

RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Can you believe it's already August? When summer began, many of us felt a great sense of freedom. We made plans to visit loved ones, and we booked long overdue trips. We made it a point to do and experience things that were not possible a year ago, and here we are at the last full month of summer. Some of us are enjoying every single minute under the sun, while others are beginning to make plans for the fall. A few of us are beginning to think about the holiday season; I'm one of those people!



While there's nothing wrong with being a planner, COVID challenged the over-planner in me, and I'm thankful. Those of us who plan well in advance can forget the fact that things can change in a moment. In a matter of seconds, all our hard work can be thrown out or drastically altered. This can be devastating, but it can also be humbling. COVID has humbled me, as I'm sure it has many of you. But rather than causing a fear of the future, it has made me grateful for every day.

As we continue to gather in person for worship, we're exploring ways to come together beyond Sunday for equally meaningful purposes. I'm excited to share with you that in the fall we will see the return of our Children and Youth

Formation Program. This includes our Lakeside Worship & Learning event for children, youth, and families; Sunday School for elementary school and early middle school-aged children; a once-a-month class for our parish teenagers; and a youth confirmation program. Later this month, you will all receive more information about our revamped Children and Youth Formation Program. It's important that we all be aware of the great work taking place in our parish, and that we both support this ministry and spread the word. Let your family and friends know about the offerings taking place here at Saint John's for children, youth, and families.

Not only are we relaunching our Children and Youth Formation Program, but we also plan to hold weekly and seasonal parish gatherings. Our Wednesday 9:30 a.m. mass is once again open to the public. Deacon Alex and faithful volunteers are excited to coordinate dinner fund raisers and other activities to financially support our parish. In the fall we will continue to offer online learning opportunities, like our current study on the Sermon on the Mount. In addition, I plan to offer a late fall/Advent in-person learning series. While this is still in the works, I'm happy to share with you a new program that we will be launching this fall: *Let us keep the Feast!* This is a monthly worship and dinner series that celebrates feast days of the Church that would otherwise go unobserved. Each gathering will begin with a simple mass in the church, followed

by a thematic dinner in the rectory or parish hall. The following feast dates will be observed in 2021:

Tuesday, September 14 - Holy Cross Day

Thursday, October 28 - Ss. Simon & Jude

Thursday, November 16 - St. Hilda of Whitby

Tuesday, December 14 - St. John of the Cross

Our evening schedule will begin with mass at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m. For our first celebration, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we will have a Middle Eastern-inspired dinner. Save the date, bring your appetite, and bring a friend! As the date approaches, we will be taking dinner RSVP's to help with food preparation.

Amidst this difficult year, there have been many things I have been grateful for: the love of my parents, family, and friends; my dear Ozzie; our quaint town of Bellefonte; and our parish community. Every time I walk up to our red church doors and step inside our beautiful sanctuary, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve as your priest. I look forward to worshipping almighty God with you, in-person or online, especially on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, when we will dedicate our parish ex-votos as a sign of gratitude for God's grace and blessings upon our individual and common lives.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Carlos†

FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH

"Before prayer changes others, it first changes us." ~Billy Graham



I was going to take a break to give you a reprieve from my ramblings; however, I couldn't resist, with all the excitement in my heart over revelations about prayer and gratitude during the past few days. Like all of you, I have been anxious about what's been going on in the world, with climate change, politics, social gatherings, and the uptick in COVID reporting, and with the Delta variant affecting adults and especially children. The news has been dismal. I watch many news stations and try to get different perspectives on current events. In doing so, my emotions get in the way of my prayer life. Why should I pray? God is not listening these days. He's too busy with everything else and doesn't have time for me. Finally, in despair, I conclude that we deserve what we are getting for all our actions—or maybe inaction. Wouldn't you know? I just caved in to the "evil one."

You would think I should know better, having received all this training in prayer, meditation, reading scripture, compline, daily prayer, morning, noon, and night. I realized at a Weight Watchers Zoom meeting this morning, plus our Zoom Bible study on Wednesday (using the book from A. J. Levine's *Sermon on the Mount*), that I let my guard down. It wasn't God who wasn't

paying attention, but me not shutting up enough to listen. In our study group we discussed prayer and ways of praying. All my prayers have been asking why. As the book states, “why” is not a sign of disbelief; it expresses our human resistance to chaos. Psalm 42:9 asks, “I say to God, my rock, why have you forsaken me? Why must I walk around mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?”

