

April 2020

# Saint Raphael



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## The Christian Origins of Easter

By Ashley Herzog

Is Easter derived from an ancient pagan holiday? In a word, no—but the myth persists.

Maybe you've seen the eyebrow-raising claims on the Internet or elsewhere in the media: rather than celebrating Jesus' resurrection from the dead and triumph over crucifixion, Easter is really derived from a pagan holiday. Proponents of this theory point to symbols of rebirth and fertility, like eggs and bunnies, that we see at Easter as proof. But the foundation of the claim that Easter is a pagan tradition is the similarity in names: Easter, they say, is the English translation of *Eostre*, a Germanic goddess of fertility. (Others claim Easter got its name from the Mesopotamian goddess *Ishtar*, or the Ethiopian god *Ashtar*. That they have trouble keeping their story straight should be your first clue the Easter skeptics don't have much in the way of actual evidence!) Others take the theory even further, arguing that the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection was lifted from ancient mythology—and therefore can't possibly be true.

It's intriguing stuff for people who wish to deny the divinity of Christ. But, much like the fertility myths surrounding *Eostre*, these claims are more fiction than fact. For starters, the word for Easter in many languages—including

Spanish (*Pascua*), French (*Pâques*), and Romanian (*Paști*)—is derived from the Hebrew word *pesach*, or "Passover."

Christians indeed borrowed many of their Easter traditions from another faith, but it was the monotheistic religion of Judaism, not paganism. Moreover, Ronald Nash, a philosophy professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, spent years thoroughly researching ancient mythology and found no evidence for resurrection stories similar to Christ's. He did find a few examples of gods who died and then came back to life, but the circumstances bore no resemblance to Jesus' execution and resurrection: "None of the so-called savior-gods died for someone else... Only Jesus died for sin. The other 'dying gods' tend to

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## We Are An Easter People!

### - A Letter from our Pastor

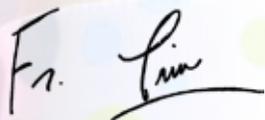
Easter is quickly drawing upon us; and we, as a faith community, look to celebrate God's saving activity in the gift of the Resurrection. How deeply we long and yearn for our God who loves us unconditionally. Jesus is risen, just as He foretold! This new and everlasting covenant has been established by the blood of His cross and remains with us forevermore! What a blessing, what a gift! May we continue to be drawn deeply into the mysteries of our faith and the miracle of Easter this year.

During these final days of Lent, be sure to take the opportunity to spend some quality time with Our Lord. Let us openly walk with Jesus through Holy Week and fully embrace the passion, death, and

resurrection of Jesus through the ceremonies that are made available to us. The mystery of Passion Sunday with the palms reminds us of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the city where He gave His life for us; Holy Thursday, which recalls the institution of the Eucharist (the source and summit of our faith) and the gift of priesthood (the source of service in Jesus); Good Friday, which asks us to follow the path of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross and embrace the redemptive value that the cross holds out to us; and Easter, the culmination of these days of grace and strength.

Please join us during Holy Week, Easter and well beyond. How important it is to gather as a faith community to remember and celebrate what God has done for us. All are welcomed and encouraged.

The Pastoral Staff here at St. Raphael extends a heartfelt "thank you" to all of our parishioners. Your dedication, support, and love for the Lord encourage us in our ministry. You are an Easter People! You live in the light and the love of the Lord and inspire us greatly! May we continue to work together in building God's Kingdom and extending Easter joy to all those we meet. May the grace of the Risen Christ be with you and your loved ones. God bless and keep you!



