

# PROCLAIM

CHRIST THE KING PARISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022 | VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 9

## *Coming Home*

Heather & Scott Newton share their experience of RCIA and coming into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil

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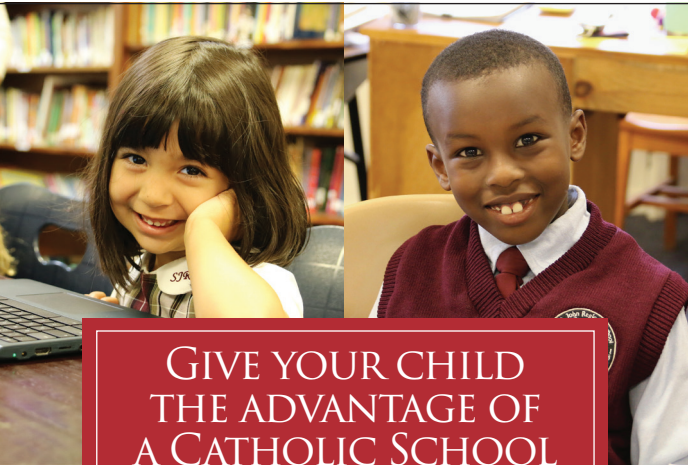
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*Dear Friends,*

The season of Lent is upon us. Every year, I feel like we barely recover from Christmas before Ash Wednesday arrives! Lent is such a special time in the Church. It is a time for reflection, penance, and sacrifice. The fruit of our sacrifices can be powerful, leading towards conversion. Conversion means growth; it means change. Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving we are changing to be more like Jesus.

This journey to holiness, Christ-likeness, is important for our own salvation. Yet, it is also important for the salvation of the world. Yes, we need Jesus, but our world needs Jesus too! And in His great, mysterious way, Jesus has chosen to be present in this world through us. So let us all embrace this season of deeper conversion with a renewed spirit of love for Jesus, ourselves, and our human family.

I would ask that you keep in prayer four members of our community who are themselves in a process of conversion. We have two candidates (baptized non-Catholic Christians) and

two catechumens (unbaptized) who are preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil this year. We greatly look forward to Liz, DJ, Alex, and Taylor joining us at the Eucharistic table. You'll understand a little more of the process they are undergoing as you read our cover story this month, shared by Heather and Scott Newton.

This year I have chosen as a theme for Lent "Cultivating A.C.T.S." I have always found the acronym – Adoration Contrition Thanksgiving Supplication – helpful in guiding my prayer. I also think that the analogy of cultivating growth in a garden is apt for growing our prayer life. It takes fertile soil and careful tending for our spiritual life to grow deep roots. I look forward to breaking open this theme with you over the coming weeks as we journey towards Easter together.

Almsgiving is traditionally understood as giving voluntary contributions to help the poor. Many in our parish community

give regularly to the Christ the King Food Pantry and Homeless Outreach Ministry. This month's *Ministry Profile* on page 8 highlights an extraordinary gift that will help our Food Pantry better serve the community.

This past fall, Christ the King Parish had our annual Stewardship Renewal. We are pleased to report the results of this initiative that calls us prayerfully to consider the use of our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. You will find the report below. Thank you for your generous response.

My prayer for all of you this Lent is that you continue to choose the path of conversion to Jesus, who is "the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6) May we all be intentional in our practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in order to make Jesus more present to a world desperately in need of His love.

Yours in Christ,

*Father Rich*

## Report of Annual Stewardship Renewal 2021 Time, Talent, and Treasure

Time and Talent		Treasure/Sacrificial Giving	
<b>102</b>	Parishioners Volunteering for a New Ministry	<b>185</b>	Numbers of Responses
<b>42</b>	Parishioners Volunteering for the First Time	<b>\$1,799</b>	Weekly Offertory Increase
<b>958</b>	Volunteer Positions Being Served	<b>\$93,562</b>	Annual Offertory Increase
<b>486</b>	Ministry Volunteers as of January 1, 2022	<b>\$85,100</b>	Contributions to Capital Projects

72% of those attending weekly Mass participating as volunteers

The Stewardship Renewal was done in October-November 2021.



Father Richard Roberge, Pastor at Christ the King Parish



# Merciful Love

*God's love is unconditional. His mercy is never ending.* Did you read this and remain unmoved? Have you heard this so many times that these words no longer hold the immense weight that they should? If you answered "Yes," I hear you. But, recently, these words burst to life for me in a very different and unexpected way.

