## PROCLAIM

CHRIST THE KING PARISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2023 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 4



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#### Dear Friends,

October 7 is the Feast of the Holy Rosary and so October is set aside as a month to honor and celebrate the Holy Rosary. The rosary is a beautiful prayer wherein we meditate upon the mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary.

Pope Francis says this about the rosary: "The Rosary is the prayer that always accompanies my life: it is also the prayer of simple people and saints...it is the prayer of my heart. The Rosary lays before our eyes the beauty of a simple contemplative prayer that is accessible to everyone, great and small."

I would invite us especially this month to pray the rosary and lift up various intentions for our loved ones and our parish community.

Let us pray for the guests attending Alpha this fall at the Barley House, along with the Alpha team. Alpha is our primary evangelization initiative; it is a great way to renew ourselves in our relationship with Jesus and to introduce others to the power

of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet attended Alpha, prayerfully consider attending the next session. If you have attended, consider who God might be asking you to invite.

Let us pray for Emmaus, our central discipleship offering, which begins this month. We hope that you have registered and will participate, but there is still time if you have not. The theme this year is "Seen and Unseen" and we will be studying and discussing the seven sacraments. Emmaus is for everyone, for all ages. However, if you have children in second and third grade, it is our expectation that you will participate in Emmaus as your children prepare for First Penance, Confirmation, and First Holy Eucharist.

Let us pray for our Stewardship Renewal as October is also a time each year when we consider how to give of our Time, Talent, and Treasure. These are gifts from God and we must pray to discern the best way to use these gifts according to God's will. You will be receiving a stewardship packet in the mail with a commitment sheet. Please fill it out and return it on the weekend of October 21 & 22. Each year, our circumstances may change and it is important to respond to God's call according to our means.

So together, let us pray, as we celebrate this beautiful month of October. The brilliant color of the leaves call us to appreciate the beauty of God's creation and our many blessings.

Yours in Christ.

#### Father Rich



Father Richard Roberge, Pastor of Christ the King Parish



"Mom, I've been feeling a little odd lately," my oldest son, Cooper, said, his face distorted with worry and concern. "I've been thinking about our faith and heaven and hell and just questioning if this is all real." I nodded understandingly, while trying to push aside the tingly panic that rushed over me. He added with a further concerned tone, "I really don't like this feeling, I...I don't want to doubt my faith."

Last year, my second eldest,
Jack, came to me with a similar
concern. He overheard my
husband, Andrew, and I talking
about our pasts and how we
weren't really connected to a
church growing up. Jack hung his
head and wrapped his arms around
my waist as he let out a cry and
said, "I don't ever not want to be
Catholic!"

One of my greatest and most fervent prayers is that my children won't lose their faith and fall away from the Church. So hearing that Cooper was experiencing doubts really sent me into an internal spiral. Externally, I stayed cool, calm, and collected as we talked about these doubts and questions.

"God can handle this, you know," I said to Cooper. "He's big enough to take this from you and shape it into something that will strengthen your faith." I paused for a moment, then, to reassure him, I gave him examples of saints who have died for the faith, of two of my favorite apparitions of Mary – Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Fatima and of Eucharistic miracles. "When doubt creeps into my heart, I turn to these people and situations and think that there is no way these things could happen or exist if our faith wasn't real. My suggestion to you would be to lean into these doubts, ask the hard questions and trust in the Lord to guide you. Dig deeper. More often than not, the further you dive into Catholicism, the more you find this all to be authentic Truth."

I have a tendency to be too long winded, especially when it comes to all things Catholic, so in an attempt to sum it all up and hoping that Cooper could walk away from our conversation with a single, solid nugget to ruminate on, I added this piece from the Gospel of Mark, "Pray this anytime you're questioning, 'Lord, I believe, help

my unbelief."

Something that I need to remind myself of often is what Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) Jesus wins in the end, regardless of the doubts, questions, and fears we might have. Another huge thing I cling to as a mother is that my children are not my own. They are on loan to me by God Himself. They are God's first and I have to trust that God knows what He's doing in the hearts of my...ahem, His children.



