



SAINT TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH



Promoting Vocations and Engaging Our Youth in Discerning Their Call

We all have a vocation, whether that's to the married life, single life or to be a priest or religious sister or brother. With this very much in mind, we celebrate National Vocations Awareness Week from Nov. 7-13.

The motto of our diocese is "Courageously Living the Gospel"—and we want to be sure everyone at our parishes is living the Gospel through their vocation, says Fr. Chuck Dornquast, who serves as the diocesan Director of Vocations and Seminarians. Part of his goal is to create a culture of vocations. He visits and preaches at each parish in the diocese at least every four years.

"What we know is that many of the youth of our diocese want to give their lives to Him, and they are willing to do that in significant ways," Fr. Chuck says. "There is a tremendous number of young people who are praying about vocations and open to what the Lord is asking."

Fr. Chuck says that sometimes there is a spirit of despair and pessimism that can often be associated with calls to religious life. However, this is not the truth.

"We want parents to know that priests aren't miserable," Fr. Chuck says. "Our lives are satisfying and fulfilling."

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Current deacons and seminarians from the Diocese of St. Petersburg

November 2021

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



Promoting Vocations and Engaging Our Youth

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Here at St. Timothy, we can help the cause by praying for vocations to the religious life and helping anyone we know who is considering the priesthood or religious life.

"The Alpha Program is a great way to start the process of discernment," Fr. Chuck says. "St. Timothy fosters a spirit of discipleship with Alpha, Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, and more."

Fr. Chuck visits schools and events for young men and women throughout the diocese. His office also performs social media outreach. Fr. Chuck can help women explore the religious orders that might be a fit. He then connects them to the order to learn more. Another part of Fr. Chuck's job is to walk with and support men studying for the diocesan priesthood.

Fr. Chuck asks all families to consider their child's vocation and how they can help him or her discern. He also asks all families to pray together and, if possible, to invite priests into their homes to get to know them better.

"One goal of my office is to have some type of discernment material in every Catholic household in the diocese," he says. "We want to help families be open to vocations."

The Office of Vocations holds many events throughout the year to promote prayer, discernment, and fun. Three times a year, a retreat is held at the diocese's formation house. There are also St. Andrew Dinners held throughout the diocese where men can come to enjoy a meal and hear the vocation stories of current priests.

Fr. Chuck's goal is not to push the priesthood on anyone — rather, he is here to help men discern their vocation — because he wants only priests who are called.

Fr. Chuck invites anyone discerning the religious life to reach out to him. He wants to help foster a strong faith and prayer life.

"Peter didn't begin by being called to be the rock," Fr. Chuck says. "He wanted his life to be in unity with Jesus. That's how it started."

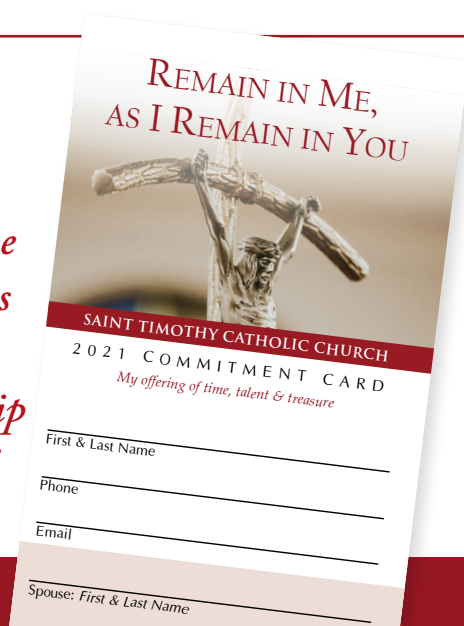
When men and women develop a strong faith, it's easier to answer "yes" to God's call.

"There's nothing to fear," Fr. Chuck says. "When we learn to trust the Lord, we develop dependence on Him. That makes saying 'yes' a lot easier because we know the One we are saying 'yes' to."

If you would like to learn more, or for helpful resources from the Office of Vocations, please visit www.dosp.org/vocations/.

Don't Forget to Return Your Commitment Card!

Please remember to turn in your commitment cards to the parish as soon as possible. We appreciate your willingness to participate in this year's Stewardship Renewal. The more we grow to embrace and understand the stewardship way of life, the more our parish will flourish and grow!



SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Letter From Our Pastor

This Month, We Commemorate All Souls

Dear Friends in Christ,

During this month of November, we turn our attention to the souls of the faithful departed who are in Purgatory undergoing the final purification of the elect. This is highlighted liturgically with the Commemoration of All Souls on Nov. 2.

The Holy Souls are friends of God who have died in His Grace and are assured of heaven, but who are not yet spiritually “clean” enough to enter into heaven. Their wedding garments are still stained with the imperfections, vices, and attachments to sin that need to be washed away so they can achieve the purity needed to be received into the heavenly wedding feast of the Lamb.