I caught my son in a lie. Two lies, in fact. Now, I won't go too deep into the story, but I'll tell you they were fairly small lies, but lies nonetheless. I asked him, "Are you lying to me?" He answered, "No." As he answered, his body betrayed him in the way of flushed cheeks. We looked at each other for a moment and I said, "You have a tell, you know." "What's a 'tell'?" he asked. "A tell is when you do something unconsciously that tells of your attempted deception. Your tell is that your cheeks flush." He pursed his lips, let out a sigh and said, "My cheeks are flushing."

"Yup," I replied. He looked at me with welling eyes and a quivering lip. In a moment the tears came. "I'm sorry," he said, shakily. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry I lied."

*God's love is unconditional. His mercy is never ending.* These words blew through my mind as I simply took my son in for a moment. I didn't yell or even speak sternly. I just looked at my crying son, knowing he truly was sorry for lying to me and I didn't need to do or say much more. I just let love and mercy flow through my mama-heart. "You know you're better and bigger than lies and deceit," I said softly, cupping his face in my hands. "You know I love you and I'll forgive you every time, but this isn't something I want to forgive often. I am your safe place, trust me with the truth and I'll trust you to tell it."

I found myself reflecting on this and it made me wonder if this is how God feels when we

come to him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation with true repentance and contrite hearts. I imagined myself in my son's place, (because, c'mon, we've all been him) crying and kneeling before God the Father in confession. I imagined him saying, "I love you. I forgive you. You're better and bigger than that sin. Trust me. I want so much more for you."

Confession is a healing sacrament, not a shameful place. I try to go to at least once a month and I give my children the choice to go also (I don't force them). More often than not, they choose to join me and I've seen them leave the confessional, come back to me and say, "Ahh, I feel better." Making Confession a normal practice in my family's life is so beneficial. It's literally right up there with getting enough rest, eating well, and exercising. One of the most important aspects of my vocation as a mom is to look after the wellbeing of my children – body *and* soul.

So as we journey into Lent and come upon the Easter Season, I invite you to come with me to confession (I won't force you). I promise you that no matter how long it's been, God the Father is waiting there for you with unconditional love and never ending mercy. ♦



Lomanno

Jen Albee, Coordinator of Young Disciples at Christ the King

# Is the Eucharist really the Body and Blood of Jesus?

A remarkably low number of Catholics today believe in transubstantiation, that the bread and wine presented at Mass truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the act of consecration. According to a 2019 Pew Research study, “Nearly seven-in-ten Catholics (69%) say they personally believe that during Catholic Mass, the bread and wine used in Communion ‘are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.’” This leaves only one third of Catholics today believing in transubstantiation.

I too struggled to accept this complex and strange doctrine for many years. However, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’” (CCC 1324) With the Eucharist playing such a foundational role in our faith, it is worth exploring what evidence exists for belief in transubstantiation.

First, we turn to the Scriptures. As Catholics, we believe that Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. In the Gospel of Matthew, we read, “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:26-28) Jesus even calls himself the Bread of Life in John’s Gospel.

In my journey towards belief, I was greatly compelled by the long-standing Tradition that is

the doctrine of transubstantiation. Rather than focusing on what makes sense to me in the 2000s AD, I focused on what was taught by the churches the Apostles founded. The words of Saint John Chrysostom, who lived in the 300s AD, reveal an early belief in transubstantiation as he declares, “It is not man that causes the things offered to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but he who was crucified for us.” It was only during the Protestant Reformation that the doctrine of transubstantiation was even challenged.

Beyond Scripture and Tradition, one of the most persuasive arguments in favor of transubstantiation is the collection of over one hundred Eucharistic miracles that have taken place around the world. Ascension Press author Jeannette Williams details a miracle that took place in Lanciano, Italy. “In 750 AD, a priest experienced a terrible temptation to doubt the True Presence while he was saying Mass. As he pronounced the words of consecration, the host and the wine transformed into what appeared to be flesh and blood. In 1970, more than 1,200 years later, the archbishop of Lanciano, with Rome’s approval, requested a thorough scientific examination of the miraculous relics by Dr. Edward Linoli, director of the hospital at Arezzo and professor of anatomy, histology, chemistry, and clinical microscopy.” (ascensionpress.com)

His results revealed the substances to truly be human blood and human heart tissue. Both substances were living, as if taken that day, with no signs of preservation.

