

January/February 2015



the

connecting the community of st. francis xavier parish

Navigator

Parish begins 155th year

More than a century and a half ago, Catholics gathered in their homes to celebrate Mass in this farming community. Some 155 years later, we celebrate the vibrant faith community that has flourished here.



Beginning in 1864, the faith community was formally recognized by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland and organized as a mission station. It gained "parish" status in 1876, and construction began on Medina's first Catholic church.

By 1907, a new stone church at 4142 W. Liberty St. was dedicated in what is described in parish records as a major event celebrated by nearly 4,000 visitors who arrived by train, carriage and trolley.

In 1948, the diocese appointed a young Father William H. Randel as pastor. Father Randel saw the need for a Catholic school, church and "parsonage" for the growing parish and purchased four acres in what was "the city's finest section," the corner of Spring Grove and Washington streets.

A 10-room school and auditorium opened in 1951, and was staffed by four Dominican sisters and lay teachers. Father Randel immediately began to plan for the new church, and collected \$200,000 in donations and pledges.

However, in 1959, those plans were halted when Father Randel entered the hospital for a minor operation, but became critically ill and died eight days later. Father Robert E. Murphy, who succeeded him, determined that the money raised was insufficient to build the church – unless the parishioners themselves would donate their labor.

Parishioners responded eagerly to this idea, and men and women devoted hundreds and even thousands of hours of work every day but Sunday to lay brick, install electricity and plumbing and more. On May 1, 1961, Father Murphy celebrated the first Mass in the church, and it was dedicated May 8, 1962.

Built to seat 1,046 people, the new church served the parish's 800 families. Over the years, the church property expanded with the acquisition of several adjacent properties, including a house (named for Father Randel) to serve as meeting space for Operation HOMES, RCIA and many parish groups. A gymnasium was added in 1993, and a 1999 addition created the



St. Francis Xavier himself (also known as Tom Urban) addressed the Edge students Dec. 3.

155th year continued on page 2



Saturday Vigil – 5 p.m., Sunday – 8 & 10 a.m., noon & 5:30 p.m.
Weekdays – 7:30 a.m. Monday through Saturday; 7 p.m. Monday, Thursday & First Friday of the month



155th year

continued from page 1

Xavier Room, school office, library and classrooms, improvements to the rectory and priests' garage, and an underground tunnel connecting the school and church.



Today, as the parish marks its 155th anniversary year, the parish includes more than 3,100 families, with 500 students enrolled at the day school and more than 800 in our Parish School of Religion classes.

We are grateful for and blessed by the humble service of our pastor, Father Tony Sejba, and parochial vicars, Father Thom Kowatch and Father Christopher Cox.

Events are being organized to mark the parish's anniversary. Stay tuned for more information, and plan to join your parish family to celebrate this milestone.

Children in the parish day school and parish school of religion kicked off the anniversary celebration on Dec. 3, the feast day of St. Francis Xavier. The morning included a Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day, and students took time throughout the day to worship in church. In the evening, middle school students in the parish's Edge program were treated to a personal visit by St. Francis Xavier (otherwise known as longtime parishioner Tom Urban), who told them about his life and missionary visits to India, China and Japan. Students then "traveled" between classrooms to learn more details about his life and work.

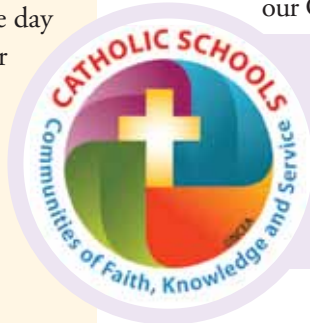
National Catholic Schools Week 2015

National Catholic School Week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. The theme for the National Catholic Schools Week 2015 is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." The annual observance starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2015 is Jan. 25 to 31.

Schools typically celebrate Catholic Schools Week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and the community at large. Through these events, our school will have the opportunity to focus on the value that Catholic education provides to our young people and its contributions to our church, communities and our nation.

The CSW theme encompasses several concepts that are at the heart of a Catholic education. First, schools are communities — small families in their own right, but also members of the larger community of home, church, city and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are three measures by which any Catholic school can and should be judged.

The CSW logo features a swirl of colors interacting around a cross, which is at the center of all Catholic education. The vibrancy of the colors and the movement and shadows in the logo portray the inner-connectivity and community life that are present in our Catholic schools.



