



Around the Parish

MAY NEWSLETTER

2024

Faith on the line in Iraq and at home



“There are no atheists in foxholes,” the World War II adage goes. Certainly Catholics who have faced war in Iraq and their families say that the experience has strengthened faith both in foxholes and on the home front. These eight war stories provide snapshots into the lives of those most intimately affected by the Iraq War—soldiers, mothers, a chaplain, and an Iraqi refugee. Their faith may be manifested by a crucifix hanging in a Humvee, a Chaldean Mass in Jordan, or a peace protest in Chicago, but they are united by a trust in God even in the worst of situations. After five years of fighting, war fills their daily prayers and faith is an essential part of their armor.

“I really hope somebody is praying”

Staff Sergeant Joseph Lemay, currently at Fort Stewart, Georgia, grew up in a military family. He is married and has three teenage children. Lemay served in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 and has been to Iraq three times.

I’ve had my ins and outs with the church. But my family, we have a pretty good faith. My dad is a permanent deacon. When I’d get to talk to him, he’d say, “We’re praying for you.” I’d say, “Keep doing it. It’s working.”

When I get a letter in the mail that says, “We’re all praying for you,” that means something. There are certain

things that happen to you over there where you realize that prayer is helping. I see a lot of families crumble under the stress of this, and the fact that mine hasn’t is due to prayer.

I also pray for my family. For the last five years my wife has been basically a single mom trying to raise three teenagers while going to school and working. We never really thought I’d go into combat, but my wife has still been great.

In the hours just before the initial invasion, we had rolled our convoy over near the Iraq border. It was dark, and to catch some sleep I crawled up on the canvas top of a supply truck.

About 4:30 a.m. I woke to the sound of rumbling. It was pitch black, but I could see an armada of helicopters and missiles flying into Iraq. I didn’t think I was going to live through it. At that moment, you think, “I really hope somebody is praying for me.”

I was in the middle of nowhere, so far away from home, lying on this truck wondering, “What in hell did you get yourself into?” You say a few Our Fathers right then.

I never wanted being in Iraq to be an excuse for having a deeper faith. I see people that have never gone to church and they find God all of a sudden. Then when they come home, their newfound faith doesn’t stick. I never wanted that to be me.

Trying to forget

Specialist Franklin Vera served with the 11-B Infantry Troop as a gunner on top of a Humvee. He and his family are members of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Chicago.

War was not what I had expected; it’s not what you see on TV. I had imagined we would be sweeping the streets and actually capturing “bad guys.” But I ended up transporting food and supplies and people. Somehow that didn’t really seem like that much in terms

of making a difference for the Iraqis, changing things in the country for the better. But overall we were making some progress in Baghdad.

I’m trying to forget some of the interactions with the Iraqis. We were trying to protect the civilians. Not all of them are bad—most of them are just trying to provide for their families. Some seemed to put all their faith in us to change their country for them, while many others didn’t seem to trust us. Some of the ones fighting, they think they are just defending their country, but they go overboard.

We had a few incidents when our trucks ran into bombs, but thankfully nobody got hurt or killed. When the bombs went off, my mind just went blank. Later I kept thinking that could have been it, that could have taken my life away. But I wasn’t really so worried about my own life but more about trying to make a difference.

I’m on leave now, but hopefully I don’t have to go back over there again.

The hardest thing for me was being away from my family. I just kept going on, trying not to think too much about the war, doing my job until I could come back. I talked a lot with friends and would stay in touch with phone calls, e-mails, and sometimes letters.

My family would always tell me they were praying for me, and I would pray quite a few times myself.



Via: uscatholic.org

SACRED HEART CHURCH

Brandon Lee (Vincent De Paul) Moris
Soraya Solano (John the Baptist) Marquez
Tara Beth (Katharine Drexel) Witman
Susan Beth (Elizabeth of Galilee) Pichini
Joseph Thomas (Christopher) Lombardo

EASTER VIGIL Confirmation



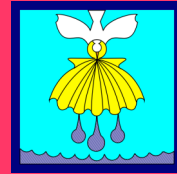
Clean Out Your Cupboards to Help Those In Need!

The weekend of **May 18/May 19** the St. Vincent de Paul Society will be collecting canned goods and non-perishables for Kennedy House. Please bring your donations along to Mass and see the volunteers collecting at the main entrance to Sacred Heart Church. Cash donations for Kennedy House also accepted.

Poor Box

Not sure if you have ever noticed - but on both sides of the narthex, there is a Poor Box for collection of money donations to help those in need! Please consider making a donation weekly or periodically to help the St Vincent de Paul Society support our Greater Reading area neighbors with basic needs.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



