



SAINT TIMOTHY
CATHOLIC CHURCH



The Upcoming *Women's Retreat* Offers a Renewal of Faith and Fellowship

A day-long retreat offers a perfect opportunity for spiritual renewal, giving us a chance to set aside the busyness of everyday life and truly nurture our faith life. With this in mind, our parish Women's Club is pleased to host its annual retreat at the Bethany Center on May 15, 2021!

Johnnette Benkovic Williams will lead our retreat. As the founder and president of Women of Grace, Johnnette hosts a radio show and television program by the same name. She is an experienced speaker and retreat leader and has authored several books on the topics of authentic femininity and living an abundant life in Christ. The theme of May's retreat is "Grace for Today: Spiritual Warfare and Strategies for your Spiritual Growth."

Donna Boudreaux, Co-Chair of the retreat with Betty Quigley, feels that this topic is now more important than ever.

"During this time we are in, with the pandemic and conflict in the nation, we need to use our spiritual strength to learn how to grow stronger in our faith and how to conquer our fears,"



Donna says. "There is a lot of uncertainty in the world, so we need to increase our inner strength because each day brings new challenges."

There are few people as qualified as Johnnette to bring this message of spiritual strength to the women of our community. Having experienced great tragedy in her own life, Johnnette is a

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The Upcoming Women’s Retreat Offers a Renewal of Faith and Fellowship *continued from front cover*

living example of the immense power of faith and grace in the midst of suffering.

When Fr. Malley first suggested Johnnette as a retreat presenter in late 2019, Donna and Betty traveled to St. Jude Cathedral in St. Petersburg to hear her speak.

“She’s just electric, she’s so dynamic,” Donna says. “She’s beautiful inside and out. She is authentic femininity at its core, and her stories just capture you. You can relate to a lot of the things she has been through, and she has been through a lot.”

The retreat will begin with breakfast at 8 a.m., followed by four one-hour sessions, with breaks for lunch and snacks. At the end of each session, there will be time for each table to engage in small-group discussion of the topic. The day will conclude at 4 p.m. after a Mass in the St. James Chapel at the Bethany Center.

By hearing the witness of Johnnette and discussing various faith topics in small groups, participating women will be drawn together in close fellowship with one another over the course of the retreat day.

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“Just hearing the Word and immersing ourselves in the goodness of Christ on these retreats helps our faith lives. You go through everyday life and don’t think about these things, but when you listen to these discussions and talk to other women, I think you just grow from it and feel it when you’re there.” — Donna Boudreaux
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(Back row, from left) Donna Boudreaux, Janet Barteaux, Colleen Carroll, Ann Rees; (front row, from left) Donna Silagi, Lisa Marinik, Diana Martin, Betty Quigley. (Not pictured — Mary LaMacchia, Kathy Gutschmidt and Catherine Cherniak)

“You always get something out of the retreats,” Betty says. “We bring people in with a warm welcome for everybody. We introduce ourselves and learn about each other during the day, and share our Catholic beliefs. Then, when we see each other at church and community functions, we feel closer. With the state of our world today, people want closer relationships with people in their community and their church.”

With the combination of beautiful natural scenery, a dynamic speaker, and wonderful fellowship, this retreat is sure to restore and revitalize the faith lives of all participants.

“Just hearing the Word and immersing ourselves in the goodness of Christ on these retreats helps our faith lives,” Donna says. “You go through everyday life and don’t think about these things, but when you listen to these discussions and talk to other women, I think you just grow from it and feel it when you’re there. Even if I couldn’t attend a lot of meetings or functions when I was working, I always made it to the retreats. I always walk away feeling more peaceful and fulfilled, and very close to Christ and the Holy Spirit.”

The 2021 Women’s Retreat is sold out. If you would like to be added to the waiting list, please contact Diana at (407) 927-7033 or dsamartin56@gmail.com.

