

The Year of Mercy

The Light

of
St. Michael
the Archangel
Roman Catholic
Church
Lake Jackson,
Texas



Jesus said, "I am the
light of the world.
Whoever follows me will
never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of
life."

John 8:12

Adult Faith Formation
Summer – Fall 2016
(July – November 2016)



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As we begin the summer season, our Liturgical calendar comes to the end of the Easter season and we enter the second segment of Ordinary time. This segment extends from Pentecost Monday to the first Sunday of Advent and therefore making it the largest season of the Liturgical Year.

In this season, the liturgical color is green, the color of hope and growth; the Church

invites her children to meditate upon the mystery of Christ, his life, miracles and teachings, in the light of the Resurrection. It's our hope that this issue helps, our readers, to growth spiritually and to take advantage of the immense verdant fields of Ordinary time.

In this issue you'll find, in *Clergy's Corner* a message from Fr. Leo, Fr. Giovanni's message on abortion, Gary Forse's Deacon Minute and Blake Novosad greetings from Rome. In *Did You Know?* Richard Keistler reflects on the apparitions of Our Lady of Pontmain. In *Buen Camino* Ed and Kay Birdsong describe their experiences of the Way of St. James (*El Camino*).

The *Liturgical Season* takes us from the newly instituted feast of Mary Magdalene through the celebration of Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe and the ending of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

In *From the Vatican*, we have excerpts from Pope Francis' catechesis about the love of God and his mercy for us. The canonization of two saints: Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, and Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad.

In *The Saints* we feature, the inspiring and encouraging lives of the Apostles that we celebrate this season. We also include a list of Bible Studies and Prayer Groups that you may consider joining. In *Save the Date* information regarding Fr. Callistus Isara annual summer talk and a retreat that won't want to miss.

Your comments are welcome. Please do not hesitate to contact the editors or any of the team members. On behalf of the entire Adult Faith Formation Team, we wish you a fun and safe Summer.

Margarita Prinz

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Clergy Corner



Summer is usually a slack time... not so this year. Things are busy around here. This past week we had a going away party for Deb Kyle and Lisa Ondrey, both of whom are leaving us. They have blessed our parish in many ways for the sake of the children of this parish. Lisa for the middle school and Deb for our younger children. Again, I thank both of them for their years of dedication and service.

We have hired Juan Serros, a youth minister from Dallas who wanted to move closer to family. We will have his official welcoming later this summer. Juan will be fulltime and will take care of the young adults, High school and middle school. He is 37 years old, married and has three children. His wife is a nurse. Please give him a warm welcome.

Our youth have just gotten back from Steubenville South. We'll hear about their trip this weekend. It's always a blessing for them to experience this wonderful gathering of young people for the sake of Jesus Christ. "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

The mission trip is coming up. We have about 100 people going to the Shrine of the Virgin of San Juan. They are going to preach the gospel and as St. Francis says, "Preach the gospel always...and sometimes use words."

Ah, I did not mention Fr. Callistus, he is always spiritual refreshment. And so we are looking forward to a wonderful summer. And to cap it off...celebrate our 50th anniversary as a Parish.

Have a restful summer.

Msgr. Leo Wleczyk

Parish 50th Anniversary

On September 10 and 11, 2016, our parish will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. There will be a Golden Gala and a Fall Festival. Please save the date and check the bulletin for further announcements. So, how did our parish start it?

Well, it all started when in the 1940s Dow Chemical was starting up. There were approximately 50 families living in Lake Jackson and attended Mass at St. Mary's in Freeport. In 1947 under the direction of Bishop Byrne, St. Mary's pastor Fr. Thomas J. Pendergast, selected a building committee for a church in Lake Jackson. In 1954, the property on Oak Drive was secured and in 1959, a temporary church was built with Fr. Francis G. Weardon as the full-time administrator of 300 families mission church.

On March 1, 1966, St. Michael's became a parish with Fr. Ron Titus as first resident pastor. A new, larger church building was started in 1970 under Fr. Titus and dedicated on September 27th, with Reverend William Hamilton as the pastor. Fr. Titus was transferred to St. Joseph-St. Stevens and Fr. Hamilton became pastor in July. In 1971, after only seven months Fr. Hamilton was transferred to Bay City and Reverend William Robertson became our new pastor. In 1980, Fr. Robertson was transferred to St. Jerome's in Houston and Fr. Jim Welsh became our new Pastor.

In 1984, Fr. Welsh was transferred to Galveston and Fr. Leo Wleczyk became our pastor in March. Under Fr. Leo's guidance our parish has flourished and benefited from the different spiritual renewal processes like RENEW and Christ Renew His Parish which have created an inviting and welcoming parish that truly follows its motto "*There are no strangers here...only friends you haven't met*"

On March 27, 2016, Fr. Leo announced that with the Lord's blessings he will be retiring in July 2017.



Protecting The Unborn Animals But Not The Unborn Children



According to a new [Gallup poll](#), more Americans than ever before believe animals should have the same rights as humans. The poll found 32 percent of Americans support equal rights for animals, up from 25 percent in 2008. Meanwhile, 62 percent of Americans believe animals should have some protections but can still be used to benefit humans.

For centuries, society—including our laws and our cultural mores—has been based on a belief that humans are distinct creations. Indeed, our own Declaration of Independence establishes the premise that humans are “created” and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” One of our responsibilities as human beings created in God’s image is to care for animal life. Proverbs 12:10 clearly says that the righteous man regards the life of his animal. However, when society loses the ability to make meaningful distinctions between human life and animal life, it doesn’t so much elevate animals, but rather it inevitably devalues the unique character of human life.

The irony is that while there are laws imposing penalties for destroying unborn turtles, outcries arise over efforts to protect unborn babies—a clear indication of the loss of a societal moral compass that can make meaningful distinctions between the relative value of human beings and animals. Supreme Court decided to abortion-rights campaigners, striking down Texas’ contentious 2013 abortion law. In the court’s biggest abortion case in nearly a quarter of a century, justices voted 5-3 on Monday, June 27th 2016 in favor of Texas clinics that protested against the regulations. Many clinics are now expected to reopen.

Some US states have pursued a variety of restrictions on abortion, including banning certain types of procedures, prohibiting it after a certain number of weeks of gestation, requiring parental permission for girls until a certain age, imposing waiting periods or mandatory counseling, and others.

Americans remain closely divided over whether abortion should be legal. In a Reuters/Ipsos online poll involving 6,769 US adults conducted from June 3 to June 22, 47 percent of respondents said abortion generally should be legal and 42 percent said it generally should be illegal. Shall we obey God’s Law or Human Law?

In June 29th, our Catholic Church celebrated the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles. They became martyrs of the Church of Jesus for not to be overpowered in to demands of the leaders of religious as well as the society. Let us read the following Bible texts:

The Apostles before the Council (Act 5:27-29): They brought the apostles in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, where the high priest interrogated them. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us responsible for this man’s blood.” But Peter and the other apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than men.”

Pleasing God Rather Than People ([Rom 12:1-2](#)): I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The simple answer is that Christians are to obey human law except where that human law violates God’s Law. Our supreme duty is to obey God. Since God tells us to also obey human laws, we should. But, when they come in conflict, we are to “obey God rather than men.”

Fr. Giovanni Nguyen—Researched from Dr. Richard Land’s opinion.



From the Deacon's Desk



Why does the Deacon give the dismissal at the end of Mass? The ministry of deacons is fundamentally a ministry of service. This service takes a twofold expression: first, the deacon serves the community. Second, the deacon serves his bishop by assisting him in the celebration of the sacred mysteries and by gathering from the community gifts of bread and wine to be offered to God. This twofold service is no less true today than when the Apostles ordained the first seven deacons in Jerusalem two thousand years ago.

At Masses at which deacons assist the presiding priest or bishop, we notice that the deacons have specific roles in the Mass which are proper to them. The most obvious of these is the proclamation of the Gospel. Another task of the deacon is to give the dismissal at the end of Mass. The Latin formula for this dismissal is *ite, missa est*. Literally, this means, “go forth, the dismissal is made”; since a literal translation sounds awkward, we render this more smoothly as “The Mass is ended, go in peace”. The response to the dismissal is, of course, “thanks be to God”. The dismissal is given after the priest or bishop gives the final blessing. This order (blessing first, dismissal second) stands in contrast to the dismissal found in the Traditional Latin Mass. In these old rites, which grew gradually out of the Eucharistic celebrations of the earliest centuries, we see certain rituals with ancient roots going back to the times of the first Christians. For example, in the Traditional Latin Mass, the dismissal is given **before** the final blessing— a reversal of the arrangement in the modern missal.

