

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter Connecting Disciples of Jesus  
with One Another and the Lord

April  
2023

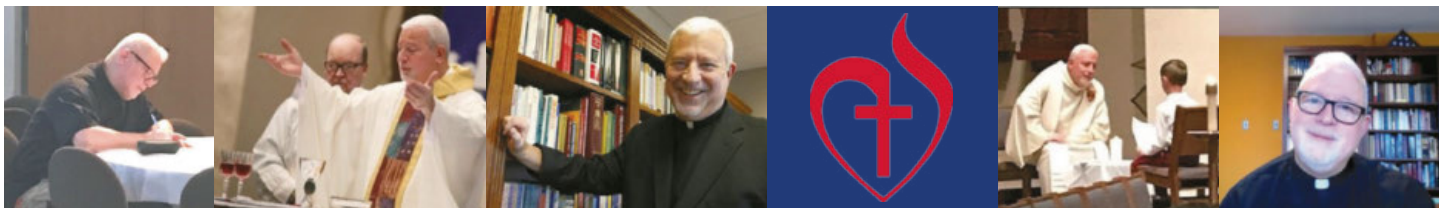


We are a Welcoming Community that Inspires Disciples of Jesus  
to Share God's Love and Transform the World.



## DIVINE MERCY PARISH

SACRED HEART CHURCH · ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE CHURCH



I recently was preparing for the sacred Paschal Triduum, the three special days of Holy Week: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday with its Easter Vigil. In my preparation, I came across the antiphons for the Washing of Feet on Holy Thursday.

The first antiphon for that ritual is: *After the Lord had risen from supper, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of his disciples: he left them this example.*

And what an example it is! The Lord of the Universe, the Messiah, the Son of God washes the feet of his disciples. The Master stoops low to perform this humble service. If the Teacher does this, how can the disciples (how can we) do otherwise?

This issue of *Connections*, like every other, highlights stories of discipleship, people like you and me who are trying their best to follow the example set for us by Jesus. No one is claiming perfection.

Discipleship is a "work in progress." Some days and months we are better at it. Other times, not so much. That's what it means to be a disciple, a learner, a seeker after the truth, one who is willing to submit to the grace of God through the workings of

the Holy Spirit, one who tries to follow the example of Christ.

Where are those basins of water today? Who is in need? How might we be of service in the name of Jesus? There is much to do; we do what we can.

Blessings on you! Enjoy this springtime issue of *Connections*!



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# The Viking Wire

## A NEW DAY

### AT SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Easter is a time of rebirth. It is a time of renewal. At Sacred Heart School, this Easter is especially meaningful as we prepare to welcome our new principal, Jodi Reuter, to our school. Jodi brings a wealth of experience and energy to hit the ground running. "While some people think a school year begins in August, it actually begins with laying the groundwork the year before," says Mrs. Reuter. "In order to build a foundation of teamwork, it helps to get to know each other and put names to faces. Together we can get a sense of what is currently working and what needs to improve to grow the school."

And Mrs. Reuter knows about what she speaks, having spent over twenty-six years in Archdiocese schools. She started teaching first, second, and third grades, where she "loved every minute of it!" From there, her path led from assistant principal to principal of St. Catherine Laboure School in Glenview.

Coming from a school similar in size to Sacred Heart, Mrs. Reuter believes in everything we provide. "I have loved working inside a small school with a family feel. Sacred Heart is a small school with a family feel, great academics, great sports, a wonderful catholic identity, and such a warm, welcoming feeling." And in the future, she sees her job as helping to improve the high level of achievement others have already established. "My job, as I see it," she says, "is to only build on that great foundation that has already been built."

While some may feel the need to come in and act like the new sheriff in town, Mrs. Reuter has a different approach. "**I intend to do a lot of listening.** I want to hear ideas. I want to get creative. I want to strategically plan and think outside the box to discover what is going to bring Sacred Heart to the next level."

As for the why, Mrs. Reuter brings it back to basics with a philosophy familiar to anyone who's ever gone to church or

Do you remember the names of any  
of your principals?

Why? Or...why not?!

read a bible. "You can't keep a light under a bowl, as the Bible says. You have to let it out so it can shine. Sacred Heart is truly a shining star, and it's time that we let it out and let everyone know how awesome it is."

Mrs. Reuter is the living embodiment of the excitement and renewal this Easter season brings to Sacred Heart School. And as we already start to think about what life will be like at Sacred Heart next fall, our thoughts are squarely focused on creating the best learning environment for our students and

teachers. We are committed to creating an environment where innovative academic strategies join with Catholic moral values to challenge our students to reach their full potential. Principal Reuter, our faculty, and our parents will all be working together to help shape the hearts and minds of our students so that they go on to excel in high school, college, and beyond. **We are delighted to welcome Jodi Reuter into the fold** and are sure she will be a crucial figure in letting the world see just how brightly Sacred Heart can shine.