Equally astounding are the similarities between Eucharistic miracles. For example, the blood type has been the same from all samples and the flesh is repeatedly found to be heart tissue.

Finally, and more intimately, we can find evidence of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist through our personal encounters with him, as we receive communion or spend time in Eucharistic adoration, a practice of praying before the Eucharist as it is exposed on the altar. Ultimately, I became convinced of this teaching through an overwhelming, undeniable experience of the presence of Jesus in adoration. Concord is blessed to have a perpetual adoration chapel on the campus of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. If you struggle with this belief, know that you are not alone, but I invite you to explore the evidence and seek the truth with an open heart, perhaps at adoration. ♦



Haley Judd, Coordinator of Adult Discipleship at Christ the King



# Coming Home

Heather & Scott Newton share their experience of RCIA and coming into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil

by Michael Clark | Photography by Charlene Graham

For many of us, the Catholic Church has been our spiritual home since birth. Some, however, join the Church as adults and as such have the blessing of knowing in a special way just what it feels like to “come home.”

Heather and Scott Newton had this experience. Throughout their lives, God took them on different journeys that both converged in the same place: the Catholic Church. Scott’s conversion experience actually started years ago. Although not raised in a Catholic household, he always felt an attraction to the Church. “Internally, I’ve always been drawn to the Catholic Church,” he says. “To me it’s always been the Mother Church.” In fact, the appeal of the

Church was so strong for Scott that in his younger years he actually felt drawn to Catholic priesthood. “It was ironic, considering I was never raised around a Catholic church and didn’t have any Catholic friends.” Given this longstanding interest, Scott reflects, “joining the Church was a lifelong culmination on my own road of spiritual development.”

Heather’s spiritual path took a number of twists and turns. Although baptized Congregationalist, Heather says, “I was not necessarily raised in a religious home and I never really attended church growing up. However, I did have faith and I believed in Jesus.” Later in life, she experienced a serious challenge to

her faith. “In 2007, I had a medical event that made me abandon my belief; it made me abandon Christ. Over time, I began to experience my faith in Jesus returning. In a conversation with Scott, I said, ‘I need to go back to the church.’” At first, her plan was straightforward. “I was going to go back to the Congregational church because that’s what I knew.” Scott, inspired by his lifelong interest, had another suggestion. “We decided to give Catholicism a try,” he says.

With the decision made, Heather and Scott attended a Sunday Mass at Christ the King Parish in 2020. The effect of this Mass was very profound for both of them. Scott says, “Coming to Mass felt like home to me and the spirituality it represented was a perfect fit.” Heather too was deeply affected. “I remember at the end I actually felt an embrace,” she says, “I just started sobbing.” Scott adds, “I knew I was home. That’s exactly where I was supposed to be.”

Among the elements of the Mass that were particularly affecting was Father Rich’s homily. “The message he was providing in his homily was just right on target,” says Scott.

From that moment, they knew they wanted to join the Church, and shortly thereafter began the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) process at Christ the King. Since Heather had already received past instruction in Christianity, much of the material covered in the RCIA sessions was familiar to her. For Scott, the lessons in the program brought some surprises. “It kind of overwhelms you a little bit at first because there’s a lot to learn,” he says. “This learning experience was eye-opening because I found that often what you think you know, you don’t.”

Just as their own personal



feet. I could feel the static climbing up through my body until it hit my shoulders.” This incredibly powerful moment filled her with a grace that allowed her to have the courage to face the surgery. “It was almost like I was actually eager to get underway with the surgery,” she says. For her, the experience was further confirmation of Jesus working through the Church’s sacraments. She reflects, “If you didn’t have faith already, that experience would be an undeniable mark of faith.”

“Life as a Catholic brings a sense of peace,” Scott says. Indeed, living by faith in God’s love allows us to bring our challenges to him, regardless of how difficult they might be. Scott says, “I don’t worry as much as I used to.” Heather concurs. “When you go to Mass, you walk in with your shoulders heavy with the burdens from the week and when you leave you’re like clean laundry,” she says.

For Heather and Scott, the experience of RCIA, culminating in the Easter Vigil, truly brought them home. ♦

journeys to the faith were different from each other, so their respective processes of entering the Church were different. Since Heather had already been baptized, she was to enter the Church as a candidate; since Scott had not been baptized, he entered as a catechumen.

