



*Fr. Jim Vesely celebrates the 60th anniversary of his ordination in 2014. In residence at St. Leo's, Fr. Vesely can look back on many years of priestly service.*

## After 60 years, St. Leo's is home for Fr. James Vesely

By John Sabol

It's a few minutes to 4 on Saturday afternoon and the sacristy at St. Leo Church is a flurry of activity: a seminarian will be speaking at the Mass, lectors are popping in to talk to Fr. James Vesely, presider that day, someone else wants to talk to him about deacon ordinations at St. John Cathedral that day.

Amidst this pandemonium stands Fr. Vesely, who, after 60 years has possibly "seen it all."

Celebrating his 60th ordination anniversary this December, Fr. Vesely can look back on a priestly education steeped in old traditions—seminary classes in Latin and the Mass also celebrated in that ancient language. He can also look back on 51 years as an associate pastor (parochial vicar) and pastor, filled with unusual

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## ARISE helps 100 examine God's role in their lives

By Chris Rath

"It wasn't what I expected, but it was what I needed."

That comment from one of the almost 100 participants in the first season of ARISE Together in Christ sums up the feelings of many others as this six-week session comes to a close.

The first season of ARISE, a three-year parish-centered process of spiritual renewal and evangelization, ended during the week

of November 17, with all of the ARISE groups completing six weekly meetings. During the meetings, participants are encouraged to look at how God works in each other's lives, to deepen their faith and their relationship with Jesus, and reach out in service to others.

The first season's theme was "Encountering Christ Today," and members of each group (small community) explored a different gospel story or Paul's letters about Jesus.

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# Fr. Vesely celebrates 60th anniversary

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events and experiences. And he can look back on the past nine years at St. Leo, where he is allegedly retired.

Today, with leadership responsibilities resting with a much younger pastor, Fr. Vesely can focus on celebrating Mass, usually with his own musical style, and preaching the Gospel, usually with a little bit of humor.

A native west-sider, Fr. Vesely attended St. Michael School on Scranton Road, and after graduating from Holy Name High School in 1947 he entered Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, and completed his priestly studies at St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland.

He served as an associate at St. Clare Parish (1954–60), Ascension (1960–62), St. John Nepomucene (1962–67), St. Charles Borromeo (1967–70) and Our Lady of Lourdes (1970–73). In 1973, he was named pastor of St. Procop Parish, where he served until 1987, when he was reassigned as pastor of St. Thomas More, where he served until his retirement in 2005.

Fr. Vesely jokes that bishops must have noticed his Czech surname and accordingly assigned him to three out of the

six Bohemian parishes in the Cleveland Diocese. “The only Czech I know is knedliky i zeli [dumplings and sauerkraut].”

His life as a parish priest was not without excitement and sometimes frightening experiences, and he sometimes tells Sunday congregations about an encounter with a parishioner when he was an associate at St. John Nepomucene.

One day, he was talking to a woman parishioner in his office when he received a phone call that the woman had just escaped from the Cleveland State Mental Hospital on Turney Road. The police were on their way to the church to capture her when she made a break for it. “With the police coming in the front door of the church, she was trying to escape out the back, and I was holding the door so she couldn’t get out,” Fr. Vesely recalls. “She tried to get me to release my grip on the door by biting me on the hand. Luckily, the police got there before she could do any more damage.”

He noted how pastoral responsibilities have changed over the years. “When I was at St. Procop we did house visits and collections once a year. With the size of parishes today,

*Fr. Vesely will mark his 60th ordination anniversary at the Noon Mass on Sunday, December 7, followed by a social in Lux Hall.*

pastors no longer have the time to do that and a number of other things that pastors used to do.”

After several years of delaying his retirement at the request of Bishop Anthony Pilla, Fr. Vesely departed St. Thomas More in 2005. Fr. Russ Lowe, pastor of St. Leo at the time, knew him from St. Thomas and invited him to live at the St. Leo rectory. The rest is modern history.

“The people here are fabulous,” he says of his retirement parish family. “I’m always amazed at the number of people who know me.”

St. Leo parishioners do know Fr. Vesely, and love him as well. This became evident when representatives of the Diocesan Personnel Board visited St. Leo in 2013 to get parishioner input on a new pastor. One of the stipulations that several speakers stressed that night was that the new pastor must keep Fr. Vesely—a vote of confidence if ever there was one.

## Share your Christmas joy through Adopt-a-Child

For the St. Leo Adopt-a-Child program, the need has increased each year since it was founded in 1973. This season is no different.

The program began November 15 and ends when gifts are collected the weekend of December 13 and 14.

Parishioners are asked to sign up to purchase a gift of about \$15 for a needy child. Children who benefit from the program include families at St. Colman Parish, St. Aloysius School, the Zechariah House (Maggie’s Place), families living at Transitional Housing Inc.’s shelter on the Near West Side, Catholic Charities Refugee families and families at St. Leo Parish.

You can also donate money to the program. Checks payable to St. Leo Parish or cash can be placed in an envelope marked “Adopt-a-Child” and placed in the collection basket or dropped off at the rectory.

