

## TOTUS TUUS TO PROVIDE Faith-Filled Fun This Summer

The words “*totus tuus*” might sound unfamiliar to our ears, but to God, they’re the sweetest words He can hear from us.

In Latin, *totus tuus* translates to “totally yours,” and the summer program that takes its name from that phrase wants to help our young parishioners grow deeper in their friendship with Jesus.

“It is a good way to build faith in the kids and help them get ownership of their faith in a way,” says Coordinator Savannah Short. “There are interesting things they learn about, like the meaning behind the mysteries of the Rosary. They learn important things about the Mass and focus on different parts of the Mass every day — and that’s just what the little tykes are learning about!”

This year’s Totus Tuus session will be held July 15-20 at Sacred Heart. College students and seminarians will assist in leading the program’s classes and activities, which focus on topics like Marian devotion, the Eucharist and vocational discernment.

“They teach a different theme each year, like the different mysteries of the Rosary,” Savannah says. “They will also have another biblical



*Totus Tuus will be held July 15-20 at Sacred Heart. All parish children in first grade and up are invited to enjoy a week of fun and learning as they grow deeper in their faith. Students from last year’s session are pictured listening to a Totus Tuus team member.*

story theme. As they take the kids through different sessions, they’re broken down into four groups between first and sixth grade during the day, and then middle and high school students in the evenings.”

Every day, students will have the opportunity to attend Reconciliation and pray the Angelus. In the midst of all this learning and prayer, students will also enjoy plenty of time for fun.



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# HOSPITALITY:

## *The Cornerstone of Stewardship*

**T**he dictionary defines “hospitality” as “the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.”

A Christian worldview can refer to hospitality as “Christian kindness.”

We see the effects of hospitality – or the lack thereof – time and time again throughout the Bible. Christ speaks of hospitality in Matthew’s Gospel when He says, “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Old Testament told of the Israelites, as they wandered the desert for 40 years in search of hospitable environs. Even the Holy Family spent ample time searching for shelter before the birth of Our Lord.

It is safe to say that hospitality is, and most likely has always been, of great importance to people everywhere. Modern hotels and hostels often use the image of a pineapple to advertise their special brand of hospitality. There is no doubt that in ancient times, the distant lights of an inn or tavern struck a chord of hope within weary travelers’ hearts.

Indeed, hospitality’s meaning has not diminished at all over the years, decades and millennia.

Christians view the presence of hospitality as meaning the difference between calling others “guests” and “strangers.” Guests are welcomed with open arms and warm smiles, but strangers aren’t. Guests feel the genuine love present in a hearty welcome, but strangers don’t. Guests often return for second or third visits, while strangers don’t.

As a parish, do we find ourselves surrounded by guests, or burdened by strangers?

Hospitality is, in many respects, a mindset. The same person may be treated as guest at the church just down the road, but as a stranger here.

Matthew’s Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality: “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” That is, “I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me.” It’s a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

Stewardship holds hospitality as an immensely important concept. Remember the “three Ts” of stewardship – Time, Talent, and Treasure? Well, there are also “four Ps,” the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Hospitality is mentioned first. Why? If not for hospitality, none of the other pillars will ever take hold. Hospitality is the cornerstone of stewardship, because it opens the door to a person’s heart and allows them to receive joy, grace, and love.

Hospitality must become second nature, if stewardship is to truly take hold within a parish. So, when a stranger visits our parish, welcome them as a guest. Perhaps one day, they’ll pay us a second visit.