This ancient order (dismissal first, blessing second) is one of those rituals which has its source in the early centuries of Christianity when our faith was violently persecuted under the Roman Empire. The Eucharist was celebrated in secret, and Christianity was an underground religion celebrated in the catacombs. Roman soldiers would often patrol areas around the catacombs in order to arrest and kill Christians as they emerged from the underground liturgies.

When the Eucharistic sacrifice was completed, guess who would be sent out to check whether there were Roman soldiers lurking about before the bishop and people could safely leave? The deacon. Carefully, he would go to the entrance of the catacombs to peek around for soldiers. Once the patrols had passed, the deacon could finally give the dismissal: *ite, missa est*, to which the people gladly responded, “thanks be to God”. The people and the bishop could safely leave at last. As the final gesture, the bishop would then send the people back into the hostile world with the final blessing, not knowing who would be martyred before the next Mass.

Thus, the early Christians were also thankful to God that they could finally leave Mass! Of course, it is not for the same reasons that people have today; often we say “thanks be to God” that we can now watch a sporting event, attend a barbecue, go shopping, or otherwise enjoy the rest of our weekend that was interrupted by Mass. Our ancestors in faith thought differently. They said “thanks be to God” that they might go safely to their homes to pass on the faith to their children and to promote the increase of the Church by their acts of charity. May we rediscover the strength of faith and resolute courage of those who risked their very lives for the worship of Almighty God and the propagation of the faith which, “*Thanks be to God*”, we profess today.

Deacon Gary Forse



The Jubilee Year of Mercy and the Love of God



By Blake Novosad

Greetings to all from Rome!

As you are all aware, December 8th began the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, which will last until November 20th. There have been thousands of pilgrims traveling to Rome over that past six months to enter the Holy Doors of the major basilicas with much joy and enthusiasm. One of my seminary assignments is to be present for a few hours each week in St. Peter's Square, which has provided me with the opportunity to speak to

many of these travelers. The people I meet come from every continent and have extremely diverse backgrounds, some are devoted Catholics, others are curious atheists, but each possesses a quality common to all: hunger. Each person has a deep hunger for something else, for something better, for something more. Man has been created with a capacity for the infinite because man has been created for God, and nothing less will satisfy. It is this deep hunger that I would like to speak about, for I believe that it is at the heart of Pope Francis's desire for this Year of Mercy.

Perhaps when we think of the mercy of God we think of it as something that we need after we have done something wrong, a need we have after a major mistake. While mercy may (and should!) be sought in that situation, I believe that it is something that is indispensable to our daily lives as Christians. For Jesus demands perfection of us (Matt. 5:48). The perfection that Jesus calls us to, however, is not an unrealistic life without sin, but rather a call to desire our perfect union with God (in which sin is necessarily avoided). Yet when we examine our lives at the end of the day we realize (sometimes painfully) how far we are from living up to this call to perfection. It is in this gap, the gap between the finite and the infinite, where Pope Francis is urging us to receive the mercy of God.

In the papal bull announcing the Year of Mercy Pope Francis writes that mercy is "the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2). By using the word "forever", Pope Francis is revealing the limitless quality of God's love; only God, who alone is infinite, can love infinitely. This is the hunger that each of us feels within us at times, not only in times of sadness or loneliness, but also when we encounter the limits of our material world. One simple example, think of the best song you have ever heard. You couldn't hear it enough! You played it over and over again because it gave you an indescribable feeling...until it didn't anymore. The song stopped satisfying because it was limited, but it stirred longings in your soul that are infinite (cf. C.S. Lewis's *The Weight of Glory*). Jesus, knowing this infinite capacity of our soul, calls us to perfection because He knows that nothing less will satisfy us.

What then is this perfection that Jesus calls us to? It is nothing less than His very life in the Trinity. By His Incarnation, Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, became man, and, after His Passion and Resurrection He ascended into heaven. This means that our human nature (what we all share by virtue of being human) is part of the Trinity, the very life of God. *This* is the perfection that Jesus is calling us to. Listen to His words: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (Jn. 14:23). Jesus is telling us that heaven does not begin after our death, but here and now. When we love God and seek to do His will the Blessed Trinity comes to dwell in us and we dwell in the Blessed Trinity. Once we experience this, once we *encounter* the Lord as Pope Francis says, we hunger for more of Him. We want to be filled with this love more and more. And this time our desires are satisfied beyond our wildest dreams; satisfied because God and



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His love are infinite, which means that there is always more to receive; beyond our wildest dreams because we cannot possibly imagine the goodness of this love as our minds are limited and cannot comprehend the *limitless* depths of God. This is the well that we must desire to draw from, or at least desire to desire it.

Once we begin to encounter this love of God we begin to avail ourselves to receive more of it. We pray longer and more often, we read spiritual books and Scripture, and we receive the Sacraments more often, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation. However, the closer we come to God, the more unworthy we realize we are. It is in this realization that we must cling unconditionally to the mercy of God. For no human being is ever *worthy* of God. It is not because of our worthiness that God loves us, He loves us simply because He does (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19). This is the great mystery of our faith, that God loves us as He does and desires us to share intimately in His very life.

Going forward, I propose that we each take two steps. First, let us resolve to seek this *infinite* love of God more diligently than we are right now (because God is infinite we can always go deeper into Him, but there will always be more truth and love to receive!). Second, when we fall, when we fail to do the will of God, or fail to even seek the will of God, let us run to the Father and ask for His forgiveness trusting in His mercy. For we give God great delight when we trust in his mercy and love. Pope Francis says that it is not God who grows tired of forgiving, but rather we who grow tired of asking for His mercy (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 3).

Let us not stop seeking the Lord! He wants so desperately to love us and for us to love Him in return. He thirsts for our love! Listen to His words to the Samaritan woman at the well: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (Jn 4:10). This is Jesus's invitation for us to “give Him a drink”. If we offer Jesus a short prayer every day telling Him that we love Him (or want to love Him) it will not be long before we too will be filled with a spring of water welling up to eternal life (Jn. 4:14), which is none other than God's Trinitarian life dwelling in us. And when we fall, let us turn to God immediately, imploring His help and His mercy. He will set us back on our feet and we will continue to journey into the infinite depths of His love. It is this perseverance and trust in God that marks the lives of the saints, not the absence of sin. And it is this perseverance and trust in God that Pope Francis is calling us to in this Jubilee Year of Mercy!

In the words of Pope Francis, *andiamo avanti!* (Let us go forward!)

Did You Know?



By Richard Keistler

We all, as Roman Catholics, are familiar with the apparition of our Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes. In fact, growing up as a Presbyterian, one of my favorite movies was the story. But—are you aware that there was another Marian visitation, more recent, and to the French, also very significant?

In 1870, Napoleon III in France took that nation into war against Prussia. For you church history buffs out there, this was the major reason that France was unable to help Pope Pius IX in his defense against the new Italian national red-shirts, and Rome and the Papal States subsequently fell to the Italians. As fits the old cliché, the French just didn't stand up well to the efficient Prussians, and, as we may know better from World War II, by the



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following year the Prussians were threatening Paris, and nearly two-thirds of the country was already under Prussian control.

There was a little town of about five hundred people named Pontmain. This village was directly in the path of the Prussian army. One night, January 17, 1871, there were two young boys in Pontmain, aged ten and twelve, who were helping their father in the barn. The older boy walked to the door of the barn and looked out into the night, and saw a beautiful lady in the sky, wearing a dark blue gown with golden stars, and a golden crown over a black veil.

The child called his father and brother over; his younger brother could see the apparition, but his father couldn't. The boys' mother came outside, but, like their father, couldn't see anything. They sent for the local schoolteacher, Sister Vitaline. Like the parents, she also was unable to see this apparition. However, she had two small girls brought to the place, and they were able to describe the apparition without prompting, exactly as the two boys had done.

Quickly in this small village, many people began to gather. All of the children of Pontmain could see the apparition, but the adults could not; all they could see was three stars. The children began praying the Rosary, and soon the stars began increasing, until the garment of the apparition was almost all golden stars.

