



# St. Rita

catholic community

A Letter From Our Pastoral Administrator

## What Keeps Us Catholic? *Reflecting on Truth and Kindness*

While an Anglican seminarian in England, I read a biography of John Henry Newman, the great English convert to Roman Catholicism. His story did not have a favorable effect on me. In fact, reading it put me off Catholicism for almost a decade.

Newman's life as a Catholic wasn't pleasant nor, I thought, very attractive. Life after his conversion in 1845 was hard. He was despised by most of the friends he left behind in the Church of England, while at the same time he was held in suspicion by many of his fellow Catholics. At times, he was mistreated and humiliated, hardly accepted by many within the Catholic Church. Reading his story, I found myself thankful to remain within my genteel, although somewhat troubled, Anglicanism. Newman's Anglican days were

beautiful; his Catholic days were hard. The lesson for me was simple. Choose the pleasant path and remain an Anglican. And so I did.

Such was my view of Catholicism for many years – harsh, impersonal, and coldly bureaucratic. Often, as an Episcopal priest, I welcomed Catholics into my parish after they'd left the Church in frustration, feeling either mistreated or simply neglected. Some, of course, came to the Episcopal Church for the ease and laxity of it. Others, however, seemed genuinely victimized and worn down.

Now, as a Catholic, I see the other side. Yes, there are Catholics who leave because they're spiritually or morally lazy, not up to the challenge and adventure of Catholicism. However, there are also those who leave because we have not cared for them as we

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## What Keeps Us Catholic? *continued from front cover*

should. Becoming Catholic has not removed from me the view that the Church is sometimes harsh and difficult, on very rare occasions I've felt it myself. Yes, the Church can be unpleasant at times.

But why did Newman become a Catholic? Why did I become Catholic? And why do people remain Catholic even when the Church at times seems hard and uncaring? To answer this question is to uncover the deep place and purpose of the Catholic Church. Why become or remain Catholic, no matter what? Answer: *Because it's true.* The religious marketplace is replete with versions of Christianity offering all sorts of fulfillment, progress, programs, support, and so on. The Catholic Church, in contrast, makes this her primary claim, that she is the true Church of Jesus Christ willed by God. The Catholic Church points to the Bible, where Christ speaks of His body, and says unashamedly, "That's me." True converts to Catholicism come to the Church because in some way they see that she is true – true above every good and glory or shame and discomfort. Thus, having seen her truth, anchored Catholics rarely leave the Church. Newman was never completely comfortable with Roman Catholics, yet he never questioned his conversion, because, as he said, "I recognized my spiritual Mother." Seeing the truth of Catholicism, he could never go back. Truth keeps us Catholic.

But what should we do about the harshness sometimes found in the Church? First, I'm not being unfaithful by saying that we Roman Catholics can get better at hospitality and pastoral care, institutionally and individually. We could learn a lot from our Protestant friends about this. We needn't be afraid to be warm and friendly, and even at times a little flexible. There is an overly rigorous side of Catholicism that could do to become a bit more human, more full of the "joy of the Gospel," as Pope Francis teaches. It's the same thing

Pope Benedict XVI said during his trip to America years ago: "[I]n a society where the Church seems legalistic and 'institutional' to many people, our most urgent challenge is to communicate the joy born of faith and the experience of God's love." What can we do about the harshness of the Church? We can be kind, all of us. Me, you, each one of us.

But second, and more deeply, we Catholics need to cultivate a deeper love for the Church – the Church as she is in reality, sometimes squalid but always glorious. It seems many Catholics tend either to sugarcoat the failures of the Church with pious excuses, or, on the other hand, overly criticize her as if they are not her spiritual sons and daughters. Neither extreme will do. Rather, we should pursue the ideal described by Henri de Lubac, himself a great theologian who suffered within the Church. To love the Church genuinely, we must love her in truth, "in her human day-to-day reality just as much in her divine and eternal ideality." We mustn't ignore our failures, but we must never forsake obedience to the Church. "Love should," he said, "be our only response to our Mother the Church." And to love the Church truly, we must be both realistic and docile. To be a person of the Church (what De Lubac called a "*vir ecclesiasticus*"), we must "first of all and always" be a child of the Church, loving and trusting as a child loves her mother.

