

OUR PARISH

Family Newsletter

Fall 2021

St. Joseph's Table

A Three Part Series

Saint Joseph
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Serving God and Neighbor Since 1946



Although the Feast of St. Joseph, always falls in the middle of Lent, we thought this a good time to talk about the tradition of the St. Joseph's Table. You may recall that we used to do a Food Drive each year, around the Feast of St. Joseph, as a type of St. Joseph's Table. Our patron, St. Joseph, is especially commemorated and celebrated in Italy in general, and Sicily in particular, where St. Joseph has been long-regarded as the island's Patron saint. It is there, among Sicilians, that the tradition of the "Tavola di San Giuseppe" or "St. Joseph's Table" has its origins.

March 19th is, in Italy, also Father's Day—which isn't at all surprising, as St. Joseph was, of course, the foster father of Jesus. This celebration is a symbolic "thank you" and a renewal of the Sicilian people's devotion to Saint Joseph.

It is a *shared* celebration with the entire community where the riches of food are given as alms to the poor: traditional etiquette is that *no one* can be turned away from this table.

Origins

Legends from the Middle Ages attributed the end of a devastating drought to a prayer-devotion that the Sicilian people made to St. Joseph.

During a time of drought and famine, no rain fell on Medieval Sicily. Food crops for both people and livestock withered and died. The people prayed to St. Joseph for help.

When the clouds opened, the desperately-needed rain poured down, and there was much rejoicing! After the harvest, to show their gratitude, they prepared a table with special foods to honor St. Joseph and to share with the poor. After thanking and honoring the saint, they distributed the food to the less fortunate. This celebration

became an annual tradition. Each year, wealthy families prepared huge buffets. The less fortunate people of the community, especially the homeless and sick, were invited, and all the remaining food and proceeds were given to the poor.

Through the years, the tradition has remained throughout Italy, and is also prevalent in Poland, Malta, Spain, the Philippines, and, with the influx of Sicilian immigrants to the US, here in our own country.

Three-Fold Purpose

The heart of this tradition can be found in these three aspects:

Veneration—special recognition of St. Joseph during Mass and at the "table."

The Table—both a kind of "altar of reverence", and a communal celebration.

The Poor—The intention of all the gifts is to help those in need.

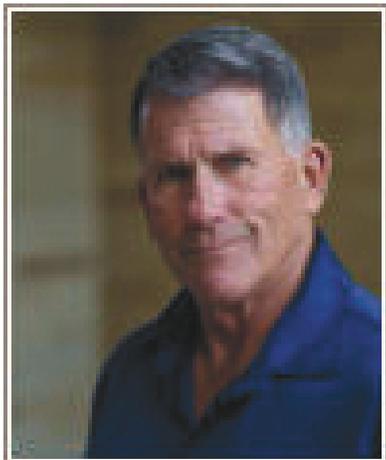
Veneration

The festive nature of the table celebration is all about St. Joseph, but the primary veneration is during Mass. When the "table" is part of a parish activity, the "celebration" follows Mass. At Mass, St. Joseph, Mary and the child Jesus bring up the gifts; parishioners dressed as the Holy Family emphasize the stewardship of St. Joseph's gifts to the Church. Included with the normal sacramental gifts are some representative food items from the "table", especially hand-fashioned breads. In many parishes, after Mass, the statue of St. Joseph is carried, procession-style, into the parish hall to be placed in a prominent spot on the "altar", surrounded by lilies and other items.

~Adopted from Diocese of Charlotte

(Continued in the Winter Newsletter)

Introducing Our New Parish Pastoral Council Members



“My wife, Colleen, and I joined St. Joseph Parish four years ago. After moving to Columbia Station more than four years ago, Colleen and I took our time to find a parish where we would feel at home.

Our preference has always been a parish that has a school attached to the church. St. Joseph’s fit that part of the bill. We moved here from a parish that had very little ministries or community involvement. So, it was important for us to find a parish that offered ministries and volunteer opportunities.