Rev. Timothy W. Gareau, Pastor



Rev. Eric Garris  
Deacon Mark Cunningham  
Deacon Larry Gregg  
Deacon Frank Semancik  
Roger Andrachik  
Susan Andregg  
Keith Benya  
Tish Bush

Joanne Gill  
Ellen Grady  
Kelly Helbig  
Zak Jester  
Andy Kereky  
Colleen Maher  
Maureen Mayer  
Ken Mitskavich

Candy Reese  
Marilyn Senn  
Sara Seybold  
Bill Sheehan  
Terri Telepak  
Bill Toler  
Kelley Tonegato

# COVID-19 Notice

Out of concern for the common good and the physical as well as spiritual well-being of all of the people of Ohio, the Catholic bishops of Ohio have agreed to cooperate with the governor's direction to create "social distance." The Diocese of Cleveland, therefore, issued the following directive on March 12th:

**Catholic faithful who reside in Ohio and all other Catholics currently in Ohio are dispensed from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass for the weekends of March 14-15, March 21-22 and March 28-29. Out of charity and concern for our brothers and sisters in Christ, we encourage all the faithful, in particular those who are sick, experiencing symptoms of illness, or are at risk of illness to seriously consider refraining from Mass attendance.**

(Note: The 10 a.m. Mass at St. Raphael is live streamed every Sunday, for those unable to attend. It can be watched at [www.saintraphaelparish.com/164](http://www.saintraphaelparish.com/164))

As a parish church, St. Raphael essentially celebrates and administers the Sacraments, in order to provide spiritual nourishment and grace to the faithful. St. Raphael will continue to celebrate the Sacraments: Eucharistic Mass, Baptism, Holy Matrimony, Reconciliation, and Anointing. We hope that these essential celebrations are a source of comfort and strength. **All other scheduled**

**events at St. Raphael are cancelled until further notice.** As this is a rapidly changing situation, please be prepared for changes in our response.

**Note:** Please check the parish website at: [www.saintraphaelparish.com](http://www.saintraphaelparish.com) for the latest updates on how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting our parish.)

## Holy Week 2020

### Confessions

*Wednesday, April 8*

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

*Saturday, April 11*

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

### Passion Sunday, April 5

*Saturday Vigil Masses, April 4*

4:30 pm

*Sunday Masses, April 5*

8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm

### Monday, April 6

*Mass*

7:45 am, 9:15 am

### Tuesday, April 7

*Mass*

7:45 am, 9:15 am

*Chrism Mass at St. John Cathedral*

7:00 pm

### Wednesday, April 8

*Mass*

7:45 am

*Confessions*

5:00 - 7:00 pm

*Tenebrae*

8:30 pm

### Holy Thursday, April 9

*(No Morning Masses)*

*Mass of the Lord's Supper*

7:30 pm

*Eucharistic Adoration in the*

*Community Rooms until 11:00 pm*

### GOOD FRIDAY, April 10

*(No Masses)*

*Stations of the Cross*

12:00 pm

*Celebration of Our Lord's Passion*

3:00 pm

*Liturgy of the Word*

*Veneration of the Cross*

*Holy Communion*

### HOLY SATURDAY, April 11

*(No Morning Masses)*

*Blessing of Food*

1:00 pm

*Confessions*

2:00 - 4:00 pm

*Easter Vigil Mass*

8:30 pm

### EASTER SUNDAY, April 12

*Resurrection of Our Lord*

*Mass*

7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12:00 pm



# He Knows You, But You

by Mike Manco



In Matthew 5:16, Jesus commands us to “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” I don’t know about you, but I can count on three fingers the number of people I have come across in my life who let the Holy Spirit shine brightly. To me, it is both impressive and comforting. This is the way I see our pastor Father Tim. Prior to my interview with him, I had limited exposure to Father Tim. I would hear his homily or shake his hand as I walk out of church. This year I had the opportunity to see him at a few Parish Pastoral Council meetings. I always saw a nice, friendly, and caring person. But if you could spend just an hour with him, you get to see a whole lot more of this man. When Father talks to you, you know what he says is true, original, and heartfelt. The Holy Spirit is in every word that that man speaks.

I first came to this awareness when as an 8th grade PSR teacher I had the opportunity to hear Fr. Tim speak to PSR evening kids at what is called the “Spiritual Olympics” event. Now, mind you, he was talking to

students from the 1st grade to the 8th grade; but as I sat there listening to his motivational speech, I was so taken with it that half way through the talk I had the presence of mind to record it on my iPhone (only capturing the last half of his talk).

