



SAINT TIMOTHY CATHOLIC CHURCH



Celebrating Fr. John Blum's Ordination Anniversary

"A Tug at His Heart"

Fr. Blum's Ordination Mass, 1996

Our pastor, Fr. John Blum, was 8 years old when he first felt a tug at his heart and the initial stirrings of a vocation to the priesthood.

"The seeds of a vocation were planted when I began serving at the altar, and they grew steadily over the years," Fr. Blum says. "In high school, you begin to think about careers, to think seriously about what you'll do with your life, and I felt compelled to discern the priesthood."

This year we're celebrating the 25th anniversary of Fr. Blum's ordination to the priesthood. The oldest of eight children, he was raised in a big Catholic family where they actively lived the faith in their home.

"Having the faith nurtured at home in so many wonderful ways is a big part of my vocational story," Fr. Blum says. "There was a strong connection between parish life and family life through Catholic devotions, especially the Rosary and fidelity to Sunday Mass."

It felt natural for Fr. Blum to become a diocesan priest. So, he attended seminary at St. John Vianney College Seminary in Miami and then studied theology at St. Vincent de Paul Seminary in Boynton Beach. He was ordained May 18, 1996, at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle in St. Petersburg.

"What I have most enjoyed about the priesthood is being able to administer the sacraments, especially the Eucharist," Fr. Blum says. "All my pastoral assignments have been great blessings in their own ways. I also had the opportunity to serve as vocations director for the diocese and work with our seminarians on their journeys to the priesthood."

Over the years, Fr. Blum has also been blessed to lead several pilgrimages, and he has traveled with faith community members and families to France, Spain, Portugal, and the Holy Land.

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Celebrating Fr. John Blum's Ordination Anniversary

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"The pilgrimages have been grace-filled experiences," Fr. Blum says. "Twice, I was able to walk the Camino de Santiago. In the Holy Land, we visited all the places you read about in the Scriptures. It was incredibly memorable."

Fr. Blum served 13 of the past 25 years at St. John Vianney in St. Pete Beach — a significant and special part of his priestly ministry and life.

Bishop Gregory Parkes called Fr. Blum on March 24, 2020, a week into the COVID-19 lockdown, and asked him if he would be willing to leave St. John and come to St. Timothy.

"It was a simple call, and I had a simple answer," Fr. Blum says. "I said I will go where you need me to serve. I felt that God had a plan and purpose for me and for St. Tim's, and I had to be open to that plan, even under challenging and surreal circumstances."

Since joining St. Timothy's, Fr. Blum has deeply appreciated the community's warmth and hospitality.

"This is a wonderful faith community with such a spirit of giving," Fr. Blum says. "They are living a life of faithful stewardship. The parishioners understand what it means to be good stewards of their gifts, talents, and time. Seeing this has been edifying for me."

The past 25 years of Fr. Blum's priesthood have been filled with great joys and blessings, and he looks forward to experiencing more joys and blessings with the faith community at St. Timothy.

"God has called me to begin a new chapter here with you at St. Timothy," Fr. Blum says. "Thank you for the many ways that you faithfully serve this parish family and for witnessing to the Catholic faith and the Gospel."

"God has called me to begin a new chapter here with you at St. Timothy. Thank you for the many ways that you faithfully serve this parish family and for witnessing to the Catholic faith and the Gospel." — FR. JOHN BLUM



Fr. Blum at the Mass of Thanksgiving reception with his family



Fr. Blum celebrating Mass in Jerusalem near the upper room, 2011

SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Letter From Our Pastor

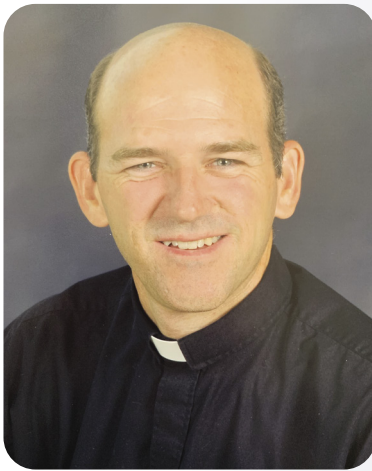
This Month, We Honor Our Blessed Mother on Her Birthday

Dear Friends in Christ,

Birthdays are always special occasions we all enjoy celebrating. We send cards, give gifts, gather with family, and loved ones, sing “Happy Birthday,” and enjoy the traditional birthday cake. We make a big deal about birthdays because they remind us how special, precious, and wonderful is the gift of life given to us by God.