Jen Albee, Coordinator of Young Disciples at Christ the King

### Can Catholics celebrate Halloween?

Happy "spooky season" to you all! I've always loved Halloween. I'm not into the scary scene, but I love the old-fashioned, good clean fun that is dressing up and going door to door trick-or-treating. In fact, for many, Halloween is the time of year when we interact with our neighbors the most! Being a Halloween-lover, I am grateful that the answer to this month's question is yes! However, as with all things, we must navigate how to engage in this day while staying firmly rooted in our faith.

As we all know, Halloween takes place on October 31. What you might not know is that this is the day before a major Catholic feast - All Saints' Day! In fact, the title "Halloween" comes from the phrase "All Hallows Eve," referring to the evening before the holy day that is All Saint's Day. On All Saint's Day, we celebrate those who have died and gone to Heaven, those who are living with the Lord in perfect happiness. The following day, on November 2, we celebrate All Soul's Day, commemorating all who have died and praying for the souls in purgatory.

As Catholics, we cannot lose sight of our feast days. Cultures and peoples are defined by their celebrations. As Americans, our society operates around a schedule of our major occasions - Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc. It is ingrained in us from the time we are young. To hold onto our Catholic identity, we must remember and celebrate our significant days as well. So, while we can celebrate Halloween,

we cannot allow it to replace or overshadow the significant Catholic feasts that follow it. So as you decorate and buy candy for October 31, consider how you will acknowledge the celebration that is the following day. Perhaps hold a big family meal using the recipes of family members who have passed. Consider putting out some pictures of deceased relatives. And don't forget to get to Mass! An additional way that you might celebrate both Halloween and All Saints' Day together is to dress up as a favorite

In discussing the Catholic perspective on Halloween, I would be remiss if I did not mention the things we must avoid during this season. To begin, Halloween can be a time when the devil and demons are made into "caricatures," a provocative costume, or even celebrated. This is something Catholics simply cannot engage with. We believe the devil and his evil spirits exist and actively seek the ruin of your soul. It is not something to make light of. Consider how you would feel towards a person in your life who was trying to harm you at every turn. Even on Halloween, we must "reject Satan and all his empty promises." Therefore, costumes and decorations that focus on dark forces or the demonic ought to be avoided.

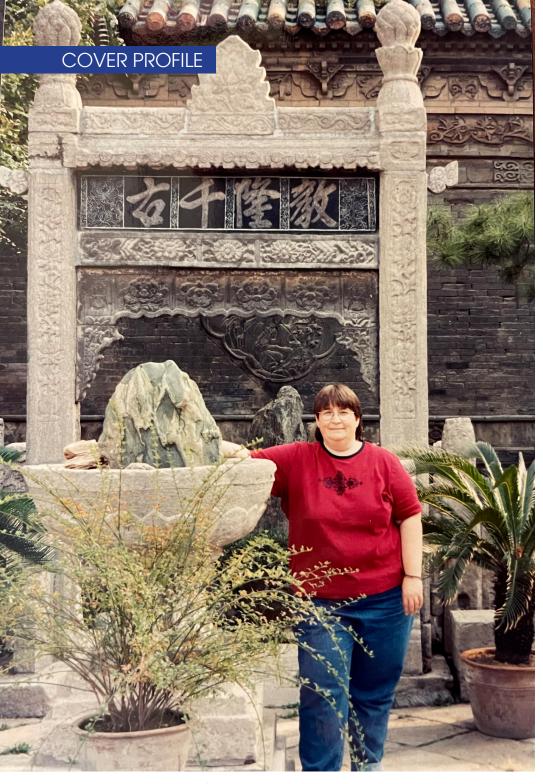
The next thing we must be on the watch for is what the Church calls "divination." As defined by Father John Hardon's Modern Catholic Dictionary, divination is "the art of knowing and declaring future events or hidden things by means of communication with occult forces." As the Catechism states, "All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to 'unveil' the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums...They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone." (CCC 2116) The Catechism goes on to condemn all practices of "magic or sorcery." These practices are not fun, seasonal activities. They are dangerous and contradict what it is that we believe.

As Catholics, we are called to be in the world, but not of it, as Jesus' tells us in John's Gospel (John 17: 13-19). The life of a faith involves a continuous discernment of what this looks like in the modern world. Halloween affords us an opportunity to evaluate how we participate in the world around us, while keeping our eyes fixed on what is beyond it.