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# THE MONTH OF *Mary:* A TIME FOR CELEBRATION AND JOY

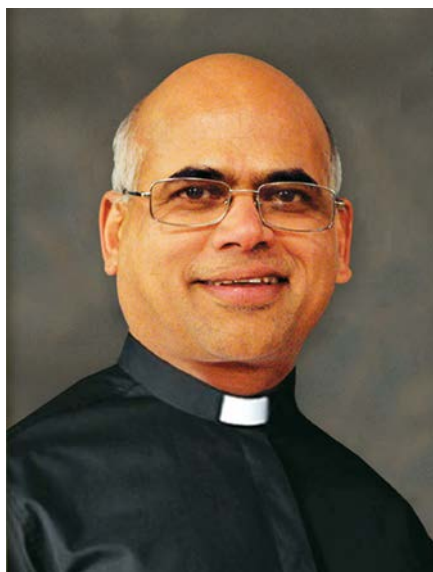
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month — and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine. Praying the Rosary might be even more important. Of course, that assumes that daily prayer is part of our daily routine — which it should be.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and to our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way that allowed the Lord to take human form really made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint and in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ Himself.

Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say “yes” to the Lord. Let us be grateful to Mary for bringing us her Son. This is why our children crown her during the May Crowning celebration. Through Mary, we are given an invitation into the Catholic fold. Her feminine presence and the safety of her motherhood may help us grow. For most of us, this time of year



is a month of growth in relation to nature. It is difficult not to have May as one of our favorite months for so many reasons. May is a beautiful time. We are called to make it even more beautiful, and we can do that as we serve and love one another.

I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. I may say that often, but it is true. My priesthood has been a blessing, and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant. I pray for you daily. Please pray for me. God bless you and keep you always.

Sincerely yours in Christ and His Mother,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Antony DeHeer".

Fr. Antony  
Pastor



# FOR THE CROME FAMILY, DISCERNING A



*The Crome family with the Little Sisters of the Poor during their visit in summer 2017.*

Sit down over a cup of coffee to chat with parishioners Wayne and Leah Crome, and you will soon realize that the conversation naturally returns time and again to the same theme — vocations. Whether it is a religious vocation, a career, or a vocation to marriage and parenthood, discerning the Lord's call — and embracing it — is at the center of life for the Crome family.

Recently, the family's interest in vocations led Wayne and Leah to become a part of the group forming a Vocations Committee at Sacred Heart.

"We were a part of the process, starting this [ministry] from scratch," Leah says. "Basically, the committee wants to bring more awareness to vocations — not just religious, but also married life — and to bring it to people's attention and make it more a part of daily life."

The Cromes have a particular passion for living out one's vocation, and they feel incredibly blessed by the life that God has called them to — as unpredictable as it may seem at times! Wayne's career path is a prime example — shortly after coming into the Catholic Church, Wayne left a career in law enforcement to take advantage of the opportunity to work as a Knights of Columbus insurance agent. Today, he is the development director for a Catholic radio station.

Since deciding to change careers, Wayne has

felt blessed by the opportunity to work in Catholic environments.

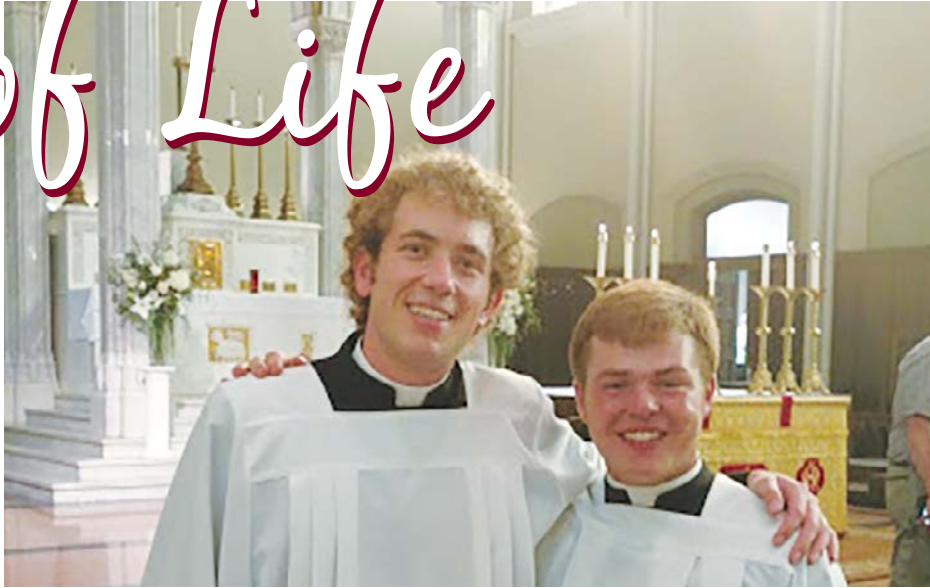
"Going to work for the Knights of Columbus and being around these good Catholic men and their families really helped me grow in my faith," Wayne says. "It's been a great blessing, first with the Knights and now with this job. It's almost surreal to think about the path that the Lord's put us on, not just career-wise, but also family-wise."

