



OUR LADY OF  
**LOURDES**  
CATHOLIC PARISH

# THE **LOURDES** **WORD**

FALL 2024



~Fall Theme~  
**“What I Like  
About Our Lady  
of Lourdes  
Parish”**

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## Our Lovely Lady of Lourdes

by Linda Abner

The first thing was the bells. They rang out at all hours over the old neighborhood I’d just moved into, blessing the trees and sidewalks, schools and homes, and all the people living among them. I was enchanted.

Later, when I discovered the ancient reason behind the bells ringing at certain times – calling people to stop what they were doing for just a few minutes, and pray – I was even more enamored. Our Lady’s bells speak without words, calling to our hearts and souls (I missed them sorely when they were out for repairs!).

As a newcomer to this neighborhood, I explored – and discovered the Grotto of Our Lady. Although not yet Catholic, I would come sometimes and just sit, looking at gentle Mary, listening to the music of her fountain, pondering many things. Years later, I still come at times and have introduced my young granddaughter to the sweet pleasure of just being in Mary’s quiet presence (although the granddaughter, at her tender age, is just as happy walking the winding garden path and hiding beneath the branches of the perfect tree beside it).

I love the trees and gardens of Our Lady of Lourdes. They are beautiful works of art, made all the more beautiful by the dedication and faithfulness of the intrepid volunteers who create and tend them. They are a welcoming gift to all who see.

The first time I ever saw the inside of Our Lady of Lourdes was over half a century ago, when I attended a wedding here. I was amazed and inspired by the magnificent beauty of this church, and still am. The medieval design with its soaring ceilings, commanding pillars, stone walls, and majestic altar is indeed something to behold. I imagine angels high in every corner, keeping watch whenever worshipping hearts are here. And I could meditate for hours on the brilliant stained glass windows. How blest we are to have this timeless jewel in which to praise and thank our God!

But beyond flowers and trees and stained glass, are people. And I have found such kindness in the people here. As a nervous, unregistered newcomer to an inquiry session for those interested in Catholicism, I was welcomed warmly by the most gracious leader who bade me “Come in, come in!”, assuring me that my unexpected presence was no problem at all. And at my first ever Mass here, people smiled at this stranger in their pew (it’s amazing how much difference a simple, friendly smile can make). Another time, after a church event, I had many heavy boxes and other things to carry to my car. A wonderful mom, who’d also been helping, summoned her strong teenage sons with a snap of her fingers and viola! Dreaded job was done (I could have kissed her). At the

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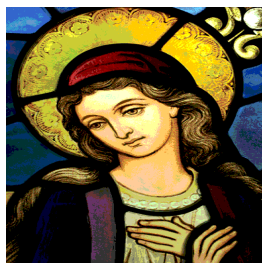
# Our Lovely Lady of Lourdes

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Festivals, I've been consistently impressed by the good humor and kindness of those willing to teach well-meaning "helpers" (like me) who are clueless. And there are so many more examples.

The heart of any church is its people. And I love the good hearts here at Our Lady of Lourdes!



## What I Love About OLL

*by Sally Ann Welch*

I had been a Catholic for only a short time, and my entrance into the faith was at a church in a small town nearby. It did not even have stained glass windows at that time. So, it was rather plain.

The first time I came to Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) was in the mid-1990's. I was greatly impressed by the beauty and architecture of the church, its décor, and the reverence it inspired. And that is only one thing that I love about Our Lady of Lourdes.



At that time, I never dreamed that one day I would actually work here! Yet thankfully here I am.

Since I came to work in the parish office in June of 2015, what has impressed me the most about Our Lady of Lourdes is her people. I plopped into the job of Parish Secretary from out of nowhere, and from my very first day, I have felt welcomed and appreciated.

The people of our parish are kind, giving, and supportive. I have never belonged to a parish that has had so many volunteers! It is wonderful and heart-warming to see the spirit with which our parishioners pitch-in and help however they are able.

I thank you all for welcoming me and making me feel a part of this great parish. Peace and blessings are wished to you all!



# Let Me Count the Ways I Love OLL

by Kate Cabell

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Love for my Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) parish has a back story. It began in 1996 when my husband and I joined St. Bernadette parish. We immediately felt a kinship with our parish family and our pastor who, at the time, was Father Jim Farrell. Our daughter and our grandchildren soon joined us there.

