



# St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## Faith Formation at Your Fingertips

*Hundreds of Catholic Resources Available Free to Parishioners Through FORMED*

There is no denying that technology is an ever-present force in our lives. Often, it is thanks to technology that our everyday life has become easier in so many ways – we may keep track of our daily appointments on our computers and cell phones, consult the Internet for the weather forecast, pay bills online, and check in on our friends and family. Most parishioners here at St. John the Baptist are probably familiar with various Internet resources that can improve our daily lives. What many parishioners may not realize, however, is that we have access to an amazing online resource that can benefit our faith lives, as well. With our parish subscription to the FORMED website, all parishioners have hundreds of Catholic readings, reflections, videos, and books at their fingertips!

Lisa Short, one of many parishioners who has been enjoying our parish access to this valuable resource, visits the website on a regular basis.

“For me personally, I think it has some of the best Catholic resources out there,” Lisa says. “It’s available free to us, and it’s easy to use, too. I’m on there at least once a week because I’m a mentor for YDisciple, so I get [a lot of materials] there. I also listen to all the audios. And just today, I was looking for a book and went on the FORMED site and saw it was right there for me.”



*Mike and Lisa Short with their children (from left) Andrew, Madeline, Patrick, and (front) Natalie.*

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## How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 35). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation, by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children is not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable... Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children learn in school and at religious education classes by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with them, and spending time in family prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents OnLine ([www.catholicparents.org](http://www.catholicparents.org)) which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.

But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong

commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults and active participation in the sacraments. It also includes the giving back of our time, talent, and treasure in service of our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents often hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the faith. By living as stewards of God’s gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## The Word of God: How Do We Hear It? And How Do We Respond to It?

Dear Parishioners,

A few short weeks ago, we completed our Christmas season. We are now in what we call Ordinary Time – but before long, we will begin Lent. This is one of those rare years when Ash Wednesday is in March – so, Lent does not, of course, begin in February this year.

The Gospel of John begins with the statement, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We speak often of the Word in the Church. As most of you are aware, the first part of our Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. What does that mean to us?

Basically, there are four parts of our celebration of Mass: Introductory Rites; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; and Concluding Rites. My focus in this reflection is that second part – the Liturgy of the Word. The main parts of that are a First Reading, a Responsorial Psalm, a Second Reading, the Gospel, and a Homily.

We draw on Holy Scripture from the Bible for the readings. As Catholics, we do not consider that these readings are about God, or about the Church, or about our faith, or a history lesson, or a nice story from long ago. We consider them to be God speaking directly to us. Thus, our attentiveness to what is being proclaimed is important. Are we listening? Do we hear? And then,



do we respond in our lives? All of those should be facets of how we approach the Word of God.

For us, the Word of God is the living Word. God is speaking to us as a community, and He asks us to be faithful to His Word. If we pay attention and truly listen, God can nourish our spirit, and Christ can be more real and present to us. The Homily, the Responsorial Psalm, the Profession of Faith, and the Intercessions develop the Word further and complete it. The Profession of

Faith is our acceptance of God’s Word.

However, the question for us is, how do we respond to the Word? Does it change our lives? Does it bring us to the conversion necessary to live lives of stewardship and service? It is not easy, I know. Being able to listen, to hear and then to act requires time, practice, commitment, and a desire to fulfill all of this. That is one of my prayers for us – that we can hear the Word, and that we can bring it to life in our own lives and in the lives of others.

In Christ,

*Fr. Butler*

Fr. Butler, Pastor



# St. John the Baptist

## “Do Not Be Afraid”

Joanne Weirich was the poster child for the lukewarm Catholic.

A self-described product of the 1960s, Joanne would pick and choose where she thought the Church was right or wrong. She thought people who were involved at church were cliquish. She went to Mass on Easter and Christmas, enough to meet her obligation and not feel guilty. She hadn't received Confession in over 25 years.

“I wanted Church for my kids and for funeral and weddings, but I didn't want to give myself to God,” Joanne says. “I felt out of place at church.”

Joanne has a message for anyone who might be in a similar place, who might be hesitant to look more deeply at his or her relationship to the Church and to Christ.

“Do not be afraid,” Joanne says. “I cannot begin to say how rewarding it has been to come back home.”

Joanne's relationship to the Church began to shift when she was watching a charismatic preacher on television.

“I wanted something more – the truth,” she says. “Everywhere I turned was someone else's 'truth.' I started learning about other faiths and comparing them to what I knew about the Catholic Church, as it formed as I was.”

Joanne said a Rosary and prayed to God to show her the truth. She started watching EWTN and its catechism shows and interviews with people who came back to the Church or who converted.

“I started reading the Bible, the whole Bible, and I learned the true meaning of each sacrament,” Joanne says. “Then I started going to Mass again. It all made so much sense then!”

The next step was participating more fully in parish life and tearing down the misconceptions she had about those who did.

The Holy Spirit pushed Joanne out the door and to Rosary Makers at the parish center. She walked into a room full of people.