On the Church’s calendar, we celebrate three important birthdays. On Dec. 25, we celebrate the Birthday of Jesus; on June 24, we celebrate the Birthday of St. John the Baptist; and on Sept. 8, we celebrate the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Why do we celebrate Mary’s birthday on Sept. 8? The answer lies in another very important feast day of Our Lady, and that is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8. The Immaculate Conception is a dogma of the Church, which states that Mary was preserved free from all stain of Original Sin from the very first moment of her conception (this grace also preserved Mary from all sin throughout her life). This was a special gift from God and a wonderful privilege bestowed upon the Blessed Mother as she would become the pure, holy vessel to carry in her womb Christ, the Son of God. So, since



we celebrate Mary’s Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, we celebrate her birthday exactly nine months later on Sept. 8!

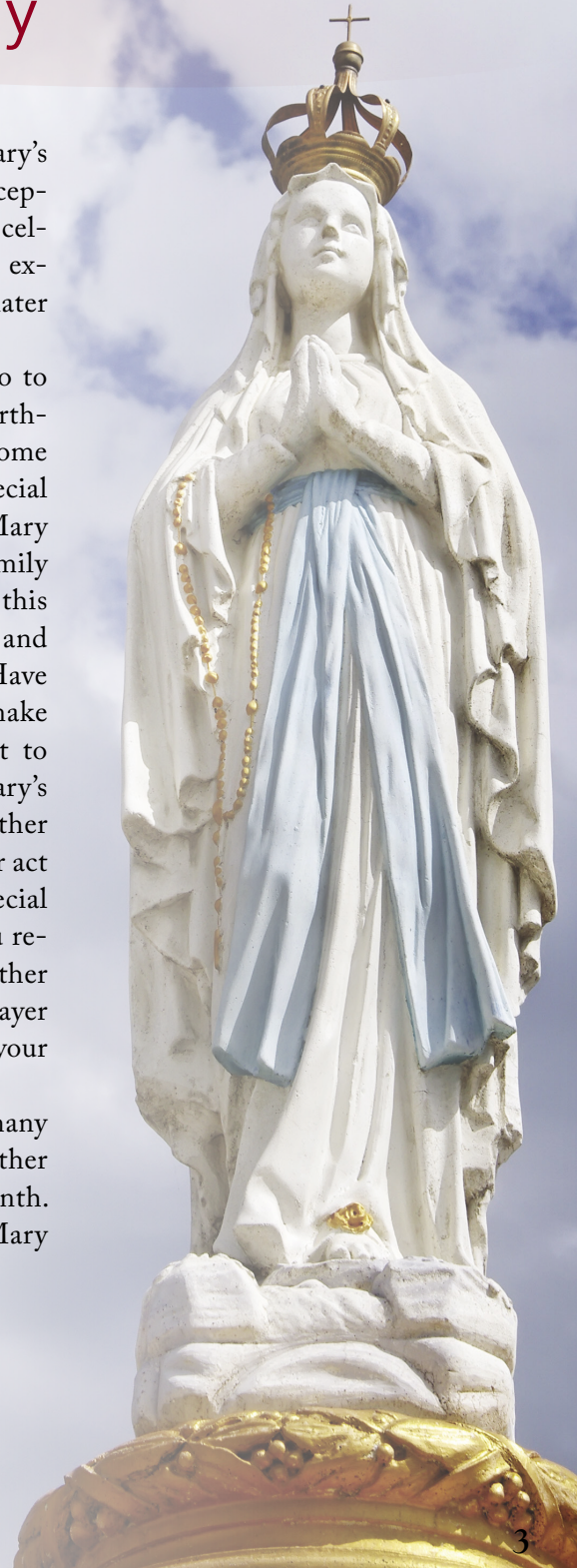
What can we do to celebrate Mary’s birthday? Here are some ideas: Make a special birthday cake for Mary and have it as a family dessert one night this

month. Light a candle on the cake and sing “Happy Birthday” to Mary. Have your children or grandchildren make a birthday card for Mary. Bring it to church and place it at the foot of Mary’s statue to show your love for the Mother of God. Decide to do a good deed or act of kindness and make that your special gift to Mary for her birthday. If you really want to make our Blessed Mother happy, gather for some family prayer time and pray a family Rosary as your gift to Mary.