At that time we shared our pastor with Our Lady of Lourdes parish. We considered ourselves sister parishes. When our 6:00 P.M. mass was dropped from St. Bernadette's schedule, we often attended the Saturday evening mass at Our Lady of Lourdes, especially during the summer. Likewise, parishioners of OLL sometimes attended masses and functions at St. Bernadette. I felt strongly the sisterhood of our parishes. Still, there was a keen sense of St. Bernadette being my true home.

In 2000, our parishes, together, held our first CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish) weekend. In spring of 2001, the members of that first weekend presented to the second weekend group. I attended that weekend at OLL. There were members of both parishes, and as we planned to present to the women of the third weekend, our parishes grew closer than ever. I believe we had eight teams in total before we ended our CRHP involvement. My husband and I cooked for many of the weekends. Sometimes weekends were held at OLL and sometimes at St. Bernadette.

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I found myself, as did much of the world, in a very dark place. I was sad, horrified, scared, and lost. I needed my church family. St. Bernadette had a 6:00 P.M. mass on Tuesdays. I couldn't wait to get there. The weeknight masses were usually sparsely attended, but this night it was packed. The comfort I felt the minute I joined with my sisters and brothers of both parishes will never leave me. Church became my true sanctuary.

In the proceeding years, our parishes shared resources, programs, missions, Easter Vigils, Christmas masses, and a pastor. I was comfortable at OLL while still considering St. Bernadette my home.

In 2014, the Archdiocese announced that St. Bernadette would close before year's end. I can't lie, it was a gut punch. We were to merge with Our Lady of Lourdes. I thank God that we had that year's long connection because, while we were stunned at the news, we did have a soft and familiar place to land if we chose to accept it.

Cardinal Joseph Tobin was our Archbishop at that time. He named Father Noah Casey as our new pastor. Father Noah had a strong connection to both parishes as he was in residence when Father Jim was our pastor, and he celebrated masses and preached often. We waited anxiously for weeks to learn who our new pastor would be. For most of us, our joy was palpable when Father Noah was named. Sweet, caring, pastoral Fr. Noah was the perfect fit. A new pastor to facilitate our merge was exactly what was needed. Out with the past and on with the future.

We couldn't have been in better hands. Father Noah planned for a speaker to address how to have a successful merger and still retain our St. Bernadette identity. He planned an outdoor mass and picnic for our two parishes to bring us together in joy. He planned a special mass concelebrated by several former pastors followed by a farewell to St. Bernadette dinner on our final day.

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# Let Me Count the Ways I Love OLL

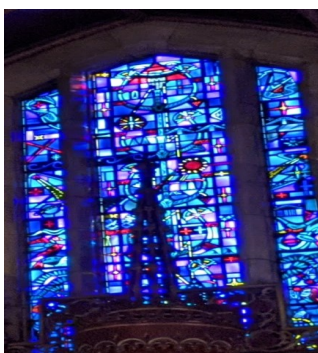
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I think that both parishes stepped up in a major way as we merged, and it went almost seamlessly. We joined ministries, and we were welcomed as fellow parishioners. We brought a new warmth to Our Lady of Lourdes, we were told by the original parishioners.

Everything was going well. We had a lovely Advent and Christmas season, and I loved almost everything about OLL. Shortly thereafter, Father Noah was bowed low by cancer. It was devastating. We hoped that he would have treatment, recover, and return to us. That was not meant to be.

The Archbishop and Our Lady of Lourdes leadership wrapped us in love and care. We were graced with compassionate priests for daily masses, we were blessed beyond measure to have Father Mike Welch agree to come out of retirement and be our administrator until things settled down.

Father Noah was unable to return to us, and he passed away on July 10, 2015. I love Our Lady of Lourdes because we were allowed to have a visitation and vigil service for Father Noah before his Mass of Christian Burial at the Cathedral.



I love Our Lady of Lourdes because we were invited to transfer our statue of St. Bernadette to OLL's parish center. It was received in a special ceremony attended by old and new parishioners.

I love Our Lady of Lourdes because it was decided that the parish center would be named Bernadette Hall. It left me speechless the first time I saw the name above the door on the building.

I love Our Lady of Lourdes because I feel a warm family hug during each service. That is such a comfort to me.

I love Our Lady of Lourdes because when I tell our pastor, Father Rick Ginther, that a certain mass felt like a warm family hug, he responds that he is happy to be a part of the family, and I know he's sincere. I know he's sincere because he shows his love for us in everything he does.

He shows his love when during mass he tenderly leads the servers when they are in need of guidance. His love is on display when he attends programs with us when he is not presenting. His love for us was on display when he put off his retirement just to spend extended time shepherding us.

I love Our Lady of Lourdes because of our music director, Greg Martin. He has gifted us with diverse musical experiences that few are privileged to receive.