Becoming or remaining Catholic is about truth, but for truth to be lived out requires virtues. Being a Catholic means living a life of faith, hope, and love but also patience, kindness, and, really importantly, obedience. That is what being Catholic looks like. It's how we remain Catholic.

pax,

Fr. Joshua

# St. Rita Booster Club Working for Athletics, Building Community

You may know our St. Rita Booster Club from buying snacks at the football or basketball concession stands, but the Boosters are working all year long to build a sense of family and community at St. Rita School.

There are no formal meetings, and no formal membership list, other than the school parents who pay dues at the beginning of the school year. Adam Kobos is President, and he works with two support leaders, Ryan Betz and Robert DeVita.

"The members are really anyone who attends St. Rita School," Adam says. "We are all volunteers. Our purpose is to support the St. Rita Athletic Department and also maintain a positive atmosphere around the St. Rita community. Our overall goal is to raise money to help support athletic endeavors, but we do special projects to enhance St. Rita. Our Booster Club is important because we help sustain a family atmosphere that is all inclusive, and a strong sense of community."

Adam's family has a strong connection with St. Rita School. One of his children just graduated from eighth grade – another child is entering eighth grade this fall, and his youngest will be in sixth grade.

The Booster Club's major fundraising project with the Dads' Club is the St. Rita Golf Classic, slated for Sept. 29 at the Brookhaven Country Club. Saenz-Rodriguez and Associates are presenting the tournament.

One of the special projects the Booster Club has had the opportunity to support, in conjunction with the Parents' Club, is the facelift at Sweeney Center.

"Sweeney needed remodeling, and through the generosity of our donors and members, by attending Booster Club events and buying merchandise, we can continue this work," Adam says. "The work includes putting in a new floor, and installing padding and putting in new retractable basketball hoops so the kids can practice and have recess."

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*From the winning smiles and trophies in hand, these St. Rita athletes are more than pleased with their chosen sports.*



*The St. Rita Booster Club is devoted making sure our school's athletic programs can serve any student who wants to participate.*



*The major fundraiser for the St. Rita Booster Club, in conjunction with the Dads' Club, is the St. Rita Golf Classic, coming up Sept. 29 at the Brookhaven Golf Club. The entrants in last year's tournament are ready to hit the links in their carts.*

## A Heart for Teaching and Faith Fo

As he shared in his 2016 testimony on EWTN's *Coming Home Network*, Joshua Clemmons grew up with very little faith formation. Aside from a general belief in Jesus Christ and the Bible, he was largely left on his own when it came to discovering truths and doctrines. Yet, as he continued to mature and grow, he began to increasingly long for truth and authority. So much so, that he prodded his parents to baptize him at the age of 12, fearful of not obtaining salvation.



New Director of Faith Formation Joshua Clemmons with his wife, Sarah, and their eldest son, Zachary Augustine.

Joshua's hunger for God continued to increase during his early college years, leading him to plan on leaving Texas Tech University in order to enter a theology program at a nearby Protestant university. Things took a dramatic turn, however, when he began listening to conversion stories and exploring the Catholic faith for the first time.

"I was at a point in my life where I was just really pursuing God, and I asked him to lead me to His Church, any church that He desired me to become part of," Joshua says. "During this time, I heard conversion stories of various apologists, and I had some good Catholic friends whose prayer lives I really admired and respected. So, I was really curious and attracted to Catholicism, especially after hearing Scott Hahn's testimony. I began reading the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with a fine-tooth comb, and by the time I finished reading it, I was convinced that the Catholic Church was the one that Christ had established and that it was where everyone – not just me – was called to be."

