



The Visitation Visitor

VISITATION OF THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY CHURCH

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"No Greater Love" Garden

by Pat Gavanus and Colleen Henderson



If you are not part of it, we need you! Parents bring your kids. Kids bring your parents.

In the spring of 2022 the idea for the garden was born. Father Bob was anointing a parishioner and the relative gave him an idea which seems to be growing stronger each year. The relative told him about Matthew XXV Garden at St. Cornelius Parish in Chadds Ford. Father Bob, our Pastor, and Mary Pat, our Parish Manager, went to visit the garden. Since our parish had already been sending food to the Patrician Society in Norristown, it was just natural that the garden would supply them with fresh herbs, vegetables and fruit. In the first year almost 3,000 pounds of produce was donated. Last year the garden provided about 7,200 pounds of fresh produce to the Patrician Society!

Why the name "No Greater Love Garden"? The name was created by the Pastoral Council and Father Bob. The name symbolizes that the

garden isn't about us but about serving others... (A Corporal Work of Mercy...to feed the hungry). That is the main focus of the garden.

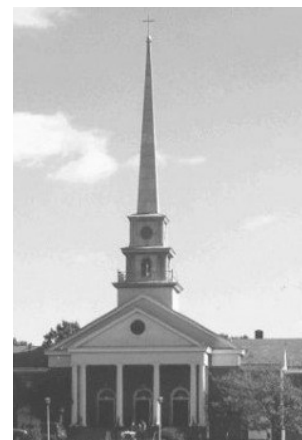
The beauty of this garden is that it is a "parish garden." It was not started by one person and is not maintained by one person. John Baldassari's landscaping company broke ground in early 2022. Pete Roman, a contractor, was instrumental in building the raised garden beds. Another parishioner, Steve Campanella and his company provided the irrigation system. The large crucifix was put together by two parishioners, the image of Jesus, donated by another, and the wall around the bottom of the crucifix was another parishioner's creation. Picnic tables, benches and Stations of the Cross were donated by various parishioners and will be dedicated later this year. The garden includes a "teaching corner" that is used to instruct students when they come to plant or harvest.

The Junior High students of Visitation School also have their hands in the garden. They planted garlic last October and have started planting vegetable seeds in the greenhouse (attached to the school and science lab). The plants that they grow will be planted in the No Greater Love Garden in May. The students are learning about Environmental Science as part of

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Parish Profile — Monsignor Joseph Nicolò

By Joe Gavanus



Upon reaching their 75th birthday, Catholic priests are required to submit their resignation from the active ministry to the Bishop of the Diocese. Monsignor Joseph Nicolò, having attained that age last year, dutifully sent his letter of resignation to the head of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Bishop Nelson Perez. As is the standard procedure, his resignation was accepted. In some circles, that would be the end of the story; But not in this case.

After serving as the Pastor of St Helena Church in Blue Bell for the past 23 years, Monsignor Nicolò did not retire to a life of leisure to which he was certainly entitled. Instead, he gladly accepted an invitation from Visitation's Pastor to live in our parish as a retired priest to assist with certain priestly duties in service to the parish community. Here begins his Visitation story.

The list of clerical functions that Monsignor Nicolò performs is very ambitious for a man of his years. These activities include being the celebrant at daily and weekend Masses, visiting the sick, and assisting neighboring parishes with some of their liturgical needs. In an era where the common perception is that senior citizens are not so technologically savvy, Monsignor is also responsible for updating and maintaining Visitation Parish's Facebook page!

Monsignor Nicolò's first assignment as a priest was at Holy Savior parish in Norristown. Being of Italian descent himself, he felt very much at home and welcome there.

Family life is very important to Monsignor Nicolò. He is very proud of his Italian heritage and looks forward to the times when he can visit family and friends both locally and in Italy. One set of his grandparents came from Italy and he is a second generation Italian.

However, he also has relatives on the other side of the nationality spectrum – he is Irish on his mother's side of the family having the other set of grandparents from Ireland. He has also visited relatives in the Emerald Isle as well.

