



# THE MODERN SAINT

Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish is a Roman Catholic Christian community which unselfishly ministers to all people through hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. Eucharist centered and led by the Holy Spirit we strive to be grateful stewards of all God's gifts.

## MUSIC MINISTRY AT ST. MAX SING PRAISES

By: Ron Miller

Music Ministry is where those who share a passion for music and prayer come together to make great things happen. Parishioners who enjoy singing or playing an instrument give their talents back to God while leading our family in sung prayer. I have a tendency to describe my love of the church choir as: “perfectly imperfect” or similar words. What do I mean by that? We have talent and skill levels ranging from professionally trained, to beginner. The beautiful thing is to watch those two extremes, and everything in between, work in harmony that creates the sound of God’s people. We work hard and challenge ourselves. Sometimes we could’ve used just one more rehearsal, or we’re missing our singing neighbor who fell ill or is traveling. But without fail, the Holy Spirit pours out His grace on us and we sing and play the liturgy with the time and gifts we’ve been given.

Perhaps you are a college student or young parent saying: “I can’t make the time commitment.” I get it; I’m with you. Rightfully so, we get caught up in the hustle of kids and family time, that our own faith, and desire to express that, gets put at the bottom of the list. However, the “big choir” can’t survive if it doesn’t have a steady stream of new, young voices. Find a way to make it happen for YOU.

In February, Fr. Jim spoke of the 2,000 regular Mass attendees, and the 8,000 missing parishioners.

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Christmas 2021 Musicians

“ SING PRAISES  
OLD AND NEW,  
PAST AND PRESENT  
JOIN IN ONE.

BRIAN WREN



# OUR LADY OF LA VANG

By: Fr. Jim Riehle

In this month of May, we honor our Blessed Mother. For so many reasons, she is worthy of the honor we give her. While the universal Church is in agreement on this devotion to Our Lady, the particulars of that devotion vary from country to country. This is partly because throughout the history of the Church, our Blessed Mother has appeared in visions or other apparitions around the globe. While most people are well aware of Our Lady of Guadalupe or Our Lady of Fatima, one lesser known apparition of Our Lady occurred during a period of persecution in Vietnam.

The faith arrived in Vietnam in the sixteenth century. At first, the missionaries and their message were well received. As the faith grew, however, some in power felt threatened by this growing movement.

In 1798, the emperor, Canh Thinh, placed restrictions on the practice of Catholicism. Soon, more explicit restrictions were put in place and outright persecutions began. Teaching of the faith was outlawed. Missionaries and native Catholics alike were tortured and executed. The goal was to rid Vietnam of Catholicism.

As the persecutions spread, a group of Christians sought out refuge in the forest of La Vang in the Quang Tri Province.

Despite the refuge it provided from persecution, the conditions in the rainforest were difficult, to say the least. Many were becoming very ill. Every night the group would gather to pray the rosary at the foot of a banyan tree.

One night during their prayers, a woman wearing traditional Vietnamese dress and a golden crown appeared in the branches of the tree. She was holding an infant in her arms and two angels were at her side. The woman consoled the people with words of love and comfort. She gave no dire warnings as other

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# Happy Mother's Day

## FROM THE YOUTH MINISTRY

My mom inspires me every day to grow in my faith through prayer and the way she lives her life through God. She is kind, courageous, strong, determined, organized, and faithful. I love my mom with all my heart. She is my best friend, my biggest supporter, and I wouldn't be who I am today without her. – Maggie



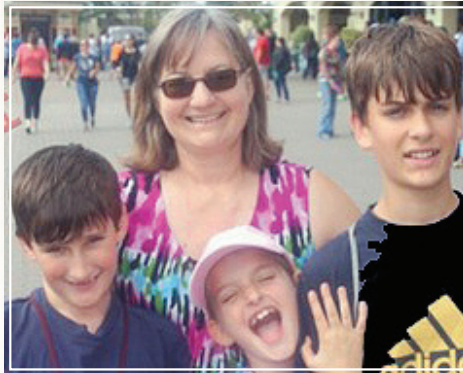
I love that mom sacrifices time for herself and does so many things to help me like cook wonderful dinners, drives me to swim practice, and cheers me on at all my all swim meets. I love her because she always takes me to go out with friends and events. She has been a good example in my faith by offering advice and perspective on difficult situations in my life. – Madeline



Something that I love about my mom is how she is always there for me when I need anything and supports me to become the man that God wants me to be. She's always able to see the good in me even when those around me can't. My mom has helped me to grow in my faith by giving me a great example of what it means to be Catholic and helping me to have experiences that allow me to make my faith my own. She continues to be such an inspiration to me in everything that I do. – Jon

I love how supportive she is and how much she cares for me. She helps me grow by pushing me to be better and making me go and do things I don't want to do. – Eddie