Just as Wayne couldn't have predicted his current career path 20 years ago, the same can be said for the path of parenthood the Lord chose for the Cromes. Back when Wayne and Leah were dating, Leah asked Wayne how many children he pictured himself having one day. As a young man in his twenties, Wayne had never given much thought to the question, so he jokingly replied, "I don't know, maybe 2.3?"

As it turns out, the Lord's plans for the Cromes were a little different! Today, less than 20 years after that conversation took place, the couple has nine children, ranging in age from 1 ½ to 18 years old.

Wayne and Leah may have found a fulfilling vocation in marriage and parenthood, but they also have a deep respect for vocations to religious life. After high school, Leah spent a year living

# AND FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL IS AT THE of Life



*Justis Crome with Fr. Scott Harter at the ordination of Fr. Matthew Nash.*



*Justis Crome with Bishop Joseph Hanefeldt and Bishop Emeritus William Dendinger (middle) at the ordination of family friend Fr. Matthew Nash. Justis served at the ordination shortly before leaving for seminary.*

with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Illinois, and even visited their mother house in France.

Reflecting on some of the most powerful moments in her life's faith journey, Leah looks back to her time with the Little Sisters of the Poor.

"Becoming a parent is huge," she says. "And before we were married, going to see the Little Sisters made a difference [in my faith life]. It was neat seeing faith in practice day by day, not just on Sundays. There was a routine and meaning to everything they did, and that made a huge impression on me."

While Wayne and Leah have always had a focus on the discernment and daily living out of vocations, their involvement with the Sacred Heart Vocations Committee was actually spurred by their eldest son's interest in the priesthood. Justis, who first began contemplating a vocation to the priesthood at age 12, is now in his first year of study at Conception Seminary College in Missouri.

Occasionally, fellow parishioners and parents will ask the Cromes how to encourage their children to consider a vocation to religious life, and Leah's response is fairly simple.

"When Justis left for seminary, people began asking us what was our 'secret,'" she says. "There is no formula other than letting our children think it is an option."

Wayne agrees that the "normalization" of religious life, along with the formation of friendships with priests and sisters, are some of the keys to developing children's interest in religious vocations.

"We've been connected to vocations since before we were married, so it was always something we talked about in our home," Wayne says. "About a year ago, we all spent a week with the Little Sisters of the Poor at the convent Leah lived in and we're going to go again this summer. The kids got to meet all of the sisters. They have a nursing home, so we helped with activities and spent time with the people there, and the boys served all the Masses while we were there."

By experiencing a taste of life with the Little Sisters of the Poor and enjoying close relationships with priests and sisters alike, the Crome children have learned to view vocations to the priesthood and to religious life as a possible option for their future.

Approaching life with an openness to God's call and a willingness to discern His path for them, Wayne and Leah look on the many blessings of their vocation to marriage and parenthood with gratitude.

"Just like anyone, we have struggles," Wayne says. "But I constantly remind myself to step back and be thankful for all that we have."



# THE BLESSINGS OF THE Catholic Mass

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to

join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces

to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.