These are just some of the many ways we can honor our Blessed Mother and celebrate her birthday this month. Happy Birthday, Blessed Mother Mary — we love you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. John Blum
Pastor





Fr. Drew Woodke

Celebrates a Year of Priestly



Fr. Drew Woodke feels so blessed to be living out his vocation as a priest. He loves celebrating the sacraments and being a part of the lives of parishioners. He also loves administering the Anointing of the Sick, since it's a beautiful gift to give someone who is suffering.

It should have been a special day for Fr. Drew Woodke. In fact, the date — May 16, 2020 — is even inscribed on the chalice he uses for Mass. It was the day he was to be ordained to the priesthood. But the COVID-19 pandemic altered those plans. Ordination was pushed back to, hopefully, allow more people to attend. When that wasn't possible, it was rescheduled to Aug. 15, 2020. Fr. Drew was then able to invite 50 people to the Cathedral for the ceremony.

"This year, the guys I was in seminary with all texted each other and said, 'Happy would-be ordination date,'" says Fr. Drew with a laugh.

Despite the altered plans, Fr. Drew says it was a beautiful celebration with about 80 priests present to concelebrate.

When Fr. Drew first arrived at St. Timothy's in May 2020, he was both a deacon and a parochial vicar since he was not yet ordained. Although Fr. Drew wishes things could have been more normal when he was first ordained, he appreciates the unique opportunity he had to take the time to ease into parish life. He came to St. Timothy's when there were no public Masses due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"I think, normally when a priest is ordained, they are thrust right into parish life," he says. "It's almost like, zero to 60. You have to hit the ground running to catch up to speed with what has been happening."

Instead, Fr. Drew had the opportunity to take the time to become more centered and focus on the many details of our parish. Of course, when churches did open, there were fewer people in attendance for Mass than normal.

But Fr. Drew is happy to report that he's met more St. Timothy's parishioners in the days after Easter of 2021 than in all the time before that.

"There's been a shift in parish life," he says. "It's so nice to see people coming back."

Service and Ministering to Our Community

Fr. Drew has enjoyed his first year as a priest, even though it has taken place during an unprecedented time. He remembers being concerned in March 2020, along with many other priests, as to whether people would continue to support their parish, and would they return when public Masses started again?

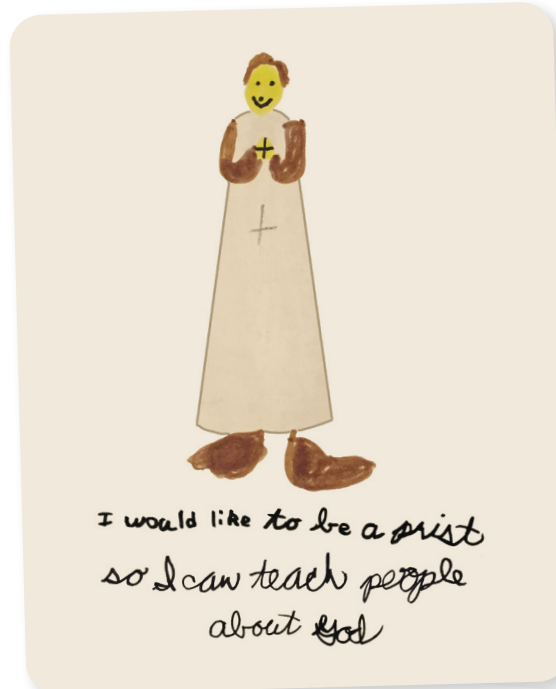
"I'm happy to report that we didn't need to worry at St. Tim's," he says. "People stood up in a really big way. It was touching to see the generosity and faith of people. This community really is faith-filled, and they proved it."

