and offensive.

In the year 303, Emperor Diocletian launched what would be the last great Roman persecution against the Christian Church. So, Genesius used the persecution as an opportunity to write a comedy about Christianity. He thought it might attract the attention of the Emperor, increase his fame, and make him some money in the process.

Genesius approached leaders of the Christian community in Rome and presented himself as a catechumen seeking Baptism. He was then

invited into a period of instruction in the faith, in order to learn the beliefs of the Christians. He was particularly taken by the idea of Baptism. But at the time, he had no plans to convert to the faith – it was all just a part of his plan to research new material to use for his comedy.

But a strange thing happened to Genesius as he began to work on his play, which was to be a comedy on Baptism. As Genesius began teaching the other actors about Baptism, he began to believe, and a desire to be baptized grew within his heart.

The opening night of the play was a great success, with Emperor Diocletian in attendance. But at some



point during the play, the Holy Spirit touched Genesius. He was no longer acting.

“You fools, I wish to die a Christian,” Genesius said. When the other actors asked him why, he said, “All my life I have been a fugitive, and only today have I found God.”

Everyone, especially Emperor Diocletian, laughed as Genesius spoke. Genesius, standing in a pulpit designed to look like the goddess Venus, began to preach to the audience. He told the crowd how he once hated Christians and enjoyed insulting them. He told the crowd how he deserted his own family as a child because they were Christians.

From there, Genesius addressed Diocletian, stating that he wrote the play to mock Christians, but had been converted on the spot during the course of the play, by the power of the Holy Spirit. “I now know that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, the Light, the Truth and the Mercy of all who have received His gift of Baptism,” Genesius said.

“O great Emperor, believe in these mysteries! I will teach you, and you will know the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God.”

Diocletian was furious and stopped the play, having the troupe arrested and beaten, while Genesius was condemned to torture. Through all of his sufferings, he continued to confess that Jesus was God. When this failed to break his spirit, Diocletian ordered Genesius be beheaded. His final words were, “Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and we shall have life in His name.”

St. Genesius is the patron of comedians and actors. His feast day is Aug. 25.





## Greeter Ministry Upholds Hospitality as a Pillar of Our Vibrant Faith Community

**W**e've learned a lot of new ways to do things during the COVID-19 pandemic, from electronic clinic visits to virtual Mass and much more. We've also learned that an important part of our faith is celebrating with one another. The Mass is to be experienced in person, alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ.

So what could be more important than making sure every single person seated around us knows they are truly welcome in God's house? A dedicated group of greeters at St. Timothy's makes sure of this — they are there to open the door, lend a smile or answer a question.

Liz Abrams took over this ministry for the Sunday 9 a.m. Mass around Pentecost of 2020. The main goal of the greeters, at that time, was to make sure people had Mass reservations and to check temperatures. But as the threat of COVID-19 has subsided, they are more like ambassadors, greeting people, answering questions, and lending a smile.

"We make them feel like they are the best people to walk through the door," Liz says. "We let them know their kids are so welcome."

Deacon Peter J. Burns started this ministry when the church reopened following the stay-at-home orders. It's fitting that Liz is coordinating this ministry — when she first came to St. Timothy, Deacon Peter greeted her and he remembered her name the next time he saw her.

"That has never really happened to me before," Liz says. "He is just that way. He is just really kind and friendly."

The greeters also stay after Mass to sanitize the pews and the high-touch areas. Liz invites anyone who loves being around people to consider becoming a greeter. You are already at Mass, so why not come a little early and stay a little after to serve? Plus, this is a ministry with no need for meetings or training. It is simple but important.

"This is more fun as more people come back to Mass," Liz says. "You can get to know people and be the face of the parish. Plus, it's not a huge commitment."

Liz is also thankful to the ushers for offering another smiling face to parishioners and guests.

"Everyone chips in," Liz says. "This is rewarding. I am happy I am doing this."

*If you would like to learn more about the Greeter Ministry, please contact the parish office at 813-968-1077.*



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## Phone Ministry Members Offer a Friendly Call and Conversation *continued from front cover*

Trudy enjoyed the occasional call to a friend as part of this ministry and also being introduced to new people, even if it was just over the phone.

“Of course, I said ‘yes’ when I was asked to help,” Trudy says. “I really care about our parish and our parishioners.”

Trudy says some people were very busy and didn’t have time to talk for long. Some had kids at home while they were working.

“This was a simple way to pray together and connect people back to church and the church family,” Trudy says. “This was something I could easily do to help. I have the time.”

Trudy was feeling alone, herself, so this ministry served a dual purpose of keeping her connected to our community, as well. Plus, being involved is just part of what Trudy does. Besides attending daily Mass as often as she can, Trudy serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and volunteers for Bingo, the Environmental Ministry, Women’s Club, and the Creative Hands Ministry. From a young age, she has known that volunteering is important. She says her mom and dad taught that lesson through their example.

“I have received much so it is appropriate for me to give back,” Trudy says. “I just always try to help where I can. We are working for God, so we have to give Him our best.”

*“People were so happy that the parish was thinking about them. They were happy to speak to someone and I was happy to hear a little about how they were doing. We prayed together, and this helped all of us feel better and added to our day.” — TRUDY CHLEBOSKI*

### *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 p.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.