“I said, ‘I'm new and I don't know what I'm doing,’” Joanne says. “Next thing I know, they had made a place



*Joanne Weirich (back right) with her daughter, Christine (back left), and her two grandchildren*

for me at the table and showed me what to do, and before I left that morning, I felt like one of the family.”

Joanne began volunteering for the Women's Society functions, but she also wanted to do something at Mass. She asked an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion about the ministry, and was soon not only a minister at Mass, but also to the sick.

“Being a Eucharistic Minister has overwhelmed me in the wonderful meaning of the Sacrament of the Eucharist,” Joanne says. “I travel to parishioners' houses and deliver the sacrament. To think that I would not have met these wonderful people if it weren't through the grace of God.”

Participating more led Joanne to desire to learn more about the faith. She began to really understand that Jesus is present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in the Eucharist. She began to learn that you don't have to be a theologian to understand the faith.

“Use the resources the church supplies like the CDs and books at the back of the church,” Joanne says. “Go to a small group. Attend Eucharistic Adoration. One hour seems to pass so quickly in front of the Real Presence.”

## id” Joanne Weirich

Joanne has found great satisfaction in contributing her time and resources to the church in many different ways, and now also as a member of the Pastoral Council.

“Contribute without thought for yourself,” Joanne says. “You may be the one to change the hearts of others. We need more friends in faith to grow closer to Jesus Christ.”

Today Joanne looks back on her decades as a lukewarm Catholic and is deeply grateful to the Holy Spirit for reawakening the faith within her.

“Don’t be the type of Catholic I was, content to sit in the pew to meet your Sunday obligation,” Joanne says. “Take the first step. Celebrate the sacraments. Develop a personal relationship with Jesus and Mary. Your life will never be the same.”

*“Contribute without thought for yourself. You may be the one to change the hearts of others. We need more friends in faith to grow closer to Jesus Christ.” — Joanne Weirich*

## Faith Formation at Your Fingertips *continued from front cover*

Once parishioners register on the website using our parish subscription code, **c40586**, they are free to log in whenever they choose. For Lisa and Mike Short – busy parents of four children, aged 10 and under – the convenience of being able to access the materials on their own schedule is one of the greatest benefits of FORMED.

“You can do it on your own time, whenever it’s convenient for you,” Lisa says. “For Mike and me, it’s hard to get to some of the programs at church, but this we can fit into our lives whenever we get a chance. For example, we have date night once a week, and recently our date night was sitting down and listening to the *Beloved* program on marriage.”

Indeed, you can access this Catholic resource anytime and anywhere there is an Internet connection, whether during a quiet date night or a busy day of juggling family responsibilities.

“I will literally walk around with my phone in my pocket, listening to the audios while I do things around the home,” Lisa says with a chuckle. “My kids look at me like I’m a nut, but it works!”

In addition to the great faith formation programs that are available – such as *Beloved* and *Symbolon*

– Lisa also enjoys the weekly *Opening the Word* readings and videos, which provide parishioners with a great way to familiarize themselves with the readings before Sunday Mass. She is also excited to explore a new children’s section that was recently added to the website.

With the great wealth of resources available through FORMED, faith formation is no longer limited to a specific class offering or schedule. Instead, learning about the Catholic faith can be a continuous – and truly limitless – process.

“I think it’s always important to continue to learn about your faith and grow and get closer to God, and this is a great way to do that because you can come to understand your faith more,” Lisa says. “I think it has helped me understand the reasoning behind what we believe and what we do. It’s easy to just go to Mass and go through the motions, but using FORMED helps you understand the ‘why’ behind it all.”

Our parish offers us an amazing resource with the FORMED subscription. We invite anyone that has not yet explored this website to do so, and begin making faith formation a valuable part of your daily life today!

*Logging onto the FORMED website for the first time? Go to [FORMED.org](http://FORMED.org) and use parish subscription code c40586 to receive access to this amazing Catholic resource for FREE!*

# St. John the Baptist

## Celebrating the Miracle of St. Blaise *Feast Day, Feb. 3*

Every year on Feb. 3, we celebrate the feast day of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr. In remembrance of this great saint, priests at most parishes around the world bless the throats of the faithful at Masses on this feast day.

Year after year, many of us step into line to receive the blessing – yet how many of us know the reason why St. Blaise is associated with the blessing of throats? What are the origins of this yearly ritual?

Though we do not know much about the life of St. Blaise, tradition tells us that he was born to wealthy, saintly Catholic parents. Born in Armenia, he devoted his life to medicine and helping the sick. He was a physician, until he was begged by the people to become their bishop. He was appointed by the Church as bishop of the Diocese of Sebaste.

Around the year 313, when the Roman Emperor Licinius was persecuting the Church, Blaise lived as a hermit in the woods among animals that he befriended. One day, a group of hunters found Blaise and seized him. Upon their trip to the governor, they encountered a woman whose pig was being attacked by a wolf. Blaise commanded the wolf to leave the pig alone and, upon his command, the pig was freed unharmed. Blaise was then taken to prison, where he miraculously healed a boy who was choking to death on a fishbone. While Blaise remained in prison, the woman whose pig he had freed brought him two candles to serve as his light so that he could read the Scripture.