On the night of April 3, 2021, they entered into full communion with the Church at the Easter Vigil. Heather says, “The experience of the Easter Vigil was absolutely amazing.” What was particularly stirring for her was the reaction from the parishioners. “Talk about being welcomed into a family! To have the entire congregation stand and clap made me feel so welcomed. The ceremony itself was absolutely breathtaking,” says Heather. “I had never been through anything like it. It was the most amazing experience I had ever encountered aside from my own wedding.”

Scott, too, was moved by the beauty of the Easter Vigil liturgy. “I like the ceremonial aspect of the Catholic faith,” he says. “I like the Mass and the whole orchestration of it. I find that fascinating.” Because Scott was a catechumen, he received the Sacrament of Baptism at the Vigil. Heather

recalls, “When I was watching Scott go up and get baptized, I was in tears. I knew I was watching a monumental moment. It was amazing to see him enter this new stage of his life.”

Being a member of the Catholic Church comes with many blessings. Heather relates a story about receiving the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick before going in for surgery. “I cried while being anointed. I could actually feel what felt like static start in my





“even helping her to open jars and other small tasks. He came in and visited with her just days before she passed away.”

“She did support many charities in her life, including the food pantry here, and St. Jude’s Hospital,” shared Ann. Considering Theresa’s humble lifestyle, however, it was a surprise for many after her passing to find out that she had left one million dollars to the Christ the King Food Pantry. With this incredibly generous gift, the Food Pantry might finally be able to find a suitable home.

Though no plans have been formalized, discussions have started on how to move forward. “We want to be prudent and responsible in using this gift well,” says Father Rich, “but there is certainly an undeniable need for better pantry facilities.”

Theresa Downing, through her generosity and faith, has given the Food Pantry a great gift. We pray for God’s direction that it may be used to better serve the clients of our Christ the King Food Pantry for many more decades to come. ♦

# Generosity & Faith

By Angela Glendinning

Christ the King Food Pantry (previously St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry) has been serving the poor, unemployed, underemployed, and refugees in Concord and surrounding areas for over 40 years. They provide meals for over 1,200 people each month. This corporal work of mercy, feeding the hungry, is made possible through the ongoing generosity of parishioners and other supporters, who give their time and money for this ministry.

In all its years of serving the hungry, the Food Pantry has sought a more permanent home. From its humble beginnings of operating off the rectory back sunporch, then moving twice more before settling into its current location, the pantry has struggled with storage, space, and accessibility for both its clients and volunteers. It looks like that may be about to change...

Prior to her passing last year, Theresa Downing was a faithful

member of Christ the King Parish and a loyal supporter of the Food Pantry ministry. “She led a simple life,” says Ann her friend, neighbor, and fellow teacher. “She was private and quiet. She was also a wonderful pianist.”

Theresa had deep roots in Concord and her local neighborhood. She was baptized and received her confirmation at Saint John the Evangelist Parish as a child. Right up until the day she died, Theresa lived in the house in which her parents had raised her and her sister, Ellen. She taught second grade at Conant School, just down the street from her house, for over 20 years until her retirement in the late 1980s.

After the passing of her sister in 2013, Theresa had no family in the immediate area. However, she had formed friendships with those in her neighborhood, including the local postman. “Chuck would come in and visit with Theresa every once in a while,” Ann recalls,



Theresa Downing died in 2021 and left a bequest of one million dollars to the Christ the King Food Pantry.



**MARCH 2022****March 2: Ash Wednesday**

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence, meaning a person should abstain from meat and eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. This is not a holy day of obligation. Mass and distribution of ashes will be available at 9:00 am, 12:10 pm, and 7:00 pm. (There will be no monthly adoration tonight.)

**March 4: Fridays During Lent**

On Fridays in Lent, we are asked to abstain from meat. Also, Stations of the Cross will be prayed in the church at 5:30 pm.

**March 6: Encounter**

All high school-aged teens are welcome to Encounter! Encounter is a teen-led discussion group where we can learn about the Catholic faith. We also have a lot of fun together! We meet every Sunday from 12:30-2:00 pm in Barry Hall. Get connected! Email [encounter@christthekingnh.org](mailto:encounter@christthekingnh.org).

**March 7: Miraculous Medal**

Join us every Monday night at 5:45 pm in the church for the Miraculous Medal Novena. All are welcome!

