Transformed!

The Good News at St. Hilary Parish March/April 2021

Live Easter Vigil Returns

Ten readers, five altar servers, four candidates, six catechumens, 10 sponsors, eight ushers, seven Eucharistic ministers, two celebrants, one music director, an ensemble of singers, and six musicians assemble for the most important liturgy of the church year—Easter Vigil Mass. How does it all come together in spite of COVID-19 restrictions?

The highest point of the church year is the Easter Vigil liturgy and the most complex for any parish. If you ask Pastor Steve Brunovsky or Liturgy Director Dave Dettloff, both will say the preparation begins several months ahead. Randy Malick, Director of Faith Formation for Adults, begins preparing those joining the Church through Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in September. Dave starts practicing Easter music in earnest after Christmas, incorporating some music the group has learned in the fall or even the previous year.

Liturgical ministries lend a hand

Before Lent begins, Dave convenes the Liturgy Committee, which plans seasonally. During the meeting, he confers with the coordinators of the parish's various liturgical ministries: art and environment, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, and lectors. It's a group effort.

Easter brings with it the use of a new Paschal candle, which has to be ordered well in advance. After it arrives, Father Steve adds little sacramental ornaments—pins with the sacred wounds of Christ—that must be inserted in the candle. Fr. Steve also obtains newly blessed sacred oils after attending the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral on Tuesday evening.

Several days prior to Easter weekend, Dave puts together a program for parishioners to follow the celebrations of the Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday service, Easter Vigil Mass and finally Easter Sunday. Fr. Steve says it's all in one program because the Easter Triduum is actually one liturgy. The program itself is tricky to format, not to mention the hours it takes to photocopy. Due to COVID-19, this year's program may look a bit different.

The Easter Vigil Mass utilizes a host of volunteers, most of whom are chosen and contacted by Fr. Steve and Dave. Fr. Steve also hand-picks the altar servers whose duties include handling incense and lighting the candles on the sides of church. "These are altar servers who know how to do this. As they gradually get older, we train new ones," he said.

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He also chooses the readers, and calls on the Parisi brothers, all Boy Scouts, who set up the logs in the fire pit outside of church and start the blaze that begins the Mass.

Preparing sacred spaces

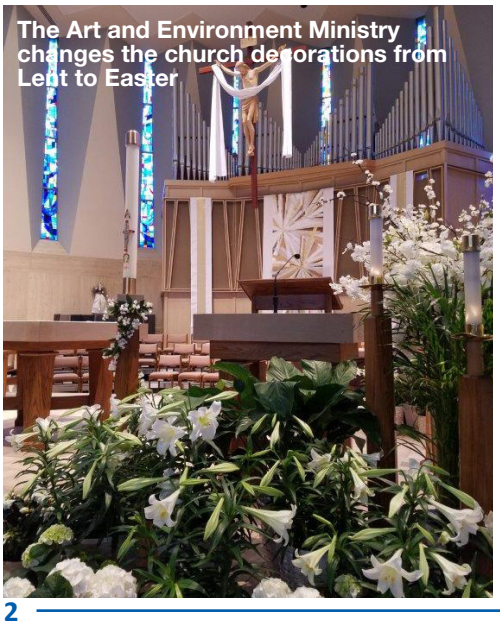
The baptismal font undergoes its own preparation. Facilities Manager Adam Glaus empties the baptismal font before the Good Friday service and fills it up again beginning that night with water for Saturday, allowing it to heat up for Easter Vigil Mass.

Shrines with votive candles are swept of any ash that has accumulated. All the votive candle holders are cleansed and new candles are inserted.

Just prior to the big day, Randy holds practice for the RCIA candidates and catechumens.

When it comes to music, Dave uses a combination of string, wind and brass instruments throughout the week.

Summing up, Fr. Steve states, “When you enter the church for Easter Vigil, the mother of all vigils in the Church calendar, know that as you have prepared your heart for Easter through the practice of Lent, so the staff and volunteers of St. Hilary Parish have been preparing in many ways, and for months, to celebrate the greatest mystery of our faith, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!”


The Art and Environment Ministry changes the church decorations from Lent to Easter

Liturgy Director Dave Dettloff conducts the choir.

Denise Fresh serves as a reader.

Fr. Steve handpicks the altar servers.

An altar server lights the candles before Mass.