Haley Judd, Coordinator of Adult Discipleship at Christ the King

Have questions about another topic within Catholicism? Send them anytime to parish@christthekingnh.org.



# Spirit Sp

By Michael Clark

unfamiliar places, and investigate concepts that are new to us. This spirit of adventure has been of primary importance in the faith journey of Greta Ernst.

Greta's walk with God began simply. "I was a Christian as a child," she shares. "We went to a Congregational Church when we lived in Massachusetts, but when we moved to New Hampshire, we didn't stay with the church very long." However, Greta always had a belief in God's existence. "When I was a kid, I spent a lot of time in the woods with my dog and I would think things like, 'Nice day, God. Thank you very much." These early intuitions were profound, but Greta admits God wasn't of primary importance: "For me, it was me and my dog, and then there was God. God was never a priority."

In later years, Greta's sense of adventure would lead her to travel, opening up an interest in eastern religions. "I had gone to China a couple of times, and I was involved in a Tai Chi school there. I eventually became a teacher," she says. "I was very curious about Buddhism and Taoism, and after some investigation, I started following the ways of Taoism, which I found very peaceful. It encourages you to work on yourself so that you can help others, and not try to change the world to suit you." Most importantly, however, was the fact that Taoism "really taught me unconditional love for other people," Greta shares.

A new phase of Greta's faith journey began unexpectedly when she said "yes" to an invitation to attend a Living Stations of the Cross at St. Peter's Church in Concord. There, an incredibly powerful experience occurred: "I remember sitting in the pew, having no idea why I was there, and everyone around me was kneeling and praying." Once again, Greta's willingness to go to unfamiliar places would set the stage for a powerful awakening. She recalls, "The priest got up and he said that he was grateful to everybody for coming, and before we started he wanted us all to take a minute to think about why we were there." During this moment of reflection, Greta remembers thinking, "Okay, God, I have no idea why I'm here, but I hope you're not offended that I'm here." What happened next was life changing. "I felt like somebody put their hand on my back, right over my heart," she says, "and I turned around to look and there was nobody there. That was my first adult realization of the presence of God."

Although this experience did not lead to an immediate conversion to Catholicism, it did increase her desire to learn more about the Catholic faith. A friend suggested she go to RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) with him and she decided to try it, even though she had no clear intention of joining the Church. When they asked the priest if Greta could attend RCIA even though she did not want to become Catholic, the priest said, "Sure, everybody's welcome!" Although the classes deepened her interest in Christianity, her wish to not join the Faith was unshakable. "They kept asking me, 'Are you going to become Catholic?' and I said, 'No."

Eventually, however, God spoke to her heart once again in a very powerful way. She recalls, "We went to class one night and I got really angry and I couldn't understand why, but I felt this anger towards everyone in the room and I felt like I just wanted to run away." This anger persisted and when she returned home that night, "I found myself having this battle with God, and I finally said, 'I don't know what you want from me, I want you to leave me alone. I don't want to do this." The battle would persist as the night progressed. "At one point I was crying, the next minute I was laughing. I went to bed, I woke up the next morning, and I thought, 'Oh my God, I'm going to become Catholic!"



Her conversion was the beginning of a new adventure, one that would lead her to help others have similar experiences, primarily through the ALPHA course. Greta helped to form and participated in Christ the King's first ALPHA course and now, seven years later, serves as the coordinator of ALPHA at the parish.

ALPHA is where the big questions in life can be discussed and even debated in a laid-back environment. Each week, ALPHA attendees share a meal, view a video presentation, and engage in small group discussions. She recalls serving as a table facilitator during the first ALPHA course and shares, "I was overwhelmed by the stories that the people at my table told, and in one case the conversion that happened with a person at my table during the course!"

Along with Co-Leader, Carol Vallieres (pictured right), with Greta's hard work and guidance, in coordination with all of the volunteers, ALPHA at Christ the King has become very fruitful. It has brought new people to Christ, and also renewed and revitalized the faith of those who were already Christian before attending. The success of Christ the King's ALPHA program has allowed the parish to become an "ALPHA Hub," helping

other parishes to start their own ALPHA programs and providing the training and guidance to empower them to do so.