To sign up, call Jeanne Sabol at 216/351-6247 or Judi Westerburg at 216/642-0134. They will give you the name and age of a child so you can buy an appropriate gift.

If you purchase a gift, please wrap it, tag it and bring it to the Parish Community Center on Saturday, December 13 from 4–7 p.m. or Sunday, December 14, from 8–10 a.m. If you cannot drop off gifts at these times, the gifts may be left at the rectory before the drop-off weekend.

Volunteers are also needed to deliver gifts on Sunday December 14 (late morning and early afternoon).

If you have questions, would like a child’s name, or would like to help deliver gifts, please call Jeanne at 216/351-6247 or Judi at 216/642-0134.

### St. Leo News & Views

The St. Leo News & Views is published three times a year. Articles and article ideas are always welcome.

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# Teacher? Marketing director? Take your pick

By Elizabeth Fleming

When one door closes in life, it often takes awhile before another one opens. But for Traci Rath-Detwiler, the door to St. Leo the Great opened right away. She walked through it enthusiastically and hasn't looked back.



**Traci Rath-Detwiler**

Traci came to St. Leo from West Park Catholic Academy in Cleveland, where she taught art. WPCA closed on June 6, 2014, and less than a week later, Traci started at St. Leo.

"God works in mysterious ways," Traci said. "I wasn't sure what I was going to do when the school closed."

Her roles at St. Leo draw on a variety of skills. She teaches art and computer classes to grades K-8, and serves as director of marketing for both the school and parish.

A graduate of Catholic schools from elementary through college, Traci has a degree from Ohio Dominican University in

Columbus. Her experience includes several years as senior vice president at an advertising agency. Additionally, she and her husband Ken operated an online printing business for several years.

As parish marketing director, Traci assisted with redesigning the St. Leo website (leothegreat.org), as well as launching the new smartphone app and rebranding other parish materials. Renee Sexton of Five to Nine Mobile Solutions designed the new logo, while Traci provided input on the final layout.

For the school, Traci is currently writing a grant application for new computers.

Traci's approach to teaching art is to grade on effort rather than ability. Lesson plans include discussing the style of a famous artist and then completing a piece modeled on it. Georgia O'Keeffe's flower paintings were a recent subject.

Her students also recently designed their own crests, incorporating a variety of symbols. The older grades did their own prep work, using compasses to draw circles, while Traci prepared templates for the younger grades.

In the computer classes, grades 3 through 8 are learning keyboarding skills. Traci tells

her students they will thank her for this later. The younger children are learning how to operate a mouse, which is a bit foreign to them, especially those acquainted with touch-screens.

Traci said she finds that wherever she goes, she meets someone with a connection to St. Leo, and many people she meets mention a link of some sort. One of her goals is to develop an alumni association to maintain a connection with graduates of the school.

She is also excited about the evangelization that is happening at the school. Because enrollment is open to non-Catholics, attending church is a new experience for some of the students. One girl recently told her mother about the liturgy, and the girl's mother is now interested in becoming Catholic.

Traci credits her supportive family for her accomplishments. "I wouldn't be where I am today without them," she stated.

She is also grateful for the warm welcome she received from everyone at St. Leo. An avid cheerleader for the parish and school, she says she is enthusiastic about the many synergies she sees. "I'm very happy to be part of the St. Leo campus," she said. "I really want to do a great job here."

## 100 examine God's role through ARISE program

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After prayer and reflection, they examined and discussed how Jesus works in their own lives and tried to find a way to bring Jesus to the other lives that they may touch.

Some comments from people who have experienced this first season include:

"It makes me think and concentrate more on my prayer life."

"I like the exchange of ideas among the group."

"I'm encouraged by how open people are to sharing with one another."

"It's so good to know people are praying for us as we pray for them!"

For anyone who could not join a group, the process includes an opportunity for prayer support of those in groups. Various types of prayer support are suggested, including praying the Rosary, fasting, Eucharistic adoration and attending weekday Mass. Parishioners who attend Mass regularly at St. Leo have become accustomed to reciting together part of the ARISE prayer (printed on the front of each week's bulletin) during the Prayer of the Faithful each Sunday. Continuing to do that during the week is also encouraged as prayer support for the members.

The second season of ARISE will begin with sign-up during the weekend of January 24-25, 2015. If you are in a group

now, you will need to sign up separately for each season of ARISE. Although members of groups may stay together or form new groups, new members are always welcome, even if you only can attend a few of the six weekly sessions.

The second season, "Change Our Hearts," will start the week of February 15, coinciding with Ash Wednesday on February 18. Why not consider joining a small group of ARISE meetings for your Lenten spiritual growth? The commitment is once a week, for about an hour and half, for six weeks. The second session will end in time for Holy Week. No matter where you are on your spiritual journey, this process can enrich and improve your life.



