

THE VICTORY VOICE

ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2025



A MESSAGE FROM FR. MIKE

I recently gave a talk to some young families about the Liturgical Calendar. One of the points I made was that the Liturgical Calendar, or Church Calendar as some would call it, is an annual cycle of seasons and feasts that teach us about Christ, and provides an “itinerary” that conforms us to Christ as we await His return.

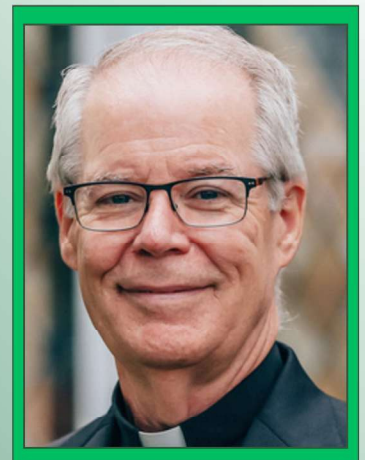
At Pentecost our Easter celebration culminated with God filling us with the Holy Spirit, and re-uniting us in one Body of Christ as we enter Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time, which lasts from now until Advent begins in late November, is a period to reflect on the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel, and how to live it in our daily lives. It is a time for ongoing conversion and for growing in relationship with Christ. This is anything but ordinary!

As July nears, I am reminded that I only got to spend one annual cycle with you at Our Lady of Victory. I originally expected to learn as a new priest for the first year, and then apply what I have learned and to grow in ministry in the next, or hopefully two years of ministry before I was assigned to another parish. I won't be able to apply my learnings here at OLV, but I will certainly take those lessons and fond memories with me to St. Joseph in DeWitt and Ss Philip and James in Grand Mound.

I am grateful for being able to spend this year with a vibrant, welcoming, active and faithful community of believers. It was through interacting with you, ministering to you, laughing and crying with you, that I learned how to be a priest. In seminary, we learn all the academic knowledge, we practice ministering the sacraments, and we prepare for the ministry of priesthood; but it is in our first assignment where we truly learn how to be a priest. I appreciate all the support and love, the advice and honest feedback, your prayers, and the resulting peace and joy that you all gave me this year.

I will pray for your health and well-being, your ongoing conversion, and for your collective ministries at Our Lady of Victory, and ask that you pray for me and for all priests.

Farewell for now,
Father Mike



WHY I JOINED OUR LADY OF VICTORY FOUNDATION - AND WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT IT

by: Jodi Siebler

As a proud member of Our Lady of Victory Parish, I am constantly inspired by the spirit of community and faith that flourishes here. One of the most meaningful ways I've found to support our parish and ensure its future is by joining the Our Lady of Victory Foundation. I'd like to share why I made this commitment and why I believe you should consider supporting it.

Securing Our Parish's Future

Our parish is more than just a place of worship - it's a vibrant, welcoming home for countless families, a place where we celebrate life's milestones, find comfort in difficult times, and grow in our faith. The Foundation exists to safeguard the financial stability of Our Lady of Victory Parish and JFK School, allowing them to continue their mission for generations to come. By supporting the Foundation, we help ensure that our church and school can fulfill their financial responsibilities, sustain essential ministries, and offer a high-quality education within a nurturing and faith-filled environment.

A Legacy of Faith and Service

One of the most powerful aspects of the Foundation is that it allows us to create a lasting legacy. Our contributions today will support not only current parish projects but also future generations. I joined because I wanted to be part of something bigger - something that would continue to bear fruit long after I am gone. It's a way to honor the traditions of our faith while actively shaping its future.

Why Your Support Matters

The Foundation relies on the generosity of parishioners like you. Your donation - no matter the size - has a direct impact. The Foundation has been able to help fund projects like the new JFK playground, HVAC system, parking lot, new exterior doors and security enhancements, just to name a few. Imagine the difference we can make together if each of us contribute to this shared vision.