When asked what his favorite foods are he immediately responds, "Anything Italian, obviously. I love spaghetti". But, he also "enjoys a good prime rib of beef, end cut".

On his observations about the parishioners of Visitation, he says, "They are city people at heart. And by that I mean that they tell it like it is. I like city people. I enjoy their honesty". He continues, "The Visitation parishioners are warm and welcoming. While I don't know everyone by name, I am getting to know their faces. Their names will come in due time".

On his view of the future for the church in our area, he sees two challenges – one is that the number of priests being ordained is on the decline and how to grow that population; the second is the growing cost of keeping parishes open needs to be addressed. When asked what word or phrase best describes him he answers, "From a pastoral perspective, when I'm sent to a parish I go there to do what the people want and need". He calls this, "servant leadership". Monsignor also believes that, "hospitality is very important. We, priests and parishioners, are the Church".

Monsignor Nicolò felt a calling to the priesthood as a young boy in grade school. Eventually, he acted on that calling and was ordained a priest in 1974. This year in May, he will celebrate his 50th year in the priesthood! He has truly been God's servant to the faithful. We thank him for that and wish him many happy and healthy years ahead as his priestly service continues at Visitation parish.



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Meet Our Parish Staff — Mary Pat Reuther, Parish Manager

By Patty Drewicz

Born in the Midwest, Jim and Mary probably never thought that their daughter, Mary Pat, would become such a powerhouse in the Catholic community. Mary Pat attended public elementary and high schools where she was active in band and gymnastics. She enrolled in a Catholic university in Iowa and then at a local state university in Pennsylvania. A soft spoken and reserved individual, it might be a surprise to learn that she was a cheerleader for one year while at college.

Upon graduation, she worked at a pharmaceutical company and was a member of Mary Mother of the Redeemer parish (MMR) where she created the Young Adult Ministry. Her love of the Catholic faith and increased desire to be in the Lord's service led her to join the Sisters of Life in New York for a few years. In her own words, Mary Pat "fell in love with their charism and the joy of the sisters. Their charism is to protect and enhance the sacredness of all human life from the moment of conception until natural death. They make four vows: Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, and to protect and enhance the sacredness of all human life."

After leaving the convent, Mary Pat found employment with technology for blind and low vision musicians working as office manager/tech support/bookkeeper/trainer. Also immersing herself in parish life at St. Cornelius, she taught CCD to various age groups, was involved in nursing home ministry, was and still is active as lector and Extraordinary Eucharist Minister.

In God's plan, Mary Pat reconnected with Jack Reuther who she had met while in the Young Adult Ministry at MMR. They were married in 2010 at St. Cornelius parish in Chadds Ford before moving to Visitation B.V.M. in 2013. When asked how she came to be our Parish Manager, Mary Pat said, "Since leaving the Sisters of Life, I had wanted to work for the Church. I heard that the Office Manager was retiring the same time Msgr. Murray was retiring."

What are your favorite things about working at Visitation? "The people! Getting to know people, encouraging people to participate! Bringing Jesus to others. Sharing Jesus with others and hopefully being His hands and feet."

Favorite liturgies? Easter Vigil, Christmas Midnight Mass, Grief Ministry.

Anything else you want to share? "Get involved! It's always more fun when you bring others with you. If you see a need, please let me know - you may not be the only person with that need. Who knows, maybe we can get something new started."



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The Visitation Visitor

The Knights of Columbus—Knights of Service

By Bob Hehn

If you were to ask individuals who the Knights of Columbus (KOC) are, some might answer that they're those guys who lead church processions dressed in tuxes, white gloves and carry swords. That describes one of the activities of the KOC but it doesn't come close to explaining who the Knights are. The Knights are a lay fraternal organization dedicated to serving Church and community. They are men who have a deep love of their Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church and their parish. They are committed to utilizing their time, talent and treasure to fulfill Christ's mandate to love and serve him and their neighbors.