Next, the children saw a banner under the apparition. As it became visible, it stated, "But pray, my children, God will hear you in time. My Son allows Himself to be touched." After the children read the message aloud, the entire crowd began singing the hymn, "Mother of Hope". According to accounts, the apparition laughed and joined in the singing!

The crowd next began singing, "My Sweet Jesus". At this hymn, the expression of the apparition changed from joy to extreme sadness. A red crucifix became visible to the children with the words, "Jesus Christ", above it, and she viewed the cross during the hymn. However, when the crowd began the hymn, "Ave Maris Stella", the cross disappeared, and the lady again smiled. Two small white crosses appeared on her shoulders, and the lady disappeared. The total time of the apparition was three hours—not an insignificant time.

That very same evening, suddenly the Prussian troops stopped their advance toward Pontmain. Documentation records that the advance stopped at the same time as the apparition's appearance. General Schmidt of the Prussian army was quoted as stating that there was "an invisible 'Madonna' barring the way".

Very shortly thereafter, an armistice was negotiated between France and Prussia (remember, the German nation was still just in early formation). Thirty-eight men and boys had been conscripted to fight the Prussians; after the apparition, all thirty-eight returned unharmed.

As a follow-up, both of the young boys who originally saw the apparition became priests, one ordered and one diocesan. One of the two little girls who first saw the apparition became a nun. A sanctuary was constructed in Pontmain the year after the armistice. Saint Pius X elevated that sanctuary to the level of a basilica, and Pius XI passed a decree with the ultimate honor, that of the crowning of the Marian statue there with a crown of gold.

As with Fatima, this apparition is one that is difficult for skeptics and non-believers to explain. However, it can be very easy for those of us who are Catholic!



Buen Camino

By Ed and Kay Birdsong,



Our journey to Santiago began back in 2001 when Ed and I read Shirley MacLaine's memoir about walking the Camino de Santiago. The pilgrimage to the town of Santiago (St. James) began with the Apostle, St. James, preaching in that area of Spain in A.D. 33. He wasn't very successful and returned to Palestine where he ended up being beheaded by King Herod in Jerusalem. Legend has it that James' disciples smuggled his body out of Jerusalem and loaded it on a boat made of stone. Without sails or a crew the boat made it to the western coast of Spain where it was discovered by his disciples there who buried him. It was forgotten until 813 when a hermit saw strange lights and heard celestial music coming from a hill. He called the local bishop and they found a marble coffin with the name of Santiago inscribed on it. The local King (Alphonso

II) was also called and a church was built. There are numerous other legends and miracles ascribed to St. James and once the church was built pilgrims started walking to Santiago de Compostela

Although we were very interested in walking the Camino, the time wasn't right for us then. Then in 2014, the Theresian Community presented a program on the Camino and several ladies at church started talking about going. As it turned out, no one else could go, but Ed and I decided we would make the walk. However, the idea of carrying backpacks and trying to find a place to sleep and something to eat every night was not appealing. We also knew we couldn't walk the entire 500 miles. So we looked for tour companies who would take care of our daily needs and decided to walk the last 100 kilometers (66 miles) so that we would be recognized by the Catholic Church as pilgrims and receive the Compostela certificate. We decided on Fresco Tours and they met us at a hotel in Madrid and took us by bus to Leon where we started our tour. There were 9 of us on the tour and Ed was the only man! In Leon, we stayed in a monastery that had been converted to a hotel and was connected to the Basilica of San Isidoro. We attended mass there that evening and our tour guides had talked to the priest before mass about giving us a blessing for the start of our Camino. So we received a blessing from a very kind priest who did not speak English but took us to a private chapel and gave us a copy of the blessing in English while he prayed it in Spanish. Then he shook each of our hands and wished us "Buen Camino". We heard and said that phrase many times every day for the next nine days.

Our tour group, while all women, was somewhat diverse in other regards. In age, we probably ranged from around 40 to 80 and came from all over the United States. Four of us were Catholic or at least practicing Catholics, one was Methodist, one was Jewish and the other three didn't really discuss their beliefs. Five of them seemed to be there for the adventure, three of us definitely were there for spiritual reasons, and one had found out a year ago that she had a terminal illness. As our tour guides told us many times, everyone walks their own Camino and for their own reasons so even though the nine of us (and our two guides and bus driver) were all different, we became close during the ten days we spent together.

Our first day, we hiked up to the Iron Cross where we brought a rock from home and left it at the cross. Again, pilgrims do this for many different reasons and our tour guide suggested we were leaving our past sins at the cross and our slates would be wiped clean when we reached Santiago. After our hike this day and many days we visited special villages, churches and



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monasteries along the way. All of our meals were also provided along with wonderful Spanish wines! Most days we walked from 9:30am until about 1:30pm and then had lunch. A couple of the days we walked after lunch as well which means that we walked about nine to eleven miles a day. As we found out the first day, walking on the Camino is not the same as walking in Lake Jackson! We walked on rocks, uphill and downhill as well as along beautiful forested paths. The walking was definitely a challenge for me and I soon developed the dreaded blisters on my feet. Ed's back challenged him and we were grateful we had chosen the "Gentler Camino" so that we had a bus and van for support as well as fewer miles to walk each day. At the end of our day of walking, the bus took us to our hotel and then brought us back to where we left off to start the next day. Our actual sixty-six miles began in Sarria and ended in Santiago and took eight days. Sometimes it was crowded with pilgrims and sometimes you were all alone on the trail if you chose. To find your way, the trail is marked with yellow arrows and shell symbols. There were many markers pointing the way that also specified how many kilometers it was to Santiago. The hours of walking could be spent in prayer and meditation or in sharing and getting to know someone better. It was an amazing gift to have that time and we reached Santiago with mixed emotions.

As you come into the city, you finally reach the Cathedral and walk around to the front plaza where pilgrims are hugging and congratulating one another for completing the walk. That evening we toured a little of the Cathedral which is beautiful and magnificent and we visited the tomb of St. James and hugged his statue. Then we attended the pilgrim's mass and the cathedral was totally packed. I'm sure the homily was great but it was all in Spanish so we didn't understand but it was just amazing to be there. After Communion, the highlight of the mass was the lighting of the incense in the giant botafumerio (incense burner) which is suspended from the ceiling by a pulley mechanism. Eight men in robes pull the ropes causing the censer to swing from one side of the Cathedral to the other to a height of over 68 feet. The sight of the men pulling on the ropes, the incense filling the air, and the censer reaching the heights of the Cathedral causes a simultaneous intake of breath from all the amazed pilgrims and then an overwhelming feeling of joy to be part of the experience especially as the final moment of a physical and spiritual journey. I think that everyone is changed in some way by the Camino and as is printed on the Cathedral's website, *"The destination of the Way is now the beginning of another journey, of your new life."*

The Liturgical Season

St. Mary Magdalene

Feast July 22



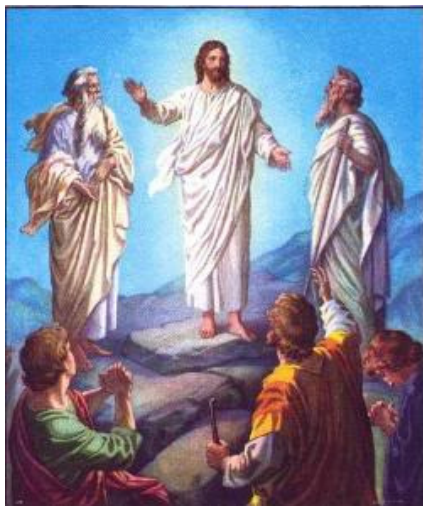
Vatican Radio 2016-06-10 - The Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Archbishop Arthur Roche, says Pope Francis' decision to raise the celebration of the memorial of St Mary Magdalene to the dignity of a liturgical Feast reflects the importance of this female disciple and women in general within the life of the Church. He also said that it reflects the Holy Father's view about "the importance of women and their role within the life of the Church," and the valuable role women can play in the new evangelization because they can reach places to spread the gospel where men do not readily go. The archbishop also drew attention to Mary



Magdalene's important role as the first witness to Christ's Resurrection and as the person who announced that momentous event to the Apostles. He noted it was Mary Magdalene's sense of compassion, love and anxiety that drew her to Christ's tomb. "Christ showed her (Mary Magdalene) a very special mercy by appearing to her and also by giving her this remarkable role of telling the apostles that the Lord had risen," Archbishop Roche said.

