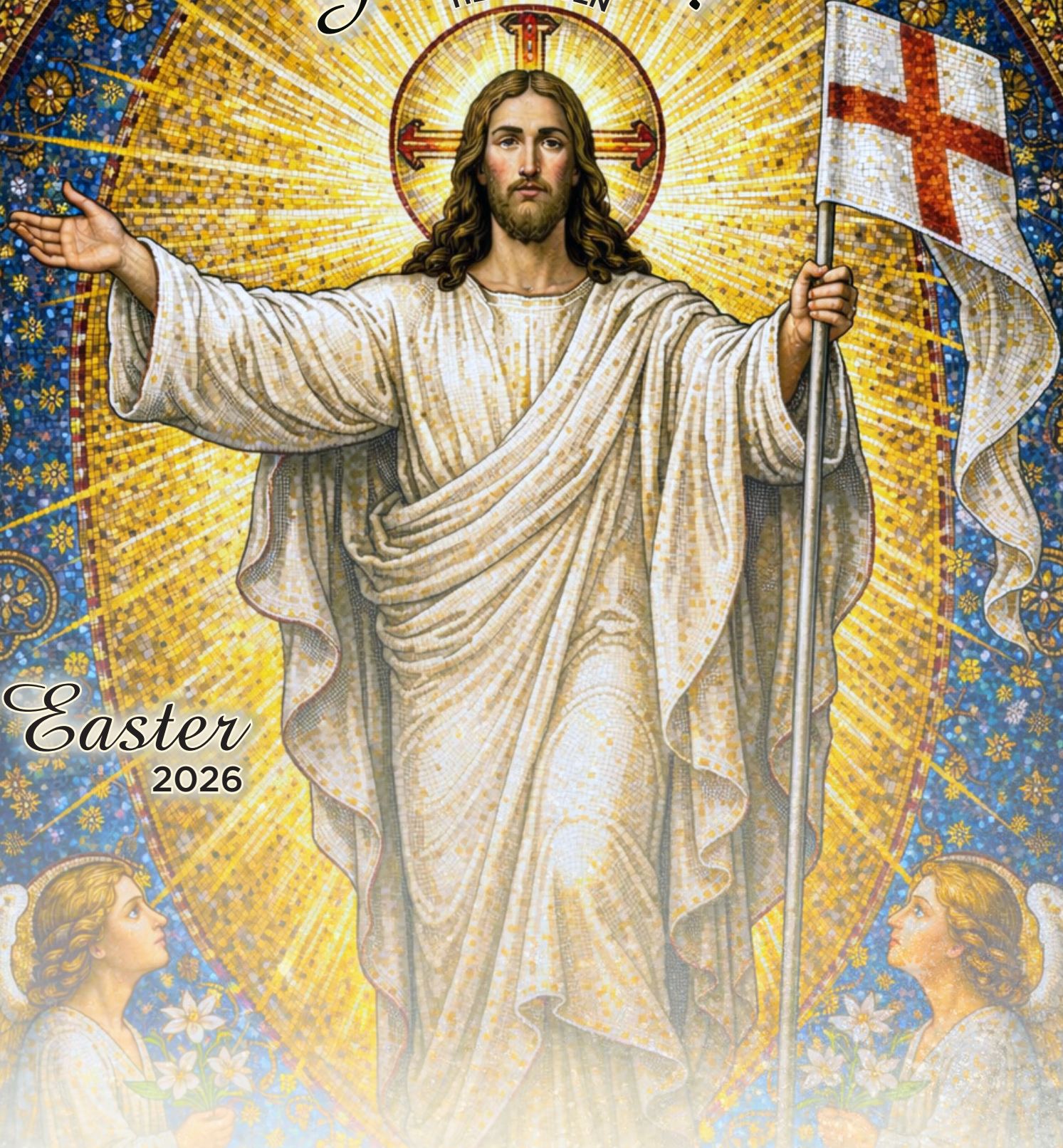


*Alleluia!*  
HE IS RISEN



*Easter*  
2026

**St. John Neumann Catholic Church**

9633 E. OH-37, Sunbury, OH 43074  
740-965-1358 • [www.saintjohnsunbury.org](http://www.saintjohnsunbury.org)



**This year's Festival kicks off a yearlong celebration of 50 years since St. John Neumann's canonization and our parish's first Mass in Sunbury.**

- Live entertainment: Ray Massa's EuroRhythms on Friday night and Shucking Bubba on Saturday night
  - Beer Garden
  - Family B-I-N-G-O - for all ages!
  - Kids and Adults Midway Games
  - Italian Kitchen
  - Jet's Pizza Pavilion
  - Sweet Shoppe and Cake Walk
  - Cash Raffle
  - Silent Auction and Basket Raffle
  - Fireworks on Saturday night
- ...And So Much More!