2020 Paschal Candle

Join us for Holy Week

Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 1
Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7:30 PM
Adoration following until 11 PM

Good Friday, April 2
Outdoor Stations of the Cross, 12 PM
Indoor Stations of the Cross, 2 PM
Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 3 PM
Life Teen Stations of the Cross, 7 PM

Holy Saturday, April 3
Blessing of Food, 2 PM
Solemn Easter Vigil, 8 PM

Easter Masses

To allow for all parishioners to safely attend and enjoy Easter Masses, pre-registration will be REQUIRED. The 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM Masses will also be live streamed on our website at sthilarychurch.org/live.

Mass times

8:00 PM - Solemn Easter Vigil
7:15 AM
9:00 AM
10:45 AM
12:30 PM

To register for Easter Masses, visit our website listed below, or call the Parish Office starting March 22.

www.sthilarychurch.org/Easter

We look forward to celebrating with you in person or online!

Children lead the way in family faith journeys

Lindsay Schroeter with her children, Elena, William and Sophia

What started out as a search for an alternative to public education led three families to St. Hilary School and ultimately three mothers to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), all following the lead of their children. This Easter Vigil, Sarah Karlen and daughter Kylie, Lindsay Schroeter, Jennifer Winder and son Evan will officially become members of the Catholic Church. Sophia Schroeter and Emily Winder, both second graders, will receive their First Holy Communion with their classes.

Jamie's role as teacher

Their stories of faith are rooted in the experiences of their children in the classroom with religion teachers like Jamie Kovarik, who is Kylie's sponsor. "As a convert myself, just a few years ago in high school (lol), I relish the rich traditions and history of the Catholic faith. I also enjoy sharing my Jewish roots, and I love hearing the students share their faith journeys, be they Christian, Hebrew or other," said Jamie, who has worked at St. Hilary School for 22 years.

"We enjoy learning about one another's traditions. It is easy to connect with students because they are open books and they want to learn. They come with less bias (baggage) and are accepting of one another's differences," she said.

> 'It reinforces Catholic schools' ministry of developing the entire student: heart, mind, and spirit.'
>
> *Jamie Kovarik*

"I have been a sponsor for a few students, and seeing Kylie become baptized and take the entire sacramental journey, is both thrilling and touching to me. She readily shared her faith and we had many good conversations in Religion class. I recall telling her to go home and talk to your mom about this. I am so glad she did," said Jamie.

"My deepest joys and honors as a Catholic school teacher have been seeing my former students grow in their faith relationship with Jesus and succeed in their high school, college, and adult careers. It makes me exceedingly proud and humbled to be a small part of their journey. It reinforces Catholic schools' ministry of developing the entire student: heart, mind, and spirit," she said.

"I think kids are looking for a place to belong, to grow, to be accepted, and to find out who they are and who they are meant to become," Jamie added. "St. Hilary School provides that for students of all faiths, by infusing them every minute of our day in Christ's mission of evangelization—sharing the Good News.

"Being a sponsor for Kylie and seeing Evan, Brielle Conner, and Ethan Cadwell also entering the Church, carries a message of hope during this pandemic. It proves that the Holy Spirit is at work in our world. It is a testament to the welcoming community of St. Hilary that we can, in the midst of the COVID craziness, go out of ourselves to welcome in new believers to bring

Kylie and her sponsor Jamie Kovarik

Sarah Karlen, with her children Bailey, Kylie and Wesley

forth the Kingdom," Jamie concluded.

Sarah's transformation

Sarah Karlen and husband Tim were just getting ready for their wedding when the couple was looking for a school for Sarah's daughter Kylie. The couple was not Catholic, but had done their homework, examined the St. Hilary School's scores, and based on the recommendation of other family members and their experiences with the school, enrolled Kylie in kindergarten. It proved to be a decision that would eventually transform both Kylie and Sarah.

"It's a great education. We looked up all the scores and chose the school for its great quality of education. The school has been amazing. I love that I have the opportunity to be involved in the school," said Sarah.

Sarah explained that Kylie was interested first in joining the church, then her. "I was content in just sending them without joining the parish. But her second-grade year took a toll on her as she watched her friends make their First Holy Communion, and she didn't get to be a part of it. I thought after second grade it would pass, but it didn't. She still had a strong interest in joining the Church," said Sarah.