As a coach for ALPHA New England, Greta has been instrumental in this work. "It's awesome to be able to pay back all that amazing time and energy that other parishes gave to us when we started on the path of parish renewal," she says. And so, the adventure continues for Greta but now she knows that the Lord is by her side each step of the way. •





## Bringing People Together

Linda and Tom Varela are the leaders of Christ the King's newly formed Social Committee. Linda explains, "The Social Committee is a way of having parishioners socialize outside of church." People are always searching for opportunities to connect with others; creating enjoyable activities allows us the opportunity to create bonds with others in a fun and approachable way.

Linda and Tom moved to the area two years ago and after researching the churches in and around Concord, they decided to join Christ the King Parish. "We were drawn to this parish because everyone was so welcoming," Tom shares. "We were looking at the

different ministries and thinking that this is a very vibrant and active parish. However, there was no social committee." At a meeting of the Pastoral Council, Linda, a current member, brought up the idea of forming such a committee and it was approved!

Linda has nine years of experience volunteering with the Social Committee at her former parish, Our Lady of Mercy in Merrimack, New Hampshire. "It was great, we had lots of activities that were inclusive, not only for couples but also for families, children, and the elderly," Linda recalls. "In addition, we always did something special on festivals such as Saint Patrick's Day, Halloween,

and Mardi Gras just before Lent. When we were asked to head the Social Committee here at Christ the King, we were thrilled. We spoke to people after church who had bubbly and exciting personalities and asked if they would like to join our committee and we got some great people involved."

"Our first event was a trivia night once a month during June, July, and August and we were shocked, surprised, and excited to see about 35-40 people show up each time and the results and feedback were wonderful," Tom says. "We asked people what future events they would like. The results were: square dancing (most popular), game night, and line dancing."

Linda added, "We are currently planning a family game night. We will have a children's corner for the little ones. You can come single, as a couple or as a family and you get the opportunity to socialize with your family and other parishioners." Tom explains, "We will have games that are 20-30 minutes in duration so you can play a game and then move on to another table."

Linda says, "We did have some people come who are not from the parish. That is what we like to see because if parishioners invite their neighbors and friends who are not part of Christ the King or who have drifted away from church, but they enjoy these social activities, perhaps they will want to go to church here. They will see familiar faces in church from attending the Social Committee activities."

Tom says, "It was nice to see that there was a need, and we were able to meet the need in the parish." Linda agrees, "When people come and say, 'Wow, that was so much fun!' it gives me a grateful heart to know that we are bringing people together from Christ the King Parish and beyond." ◆

#### OCTOBER 2023

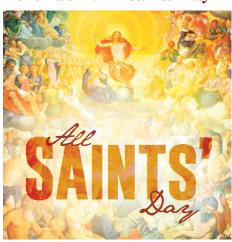


#### October 6 & 8: Emmaus

Emmaus is a place where every disciple of Christ of every age can come and grow deeper in their Catholic faith and deeper in fellowship with their church community. This year's topic is "Seen & Unseen: The Sacraments of the Catholic Church." This month, we will be discussing "An Introduction to the Sacraments." Register at **christthekingnh.** org/emmaus.

October 9: Columbus Day
The parish office will be closed in
observance of the holiday.

#### NOVEMBER 2023 November 1: All Saints' Day



All Saints' Day is dedicated to the saints of the Church, that is, all those who have attained heaven. This is a holy day of obligation and Mass will be available at 9:00 am, 12:10 pm, and 7:00 pm.

#### November 2: All Souls' Day

All Souls' Day is dedicated to those who have died and not yet reached heaven. Consider using the provided All Souls' Day envelope to add your prayer intentions. These intentions will be prayed for throughout the year.

#### November 3 & 5: Emmaus

This month, we will be discussing "Indelible Mark: The Sacrament of Baptism." Visit **christthekingnh. org/emmaus**.

**November 10: Veterans Day** The parish office will be closed in observance of the holiday.

#### November 23: Thanksgiving

Mass will be offered today at 9:00 am. "We thank you, Father, for the gift of Jesus your Son who came to our Earth and lived in a simple home. We have a greater appreciation of the value and dignity of the human family because he loved and was loved within its shelter. Bless us this day; may we grow in love for each other in our family and so give thanks to you who are the maker of all human families and our abiding peace." (*The Catholic Prayer Book*)

#### November 23 & 24: Thanksgiving Break

The parish office will be closed for a Thanksgiving break.