Something I love about my mom is how much she cares about her family. She always takes the time to make sure we know she loves us, and that we are doing well. She has helped me grow in my faith by her example. Since she grew up in a all-Catholic family, she was raised when and where everyone was Catholic. Her example in this irreligious and atheist-growing world is a shining one that I try to emulate. – Matthew



I love that my mom is so loving and funny. She truly is the hardest working person I've ever met, she never stops working it seems. I may give her a hard time sometimes, but that's just to show I love her. She means so much to me. My mom supported me in my decision to join the Youth Group and become more invested in my faith. – Amelia

I love my mom so much because she's so sweet, caring, and selfless. She's helped me through so much and has been a huge part of my faith life through driving me to youth group, sharing conversations with me about our faith, or taking me to retreats, even if they're hours away! – Rachel

What I love most about my mom is that she is always willing to talk to me about my faith or take me to youth group every Sunday so I can bond with other kids from the parish. I love it when she and I bond at Mass during the homily when Father is discussing the Gospel. Her influence on my faith has helped me to understand the story of Jesus Christ and other stories from the Gospels. – Isaac



I love my mom because she goes so far to do anything for me and she prays with my every night. – Ava

I am thankful that my mom is supportive of everything I do in my religious life and outside of religion. She has influenced my religious life because she has explained why we do things and how they've changed her. – Carson





# WORKS OF MERCY



*Bear wrongs patiently.  
forgive injuries*

F<sub>4</sub> O<sub>1</sub> R<sub>1</sub> G<sub>2</sub> I<sub>1</sub> V<sub>4</sub> E<sub>1</sub> N<sub>1</sub> E<sub>1</sub> S<sub>1</sub> S<sub>1</sub>

By: Mary Ella Wielgos

I'm not sure why I volunteered to write about this Spiritual Work of Mercy. Clearly, I wasn't thinking when I said I'd do it. How can I write about something I feel I fail miserably at? I mean, I can literally remember certain people in my life, even going back nearly 20 years, (scary, I know), who betrayed me in one way or another, call to mind *their* errors and feel the pain all over again. (Notice how I so humbly said, "*their* errors" in that last sentence and conveniently left out the part about how I may have mistreated them? Yup.)

When I reflect on past relationships in which I was honestly mistreated, betrayed or unjustly accused of error by someone else, I can feel the anger rise within me. I've even felt anger towards God, particularly for the unexpected losses in my life.

Whenever an injustice is done to us, it hurts, and it's hard to let go of that hurt. Sometimes, we choose to not let go of the hurt. We may feel we are truly justified in our actions or anger, which we may actually be, in some sense. When we are mistreated by others, the pain is real, and it can have lasting negative effects on us, on the way we live as disciples of Christ, on the way we fail to show mercy to others.

When our kids were little, if they wronged one of their siblings, we taught them to say, "I'm sorry" and the other child to say, "I forgive you." Our hope was that not only would we teach the one in error to own up to his/her mistakes, but to also be the one to offer forgiveness, and offer it readily. Did you ever hear your young child say, "I'm sorry" and clearly,

they did not mean it? So, you tell them to 'say it again but mean it this time', and their attitude only gets worse and more obnoxious, so you give up? The interesting thing is, often times, the other child is standing there ready and willing to say "I forgive you" but isn't given the opportunity to offer it.

It's easy to forgive someone when they make minor injuries toward us, and they are visibly upset for having hurt us. We get it, we've all been there. We've screwed up, too, and have humbly sought and received forgiveness for our actions. That's easy. But what about the bigger stuff? What about the hurt that is so severe that a simple "I'm sorry" won't really settle it? What if the other person never says, "I'm sorry," so the hurt just sort of lingers over us all the time? It can be complicated and difficult to figure out how to process it and move past it.

Forgiveness is not a natural response when we've been hurt. It's so much easier to hold a grudge or avoid the problem altogether. It's so much easier to lie to ourselves that our anger is justified and place all the blame on someone else. As disciples and lovers of Jesus, we know in our hearts that forgiveness is what will lead us to true freedom and peace. We know the right thing to do is to step beyond the pain, choose to love, choose to show mercy, and to examine our own actions as well. I know what you're thinking, because I've said it to myself as well... "but it wasn't my fault, it was their fault! I can't just let this roll off my shoulders."

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## WORKS OF MERCY, Continued from Page 4

Ah, so now we come to it, where the rubber hits the road as they say. Are we disciples of Christ or are we not? Will we live our lives according to His way or our way? Do we want peace in our hearts, or do we want to hold on to anger and self-righteousness?

In the Our Father, we pray these words: Give us this day our daily bread and *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us...* What do these words mean to us, and do we mean them when we pray them?