**Please plan on joining us to begin the celebration of
NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK**

**at St. Francis Xavier School on Sunday, Jan. 25,
starting with the 12 noon Mass and continuing
in the school from 1 to 2:30 p.m. for our Open House.**

Our classrooms will be open and our outstanding teachers and staff are excited to host this great event! Great things are happening at St. Francis Xavier, and we want you to come visit and see why St. Francis Xavier School is a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence!

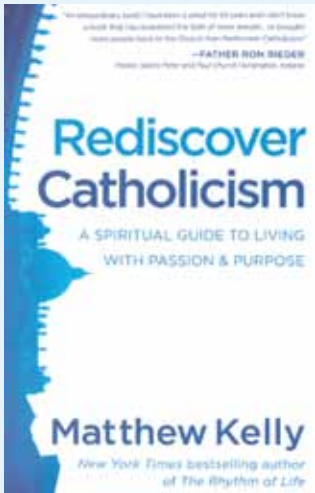


Mrs. Bibiana Seislove, the principal, checks out the fifth-graders' art project



Opening your parish Christmas gift

As the Word Became Flesh incarnate on Christmas, He came as God's gift to all. This Christmas, St. Francis Xavier Parish was pleased to offer the book *Rediscovering Catholicism* by Matthew Kelly as a gift to parishioners and visitors at all Masses. (If you were out of town, stop by or call the rectory to see if more copies are available.)



We believe that the Word comes ever so quietly and often in ordinary ways. Through the reading of this book, God may come to you to rediscover your faith or deepen your relationship with Him.

The book reminds us that we all constantly need to rediscover the beauty and richness of the faith. Not because it changes, but because

we change. Who we are and the circumstances of our lives are constantly evolving, and so a truth that we passed over a year ago might prove to be completely transformative today.

Rediscover Catholicism was first published as *Rediscovering Catholicism* in 2001. It spent more than seven years (364 weeks) consecutively on the Catholic Book Publishers Association bestsellers list. Other than the Bible, it is the bestselling Catholic book in America ever.

The author proposes that Catholicism is not a lifeless set of rules and regulations, but a way of life designed by God to help each person reach his or her full potential. With remarkable insight, Kelly dispels dozens of the myths that surround the rejection of Catholicism today and provides a profound and practical vision of what will lead the Catholic Church to thrive again in the future.

Rediscover Catholicism takes us on an adventure of life-changing proportions. Beginning with our common yearning for happiness, Kelly reveals the essence of authentic Catholic spirituality while addressing some of the most important questions we face today both as individuals and as a Church.

- Are you happy?
- Are you living an authentic life?
- Do you really think you will find happiness where you are looking?
- How would you like your life to change?
- What is God's dream for your life?
- Why have so many people rejected Catholicism?
- What does it mean to walk with God in the modern world?
- Do the saints have anything to offer you?
- Is Jesus still relevant?
- Can the ancient traditions of Catholicism help us deal with the modern challenges of our lives?

If you would like to gather and discuss the content of this book, Father Thom will lead a six-week program. You can join in the discussion on any week, even if you are unable to attend the whole program. All the sessions will be held in the Xavier Room on Monday evenings following the 7:30 p.m. Mass and will conclude by 8:45 pm.

Small groups may wish to meet using this book prior to beginning the Lenten book (see page 6). A discussion question guide is available at <http://dynamiccatholic.com/rediscover-catholicism/resources/>.

Jan. 12: Session One

Where to From Here?

Read pages 13-25

Jan. 19: Session Two

Part One: We Become

What We Celebrate

Read pages 27-66

Jan. 26: Session Three

Part Two: The Authentic Life

Read pages 67-144

Feb. 2: Session Four

Part Three: The Seven

Pillars of Catholic Spirituality

Read pages 145-228

Feb. 9: Session Five

Part Three Continued:

The Seven Pillars of Catholic Spirituality

Read pages 229-284

Feb. 16: Session Six

Part Four: Now is Our Time

Read pages 285-324





Supporting life as a foster parent

On paper, parishioners Misty and Jason Formani have three children, but in their hearts they number in the double digits.

Their children range from newborn to 17 years old, although, presently, only four live in their home.

