

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY



SPIRITUAL SUPPORT AND SISTERHOOD: *Moms' Bible Study Group*

If you're a mom who's dared to wander into an online community of mothers, or maybe even a real-life moms' group, you've likely heard the expression, "mommy wars." Maybe you've even experienced the bickering that has become an unfortunate norm in interactions amongst mothers. However, here at St. Leo's, we have a different view of what a community of women and mothers should look like.

"When I became Parish Nurse, I saw a real need in the community for a support group for moms," says parishioner Julie Gortemaker, who began the Moms' Bible Study five years ago. "It's about bringing moms together in a non-judgmental and open format. It's very supportive, no one judges each other, and I believe we've been a great support system for a lot of women throughout the years."

The group consists of moms from all the parishes in the area, as well as moms in all different stages of life, from pregnancy to empty nesters, with the majority of members having young and school-age kids. They meet on Tuesday mornings during the school year, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. in the Gather Room at the parish. Typically, the group spends the first part of the gathering sharing what is going on in their lives, and then the second half is spent discussing a spiritual book that they're reading together. Children are welcome to attend the Bible Study, along with their moms.

"I think it's really important to have people with whom you have similar values — people who understand the importance of going to Mass and receiving the sacraments, and raising your children in a Catholic household," Julie says. "It's important to have other women who understand the importance of faith in the journey of motherhood."



MAY 2020

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KEEPING THE FAITH

During a Crisis

Adversity is a part of life. We may face family strife or financial issues. We may experience a personal or family medical crisis. We may suffer the loss of a loved one.

The thought of not being able to attend Mass to receive the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord as a result of a crisis — such as the one we are experiencing today with the COVID-19 pandemic — is devastating.

Right now, it may seem challenging to remain a faithful steward. We may even question our faith and wonder how to find God during these turbulent times.

Where do we turn?

First and foremost, we must pray without ceasing. During a difficult time, we can always turn to the Church's treasury of prayer. Take time each day to read the daily Scripture readings — they can be found at USCCB.org, and then by selecting the date on the calendar on the home page. We can also use the many rich resources of our faith to engage in spiritual reflections each day as an individual and with our families. This can include simple prayers like an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* a few times a day, as well as praying the Rosary, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Stations of the Cross, among others. Many resources for these are easily found online.

It is also important to remember that at times when we cannot physically attend Mass, Sunday remains a holy day, and we are encouraged to pray. We can participate in prayer by way of televised or live-streamed Mass on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/saintleos.org/.

During times of crisis, we must also find ways to use our talents to serve God. If we are unable to participate in ministries and serve our parish community, we can still use our talents to serve our family and those closest to us. Something as simple as calling to check on family and friends — or even doing a video call — can go a long way.

Finally, it is important to remain good stewards of treasure — even for those of us who have lost a job or have seen a reduction in work hours and pay. But despite any hardships, a faithful steward must faithfully try to return a portion of his or her treasure to God however He is calling us to do so. Check the parish website for online giving opportunities and let us all do what we can to return a portion of our treasure to God.

No matter the situation, God always remains faithful to us. Don't forget that everything God gives us is a gift, and the way in which we share our gifts with God and our neighbor is ultimately how we give Him glory.

*Please visit our Parish Website, www.saintleos.org,
Facebook Page and YouTube for parish updates,
live-streamed Mass and spiritual resources.*



An Act of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus,
I believe that You are
present in the Most Holy
Sacrament.
I love You above all
things, and I desire to
receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this
moment receive You
sacramentally,
come at least spiritually
into my heart.
I embrace You as if You
were already there and
unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be
separated from You.*

Amen.

A Letter From Our Pastor

HONORING OUR LADY IN MAY

Dear Parishioners,

May is Mary's month. For centuries, Catholics throughout the world have included special devotions to the Blessed Mother in their activities during May. Best known, I'm sure, is the widespread and ever-popular practice of crowning an image of Our Lady with flowers during the course of the month.



May is a beautiful month, full of renewal and hope. The March winds and the April showers have done their work, and the spring flowers are in bloom. Even though the earliest signs of spring have passed, May doesn't quite have the look or feel of summer. It is spring at its finest! And it's not only the flowers or trees that show new life in May.

And of course, May is a month of joy for all of us who claim the Church as our spiritual home. We spend the whole month this year in the Easter season, which closes with Pentecost on May 31. The joy of the Resurrection, the glory of the Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit are the themes that fill our Christian calendar.

But as we rejoice with Mary at her Son's triumph over sin, Satan and death, we remember her faithfulness to God's will throughout her life. Indeed, she can be viewed as the model Christian steward. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops pointed to her in its pastoral letter on stewardship: "After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense" (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 41).

Let us follow her example of total dedication to God as we rejoice in the blessings He gives us this month!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Donald A. Buhrman".

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor



A LIFETIME OF FAITH

Bob and Pat

When Bob and Pat Golka first met at the University of Nebraska over 60 years ago, they could never have predicted just what the Lord had in store for them! Fifty-nine years of marriage, 10 children, 21 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren later, the couple feels tremendously blessed by the many ways in which God has worked in their lives.