I could continue counting the ways I love Our Lady of Lourdes. But there is only so much space in this publication, and I have far exceeded my allotment.



# My Lourdes Words

by Michele Oertel

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After 63 years of calling Our Lady of Lourdes “my parish,” it is good to sit down and contemplate on what I like about this urban parish in a historic neighborhood. Several thoughts immediately came to mind. One is a result of the recent enhancements to the church itself. It is so pleasant to be outside at the top of the hour and hear the bells of Our Lady of Lourdes strike out the time. What makes the sounds even more beautiful is when I am outside at night as the bells ring. When this opportunity arises, I look to the north of our house and with the new lighting system view the beautiful steeple against the dark sky. What a wonderful reminder of how blessed we are to be members of this church family, and to just think about, despite my character defects, that God loves me.

One of my favorite quotes from Pope Francis is when he describes the church as a field hospital. The Holy Father writes, “...what the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful, it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle.” That pretty well describes how I view Our Lady of Lourdes parish. It is a field hospital for sinners. I come with failings which result in not living the gospel of Jesus. There is disappointment in myself and fear about this hard truth. I am in need of the strength to stand up to the rigors of the cross. Our Lady of Lourdes parish is my source of the power to overcome my disappointments. It is the source of encouragement to live the gospel. Regrettably, I go out into the world and sin some more. Then it’s time to return to the field hospital at 5333 East Washington Street.

I know I’m not the only one in this situation. It is the community of parish leaders, friends, and neighbors who help us recognize that we can’t do it alone, that I am in the same boat as others: “A sinner’s boat.” We are all in solidarity, even if we don’t know it.

For these reasons and others, I love the entrance song “*Gather Us In*,” by Marty Haugen. What wonderful theology it is! What a wonderful awakening to what Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is!

Here in this place the new light is streaming  
now is the darkness vanished away,  
see in this space our fears and our dreaming  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,  
gather us in, the blind and the lame,  
call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a myst’ry,  
we are the old who yearn for your face,  
we have been sung throughout all of hist’ry,  
called to be light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,  
gather us in, the proud and the strong.  
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,  
give us the courage to enter the song.

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Here we will take the wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth,  
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
call us anew to be salt for the earth.

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you,  
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion,  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

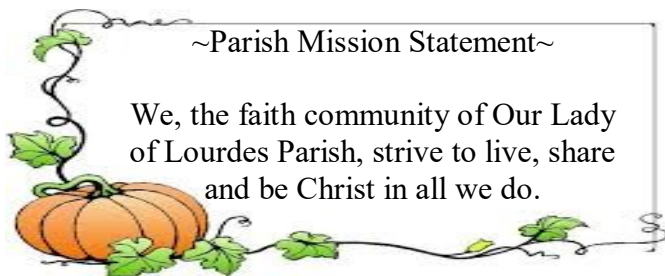
Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven, light years away-  
here in this place the new light is shining,  
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever,  
gather us in and make us your own,  
gather us in, all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.



~Parish Mission Statement~

We, the faith community of Our Lady  
of Lourdes Parish, strive to live, share  
and be Christ in all we do.



*If you enjoy writing and would like to submit an article,  
poem, etc., then please see the last page of this publication.*

# The Parish: From God's Heart to Our Hearts

by Noah Casey

*The Lourdes Word Committee feels that our readers may be interested in the following article written by Fr. Noah for the Winter 2014 edition:*

A Parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its proper pastor under the authority of the diocesan bishop.. This short paragraph is taken from of Code of Canon Law. It is a “bare bones” definition of a parish. The concept of the parish has developed over the centuries reflecting religious, political and cultural shifts. The early church was experienced in smaller communities of the faithful gathering around a bishop, a few deacons and priests. As the church grew, more communities developed and called for the expansion of clergy. With the Edict of Milan in 315 AD, Emperor Constantine recognized and legitimized the public display of religious commitment. Parishes gathered around larger cities while the faithful residing in rural areas found sacramental care around local kings and queens. Monasteries became centers for learning and spiritual care. The reformation caused the disruption and separation of many parish communities. Poverty, illiteracy, politics, war and famine often influenced the practice of the Catholic faith in many communities.