Fr. Drew feels so blessed to be living out his vocation as a priest. He loves celebrating the sacraments and being a part of the lives of parishioners. He also loves administering the Anointing of the Sick, since it's a beautiful gift to give someone who is suffering.

"On the day we had First Communion Masses this year, I went from Mass to confession to First Communion Mass to anointing someone to another Mass of first communicants," Fr. Drew says. "I feel so privileged to be part of such monumental moments in people's lives."

As a message to parishioners, after a year of the priesthood, Fr. Drew wishes to thank everyone for welcoming him, as well as their understanding and patience. He also wants to thank parishioners for their continued generosity during the pandemic.

He has so enjoyed getting to know people and being involved in the parish. He even spent some of June leading the games and getting to know the kids at Vacation Bible School. Fr. Drew follows the lead of his two favorite saints, St. Francis of Assisi — St. Francis' Prayer of Peace is important to him — and St. Ignatius of Loyola. In his free time, Fr. Drew loves to golf, mountain bike, exercise, and watch sports.



Fr. Drew's third-grade self-portrait, for which he drew what he wanted to be when he grew up, was included on his ordination prayer card.

The back of Fr. Drew's ordination prayer card includes the Prayer of Peace.

FR. MARK ANDREW WOODKE

Ordained a Priest of Jesus Christ
August 15, 2020
St. Jude Cathedral, St. Petersburg, FL

THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
where there is hatred, let me sow love
where there is injury, pardon
where there is doubt, faith
where there is despair, hope
where there is darkness, light
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console
to be understood, as to understand
to be loved, as to love
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.



ST. RAPHAEL



ST. MICHAEL



ST. GABRIEL

Celebrating the Feast of the *Archangels*

Every Sept. 29, the Church celebrates the feast day of the Archangels — St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael. We are blessed to be inspired by these “servants and messengers of God” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 329).

The term “archangels” has its Scriptural basis in the New Testament (1 Thes 4:16, Jude 1:9), indicating a chief or leading angel. “Archangel” generally refers to St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael, as they are the three angels most frequently mentioned throughout Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. The fact that these three angels are mentioned by name on multiple occasions indicates the significance of their roles in the history of salvation. It is because of these important roles that we take pause to celebrate on Sept. 29.

St. Michael is mentioned by name on several occasions in Sacred Scripture (Dn 10:13, Rev 12:7), and his role in the Tradition of the Church has been extensively documented. He has been widely referred to as the “great prince,” and is most often associated with the apocalypse — the final battle against Satan. Christian Tradition gives St. Michael four different roles, but he has primarily been regarded as the patron and protector of the Church.

St. Gabriel is mentioned by name in Scripture (Lk 1:19), and Tradition has also assigned him implicit roles within Scripture where he is not specifically mentioned. Most important, however, is St. Gabriel’s role as the messenger of God, delivering to Mary the announcement of the birth of Our Savior (Lk 1:26).

St. Raphael is mentioned by name only in the Book of Tobit, where he is responsible for healing Tobias. Raphael means “God has healed” and thus, he has also often been associated with the “angel of the Lord” (Jn 5:4).

The feast day on Sept. 29 gives each of us the opportunity to consider our own role in the Church, as we gratefully commemorate the Archangels responsible for carrying out their roles of defender, messenger and healer.

A Visit with Founding Pastor, Msgr. Hughes: *Continuing to Bless and Serve Our Parish in Retirement*

Thanks to the grace of God working through Msgr. Hughes, our parish, at least in part, is the beautiful place it is today. When Msgr. Hughes served as the founding Pastor of St. Timothy Catholic Church from 1985 to 1996, he encountered various trials but worked through them all with a joyful, faith-filled heart.

"I really liked being at St. Timothy, and I made a lot of discoveries here because it was my first time being a Pastor," he says. "At the time I came to this parish, the median age of the parishioners was about 18. Because we did not have a parish school or a Catholic school close by, we literally had to deal with hundreds of children in our Religious Education program. That was a real challenge, but we did it, and they are all grown up now!"