They are Catholic Charities foster parents, providing a safe and loving home to children in need of a stable place to live when their biological parents are not able to do so. To date, they have cared for 15 children in addition to their three biological children, ages 10 to 13.

They said they feel called to open their home to children in need. “We always wanted a big family,” Misty explains.

Children may be in the foster system for many reasons and for various lengths of time. Misty and Jason Formani and fellow parishioners Kristen and Kevin Thornton say they feel called to love and respect children whose lives might be full of uncertainty.

Both families first considered adoption. But, after learning more, they were trained as foster parents and now say they recognize the critical need that exists for younger foster families.

Kristen and Kevin, who have a 12-year-old daughter, were licensed as foster parents by Summit County in 2012. That year, a 2-year-old girl was placed in their care, and a year later they were

asked to also take in her newborn brother. Today both children continue to thrive in their home. “The goal started out adding to our family, but it’s turned into a greater good,” Kristen says.

For nearly two years, the Formanis cared for a brother and sister. After they left, they opted to become providers of “respite care” – short-term care, often to give long-term foster parents a break when they become ill or just need a weekend off. Since then, the Formanis have hosted children, from birth to age 6, plus one 17-year-old girl, for one weekend to eight weeks.

Misty, 37, says she still gets sad when they leave, but she knows they provided the help each child needed at that time. “It’s actually fun,” adds Jason, 39. “We play. We make it as pleasant as we can for them.”



Kristen Thornton, left, and Misty and Jason Formani say they feel called to be foster parents.ect

A child needs you!

For more information about becoming a foster parent, visit <http://ccdole.org/program/foster-care-services> or <http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/fostercare.pdf>.

Adoption is an option

Catholic Charities and many other organizations stand ready and eager to help biological parents make the best decision for their children when they are not prepared to provide a stable environment. As Misty Formani points out, “adoption is an option (we) hope birth parents will consider.” Birth parents can choose the adoptive family, whether they want to be able to visit their child and how often, and they receive complete coverage of their medical and some living expenses.

For information about adoption, visit <http://ccdole.org/service-category/adoption-foster-care>.

March for Life

Show your support for life by taking a stand against legalized abortion. St. Francis Xavier parishioners and others participating in the 2015 March for Life will depart from the church parking lot at 9 p.m. on Jan. 21 and return by 1 a.m. on Jan. 23. A side trip to the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception is included in the trip. The cost for the bus is \$65. For more information or to reserve your seat, please contact Stephen Hamilton at noble1996@gmail.com.



Kristen, 38, says she is awed by the way her foster daughter has blossomed in their care. "She's got this sense of not just family, but community," she says. "She's been given the gift of stability."

Even though children might be in their care only a short time, both families say they take comfort in knowing that they have done the best they can to help them become stable, loving individuals. Children who grow up without that sense of stability can have a hard time being adopted and attaching to others later in life, Jason says. The families say they hope they provide a time in each child's life when he or she feels loved and valued.

"That can be the difference between kids aging out in the system or not," Jason says.

Both families say the experience also has been good for their biological children, who gain a unique insight and sensitivity to the needs of others. "When my kids see these kids come in, they

have no clothes, no shoes... They're getting it, that not every kid has what they have," Misty says. "Sometimes they need to see what other kids go through."

Being a foster parent takes a big heart but not necessarily a big home. "We have a cozy little house with three bedrooms, but we're making it work," Kristen says. Foster families receive access to federal Medicaid and WIC programs, plus a per-child stipend that Kristen says is "plenty sufficient." Still, Misty and Jason organized a fundraiser last fall for Catholic Charities' foster parent program, raising \$6,000 to help buy Christmas gifts for the children and offset other expenses.

The families say they feel that they are responding to the Lord's call by sharing their gifts to help others in need. "The Lord's been good to me," Jason explains. "I'm just doing what I can do to help out and give back."

Free small electronics recycling event

Don't pitch your electronic devices after receiving the newest version for Christmas!

Parishioners are invited to recycle electronics at the church on Sunday, Jan. 25. Clean out your drawers of old, antiquated electronics and bring them in!

Empty inkjet and toner printer cartridges also will be collected. Please bring them in a closed plastic bag, separate from the electronics.

The Go Green Group at St. Francis Xavier School is hosting this recycling event to help combat the growing problem of electronic waste. Your

recycling also will help raise funds for the school and for educational and recycling programs.