The Transfiguration of the Lord

Feast August 6



An excerpt from the Address of Pope St. John Paul II on August 6, 1999.

Today, the Eucharist which we are preparing to celebrate takes us in spirit to Mount Tabor together with the Apostles Peter, James and John, to admire in rapture the splendor of the transfigured Lord. In the event of the Transfiguration we contemplate the mysterious encounter between history, which is being built every day, and the blessed inheritance that awaits us in heaven in full union with Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

We, pilgrims on earth, are granted to rejoice in the company of the transfigured Lord when we immerse ourselves in the things of above through prayer and the celebration of the divine mysteries. But, like the disciples, we too must descend from Tabor into daily life where

human events challenge our faith. On the mountain we saw; on the paths of life we are asked tirelessly to proclaim the Gospel which illuminates the steps of believers.

This deep spiritual conviction guided the whole ecclesial mission of my venerable Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, who returned to the Father's house precisely on the Feast of the Transfiguration, 21 years ago now. In the reflection he had planned to give at the Angelus on that day, 6 August 1978, he said: "The Transfiguration of the Lord, recalled by the liturgy of today's solemnity throws a dazzling light on our daily life, and makes us turn our mind to the immortal destiny which that fact foreshadows".

Yes! Paul VI reminds us: we are made for eternity and eternity begins at this very moment, since the Lord is among us and lives with and in his Church.

As we commemorate my unforgettable Predecessor in the see of Peter with deep emotion, let us pray that every Christian will know how to draw courage and constancy from contemplating Christ, who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3), in order to proclaim and witness faithfully through his words and works.

May Mary, our tender and caring Mother, help us to be bright rays of the saving light of her Son Jesus.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Solemnity August 15

An excerpt from the Address of Pope Benedict XVI on August 15, 2007:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Today, we are celebrating the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is an ancient feast deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture: indeed, it presents the Virgin



Mary closely united to her divine Son and ever supportive of him.

Mother and Son appear closely bound in the fight against the infernal enemy until they completely defeat him. This victory is expressed in particular in overcoming sin and death, that is, in triumphing over the enemies which St Paul always presents as connected (cf. Rom 5: 12, 15-21; I Cor 15: 21-26).

Therefore, just as Christ's glorious Resurrection was the definitive sign of this victory, so Mary's glorification in her virginal body is the ultimate confirmation of her total solidarity with the Son, both in the conflict and in victory.

The Servant of God Pope Pius XII interpreted the deep theological meaning of this mystery on 1 November 1950 when he pronounced the solemn Dogmatic Definition of this Marian privilege.

He declared: "Hence, the revered Mother of God, from all eternity joined in a hidden way with Jesus Christ in one and the same decree of predestination, immaculate in her conception, a most perfect virgin

in her divine motherhood, the noble associate of the divine Redeemer who has won a complete triumph over sin and its consequences, finally obtained, as the supreme culmination of her privileges, that she should be preserved free from the corruption of the tomb and that, like her own Son, having overcome death, she might be taken up body and soul to the glory of Heaven where, as Queen, she sits in splendor at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the Ages" (Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus: AAS 42, [1 November 1950]).

Dear brothers and sisters, after being taken up into Heaven, Mary did not distance herself from us but continues to be even closer to us and her light shines on our lives and on the history of all humanity. Attracted by the heavenly brightness of the Mother of the Redeemer, let us turn with trust to the One who looks upon us and protects us from on high.

We all need her help and comfort to face the trials and challenges of daily life; we need to feel that she is our mother and sister in the concrete situations of our lives.

And so that we too may one day be able to share in her same destiny, let us imitate her now in her meek following of Christ and her generous service to the brethren. This is the only way to have a foretaste, already on our earthly pilgrimage, of the joy and peace which those who reach the immortal destination of Paradise live to the full.

Queenship of Mary

Memorial August 22

Mary the Queen

By Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

O Lady, whose throne is above the thrones! O Lady, full of wisdom greater than the cherubim's! O Lady, inflamed with love greater than the seraphim! In the company of these three choirs we render you obedience as your most indebted servants.

We entreat you in your magnanimity, remember, divine Esther, your afflicted people and your oppressed lineage. Liberate us, sovereign Judith, from the dominion of the devil. Reward our works according to your justice. Enlighten our understanding with your wisdom so that we may contemplate your greatness. Inflame our hearts with your love, so that filled with the fervor of your sweet devotion, illuminated with your light, and aided by your maternal protection, we will know in this life the means of serving you and of fulfilling the will of your most holy Son, so that we merit entering the glory where we will enjoy your company forever by passing through the portal of your intercession.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, († 1695) was a Mexican nun and a poet, dramatist, and spiritual writer.



The Triumph of the Cross

Feast September 14

An excerpt from the Homily of Pope John Paul II on September 14, 1988.

The feast that we celebrate today speaks of a marvelous and ceaseless action of God in human history, in the history of every man, woman and child. The Cross of Christ on Golgotha has become for all time the center of this saving work of God. Christ is the Savior of the world, because in him and through him the love with which God so loved the world is continuously revealed: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son" (Ibid. 3, 16).

– The Father gave him so that this Son, who is one in substance with him, would become man by being conceived of the Virgin Mary.

– The Father gave him so that as the Son of Man he would proclaim the Gospel, the Good News of salvation.

– The Father gave him so that this Son, by responding with his own infinite love to the love of the Father, might offer himself on the Cross.

From a human point of view, Christ's offering of himself on the Cross was a sign of contradiction, an unthinkable disgrace. It was, in fact, the most profound humiliation possible.

The Apostle Paul speaks to us in words that capture the mystery of the Cross of Christ: "His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a Cross. But God raised him high" (Phil. 2, 6-9).

Through his self-emptying on Golgotha, in the disgrace of the Cross and the crucifixion (at least in the human way of understanding these events) Christ receives the highest exaltation. In God's eyes, the Cross is the greatest triumph. The way of human judgment is very different from God's. God's judgment far surpasses ours. What seems to us to be failure is, in God's eyes, the victory of sacrificial love.

It is precisely this Cross of human disgrace that bears within itself the source of the exaltation of Christ in God. "God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Ibid. 2, 9-11).

Let us never forget the Cross, the triumphant Cross.

Let us never forget the works of the Lord! (Cfr. Ps. 78 (77), 7). Amen

Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels

Feast Sept. 29



*An excerpt from the book Saints—Seventy Stories of Faith
by Alexandra Bonfante-Warren:*

As often as there is work of wondrous power to be wrought, Michael is sent to perform it. This mighty angel is an important figure in both the Old and the New Testament, and in both the Eastern Church, where he is protector of the sick, and the Western, where he is the patron saint of all Christians, and of soldiers. Michael has fought the Devil and his demons since he triumphed over them and cast them



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out of Heaven; it is he who will welcome the holy souls to Paradise; and it is his voice who will call the dead to rise again. Michael, it is said, has often appeared on earth, but three of his visits are especially well known.

In the late fifth century, Michael appeared on Mount Gargano in southeastern Italy, announcing that he wished to make that place his earthly home. When his church was built and consecrated, he placed his mantle upon the altar: the angel's feast day, also known as Michaelmas, commemorates the consecration of the church.

A second apparition took place in northwest France. There, too, Michael had a church built on a hill, a rock surrounded by water, today still named for the archangel: Mont-Saint-Michel. When the church was consecrated, Michael brought a piece of his cloak from Mount Gargano, along with a fragment of the marble on which he had stood.

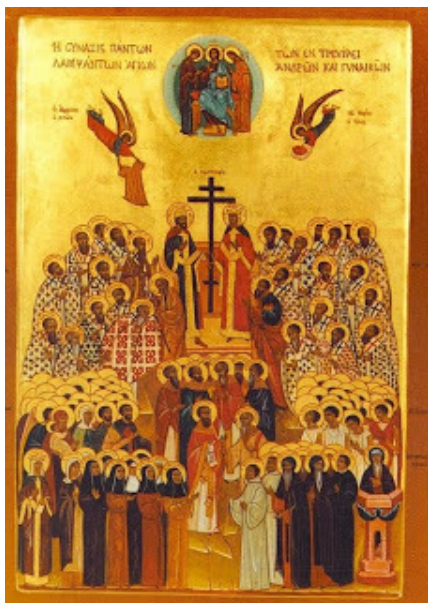
The third apparition was vouchsafed to Pope Saint Gregory the Great. During a terrible plague in Rome, Gregory was praying that the people be delivered, when he saw above the mausoleum of the emperor Hadrian the radiant archangel Michael drying blood off his sword, then sheathing it, a heavenly sign that the plague was over. In gratitude, Gregory had a church built on the site, today known as Castel Sant' Angelo—the Fortress of the Holy Angel.