"Through 2020 she was home a lot since school went online during the shutdown. It left us a lot of time to discuss it. I looked into when RCIA would be starting. I had to do some self-teaching and met with Randy Malick." Randy is the Director of Faith Formation for Adults and heads RCIA.

Kylie, a fifth grader, and Evan Winder, a fourth grader, will join the Church through a process similar to RCIA, but one that's geared to them called Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC). They meet twice a month with Jeannie Hohlefelder, Director of Faith Formation for Children. "They don't allow kids to go through the process by themselves," said Sarah. "It was important to me to take those milestones together."

> 'It dawned on me that I needed to do RCIA. To do this inspired me to finish the spiritual journey to find wholeness.'
>
> *Lindsay Schroeter*

"It's a special time for us together. Kylie is excited because she gets to be the leader. Her younger siblings Bailey and Wes will be baptized after Easter. Kylie is part of the raising of them faith-wise. She is part of the transformation."

Lindsay's search for wholeness

"Our child led us to Christ," Lindsay said. "It wasn't until we had Sophia baptized, that our faith lit up. The presence of Christ lit up—having children does that to you."

Lindsay, along with daughters Sophia and Elena, were baptized in the Episcopal Church, which jump started her faith journey. They have since added William, now five months old, to the family. "There was that idea of wanting to get closer to Christ before Sophia started school. A few years before we came to St. Hilary I realized the need to get Christ at the center. That spiritual light flickered on.

"When we decided on a private school education, we were all for a neighboring school—until we attended Kindergarten Kaleidoscope at St. Hilary. The curriculum blew us away."

The light of faith grew with her daughter's exposure to Catholicism in school. "Sophia has religion classes and kept coming home with all that she learned—and it was not just the religion stuff. She sparked that interest in me," said Lindsay.

"So, when she started at St. Hilary, I started getting involved at the school and was on the school board," she continued. "It dawned on me that I needed to do RCIA. To do this inspired me to finish the spiritual journey to find wholeness. That spiritual part was the missing link. I found it, and it's making me whole.

Jennifer Winder with her children Emily and Evan

Jeannie Hohlefelder meets with Kylie and Evan for RCIC.

"Sophia is making her First Holy Communion and says she's excited. She is doing it with her class, but we are doing it together. I feel excited. It's given us one-on-one time, growing together spiritually," Lindsay explained.

"I have been excited for this whole process. I am excited for new beginnings, to see how this is going to impact our life. The perception of the classes we've taken tell us we're not in control, that God has a plan for us. What I find most exciting is finding out what that's going to be!"

Jennifer's unexpected opportunity

Jennifer had not anticipated joining the Church when she and her husband decided to send their son and daughter to St. Hilary at the start of this school year. Their intent was to find a better learning situation for their son Evan, who was not thriving in Akron Public Schools which had opted for at-home learning at the start of this school year.

The Winders thought they found an alternative, but were dismayed that their calls were not returned. So they considered St. Hilary and were pleasantly surprised when Debbie Sinopoli, Director of Marketing and Admissions, got right back to them. There was a problem, though. While the school had a spot for Evan, the second grade was full. When a parent opted for on-line learning for their second grader, however, Debbie got back to Jennifer with news that a space opened up for Emily. This enabled both of their children to attend St. Hilary. That opportunity turned out to be life changing.

Prior to their involvement with St. Hilary, Jennifer explained, "My kids weren't exposed to religion. My husband and I didn't get them baptized. But when they came here, they really took to the religious aspect of the school, especially the Mass and the stories. Shortly after school began, Evan started sharing stories from religion class. Evan said, 'I want to become a Catholic.' Someone told me I should call Randy Malick."

It was Evan's intense desire to become a Catholic that led Jennifer to seek out RCIA. "Evan drove this process," Jennifer recalled. Her decision enabled Emily to join the process, too. As a result, Emily was baptized by Fr. Matt Jordan in December.

The decision was not a hard one for Jennifer. "I wouldn't have it any other way. It's important to Evan. It's something you can share together."

The experience has had a profound effect on her children. In preparing for her first Reconciliation, Emily learned that if you are struggling you should pray. Jennifer related, "When she's going through a tough time, she excuses herself to pray."

"Since starting RCIA, I have really enjoyed it. I look forward to Wednesday nights. This fills a need. I am most looking forward to being part of the Mass, being there for the whole thing, and doing service work for the Church, and finding out what my calling is."

