



# St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## The Garden Club *Sharing the Joy of God's Creation*

**I**t's amazing what just a few flowers can do.

"Flowers can put a smile on just about anyone's face," says Pat Werner, who coordinates the Garden Club. "If you just look at them, you know they are God's workmanship. Only God could create something so pretty, and only He could have it that you can plant a little seed, and then enjoy its beauty all summer long."

Thanks to the hard work of the Garden Club members, the joy that flowers bring to the heart and soul is being showered upon our parish community, and far beyond.

"Our flower gardens help to make the church look beautiful," Pat says. "A lot of people in town have told me – even people that are not even Catholic – how pretty our church looks with the flowers planted around it. I feel that it is important that people in our community see that Catholics take



good care of their church. It makes a good impression on them."

The Garden Club currently has about six members who give their time and talent to enhance the beauty of our church property. Mainly, they are responsible for taking care of the potted flowers, bushes and flowerbeds around the parish building – except for the grotto area, which is cared for by another committee. Recently, they planted the beautiful white Alyssum flowers around our church, as well.

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# St. John the Baptist

## Stewardship *Hannah, the Good Steward*

**W**hat should we do when our prayers are answered?

Is there anything left to do after we have sincerely thanked God for His favors? If God were a human peer, we would probably try to reciprocate by granting Him a favor in return. But the truth is that God cannot be made greater by anything that we do for Him. Instead, God receives our thanks and tells us to “go and do likewise.” That is, He tells us to share with others the good that He has bestowed on us. And in doing so, we are really sharing God Himself. That is the definition of stewardship!

The Old Testament Book of Samuel contains one of the most poignant examples of stewardship in the entire Bible. The first chapter teaches us of an unhappy, barren woman named Hannah. Desperate in her barrenness, Hannah prays that God will give her a son, vowing that she will raise him to be a man of God.

Imagine Hannah’s elation when she was granted her prayer! When Samuel was born, her heart’s desire had come true! Imagine further the pang of motherly sorrow, as Hannah kept her promise to God by taking Samuel at a young age to be the servant of Eli, the high priest. The Book of Samuel tells us that once Samuel became Eli’s servant, Hannah saw her young son just once a year.



Indeed, Hannah knew that Samuel was truly a gift from God — an answered prayer. Hannah’s response is that of the Good Steward — with an attitude of both gratitude and sacrifice, she gave up her son to honor God. One imagines that Hannah probably struggled with this sacrifice during those first years. She probably did not know what God had in store for her son. Yet, through her faithfulness, God used him as a gift to an

entire nation. Samuel would, in time, become one of the greatest prophets of Jewish history.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand the sacrifices we make in the name of stewardship, while the results may just be impossible to miss! However, He asks that we continue to be faithful in either case. God has undoubtedly bestowed gifts on all of us — at whatever the cost, we are to “go and do likewise.”

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## We Cannot Be Part-Time Christians

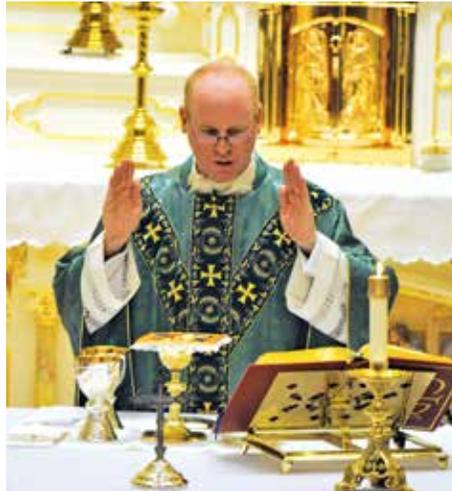
Dear Parishioners,

May is traditionally celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and our fellow humans, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to model the life of Jesus. That can be difficult, and there are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ. But living stewardship and discipleship brings intense contentment and joy to those who take that risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life and her ministry in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. She responded to the call to be a disciple. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received. Our Church and our parish are gifts to us from God.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and commitment.



Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

I suspect that is how Mary lived her life from that moment she turned it over to God and His Will. So, let us vow together during this month of Mary to follow her example, and seek to be the kinds of good stewards that will make our faith community even stronger and more effective.

I pray that we all can find the strength to live and practice our faith as we should. This means being faithful to the sacraments and looking for ways to help and serve one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater.

As we hear in Holy Scripture, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Pray for me, as I pray for you.

In Christ,

*Fr. Butler*  
Fr. Butler, Pastor



# St. John the Baptist

## “One of the Greatest Gifts” *Seminarian John McFadden*

**W**hat once started with a friendly conversation between John McFadden and the Lord, has now grown into an incredible vocational journey that may bless countless souls for years to come.

“I was kneeling in adoration before the Lord and I made a deal with Him,” John says. “I told Him if He would heal me I would give all of my time, attention and energy to Him. He said He would, and then asked me to become His priest.”

However, initially, John refused. But, after much prayer and asking the Lord to help him to want to be who He wanted him to be, John began to desire to become a priest.

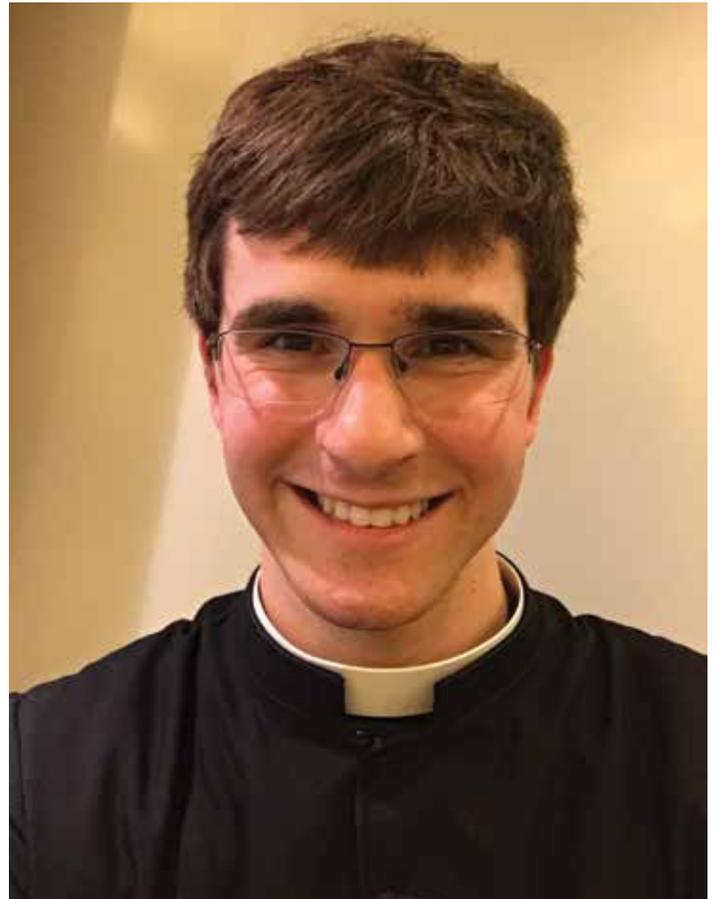
“To have this call, this vocation – it is one of the greatest gifts I have ever received,” John says.

These days, John is still heeding these gracious words of Christ, and is studying at St. John Vianney College Seminary on the campus of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

“What I enjoy the most about my seminary formation is the opportunity to live with the Eucharist and spend time daily in prayer,” he says. “It is through prayer that we become saints. Sharing fraternity with the guys in seminary is also great. It is a gift and a grace from the Lord to live in a house with 120 other men who are trying to be like Jesus Christ.”

John is grateful for all those who have “watered the seed” of his vocation along the way.

“The first one to nurture my vocation was the Lord, as He instilled desires upon my heart,” John says. “Having several priests as good role models and encouraging, loving parents helped a lot, too. But, the biggest factor for me was having friends that encouraged me to live out my Catholic faith. They created an environment where talking



*John McFadden*

about a vocation to the priesthood was socially acceptable and even cool. That helped me a lot in high school.”