These holy souls are often referred to as the Church Suffering because their temporary separation from God and from the Beatific Vision is a cause of great pain. However, the suffering is not punitive, but purgative. Like gold tested in fire, the suffering experienced is the purgation of all the spiritual impurities and imperfections that ultimately lead to purification, healing, and wholeness.



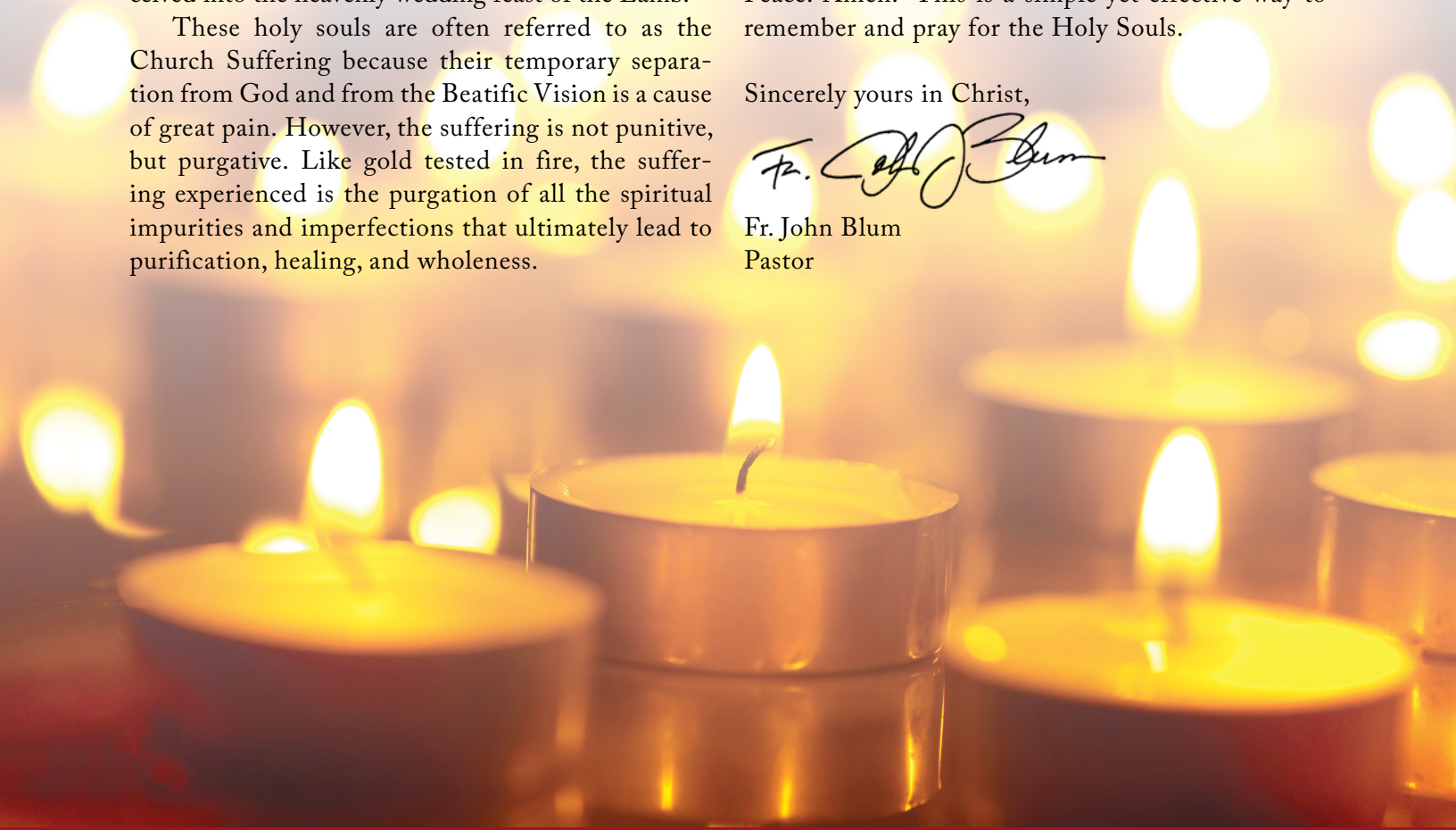
We, the Church Militant on earth, have the awesome opportunity and obligation to assist the Holy Souls with our prayers, sacrifices, and good works in order to help them reach their final destination — heaven.

And so, let us renew our commitment this month to pray for the souls in Purgatory when we are at Mass, when we pray the Rosary, even when we pray grace before meals. We can easily add to the conclusion of our grace before meals, “and may the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God Rest In Peace. Amen.” This is a simple yet effective way to remember and pray for the Holy Souls.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. John Blum". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Fr. John Blum
Pastor





MEET **SISTER ORGECHI OF** *A Joyful Life of*



"I love to know that my life serves!" says Sr. Orgechi.