This realization dramatically changed the trajectory of Joshua's life, leading him to convert to Catholicism as quickly as possible, eventually pursuing a career in lay ministry, and most recently to complete his Master of Arts in theology at the University of Dallas. Over the years, Joshua has worked a variety of ministerial jobs, such as with the Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Dallas, as a Director of Young Adult Ministry for All Saints parish in Dallas, and now at St. Rita's as the new Director of Faith Formation and Education.

Because of his own conversion experience, Joshua has a passion for catechesis and faith formation. That's why, in many ways, this new position is an answer to prayer, allowing him to more fully use his gifts and experiences for God's glory.

"I truly have a heart for teaching and faith formation," Joshua says. "I'm most excited about making new

# Information: Meet Joshua Clemmons

Catholics, being able to address their questions and enter into the journey of the Church with them – to witness the excitement over the process of RCIA, and to further assure alignment between the departments with a single vision.”

Joshua hopes to further foster a Christocentric approach to St. Rita’s catechesis programs, helping ensure that discipleship and our universal call to evangelization remains at the heart of all we do.

“It’s part of our mission to ensure that we’re not simply catechizing people, but that we are also evangelizing them – to help individuals come to know and truly make Jesus the center of their lives,” Joshua says.

As Joshua, his wife, Sarah, and their young boys continues to get settled, he looks forward to becoming part of the “well-oiled machine” that is St. Rita’s. We invite all parishioners to continue welcoming the Clemmons family!

*“It’s part of our mission to ensure that we’re not simply catechizing people, but that we are also evangelizing them – to help individuals come to know and truly make Jesus the center of their lives.” – Joshua Clemmons*

## St. Rita Booster Club *continued from page 3*

Another activity the Booster Club has supported was sending teachers to team-building events.

During Spirit Week, the Booster Club supported the lunch that was served to the students and staff at the end of the week.

“We help out at Field Day at the end of the year, and myself, along with Ryan and Robert, run the concession stand at the home football games, and support the basketball concession stand,” Adam says. “We’re small, but we serve a larger community. We’re all for raising the spirit of the school!”

Anyone interested in joining the Booster Club can reach out either to Adam or to Ryan or Robert.

“You can take part, really, by just showing support at the athletic events,” Adam says. “Come out to football games, volleyball, basketball. At the beginning of the school year, we have a fall sports kickoff. You can be a sponsor for one of our events, or support us by buying spirit merchandise, or snacks at the concession stands. There’s always a good way to get involved.”

*To learn more about the Booster Club, please call Adam Kobos at 469-964-2326 or email him at [adamkobos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adamkobos@sbcglobal.net).*

## Good for the Giver

A simple riddle: If you don't give it away, you can't keep it. But if you give it away, it will increase.

The best answer to this riddle, if you haven't already guessed, is *love*. But the beauty of this paradox is that there can be a number of different answers. Another response might be *artistic talent*. Ask any artist, and they'll tell you that their skill for drawing or painting diminishes after a few weeks or months of inactivity. But the more they paint, the more their talent grows.

We also see this truth illustrated in nature. The Sea of Galilee, teeming with fish and other wildlife, is one example. All of the water in this beautiful reservoir is constantly being drained through the Jordan River, which stretches for about 60 miles, providing the only fresh water for all of Israel. It finally drains into the Dead Sea, which has no outlet. It is consequently stagnant and totally lifeless, continually evaporating into thin air.

The point, in a nutshell, is that the good steward takes care of his or her gifts by giving them away. As a result, you won't have less left over, but will instead have more!

There is a story about St. Teresa of Calcutta and her visit to one of the hundreds of convents she had founded. The Superior of the convent told her, "Mother, we don't have enough time to do our work with the poor; there's just not enough hours in the day." St. Teresa responded, "Then you need to pray more." When the convent added another full hour of prayer each day, they somehow found that they had enough time to do even *more* for the poor in that city.

The difficulty with this idea – that by giving we receive – is that it is still a struggle to give. When we arrive at the moment of giving, it appears on the surface that we will have less left over. This is especially true regarding money. When writing a check to a charity or to the parish, you mathematically end up with less money to spend on other

things. And yet, the immaterial value of our sacrifice is immeasurable. This is why Jesus speaks so frequently in the Gospels about the spiritual benefits of giving to others. We *do* have more after we give, but it is simply more of something else – and something better.