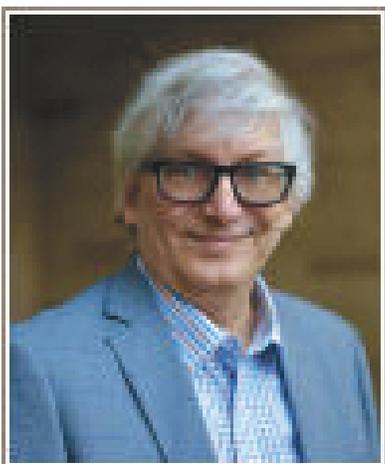
As a result, Colleen and I have been involved in Service Day, Mission of

Hope, inner city serving of breakfast and dinner, as well as other involvements with parish life. I also transferred my membership as a Knight of Columbus to the St. Francis of Assisi Council for St. Joseph and St. John’s parishes.

All in all, our joining of this parish has been a blessing. Anyone in the parish who has not taken advantage to be involved in the ministries and activities provided, you are missing out on things that could change your life forever. Look forward to meeting more parishioners in the coming years.”

~Tony Manning

“Hello! My name is Peggy Slavik and I have been a parishioners of St. Joseph Church since 2000 after returning to Strongsville with my husband Mark, and our two children. I grew up in the parish, attended St. Joseph School and was married here in 1986. I am currently a member of the Praise Team Choir and involved in our Mission of Hope ministry. I work at Baldwin Wallace University as a faculty member in the mathematics department and enjoy hiking, boating and scuba diving. Mark and I also welcomed our fifth grandchild this summer. I look forward to serving my fellow parishioners as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.”



“My name is Bob Mathas and I am honored to be a member of the Parish Council. I feel this opportunity gives me a chance for personal spiritual growth, spiritual growth with my fellow parishioners, and a more active participation in our Church’s mission.

My wife, Doreen and I started attending St. Joseph’s in the fall of 1977 when we relocated from Pennsylvania to Middleburg Hts. As newlyweds ready to start our careers. We were young, fresh out of college and St. Joe’s had a Sunday 5pm Mass that fit nicely with

our weekend schedule. We quickly realized St. Joe’s had great religious services, inspiring sermons and wonderful ministries. We continued attending as we moved to and around Strongsville and finally became “official members”.

I am retired from software development at Ernst & Young LLP and Doreen is retired from a career in education. We assist with Parish Service Day, the Fish Fries the Carpenters and enjoy Bible Study. Again, I appreciate this new opportunity to be of service to the parish.

“I have been a parishioner of St. Joe’s since 2002. I graduated from Strongsville High School in 2013 and I met my wife in that time. We got married in 2017 and moved to Middleburg Heights. We have a precious nine month old daughter, Grace Lyn. I am a firefighter/paramedic at Bainbridge Twp. FD and my wife is a Pre-Access Rep at Southwest General Hospital. God has blessed us beyond words and our hearts are overwhelmed with gratitude.

Life is finally slowing down and I’m excited to get more involved in our church community.”

~Greg Savel





From the Desk of Fr. Joe

Dear Parish Family:

I find it hard to believe that we've already begun another September. I am not quite sure where summer went, but it's already gone...and September is here! I wish things were still more normal as we deal with COVID-19, but as I write, we are still seeing a growing amount of cases, increased hospitalizations, and the Diocese's encouragement that all of us, regardless of our vaccination status, consider wearing masks whenever in close proximity to one another. I am so grateful and thankful for the many continued ways that we have all sought to offer our support to one another and our parish during this time! Let us all continue to do our part to move our community beyond this and emerge once again healthy.

