



St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Baptism:

Beginning the Journey of Faith

Setting up the nursery. Installing the car seat. Stocking up on diapers. The to-do list as you prepare for a new baby can be both exciting and exhausting. Sometimes, in the midst of washing tiny clothes, writing shower ‘thank you’ notes and choosing a name, it can be easy to forget the most important thing that you, as a Catholic parent, will do for your child.

“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life,” the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us (1213). In other words, the Sacrament of Baptism is the foundation of a life of faith.

The Church has always taught the necessity of Baptism for salvation – that is, welcome into heaven. It is the call and duty of Catholic parents to make every effort to aid their children in experiencing a relationship with Christ here on earth, and



The Chalfins were happy to celebrate Cole's Baptism along with other members of their family, at St. John the Baptist, where Jessica received most of her sacraments.

also, for eternity in heaven. Baptism is the first step in this journey.

While the Sacrament of Baptism can be received in a number of different situations, including older children and adults, the ordinary form of Baptism in the Catholic Church takes place when a child is an infant.

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Baptism: Beginning the Journey of Faith *continued from front cover*

Jessica and James Chalfin recently had their third son, 11-month-old Cole, baptized at St. John the Baptist.

“I wanted to have my kids baptized because that’s how I was raised – I was brought up in the faith, and I wanted that for my kids too, that opportunity,” says Jessica, who has been a parishioner at St. John the Baptist since her family moved to the area when she was 7.

For Jessica, not only were her sons welcomed into the Church at their Baptisms, but her own faith was strengthened and renewed through them receiving the sacrament.

“A lot of times, the faith is just second nature and you don’t really stop and consciously think about a lot of things because it’s what you’ve always believed,” she says. “But when you stop and plan a Baptism and go to a class, it really makes you stop and think of the meaning and impact. It re-opens your eyes.”

Jessica has also begun to see the fruits and impact that the sacramental grace of Baptism has had on her two older sons, who were baptized as babies and are now 3 and 5 years old.

“My oldest is 5, so he gets it now,” she says. “He asks questions and he talks about the faith, and you can see him slowly understanding. When



James and Jessica Chalfin recently had their third son, Cole, baptized.

they’re babies, they don’t get it – but now that he’s older, I can see that it did make an impact.”

Jessica also noticed the interest they took in their little brother being baptized.

“They were fascinated by the Baptism,” she says. “They got to stand up there with us – their eyes were huge, like ‘this is so cool!’ And then, they were asking more questions about Baptism.”

Jessica encourages parents who may be hesitant about having their child baptized as an infant to consider the importance of introducing the faith at a young age.

“Waiting is missing an opportunity, because why not start when they’re young?” Jessica says. “Why wait? You could

start young. Why miss the opportunity? Do it while they’re young, and they have their whole lives to experience a relationship with God.”

As her sons grow older, it is Jessica’s hope that Baptism will prove to be the first step in a lifetime of journeying closer to God.

“I hope that their faith always continues to grow and they really do embrace it,” she says. “I hope their relationship with God becomes stronger. I really hope they appreciate their faith and it does continue to grow stronger over time.”

If you would like to learn more about being baptized or having your child baptized, please contact the parish office at 815-498-2010.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Time Is Limitless... Or Is It?

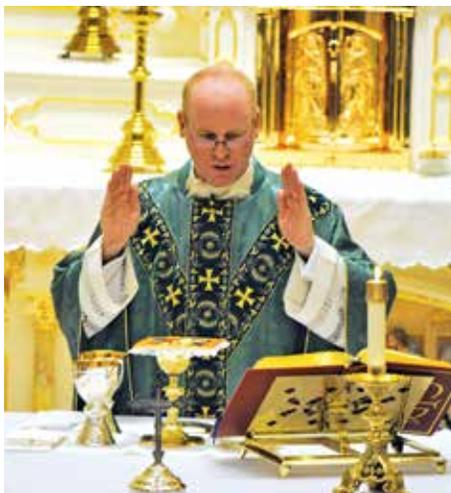
Dear Parishioners,

Some years ago, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to renew their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June. In thinking about that, it made me realize that we all like to measure time – not necessarily in minutes and hours, but certainly in terms of what happens at particular times of the year. In the Church, we celebrate so many occasions that measure time – Easter, Christmas, Corpus Christi, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, the feast days of our saints, and much more, all of which give us that sense of moving forward.