## 5 Key Elements of Active Listening

- 1) Pay attention
- 2) Show that you are listening
- 3) Provide feedback
- 4) Defer judgement
- 5) Respond appropriately

Learn more about active listening by visiting  
<https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm>

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Easter season is a wonderful time to recognize and honor the many people who walk in the footsteps of Christ. This column has highlighted a parishioner or couple you should know. Today we wanted to recognize all kinds of parishioners you should know because they inspire others by who they are and how they live their lives...because of Jesus.

These are people who share the Good News with others, care for the sick, the lonely, and the broken-hearted.

They are the people who hand down the faith and share their love for Jesus with our young people. Sometimes they even dress up like Jesus!



They are the people who welcome familiar faces, greet newcomers at our doors, and share their gift of music with the congregation.

They are the people who gather together to pray the Rosary together every morning online.

They are the people who make the coffee or pick up donuts, pastries and juice boxes for our Sunday hospitality.



They are the people who dedicate their lives to teaching the students of Sacred Heart School.

They are the people who send notes of encouragement and hope to those who are grieving, or to those families or individuals facing unbelievable health challenges.

They are the people who make casseroles or drop them off at A Just Harvest community kitchen.



They are the people who accompany seekers through the Adult Catechumenate process (the RCIA or Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) as they come to know Jesus and the faith community of Divine Mercy.

They are people who give of their time to help craft a vision and vibrant future for Divine Mercy Parish and Sacred Heart School.

They are people who pay the bills for the Church and our school, plant spring bulbs and fill our flower pots each season.



# Parishioners You Should Know (continued)

They are people who bring donations to Hunger Hero every month.

They are the people who gather each week to share their reflections on scripture or inspirational books they've read with each other.

They are the parents who give of their time to share their faith in our Children's Ministry program as Catechists or teen aides.



They are the people who clear tables and load the dishwasher after parish events, or help out in the sacristy before or after Mass, be it on Sundays or daily Mass.

They are the people who lead Adoration in our both our churches so that others might be able to spend time in the presence of Christ.

They are the families who come together to share their faith with each other through Family Faith Connections.



They are people who tutor and care for the students of Augustus Tolton Catholic Academy each week.



They are the people, young and old, who pack sack dinners for the less fortunate that are shared through Uncle Pete's Ministry.

They are the people who gather each week for community and faith sharing.

They are people who give of their time and energy to nurture our parish garden and share the bounty with our homebound.

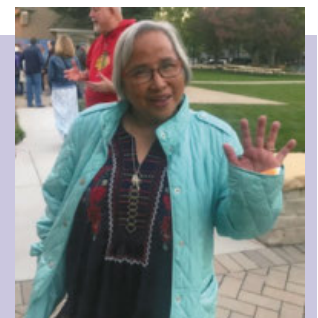
They are the people who constantly brainstorm to come up with ways to welcome, invite and inspire parishioners to be part of our amazing faith community.



They are the people who clean up the pews after Mass or bring Holy Communion to nursing homes, hospitals and the homebound.

They are the people who help decorate our churches for each liturgical season.

They are the people who host our Alpha sessions as they accompany those who hunger and thirst for Jesus in their lives."



**They are you.**

**And we thank you.**

**Happy Easter!**

# Engaging Children's Hearts

## SEASON OF SACRAMENTS

Divine Mercy Children's Ministry has been blessed with bountiful sacraments and sacramental preparations this past month. We held a First Communion Retreat for nearly 50 First Communicants, held a Reconciliation Service for our Confirmands, a First Reconciliation and then Confirmation for nearly 50 children from Children's Ministry, Sacred Heart School and Northridge Prep. Blessings multiplied.

## FIRST COMMUNION RETREAT

Thanks to our wonderful, engaged catechists, we were able to bring back our traditional First Communion Retreat after a three-year pandemic hiatus. Children made bread with their parents, which was baked in the Parish Center oven; created *Makelt* plates; practiced receiving the Eucharist; and participated in a Last Supper play.



Children's Ministry Board member Tim Womack was Jesus in all four plays! The children also had a chance to play Mass Bingo, which tested their parents' knowledge as much as their own! We had tremendous participation, great volunteer help from our board, including Bobbie Weiss, Tim Womack, and Stephanie

Do you have a family Bible, or more importantly, do you ever just pick it up to read?

Fr. Bob referred to the Bible as more than just a book- it's a library!



Rick, who effortlessly corralled the children into their costumes for the play (it helps that she is a full-time teacher). Many thanks to Sara Dahlstrom, Caitlin Eck, Meghan Miller and Margaret Reynolds for their vision and execution along with teen aides Eleanor Goodrich, Nora and Lily Hartvigsen, Darby O'Connor and Evan Rick, who provided vital support.