# Seven Sisters Apostolate

## DEVOTED TO SPIRITUALLY SUPPORTING PARISH PRIESTS

In the span of a day, a priest is asked countless times for prayer and guidance. They're the ones we turn to when our soul is in need of cleansing. We look to them for wisdom during times of discernment. Yet, in the process we sometimes forget that these selfless men of God are also equally in need of prayer to sustain and strengthen them in their vocation.

"I don't think people realize the many sacrifices that our priests make," says St. Theresa parishioner Julie Landgren. "Their lives are completely not their own. They go where they are sent and spend each day serving us."

This is why Julie is excited about St. Theresa's newly formed Seven Sisters Apostolate, a ministry devoted to spiritually supporting parish priests through intercessory prayer. Consisting of seven core women, each member of the Seven Sisters Apostolate commits to making a Holy Hour on a designated day of the week spent interceding for a particular priest. Thus, working together, they ensure that time is spent each and every day praying specifically for our parish priests.

"I just think it's a beautiful gift to our pastors," Julie says. "During our designated prayer time, we are praying for their conformity to Christ and a growing closeness to our Blessed Mother. The stronger our priests are, the stronger our entire community, so it ends up benefiting us, as well."

Having only begun this February, the ministry has already gained enough interest at St. Theresa's to allow the women to form two



*Several members of the Seven Sisters Apostolate from St. Theresa gather in prayer.*

separate groups — one interceding each week for Pastor Fr. Antony Thekkekara, and the other for Fr. James Murphy. Women are also working to form Seven Sister Apostolates at St. Michael and Sacred Heart parishes, helping to ensure a wellspring of intercessory prayer for our beloved priests. And in the

process, Julie shares, the women can't help but be blessed themselves as they spend time each week in our Eucharistic Lord's presence.

"I just have a great sense of peace knowing that I'm interceding for these holy men," Julie says. "I come away filled with joy, knowing that I'm doing something for Christ and the entire Church. Many of the women have shared, too, that they've been amazed by how quickly the time goes by. I often find myself going for that hour and then staying even longer because I have other personal things that I want to pray for."

The Seven Sisters Apostolate welcomes new members, allowing Families in Faith parishes to complete and form new prayer groups. The ministry is also working on compiling a growing list of substitutes that can help on days when core members are unable to fulfill their weekly commitment.

"The time you are offering through this ministry will truly benefit the entire Church," Julie says. "We have all been given the gift of time. I know everyone is busy, but I think God really blesses us when we offer time for Him in front of the Blessed Sacrament, especially when we are there interceding for others."

*If you would like to learn more about the Seven Sisters Apostolate and how to get involved, please contact Julie Landgren at 402-340-3915.*

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## TOTUS TUUS *continued from front cover*

“At the end of the week, they have a party and whichever kids were the best behaved get a treat like putting ice cream on the session leaders,” Savannah says. “They’ve had water fights. It gets crazy.”

“Wednesday night is a potluck to which the whole parish is invited,” she adds. “They can come see what’s been happening and enjoy the kids performing the songs they’ve learned.”

Volunteer families are needed to host the four students who will travel into our region to lead the Totus Tuus program. The teams are made up of two girls and two boys who will stay in the homes of parish families the weekend before the program and throughout the week. Other families may provide meals for the team and snacks for the program’s participants throughout the week.

This is a great week-long summer program that will energize our youth and leave them with a greater understanding of what it means to be “Totally Yours.”

*Interested in being a Totus Tuus volunteer? Or are you a parent who is interested in signing up a child for Totus Tuus? Contact Savannah Short at 308-750-4669 or Angie Pfeifer at 785-410-7285. Though the program has a Catholic basis, children from all community churches are welcome to attend. Depending on interest, bus transportation may be provided for children from St. Michael and St. Theresa.*

## MASS SCHEDULE:

**7 p.m. Saturday** - St. Michael in Spalding | **7 a.m. Sunday** - St. Michael in Spalding  
**9 a.m. Sunday** - Sacred Heart in Greeley | **11 a.m. Sunday** - St. Theresa in Ericson