**SAVE THE DATE  
ST. JOHN NEUMANN  
COMMUNITY FESTIVAL!  
FRIDAY, JUNE 19 &  
SATURDAY, JUNE 20**



## **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SPONSOR?**

Contact Jackie Sutton at [jsutton@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:jsutton@stjohnsunbury.org).

All proceeds support local needs and parish ministries.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!

# Tribunal Information Session

Understanding Catholic Teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Annulments.

All are welcome. No registration required.

Thursday, April 23  
6:30–7:30 pm



## JOIN OUR STAFF!

Liturgical and Engagement Coordinator

The Liturgical and Engagement Coordinator plays a vital role in fostering a welcoming, vibrant parish community by developing and coordinating opportunities that deepen connection, encourage participation, and support the parish mission. This role actively engages parishioners—especially new members and newly initiated Catholics—helping them feel known, involved, and supported. The coordinator creates and implements a strategic approach to increase volunteerism across all parish ministries, recruiting, training, and inspiring volunteers to serve in liturgies, programs, and events.

With the approval of the Pastor, this role also oversees the coordination, scheduling, and formation of liturgical ministers, including altar servers, Masters of Ceremonies, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, and sacristans.

If you or someone you know is interested in the Liturgical and Engagement Coordinator position, please visit the St. John Neumann website for more information.

Visit the website or scan the QR code to read more and to apply.



[SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG/WERE-HIRING](http://SAINTJOHNSUNBURY.ORG/WERE-HIRING)

YOU'RE INVITED TO

# First Holy Communion May 2 & 3 at All Masses

Join us in celebrating our First Communicants as they receive their First Holy Eucharist at all Masses the weekend of May 2-3.

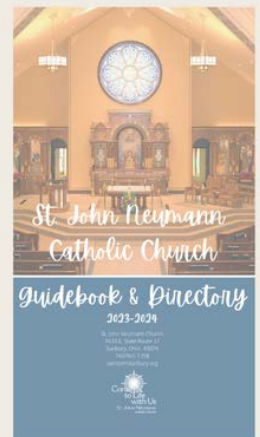
The front pews near the center aisle will be reserved, and we look forward to welcoming many guests. Thank you for showing them the warmth and hospitality of our SJN family!



## Guide Book & Directory Advertising Opportunity

We are in the process of updating our annual Guide Book & Directory for the church. This book will contain everything pertinent to our church: the various ministries, organizations, committees, activities, functions, and events plus a complete directory of all members.

This book is being provided and direct-mailed to each family at no cost to our church, and it is again being subsidized by local businesses that advertise. If you own or manage a business and would like to find out about advertising in our book, please call Jackie Sutton in the Parish Office.



Recent survey results by Guide Book Publishing show that 92.1% of families would rather patronize a Guide Book & Directory advertiser over a non-advertiser. It "will pay" to advertise in our new Guide Book & Directory.

Does our Church database have YOUR family membership record correct?

Do you want your record published? If you have not already informed the Parish Office about changes to your record, please let us know now so that the information in the Guide Book & Directory is correct.

Number: 740-965-1358 x 123

Email: [jsutton@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:jsutton@stjohnsunbury.org)

# HIGH SCHOOL LARGE GROUP GIRLS NIGHT



Join us for a crafting party as we create Mother's Day and baby shower gifts for Mommies Matter. Bring a pack of diapers to donate!



"Faithful friends  
are a sturdy  
shelter..."  
-Sirach 6:14-16

6-8 PM  
SUNDAY  
04.19.26

"AS IRON  
SHARPENS IRON,  
SO ONE PERSON  
SHARPENS  
ANOTHER" -  
PROVERBS 27:17

Come enjoy a camping-themed night with outdoor games like Capture the Flag and Dodgeball, plus a fire and S'mores!

Bring personal care items like soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, etc., and single-serve snacks. We will be making blessing bags for MASH Pantry



## GUYS NIGHT



Family of Faith

## 2026-2027

# CONFIRMATION MEETINGS

All Current 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents

April 19, 2026

4:30 pm

Students are welcome to stay during the meeting, which will run approximately 30 minutes.