SAINT TIMOTHY

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Letter From Our Pastor

Let Us **Make the Most of** Our Easter Celebration

Dear Friends in Christ,

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! To all our St. Timothy Parish family, I extend a very happy and blessed Easter! May the grace of this holy season and the joy of Christ's Resurrection abide in your hearts and homes!

My first Easter here at St. Tim's is going to be filled with many graces and blessings. We will have a wonderful celebration of the Triduum welcoming new members into full communion at our Easter Vigil liturgy. It's one of the many joys of being a pastor witnessing the "birth" of new Catholics into our faith community.

The Easter season is more than just Easter Sunday. It's a 50-day celebration that will culminate with the great Solemnity of Pentecost. It's good to know that we get an opportunity to fully enter into the joy of Christ's Resurrection for a period of time that is even longer than the penitential season of Lent! We get to feast more than we have to fast!

The Church actually "stretches" the Day of Easter over an eight-day period known as the Octave of Easter. On the eighth day, we celebrate the great feast of Divine Mercy. The great spiritual fruit of Christ's Resurrection is that He has poured out His overflowing mercy upon the world. Christ's mercy was poured out from the cross on Good Friday, and it was also poured out on the evening of the Resurrection when He commissioned the apostles to forgive sins in His name. The very first thing Jesus did after His Resurrection was to institute the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in which we experience the healing grace and the merciful love of



God in our lives through the forgiveness of our sins. I encourage you to learn more about the Divine Mercy devotion and how you can incorporate it into your daily lives.

One of the essential parts of the Divine Mercy devotion is the 3 o'clock hour. This is the hour that Jesus died on the cross. This is the hour when Blood and Water flowed from Christ's wounded side, symbolizing the outpouring of His mercy upon us and the whole world. This is a good time of day to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet, or to simply pause and ask for Jesus' mercy for

you. Even just repeating "Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner" or "Jesus, I trust in you" can bear great spiritual fruit and calm our hearts and minds by reflecting on Jesus' tender love for us.

So let's make the most of this 50-day celebration of Easter. Just as the apostles and those first disciples boldly witnessed to others the Resurrection of Jesus, may we also in our own day and time witness our faith in Christ's Resurrection to all we meet.

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Fr. John Blum". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name of the pastor.

Fr. John Blum
Pastor





The Tampa KKI — Indonesian Catholic Community Halfway Around the World from Home, a Special

In the early 2000s, about six people who all had strong roots in two things — their Catholic faith and their home country of Indonesia — began to pray together. Over the years, the Tampa KKI — *Keluarga Katolik Indonesia* or Indonesian Catholic Community — has grown with the arrival of Indonesian immigrants and students in our area. In a testament to the support and dedication of many individuals, there are now over 50 active participants in this thriving ministry!

The KKI ministry hosts monthly gatherings that include time for prayer and sharing, as well as a potluck lunch — during the pandemic, these meetings moved to the virtual platform Zoom. The group also comes together to celebrate occasions such as the blessing of homes, baby showers, birthdays and weddings. In addition, a quarterly Mass is held in the national Indonesian language right here at St. Timothy. For many of the attendees, these celebrations and Masses are both a time of worship and a precious reminder of their homeland.

As Francis Mutidjo, Tampa KKI Vice President and Public Relations Officer, affirms, hearing the liturgy in one's native language helps keep the faith alive.

"Many of them feel homesick," he says. "Some are fortunate to be able to afford to go home, but most are locked in here in the United States — depending on their immigration status and whether they can travel freely or not — so they long for fellowship and they long even for the food, and this includes the spiritual food. Being able to worship in the native language for them is more profound and more meaningful, and it brings back memories of when they attended Mass in Indonesia."

For years, in order to find a priest to say the quarterly Indonesian Mass, the KKI had to engage in an arduous nationwide search. By God's grace, two years ago, an Indonesian priest, Fr. Vincent Suparman, SCJ, was assigned as head of the retirement community for the priests of the Sacred Heart in Pinellas Park. Today, Fr. Suparman offers the Indonesian Masses at St. Timothy and also serves as a spiritual advisor to the KKI ministry.