#### November 26: Solemnity of Christ the King

"He must reign in our minds, which should assent with perfect submission and firm belief to revealed truths and to the doctrines of Christ. He must reign in our wills, which should obey the laws and precepts of God. He must reign in our hearts, which should spurn natural desires and love God above all things, and cleave to him alone. He must reign in our

bodies and in our members, which should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls, or to use the words of the Apostle Paul, 'as instruments of justice unto God." (*Quas primas*, 33)

#### DECEMBER 2023

#### **December 1 & 3: Emmaus**This month, we will be discussing

"Sealed with the Spirit: The Sacrament of Confirmation." Visit **christthekingnh.org/emmaus**.

#### **December 3: Advent Begins**

"Mary sustains our journey toward Christmas, for she teaches us how to live this Advent Season in expectation of the Lord. For this time of Advent is a time of waiting for the Lord, who will visit us all on the feast, but also, each one, in our own hearts. The Lord is coming! Let us wait for him!" (Pope Francis)

#### December 8: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Today we celebrate Mary's conception without sin. This is a holy day of obligation and Mass will be available at 9:00 am, 12:10 pm, and 7:00 pm.

#### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

#### **October 7 & 8:**

Food Pantry (Parish)

#### October 14 & 15:

Fuel & Utilities (Parish)

#### October 21 & 22:

Maintenance (Parish) World Mission Sunday (National)

#### October 28 & 29:

no special collection

#### CONTACT INFO







#### **Christ the King Parish**

72 South Main Street, Concord, NH 03301 603.224.2328 | christthekingnh.org

#### **Weekend Masses**

Sat: 4:00 pm | Sun: 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am

#### **Weekday Masses**

Mon, Wed, Fri: 12:10 pm | Thurs: 5:30 pm

#### **Confession/Reconciliation**

Thurs: 4:45-5:15 pm | Sat: 2:30-3:30 pm

#### **Pastor:**

Father Rich Roberge, frrich@christthekingnh.org

Winton DeRosia, deaconwinton@christthekingnh.org

#### **Director of Parish Life:**

Cynthia Tokos, cynthia@christthekingnh.org

#### **Bookkeeper:**

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#### **Coordinator of Adult Discipleship:**

Haley Judd, haley@christthekingnh.org

#### **Coordinator of Young Disciples:**

Jen Albee, jen@christthekingnh.org

#### **Director of Music Ministry:**

Michelle Dokka, michelled@christthekingnh.org

#### **Facilitator of Community Engagement:**

Jeff Litchfield, jeff@christthekingnh.org

#### **Parish Secretary:**

Kathy Planchet, kathy@christthekingnh.org





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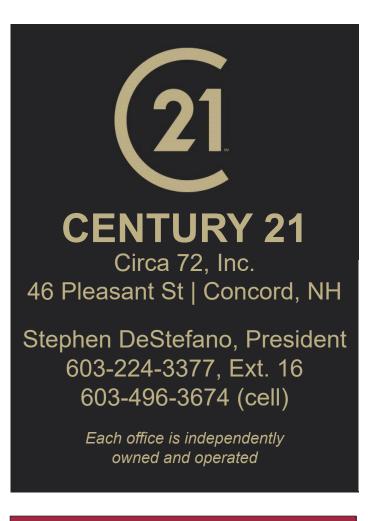
#### MONTHLY OFFERTORY REPORT

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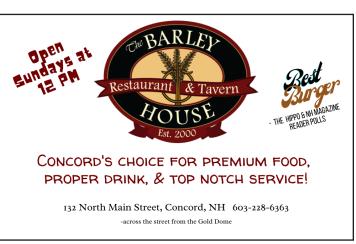
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Offertory	\$8,551.00	\$9,586.00	\$9,670.00	\$5,770.52
Online	\$7,827.72	\$6,262.31	\$5,682.00	\$9,701.67
Total	\$16,378.72	\$15,849.31	\$15,352.00	\$15,532.19



For more information on the parish's online giving program, visit christthekingnh.org/give. To request monthly parish envelopes in the mail, call Kathy Planchet, Parish Secretary, in the parish office at 603.224.2328.







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