We continue our occasional series of essays by parishioners who, in the words of St. Ignatius, ‘find God in all things.’ This essay is by Rebecca Bergh, who shares her musical gifts with Old St. Joseph’s as member of the Loyola Choir.

It was a hot summer in Upstate New York. My family was visiting my grandma, probably between weeks spent at Keuka or Canandaigua Lake. Although the details are hazy, I remember hearing that on a recent visit, my cousin Libby had gone with my grandma to sing with the church choir, and my interest had been piqued. Then on Sunday morning, we climbed the narrow, steep stairs to where the organ lived, feeling the humid air thickening the higher we went within the church. My grandma introduced me to her fellow choristers: “this is my granddaughter, Rebecca.” Even as a young child I knew it was very special to be there, high above the congregation, lifting my voice with many, returning to God what is His and His alone. We stood in front of the pipes of the organ with Kay, the choir director, before us. As she conducted the choir, her bracelets would catch the light, and jingle faintly in a way that didn’t disrupt the music, but somehow added to it.

My grandma, Constance Bergh, was born 93 years ago today. While she goes by Connie, she has always lived up to her given name, Constance, which is a Latin-based name that means “constant.” She has always been constant in her independence, ministry and my life. For thirty years, my grandma sang in the parish choir at St. Mary’s South Side in a small town in Upstate New York. Growing up in Ohio meant we only visited our extended family in New York once or twice a year. After that summer’s day in the choir loft, each time we visited, Grandma would ask if I wanted to join her in singing with the choir.

If I was lucky during those visits, I could also hear stories about Nanny (pronounced “nah-nee”) Gawronski, my great-grandmother. Music was important in her family, and we had a distant relative who was a concert pianist back in Poland. I heard stories about how Franciszek X. Klobuchowski, my great-great-grandfather, made the decision to immigrate to the United States. I heard how my great-great Aunt Pauline was my grandma’s best friend, and I knew that Aunt Pauline’s 1914 Wing & Son upright grand piano was in Grandma’s basement. Nanny had given it to my grandma in the 1950’s so that my father and aunts could learn the piano. I heard that the Wing & Son

—continued inside

Old St. Joseph’s is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are in the rear of the church.
12:05 Daily Mass Intentions and Presider

**Monday**  
1/13  
*Dorothea J. Mcgonigal*  
*Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ*

**Tuesday**  
1/14  
*Benefactors of the Maryland Province*  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

**Wednesday**  
1/15  
*Old St. Joseph’s Memorial Society*  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

**Thursday**  
1/16  
*Wm. Henry and Rose Mary Ellis and Family (D)*  
*Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ*

**Friday**  
1/17  
*Old St. Joseph’s Memorial Society*  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

**Saturday**  
1/18  
*Joseph Reis*  
*Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ*

**Saturday–Sunday**

**Saturday**  
1/18  
5:30 PM  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

**Sunday**  
1/19  
7:30 AM  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

9:30 AM  
*Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ*

11:30 AM  
*Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ*

6:30 PM  
*Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ*

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**In your prayers, please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.**

Douglas Adler, George Bernato, Eleanor and Rick Bravo, Deborah Brooks, Ann Crowther, Jane Crowther, Mary Kay Crowther, Fr. Ed Dougherty SJ, Barbara Epting, Tessie Griffin, Carol Herman, Fr. Mike Hricko SJ, Sharon Krinsky, Bruce Maloney, Allen May, Giancarlo Mazzoleni, Fr. Jerry McAndrews SJ, D. Minter, Julius Mingroni, Bobby Morrissey, Barbara Paul, Tamara Lucia Sanchez Porta, David Roberts, Ray Scannapieco, Donovan Schmidt, Dennis Scott, Sara Smith, Richard Swift, Ann Frances Tozzi, Mary Turner, Robert Wasilewski, Gail Williams, Sharon Winge and Patricia Yusko.

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**Updating the Parish Prayer List**

Four times a year, OSJ renews the list of names on the parish prayer list. If you would like someone to remain on the list—or be added to it—please email bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org or call 215-923-1733.

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**Pre-Mass Reflection Group**

Each Sunday at 5:30 PM (ending by 6:20 PM) all young adult members of our parish are invited to reflect as a group on the readings that will be proclaimed at the Sunday 6:30 PM Mass. We meet in the Greaton Parlor and read the scripture of the day, followed by a short time of quiet prayer with an emphasis on imaginative prayer, and end with an opportunity for sharing and discussion. Please meet outside 321 Willings Alley and ring the doorbell to be let in to the rectory. Materials will be provided. All are welcome. If you have any questions or if you would like to sign up to facilitate, please contact Danielle at osjyac@gmail.com.
piano had lived on the front porch before the porch became the kitchen, then it moved to the automotive garage where my grandfather started his business, before it finally came to rest in the basement—but that century-old piano could be mine I was told, if I ever wanted it. “I’m not using it” Grandma had said. Asking the right questions would lead to Grandma sharing memories of when Nanny moved in with her during the 1990’s. Nanny brought her spinet piano and it came to be in the lower living room. My grandma committed herself to learning how to play it to provide some comfort to Nanny as she declined in health. Grandma has often told me that she wishes she had kept up with the piano after Nanny died.