This meeting will provide a clear and transparent overview of the parish's new "stairstep" transition plan, which is being implemented in response to updated Diocesan guidelines regarding the Confirmation age. We will explain how this transition will impact both current and future students and allow time for questions and discussion.

**It is vital that you attend!**

Questions? Contact Sarah Gantz at  
[sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org)

Welcome

# TO ST. JOHN NEUMANN

## Deacon Jeff Ludwikowski

Deacon Jeff grew up in northwest Ohio and graduated from St. John Jesuit High School. He and his wife, Lucy, have been married for 38 years and have four children, all Penn State graduates. Two later attended Ohio State and now live in Columbus. Their daughter Mary, her husband Joe, and their four children are members of St. John Neumann Parish.

After living in the Pittsburgh area for over 30 years, Lucy and Jeff recently relocated to Lewis Center to be closer to family. Jeff was ordained a deacon in June 2011. A retired attorney, he practiced law in Pittsburgh for many years and remains active in Catholic ministry.

Lucy and Jeff are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren and are delighted to be part of the St. John Neumann community.

## Happy 90th Birthday!

**Monsignor James Walter**, former Pastor of St. John Neumann from 1994-2005, is celebrating his 90th birthday on April 25th!

Cards are requested to be mailed to:

Trustwell Living at Urbana Place  
Monsignor James Walter  
609 E Water St.,  
Urbana, OH 43078



# Family of Faith

Our desire is to help all members of the family to grow as disciples of Jesus.

## Attention: All Current 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents

We will be holding a meeting for all parents of current 6th grade students on April 19th at 4:30 pm, immediately following our middle school session.

Students are welcome to stay during the meeting, which will run approximately 30 minutes.

This meeting will provide a clear and transparent overview of the parish's new "stairstep" transition plan, which is being implemented in response to updated Diocesan guidelines regarding the Confirmation age. We will explain how this transition will impact both current and future students and allow time for questions and discussion.

It is vital that you attend!

## Girls Night / Guys Night - High School Ministry Event

All high school teens are invited to a fun night with friends – bring someone along!

When: April 19 | 6–8 pm

Where: Girls in the Faith and Family Center | Guys in the Pavilion

Guys Night: A camping-themed evening with games like Capture the Flag and Dodgeball, plus a campfire with S'mores.

*"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."*  
– Proverbs 27:17

Girls Night: A creative painting party making Mother's Day gifts and cards for Mommies Matter.

*"Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter..."* – Sirach 6:14–16

## Final NOURISH Sessions April 19 & 21

Our final NOURISH A session for the year will be on Sunday, April 19. Our final NOURISH B session will be on Tuesday, April 21. We'll talk about different ways God has shown that He was near His people throughout history, and how He is near us still. This session is packed full of fun activities and discussion! We look forward to spending this time with our families, celebrating our year together, and anticipating First Communion in May!

## APRIL 2026 EVENTS

4/19/2026:

- NOURISH A First Communion Prep Session 10:15 – 11:15 am
- Middle School Youth Group 3:00- 4:30 pm
- Confirmation Transition meeting for all 6th grade parents 4:30-5:00 pm
- High School Youth Ministry Large Group 6:00 – 8:00 pm

4/21/2026:

- NOURISH B First Communion Prep Session 6:30-7:30 pm with Pizza at 6:15 pm

4/26/26:

- Baptism Preparation Class 10:15 – 11:15 am
- Baptisms 12:15 pm
- Last Confirmation Session 3:00-4:30 pm
- High School Teen Life Groups 6:00-8:00 pm

4/28/26:

- First Communion Rehearsal in the Church 6:30 – 7:30 PM

## MAY 2026 EVENTS

5/2/26:

- First Communion at Mass 4:00 pm

5/3/26:

- First Communion at Mass 9:00 am
- First Communion at Mass 11:00 am
- May Crowning after Mass 12:00 pm
- First Communion at Mass 5:00 pm

5/8/26:

- High School Youth Ministry End of Year Celebration 6:00 – 8:00 pm

5/10/26:

- Baptisms 12:15 pm

5/12/26:

- Family of Faith Community Night (Grades 1-4) 6:00 - 7:30 pm

5/24/26:

- Baptism Preparation Class 10:15 – 11:15 am
- Baptisms 12:15 pm

# SJN OUTREACH



Help Rewrite a Future:  
Volunteer in Our Jail Ministry Program



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



**"The best way to predict the future is to create it."**

Many individuals in Delaware County Jail are seeking a new beginning but lack the skills needed to succeed after incarceration. You can provide the coaching and spiritual guidance that would help them lead a more purposeful life when released and change the trajectory of their life.