It was from the miracle of saving the choking boy that the custom of praying to St. Blaise to cure all

ailments of the throat was born. And, so, after still refusing to recant his Christian beliefs, he was suspended from a tree and his flesh was torn with iron combs or rakes.



Blaise was then thrown into a lake to drown. To the surprise of his persecutors, he surfaced and walked upon the water, and he invited his persecutors to join him. They should do this, he said, to show the power of their gods. The pagans took him up on his invitation, and ultimately they were drowned. Blaise was then told by an angel to return to dry land to receive martyrdom. He was beheaded on the shore and immediately went to heaven.

Because of his prison experience and his great reputation as a healer, St. Blaise's intercession is invoked for the healing of diseases affecting the throat. The candles that the clergy place upon our throats while blessing them symbolize the candles that enlightened St. Blaise's cell as he studied Sacred Scripture – connecting his spiritual life to the physical healing.

Let us remember to invoke the intercession of this great healer upon any ailments that might be affecting us, either physical or spiritual – especially those pertaining to the throat.

The blessing of the throats is done by the priest holding two blessed candles near the throat in the form of a cross. The priest says, "Through the merits and intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver thee from all diseases of the throat, and preserve thee from every other evil. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

## A Look Back on Our 2016 Stewardship Renewal

This past autumn, our parish leadership here at St. John the Baptist conducted our 2016 Stewardship Renewal. As we consider the results of this Stewardship Renewal, we are very happy to note that stewardship continues to be of utmost importance in our St. John the Baptist parish family.

This month, we share with you some of the highlights of the Stewardship Renewal:

- ❖ Commitment Cards were returned by 49 percent of active households, with 160 Commitment Cards received.

- ❖ There were 771 prayer commitments – or commitments to Stewardship of Time. This was from 96 percent of participating households.

- ❖ There were 567 ministry commitments – or commitments to Stewardship of Talent. This was from 81 percent of participating households.

- ❖ Of commitments to ministry, 118 were new ministry commitments, while 449 were re-commitments to ministry.

- ❖ Relatively inactive families are becoming involved in parish life, with 21 families who were previously inactive in any ministry signing up for ministry involvement.

- ❖ There were 115 offertory commitments – or commitments to Stewardship of Treasure. This was from 72 percent of participating households.

- ❖ The average offertory pledge was \$1,270.

If you did not return a Commitment Card during the 2016 Stewardship Renewal, we still encourage you to consider the ways you can live out stewardship here at St. John the Baptist. There are many ways to become involved!

We thank you for your participation in parish life at St. John the Baptist, and we hope you have a very blessed 2017!

## A Place to Belong

2016 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL





# St. John the Baptist

FEBRUARY 2017

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## Mass Times

Saturdays 5:00 PM  
Sundays 8:00 and 10:30 AM  
Weekdays:  
Tuesdays 6:30 PM  
M, W, Th, F 7:00 AM

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Tuesdays 5:00 PM  
Saturdays 4:00 PM  
or by appointment

## Adoration

Tuesdays 5-6 PM and  
First Fridays 7:30 AM-9:00 PM with  
Benediction 9:00 PM

## *Activities and Events During Lent:*

### **Parish Lenten Revival with the Dynamic Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers**

#### **Thursday, March 16**

7 a.m. Mass - homily  
9 a.m. Talk 1 - Apologetics 101  
7 p.m. Talk 2 - Meeting Jesus in the Beauty and Truth  
of the Catholic Faith and Vocations (This talk is for the  
Confirmation class students, teachers and sponsors and  
all high school-age children.)

#### **Friday, March 17**

7 a.m. Mass - homily  
9 a.m. Talk 3 - The Pursuit of Happiness: Finding True  
Joy in the Catholic Faith  
7:30 p.m. Talk 4 - Why Be Catholic?

## *Lenten Liturgy Schedule:*

**Ash Wednesday, March 1**  
Mass at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

**Adoration** every Friday during Lent, from 7:30 a.m.-6:30  
p.m. Followed by Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. - we  
will have Simple Supper from 5:30-6:30 p.m. before  
stations. (One Exception: March 31 Adoration ends at 5  
p.m. with Stations at 5:30 p.m. - Parish Retreat begins  
at 6 p.m.)

**Be Reconciled** Wednesday, April 5 (Confessions avail-  
able all day) - 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

### **Penance Service**

Monday, April 10 - 7 p.m.

### *Holy Week:*

Holy Thursday Mass - 7 p.m.  
Good Friday Service - 3 p.m.  
Easter Basket Blessing - 10 a.m. on Holy Saturday  
Easter Vigil - 7:30 p.m.  
Easter Sunday Mass at regular times - 8 and 10:30 a.m.