When asked what he would say to a young man who is thinking about entering the seminary, John offers some helpful advice.

“I would tell him to take it before the Lord, and ask Him if it is His will for you,” he says. “Being in the seminary will help you discern the priesthood in a way that you would be unable to do outside of seminary formation. I would also say the seminary

# Gifts I Have Ever Received”

*John McFadden*

is challenging but so good. I have grown a lot as a person and in my relationship with God since I’ve entered seminary.”

And, according to John, it is through deepening one’s friendship with the Lord and being in tune with His voice that one can discern a vocation.

“I would also tell him to pray!” John says. “It is so hard to hear the call of the Lord in this noisy world if you don’t have a relationship with Him. And a relationship is based in mutual consistent communication. To hear His voice,

you must sit quietly before Him, especially in His presence in the Most Holy Eucharist.”

Through the power of prayer, a young person can reach a level of peace and trust in the divine plan for their lives – no matter what it may cost.

“I know there are many young people that have fears about joining the seminary or entering the convent,” he says. “To this, I would respond, ‘Be not afraid!’

“I have received so much more than I could have ever imagined since joining seminary,” John

continues. “He will never ask you to give something up that He will not give you the grace to do.”

In the end, it is when we follow God’s wise plans that we become satisfied.

“Discerning the will of the Lord is important in your life, because God has made you,” John says. “He has created you to become a great saint. To be the happiest, the most fulfilled, the most joyful – it is important to ask Our Lord what He created you for.”

## The Garden Club *continued from front cover*

Even though watering and weeding these plants can be time consuming, the work continues to bring great joy to Pat and the other volunteers.

“Gardening is a job you really have to keep up with,” Pat says. “You can’t just do it once and leave it. But I still think it is relaxing and fun. It gets you away from the stresses of life and the hustle-bustle of the world. It gives you a chance to slow down and enjoy life a little bit. It is nice to just take care of plants and nurture them. It is like a prayer time, too – a time to enjoy all that God has created and take it all in.”

For Pat, gardening is something dear to her heart, and that is one reason she loves to share it with our parish family.

“I grew up on a farm, and my mother loved flowers, so we always had a lot of flowers, both outside of our home and in,” Pat says. “I have carried on her love for flowers. I have always enjoyed them. I love to watch the trees, and see how they glide with the wind. I also love to smell the lilacs. We all need to take time to notice the small things in life and in nature.”

*If you would like to offer your time and talent to help tend God’s creation by helping the Garden Club, please contact Pat Werner at 815-498-3067.*

# St. John the Baptist

## St. Isidore's Simple Stewardship

When we consider the lives of the saints, the first that usually come to mind are more than likely classed into four categories – martyrs, priests, religious, and great miracle workers. St. Isidore was none of these, and yet he is revered in Spain as one of “the five saints,” which include St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Philip Neri, all of whom were canonized with him in the same year. His Feast Day is May 15.

The life of St. Isidore is a great testimony to how, with God's grace, we can take the occurrences of a simple, mundane, and even sometimes difficult life and use them as opportunities for sanctification.

Isidore was born near Madrid, around the year 1070, into a peasant family. While still a young boy, he began working as a day laborer on the farm of Juan de Vergas, a wealthy landowner, just outside of Madrid.

Despite the hard work on Vergas' farm, where Isidore spent the rest of his life in service, he did not complain and always tried his hardest to meet the tasks requested of him. Above all things, he upheld his relationship with Jesus. As he walked behind his plow, he would talk to God, offering up his work as a prayer. He rose up extra early each day before work to attend daily Mass. He would even spend his vacations touring the different churches of Madrid and the surrounding areas.