I have been making music as long as I can remember: singing in choirs, playing in school band, becoming a master’s level music therapist. My grandma’s stories taught me my family’s history and their connection with music. Her stories helped me understand who I am and connected my talent for music with my ancestors. I don’t know when my grandma first told me that “singing is praying twice,” but it was a lesson I learned from her. It is not dependent on the quality of the singing; so long as you sing, it doubles your prayer. In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus has much to say about the responsibilities given to those who have received much from God. He tells a crowd, “Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.” As the years progressed and I continued singing and playing various instruments, I came to understand that I am cultivating this gift I was given.

Whenever I visit, it has become routine for my grandma to ask me to sing with her in church. Over time, the churches in her small town have combined into one congregation, and the choir has moved from the loft to the front of the sanctuary. My grandma no longer sings with the choir. Now when I visit, we sing together from the pews, just as we would during the choir loft all those visits in my childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Grandma often smiles at the kiss of peace, and comments on my vocal quality. She tells me how lovely it is to sit next to me. The truth is, she has given me the greater gift by instilling this ministry and by sharing music with me these many years. My grandma has been constant to me and to the One whose gift we share. What was given to the good and faithful servant has been multiplied, and we revel in our Master’s joy (Matthew 25:21).

—Rebecca Bergh, MA, MT-BC

Thank you!

Many, many thanks to all who made OSJ’s Christmas liturgies a lovely and prayerful experience for our community and our guests! Much gratitude to the musicians, ministers of hospitality, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, servers and all whose seen and unseen preparation and participation came together on these days.

Special thanks to longtime parishioner Ron Rex Piselli of Piselli Funeral Chapels for the loan of his beautiful antique Gesu Bambino statue which adorned OSJ’s Sacred Heart altar during this Christmas season.

Front page image: Photo by David Beale on Unsplash.
Announcements

Court Accompaniment Reflection
I noticed the little girl as soon as I walked into the courtroom. She was sitting on her mother’s lap before a black-robed judge. She wore a sparkly sweatshirt that said “raised by unicorns” and a solemn, anxious expression. Her family’s case was the first that I witnessed during a morning of court accompaniment on the 5th floor of 900 Market Street. The little girl seemed to understand that in this nondescript room with its impenetrable routines, her family’s life was at stake.

The judge sat beneath a seal that read “Executive Immigration Review Office.” He scheduled the petitioners’ return to court in two or three years, conducted procedures in a language they didn’t speak and gave instructions that concluded “or I will enter an order for your deportation.” Despite the external impartiality, the separation of powers was blurred in this room. It seemed clear to me that the business of this court was enforcing the executive branch’s immigration policy.

I was part of a group accompanying a young woman seeking asylum. She was among the last called forward that day. She did not have a lawyer. When the judge saw a handful of people still seated in the gallery, he asked why we were there. Turning to the young woman, he said “your friends are all there behind you.”

What I witnessed in court that morning seemed to me a kind of injustice committed by bureaucracy. Even for immigrants lucky enough to make it this far in the legal system, they face a slow erosion of their dignity and the near-total withdrawal of our obligation to welcome the stranger. I left convinced that while accompanying immigrants in court is an act of solidarity, it is also an invitation to redeem the social structures that entrap them.

—BJ Brown

Ethical Decisions in Health Care Settings
Health care decisions are complex and challenging, and something many of us will face for ourselves and our loved ones. Take some time to reflect on how we make those decisions with Rev. Dr. Aloysius Ochasi of Saint Joseph’s University Institute of Clinical Bioethics. On January 22, Rev. Dr. Aloysius Ochasi will speak on Moral Principles for Ethical Decision-making. On January 29 he will help us explore Practical Ways for Resolving Disputes When Principles are in Conflict. Both talks will take place in Barbelin Hall from 7:30–9:30 PM. A possible snow-date is set aside on February 5. While these talks will be of particular interest to health care professionals, all are encouraged to attend.

Organ Recital
The Philadelphia Chapter of the American Guild of Organist sponsors the AGO January Tuesday at Noon Organ Recitals at St. Luke’s UCC Church, 125 Main Street in North Wales PA. These free recitals feature some of the finest organists in the Philadelphia area, including Old St. Joseph’s music director Mark Bani on January 28. A reception follows each performance. For more information call 215-368-2884.

Spirit@Work for Young Adults
Looking for a Catholic retreat for young adults this spring? Join us for the third annual Philadelphia Charis Ministries retreat at St. Raphaela Retreat Center in Haverford, PA from Friday, March 6 to Sunday, March 8. Retreatants will reflect on different career or relationship paths, seek the Holy Spirit’s presence in their lives, learn Ignatian tools for decision-making, and grow in understanding how to respond to God’s invitation. Registration is open at straphaelacenter.org. Questions? Email ignatianyaretreats@straphaelacenter.org.
Announcements

Liturgical Ministers: It’s That Time Again!
Please update your profile on the Ministry Scheduler program by January 15 for February 1–March 31, which includes liturgies on Ash Wednesday (February 26, at 12:05 and 7:00 PM) and the Feast of Saint Joseph (March 19, at 6:00 PM).