The collected electronics will be shipped to American companies that will erase all memory, in accordance with U.S. Department of Defense regulations. Then they will remove valuable precious metals and other components and reuse them. The leftover components will be disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

Watch for updates in the bulletin and SAVE your unwanted small electronics for Jan. 25.

ITEMS TO RECYCLE (in any condition):

- Cell Phones
- iPods/mp3 Players
- Laptop Computers (no towers or monitors)
- iPads/Tablets/eBook Readers
- GPS Units
- Radar Detectors
- Calculators
- Digital Cameras
- Video Cameras
- Video Game Consoles & Handhelds
- Leapsters and Cartridges



Give the Gift of Blood

Share the gift of life by participating in a bloodmobile drive at our parish on Sunday, Jan. 18, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



LifeShare Community Blood Services will park its vehicle outside the rectory garages for a blood collection that will benefit people in our Medina community.

All donations also will benefit our parish school: For every 25 donors, LifeShare will make grant money available to help with the replacing and upgrading of information technology equipment.

Individuals are eligible to donate every 56 days. Please participate if you are able.



Is your love tank nearing 'empty'?

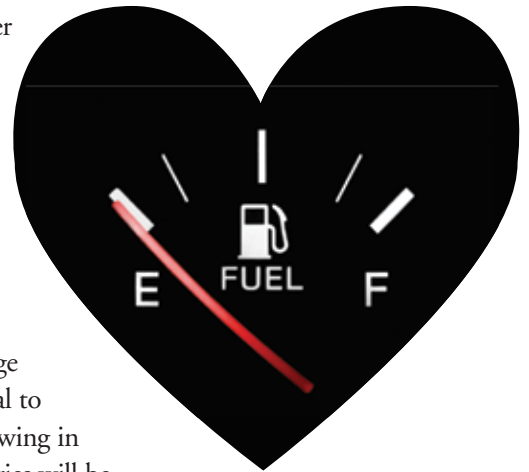
Falling in love is easy. After a period of dating, couples choose to get married, believing they have discussed all the issues and communicate well. However, years later, a couple can struggle with communicating even simple things. Maintaining healthy relationships is a daily and a lifelong pursuit.

It does not have to be an arduous pursuit, though. Words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, sharing quality time and physical touch are all ways to show and to be shown love. Once a couple understands these "love languages," they frequently nurture not only a romantic relationship, but also casual, business and familial relationships effectually. Dr. Gary Chapman's classic *The 5 Love Languages* has sold more than 9 million copies and is as applicable as it is insightful.

St. Francis Xavier

Marriage Ministry will present a book study series on *The 5 Love Languages*.

Married couples and Fr. Thom will guide couples to identify their language that is most beneficial to maintaining and growing in relationships. The series will be held Thursdays, from 7:45 to 9 p.m., in the Randel House beginning Jan. 8 for five weeks. This program is open to all married couples (no matter how long you have been married) and those who are engaged. Please call the parish office (330-725-4968) to reserve a book.



Are you ready to renew your baptismal vows?

By Chelly Bergman

This Easter, when we renew our Baptismal vows, really think about what you are saying.

Do you reject Satan? Do you reject all of his works?

I think of the Devil tempting Jesus. What does he tempt you with?

More money? Buying more stuff? Some songs really make me think – one of them is "Shepherd me oh Lord." "Shepherd me, oh Lord, beyond my wants, beyond my fears..." For me, I think "beyond my wants" is harder to do than "beyond my fears." Wants can have such overwhelming desire; it is easy to tell yourself that your "want" is suddenly a "need."

Do you accept Jesus Christ, his only Son...?

I think of Jesus telling God he will do his will. There have been many times in my life where I asked myself, why is this happening to me? Later, with time, I can see there was a reason.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church...?

I think of Jesus handing the keys of the church to Peter.

Did Peter really understand what he was accepting? Over 2000 years and the

Catholic Church is still going strong.

This Lent, what can we do so that we are confident when we renew our vows, which for most of us were answered for us by our godparents when we were infants? What is standing between you and God?

Our Sunday Visitor has come up with the K.I.S.S. principle: Keep It Simple Sinner. Many people either take on too much or not enough. OSV recommends the 1-1-1 plan. Focus on one sin, do one give up (maybe TV time, impulse buying or an unhealthy habit), and do one add-in.