I mentioned this morning’s Weight Watchers meeting. The wellness part of the meeting explores how we can be happy where we are. Many said weight loss—which is ok—but many others shared about cooking healthy meals, being creative in the arts, exercising, and finally being grateful for something greater than ourselves. God is continually around us in all that we do. All we need to do is *look*. Let us look at the wonders in our life and practice a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving for what we have, instead of dwelling on what we don’t have. This leaves all the room in our hearts to pray for the need of the world and for the people in our lives. This seems to be a quick answer, but I’m willing to go further in this discussion with any of you who care to reflect upon these ideas in your own life and to hear your own thoughts. Do know that our Father hears each word from our lips and our heart.

I continue to work with the food bank. We kind of slacked off a bit in July. However, hunger doesn’t take a break, so let’s make a push in August for condiments. We will change our focus in September for different food items, but

they are giving out all we give, so thank you to all who contribute.

The men’s group is going really well as we study the book of Acts. I am impressed at the summer attendance and faithfulness of the group members. I completed the first phase of mentor training for “Education for Ministry.” I am waiting to hear about the next course. Each phase is comprised of 25 hours of classwork, plus reading and prepping for the next class. I am meeting people from all over, and surprisingly, I am the only ordained person in attendance. The rest of the class is made up of people who are seeking to understand theological reflection with scripture in our life.

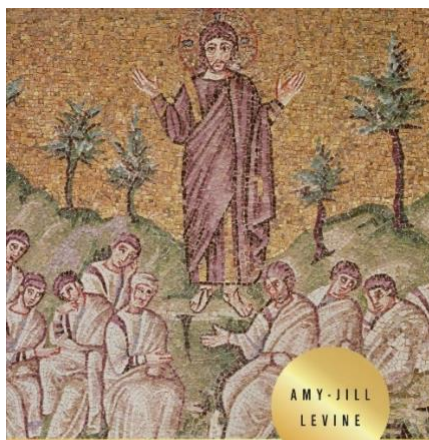
I am so grateful to have Deacon Kevin with us because I’m able to have a break from some services. A special thank you is extended to Fr. Carlos for looking out for my well-being. Have a great summer of what’s left, and remember to practice gratitude and prayer. ~Deacon Alex†

SAVE THE DATE!



SUMMER BOOK STUDY & LEARNING:

◆ SERMON ON THE MOUNT: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ◆



SERMON *on* the MOUNT

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

This summer, Saint John's and parishes in the Altoona Convocation are studying Dr. Amy Jill Levine's book, *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven*. If you would like to receive a free

copy of the book, please email Father Carlos. A book will be mailed directly to your home.

Below is an outline for our book study and the Zoom info for all our sessions:

Wednesdays, July 7 – August 18 at 7:00 p.m.
[Program Outline for the Sermon on the Mount](#)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81095037129>

Meeting ID: 810 9503 7129

SUMMER COFFEE HOUR SIGN UP

Throughout the summer, we have been gathering for coffee hour outside the rectory after the 10:30 a.m. mass. We are looking for volunteers to help set up, serve beverages, and clean up afterwards. All beverages (and occasional food items) will be provided by the church. If you want to bring any specialty drinks or food items, you are welcome to do so, but it is not required.

We still need volunteers in August. To sign up for coffee hour, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/3u6ZoLP>.



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AUG 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Pentecost X 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Solemn Mass	St. Eusebius of Vercelli, Bishop 7:00pm Men's Group	St. Nicodemus, Confessor 7:00pm AA	St. John Vianney, Priest 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA	St. Oswald, King & Martyr	The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ	Bl. John Mason Neal, Priest
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
Pentecost XI 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Solemn Mass	St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Virgin & Martyr 7:00pm Men's Group	St. Lawrence, Deacon & Martyr Confessor 7:00pm AA	St. Claire of Assisi, Abbess 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA	St. Hippolytus, Priest & Martyr	Bl. Jeremy Taylor, Bishop	St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe, Priest & Martyr
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Solemn Mass	St. Stephen of Hungary, King 7:00pm Men's Group	Feria 7:00pm AA	St. Helena, Queen 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA 7:00pm Vestry	St. John Eudes, Priest	St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbot & Doctor	St. Pius X, Pope
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Pentecost XIII 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Solemn Mass	St. Rose of Lima, Virgin 7:00pm Men's Group	St. Bartholomew the Apostle 7:00pm AA	St. Louis of France, King 9:30am Low Mass 12:00pm AA	Feria	St. Monica	St. Augustine, Bishop & Doctor
29	30	31				
Pentecost XIV 9:00am Low Mass 10:30am Solemn Mass	The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist 7:00pm Men's Group	St. Aidan of Lindesfarne, Bishop 7:00pm AA				