Hopefully, though, as things lessened earlier in the summer, you had the chance to change up your routine, get outside, and enjoy different things – such as time with friends or family relaxing outside, a cookout, talking, and simply enjoying a calm summer evening. Yet, now as the calendar turns, the more “care-free days” have come and gone – and we're beginning both another school year and “pastoral year” full of activities around the parish. While we continue to hover around 60% attendance in comparison to our pre-COVID average at Mass, many activities, ministries, and events continue to take a careful and deliberate approach to their restart. So please keep following along in the bulletin as we move throughout these months in regards to activities and also remember that you may find details on our continued COVID protocols

and Mass attendance by visiting www.sjohio.org/covid.

As you begin to thumb through this edition of the Parish Newsletter, we continue to move through the celebration of our parish's Diamond Anniversary. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect upon the blessings of the past, our present opportunities, and are ability to leave a legacy for those who will come after us. Please see the last page of this newsletter for a listing of all the upcoming events. In their own way, each one of these events will help us recall that we truly have been trying to “serve God and neighbor” well since our earliest days in June 1946! Our Annual Parish Service Day returns this year on Saturday, October 9. I hope that you might consider setting aside time that day to participate in one of the various service opportunities. Later this month, sign-ups will begin in the Holy Family Center and online. Please stay alert for updated information in the bulletin or you can visit www.sjohio.org/service to see more photos from the past several years and soon, to sign-up for this year's opportunities!

Secondly, I invite you to see the article and pictures about this year's SummerFest. Sure, it was different than past SummerFest's, and had fewer activities, it was a true treat to be together outside, enjoy some live music, food, and most importantly, one another's company! Heck, I was even able to play in this year's Parish Golf Outing! We welcome everyone to these events. As with all of our events, please feel free to invite your neighbors, family, and friends to join you. Events such as these give us an opportunity to celebrate our community and enjoy ourselves as members of the community of St. Joseph! We certainly look forward to next year, on July 31, 2022, when we can have

a “full” picnic again!

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I invite you to see the section about our Knights of Columbus and their recent awards given to members of our local Safety Forces. As many of you may be aware, I have been honored to serve as the Chaplain of our Strongsville Safety Forces since 2015. Over the years, I have gotten to know so many fine women and men who daily devote their lives to serving our community. I have spent time in their cruisers, stations, fire trucks, ambulances, and dispatch center, I have gotten to know their families, and I can attest that each one of these award winners are not only deserving, but also representative of our Safety Forces. I even made my First Communion with one of this year's winners! I am grateful to the St. Francis of Assisi Council of the Knights of Columbus (which serves both St. John Neumann and our parish) for their offering of these awards each year. As we draw near the 20th Anniversary of the Terror Attacks of September 11, 2001, I invite you to take the opportunity to remember these servants in your prayers.

As we journey through these months, may God continue to bless each one of us. May St. Joseph, our Patron, always be our guide. Finally, as we have since 1946, may we remain committed to “serving God and neighbor!”

With my best wishes and prayers,

Fr. Joe Mamich
Pastor

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HONOR OUR HEROES

Police Officer of the Year

As we all know, 2020 was a very challenging year for everyone. Law enforcement faced obstacles never before seen. The pandemic, the lockdowns, and civil unrest just to name a few. In challenging times like these it is vital for law enforcement to adapt and overcome to the ever changing environment. I am proud to say, as a department, that is exactly what the men and women of the Strongsville Police did. Although there were numerous incidents, and several worthy nominations, one officer stood out to his peers and was nominated for the office of the year award.

Officer Michael Mendise is a 20 year veteran of the Strongsville Police Department. During his time with the SPD, Officer Mendise has been a field training officer, an Honor Guard member, and holds a leadership role in the Southwest

Enforcement Bureau. During 2020, Officer Mendise and the Southwest Enforcement Bureau (SEB) were called on numerous times, not only to protect the city of Strongsville from civil unrest but also surrounding communities as well, including the May 30th riots in the city of Cleveland.