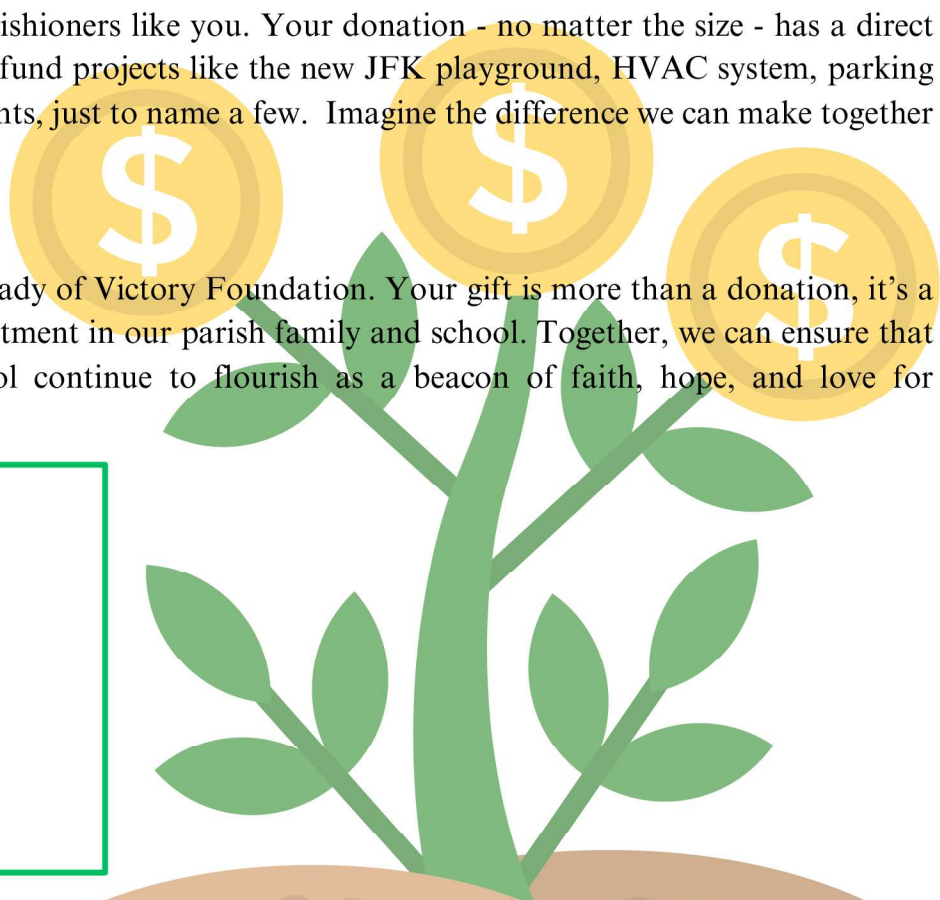
Join Me in Making a Difference

I invite you to join me in supporting the Our Lady of Victory Foundation. Your gift is more than a donation, it's a powerful expression of faith and a lasting investment in our parish family and school. Together, we can ensure that Our Lady of Victory Parish and JFK School continue to flourish as a beacon of faith, hope, and love for generations to come.



Officers: Mike Matthys, Roni Pianca, Kathy Peterson and Joe Creen

Members: Rev. Patrick Hilgendorf (ex-officio), Dan Haverkamp, Mike Lazio, Bernie Mack, Denny Prior, Jodi Siebler, Mike Strajack, and Jenny VanGenderen



LIVING STEWARDSHIP THROUGH THE LOVE OF *Music*

by Judy Johnson

Inspired by her mom, Sharon Ehlers developed a love for music and song early in life. She recalls her mother going about the house singing along with the radio or record player and harmonizing with anyone willing to join in the merriment. This festive environment led Sharon to a keen interest in school chorus and band where she further developed musical expertise. As a teen flutist she was invited to accompany the OLV Adult Choir at a special feast day Mass. She promptly joined the choir and has been serving our congregation with the gift of music for more than 45 years.