### We are seeking volunteers who will:

- Visit the jail to teach topics such as job skills, relationships, and life skills.
- Lead a Bible study to empower inmates returning to the community.
- Start by being a helper to an experienced minister, and you would be given resources to help you present a topic.

No prior experience is necessary—just a willingness to share your knowledge and care.

Ready to make a real difference?  
Contact Chuck Nell at 740-815-7130  
for more information.

TACKLING WORLD HUNGER USING A  
SIMPLE IDEA.

## MARY'S MEALS

### SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP WITH MARY'S MEALS IN MALAWI, AFRICA

St. John Neumann exists to lead people to a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ. Through Mercy in Action our goal is to support Nansembe – school size is 414 – in Blantyre District of Malawi this school year. Please support us in our 3rd year of sponsoring Nansembe school!

IT COSTS \$25.20 TO FEED  
A CHILD FOR A YEAR.



TO DONATE OR  
FOR MORE  
INFORMATION,  
VISIT

[www.marysmealsusa.org](http://www.marysmealsusa.org)



## MARCH OUTREACH TOTALS

The total amount received for March was \$19,996.

Thank you for your generous gifts supporting outreach to the poor through the blue envelopes and WeShare. Through your generosity, St. Vincent de Paul was able to assist several individuals and families in need. In addition, the Good Samaritan Ministry awarded grants to two parishioners – one to support the Corporal Works of Mercy and another to address needs related to the Spiritual Works of Mercy.



[saintjohnsunbury.org/outreach](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/outreach)

## Little Liturgical Lessons

# On Sacred Fire, Holy Water, and Why We Use Them

By Paul Stokell, Adult Formation Director

Fire and water stand among the ancient and evocative symbols of the Christian liturgical imagination. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Easter Vigil, the “mother of all vigils,” where the Church gathers in darkness to witness creation renewed through the flame and the Font. These elements are not theatrical excess but real sacramental pedagogy: the Church takes the raw materials of creation and, through ritual, reveals them as instruments of divine action. As the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* reminds us, the liturgy “makes use of signs perceptible to the senses” so that the mysteries of salvation may be grasped more deeply (GIRM 5). Fire and water, with their beauty and danger, serve this purpose with singular force.

The Vigil begins with fire—sometimes a modest flame in a metal bowl, or a roaring blaze that threatens to singe vestments and eyebrows alike! Liturgists often repeat the maxim: if a symbol is worth using, it is worth using boldly. Fire demands such boldness; it’s never neutral. It warms or destroys, illuminates or consumes. Its ambivalence is precisely what makes it a fitting sign of the God who is merciful and awe-inspiring.

Scripture consistently presents fire as a point of divine presence. In Exodus, God leads Israel through the wilderness as a “pillar of fire by night” (13:21), a manifestation at once protective and fearsome. The same fire that enlightens Israel terrifies Pharaoh’s army. Christian liturgy inherits this. The Easter Fire is not a quaint prelude to the liturgy but an encounter with the God who creates, commands, and transforms the elements.

From this fire the Paschal Candle is lit—the great “pillar of fire” that will lead the assembly through fifty days of Easter and the baptisms and funerals throughout the year. The GIRM notes that the Paschal Candle is to be “the preeminent candle” of the liturgical year, its flame a sign of the risen Christ dispelling the darkness of sin and death (cf. 31, 82). When the assembly holds small taper candles lit from the Paschal Candle, the symbolism isn’t merely communal but telling of our new purpose in the world: the baptized share in Christ’s light, bearing it everywhere.

If fire marks the beginning of the Vigil, water marks its center. The blessing of the baptismal font is one of the most ancient and theologically rich rites of Christian tradition. The font, drained and refilled with ordinary water, becomes through prayer and ritual action the womb of the Church. The repeated lowering of the Paschal Candle into the water—an action with roots in pre-Christian Roman fertility rites—expresses a profound sacramental truth: the risen Christ, symbolized by the candle, sanctifies the waters so that they may become the place where the old self dies and the new self rises (cf. Rom 6:3–11).