On May 25th, just five days prior to the Cleveland riots, Strongsville PD received a call of a distraught female that was planning on jumping off the Boston Road bypass. Several SPD officers responded to the scene with Officer Mendise being the first to arrive. Upon arrival, Officer Mendise noticed the female had already climbed over the safety fence and was standing on a narrow ledge above I-71. Not knowing the reasons the female was upset, Officer Mendise immediately asked for the family members on scene to

step away. Officer Mendise then climbed over the fence and began to speak to her. He was able to calm the female and assure her that he was there to help. After a few minutes, Officer Mendise was able to convince the female that harming herself was not the solution to whatever problems she was facing. He then escorted her off the ledge to safety.

Officer Mendise displayed extreme compassion and used his instincts to have a successful outcome to this dire incident. He also showed courage and professionalism, along with the other team members of the Southwest Enforcement Bureau during a time unlike any other in law enforcement. For these reasons, we nominate Office Michael Mendise as the Strongsville Police Office of the Year.

Dispatcher of the Year

“I would like to nominate Angel Love for Knights of Columbus Dispatcher of the Year. Angela started working at SWEDC in August of 2018. She brought with her a vast amount of experience, a jaw dropping work ethic and a wonderfully sunny disposition.

Angela is the co-worker that will always help you out. She knows the meaning of the word TEAM and shows it every day. Whether it’s taking your radio for you, answering your radio when you are busy or passing on knowledge; she does it all. And, she does it all with a smile on her face and has malice for none.



She simply wants to do her job and help out when she can.

Her work ethic exceeds normal standards. She is always at the top of her game. She never complains if you ask her to do extra jobs and will even volunteer. If a co-worker needs to switch shifts because of personal issues, she will always try and accommodate when asked.

When Angela is at work, you know that the atmosphere will be lighter and happier just by her presence. In a career where you can experience so much darkness, she is a bright spot, indeed.” *Submitted by Erin Iorillo*

Firefighter of the Year

“It is my belief that Fire Fighter Andrew Smeader deserves recognition and consideration for receiving the 2021 Fire Fighter of the Year Award.

FF Smeader has demonstrated a desire to be as technically and tactically proficient as he can be in the performance of his duties and his attention to training in the fire and rescue disciplines have been observed to be at a level above many of his peers. He is respected by his fire fighting peers and the company officers of the department for his ability to teach skills relevant and critical in the performance of our mission.

It is the result of his action on February 9, 2020 that I believe he is deserving of this recognition and award. His years of preparation for leadership roles in the SFEMS culminated in his taking actions during and after the severe and potentially life threatening crash involving a medic unit he was serving in as the Officer in Charge (OIC). After suffering a severe vehicle impact to his unit, he, after a brief period of unresponsiveness, displayed “muscle memory” driven



actions that were the result of his years of preparation for leadership responsibilities and taking care of his fellow fire fighter’s in the time of need. He, under great duress, managed to steer his unit off of the roadway and into an area of relative safety saving his crew from possible further impact by another passing motorist and also from the medic unit striking an unsuspecting civilian vehicle. He then was able to rely on his training and deliver an inspiring

and critical radio transmission, with the obvious distress of the situation audible in his voice, detailing what had just occurred, the status of one of his crew members, and necessary resources needed to respond to this violent crash. He was then reported to have shown great concern and care for the members of his crew in follow up actions until he himself was removed from the scene for medical treatment.

After having served in the US Army and for almost 27 years in the SFEMS, it is my belief that his actions on that awful day truly exemplified what strong fire service leadership represents. It is comparatively easy to be a leader in the routine and non-emergent duties that service as an OIC requires. It is my belief that what truly sets fire service leaders apart is the performance and concern for their crew during times of great stress and during events that are rare and requiring reliance on learned behaviors and training. I believe the actions of FF Smeader on February 9th warrant consideration for the 2021 Fire Fighter of the Year award. *Submitted by Lt. C. Zerman*

Teacher of the Year

Miss Brianne Tabor is currently a second grade teacher at Sts. Joseph and John School and we have never seen a teacher so dedicated and committed to the betterment of each and every student in her classroom and the school. In everything she does, her love for children is visible and palpable. She comes in early and stays late to be sure her students have all the resources and materials needed to help them be successful. Miss Tabar takes her second grade content and makes it come alive for



her students and constantly challenges herself to provide experiences for her students that they will remember.