## RECONCILIATION

Prior to Confirmation, all candidates receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. The Service, led by Father Steve Lanza along with Father Bob Heinz, was prayerful but joyful. The Examination of Conscience, read by our students, offered everyone a chance to reflect. It is a blessing to pause during this Lenten season, to hear the beautiful music and to have a few moments to recognize our failings while knowing we are forgiven.

## FIRST RECONCILIATION

Our First Communicants carefully prepared for this special sacrament. They made beautiful votives, a parish tradition, gluing pieces of cut tissue paper onto a glass votive. The Agnew girls – Molly and Ellie – graciously offered to put a finished coat of see-through glue on each votive. After the children completed their reconciliation, they met their parents to light their candle, signifying that Christ is lighting the way. At the end of the service, all the candles are brightly shining in the darkened church. It is beautiful. They take them home that night, and hopefully will light them during special gatherings and prayerful times in the years to come. They are beautiful lit at Christmas, reminiscent of stained glass windows.

## BIBLE PRESENTATION SERVICE

Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders received a teen Bible this past month as part of their Confirmation journey. Each Bible is personalized and presented during a special service, which was

led by Father Bob Heinz. Our wonderful 7<sup>th</sup> grade catechists – Sam Fifer, Jeff Link and Dan Hagedorn, along with teen aide Jimmy White – presented each Bible and Father Bob gave each child a blessing. What a gift! Father Bob shared many stories and memories about growing up, when the Bible only sat on the coffee table rarely to be opened except to add a sibling's latest sacrament. But he also shared that through his years as a priest and pastor he has opened, read and fallen in love with the scriptures. Amen!

## CONFIRMATION

Bishop Robert Casey, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Chicago, came to the parish on Tuesday, March 21 to



What was the name of the Bishop that confirmed you?

What Confirmation name did you choose & why?

confirm 50 children. Every pew was filled. It was a beautiful sight with anxious sponsors, proud grandparents, excited parents and well-dressed candidates. The music soared, the Bishop's homily encouraged children



Continued on the next page.

# Engaging Children's Hearts (continued)

to live out their faith with funny and relevant stories, and the children all looked proud and happy as they were anointed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Casey's words resonated as he encouraged the children to continue to actively build their faith. Despite the staggering statistic that only 15 percent of those confirmed continue to practice their faith, he encouraged them: "Be the #16!" We continue

to seek ways to involve our teens in the faith and are thrilled to have 18 active teen aides this year, the most we've ever had.

Next up, sessions, our May Crowning Family Mass and three First Communions on Mother's Day weekend. Amen!

## Connected Through Service

While a student at the University of Notre Dame, John Russell volunteered for three years with the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program. He remembers the first time he went to the home of his little brother, who lived in public housing, and saw how the boy lived. This first-hand experience of poverty stuck with John for the rest of his life, leading him to advocate for school choice so that poor, inner-city children, like his little brother, could have greater opportunities in life.

John believes that while education is a key social justice issue, it is crucial to pair service with faith. A man of great personal faith who also leads our parish's online Rosary group that meets at 7:30 am on weekdays, the link to which can be found on our website homepage [www.divinemercynorthshore.org](http://www.divinemercynorthshore.org). John notes that, "You have to pray hard."

After being involved for many years with school choice programs, John became an early leader in the organization that became Empower Illinois. Through Empower Illinois, the Big Shoulders Fund, and a few other organizations, taxpayers can contribute to the Illinois Invest in Kids scholarship program. This program offers a 75 percent income tax credit to individuals and businesses that contribute, and then provides scholarships for students whose families meet the income requirements to attend qualified non-public schools.

There are two reasons John remains involved in education issues. The first is to help create a more equitable education system so that poor, inner-city

children can leave public schools that are unsafe and academically failing, to attend private schools. The other is to help the Catholic school system, which faces financial challenges in inner-city environments but also offers unique benefits that only faith-based education can provide. As

John sees it, tax credit scholarships are of immense value to taxpayers, schools, families, and especially to children.

"The benefit it gives a kid to go to Augustus Tolton versus a local public school is huge. Those kids who attend Tolton will go to a college prep high school and from there go on to college," John says, referring to the parish school of one of the Divine Mercy sharing parishes, St. Moses the Black.

While between 6,000-7,000 children benefit from tax credit scholarships each year, the program can grow by an additional 30 percent to reach more students. John notes that the program is not widely known, and the taxpayer must take some steps to participate. The steps are not hard, however, and help is available. "You can just call Empower Illinois, and they'll walk you through what to do," he says.

### For more information

Empower Illinois:

[donations.empowerillinois.org/donations](http://donations.empowerillinois.org/donations)



Discover more about Divine Mercy by visiting our website at [divinemercynorthshore.org](http://divinemercynorthshore.org).

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