**March 9: Handchime Choir**

This is a multi-generational group open to ages 9 to 99. If you can count to four, know your left from your right, and can see in color, you have all the skills you need to be in this group. The handchime choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30 pm in the choir loft.

**March 11 & 13: Emmaus**

The theme for the year is "We Believe: Understanding the Nicene Creed." This month, we will be discussing "One Baptism: The Role of the Church." For more information

and to register, visit [christthekingnh.org/emmaus](http://christthekingnh.org/emmaus).

**March 12: Men's Ministry**

All men are welcome to come together for coffee and conversation! We meet in the IHM room on the 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month at 8:00 am. For more information, email [menofctk@gmail.com](mailto:menofctk@gmail.com).

**March 16: Lenten Book Study**

The Women's Ministry is offering a lenten study of Sister Miriam James Heidland's new book RESTORE. Discussion groups will meet March 16-April 15: Wednesdays at 9:00 am, Fridays at 1:00 pm, and on Zoom Wednesdays at 7:30 pm. For more information, email [ctkwwp20@gmail.com](mailto:ctkwwp20@gmail.com).

**March 31: Discipleship Course**

"Going Into The Deep - What is Your True Identity? Who Are You To God?" is a 9-week adult in-depth study of the Catholic Faith presented by Mary Parker. Meetings will be held on Thursdays at 6:30 pm. For more information, email [haley@christthekingnh.org](mailto:haley@christthekingnh.org).

**APRIL 2022****April 11: Day of Reconciliation**

On the Monday of Holy Week, Father Rich will offer additional confession times. Confessions will be heard in the church confessional at 11:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:00-2:00 pm, and 5:00-7:00 pm.

**April 13: Tenebrae Service**

Tenebrae means "darkness" and refers to the singing of the Divine Office in the days leading up to Easter Sunday. We will hold our Tenebrae Service at 7:30 pm in the church. Readings and psalms, along with music pieces, will help you to prayerfully prepare for the Triduum.

**April 14: Holy Thursday**

Today, we commemorate the Last

Supper of Jesus Christ. Mass is available at 7:00 pm in the church. After Mass, adoration will be available until 10:00 pm in the Parish Activity Center.

**April 15: Good Friday**

On Good Friday, we gather to commemorate the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus Christ. At 12:10 pm, Stations of the Cross will be prayed in the church. Services will be offered at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm in the church. Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence, meaning a person should eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal.

**April 16: Easter Vigil**

Tonight, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter Vigil will be at 8:00 pm in the church.

**April 17: Easter Sunday**

Today, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mass will be available in the church at 7:00 am. Mass will also be available at the Capitol Center for the Arts, 44 South State Street, at 10:00 am.

**April 24-26: Parish Retreat**

All parishioners and friends are welcome to this year's Parish Retreat which will be on the topic of the Eucharist. The retreat with the Franciscan Sisters will be held in three evening sessions at 6:30 pm.

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS****March 5 & 6:**

Food Pantry (Parish)

**March 12 & 13:**

Fuel & Utilities (Parish)

**March 19 & 20:**

Maintenance (Parish)  
Easter Flowers (Parish)

**March 26 & 27:**

Catholic Relief Services & Catholic Home Missions (National)

## CONTACT INFO

### Christ the King Parish

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



### Weekend Masses

Saturday: 4:00 pm

Sunday: 7:00 am, 9:00 am,  
11:00 am

### Weekday Masses

Monday, Wednesday, Friday:  
12:10 pm

Thursday: 5:30 pm

### Reconciliation Times

Thursday: 4:45-5:15 pm

Saturday: 2:30-3:30 pm

### Pastor

Father Rich Roberge  
[frrich@christthekingnh.org](mailto:frrich@christthekingnh.org)

### Deacon

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## MONTHLY OFFERTORY REPORT

	1/16/22	1/23/22	1/30/22	2/6/22
<b>Offertory</b>	\$8,607.00	\$11,549.00	\$11,199.00	\$11,029.00
<b>Online</b>	\$7,009.89	\$7,444.96	\$5,925.78	\$7,807.29
<b>Total</b>	\$15,616.89	\$18,993.96	\$17,124.78	\$18,836.29

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For more information on the parish's online giving program, visit [christthekingnh.org/give](http://christthekingnh.org/give) or call Liz Geary at the parish office, **603.224.2328**. To request monthly parish envelopes in the mail, call Kathy Planchet at **603.224.2328**.



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