As she grew up, Sr. Orgechi had a strong sense that she was called to become a religious sister, and she continued to open her soul to it all the while.

When Sister Orgechi Offurum, HHCJ, was just 6 years old, God touched her heart in a beautiful way.

"I have always loved journaling and writing stories, and when I was 6, I wrote that I had decided to become a religious sister someday," Sr. Orgechi says. "I started reading at an early age, so my parents kept bringing me Catholic comic books and books on the lives of the saints. I thought that their lives were so awesome and I noticed how happy they were. It made me want to become a religious sister."

Providentially, Sr. Orgechi was raised in a loving, devout Catholic family in Nigeria that nurtured the seeds of her vocation all along the way.

"I came from a very strong Catholic family, and I had three brothers and three sisters," she says. "My parents were very faithful in having us pray the family Rosary every night. The babies would even bring out their rosaries, and everyone had to be there, whether they were sleeping or not! Over summer vacation, we went to Mass each morning to start our day."

As she grew up, Sr. Orgechi continued to have a strong sense that she was called to become a religious sister, and she continued to open her soul to it.

"I just kept praying and praying about it," Sr. Orgechi says. "When I finished my first college degree, I decided that this is definitely what I wanted to be, so I entered the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HHCJ), and I have loved being with them ever since."

The Congregation of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus was founded by Servant of God Mother Mary Charles Magdalen Walker, a Religious Sister of Charity, who came to Nigeria in 1923 at the invitation of Bishop Joseph Shanahan of the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria. This heroic foundress lived out the preaching of being all things to all people, by engaging in any ministry that would uplift the standard of life of the people she served.

Over the years, Sr. Orgechi has cherished many aspects of her religious vocation, especially the communal life.

"We live a lot like the early Christians mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, who shared everything," Sr. Orgechi

FURUM:

Serving Others in Christ

says. “We use everything in common, and nothing belongs to us personally. Further, even though we receive a stipend for teaching, we do not keep it for ourselves. We give it to our community, which uses some of it and gives the rest of it to fund various corporal works of mercy, such as orphanages.”

Impressively, Sr. Orgechi’s vocation has also spoken volumes to her heart about the value of faithful stewardship.

“Stewardship is all about serving others because you see Christ in them — because they are made in the image and likeness of God,” she says. “My fellow religious sisters and I serve in various ministries because we believe that you should serve with the talent that God gave you. I love to know that my life serves!”

She also really loves teaching science and religion at Bishop Larkin Catholic School in Port Richey, as well as teaching First Communion at St. Timothy.

“I really love teaching, especially First Communion,” she says. We use a program called ‘Blessed’ which teaches our children that God loves them no matter what, which is very important. It shows them that they are deeply blessed. I want them to know that when they receive Communion, they are receiving a God who really loves them.”

Two of Sr. Orgechi’s fellow religious sisters, Sister Agnes Okon, HHCJ, and Sister Grace Ozomba, HHCJ, attend our parish as well and live with her in a nearby convent.

“The atmosphere of our parish is very welcoming, and it feels like a family,” she says. “I hope we never lose that. It was one of the first things my sisters and I noticed when we came here.”

“Stewardship is all about serving others because you see Christ in them — because they are made in the image and likeness of God. My fellow religious sisters and I serve in various ministries because we believe that you should serve with the talent that God gave you. I love to know that my life serves!”

— SISTER ORGECHI OFFURUM



During a pilgrimage, Sr. Orgechi enjoys time on the Sea of Galilee.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF *Loving God More Deeply at Mass*

When we meet a person that intrigues us, that attraction becomes a frequent topic of conversation. This attraction alters behavior so that we become enthralled and desire to share our enthusiasm.

Imagine if we were more enthralled with the presence of Christ in our lives. Imagine if we fully recognized that Christ is truly present to us in His precious Body and Blood, and present as well in the proclamation of His Word and in the gathering of our community, praying and singing (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy], para. 14). Recognizing the living Christ in all these ways would awaken in us the desire to be with the One who is the object of our most fundamental, pure, and holy attraction to our merciful, loving, and gracious Savior.

If we were to recognize the presence of Christ in these beautiful ways, wouldn't our desire to be more completely in His presence increase? Surely our desire to be better stewards of our time with the Lord would grow. Our attention to the readings and other prayers of the Mass would bring about within us deeper communion with the One who suffered and died for us. If I recognized that God is the answer to all my pangs of hunger, that Christ is my way to the Father, and that the Holy Spirit works to convert my heart and soul every day, would I not seek to fill that hunger at the banquet of the Lamb?