In our own lives and the lives of our families, we mark birthdays, anniversaries, Baptism days, and more dates than we can possibly remember. These dates commemorate or remind us of a point in time. Time is also one of those gifts from God that we attach to the idea and life of stewardship.

We are fond of saying that time is the one thing given to all of us in equal amounts. However, we all know that is not necessarily true. Does a mother with several children have the same amount of time as a person with no family? Does a company manager who is expected to be available seven days a week have the same amount of time as someone who works a 9-to-5 job?

My point is that time is a valuable commodity, whether we feel like we have a lot or very little. God, on the other hand, is timeless. The Lord sees things in an eternal view, while we tend to look at it in shorter measures. The question is really “What do we do with our time to serve others and to increase our relationship with God?” We have said many times that each of us needs to set aside time for both of those purposes – to serve and to pray. There is a reason it is called “prayer time.” Prayer should be a part of our lives, as much as eating, sleeping and working.



Another thing that June brings to mind is how life slows down for most of us. Young people are on summer vacation from school. Families and individuals take vacations. Unfortunately, some see it as a time to take a bit of vacation from worship. We can see it in declining Mass attendance and in the reduced number of activities within ministries and organizations.

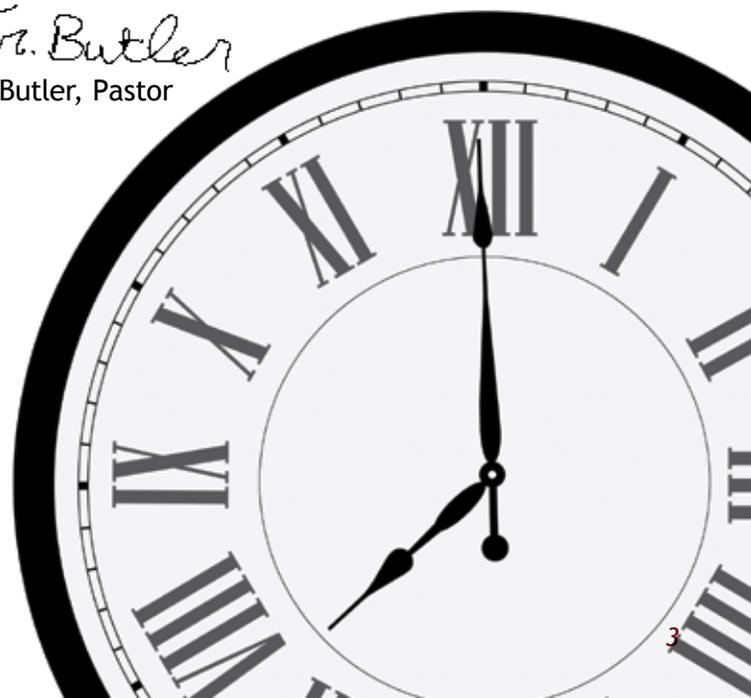
We all mark time. We all know that it is limited, and can be fleeting. That is why even countries celebrate special days that mark time –

throughout the summer season, Americans celebrate Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. How do we mark time as individuals, as families, and as a parish? That may say more about our understanding of stewardship than anything else. Maybe now, as summer is upon us, is the perfect time to concentrate *more* on our spiritual habits, rather than less.

In Christ,

Fr. Butler

Fr. Butler, Pastor



A Life Built on Faith *Meet Parishioner Teri Elson*

For parishioner Teri Elson, a love of the Catholic faith is truly a family affair. In gratitude for the strong foundation of faith her parents instilled in her as a child, Teri now drives over an hour every Saturday to pick up her parents from their assisted living home in order to bring them to Mass with her that evening. Knowing how much her parents love the Church, it means a lot to Teri to ensure that they are able to receive the Eucharist each weekend.