That's where I come in. Consider this Lent joining a Lenten faith-sharing group here at St. Francis Xavier Parish. Groups meet once a week during Lent for about two hours. In the past we have studied the Psalms, Gospel of Mark, the study of Prophets and Apostles. Do you have a group of friends you regularly meet with (or want to renew old friendships)? Consider starting your own group. Are you new to the parish? I know the size of our parish can be a bit overwhelming. This is a great way to meet people in a small-group setting.

Watch the church bulletin, website (sfxmedina.com) and Facebook page to find out what study we are doing this Lent.

Interested in joining? You can text or call me at 330-461-0365 or email stfrancislent@gmail.com.



Girl Scout helps kids learn hydroponics

Robin Olesinski has a passion for chemistry. Since the first grade, she also has nurtured a love for helping others through her involvement in Girl Scouts.

Last summer, the 17-year-old found a way to combine the two interests by developing a hydroponic garden that required careful pH testing and adjustments, and teaching children at a summer camp how to grow their food.

The project culminated in a Gold Award – the highest award a Girl Scout may earn, often compared with the Boy Scouts' Eagle Award. Less than 5 percent of Girl Scouts take on a Gold Award project, which, among other requirements, must be sustainable and take at least 80 hours to complete.

Robin, the daughter of Diane and David and a junior at Walsh Jesuit High School, said she was worried that it would be too hard – until she stumbled upon the idea of building a hydroponic system at Country Life Kids Camp in Medina.

"When I learned I could get my hands on acid and chemicals, I was in," Robin says.

The Christian youth camp, at 7003 W. Smith Road, was founded by fellow parishioner Tina Bildstein to help children explore, learn and grow through academic exploration and athletics. Tina says she supported the idea as a way to enhance the learning for the 40 campers, age 5 to 14, who come each summer.

While they already did "seed-in-the-ground" gardening, Robin says, "I thought it would be cool to show them different ways of planting." Hydroponics is the growing of plants in a water and fertilizer solution with all the essential nutrients.

Robin researched the materials needed, purchased them and built the system. Four, 8-foot panels each grew 12 heads of Bibb lettuce or basil suspended over water. She created a video to teach the children about the system and charted the plants' growth each week, comparing it with crops planted at the same time in the ground.

There was far more success with the hydroponic crops – "we could only harvest two heads from the dirt," Robin says. Campers ate some of the lettuce in salads and the rest was donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Society at our parish for the needy.

"It was the most amazing, delicious, beautiful, bug-free lettuce ever," says Diane, who has served with co-leader Karen Braehler since the first grade.

The project required many hours at the camp,



The hydroponics garden was dedicated to Robin.

working independently with the children and consulting with experts, but Robin says she learned to be self-sufficient and responsible. "I'm glad I did it. I loved the kids I worked with," she says. "It made me want to go back."

She says the project convinced her that more growers should embrace hydroponic gardening. "It's really expensive (at first), but once you have it in place, it's very efficient," she says. "Animals don't eat (the crops) because it's high off the ground. The vegetables are way more crisp and fresh. With climate change, hydroponic gardening doesn't rely on ground temperature because it's not on the ground, and the vegetables are very nutrient-dense."

"I was really proud of her," Diane says. "She really inspired these kids. I was really proud to see her take the initiative as a teenager and see her do this project."

Robin will receive her award in May. "At Country Life Kids Camp, Robin gave of her time, talent and treasure to do great acts of service for our Camp Counselor in Training Program," Tina says. "She was an inspirational role model for our campers and made a positive impact in their lives."



The day campers with some of their hydroponics-grown lettuce.

St. Francis Xavier

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CALENDAR

Jan. 17

Adoration for Life
8 to 8:30 a.m., Church

Jan. 24

Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby
1 p.m., Church Basement

Jan. 21

Buses depart for March for Life
Call rectory (330-725-4968) for details.

Jan. 23 & 30

First Eucharist meetings
6:45 p.m., Church

Feb. 13 & 16

No School

Feb. 18

Ash Wednesday
Services at 7:30 a.m., 9:15 a.m.,
noon, 5 and 7:15 p.m.

Feb. 21

School Auction
Weymouth Country Club

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Check out our new parish
CYO website for team
and coach information:

sffrancixavierathletics.com