The development of the modern parish found its roots in part in the need for the establishment of certain geographical boundaries erecting a parish community over which a pastor is appointed by the local bishop for the “care of souls”. The Catholic church in the United States developed around parish churches that offered support and encouragement to newly arrived immigrants who sought out the familiarity of languages, family members, schooling and work. As neighborhoods and small towns were identified, parishes took on a greater significance. In 2014, the Roman Catholic while still having Canonical boundaries, welcomes persons from a wide variety of communities.. With greater mobility, and a greater variety of non agrarian employment, the contemporary rural person might be driving past two or three other parishes to get to work, go shopping, seeing a doctor, etc. Similar experiences took place in cities. Many parishioners walked to church in both the parishes of St. Bernadette of Our Lady of Lourdes. My own grandfather thought nothing of walking every Sunday morning from Grant Avenue on the far west end of the parish to Lourdes for Mass, and then walk home. (Most likely whistling an Irish tune all the while.)

Whatever the reason might be, there are certain characteristics of parish life that remain important in any parish setting. First, the parish is the center for **worship and prayer**. The sacramental life of the church is the network of the spiritual life for persons in the community of faith. At the heart of this life, is the celebration of the Eucharist. We are a pilgrim people gathered around the Table of the Lord, not only eating and drinking of the Lord's Body and Blood, but becoming this mystery that we celebrate. The Eucharist is the core of our Catholic identity. The sacraments mirroring the significant transitions of our lives, knit us together in the mystery of Christ dwelling among us. As we become the mystery we celebrate, we are sent into the world nurtured and nourished to be servants of the Word made Flesh, and return again bringing together the richness of lives lived for the Lord and building up the Kingdom of God.

***The Word of God proclaimed and preached*** flows from the Scriptures to be a “lamp for our path and a light for our steps.” The Word of God first in the flesh of His Son, Jesus, has always been the message. It is a message that demands to be heard, to leap off the written page. Owing to the fact that the Word was first an experience of Jesus, and then shared in oral tradition, the Word was incarnate in the hearts of many early Christian communities who gathered eagerly, sometimes at the expense of their very lives. As with the sacraments, we become the message we have heard taken into our hearts and sewn there to produce a harvest of the message to “seek first the Kingdom of God and all else afterwards.”

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## The Parish: From God's Heart to Our Hearts *(continued from pg 8)*

If we pray with the Scriptures daily, if we prepare for the Sunday Eucharist by first reading the Lectionary selections, the Word is more like to find fertile soil in our souls. The unfortunate comment, "I don't get anything out of Mass," might well be rooted in the lazy approach to seeking our God's message in the Bible. The dynamics are not complex, "the Word comes to our hearts inviting us to seek the Lord while He may be found."

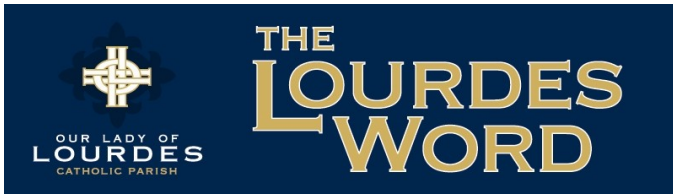
Evangelization, RCIA [OCIA], religious instruction, bible study, and adult formation allow the Word to lift off the page of the Bible and become in lives lived in faith.

**Service** affords us the opportunity to put into practice the life of Word and Sacrament that we have received. Service of any kind in the name of the Lord Jesus puts flesh and bones on the mystery of God in our midst. We are baptized into the life of God through, with and in Jesus. It is no mistake nor accident that the washing of the feet takes place during the Last Supper. Jesus declares in interrupting the supper "as I have done for you so must you do for one another." Service is not an option, it is a necessary outgrowth of making the Catholic faith our own. What is planted in the heart must find a harvest of justice and peace in the deeds and behaviors of our lives. We cannot have one without the other.

Saint Vincent de Paul Society parish outreach programs, assisting with catechesis, liturgical ministries and many of the less than glamorous needs of the parish all contribute to the health and truth of our faith.

(My reflection is not intended to be complete, but a point to begin for the reflection and prayer. May God bring to completion the good work he has done in us!)





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Our quarterly publication of *The Lourdes Word* is an attempt for us, the followers of Christ, to reflect publicly on our faith journey. Each edition has a specific theme. Contained in this issue are reflections on “*What I Like About Our Lady of Lourdes Parish.*”



We invite the parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes to submit writings which they feel will help address the theme of the next publication. All submissions will be reviewed by the publication committee. Please note that due to space requirements, editing may be necessary. Therefore, please limit your submission to 525 words or fewer. The theme for the next edition will be, “*Forgiveness.*” The edited copy will be returned to the author for review before final publication. Please feel free to submit writings through the parish secretary or to [markchudson@gmail.com](mailto:markchudson@gmail.com).

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