To see proof of this, you need only look at Visi's very own Knights of Columbus St. John Paul I Council #7565 which includes both Visitation BVM and St. Theresa of Avila parishes.



You often see some of these Knights outside our Church doors after Sunday Masses selling tickets and asking for contributions and support for either their own organization, e.g., Football / Super Bowl Mania and Pasta Dinner - helps fund Knights' activities; or other organizations, e.g., Roses for Life - helps fund Respect Life activities. Our Council also participates in the KOC District's Knight at the Races event to raise funds for the Gianna Center and the Rising Together Alliance. Last September our Council through the National KOC sent a spiritual bouquet of Masses and Rosaries to the people of Ukraine via Ukraine's KOC in solidarity with their suffering.

We see the Knights as Honor Guards. Whether they're leading a funeral procession for a deceased brother knight, or a Forty Hours procession for Our Lord, or a May procession for Our Lady, it is not mere pomp and circumstance. It is a time honored KOC custom for honoring special individuals and events.

Your children may have participated in the Knights annual free throw shooting contest or the annual Easter Egg Hunt (co-hosted with the high school CYO). Your family may have enjoyed the Knights annual pasta dinner or annual pancake appreciation breakfast for first responders. Your altar server or Visi student may have received an award from the Knights among the many annual awards and scholarships they provide. Some of you may have benefited from the Knights Community Outreach Project which provides minor home repairs for needy parishioners or for Visi campus minor repairs/landscaping improvements.

The Knights provide numerous contributions to various Catholic charitable organizations and have participated in the National Knights of Columbus organization's annual Coats for Kids program for kids in need in the US and Canada. Last year our Council donated 366 coats.

The Knights also support our Respect Life ministry by setup/cleanup for the Larkin Center reception held after the annual January Respect Life vigil Mass celebrated before the March for Life in Washington DC. In past years they provided "race marshal" support for the A Baby's Breath annual Race for Life. Additionally the Knights provide traffic support for the Food Truck Fest and the Live Nativity. The Knights run the popular *Stuffed Animal Wheel of Fortune* at the



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The Knights of Columbus—Knights of Service (continued)

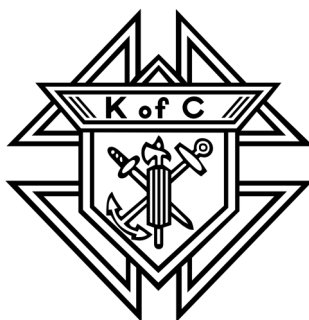
Christmas Bazaar. The Knights are now supporting the No Greater Love Garden by planting and caring for four plots. As you can see, the Knights are always ready to answer a call for help, whether it is Fr. Bob, a Visi ministry, a parishioner, another council or their district.

The Knights, of course, tend to the administrative, spiritual and social needs of members. They hold twice monthly meetings - one for the officers and one for the general membership. They conduct an annual Lenten retreat led by Fr. Mulranen, the Council's chaplain. They visit local parishes on Holy Thursday evening for adoration. They have a Christmas dinner and a newly installed Officers' recognition dinner.

Our Council's ongoing service is patterned on the more than 140 year old service legacy of the Knights of Columbus. The KOC was founded in March, 1882 in Hartford, Connecticut by Fr. Michael McGivney, a parochial vicar at St. Mary's Church. His original mission was to provide material support for many fatherless families in his parish that resulted from dangerous factory working conditions. Over the decades Fr. McGivney's fledgling group has grown and evolved into the world's largest and premier Catholic fraternal charitable organization. There are over 12000 councils worldwide and that includes more than 300 college councils. There are more than 1.6 million members worldwide.

Gary Garofalo, the Grand Knight (leader) of our Council #7565, notes, "We continue to grow our council and welcome Catholic men [18 years and older] to join us in our mission of faith and service. All are welcome to attend our general council meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Larkin Center. He added that the council welcomes new members and those interested can contact him at ggarofalo10@comcast.net or 215-287-6569 (cell/text) for more information.