Following their college graduation, Bob and Pat married and, following Bob's career, moved here to Grand Island. They became members at St. Mary's Cathedral and Bob joined the Knights of Columbus. Pat found work as a physical education teacher at Grand Island Central Catholic School. Both Bob and Pat often found themselves volunteering at the school, with the Booster Club, Karnival Kapers, and Husker Harvest Days. Bob also served as a lector and Eucharistic Minister at Mass and for the homebound.

By engaging in parish and school life, the couple had quickly come to think of the Catholic community in Grand Island as

an extension of their family. The increased growth of the local faith community prompted the diocese to open a new parish in town. Bob and Pat still remember when the cornerstone for St. Leo's was laid in 1973. From the very beginning, the Golkas were involved in various parish ministries, even sitting on the Parish Council through its early years.

As our faith family continued to grow, so, too, did the Golkas' own family! When it came to raising their 10 children, there was no question that the Catholic Church would be at the center of family life, just as it had been when Bob and Pat were growing up.

"I grew up in a family of 13 children and Bob was one of seven," Pat says. "I grew up in a small town that was almost 100-percent Catholic, and then went to a university where the Newman Center was very involved. [Raising our own family in the Church] was never something we really thought about — it was just something we did. We had gained from that, and our kids would gain from it, too."



St. Leo's parishioners Pat and Bob Golka

Indeed, forming their family in the faith was so second nature to the Golkas that they simply couldn't imagine life any other way.

"I don't know what kind of a family we'd be if we weren't Catholic or not had Sunday Masses," Bob says. "It's just such a big part of our life."

With their parents' strong example of the faith, it isn't surprising that one of the Golka children became an ordained priest. Fr. Jim Golka

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FAITH AND SERVICE:

Pat Golka

currently serves as the pastor/rector at St. Mary's Cathedral, where he continues to nurture the vibrant faith community that first greeted Bob and Pat upon their arrival in Grand Island so many years ago.

Watching their son thrive in the priesthood — and their other children follow God's call in other ways — has been a blessing for the Golkas.

"I guess some people say, if you have 10 children, somebody is supposed to wind up either in religious life or ordained," Bob chuckles. "It is kind of neat. We are tremendously blessed that the Good Lord gave us Jim, and we're proud of the kid doing well as a priest. Really, God blessed us with 10 super kids."

Certainly, the Golkas did a remarkable job in forming their 10 children in the faith. And fortunately for our faith community, Pat didn't stop there! After teaching Religious Education at St. Leo's for 10 years, she returned to Grand Island Central Catholic School to teach theology. There, she was one of the founders of the senior retreat

that she helped organize for another 10 years.

While teaching, Pat loved to witness the students growing in their faith.

"I enjoyed just getting to know the kids and seeing where they were coming from and helping them to mature," she says. "That was probably the best — being with the kids and teaching them something different. Religious education just gives them a foundation, a way of living, something that will help them understand why they are doing things that they are."

In 2019, the Golkas were greatly humbled by their induction into the Grand Island Central Catholic School Hall of Fame. No one who knows the couple, however, was the least bit surprised! Bob and Pat have long contributed their time and talent to our parish and the school, and they hope that others — especially the younger generations coming in — will find the same love and family that they have found here at St. Leo's over the years.

"It's a very open parish and accepts people," Pat says. "It offers a lot for different people, and it is easy to meet people and do things. I would encourage people to get involved and get to know more people here."

Having experienced firsthand the spiritual growth and sense of belonging that come with being engaged in parish life, Bob also encourages all parishioners to take a closer look at the many opportunities for involvement at St. Leo's.

"It's important that people at least come to the Sunday Mass, but I would also say it's important that they get involved in the parish," he says. "Whatever fits their talents, they can look at that and do their best to do it — and they'll find that their church experiences and their experience as a Catholic will be a whole lot richer."

Since the founding of St. Leo's, Bob and Pat Golka have done so much to make the experience of our faith family richer for all of us — and for that, we are truly grateful!

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THE ROSARY: *Our Lady's Lasso*

There was a priest who once said, “It is no coincidence that rosaries look like lassos, as Our Lady wraps them around lost souls and pulls them out of the depths of hell.”

This thought is comforting but provokes inquiry — what exactly is the Rosary, how does one pray it, and why should one pray it?

Since May is the month of Mary, this is a great time to consider the theology behind this intense spiritual weapon.

There are two putative origins of the Rosary. For many centuries, it was believed that the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Dominic and exhorted him to encourage the use of the Angelic Salutation — or Hail Mary — for the conversion of souls and comfort of the afflicted. Modern scholarship traces the Rosary back to ninth century Irish monasticism. Monks would pray all 150 psalms or “psalters” every day, a form of prayer too complicated for uneducated laypeople without access to copies of Scripture. So many began reciting the Lord’s Prayer or the Angelic Salutation in response to each psalm, keeping count with pebbles or a knotted rope. Through many centuries, the Rosary evolved into three sets of five mysteries, each mystery consisting of 10 Angelic Salutations and one Lord’s Prayer recited while meditating upon the life, death or glory of Jesus Christ.