Emerita Banta

Born November 20, 2023

Daughter of Matthew and
Marlissa Banta



Hayden Ann Nelson

Born October 5, 2023

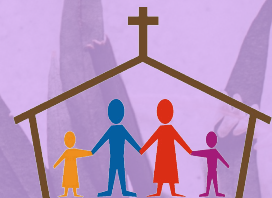
Daughter of Andrew and Casey
Nelson



Miles James Napolitano

Born December 13, 2023

Son of Matthew Napolitano
and Brianna Donahue



WELCOME

TO THE PARISH

Mr. & Mrs. Anthony & Kara
Piscani



Mrs. Emma Almero

Third Quarter Honor Roll

Distinguished Honors

Freshmen

Casey Changco
Riley Knepp

First Honors

Juniors

Antonia Antolini
Carter Gasperak
Isabelle Gasperak
Nathan Hnatishion
Ava Smith

Sophomores

Dylan Strock

Freshmen

Ilaria Cirandine
Vivian Golden

Second Honors

Juniors

Francesca Ditsky
Mary Esterbrook

Sophomores

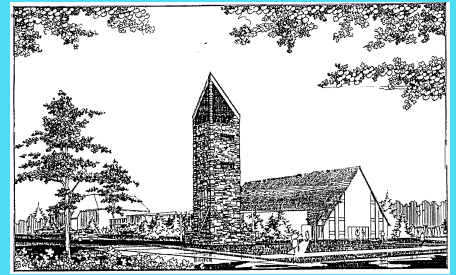
Coral Abreu Rosario
William Chi

Freshmen

Sofia Cirandine



UPCOMING EVENTS



First Holy Communion

SH Religious Ed.

Sacred Heart Church

May 4th, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

Spaghetti Dinner

Knights of Columbus

Victor Emmanuel II

May 1st, 2024 @ 4:30—7:00 p.m.

Scuba Vacation Bible School

SH Religious Ed.

Sacred Heart Parish

June 17th-21st, 2024 @ 9:00-12:00
Noon

Parishes Italian Family Picnic

Sacred Heart & Holy Rosary

Victor Emmanuell II

August 16, 2024

Swing & a Prayer Golf Outing

Knights of Columbus

Reading Country Club

August 16, 2024

SAVE THE DATE



August 16th, 2024



SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

Sacred Heart Parish Religious Education Program

2024 – 2025 School Year Registration Form

Grades 1st through 8th

P.O. Box 6217, Reading, PA 19610 Phone: 610-374-5430

Email: sacredheartreled17@gmail.com

This Registration Form is to be completed and returned to the Religious Education Office with the registration fee(s) and a copy of your child/children's Baptismal Certificate if your child is new to the Program.

Family Last Name _____ Home Phone _____ School District Sept. 24-25 _____
Street _____ City/State _____ Zip _____
Father's Complete Name _____ Religion _____
Father's Occupation _____ Work Phone # _____
Father's Cell Phone# _____
Mother's Name (First, **Maiden**, Last) _____ Religion _____
Mother's Occupation _____ Work Phone # _____
Marital Status _____ Mother's Cell Phone# _____

For emergencies we will be using your E-mail address. Please provide below:

E-Mail Address (Please Print) _____
Person to contact in case of emergency _____ Phone # _____

Please complete all information for each child registering:

First Name (No Nicknames)	Last Name	Boy/ Girl	Grade	Rel. Ed. Level	Date of Birth	Health/Behavioral/Learning Issues. Please list all that apply.

Registration Fee: \$95.00 per child, until April 30, 2024, thereafter \$120.00 per child. Sacrament Fees for First Holy Communion and Confirmation are due with registration.

If there is serious financial difficulty, please contact the Religious Education Office or Monsignor DeSantis.

- ▶ All 2nd Level - Holy Communion Sacrament Fee: \$30.00 per child.
- ▶ All 7th Level - Confirmation Sacrament Fee: \$30.00 per child.

Office Use Only: Date Received: _____ # of Students _____ ☐ ☐
Check # _____ Total Amount Received: _____ Sacrament Fees: HC Confirmation



Our next scheduled event is our **Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Bake Sale at Victor Emmanuel II on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, from 4:30pm to 7:00pm.** As in the past, this too will be a Dine-In or Take-Out event. Ticket sales will begin after Mass at both churches on the weekends of April 20/21, and 27/28. Dinners are \$12 per meal and include Spaghetti and Meatballs, Salad, Bread & Butter. Cash bar is available for beverages. Your ticket stub will also be entered into a variety of raffles for prizes, and a 50/50 drawing is also available. We hope to see you there! Anyone willing to bake should see/contact Randy Bjorken at 610-375-6229, or just bring your baked goods to the dinner. Proceeds from this event helps to continue our Council's Mission to benefit both our parishes. Thank you.

Recitation of the Rosary is now on the weekly schedule, and we hope you can join us on Sunday mornings after the 9:30am Mass in the church and at 5:30pm before Mass on Tuesday evenings. All are welcome!

Important 2024 K of C dates for your calendar:

MAY 1 - Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Bake Sale at Victor Emmanuel II - 4:30pm to 7:00pm

MAY 2 - Officer's Meeting – IHM Room 7:00 p.m.

MAY 12 – MOTHER'S DAY

MAY 16 - Membership Meeting – IHM Room 7:00-8:30 p.m.;
Rosary at 6:30 p.m. before the meeting.

MAY 23 - LifeLine of Berks County Banquet, Doubletree in Reading

More Events:

SAVE THE DATE - Annual Swing and a Prayer Golf Outing – Friday, August 16, 2024

August 11 – ANNUAL PARISHES ITALIAN PICNIC @ Victor Emmanuel II - 12 Noon—3:00 p.m.

The Knights of Columbus Monsignor Bornemann Council membership is open to all practicing Catholic male adults, aged eighteen and over, who wish to serve their parish and community. Meetings are the third Thursday of the month. To join, contact John Sylvester at 610-451-6980, or go to bornknights.org and fill out the Contact Form located on our website OR signup directly using the online KofC link.



**CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR WEDDING:**

***Adrian Rodriguez
and
Kate Parisi***

***Married
May 11th, 2024***



**OUR
CONDOLENCES
TO:**

The Kingree Family and
Friends on the passing
of:

Constantine Kingree

4-15-2024