In the twentieth century, the archangels Gabriel and Raphael, once venerated by the eastern Church but only locally in western Europe, joined Michael in being honored on this day.

All Saints

Solemnity Nov. 1

An excerpt from the Angelus of Pope Benedict XVI on November 1, 2006:



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we are celebrating the Solemnity of All Saints, and tomorrow we will be commemorating the faithful departed. These two deeply felt liturgical celebrations offer us a special opportunity to meditate upon eternal life.

Is modern man still waiting for this eternal life, or does he consider it part of a mythology now obsolete?

In our time more than in the past, people are so absorbed by earthly things that at times they find it difficult to think about God as the protagonist of history and of our own existence.

By its nature, however, human life reaches out for something greater which transcends it; the human yearning for justice, truth and full happiness is irrepressible.

In the face of the enigma of death, the desire for and hope of meeting their loved ones again in Heaven is alive in many, just as there is a strong conviction that a Last Judgment will re-establish justice, and the expectation of a definitive encounter in which each person will be given his reward.

For us as Christians, however, "eternal life" does not merely mean a life that lasts for ever but rather a new quality of existence, fully immersed in God's love, which frees us from evil and death and places us in never-ending communion with all our brothers and sisters who share in the same Love.

Thus, eternity can already be present at the heart of earthly and temporal life when the soul is united through grace with God, its ultimate foundation.



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Everything passes, God alone never changes. A Psalm says: "Though my flesh and my heart waste away, God is the rock of my heart and my portion for ever" (Ps 73[72]: 26). All Christians, called to holiness, are men and women who live firmly anchored to this "Rock", their feet on the ground but their hearts already in Heaven, the final dwelling-place of friends of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us meditate on these realities with our souls turned toward our final and definitive destiny, which gives meaning to the circumstances of our daily lives. Let us enliven the joyous sentiment of the communion of Saints and allow ourselves to be drawn by them towards the goal of our existence: the face-to-face encounter with God.

Let us pray that this may be the inheritance of all the faithful departed, not only our own loved ones but also of all souls, especially those most forgotten and most in need of divine mercy.

May the Virgin Mary, Queen of all the Saints, guide us to choose the world of eternal life at every moment, "and life everlasting", as we say in the Creed; a world already inaugurated by the Resurrection of Christ, whose coming we can hasten with our sincere conversion and charitable acts.

Dedication of St. John Lateran Church

Feast Nov. 9



An excerpt from the Angelus of Pope Francis on November 9, 2014.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today the liturgy commemorates the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, which is the Cathedral of Rome and which tradition defines as "mother of all Churches of the city and of the world". The term "mother", refers not as much to the sacred building of the Basilica, as to the work of the Holy Spirit who is made manifest in this building, bearing fruit through the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, and in all communities which abide in unity with the Church over which he

presides.

Each time we celebrate the dedication of a church, an essential truth is recalled: the physical temple made of brick and mortar is a sign of the living Church serving in history, that is to say, of that "spiritual temple", as the Apostle Peter says, in which Christ himself is the "living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious" (1 Pt 2:4).

In the Gospel from today's liturgy, Jesus, speaking about the temple, reveals a shocking truth: that the Temple of God is not only a building made of brick and mortar, but is his Body, made of living stone. Through the power of Baptism, every Christian takes part in "God's building" (1 Cor 3:9), indeed they become the Church of God. The spiritual structure, the Church community of mankind sanctified by the Blood of Christ and by Spirit of the Risen Lord, asks each one of us to be consistent with the gift of the faith and to undertake a journey of Christian witness. And we all know that in life it is not easy to maintain consistency between faith and testimony; but we must carry on and be coherent in our daily life. "This is a Christian!", not so much in what he says, but in what he does, and the way in which he behaves. This coherence, which gives us life, is a grace of the Holy Spirit which we must ask for. The Church, at the beginning of her life and of her mission in the world, was but a



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community constituted to confess faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God and Redeemer of Man, a faith which operates through love. They go together! In today's world too, the Church is called to be the community in the world which, rooted in Christ through Baptism, humbly and courageously professes faith in Him, witnessing to it in love.

The institutional elements, the structures and the pastoral entities must also be directed toward this goal, this essential goal of bearing witness to the faith in love. Love is the very expression of faith and also, faith is the explanation and the foundation of love. Today's celebration invites us to meditate on the communion of all Churches, that is, of this Christian community. By analogy she spurs us to commit ourselves in order that humanity may overcome the confines of enmity and indifference, to build bridges of understanding and dialogue, to make of the entire world one family of people reconciled among themselves, in fraternal solidarity. The Church herself is a sign and preview of this new humanity, as she lives and, through her witness, spreads the Gospel, the message of hope and reconciliation for all mankind.

Let us invoke the intercession of the Most Holy Mary that she may help us to become like her, the "House of God", and the living temple of his love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe

Solemnity Nov. 20



An excerpt from the Homily of Pope Francis on November 23, 2014:

Today's liturgy invites us to fix our gaze on Christ, the King of the Universe...

Jesus brought about his kingdom... through his closeness and tenderness towards us. He is the Shepherd...

The Father, little by little, subjects all to the Son and, at the same time, the Son subjects all to the Father, including even himself in the end. Jesus is not a King according to earthly ways: for him, to reign is not to command, but to obey the Father, to give himself over to the Father, so that his plan of love and salvation may be brought to fulfillment. In this way there is full reciprocity between the Father and the Son. The period of Christ's reign is the long period of subjecting everything to the Son and consigning everything to the Father...

The Gospel teaches *what Jesus' kingdom requires of us*: it reminds us that closeness and tenderness are the rule of life for us also, and that on this basis we will be judged. This is how we will be judged...

The starting point of salvation is not the confession of the sovereignty of Christ, but rather the imitation of Jesus' works of mercy through which he brought about his kingdom. The one who accomplishes these works shows that he has welcomed Christ's sovereignty, because he has opened his heart to God's charity. In the twilight of life we will be judged on our love for, closeness to and tenderness towards our brothers and sisters. Upon this will depend our entry into, or exclusion from, the kingdom of God: our belonging to the one side or the other. Through his victory, Jesus has opened to us his kingdom. But it is for us to enter into it, beginning with our life now – his kingdom begins now – by being close in concrete ways to our brothers and sisters who ask for bread, clothing, acceptance, solidarity, catechesis. If we truly love them, we will be willing to share with them what is most precious to us, Jesus himself and his Gospel.



Bible Studies

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" St. Jerome

The Lectionary

Day	Sunday
Time	9:30 am
Location	Room 149
Leader	Joe Lesnau
Tel.	979-265-6221



Adult Faith Sharing

Day	Sunday
Time	10:45 am
Location	Room 149
Leader	Gary Forse
Tel.	979-299-3145

Day	Wednesday
Time	6:00 am
Location	Angelina Room
Leader	Duane Williams
Tel.	979-297-5564



Day	Wednesday
Time	9:30 am
Location	Room 149
Leader	Bettie Carmody
Tel.	979-265-6509

Day	Thursday
Time	9:15 am
Location	"F" Wing
Leader	Jeanne Schroll
Tel.	979-297-5860



Day	Friday
Time	9:15 am
Location	Room 149
Leader	Pam Walker
Tel.	979-297-9746

What Is Mercy?

An excerpt from the Magnificat Year of Mercy Companion by Fr. John Dominic Corbett, O.P.:

Mercy is the form love takes when it encounters misery. It is first of all a form of love because it wants what is good *for the one who is loved*. Keeping this in mind can keep us from some subtle and corrupting mistakes. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas points out that mercy is a Godlike virtue because it involves the strong showing pity to the weak, and from this truth someone may delight in showing "mercy" precisely because it allows him to highlight his own superiority on both a spiritual and material level. But this isn't really mercy. It's just pride dressing up as mercy. It's the sort of pride that Saint Francis de Sales said would make the poor "hate you for the very bread you have given them."