The Tampa KKI officers for 2020-2023 — (from left) Shanti Mulyadi, Treasurer; Sylvia A. Immanuel, President; Fr. Vincent Suparman, SCJ, Advisor; Francis Mutidjo, Vice President; Tina Mutidjo, Liturgist



Members of the KKI — Indonesian Catholic Community — after the January 2020 Indonesian Mass

Opportunity to Connect

For Indonesian Catholics in our area, the KKI provides a valuable opportunity for faith and fellowship in the context of their native culture. The chance to connect with others is especially important for newcomers to the United States, as Francis knows from personal experience. Francis moved to the Tampa Bay area from Jamaica 12 years ago, and although he spent over 30 years working in Jamaica prior to retiring here, he can still remember the difficulties he had faced as a new arrival.

“At that point, I didn’t even know why the Lord had sent me to that part of the world,” Francis says. “One thing this was missing was my community life and my relationship with other Catholics. I was not active in the church then. So when the Lord called me to go back to the church in 1983, I found myself looking for fellowship outside of the church because I felt I needed to do more than go to Mass on Sunday without any connection to people outside.

“I was searching and finally I found a prayer group over there. I joined that community and it nurtured my faith and I know there are people who are similarly hungry for fellowship. They are hungry to hear the Word of God in their language.”

In 2020, a new leadership team was called to serve the Tampa KKI. The new officers quickly went to work, registering the group with the Multicultural Ministry of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and setting the program for the next few years. Their goals for this year include the publication of a calendar of activities and development of a budget,



A gathering of the KKI — Indonesian Catholic Community

organization structure, and rules and procedures. They also hope to have more collaboration with other KKI groups in Florida and throughout the United States. The ministry is grateful for the continued support of our parish as a host for their quarterly Indonesian Mass.

From its humble beginnings as a small prayer group in the early 2000s to the thriving ministry that it is today, the Tampa KKI has been richly blessed. They look forward to many more years of growth and hope that all Indonesian Catholics in the area will consider becoming a part of this exciting ministry!

“I hope and pray that those who join us are enthusiastic about building their faith,” Francis says. “That is my hope — and the hope of the new leadership — because we want to continue this group not just as a social organization, but as a spiritual and close-knit group of Catholics.”

Anyone who is interested in joining the Tampa KKI (Indonesian Catholic Community) is encouraged to reach out to the organization’s Vice President and Public Relations Officer, Francis Mutidjo, at kki-tampa@peoplepc.com or 813-891-9803. No formal registration is required.



Teaching By Example

The Importance of Prayer in a Child's Life

"I want to be just like Mom!"
"I want to be just like Dad!"

Perhaps nothing lifts a parent's heart like hearing these words. While certainly affirming, such words also remind us of the great responsibility that comes with parenthood.

Children often examine the lives of their parents when making decisions that will affect their own lives. For example, a young boy may dream of becoming a physician one day, just like his father. Or a young girl may hope to become a veterinarian, just like her mother. Could the same be said about their parents' faith lives?

Just as children learn traits and values from their parents, they should also learn the importance and great joy of developing a personal relationship with Christ. And the foundation of such a relationship is prayer — conversation with God.

How should we go about teaching our children to pray? There are several methods, but none works as well as teaching by example. Begin teaching the importance of prayer by praying openly with your spouse. This teaches children that prayer is meaningful and important, and not just a ritual. Also, pray with your children — in the morning and in the evening. Show your sons and daughters the importance of beginning and ending each day in prayer.

While a fortunate dilemma, it's a dilemma nonetheless — Catholics face the challenge of discerning which prayers to use, considering the thousands available. A good rule of thumb is to start simple — maybe an *Our Father* or *Hail Mary*, and then move into something more complex — *Hail, Holy Queen* or *Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel*,



among others. Begin with prayers your children can pick up fairly quickly. Not only will this show them that praying can be fun and easy, but shorter prayers are also usually easier to understand.