In *The Secret of the Rosary*, St. Louis de Montfort expounds the dynamics of the Rosary. The prayer consists of both vocal or exterior prayer, and meditative or interior prayer. The first vocal component of the Rosary, the Creed, is important because faith is “the foundation of all Christian virtues, of all eternal virtues, and also of all prayers that are pleasing to Almighty God.” The

Lord’s Prayer is the “perfect prayer” to the God of heaven because it was authored by Christ, is free of all human limitations, and “contains all the duties we owe to God, the acts of all the virtues and the petitions for all our spiritual and corporal needs.” The Hail Mary blesses the name of Mary and her Divine Son and implores her powerful intercession as mediatrix of graces.

But the Rosary is not simply a physical incantation. Vocal prayer is accompanied by contemplation of the mysteries of Christ’s life and the virtues of the Virgin Mary. It is by lifting the incorporeal soul in prayer that one quiets the passions, tastes the peace of Christ, marvels at His loving plans and promises, and grows in the desire to emulate Him and His sinless mother. Because the soul animates the body, a strengthened soul means nobility of action and a will that is commensurate with the will of God. As Louis de Montfort says, “The Rosary is a blessed blending of mental and vocal prayer by which we honor and learn to imitate the mysteries and the virtues of the life, death, passion and glory of Jesus and Mary.” The Rosary’s emphasis on both vocal and meditative prayer caters to man’s nature as an embodied soul – one’s entire being, both physical and spiritual, cries out to God in praise, repentance, thanksgiving, and supplication.

Thus, it is no surprise that the magisterium and countless saints have encouraged devotion to the Rosary. Pope St. John Paul II said of the prayer, “The Rosary is my favorite prayer, marvelous in its simplicity and its depth.” The late pontiff also added five more “luminous” mysteries to the Rosary to help the faithful meditate upon significant moments in Christ’s earthly ministry.



PHOTOGRAPHY MINISTRY

SEEKING NEW MEMBERS TO SHARE THEIR TALENTS

Jodi Stauffer, Director of Children and Family Ministries, is looking for a few good people with a good eye to photograph moments around St. Leo's Parish for use now and for posterity.

The new Photography Ministry is getting started, and it is hoped that interested parishioners will volunteer their time and talent to photograph moments at parish events, either with a camera or smartphone.

"We want to be able to capture the moments of parish life and parish events so we can showcase them on social media, so everyone can see our parish is an active one, and to savor those memories," Jodi says.

There are photo albums on file in the parish office, but with the availability of digital photography, the photos that are taken now can easily be shared and stored.

"The staff now tries to take photos, but we don't always remember to do that because we're running an event," Jodi says. "It's been hit-or-miss for the staff to do it."

So, Jodi has put the word out, until the ministry gels, for parishioners attending different parish events to take photos and send them to her.

"If parishioners are at an event, if they can take photos and send them to me, we will then have them and can feature that event in the bulletin, or on the Facebook page, or parish website," Jodi says. "This will be capturing our history, so in 20 years or so, we want to be able to look back on these memories."

And if someone wants to assume the responsibility of taking parish photos and is confident in their ability to do so, please contact Jodi either at the parish office or by email.

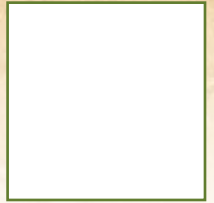
"We just want to document parish life," she says.

"If parishioners are at an event, if they can take photos and send them to me, we will then have them and can feature that event in the bulletin, or on the Facebook page, or parish website. This will be capturing our history, so in 20 years or so, we want to be able to look back on these memories."

— Jodi Stauffer, Director of Children and Family Ministries

If you are interested in the Photography Ministry and would like to contact Jodi Stauffer to learn more, please call 308-382-4757, ext. 14, or email her at jodi@saintleos.org.





MOMS' BIBLE STUDY *continued from front cover*

Over the years, the group has provided support to moms in many different situations, from bringing meals to members welcoming a new baby, supporting people through moves, difficult situations with children, and more. Their group text has become a place where people can ask for prayer, as well.

"Just knowing you have other moms to rely on is so important," Julie says. "Most moms in our group don't have family in Grand Island, so it's important to have that feeling that if something were to happen, I have other women I could count on. That's invaluable and that's what this group has fostered."

Julie has found that her own faith has grown stronger and deeper as she has received the support and encouragement of other like-minded moms in the community.

"I know I've been a lot better at prayer since I joined this group," Julie says. "I think everyone's faith has grown quite a bit by reading these books — it's been really beneficial."

Julie encourages moms in the parish to consider taking the time to come and see what the group is all about.

"It really speaks to the importance of self-care," Julie says. "A huge part of being a mom is about putting your oxygen mask on before putting other people's oxygen masks on. You need support and you need friendship."

"It's hard to stick your neck out there and try new things," she adds. "But I guarantee that after an hour, you'll leave with a full cup, and not just coffee."

If you would like more information, or to become involved in the Moms' Bible Study, please contact Julie Gortemaker at 308-382-4753, ext. 20.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Confession: Saturday 4 - 4:30 p.m. **Adoration:** First Friday of the Month, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Abide Adoration: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 7 - 8 p.m.