Her class has been involved in “text feature surgery” where they dressed up as surgeons to analyze and “diagnose” different parts of a text. Her students became crime scene analysts and had to use clues and evidence to determine who stole all their books in their classroom library. Her room looked like a *continued on page 7:*

Welcome Back SummerFest

As we gradually began to carefully return to “normal” from COVID protocols in April we wanted to have our annual parish picnic but were cautious . The decision was made to have a scaled down version. Hot food was provided by Olympia as well as fresh squeezed lemonade for family friendly prices. Ice cream was also provided by Olympia but at no cost to our picnic attendees. Desserts were provided by European’s Best and as always an excellent selection. (The poppyseed

roll was delightful.) Adult beverages were available for purchase and polka music filled the air. The Euclid Beach Rocket Car was available for complimentary rides as well as pony rides for young kids. Not as grand a picnic as we have had in the past but great to see everyone just the same. A tip of the hat to all who volunteered whether to help set up, tear down, staff ice cream, adult beverages, lemonade or just lend a hand where needed. Thank you. You made it work!





Hope to see everyone on July 31, 2022 as we hope to return to our Full-scale SummerFest

Continued from page 5: crime scene and students spent time using their inferencing skills to see where their classroom library went. Miss Tabar created a “diner” to help her students learn money, had an “Adjective Fashion Show” to help understand adjectives and had students pick their favorite books by completing a March Madness bracket. Every day Miss Tabar pushes herself to do “bigger and better” in order to help her students learn. Students will never forget the skills and content they learned in her class and every day they come in wanting to learn more and more. There is hands down, No One Like Miss Tabar”. I am in awe everyday of what she does to help her students learn.

Not only is Miss Tabar one of the most phenomenal teachers I have seen, she has such passion for her students and is so proud of them when they grow in any of their academic goals. She also takes time out to visit them to watch them compete in the sports they play and the activities they do in their free time. The students love her, the parents absolutely adore her, and it is truly amazing to see and feel the love she has for all her students. The parents in her class cannot say enough about her and how happy they are that their children get to be part of her class. If there is something a student needs, she researches best practices, locates the resources necessary, asks others for assistance and implements her

learning to be sure her students get the very best educational experience they can have.

Her attitude at school is contagious with students and staff and she is such a leader to all. Miss Tabar is a role model for all and her love for teaching and learning shows everyday. Miss Tabar can always be counted on to “push the envelope” with her students, but she also shares all her ideas with her teammates and the entire staff. She contributes to our instructional meetings and provides teachers with a different perspective in order to help all students be successful.

There is no better role model, educator and leader in the school.



Saint Joseph CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY-TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3-5, 2021

Year of St. Joseph Parish Mission

Spend some time in prayer and learn about our Patron Saint.

Mike Aquilina, author of *St. Joseph and His World*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2021

Annual Parish Service Day

Serve God through Service of Neighbor

www.sjohio.org/service

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON

Anniversary Music Concert

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022

Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary

10am Mass

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022

Grand Celebration Dinner

Strongsville Recreation Center catered dinner.

Details and ticket information to follow.

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022

Closing of our 75th Jubilee: Noon Mass

Reception to follow in the Holy Family Center.

DIAMOND JUBILEE STEERING COMMITTEE

*Jeff and Neomia Branich, Doug and Debbie Januszewski, Jason and Jodi Januszewski,
Art and Cindy Leonard, Fr. Joe Mamich, Dawna Meng, Mike and Mary Lou Shumate, and Joe and Pat Weber*