*“the risen Christ, symbolized by the candle, sanctifies the waters so that they may become the place where the old self dies and the new self rises”*

The Church emphasizes the centrality of water in the rites of initiation, noting that the font should be constructed and placed in a way that “clearly expresses the truth of the sacrament” (GIRM 294). Historically, this was expressed in architecture. Early Christian baptisteries were often located at the entrance of the church, reminding the faithful that baptism is the gateway to ecclesial life. Medieval fonts took the shape of *coffins*, emphasizing death to sin, or *wombs*, emphasizing rebirth. Contemporary fonts (like our own), frequently octagonal, evoke the “eighth day” of creation—the eschatological telling (from Greek *eschaton*, “last days”) of Christ’s return, and the new creation.

Water, like fire, is ambivalent. It liberates Israel through the parted sea, and overwhelms Pharaoh’s chariots. It cleanses, but it also destroys. Our liturgy *does not* sanitize this; it embraces it. Baptism is both cleansing and destructive, both death and life. (Ask any liturgist how much water you need to baptize, and the reply will be the same—“Enough to drown in.”) The Vigil’s blessing of water, with its sweeping retelling of salvation history, makes this clear: the God who created water, who parted it, who walked upon it, now uses it to graft believers into Christ.

Fire and water reveal a deeper theological principle: the liturgy is a site of co-creation. God alone creates and commands the elements, yet the Church, through ritual, participates in their transformation. When the Assembly kindles fire or blesses water, it does not manipulate nature but cooperates with grace. The elements remain themselves—fire still burns, water still flows—but they become transparent to divine action.

This is not optional ornamentation but a vital part of sacramental life. The GIRM teaches that the liturgy is the exercise of Christ’s Priestly office, enacted through signs that engage the whole person (GIRM 1–2). Fire and water draw the faithful into this mystery with a power few other symbols can match. They are not mere ritual props but theological proclamations. Through them, the Church announces that creation itself participates in salvation. Fire illumines the night; water births new life. When liturgy is done well, they reveal the God who makes all things new.

If you have questions about how the Mass is celebrated (in this parish or elsewhere), or about any of the other Sacraments, send them to [pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org](mailto:pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org)!

Read more Little Liturgical Lessons like this at [saintjohnsunbury.org/little-liturgical-lessons](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/little-liturgical-lessons)



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

Your compassion is a living witness to the Gospel. You have brought comfort, hope, and dignity to those most in need in the Diocese of Columbus. Thank you for your 2025 Appeal gift.

## The 2025 Appeal Results (as of 1/30/26):



## The 2025 Appeal dollars supported our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Columbus:



catechumens/  
candidates  
entered the  
Church in 2025



state prisons now  
offer weekly Mass,  
confessions, and  
pastoral care



of our Diocese now  
offer miscarriage  
and post-abortion  
healing programs



seminarians are  
currently being  
formed in our  
Diocese



souls received  
the Sacrament  
of Confirmation  
in 2025

## Here are a few stories showing how your gifts directly impacted lives in our Diocese in 2025.



## EVANGELIZATION

Our Diocese hosted its first annual Together in Holiness marriage conference at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church, welcoming over 90 couples. With 192 registrants from 38 parishes, participation exceeded expectations. 96% reported increased inspiration to grow in holiness with their spouse—providing a strong impact on marriages and families across the Diocese of Columbus. We look forward to even greater participation in 2026.

*"We're very grateful for the speakers who shared their personal, day-to-day experiences. They showed that if they can do it, so can we,"* said one participant.

# Your 2025 Impact

## VOCATIONS

Our Office of Vocations continues to experience growth in the number of seminarians we are forming. Bishop Fernandes was featured on CBS Evening News highlighting the Diocese of Columbus as one of the few dioceses nationwide seeing a significant increase in vocations. We are grateful to be forming 43 seminarians, compared to 17 in 2022.

*"Since entering seminary in 2020, the Diocese's generosity has shown me the love of God, who is never outdone in generosity. The plethora of experiences and quality of formation the Diocese has offered me will continue to build up the Catholic faith in our Diocese,"* says Deacon Zack Goodchild, who was ordained as a transitional deacon earlier this year (pictured).



## SOCIAL OUTREACH

Bishop Fernandes has made prison ministry a deeply personal commitment, making nine prison visits to celebrate the sacraments, proclaim the Gospel, and offer reconciliation. The Bishop affirmed the dignity of each person and reminded them that no one is beyond the reach of God's mercy.