Prayer Groups

"Hear my prayer, O God. Give ear to the words of my mouth" Psalm 54:2

Day	Time	Focus	Location
Monday	7:00 pm	Rosary	Church
1 st Monday	7:00 pm	Patriotic Rosary	Church
Tuesday	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	Rosary Divine Mercy Chaplet	Church
Wednesday	8:00 am 9:00 am	Rosary Divine Mercy Chaplet	Church
Thursday	5:00 pm 6:00 pm	Rosary Divine Mercy Chaplet	Church
Friday	8:00 am 9:00 am	Rosary Divine Mercy Chaplet	Church
Saturday	6:30 am	Men's Prayer Group	"F" Wing
Saturday	8:00 am	Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet	Chapel
1 st Saturday	8:00 am	Pro-Life Rosary	Chapel

What Is Mercy? Cont.

Mercy is not condescension. Instead it is kind of restoration. Imagine someone of royal lineage who has recently fallen upon hard times. He is wandering and lost and perhaps suffering from a form of amnesia. He can not tell you his name. If you encounter this person, you feel compelled to restore something lost. You don't love the fact that he doesn't have access to who he really is. You love what he is and who he is, and also you strive to restore who he really is.

Or imagine a young person lacking judgment, experience and knowledge. If you love this young person, you don't love her poverty in these matters. You love her and what she could be with the proper instruction and guidance, and therefore you want to free her from her present limitations. This is the gift of mercy, and it is rooted in profound respect.

This way of putting things makes a difference, because one could place the stress elsewhere. One could, for example, stress the fact that mercy is contrasted with justice. It is an undeserved gift, and hence to receive it marks one forever as one of the "undeserving poor." To receive mercy would, on that case, also be to receive a form of contempt.

God knows us as he intends us to be; his sons, his daughters, his friends. He knows that he has fitted us for himself and that no other destiny for us will do. When he knows us as sinners and as unable to secure our own deliverance from sins, he knows us as needing his mercy. But this mercy is, in a way, called for, not by reason of our own merits, but because of his own fatherly affection for us because he sees the change in us that his father's love will produce. His mercy reflects God's true judgment on us as being not his "undeserving poor" but his own beloved children.



The Holidays



“IT IS A GOOD THING TO GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD.”

Across the uncertain ways of space and time our hearts echo those words, for the days are with us again when, at the gathering of the harvest, we solemnly express our dependence upon Almighty God.

The final months of this year, now almost spent, find our Republic and the nations joined with it waging a battle on many fronts for the preservation of liberty.

In giving thanks for the greatest harvest in the history of our nation, we who plant and reap can well resolve that in the year to come we will do all in our power to pass that milestone; for by our labors in the fields we can share some part of the sacrifice with our brothers and sons who wear the uniform of the United States. It is fitting that we recall now the reverent words of George Washington, "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection," and that every American in his own way lift his voice to Heaven.

I recommend that all of us bear in mind this great Psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me I the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Inspired with faith and courage by these words, let us turn again to the work that confronts us in this time of national emergency : in the armed services and the merchant marine; in factories and offices; on farms and in the mines; on highways, railways and airways; in other places of public service to the Nation; and in our homes.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, do hereby invite the attention of the people to the joint resolution of Congress approved December 26, 1941, which designates the fourth Thursday in November of each year as thanksgiving Day' and I request that both Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1942, and New Year's Day, January 1, 1943, be observed in prayer, publicly and privately.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed

DONE at the City of Washington this eleventh day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and forty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-seventh.

Franklin D. Roosevelt.



THE HOLY SEE

We Are Never Alone, Jesus Is With Us



Pope Francis catechesis on May 1, 2016:

Before praying the [Regina Coeli](#) in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis' catechesis on Sunday drew inspiration from the Gospel reading that speaks of the Last Supper and of Jesus' promise to the Apostles.

He tells them, the Pope said, that their mission was to take the Gospel message into the world and that they would not be alone: "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said

to you: teach and remember".

The Pope explained that the Spirit would remember the teachings of Jesus in various concrete circumstances of life, so as to be able to put them into practice.

That, he said, is precisely what is happening in the Church today, a Church that is guided by the light and by the strength of the Holy Spirit so that the Lord can bring the gift of salvation to everyone, the love and the mercy of God.

The Pope urged the faithful to read a passage from the Gospel every day and reminded them they are not alone: "Jesus is near us, among us, within us! His new presence in history takes place through the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom you can establish a living relationship with Him, the Crucified and Risen One".

He said the Holy Spirit, poured into us through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, acts as a guide in our lives, directing us in the way we think, in the way we act, helping us distinguish good from bad. It helps us to practice the charity of Jesus, giving to others, especially to the neediest.

And reiterating that we are not alone, the Pope said the sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit is also in the peace that Jesus gives to his disciples.

It is different – he said - from what men hope or attempt to accomplish: "the peace of Jesus arises from victory over sin, over that selfishness that prevents us from loving one another as brothers".

The Pope concluded his catechesis saying that every disciple who is called to follow Jesus carrying the cross, receives the peace of the Risen Christ in the certainty of his victory, and in expectation of his coming.

[\(from Vatican Radio\)](#)

God Loves each And Every One Of Us

Pope Francis says God loves each and every one of us, He is totally extraneous to the "throwaway culture" of today and like the good shepherd he does not want a single person to be lost.

Speaking on Wednesday, May 4, 2016, at the weekly General Audience, Pope Francis



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continued his catechesis for this Holy Year of Mercy reflecting on the parable of the Good Shepherd.

He said that the Lord uses the image of the shepherd who leaves his flock to go in search of one lost sheep to express God's closeness to sinners. He emphasized that God does not want even a single person to be lost and that in his infinite mercy, he is always ready to meet us wherever we are.

And reflecting on the "throwaway culture" of the contemporary world, the Pope said it is something that is totally foreign to God who would never "throw

away" a single person.

"God loves all; he reaches out to every person: one by one! He knows nothing about 'throwing away people' because He is all about love and mercy" he said.

The example of the Good Shepherd, Pope Francis continued, also challenges us to go out in search of those in particular need of God's mercy, especially those who have gone astray.

He said that Jesus teaches us that in his eyes there are no lost sheep, but only sheep needing to be found and that the joy which the Good Shepherd feels must also be the joy of the entire flock.

Continuing to reflect on the parable the Pope pointed out that the faithful must also resist the temptation to close themselves in the pen where there may be no 'stink of sheep' but the stuffiness of a closed and airless room.

"Christians, he said, must never be closed. Ever! We must not be closed within ourselves, or within small communities or parishes thinking we are 'right'. Christians, he said, are called to embrace the missionary spirit that takes them into the world to encounter others. He said that for the Lord no one is definitely lost: "He looks for us up until the very last moment".

Pope Francis concluded saying that we are all lost sheep who were found by the Lord's mercy. "No distance can keep the shepherd far from his sheep; no flock can afford to give up on a member" he said. And he called us to rejoice in his merciful love, to bring that love to others and to join him in gathering all into the fold.

[\(from Vatican Radio\)](#)

Christ's Miracles Reveal God's Love For Us

Jesus' first miracle, at the Wedding Feast of Cana, was the focus of Pope Francis' catechesis at the General Audience Wednesday, 8 June, 2016. Following on from his earlier reflections on parables of mercy during this Jubilee Year, the Pope said Christ's miracles were not performed so that people would "marvel" at them, but rather, through them, Christ revealed the Father's love for us. They are also, he said, an invitation for the renewal of our faith.

Dear Brothers and Sisters: In our continuing catechesis for this Holy Year of Mercy, we now consider the first of Jesus' miracles, the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana. Saint John fittingly calls these miracles "signs", for by them the Lord reveals the Father's merciful love. Jesus' choice of a wedding feast points to the deeper meaning of this miracle. It is a sign of the new covenant that he came to inaugurate, the messianic banquet promised for the end times, where he is the Bridegroom and the Church his bride. By changing the water kept for ritual purification into new wine, Jesus signals that he is the fulfillment of the Law and



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the prophets. Mary's command to the servants – "Do whatever he tells you" – can serve as a program of life for the Church. We are called constantly to renew our love for the Lord, and to draw new wine, new life, from his saving wounds. The miracle at Cana reminds us that we are invited, as members of the Lord's family, the Church, to draw near to him in faith, and thus to share in the joy of the wedding feast of the new and eternal covenant.