The Knights of Columbus are not just a charitable organization. They are also a Catholic ministry that serves their local Catholic Church and parish in whatever way they're asked. As a fraternal organization members share camaraderie and fellowship alongside commitment and service. Most importantly they embody the spirit of Christ's words, "...the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve...". (Mt 20:28) The Knights of Columbus motto is "Service to one, service to all". They are truly **Knights of Service**.





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“No Greater Love” Garden (continued from Page 1)



their curriculum and applying these concepts to learn about gardening and gain hands-on experience. The younger grades will help to harvest spring crops; the students enjoyed pulling up carrots and radishes from the garden last year. PREP, Visitation and High School students can earn service hours for their work in the garden. Harvesting takes place every Wednesday evening June through October (check the bulletin for exact dates and times). Weeding and pruning can be done at any time and on any day (email: [garden @visitationbvm.org](mailto:garden@visitationbvm.org)) to let us know you are coming.

The parishioners at Visitation have created a masterpiece! The No Greater Love Garden is becoming so well known that the Norristown Garden Club has added it as one of its designated sites on this year's garden tour – “Art in the Garden.” This will take place on June 8, 2024. With the help of their teacher, Kindergarten and Preschool students are going to add their talents to the “Art in the Garden” theme by supplying the garden with artwork. During the past two years a variety of vegetables and flowers have won awards from the Norristown Garden Club based on the high quality of the items that were submitted.

In addition to gardening, The No Greater Love Garden is a wonderful place for quiet meditation and prayer around the crucifix, or meditating on The Way of the Cross through the stations which are around the outside of the garden.

Although the garden is thriving, many more hands are needed to help the garden grow and be successful. You don't need to have a green thumb to help. The Garden Committee hopes that parishioners, PREP families and school families will help with planting, maintaining the crops, weeding, and harvesting the produce. Another area where help is needed is grant writing. The parish did receive a grant for soil, which is being used to enhance the garden beds for this year's growing season. If you would like to help in any way please contact the Garden Committee at: garden@visitationbvm.org



If you can help the parish purchase additional garden supplies use the link below:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1AYPSYJJEX5IM/?ref=nav_wishlist_lists_3

Thank you to all those who make, and continue to make, our parish garden successful!



The Visitation Visitor

Parish School Facilities Manager Richard Svetz Retires

By Deacon Vince Drewicz

Congratulations

ON YOUR RETIREMENT



Visitation School Facilities Manager

Richard Svetz

Deacon Vince's comment on Richard's retirement, "Quitter!"

Happy Retirement!

We will miss you!

Answer key for Do You Know? Some Facts About Saints Trivia Quiz on Page 8:

1. D ; 2. B; 3. C; 4. D; 5. C; 6. C; 7. B

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The Visitation Visitor

Do You Know?... Some Facts About the Saints

By Deacon Vince Drewicz

Sainthood. Each of us is called to it, but it's not so simple to achieve. Thankfully, we have the example of thousands of men and women throughout history whom the Church has declared to be in heaven with Our Lord.

1. **This saint was a physician and died shortly after giving birth to her fourth child.**
A. Zélie Martin; B. Margaret Clitherow; C. Catherine of Siena; D. Gianna Beretta Molla
2. **This saint was the first to see the risen Jesus.**
A. Peter; B. Mary Magdalene; C. Martha; D. John
3. **This saint is not one of the first seven deacons mentioned in Acts of the Apostles.**
A. Nicholas; B. Stephen; C. Thomas; D. Timon
4. **There is no book in the New Testament attributed to this saint's authorship.**
A. Jude; B. Peter; C. John; D. Andrew
5. **This apostle was spared from dying a martyr's death.**
A. Jude; B. Peter; C. John; D. Andrew
6. **St. John Neumann is the only American saint with this designation.**
A. Deacon; B. Priest; C. Bishop; D. Layman
7. **The number of American saints actually born in the United States.**
A. 1; B. 2; C. 3; D. 4

The Answer Key is on the bottom of Page 7.