While active participation in Sunday Mass is an obligation for Catholics, we also will do well to see the lovely, motherly care the Church shows us in establishing that requirement. *The Code of Canon Law* states clearly in paragraph 1247, "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass." Sometimes, we might hear that as an overbearing rule. But it might more correctly be understood as our Mother, the Church, helping us learn what is best for us. At Mass, we hear the living Word of God proclaimed. He speaks to us. We receive as hungry, needy sinners, the precious Body and Blood of Christ. We encounter Christ's living presence in our brothers and sisters worshipping God with us. If we truly understood that amazing

truth, then how might it affect our lives? How might it affect our relationships? How might it impact our decision to bring our children along to Mass? How might it awaken within us a deeper attraction, fascination, desire for the Lord?

Generally, when we find ourselves fascinated with someone, we want to spend time with them, to see them, to listen to them, to get to know them, to develop a healthy, loving relationship with them.

Considering our reliance on the Lord of life and love, our fascination with His mercy, His goodness, His willingness to call us to Himself, maybe we should prepare ourselves more thoroughly by asking ourselves some questions. For example, as I prepare to come to Church, do I find my mind turning to a receptive welcome of the Lord, just as I'll be welcomed at the door of Church? Have I dressed for the important weekly (or daily) moment of meeting my King? Do I expect some profound wisdom from God in the readings? Am I open to correction, to challenge, to affirmation in the readings of God's Word? Do I intently pray along with the priest presider throughout the Mass? Do I make an offering of my life, along with the bread and wine? Do I genuinely hunger for the Body and Blood of Christ? And do I long for that blessing that sends me on my way with the mission to build the Kingdom?

Instead of worrying about what "counts" when it comes to Sunday Mass, maybe we should work hard at fostering our love for the Eucharist, our desire for eternal life, our attraction to the Master who calls us into a life of active discipleship. Instead of a merely heavy-handed requirement, maybe we can see more clearly that being at Mass together helps nourish us for a whole week of building God's Kingdom. Coming with those expectations, desires, and hopes, leaving early when unnecessary would disappear as a temptation instantly. Coming late because other things have taken priority would not typically happen, other obligations notwithstanding. Christ desires our company at Mass, from beginning to end. Let's draw near to Him.

The Marriage Course:

STRENGTHENING THE BONDS OF MATRIMONY IN OUR PARISH

One year ago, Marco and Yamileth Santos made a choice to seize an opportunity and invest a little time and energy into their marriage. Here at St. Timothy Catholic Church, the Marriage Course is offered a couple times a year to help strengthen and encourage marriages within the parish.

"We met once a week for seven weeks," Marco says. "Each week we would go through a chapter in the book and watch a video about it. There is also a study journal that contained various questions."

"It really has something for everyone," Yamileth says. "It can help any couple strengthen their marriage, but young couples can particularly benefit from this course. It can help prevent marriage difficulties from escalating. It gives you the tools to learn the best way to enjoy your marriage."

Some of the topics covered include resolving conflicts, dealing with extended family, and the power of forgiveness.

"Each week has a different theme," Yamileth says. "For us, week two was probably the most beneficial. It was about the art of communication. We have been married for 25 years and it really helped us with communication and listening to each other. We would see things in different ways, so we would be upset when we started communicating. This gave us a lot of tools for dealing with these conflicts."

"For me, better communication and understanding each other's needs was so helpful," Marco adds.



Marco and Yamileth Santos

As St. John Paul II said, "Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family — a domestic church." In turn, the Church is often referred to as "the Bride of Jesus." This parallel is not lost on the Santosos.

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"I feel like by taking this course, it shows us how God crossed our paths. Everything that happens in this world is in His hands. He knows how we need each other and how we can be so strong together. At the same time, it shows me that God is the head of our marriage. He is the glue that holds us together. And if He is the glue, then nothing can separate us." — YAMILETH SANTOS



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“Our marriages are supposed to reflect that marriage,” Yamileth says. “It is a sacred union. Taking a course like this is creating a foundation to be strong for your family. It helps couples succeed in their marriages.”

Both Marco and Yamileth encourage other couples to participate in the course.

“Have courage and find the time,” Marco says. “It will be very rewarding at the end. You might not neces-

sarily need help on every topic but I can almost guarantee that you will find help in some areas.”

“I feel like by taking this course, it shows us how God crossed our paths,” Yamileth adds. “Everything that happens in this world is in His hands. He knows how we need each other and how we can be so strong together. At the same time, it shows me that God is the head of our marriage. He is the glue that holds us together. And if He is the glue, then nothing can separate us.”

The next course will be starting in January 2022. All couples are invited to invest in their marriages and participate in the Marriage Course. For more information on the Marriage Course, please visit <https://sainttims.org/marriage-course/> — you may also contact Roger and Michele Caruso at 813-767-0071 (to call/text) or mrmrcaruso@msn.com.

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.