What Father was saying could easily be given at an adult spiritual retreat. While it lasted only a few minutes, I was so impressed that I called Fr. Tim the next day to ask if I could interview him for this article. That hour I spent with him left me in a state of amazement and a desire to spend more time talking to a man with his loving compassion and deep conviction.

We have been blessed since 2000 to have Fr. Tim at our parish. He was installed as our pastor in 2002. When he discussed his journey into becoming the man he is today, you get the feeling that the Lord had us in mind when he first touched Father Tim to become a priest.

He has always been a “local boy” who was raised on the West Side of Cleveland in North Olmsted and in Westlake. Father Tim was the eighth of twelve in a family whose parents raised them in a strong Catholic home. They prayed regularly and attended church as a family. His parents were his early spiritual advisors. His early education was in Catholic schools. He graduated from St. Edward in 1978 and spent a year at Cleveland State University studying Business Administration and doing what all freshmen college students like to do.

But when did he decide to become a priest? The promptings of the Holy Spirit began as early as fourth grade and continued into eighth grade. He manipulated his way into a visit to Borromeo Seminary when he wasn’t chosen to go with several others who were invited to go for a tour. Fr. Tim can explain it better; but he felt he had a “need to go.” He was so moved by that experience that when he returned home, he asked his mom if he could go directly into the seminary (starting his freshman year in high school).

His wise mother said he wasn’t ready yet. He had too much to learn about the world around him. The

# Don't Know Him: Part I

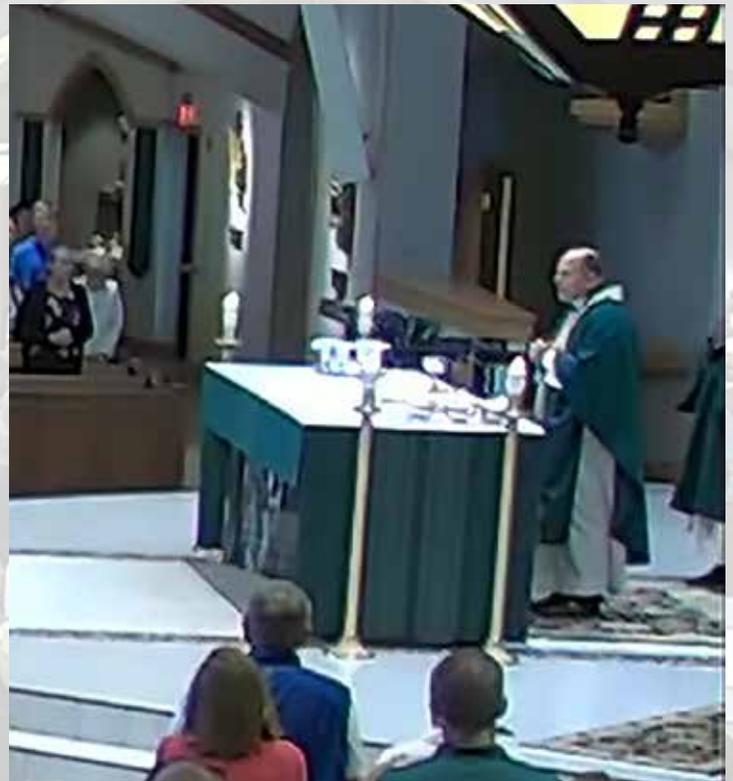
motivation went dormant in him until the end of his freshman year at Cleveland State. After experiencing a powerful retreat called Christ Renews His Parish, Fr. Tim was revisiting the possibility of entering the Seminary. Procrastinating on a history project, Fr. Tim and a friend of his went to Rocky River Library where he was drawn to look at a rack of college brochures. He picked up one from our local Borromeo Seminary; but after being teased by his friend, he put it back and tried to forget about it. After 3 months of not being able to sleep, being deluged by the thought of entering the seminary, Fr. Tim came to the deep discovery and realization that the Lord may have been calling him to the priesthood.