Although Msgr. Hughes retired about two years ago, we continue to be blessed by his presence as he offers Mass and helps out at our parish in whatever ways he can.

In addition to being the Pastor of our parish, Msgr. Hughes has also served several other parishes. He spent four years in San Antonio at St. Anthony of Padua Parish; six years as Pastor at St. James the Apostle Catholic Church in Port Richey; and as the founding Pastor of St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church in Trinity for 12 years. Presently, he offers weekday Masses at St. James in Port Richey and funerals upon request.

During his retirement, Msgr. Hughes has been embracing the stewardship vision as a priest by giving of himself in many ways, particularly through the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Ministry.

"I have helped with this ministry since about 1986, and I continue to be involved with it and present marriage weekends," he says. "In my opinion, Worldwide Marriage Encounter is the best ministry that the Church offers to married couples. Through it, I have witnessed marriages heal and couples learn to communicate better. It also provides a way for some individuals to renew their faith life or discover the Catholic faith all together."



Although Msgr. Hughes retired about two years ago, we continue to be blessed by his presence as he offers Mass and helps out at our parish in whatever ways he can.

Furthermore, Msgr. Hughes enjoys giving his time, talent, and treasure to Catholic charities in need.

"I have developed a relationship with Catholic Relief Services and I continue to support their ministries around the world," he says. "I trust what they are doing and I have seen what they accomplish."

When asked for his thoughts on how to be a good steward of one's gifts, Msgr. Hughes offers some helpful advice.

"I encourage people to give to ministries that are directly associated with the Catholic Church," he says. "Over the years, I have found these types of ministries are carefully looked at so I can trust what they are doing with the funds donated to

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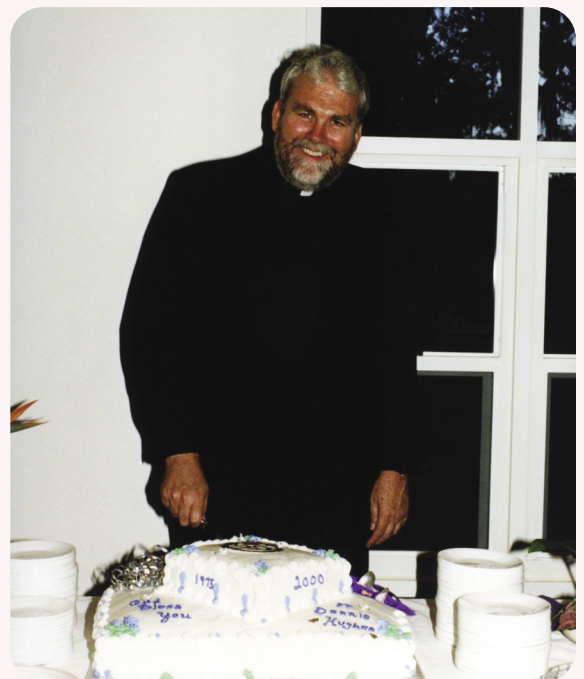
Msgr. Hughes *continued from page 7*

them. I know there are a lot of good organizations out there, but there are also ones that run really slick commercials or show pictures that may or may not represent what they actually do, so you need to be careful.”

Looking back, Msgr. Hughes is truly grateful for the life God has given to him, as well as the sacred vocation to which he has been called.

“I am indeed happy that I answered the call to the priesthood,” he says. “I entered the seminary after high school, and I have been seeking to follow the Lord ever since. I believe that I made the right decision and would gladly do it again! Celebrating the sacraments with people is such a joy for me. I also really enjoy being with people in their time of need.”

“I encourage people to give to ministries that are directly associated with the Catholic Church. Over the years, I have found these types of ministries are carefully looked at so I can trust what they are doing with the funds donated to them. I know there are a lot of good organizations out there, but there are also ones that run really slick commercials or show pictures that may or may not represent what they actually do, so you need to be careful.” — MSGR. HUGHES



Msgr. Hughes is truly grateful for the life God has given to him, as well as the sacred vocation to which he has been called.

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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.