As she brings her parents to Mass, Teri witnesses the caring and generous nature of the parishioners here at St. John the Baptist.

“They’re the most wonderful, caring people – just so friendly and welcoming,” she says of our faith community. “When I take my mom to church on Thursday mornings, people help open the doors for her and look out for her while I lector. And on Saturdays, people help with her and my dad’s walkers, and then friends will come back and say ‘hi’ to them. It’s such a loving and embracing community, and Mom and Dad feel so good when everyone does those things.”

Always seeking to explore the Catholic faith more deeply, Teri is thankful for the



(Back, from left) Andy, Teri and Cody with Teri’s parents (front), Jim and Arlene Brennan

opportunities our parish offers to learn more about the Bible and Church teachings. She has enjoyed participating in various adult faith formation classes and Bible studies, and also discovered that helping out with children’s faith formation was another great way to increase her own knowledge of the faith. Teaching first, second, and third-grade Religious Education classes over

a period of 11 years, Teri found that her preparation for the lessons and conversations with the children led to her own spiritual growth right along with that of the students!

Teri is also actively involved in the celebration of the Mass – having served as a Eucharistic Minister for many years, she has also recently begun to lector at the Thursday and Saturday

Family and Faith

Teri Elson

Masses. Joining this particular ministry was truly a leap of faith for Teri.

“In the bulletin, they were saying they needed lectors for the 5 p.m. Mass, and that is the one I take my parents to each week,” Teri says. “So I thought I’d try the Thursday morning to see if I died of fright first! As St. Teresa says, ‘Do little things.’ And you can build from there. So, after a while, I started to lector at the Saturday Mass, as well. I feel very blessed and humbled that I’m able to participate in this way. You just really feel a part of the Mass and hope that others will see [the ministry] and think about trying it, too.”

For Teri, giving back to the Church by sharing her time and talent is a way to express the gratitude she feels for the strong role that faith has played in her life. When facing difficult times of trial – including the death of her sons’ father, Bob Elson, 11 years ago – Teri has always turned to her faith and trust in the Lord to give her strength. Although handling such a loss, especially given the young ages of her sons, Andy and Cody, at the time, was extremely difficult, Teri never doubted that God was at her side.

Each time she enters the church, Teri is reminded of the constancy of God’s presence and her faith community.

“I have to look at every day – the things that the kids and I have gone through all these years – and I know I have a safe place to be,” she says. “There is that moment when you go to church and feel your shoulders come down and relax and you just start breathing.

I’m not just a member of the church – I feel like I’m a part of this church’s family.”

It is with this view of the Church as a family of faith that inspires Teri to live a life of stewardship. When she and her youngest son, Cody (now 17), bring her parents to Mass, they are not only continuing a family tradition of faith that began generations ago – they are also taking care of their extend-

ed Church family.

“It’s kind of like how you’re raised with your family and supported by parents and aunts and uncles and cousins,” Teri says. “You know you can fall back on them when you need it. I feel the Church is an extension of the family, and you want to make sure that they are taken care of and do for them what you would do for your own family.”

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Don't Take a Vacation From Stewardship This Summer

Everyone deserves a vacation after nine grueling months of school, kids get to enjoy the summer to relax and regroup before beginning a new grade. Employees, after diligently working long hours and dealing with stressful situations, deserve time away from the office to enjoy their favorite getaway.

No one would argue that we need to mentally refresh our minds and bodies from time to time so that we can come back rejuvenated and ready to do our best.

Taking a break from some things, however, is not a possibility.

Take stewardship, for example. Imagine saying to yourself, "Well, this month I think I will not pray, not share any of my talents with anyone in need, and I will hoard my treasure." What would doing this accomplish? You certainly wouldn't feel refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to be at your best. Instead, feelings of greed, selfishness and spiritual unrest may occur. Stepping back from being a good steward just doesn't make sense.