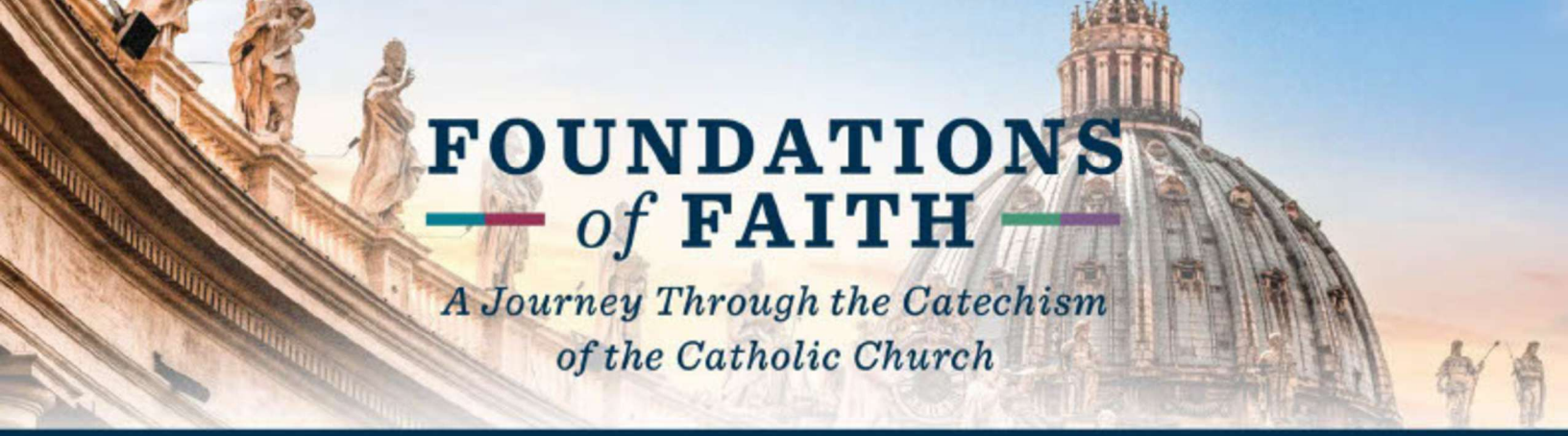
Through the Choir Sharon met and later married husband, Monte, himself a talented instrumentalist and vocalist. Their daughter Christina, born into a family of music lovers, was exposed to melody and song from a young age, eventually joining her parents as a musical artist with this same vocal group.

Beginning in fall 2017 Sharon took over the choir director's baton and began creating a tapestry of sound to boost our parish worship experience. She developed a repertoire of music to enhance the weekly readings and mirror the homily while guiding tempo and dynamics during the 9:00 AM Sunday Mass and other special liturgies. She's lead weekly rehearsals, encouraged vocalists to improve their technique and sing with passion, while managing all aspects of recruiting new members. Over the years her greatest joy has been watching the 35+ members unify as a community and deepen their connection to the divine. She describes the choir as a



close-knit family providing a network of encouragement and care that extends well beyond the confines of our church walls. Sharon firmly believes that every director, throughout our 63-year parish history, has taken the choir to the next level. Hard work, communal bonding, and openness to learning has formed a group that she describes as “bigger, better, and stronger than ever before.” She acknowledges that participation in the Adult Choir has been a deeply rewarding and enriching experience that honed her leadership skills and served as a platform for personal growth. Going forward Sharon hopes that the choir will continue to grow, and new singers will emerge to replace the seasoned voices no longer able to perform effectively due to age.

While no one looks forward to leaving a profoundly transformative experience, Sharon prayerfully decided that she would step away from director role after the 2024-25 season to have more time for leisure and travel. While we will miss her dedication and vibrant spirit, we give thanks and praise to God for the time and musical skill devoted to lifting the hearts of our congregation and inspiring us to walk more closely with the Lord. As she embarks on this new journey, Sharon stresses that she is merely “stepping back—not stepping away. When in town, I can still be found singing with Monte, Christina, and the rest of my choir family.” With deep appreciation for Sharon's immeasurable contribution to music ministry at Our Lady of Victory parish, we say “farewell”—secure in the knowledge that this is not goodbye!



FOUNDATIONS — of FAITH —

*A Journey Through the Catechism
of the Catholic Church*

ADULT FAITH FORMATION BIBLE STUDY

Discover the heart and soul of your Catholic beliefs with Foundations of Faith: A Journey Through the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This engaging, 20-session series was filmed across 40 locations, spanning 4 continents and 10 countries, showing you the universal beauty of the Church. Participants will meet weekly to view the dynamic video presentations followed by a time of lively group discussion and fellowship.

Learn from some of the most renowned Catholic educators of our time, including Dr. Edward Sri, Jeff Cavins, Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, and Fr. Mike Schmitz. Foundations of Faith offers a comprehensive exploration of the Catechism, unpacking its rich theological insights and helping you apply them to your everyday life. Strengthen your connection to the truth, beauty, goodness, and fullness of the Catholic Faith!

Join us for Foundations of Faith beginning Thursday September 25, from 6:30 to 8:00pm in the Gathering Space Meeting Room at church. We will continue to meet on the following dates from 6:30pm-8:00pm: Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13, 20, Dec. 4, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26, April 9 and 16. Cost of the workbook is \$40. For more information or to register for the study, contact Jennifer at davolvaff@diodav.org

VICTORY 4 LIFE 

by Julie Gill

The ministry is very grateful to all who attended the Spring Fling fundraiser in April, for which we earned about \$900. Along with other fundraisers we have held, we have enough money to help the Women's Choice Center and Pregnancy Resources by presenting each with a \$1000 Victory Voucher (gift card) to Walmart for use in purchasing diapers and wipes for their client families. In addition, we continue to present gift bags filled with baby items to OLV parents when they have a newborn or adopted child. Thank you, parishioners, for your support!