(from Vatican Radio)

True Conversion Opens Us To those Most in Need



From Vatican Radio

Pope Francis held his special Jubilee Audience for the month of June in St. Peter's Square on Saturday, June 18, 2016, reflecting on Jesus' call to conversion which was expressed not in judgment but in closeness to sinners and mercy to those in need

Reflecting on the Gospel passage in which the Risen Jesus encounters his disciples on the road to Emmaus, Pope Francis said Jesus' call to conversion is an experience of

unmerited love which leads to openness to others, especially to the poor.

He said the theme of conversion is present throughout the Bible, especially in the message of the prophets who continually invited people to 'return to the Lord'.

"Conversion for the prophets means changing direction and turning anew to the Lord, trusting that He loves us and that His love is always faithful."

He said Jesus focused more than the prophets on the interior dimension of conversion, making repentance the first word of his preaching ministry, as seen in the Gospel of Mark: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" (Mk 1,15).

The Holy Father went on to say that Jesus' call to conversion was expressed not in judgment but in closeness to sinners and mercy to those in need.

"When Jesus calls to conversion, he does not set himself up as judge of persons, but he calls from a position of nearness, because he shares in the human condition, and calls from the street, from the home, from the table... Mercy towards those who needed to change their lives took place through his lovable presence so as to involve each person in his salvation history. With this way of being, Jesus touched the depth of people's hearts and they felt attracted by the love of God and invited to change their life."

Pope Francis concluded that the experience of God's unmerited love in Jesus opens us to true conversion, which always entails openness to others, especially the poor.

"True conversion happens when we accept the gift of grace, and a clear sign of its authenticity is when we become aware of the needs of our brothers and are ready to draw near to them. [...] Let us follow, therefore, this invitation of the Lord and let us not put up resistance, because only if we open ourselves to mercy will we find true life and true joy."



World Mission Sunday 2016



May 15, 2016-Vatican Radio. The following is an excerpt from Pope Francis message for World Mission Sunday 2016, which takes place each year on the third Sunday of October.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
The extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, which the Church is celebrating, casts a distinct light on World Mission Sunday 2016: it invites us to consider the *mission ad gentes* as a great, immense work of mercy, both spiritual and material. On this World Mission Sunday, all of us are invited to *go out* as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family. By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love. She "is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 12) and to proclaim mercy in every corner of the world, reaching every person, young or old...

In many places evangelization begins with education, to which missionary work dedicates much time and effort, like the merciful vine-dresser of the Gospel (cf. Lk 13:7-9; Jn 15:1), patiently waiting for fruit after years of slow cultivation; in this way they bring forth a new people able to evangelize, who will take the Gospel to those places where it otherwise would not have been thought possible. The Church can also be defined as "mother" for those who will one day have faith in Christ. I hope, therefore, that the holy people of God will continue to exercise this maternal service of mercy, which helps those who do not yet know the Lord to encounter and love him. Faith is God's gift and not the result of proselytizing; rather it grows thanks to the faith and charity of evangelizers who witness to Christ. As they travel through the streets of the world, the disciples of Jesus need to have a love without limits, the same measure of love that our Lord has for all people. We proclaim the most beautiful and greatest gifts that he has given us: his life and his love...

This Jubilee year marks the 90th anniversary of World Missionary Day, first approved by Pope Pius XI in 1926 and organized by the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith. It is appropriate then to recall the wise instructions of my predecessors who ordered that to this Society be destined all the offerings collected in every diocese, parish, religious community, association and ecclesial movement throughout the world for the care of Christian communities in need and for supporting the proclamation of the Gospel to the end of the earth...



Pope Francis Canonizes Two New Saints

2016-06-05 Vatican Radio

Pope Francis celebrated Mass on Sunday morning in St. Peter's Square during the course of which he canonized two new Saints: Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, and Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad.

In the homily he prepared for the occasion and delivered Sunday morning before a crowd of some 40 thousand faithful, Pope Francis praised the two new saints as outstanding models of Christian faith and faithful perseverance in the face of trial. "In the Passion of Christ, we find God's response to the desperate and at times indignant cry that the experience of pain and death evokes in us," said Pope Francis. "He tells us that we cannot flee from the Cross, but must remain at its foot, as Our Lady did." "In suffering with Jesus," the Holy Father went on to say, "she received the grace of hoping against all hope. (cf. Rom 4:18)" "This," he continued, "was the experience of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and Maria Elizabeth Hesselblad."

"They remained deeply united to the passion of Jesus," he said, "and in them the power of His resurrection was revealed."



Stanislaus Papczyński was born on 18 May 1631 at Podegrodzie, Poland. He was a lively, enterprising boy who tended his father's sheep with care. He graduated from both Piarist and Jesuit Colleges.

On 2 July 1654 he entered the Piarist Order founded by Fr Joseph Calasanz in 1597 (also known as The Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools [Sch. P]) and took the religious name of Stanislaus of Jesus-Mary. He made his religious profession on 22 July 1656 and was ordained a priest on 12 March 1661.

In 1669, Fr Papczyński requested an indult and made an oath in the presence of his Piarist Superiors: "I offer and

consecrate to God... as well as to the Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary conceived without sin, my heart, my soul and my body, leaving absolutely nothing for myself.... I vow to serve them zealously, in chastity, to the end of my life, in the *Society of Marian Clerks of the Immaculate Conception*, which by the grace of God I wish to *found*".

Until that time all religious Orders in Poland had been founded abroad, so it was doubtful that a commoner like Fr Stanislaus would find approval for this new Society. But his trust in God was rewarded with support for his plan from the Bishop of Poznan, Poland. In September 1671 he took the white habit in honor of the Immaculate Conception and prepared the future Order's Statutes or "Rule of Life".

Two years later, near Skierniewice, he founded the Institute's first house, which he called a "Retreat House", with a small group of hermit companions. On 24 October 1673, when the local Bishop made a canonical visitation, their "Rule of Life" was approved. The Marians consider this date as the beginning of their Order.

After more than 30 years of foundation, Fr Papczyński pronounced his solemn vows on 6 June 1701 and then received the profession of the other Marians. The result: the first Polish Order of Apostolic Right of male religious in Poland's history. Having completed the work God entrusted to him, Fr Papczyński died just a few months later on 17 September 1701 in Gora Kalwaria, Poland. On 13 June 1992 Pope John Paul II declared him Venerable.



**St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church
Lake Jackson, TX**



Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad was born in the village of Faglavik, in the province of Alvsborg, on the 4 June 1870, the fifth of thirteen children born to Augusto Roberto Hesselblad and Cajsa Pettesdotter Dag. She was baptized and received into the Reformed Church of Sweden in her parish in Hundene.

In 1886, in order to make a living and to support her family, she went to work first of all in Karlosborg and then in the United States of America. She went to nursing school at the Roosevelt hospital in New York and dedicated herself to home care of the sick.

The contact she had with so many sick Catholics and her thirst for truth helped to keep alive in her heart her search for the true flock of Christ. Through prayer, personal study and a deep daughterly devotion to the Mother of the Redeemer, she was decisively led to the Catholic Church and, on the 15 August 1902, in the Convent of the Visitation in Washington, she received conditional baptism from Fr. Giovanni Giorgio Hagen, S.J., who also became her spiritual director. Two days later she was nourished by the Eucharist, and then she left for Europe.

In Rome she received the Sacrament of Confirmation and she clearly perceived that she was to dedicate herself to the unity of Christians. She also visited the church and house of Saint Bridget of Sweden, and came away with a deep and lasting impression: "It is in this place that I want you to serve me." She returned to the United States but, her poor health notwithstanding, she left everything and on 25 March 1904 she settled in Rome at the Casa di Santa Brigida. In 1906 Pope Saint Pius X allowed her to take the habit of the Order of the Most Holy Savior of Saint Bridget and profess vows as a spiritual daughter of the Swedish saint. On November 9, 1911, she welcomed three young English postulants and re-founded the Order of the Most Holy Savior of Saint Bridget, whose particular mission was to pray and work, especially for the unity of Scandinavian Christians with the Catholic Church.