If we choose Jesus, if we choose love, let us consider some ways to grow in our ability to bear wrongs more patiently and forgive even the gravest of injuries. Let us consider frequent practice of the sacrament of confession to keep the grace of mercy shown to us by Christ flowing to those who require it from us. Let us give people the benefit of the doubt. Let us recognize they might be enduring some unknown pain of their own and our example of mercy and compassion is what they need to receive. Let's let go of grudges by praying for those who persecute us and offer up Masses for them. We can pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet frequently and work at being less critical of others.

Our Lord is generous in His mercy towards us, mercy we do not deserve. May we, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, show His mercy to those who need it.



## LADY OF LA VANG, Continued from Page 2

apparitions of the Blessed Virgin had, but instead she simply expressed her love for them as her persecuted children and instructed them to boil the leaves from the tree so as to cure their sickness. She told them, in response to their prayers, "I accepted your request. From now onwards, whoever comes to invoke me in this place, I will accept and bless them."

The refugees knew this woman was the Blessed Mother.

Eventually, the Christians were able to return to their villages. Word of the apparition spread, but so too did the persecutions. Our Blessed Mother appeared many times over the century of persecution that followed. Given the strength of her prayers, the Catholic faithful remained steadfast despite the threat of being burned alive or tortured as so many had been.

After the first apparitions, a small chapel was constructed in the forest in honor of Our Lady of La Vang. Pilgrims began to flock to the site. In 1820, a larger chapel was dedicated to Mary.

After the persecution ended in 1886, the local bishop ordered the construction of a church to honor Our Lady of La Vang. It took fifteen years to complete the church. When it was completed, in August of 1901, more than twelve thousand people were there to celebrate. The bishop declared Our Lady of La Vang as the patron of all Vietnamese Catholics. In 1928, a larger church was built to meet the needs of the growing number of pilgrims. In August of 1962, Pope St. John XXIII elevated the church to that of a basilica. Sadly, that church was destroyed in the summer of 1972 during the war in Vietnam.

On June 19, 1988, Pope St. John Paul II canonized 117 Vietnamese martyrs as saints of the Catholic Church. He also publicly affirmed the importance of Our Lady of La Vang and shared his hope that the Basilica of La Vang would be rebuilt so as to commemorate the 200th anniversary the first apparition at La Vang in August 1998. Despite that hope, the basilica was not fully renovated until 2012. Today the church and the surrounding complex is one of the most significant pilgrimage sites in that part of the world.



## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS HUNGRY? By: Jo Zink

You probably do. Most of us know someone who is hungry. Not the empty belly kind of hungry, but the spiritual kind. Some of these hungry people are people we care about. They are our teens or our adult children, or maybe a sibling or in-law or spouse. These hungry people are our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends. Many of these hungry people are very blessed and on the outside look like they are lacking for nothing—except they're empty, unsatisfied, unhappy. Some of these hungry people have made a series of bad choices and are now drowning in the consequences. These people are also empty, unsatisfied, and unhappy. Maybe you are the one who is hungry. Maybe you've been fed a little and are hungry for more. St. Max has a ministry that can feed anyone who has this hunger.

This ministry is Alpha. They not only have plenty of spiritual food for the soul, they also have actual food for the belly. What a great combination! The ministry is very intentionally named "Alpha"; it is the beginning or starting place for a journey. It's designed to not only meet people where they are, but to give them an opportunity to move forward and not be stuck. Everyone is welcome to the Alpha meal—lifelong faithful Catholics, someone feeling a staleness or emptiness in their prayer life, those who have left the church, those who have never been in a church, even those who aren't sure if there is a God. All of these people are welcome and have a place at the table. Alpha provides a friendly, supportive environment for people to ask questions, share thoughts and ideas on the week's topic, and discuss in a small group. Nothing is off limits.

Each session of Alpha meets for 11 weeks and lasts two hours. Each week, participants start with a meal, watch a short video, and share thoughts on the video with their tablemates. There is a table host for each group as well as a table helper. The host facilitates the discussion while the helper remains quietly praying for the members in the group. This prayer element is quite unique and powerful, but there is another prayer element that provides additional power that few know about. There is a small group of people led by Kathy Hinger who pray in front of the Tabernacle during each session. Core team member, Phil Cottell, says "this prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament is what distinguishes the Catholic version of Alpha from the Protestant version". Kathy shares that her team is "keeping watch" as Jesus asked of His Apostles during His agony in the garden.

Phil also highly recommends the videos for the quality and the relatability of the stories that "real" people with "real struggles" share. The videos feature people from all walks of life who have felt the hunger that participants are feeling and they tell their stories of how they found the food that would satisfy forever.



Some of the Alpha core team on the Alpha Retreat.

There are so many different "programs" out there. Does this one work? The core team and table leaders have certainly seen lives changed and spirits renewed through Alpha. They also acknowledge that they themselves receive at least as much as they give. "I do feel stronger and more confident in my faith and relationship with Jesus. This has allowed me to evangelize and spread the Good News with others", says Rich Tereba, a member of the core team. Phil says, "We invite people. We invite God, and there they meet."