*"Visiting the imprisoned is a great work of mercy. The Church believes in forgiveness, conversion, and rehabilitation. Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. The prison ministry of the Diocese of Columbus is a witness to hope that not only does Christ not abandon those who are imprisoned, but rather He draws close to them through His ministries."*

- Bishop Fernandes

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION & FORMATION

Many parish Religious Education programs provide families with shared opportunities for prayer, learning, and service. Through service projects, families live out their faith by responding to local and community needs. At St. Brigid of Kildare's Family of Faith program, families complete a monthly service project. In November, they honored Military Veterans by creating thank-you cards and offering prayers of gratitude and remembrance.



As one participant noted, *"With every event, we are not only serving others in a tangible way, but these experiences have opened my children's eyes and hearts in ways I never could have imagined, helping them grow in compassion, gratitude, and faith."* - Elizabeth Kill

Through your generosity, the Appeal is changing lives across our Diocese.  
We encourage you to continue supporting the Appeal and helping our mission grow.

OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT - THE APPEAL

(614) 241-2550 | 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus, OH 43215 | [columbuscatholicgiving.org/appeal](http://columbuscatholicgiving.org/appeal)

## SCHEDULE

### Sunday, April 19

#### K of C Sub Sales

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (Julia Marie Potter †)

10:15 am NOURISH A - FFC A & B

OCI Mystagogy

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (Ed Kramer †)

2:00 pm Confessions

3:00 pm Middle School Youth Group

4:30 pm Confessions

Confirmation Meeting-Current 6th Grade Families

5:00 pm Mass (People of the Parish)

6:00 pm High School Ministry Large Group

### Monday, April 20

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Dolores Shearer-Pullens)

6:00 pm K of C Monthly Meeting

### Tuesday, April 21

5:00 pm Confessions

5:30 pm Rosary

6:00 pm Mass (Ron Myers †)

6:30 pm Last NOURISH B - FFC

### Wednesday, April 22

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Carl Musielewicz †)

6:00 pm 50 Anniversary Planning

### Thursday, April 23

5:00 pm Confessions

5:30 pm Rosary

6:00 pm Mass (Jeff Brader †)

6:30 pm Tribunal Services Information Session

### Friday, April 24

10:30 am Rosary

11:00 am Mass (Gloria Morris †)

### Saturday, April 25

#### Tribunal Services Information Session

3:00 pm Confessions

4:00 pm Mass (Diane Wanner †)

### Sunday, April 26

8:30 am Confessions

9:00 am Mass (Dr. Eugene Arnold †)

10:15 am Baptism Preparation Class-Padre Pio

OCI Mystagogy

10:30 am Confessions

11:00 am Mass (David Schimpff)

12:15 pm Baptisms

2:00 pm Confessions

3:00 pm Middle School Youth Group

4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Mass (People of the Parish)

6:00 pm High School Teen Life Groups

## SACRAMENTS & PARISH REGISTRATION

### Anointing of the Sick

Call the Parish Office at 740-965-1358. After office hours, you will select Option 1.

### Bulletin Requests

Monday at Noon Deadline. Contact Krissy Ciacchi - kciacchi@stjohnsunbury.org

### Becoming Catholic

Contact Paul Stokell - pstokell@stjohnsunbury.org

### Confirmation

Contact Sarah Gantz - sgantz@stjohnsunbury.org

### First Communion (2-year prep)

Contact Amanda Westrick - awestrick@stjohnsunbury.org

### Funeral Planning/Communion to Homebound

Contact the Parish Office - 740-965-1358

### Marriage Prep / Weddings / Baptism

Contact John Pratt - jpratt@stjohnsunbury.org

### Parish Registration

Contact Julie Bando - jbando@stjohnsunbury.org

## ADORATION, CONFESSION AND PARISH OFFICE HOURS

### Confession

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 5:00-5:50 pm

First Fridays: 10:00-10:50 am

Saturdays: 3:00-3:50 pm or by appointment

Sundays: 8:30-8:50 am, 10:30-10:50 am, 4:30-4:50 pm

### Eucharistic Adoration

Perpetual Adoration is located in the Chapel.

Unlocked hours: 7:00 am-7:00 pm. To sign up, visit: [saintjohnsunbury.org/adoration-chapel](http://saintjohnsunbury.org/adoration-chapel)

### Parish Office Hours

Monday-Thursday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Closed Monday & Wednesday: 11:00-11:30 am for Daily Mass

## OFFERTORY

Thank you for supporting St. John Neumann's mission. Your generosity is vital to the success of our community. The offertory for April 12, 2026, was \$30,970. Thank you for your commitment. To donate online, please scan the QR code below.



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