Father went to his parents and told him that he had to make a change. His mother was not surprised at all by his decision and his father was elated. His brothers and sisters wondered what happened to their brother but were a great support. They gladly approved and that was the start of his journey. Upon graduation from Borromeo and ordination in 1988, Fr. Tim was assigned to several area parishes. At Father's first assignment at St. Marks, he was diagnosed with a heart condition which required him to take a six month leave of absence from active ministry. Thankfully, Father fully recovered and returned ready to take on his priestly ministry. Fr. Tim was assigned to St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Elyria and then St. Angela Merici Parish in Fairview Park.

In June of 2000, Fr. Tim was assigned as Parochial Vicar at St. Raphael and eventually was installed as our fourth pastor in September of 2002.

Now that is a brief resume of how Fr. Tim got to where his is today. I imagine it's like many similar stories that other priests would tell of their journey to the priesthood. But there is so much more to this man's story. It would take a lot more space than the editors of this newsletter would grant me. So let me, in a simple and inadequate way, summarize Fr. Tim's spiritual growth and development.

If you have ever had a spiritual awareness that God is speaking to you, then you know the impact that it has on you. Father Tim has had many such experiences.



Even before he was born, God destined him to the priesthood. Fr. Tim pointed out that the seeds of his vocation may have come from his Uncle Bill who was killed by Nazis trying to protect some nuns inside a church. His uncle was wrapped in the altar cloth and placed in the sanctuary on the floor in front of the altar. His sacrifice inspired Fr. Tim profoundly.

Another example of the awareness of God's presence that touched and inspired Fr. Tim greatly came just after his ordination to the priesthood. After ordination he went to Rome for a two-week vacation with three other priests. He concelebrated Mass with the now Saint John Paul II and was blessed by him! He was given a rosary by the Pontiff and Fr. Tim gave the rosary to his mother in thanksgiving for her love and support. Fr. Tim was ordained in the Marian Year and he dedicated his priesthood to our Blessed Mother. His second Mass was celebrated in a Marian Chapel at the North American College in Rome.

He and another priest were the only ones present for the Mass and he was struck to the core of his heart and soul as the First Reading for the Mass was the Call of

# In Praise of Ushers

*By Joy Horvath*

At any Mass on the weekend, you are likely greeted in the Gathering Area by a smiling well-dressed gentleman or lady, with an official burgundy name tag on the lapel. He or she is perhaps the first smiling “hello” of the day, or the last cheerful “goodbye” you hear. These volunteers are our ushers, who arrive early, stay late, and assure that our worship area is ready for our celebration of the Mass. Who are these generous people, and what motivates them to give of their time each week? Al Soltis, venerable 30-year volunteer and Head Usher, recently gave me some details.

There are 31 “Blue Coat Ushers,” so called because of their unofficial dress code—blue blazers for the gentlemen, and appropriate dress for the ladies. There are also 24 back-up ushers who help with the collection each week. Ages range from under 30 to over 80 years of age. There are three college student volunteers and two active women ushers. While Al Soltis is the Head Usher, each Mass team has a Lead Usher.

The team arrives about 15 minutes before Mass, and spends time greeting parishioners, seating people during especially crowded times, and escorting disabled and handicapped worshippers to reserved seating. Every Sunday at the 8 a.m. Mass, one particular usher waits at the covered entrance drop-off area for the arrival of a certain silver-haired woman. He caringly escorts her to the front seating, then stows her walker out of the way of others. Similar acts of thoughtfulness occur at all the Masses.

Ushers find communion gift bearers, pass the collection baskets, and distribute bulletins at the end of Mass. They have also been assigned a new and important role during the distribution of the Eucharist. You might have noticed that one of the Blue Coats approaches the altar for a ciborium. Since the ushers know who might have difficulty getting into the communion line, they have been asked to take the Eucharist to those worshippers in the pews, allowing the priest to stay at the altar.



After bulletins and smiles have been handed out at the end of Mass, ushers remain about 20 minutes longer to clean up the pews and gather any abandoned articles. What are the most-forgotten items? Umbrellas. Thirty to forty of them are collected each year. They have also found lots of toys, little cars and trucks, books, gloves, and rosaries. One parent once left a fully-equipped diaper bag (but not the baby!), and someone once left a video camera, still recording. Wallets, cell phones, and a digital camera have all been rounded up by ushers, secured in the church safe, waiting for owners to return. Other, less valuable treasures are stored in the Ushers’ Room in the Gathering Area. Unclaimed articles are given to the Westside Catholic Center at the end of a year.