After about eight sessions, Alpha hosts a retreat. The sessions leading up to the retreat help to prepare participants to encounter the Holy Spirit and to help them to be open to this encounter. Some members of Kathy's intercessory prayer team are also at the retreat to pray with people individually which has also been a powerfully moving experience for both participants and intercessors. The remaining sessions are designed to help everyone get their footing and be equipped for continuing this new and fulfilling journey.

Consider inviting a hungry person to dinner or consider inviting yourself! The next Alpha series will be running this fall. If you'd like to register or get more information visit [www.saint-max.org/ALPHA](http://www.saint-max.org/ALPHA) or contact Holly Moran at [hmoran@saint-max.org](mailto:hmoran@saint-max.org). Maybe you are already full of God's grace and love and want to bring that to others. Consider joining the team! They can always use help on the hospitality, food, and prayer teams. Ministry leader Holly Smith says many gifts are needed to run this ministry well: gifts of evangelization, hospitality, administration, intercessory prayer, etc. Contact Holly if you'd like to explore how you can use your gifts in this ministry.

“WE INVITE PEOPLE. WE INVITE GOD,  
AND THERE WE MEET.”

PHIL COTTELL





Children's Choir

*MUSIC MINISTRY, Continued from Page 1*

2,000 is a very healthy number. But with 10,000 registered parishioners surely we have a few more out there who could lend their talents to the Music Ministry. It would be amazing to have a choir of fifty members. Before we can reach fifty, let's start with thirty. The Parish Choir has a roster of twenty-eight. I had the fortune of getting my semi-professional start and a mentorship with a large choir. I know the joy and encouragement a choir brings to any assembly. I love that feeling of making harmonies in a group and listening to your neighbors creating that lush sound. It's been written in science journals that choristers experience healthy hearts because they are in rhythm with each other while singing.

Or, maybe you understand how to read music, but your voice or instrument hasn't been picked up in a while. The handbell choir might be a good fit. Like any other ensemble, you are one part of a bigger instrument. Bring your musical knowledge and we'll put a bell in your hand. We have many ringers who also sing in a choir. Feel free to do double-duty.

On a younger note, it would be wonderful to revitalize our Children's Choirs back to the numbers we once had pre-Covid. Our Cherub Choir is for grades 1-3 and we focus on fundamentals and unison singing. The Children's Choir is grades 4-8 and we get into more part-singing and choral anthems. When you reach high school there is a less time demanding option by singing for Mass once a month with a short rehearsal prior. Or you can move up to the Parish Choir and keep up the choral singing.

Finally: instrumentalist. Our primary focus is the voice, but we certainly delight in the ability to supplement that with instrumental accompaniment. Being an instrumentalist does require a bit more experience. Finding the right path or Masses to play at, and getting comfortable playing your instrument with hymnody, is the first task. Naturally, we tend to have the keyboards covered with leadership, but if you excel at another instrument, please let us know.

St. Max has the unique opportunity, given our size, to continually grow. Surely you sense my desire for big choirs, and I hope any singers and musicians will consider making 2022-2023 your year to get involved. Go to the website now and register! Taking text from a choral anthem: "Sing praises old and new, past and present join in one." (Brian Wren)



### TOGETHER WE GROW CAMPAIGN

Don't forget about our Together We Grow Campaign! You can see status updates about the campaign and make a pledge online at [saint-max.org/TWG](http://saint-max.org/TWG).





## Saint Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church

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Liberty Township, Ohio 45011

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## LITURGY SCHEDULE

### MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil 4:30 PM  
Sunday 8:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM  
Monday-Saturday 8:30 AM  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30 AM  
First Fridays 7:30 PM

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturdays after 8:30 AM Mass & 3:00-4:00 PM  
Thursdays after 8:30 AM Mass & 6:00-6:45 PM  
Tuesdays after 6:30 AM Mass

### SEND US AN UPDATE

Have you moved, or do you have a new phone number or new email address? Please contact the office at 513.777.4322 ext. 101 or [cgroh@saint-max.org](mailto:cgroh@saint-max.org) to give us an update!



### WHAT IS THE 1% CHALLENGE?

**1% OF YOUR DAY IS 14 MIN AND 24 SEC.**

JUST 1% OF YOUR DAY given to God in focused prayer will change your life. We would like to challenge you to spend just 1% (let's round up to 15 min) OF YOUR DAY EVERY DAY PRAYING with Scripture through a Catholic tradition called lectio divina.

### WANT TO RECEIVE THE 1% CHALLENGE DAILY EMAIL WITH SUGGESTED READING?

Text 1percent to 42828.

More info on the 1% Challenge can be found on our website at [saint-max.org/takethechallenge](http://saint-max.org/takethechallenge).