When we emphasize stewardship, it is not primarily to increase "volunteerism" or to swell our budget. Indeed, our first aim is always the "good of the giver." It is not because the parish has needs, *but because we have a need to give*. We recognize that the model Steward is Jesus, who gave *all*, even His very life, so that we may have everything.

### Stewardship in Nature

The Sea of Galilee stays fresh and healthy because it "gives away" all its water through the Jordan River. When all that water is finally drained into the Dead Sea, it stays there, becoming stagnant and lifeless. Human beings are the same way. Giving of ourselves is one of the main ways we stay spiritually healthy.

# St. Rita School Community Excited to Welcome New Principal Dr. Carol Walsh

**D**r. Carol Walsh has a passion for Catholic education that is bolstered by her own education, from elementary school through university, and by 22 years of experience working in Catholic schools.

“Catholic schools helped me acquire the virtues needed to make a difference, and that is what I want for our students,” Dr. Walsh says. “We prepare them academically and instill in them the values to be strong leaders with the foundation of the Church.”

On July 1, Dr. Walsh formally joined St. Rita School as the school’s new Principal, succeeding Dr. Elena Hines. She and her husband, Ed Walsh, are relocating to the area from Houston, and they have three adult children, David, Michelle and Brenda.

From her earliest years, Dr. Walsh desired to be a teacher, and she remembers “playing school” as a child.

“I love my faith and always wanted to be a teacher,” Dr. Walsh says. “Catholic schools are concerned with the formation of character and values, and students who come out of our Catholic system should behave as examples for all the students around them.”

Dr. Walsh received a Bachelor of Arts in Theology, Masters of Arts in Organization Development, and Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership. Much of her high school and university education was shaped by a Jesuit influence.

“The Jesuits have a strong legacy in education, and they maintain high standards and get to know their



*Dr. Carol Everling-Walsh, St. Rita School’s New Principal*

students,” Dr. Walsh says. “I was supported and challenged to go beyond what is best for me and to think about others.”

During her first six months at St. Rita, Dr. Walsh intends to listen, observe and better understand the community, and its culture and values.

“My first goal is to establish and nurture positive relationships with each member of the school,”

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*“I love my faith and always wanted to be a teacher. Catholic schools are concerned with the formation of character and values, and students who come out of our Catholic system should behave as examples for all the students around them.” – Dr. Carol Walsh*

12521 Inwood Road  
Dallas, TX 75244

### Weekday Masses

*Monday-Friday, 5:30 p.m.*  
*Wednesday-Saturday, 8:00 a.m.*

### Weekend Masses

*Saturday, 5:30 p.m.*  
*Sunday, 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m.,*  
*12:30 p.m. (Bilingual), 5:30 p.m.*

## Welcome New Principal Dr. Carol Walsh

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Dr. Walsh says. "I believe in partnerships with the parents and the staff to help our students achieve beyond their expectations and to produce leaders who will impact the community."

Recently, Dr. Walsh participated in a conference about integrating innovative technology into the classroom, and she is motivated to work with teachers regarding new technologies. She underscores that adaptive learning doesn't hinge upon the device itself, but upon the skills that we need to teach our young people to be competitive in our global society.

"My strength is collaboratively developing and communicating a clear vision for

continuous improvement that is academic growth through enhanced technology," Dr. Walsh says. "We'll challenge the students to think creatively and to find new and innovative ways to problem solve."

Dr. Walsh is excited and honored to join the community of St. Rita, and she looks forward to implementing a long-term vision for the school that builds upon its strengths.

"St. Rita has an excellent reputation in the community," Dr. Walsh says. "I want to meet with everyone, to know their expectations and concerns, and to build a school where the entire parish is part of the learning community."



*Dr. Carol Walsh and her husband, Ed Walsh*