So, now that summer has arrived in full force and our leisure time each day has increased, how can we remain good stewards?

It is likely that the regimented opportunities available during the school year are no longer available. Youth ministry and parish religious education formation may also be on summer break.

So, where do you turn? How can you keep your faith alive?

First and foremost, don't stop praying. The slow-paced days of summer are a perfect time to quiet ourselves for a few moments and try to reconnect with God. Why not take a moment of your free time

each day to read the Gospel or a spiritual reflection while lounging in a hammock?

Next, try to participate in an outreach program over the summer. Think of the life of Christ – everything He did on Earth was an act of service. Now, think of the gifts God has bestowed on you. He wants you to share them with others like He did, and summer gives us the time to do just that.

If you like working with kids, you can volunteer at the Vacation Bible School by helping to decorate, organize or being a team leader for the younger children.

If you are handy with tools, you may call Habitat for Humanity to see how you can help build a home for a family in need.

Or, if you are musically inclined, you can share your singing or instrumental gifts with a local nursing home. Maybe you are good in the kitchen. If so, you could offer your culinary skills to a local soup kitchen or food bank.

If you are a strong student, you could offer tutoring services to neighborhood kids to help prepare them for the next school year.

No matter what gift God has given you, there is a way to share it.

Getting paid for volunteering sometimes happens. And, if you have a summer job while on break, you'll get a paycheck for sure. Have you ever taken an opportunity to think about sharing the first fruits of your check?

As a young adult, returning a portion of your paycheck to God is an important thing to consider. Giving a portion back to Him is a way to say "thanks."

Whatever you do this summer, don't take a break from being a good steward. Remember that the time God gives you is a gift. What you do with it – whether on vacation or not – is meant to give Him glory.

Summertime Fun with Fellow Parishioners at the Annual Parish Picnic

Now, who can resist a cherry pit spitting contest? And no, Fr. Butler won't be the target this year on a dunking booth.

But you'll have your chance to compete with the pits, enjoy some delicious food, and relax with your parish family at our Parish Picnic at Lake Holiday Beach 2.

Come out from noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday, July 30, and help carry on a tradition that began with a celebration.

"This is our third picnic," says Denise Ramos, picnic coordinator. "Two years ago, we had our 150th anniversary and we had a big celebration. But this is a regular picnic. We'll grill hot dogs and brats, and we'll ask people to bring a dish to pass. We have a lot of great cooks in the parish!"

Besides all the fun activities that are in store that day, the picnic will be a fine opportunity to get to know your fellow parishioners better.

"You can see your fellow parishioners having fun, and you can see more of others' personalities," Denise says. "It's just a family fun picnic. We're a family and you can get closer to one another. We have three different Masses, and you don't know all the other parishioners. At the picnic, you can introduce yourself and get to know others a bit better."

There is no sign-up and no fee for the picnic. Plans are to allow for about 150 attending.

"It's a great place to have a picnic," Denise says of Lake Holiday Beach 2. "There is a covered pavilion with picnic tables. There is swimming,

continued on back cover



The little ones will have plenty of chances to burn off some energy on the playgrounds at Lake Holiday Beach 2.

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— Denise Ramos



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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

Parish Picnic *continued from page 7*

fishing piers, a couple small playgrounds, and beach volleyball. Because so many parishioners live here on the lake, we may be able to do pontoon boat rides. We'll also have games, with Bingo for the older parishioners. And we'll have Trivial Pursuit – that's been a popular game. There will be a cherry pit spitting contest. People I didn't expect to participate last year did! There will be water balloon and egg-throwing contests. There are a couple small islands across from the beach that have been cleared, and there is a bridge from the picnic area to the island, where there are fishing areas. It's cool to walk over the water!"



The covered pavilion will provide shelter and a gathering place for our parish family.

In order to help make our Parish Picnic run smoothly, Denise Ramos is in need of volunteers. "Please call me at 815-498-9163 if you want to volunteer," Denise says. "Hopefully, we'll have a sunny summer afternoon!"