What are some unusual situations Al and his team have had to deal with? “Church Tourism” has occurred—insensitive visitors have entered the sanctuary before Mass, sipping cups of coffee, and talking loudly. Noisy disruptions during Mass are an occasional occurrence. Once, Al was passing the collection basket, and noticed a woman writing a check which he assumed was for the church. No, she indicated, she was paying bills. (Sure enough, bills and envelopes were spread out on the pew next to her!) And then there are Christmas and Easter Masses; directing “people traffic” in the building, with both the main sanctuary and the Parish Activity Center hosting Masses at the same time, is as challenging as navigating the car traffic in the parking lot.

On occasion, health issues have caused some commotion during Masses. Fainting is the usual problem, and most

people readily admit that either they took too much or too little of a medication, or that they were dehydrated. Once in a while, EMS services are called, and response is quick because the Bay Village facility is so close. In addition, all parishioners should know that there is an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) available in the Ushers' Room.

Al Soltis and his team are especially solicitous of our handicapped and disabled brothers and sisters, and are extra attentive to their needs before, during, and after Mass. We, the parishioners of St. Raphael, have witnessed so many acts of Christian kindness and thoughtfulness the ushers display each week. For their part, they enjoy the personal interaction with the congregation, are justifiably proud of their contribution to the smooth function of our weekend Masses, and should be satisfied with a job well-done.

There are many empty slots on the team roster! If you feel called to this ministry, it helps to have a friendly attitude, a caring heart, strong legs, and maybe a blue blazer (if you're a guy!). Call Al Soltis (871-0981) or give your name to one of "Blue Coats" at Mass.



## The Christian Origins of Easter

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die because of accidents or quarrels. Jesus died once and for all, according to the teachings of the New Testament. Other stories involve the 'god' dying every year, corresponding to changing seasons," Nash wrote before his death in 2006.

As for Easter eggs and bunnies, there is little evidence that modern Christians lifted these symbols from pagans. In the early years of the Church, eating eggs was forbidden during Lent. Therefore, Christians celebrated the end of Lent and the arrival of Easter Sunday by cracking open beautifully painted eggs. And the Easter Bunny didn't appear until sometime in the 1700s, when German immigrants in Pennsylvania introduced him into their Easter celebrations as a special surprise for children.

In sum, Christians borrowed their Pascal celebrations from the Jewish Passover. Easter traditions—whether it's Orthodox Christians in Russia painting elaborate eggs or German Catholics delivering gifts to children from the "Easter bunny"—have varied according to

regional and cultural traditions, and have changed greatly since the early days of the Church. But none of these traditions seem to have roots in paganism. Those who seek to undermine Christianity might tout this theory to make it seem as if believing in Christ's resurrection has as much validity as worshipping animals or fertility goddesses. But the next time you hear these dubious claims about Easter and pagan mythology, remember it is just that: a myth.



# St. Raphael

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## *He Knows You, But You Don't Know Him: Part I*

*Continued from Page 5*

Timothy! When Fr. Tim was recuperating from his heart illness and was confined to bed, he prayed every day in front of a crucifix in his family's condominium.

This gave him such tremendous strength and encouragement that he offered each day's suffering for a different person and watched with holy amazement at what God could do in their lives. Fr. Tim's suffering, joined to others, brought strength

and comfort and healing to them. It brought great meaning and purpose to his suffering.

Fr. Tim sees his role as a Priest as one who opens his life to the Holy Spirit in all that he does, especially at Mass and the sacraments. He is acutely aware that he needs to keep "filling" his spirit and soul with constant prayer and union with the Lord in his service and his ministry to the people of God.

### *Liturgy Schedule*

**Saturday Vigil:** 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., noon

**Weekday Mass:** M, T, W, F, 7:45 a.m. | M, T, Th, F, 9:15 a.m. | Saturday, 8:30 a.m.

**Confessions:** Saturdays 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. | **Eucharistic Adoration:** Friday 10:00 a.m. - Saturday 4:00 p.m.