Please mark your calendars for the Women's Choice Center fundraising banquet which will be held on September 23rd at the Waterfront Convention Center in Bettendorf. This year they are very excited to have Abby Johnson as the guest speaker. She is the author of the book Unplanned, which was also made into the movie which tells her story of leaving Planned Parenthood and exposing the truth about the organization's abortion business. You won't want to miss this! Be on the lookout for registration details later this summer.

Summer = Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Sunflowers and Following the SON!

by Jammie Jamieson



There are so many great things to do and see in the summer and one of those is a field of sunflowers. Their petals are various, rich colors, but at the center of each one are the seeds. Just as the seeds are in the middle of each sunflower, so should Jesus Christ be the center of our lives as Christians. As practicing Catholics, this is how we are called to live, turning to the Son, just as each beautiful sunflower turns to the sun!

- *'But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.'* Matthew 6:33
- *'as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.'* 2 Corinthians 4:18
- *'For in Him we live and move and have our being.'* Acts 17:28

We can find throughout Scripture that we need to put the Lord first in all things, but how can we apply this to our lives and support this within our domestic churches?

- Schedule some time to visit a sunflower field this summer and take in the abundant beauty. During your visit, or once you get home, take some time to discuss as a whole family what it means to live a Christ-centered life. What does that mean to you and your family members? *Is there a need to grow and look more toward the sun, as the sunflowers do?*
- You can expand upon the scripture listed in this article or dive into any of the Gospels. Listening to the song 'Jesus at the Center' would also be a nice way to foster prayer and engaging family conversations on this topic.
- For those with younger children or who enjoy arts or crafting, take some time to further illustrate our desire to have Christ at the center like our sunflower friends by using brown, yellow and/or orange construction paper. You can cut out sunflower petals and write down all the ways that your family does, or wants to, carry out a life that is centered on our Lord. Cut out a brown circle for the center and write JESUS in the middle of it. Use tape or a glue stick to bring it all together and hang it where it is not only a nice reminder to everyone in your family, but also as a way to evangelize all those you enter into your home!
- *Let us pray: 'Lord, we come before you today to thank you for the beauty of the summer season and to fully commit ourselves to making You the center of our lives. We want to conform our will to Yours and surrender fully to You. Amen. Saint James, the greater, pray for us!' (Feast day July 25th)*

OLV RUMMAGE SALE

by Julie Gill

The Rummage Sale was held from June 11th-14th this year. A big thank you to the many, many people who donated a wide variety of items. A total of \$4,560 was raised for the Ladies Council, who will use the money to help with needed projects at the church and parish center.

This project is also an outreach to community organizations by donating items to the following: St. Anthony's Mc Anthony Window; Women's Choice Center; King's Harvest; Davenport Library; Veteran's Outreach Center; JFK school; and a group that helps the more vulnerable members of our community with free clothing, shoes, and bedding. Help was provided by several members of the Knights of Columbus who moved tables and used their trucks to pick up and deliver large items. THANK YOU to the many volunteers who helped in any way both before, during, and after the sale. And of course, a huge THANK YOU to everyone who shopped at the sale to make it a success!

DESIGNER'S SPRING FLING

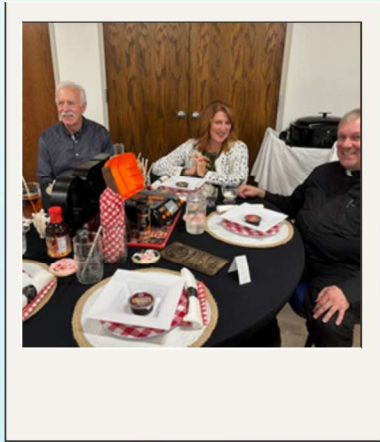
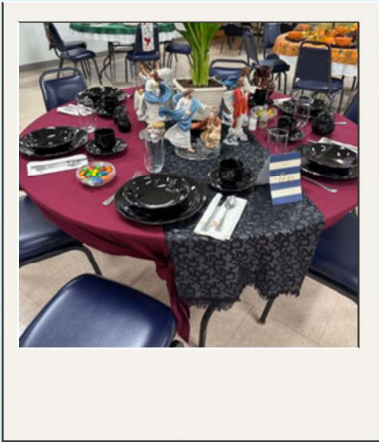
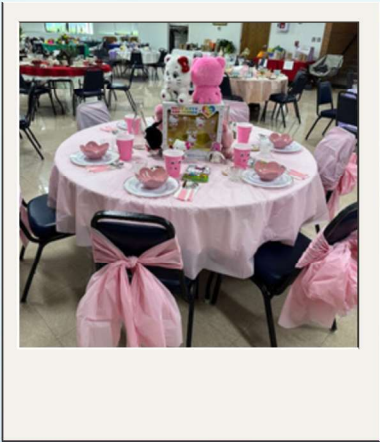
by Julie Gill