When you login to the Ministry Scheduling Program, update your contact information and service preferences on the My Profile tab. Remember that the system assumes you’re available unless you indicate times that you can’t serve. Finally, be sure to click Submit at the bottom of the page even if you didn’t change anything. Thank you for your gifts of time and talent to enhance our parish liturgies!

Young Adult Happy Hour This Week!
Happy New Year! Let’s welcome in the new decade at the Young Adult Community Happy Hour on Friday, January 17, at 5:30 PM at Dock Street South, 2118 Washington Avenue. Recently opened in Point Breeze, this lively, airy brewery and mess hall has 12 beers on tap including their classic Rye IPA and a rich, malty Munich Dunkel. Pair your pint with Mediterranean fare like hummus and pita or opt for a roast beef sandwich. Contact Christopher Ross (g.chris.ross@gmail.com, 610-952-7317) with any questions—we’ll update our location inside on the OSJ YAC Facebook page. Hope to see you there!

Elizabeth Johnson’s Creation and the Cross
Old St. Joseph’s parishioner and Saint Joseph’s University theology professor Gerard Jacobitz will lead an exploration of Elizabeth A. Johnson’s latest book, Creation and the Cross on Sunday February 9, and 23 and March 1 at 1:15 PM in Barbelin Hall. You may wish to get your copy and start reading this clear and insightful exploration for the meaning of salvation for all the world.

Intelligent Talk on Immigration Today!
Immigration is a polarized issue: emotions can run high and facts are hard to come by. Come hear what people seeking safety and family reunification face at the US border and in US courts from immigration attorney Thomas M. Griffin at 1:15–2:45 PM today, January 12, in Barbelin Hall,

Centering Prayer on January 15
All are welcome to an evening of centering prayer on Wednesday, January 15 from 6:30–8:30 PM in the Drexel Parlor of the parish offices. There will be a presentation with discussion on centering prayer, followed by evening prayer with a period of centering. For further information, contact Christine Szczepanowski at 267-250-3049 or prep@oldstjoseph.org.

Anointing of the Sick
The Sacrament of the Sick—also known as the Anointing of the Sick—will be offered at 5:30 PM Mass on Saturday, January 18. This celebration is in addition to the regular monthly anointing on the first Saturday of each month at 12:05 PM. After the Liturgy of the Word, all who wish to be anointed will be invited to come forward, as at Communion. Then, the minister will call upon the Holy Spirit, extending his hands over each person to be anointed and praying in silence. The minister then anoints the person’s hands and forehead with the oil of the sick, which has been blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday. The words that accompany the anointing are especially meaningful: Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up. At Old St. Joseph’s we wish to extend the offer of grace and spiritual healing to all who suffer from illness of any sort.
INFORMATION

Pastor
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar
Fr. Frank Hannafey SJ

In Residence
Br. Robert Carson SJ
Fr. Edward Dougherty SJ (dougherty@oldstjoseph.org)
Fr. Ed O’Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

Pastoral Associate
BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager
Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music
Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices
(office@oldstjoseph.org)

Religious Education (PREP) Coordinator
Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director
Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Rectory Office Hours
Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mass Times
Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM
Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM
Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:00 PM

Medical Emergency
In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements
Old St. Joseph’s is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

Registration
Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org. They can be returned to the parish office by mail or in person.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
A priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday from 11:30 AM–12:00 PM or by appointment.

Sacrament of Baptism
If you want to arrange a baptism, please contact Fr. O’Donnell (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org) at least two months before the desired date.

Eucharist for the Homebound
To arrange to receive Communion at home, please contact the parish offices.

The Sacrament of Anointing
The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is offered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony
If you want to be married at Old St. Joseph’s, please visit our website, oldstjoseph.org and read the material under the heading Weddings. Please call the parish office at 215-923-1766 at least nine months before your desired wedding date.

Rite of Christian Initiation
If you are an adult wishing to be baptized, or to receive First Eucharist and Confirmation, or are a baptized non-Catholic seeking full communion with Catholic Church, please call the parish office or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

Mass of Christian Burial
To schedule a funeral or memorial Mass, ask your funeral director to call the parish office.

Parish Pastoral Council
(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council
Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

Adult Education
Rita O’Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo
(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership
Pat Nelson (eldership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life
Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation
Len Mancini (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship
Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community
(osjyc@gmail.com)

Altar Servers
Maria Ramirez (altarserver@oldstjoseph.org)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Bill Stewart (EM@oldstjoseph.org)

Hospital Ministry
Luanne Balestrucci (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Homebound Ministry
Neal Hébert (homeEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Lectors
Lou Anne Bulik (lectors@oldstjoseph.org)

Ushers
Nikola Szgoricich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)