Join us for *Inquiry*!

Are you or someone you know looking for a deeper purpose and meaning to life? You are invited to join us for *Inquiry* to get answers to some of life's most pressing questions the Church has to offer. *Inquiry* often leads people to a desire to become Catholic. They can then join RCIA in the fall and begin the journey toward becoming Catholic.

Inquiry takes place on Wednesdays in the summer. Contact Randy Malick at 330-867-1055 or rmalick@sthilarychurch.org for more information.

Slow down, recharge, refocus with men's retreat

When the pandemic and specifically the shutdown brought many parish ministries to a halt, the men's Christ Renews His Parish (CRHP) retreat had to be postponed. The team presenting the retreat, however, adapted to the new challenge and continued to meet via Zoom and finally face-to-face.

"We are happy to say that our team formation and retreat preparation has continued unabated. We have been blessed by the power of the Holy Spirit and are enthusiastically looking forward to delivering a powerful CRHP Weekend Retreat in April," said Tim Miller, Spiritual Director.

Months of preparation will come to fruition on April 17 and 18 when the team welcomes new participants to the men's CHRP retreat at Loyola Retreat House in Green, all while following COVID-19 protocols. The theme is "Unlock the Light of the Spirit."

"Rest assured, the CRHP retreat is for all men, no matter how weak or strong your faith and no matter how worthy or unworthy you might feel," said Tim. "Jesus calls all of us to a personal relationship with him, regardless of our sins. So, come as you are! This is not a weekend of preaching or teaching, but rather a weekend of listening to witnesses and sharing faith stories presented mostly by the team putting on the retreat.

"It is a weekend of prayer, scripture, reconciliation, and the Eucharist—of reconnecting with Jesus. There is a good balance of group time, one-on-one time, and personal time. The food is good and plentiful, and you have your own room to sleep in!" he added.

According to Lay Director T.J. Wolski, "CRHP gives you the balance to see those turning points in life—moments that ultimately and deeply impact one's current state. But looking back on them you didn't realize they were impactful at that time. That's what I realized on my weekend and through the team formation."

He added, "For me it's the start of a process of understanding the Catholic man I am and want to be. The initial hurdle is the pressure of that expectation that going gives full satisfaction of what you are meant to be, but it's really a starting point.

"It got me to the point of understanding that my relationship with Christ starts with intentionality," T.J. said. "It isn't meaningful if it is passive. My relationship with Christ had been stand-up, sit-down, and say that — ritual driven. For me it didn't define that why or force me to investigate or discover the reasons for being a Catholic man. This retreat does that with time uninterrupted. The crux is that it is going to give you an opportunity to intentionally look at why you are who you are in your faith. It gives the opportunity to start that process," T.J. said.

Tim first attended the CRHP retreat in the fall of 2016. He explained, "If I had to settle on the most significant thing the retreat gave me, it would be a new-found sense of peace in my life. Working long hours and traveling for business, and dealing with the noise of everyday life, it is easy to lose track of our faith life. The weekend retreat gave me the opportunity to slow down, recharge and refocus. It was an opportunity to reset my sights on what matters most—my relationship with God and my responsibilities as a husband, father, and grandfather.

As Tim, T.J., and the team prepare for this men's retreat, they reflected on their hopes for the new participants. "We want everyone to be in a place where they feel comfortable, but unsatisfied with their current relationship with Christ. We want to provide an opportunity to grow in that relationship, knowing it is something people are longing for," said T.J.

Tim concluded, "We are hoping participants will see it as an opportunity to move out, change, and discover the man God intended them to be."

While some might hesitate to go on such a weekend considering the nature of COVID-19, Loyola Retreat House offered reassurance that proper precautions are taken at the facility. "All virus protocols will be strictly followed, said Tim. "Hand sanitizing, the wearing of masks, and social distancing guidelines will be followed throughout the weekend.

If you are looking for a way to jump-start your spiritual life, consider signing up for the next men's CRHP retreat through at www.sthilarychurch.org/mens-crhp or contact Randy Malick at rmalick@sthilarychurch.org.

Men's CRHP team makes preparations for the next retreat.

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An engaging full-day retreat with YOU in mind
Discover your unique spiritual gifts (charisms)
Discern your personal call from God

Advanced Registration Required!
Register online at sthilarychurch.org/gifted
or call the parish office before May 1.

Transformed!

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