Teach your children the importance of spontaneous prayer, rather than just prescribed prayers. Spontaneous prayer is any prayer that is created at the same time it is offered. Another way to think of spontaneous prayer is "praying in your own words." Structure spontaneous prayers according to the ACTS acronym — Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In layman's terms, this means beginning each prayer with words of adoration, such as "You are the Lord God Almighty. I love you." Move into a period of contrition, asking God's forgiveness for the sins you have committed. Then, give words of thanksgiving, thanking God for the gifts He has given. Finally, spend time sharing with God your heart's desires. These intentions can be personal or on another's behalf. Following this format ensures that spontaneous prayer "covers all the bases," and doesn't become just a mental wish list. While God wants to hear and grant our wishes, He also expects words of adoration, contrition and thankfulness.

The best time to begin praying with your children is right now. The sooner they learn about prayer, the sooner they can begin cultivating their own relationship with Jesus. Many parents even pray with their children before birth, hoping their unborn son or daughter can hear their words in utero. Remember, there is no better way to teach one's children about the value of prayer than by example.

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Witnessing God's Grace at Work Through the Life of Mark Gonzalez

As the saying goes, the great God works in mysterious ways. He brings good out of evil, joy out of trials, and light from the darkness. Such was the case with Mark Gonzalez, who witnessed the grace of God at work in his life in a marvelous way, even in the midst of the pandemic that has gripped our country and world.

“For a couple of years, I had been thinking that I would like to become fully initiated into the Church, but I didn't feel like I was able to,” Mark says. “I had to travel so much for work and I didn't have the time to prepare. However, after COVID hit, I didn't need to travel as much, and I was able to work from home. Thus, I found more time to study my Catholic faith, and I finally felt like I could go ahead and do it — I just needed to take that first step.”

Mark soon joined a weekly adult Confirmation preparation class in which he participated for a couple of months. Last October, he received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

“The whole program was very good and insightful,” he says. “We met once a week and discussed a number of different things, such as how to pray, be thankful and face challenges. We learned about what the Sacrament of Confirmation means, and how its significance has changed over time. Each class gave me such an interesting opportunity to enhance my understanding of how to pray. It answered many of the deeper questions I had.”

Mark's desire to join the Church was rooted in his Catholic upbringing, and is now turning out to be a wonderful way to bring up his own children in the Catholic faith, as well. Mark and his wife, Alejandra, have three boys — Aaron, Gavin and Dominic — who all attend Mother Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School.

“I grew up Catholic and was baptized, but we weren't very disciplined in going to Mass,” he says. “We only went on holidays and special occasions. However, over time, after I received the Sacrament of Marriage, I began to feel there was a lot more about the faith that I should know. Then, after we enrolled our children in Catholic school, I decided it was important for me

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Mark Gonzalez receives Communion.



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Witnessing God's Grace at Work Through the Life of Mark Gonzalez *continued from page 7*

to understand what they were learning, so that I could travel the spiritual journey along with them.”

Now that he has received all of his First Sacraments, Mark is savoring the opportunities he has to lead his family closer to Christ and His Church.

“We are now united in our faith, and no one feels excluded,” Mark says. “It has brought us closer together. Going to Mass on Sundays is now a 'family thing' for all of us. Last summer, Aaron, Gavin and I volunteered for 40 hours with Matthew 25 Ministries, serving food and giving out donations to the homeless. We are looking for more ways to get involved, as well.”

Truly, the fire of God's love has been lit in Mark's heart, and he can't help but want to keep feeding it.

“When it came time for my Confirmation class to end, I still wanted to study more about the Catholic faith,” Mark says. “In fact, I have an inspiration to start some kind of new ministry, and have even reached out to Deacon Peter about it.”



Mark Gonzalez and his family celebrate Christmas.

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m. • Sunday: 7:30, 9, 11 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. • Daily: Mon-Sat 9 a.m. • Holy Days: 9 a.m. & 7 p.m. Vigil: 7 p.m.