# For all the saints



*A few more saints are gracing the walls of St. Leo Church, thanks to a contribution from Irene Venesky in memory of her sister Catherine. The statues are, going clockwise from the top left—St. John Vianney, patron saint of all priests, found in the confessional room in the hallway to the sacristy; St. Michael the Archangel, found in the “chapel” area to the right of the sanctuary; St. Philomena, patron of babies, infants and youth, who was martyred in the Third Century, found in the room off of the main vestibule in the back of the church, where the Children's Liturgy of the Word is conducted at 10 a.m. Mass (also known as the “cry room”); and St. Vincent de Paul, patron of all works of charity, found in the main vestibule.*



# Students return to bright surroundings

By Nancy Zola

There were a lot of oohs and aahs as the students arrived for school on September 2. The newly painted cafeteria (in school colors) brightened their day, as did the new lighting installed in hallways, the cafeteria and the kindergarten through Grade 6 classrooms. Other changes included a school office makeover and the moving of the art room to the junior high hall. The old art room in the loft in Lux Hall is now the Athletic office.

Principal Diane Weiss said that the school has a strong enrollment this year. She said she is “very proud and pleased that some of our new students are children of former students, giving their trust to us to educate their children as they were educated at St. Leo’s.” Mrs. Weiss is working with alumni to get them more involved with the school.

A new school year means a new opportunity for parents to be involved in the Parent Teacher Community (PTC). Parents present at the October PTC meeting had an opportunity to taste the products sold by Market Day, and the November PTC

meeting was an Edline workshop to help parents navigate the features of keeping in touch with the school electronically.

Besides working hard at their studies, fourth through eighth graders learned about Internet safety at a workshop on October 21. Conferences on November 11 gave parents an opportunity to talk to teachers when they picked up the students’ report cards.

Of course, school is not just hard work. The first extracurricular event of the year was the school fall festival, featuring pumpkin carving and “trunk” or treating. This fall activity has grown in popularity each year, with this year’s event being the biggest one yet. Ms. Dodson’s annual turkey dinner provided an opportunity for students to pack dinners for the homebound, with their parents volunteering to make the deliveries. The annual first grade feast put

a twist on Thanksgiving with first graders and their parents dining on turkey sandwiches and side dishes.

Kindergarteners will present a nativity play December 12 at 1 p.m., and no one will want to miss Lunch with Santa on December 14, featuring the Pixie Shop for students to buy gifts for their family and friends. Students from the third, fourth and fifth grade chorus will join with the band in bringing some Christmas cheer at the school Christmas Concert on Tuesday, December 16 at 7 p.m. in Lux Hall. A repeat performance will be held the next day for the students.

Students and teachers will take a break on December 22, but they will be back to work on January 5. Plans are underway for Catholic Schools Week at the end of January. Mrs. Weiss said that St. Leo’s “reputation as a school of respectful, service-oriented students continues.”

## Craft fair set for November 29

A number of crafters have signed up for the first annual St. Leo Craft Fair, scheduled for 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. in Lux Hall.

This is the time to find that special gift you won’t find anywhere else.



## In warmer times ...

*The cold winds of fall and winter are upon us, but the warm memories of last August’s Parish Picnic linger. Although it was cut short by an impending storm, the picnic attracted a healthy crowd of parishioners, who feasted on grilled burgers and hot dogs plus other dishes brought by members of the parish community.*

**Catholic Diocese  
St. Leo the Great Parish  
4940 Broadview Road  
Cleveland OH 44109  
216/661-1006**

Rev. James P. Schmitz, Pastor  
Rev. James Vesely, in Residence

### **Mass Schedule**

Sundays—4 p.m. (Saturday Vigil)  
8 a.m., 10 a.m. and Noon

Weekdays—Monday-Thursday 7:30 a.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m.

Holy Days of Obligation—7 p.m. (Vigil)  
7 a.m., 8:30 a.m. (school Mass when  
in session) and 7 p.m. (please check  
Sunday Bulletin for exceptions to this  
schedule)

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## **Blessed events**

### **November 15–December 14—**

Adopt-a-Child (see page 2 for details)

### **November 27—**

Thanksgiving Day Mass, 9 a.m.

### **November 29—**

Craft Fair, Lux Hall, 9:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

### **December 3, 10, 17—**

The Infancy Narratives education  
series at 7 p.m.

### **December 8—**

Immaculate Conception (holy day of  
obligation), Masses at 7 and 8:30 a.m.  
and 7 p.m.

### **December 7—**

Fr. James Vesely 60th anniversary  
Mass at Noon followed by reception

### **December 13, 14, 20 and 21—**

Ornaments for Remembrance Trees  
after all the Masses

### **December 14—**

Lunch with Santa featuring the Pixie  
Shop (advance tickets needed)

### **December 16—**

School Christmas Concert, 7 p.m. in  
Lux Hall

### **December 24—**

Christmas Eve Masses, 4, 7 and 10 p.m.

### **December 25—**

Christmas Day Masses, 8 a.m.,  
10 a.m. Noon

### **January 1—**

Solemnity of Mary (holy day of obligation),  
Mass at 4 p.m. December 31 and 8  
and 10 a.m. on January 1

### **January 11—Bloodmobile**

### **January 25–31—**

Catholic Schools Week with Open  
House January 25

### **February 18—**

Ash Wednesday Masses at 7 and 8:30  
a.m., and 7 p.m.