She walked with God, clinging to the cross of Christ, who was her companion from the days of her youth. "For me," she said, "the way of the Cross has been the most beautiful of all because on this path I have met and known my Lord and Savior." She died in the early hours of April 24, 1957.

World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2017

2016-06-22 Vatican Radio

Pope Francis has chosen the theme for the 103rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees: "Minor migrants, vulnerable and voiceless."

In a statement released on Wednesday, June 22, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples said that with that theme, Pope Francis "wants to focus attention on the smallest of the small." The statement noted that children, who often arrive unaccompanied in their destination countries, "are unable to make their own voices heard" and "easily become victims of grave violations of human rights."

The Council noted that "migration is a worldwide phenomenon," and that all continents are "touched by this reality." Migration, it continued, concerns not only those who leave their countries in search of jobs or a better life, but also adults and children who are fleeing "real tragedies." The theme of this year's Day is precisely an effort to draw attention to the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

The World Day for Migrants and Refugees will be celebrated on 15 January 2017. As is customary, Pope Francis will publish a Pontifical Message to mark the occasion.



The Saints

*O Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary, infuse into me grace,
wisdom, charity, chastity and humility.*

St. James, Apostle

Feast: July 25



James the Great (anon)

This James is the brother of John the Evangelist. The two were called by Jesus as they worked with their father in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had already called another pair of brothers from a similar occupation: Peter and Andrew. “He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him” (Mark 1:19-20).

James was one of the favored three who had the privilege of witnessing the Transfiguration, the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus and the agony in Gethsemane.

Two incidents in the Gospels describe the temperament of this man and his brother. St. Matthew tells that their mother came (Mark says it was the brothers themselves) to ask that they have the seats of honor (one on the right, one on the left of Jesus) in the kingdom. “Jesus said in reply, ‘You do not

know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We can!’” (Matthew 20:22). Jesus then told them they would indeed drink the cup and share his baptism of pain and death, but that sitting at his right hand or left was not his to give—it “is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father” (Matthew 20:23b). It remained to be seen how long it would take to realize the implications of their confident “We can!”

The other disciples became indignant at the ambition of James and John. Then Jesus taught them all the lesson of humble service: The purpose of authority is to serve. They are not to impose their will on others, or lord it over them. This is the position of Jesus himself. He was the servant of all; the service imposed on him was the supreme sacrifice of his own life.

On another occasion, James and John gave evidence that the nickname Jesus gave them—“sons of thunder”—was an apt one. The Samaritans would not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to hated Jerusalem. “When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, ‘Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?’ Jesus turned and rebuked them...” (Luke 9:54-55).

James was apparently the first of the apostles to be martyred. “About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also” (Acts 12:1-3a).

This James, sometimes called James the Greater, is not to be confused with James the Lesser (May 3) or with the author of the Letter of James and the leader of the Jerusalem community.



St. Bartholomew, Apostle

Feast: August 24



An excerpt from Saints of the Day, edited by Leonardo Foley, O.F.M. and revised by Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.:

In the New Testament, Bartholomew is mentioned only in the list of the apostles. Some scholars identified him with Nathanael, a man of Cana in Galilee who was summoned to Jesus by Philip. Jesus paid him a great compliment: "Here is a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him" (John 1:47b).

Bartholomew or Nathanael? We are confronted with the fact that we know almost nothing about most of the apostles. Yet, the unknown ones were also a foundation stones, the twelve pillars of the new Israel whose twelve tribes now encompass the whole earth. Their personalities were secondary (without thereby being demeaned) to their great office of bearing tradition from their firsthand experience, speaking in the name

of Jesus, putting the Word made flesh into human words for the enlightenment of the world. Their holiness was not an introverted contemplation of their status before God. It was a gift that they had to share with others. The Good News was that all are called to holiness of being Christ's members, by the gracious gift of God.

Nathanael did see great things. He was one of those to whom Jesus appeared on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias after his resurrection (see John 21:1-14).

St. Matthew, Apostle

Feast: September 21



An excerpt from Saints of the Day, edited by Leonardo Foley, O.F.M. and revised by Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.:

Matthew was a Jew who worked for the occupying Roman forces, collecting taxes from other Jews. From such an unlikely situation, Jesus chose one of the foundations of the Church, a man whom others, judging from his job, thought was not holy enough for the position. But he was honest enough to admit that he was one of the sinners Jesus came to call. He was open enough to recognize truth when he saw him. "And he got up and followed him" (Matthew 9:9b).

We imagine Matthew, after the terrible events surrounding the death of Jesus, going to the mountain to which the Risen Lord had summoned them. "When they saw him, they worshiped, but doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them [we think of him looking at each one in turn,



Matthew listening and excited with the rest], 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of age' " (Matthew 28:17-20)

Matthew will never forget that day. He proclaimed the Good News by his life and by his word. Our faith rests upon his witness and that of his fellow apostles.

St. Luke, Apostle

Feast: October 16



An excerpt from Saints of the Day, edited by Leonardo Foley, O.F.M. and revised by Pat McCloskey, O.F.M.:

Luke wrote one of the major portions of the New Testament, a two volume work comprising the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the two books he shows the parallel between the life of Christ and that of the Church. He is the only Gentile Christian among the Gospel writers.

Luke wrote as a Gentile for Gentile Christians. This Gospel reveals Luke's expertise in classic Greek style as well as his knowledge of Jewish sources.

The character of Luke may best be seen by the emphases of his Gospel, which has been given a number of subtitles:

(1) *The Gospel of Mercy*: Luke emphasizes Jesus's compassion and patience with the sinners and the suffering. He has a broadminded openness to all, showing concern for Samaritans, lepers, publicans, soldiers, public sinners, unlettered shepherds, and the poor. Luke alone records the stories of the sinful woman, the lost sheep and coin, the prodigal son, the good thief.

(2) *The Gospel of Universal Salvation*: Jesus died for all. He is the son of Adam, not just of David, and Gentiles are his friends too.

(3) *The Gospel of the Poor*: "Little people" are prominent – Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, shepherds, Simeon and the elderly widow, Anna. He is also concerned with what we now call "evangelical poverty."

(4) *The Gospel of Absolute Renunciation*: He stresses the need for total dedication to Christ.

(5) *The Gospel of Prayer and the Holy Spirit*: He shows Jesus at prayer before every important step of his ministry. The Spirit is bringing the Church to its final perfection.

(6) *The Gospel of Joy*: Luke succeeds in portraying the joy of salvation that permeated the primitive Church. "They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God" (Luke 24:53)



For Your Information

Save the Date

Fr. Callistus Isara

Annual Summer Talk and Retreat



Summer Talk

“Cultivating a Deep and Solid Spiritual Life as a Christian”

When: *Sunday July 31, 2016*

Where: Family Life Center

Time: 7:00 pm

Retreat

“Imitating St. Paul Who Imitated Christ”

When: *Saturday, July 23, 2016*

Where: Family Life Center

Time: Registration 8:30 am

Retreat 9:00 am—2:00 pm with Mass

Contact: Margarita Prinz at 979-297-0297 of
prinzmh@yahoo.com

Registration is appreciated

Lunch provided by
the St. Michael's Hispanic Ministry .



Important Dates In This Trimester

Date	Celebration	Date	Celebration
July 4	Independence Day	Oct. 1	St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus
July 14	Kateri Tekakwitha	Oct. 7	Our Lady of the Rosary
July 22	St. Mary Magdalene	Oct. 14	St. Callistus
July 25	St James, Apostle	Oct. 18	St. Luke, Apostle
Aug. 6	The Transfiguration of the Lord	Oct. 22	St. John Paul II
Aug. 10	St Lawrence	Oct. 28	Sts. Simon & Jude, Apostles
Aug. 15	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Nov. 1	All Saints' Day
Aug, 22	Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Nov. 2	All Souls' Day
Aug. 24	St. Bartholomew, Apostle	Nov. 9	Dedication of St. John Lateran Church
Sept. 8	Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Nov. 11	Veterans Day
Sept. 10/11	St. Michael's Parish 50th Anniversary	Nov. 20	Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe
Sept. 14	The Exaltation of the Cross	Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Day
Sept. 21	St. Matthew, Apostle	Nov. 27	First Sunday of Advent
Sept. 29	Sts Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels		

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