As hardworking as Isidore was, his fellow workers complained to Vergas that the pious laborer always arrived late for work because he attended Mass every day. Isidore could not deny the accusation, but assured his employer that he always made a special effort to compensate for the extra minutes he spent in prayer. One day, Vergas decided to see for himself whether Isidore was really slacking in his work. Hiding in the bushes, he watched as Isidore came out of church, went directly to the fields, and began his plowing. To Vergas' astonishment, he saw a “man” with another plow beside Isidore, driving a team of white oxen. When he ran toward the mysterious team, it disappeared and Isidore only looked puzzled when Vergas asked him about it. “Sir, I work alone and know of none save God to whom I look for strength,” Isidore said. No doubt, God had sent His angels to help ensure that Isidore's work would not suffer because of his placing the spiritual above the temporal.

While working for Vergas, Isidore fell in love with and married a young woman, Maria Torribia, who shared his devotion and faith. They had one child, a son, who died while still a boy. A model of sanctity herself, Maria – also a canonized saint – served her husband faithfully all her life. Together, Isidore and Maria would look for ways to serve the poor, even though they had very little themselves. One story says that when Isidore brought a number of hungry people home with him one day, Maria realized as she scraped the bottom of the pot that there was no more stew. Isidore asked her to check one more time, and she was able to spoon out enough to feed everyone. They could not refuse an act of kindness to anyone.

At times, we might be tempted to think that we do not have the talents or the assets to be good stewards. But St. Isidore shows us by his simple, humble example that we can live out the call to discipleship in the smallest actions of charity and piety – that we only need do as much as we can, and trust that God will do the rest.

## Corpus Christi Procession Continues Parish Tradition

A parish tradition that had been observed for decades, and then discontinued, returned in 2015. Two years later, it carries on so that we can share our faith not only among ourselves, but also with the neighborhood around us.

The Corpus Christi Procession – slated this year for Sunday, June 18, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass – has a special meaning for Anne Novey, who used her talents as a sewer to create the procession canopy that shelters the monstrance bearing the Body of Christ.

“The canopy represents to me the time when Moses led the people out of the desert and he had the Ark of the Covenant carried with them, and it was always protected by a tent,” Anne says. “This is kind of what we’re doing, by carrying the Holy of Holies under the canopy.”

Anne believes she was asked to create the canopy because she is known to do a lot of sewing. The material was at hand – Fr. Butler had found a quantity of silk. His request was something of a surprise, however.

“It was actually overwhelming at the time,” she says. “There is no pattern for the canopy. I just had to look at others’ work in pictures and try to figure out how to do it or improve on it. We did look at a lot of websites and ended up by going to St. Mary in Plano and



*During the procession, Father walks with the monstrance bearing the Blessed Host under the shelter of the canopy.*

looking at their canopy. I made a few adjustments.”

The project took on a spiritual aspect for Anne as she concentrated on her work.

“Knowing that for our parish, this was the first time in decades we were doing it again, I wanted it to be worthy of the parish,” Anne says. “I worked on it a little at a time. One night I worked on one seam, then another seam. The hours? I don’t know for sure. I’d think I was getting it done, and I’d change something.”

The canopy is carried on poles that slip into pockets in the

material. Everything is designed to be taken apart for storage.

While the canopy is part of the procession, it is important for the observance of Corpus Christi, Anne believes.

“I think it’s one of those traditions that had fallen away over the years,” Anne says. “And it’s nice to be continuing, and do this again to show the people of Somonauk that this is who we are, and get out and be a church family for everyone to see.”

The procession sets out from the church and travels west, then north for one block, and then east

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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

## Corpus Christi Procession Continues Parish Tradition

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to the front of the church. The priest carries the monstrance under the canopy. The procession stops at four points at decorated altars erected by different families or groups of volunteers. There is a Gospel reading at each altar.

During the procession, the Knights of Columbus take part, as well as our altar servers.

“Our Boy Scouts have been there, and the choir is in the procession and sings as we go to each altar,” Anne says. “After we return to the church, we all go to the parish hall for refreshments and fellowship.”

*If you have any questions about the procession, please call the parish office at 815-498-2010.*



*The detail work in the canopy sewn by Anne Novoy is shown here.*