The Designer's Spring Fling Luncheon was held on Sunday, May 18th with about 108 people attending. Approximately \$900 each was raised for the Wellness Committee; Queen of Heaven Circle; and Victory 4 Life. Thank you attendees for your support! People commented that it was a delightful, fun afternoon with many looking forward to bringing other friends to the event next year. Several designers are thinking ahead and already planning new table designs!

The Spring Fling would not have happened without generous contributions from donors for the raffle. Please show your appreciation by frequenting the following businesses: Smokin' Butt BBQ; Halligan-McCabe-DeVries Funeral Home; The Runge Mortuary & Crematory; Dan Laubenthal – Edward Jones Financial Advisor; All Around Town Garden Center; Furnish 1-2-3; Isabel Bloom; Whitey's Ice Cream; Public House; Farm and Fleet; Fareway; Choice Automotive; Family Restaurant; Los Portales; Olive Garden; Great Clips; Flowers by Jerri; Eve's Garden Center; Village Inn; Eckhardt team of Ruhl and Ruhl; and local author John Gill.

We also appreciate these individuals who sponsored tables or provided prizes: Jan Tappa; Nancy Gusse; Mark and Maureen Mosse; John Wagner; Emily Raupp; Julie Gill; Gene and Jackie Staron; and Bob and Jan King. Please tell them thanks when you see them at church!

Next year the event is tentatively planned for April 19th. We hope to see many more of you there!



GRIEF SHARE

by Char Mc Govern

GriefShare is a Christ-centered grief support group offered at OLV twice a year. Each session is now 11 weeks long and includes two video-based lessons spread over different weeks.

Our next GriefShare series begins Tuesday, September 2, and will meet weekly from 1:00–2:30 p.m. in the Gathering Space meeting room. The final session will be held on November 11, 2025.

The cost is \$20, which covers the workbook you'll receive on the first day. However, no one will be turned away due to cost. To register, please call the rectory at 563-391-4245 so we can order enough materials for everyone.

Each session includes a video followed by group discussion. You're never required to speak, but everyone is welcome to share if they feel comfortable. The program is led by two trained facilitators, and we begin and end each session with a simple prayer, such as the Our Father or Hail Mary.

GriefShare is for anyone who has experienced the loss of a loved one—whether a parent, child, grandparent, close friend, or neighbor. Asking for support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Here are a few reflections from participants in our Spring 2025 session:

- "I was given the tools to help get through my grief."
- "Members shared their stories—it helps to know we're not alone."
- "It's okay to go on with your life."
- "It was great to hear other ways of handling grief."



For more information, visit www.griefshare.org.

Even Christ wept—so it's okay to come, to cry, and to heal.



NOURISH FOR CAREGIVERS

NEW DAY, NEW FORMAT!

by Char Mc Govern

This fall, we're refreshing our Nourish caregiver support group at OLV! Starting in September, we'll be meeting on a new day: the 3rd Wednesday of each month, from 1:00–2:30 PM, in the Gathering Space Meeting Room.

We're also excited to offer something new: while caregivers participate in the monthly discussion, your loved ones will be welcomed in the Gathering Space with two of our wonderful health advocates—Bonnie, a retired occupational therapist, and Julie, who worked in physical therapy. Each month, they'll lead a simple activity and offer a light snack for your loved ones.

We don't focus on specific diagnoses, but rather on shared experiences that apply to many caregiving situations—whether you're supporting someone with dementia, mobility challenges, stroke recovery, or other health concerns.

We invite both you and your loved one to take a short break and connect with others.

 Mark your calendar:

Our first session in the new format will be Wednesday, September 17 at 1:00 PM.

 Please RSVP to Char at 563-508-3890, especially if you'll be bringing your loved one, so we can prepare materials and snacks.

Note: Our final caregiver-only session on a Thursday will be held on August 21 at 1:00 PM.

We look forward to seeing you in September!