



The Spiritual Light

The Spiritual Light

About Us

Clergy's Corner by
Gary Forse

For Your Information

Becoming Catholic by
Gin Crawford

The Catholic Church by
Mike Caserta

The Liturgical Season

Bible Studies / Prayer
Groups

What is Hospice? by
Genie Packard

The Russian Church by
E. Betczynski

The Holidays

Featured Ministries

Featured Blessed and
New Saints

News From The
Vatican

The Saints

Important Dates



As the Liturgical Year of Faith comes to an end, it's our hope that you answered Pope Benedict's call for a closer relationship with the Lord, to re-open "the door of faith" in preparation for his coming this Advent season.

In this issue, you will find in *Becoming Catholic* the remarkable story of new parishioner Gin Crawford. Her feeling of belonging is something that we hope all of you find in our parish, because I certainly do feel the same way.

We also feature articles by Gary Forse, Mike Caserta, Betty Betczynski and Genie Packard that are inspiring, insightful, informative and heart felt. A biography of St. Juan Diego, News from the Vatican, and the Saints that we celebrate this season are also included.

It is our hope that these articles and the Holy Spirit prompt you to rediscover your journey of faith, specially during this season of giving, so you will become a true herald and witness of the Gospel as the featured saints were.

We have also included a brief description of the liturgical celebrations, a list of Bible studies, Prayer Groups, and Featured Ministries that you may want to get involved with.

As always, we welcome your comments so please do not hesitate to contact the editors or any of the team members. Finally, on behalf of the entire Adult Faith Formation Team we wish you a very Blessed Christmas and a New Year full of hope, love and peace.

Margarita Prinz

To contact us:

100 Oak Drive, South
Lake Jackson, TX 77566

Editors:

Ruth Stone,
sophia75@att.net
(281-955-1549)

Margarita Prinz,
prinzmh@yahoo.com
(979-236-1948).

A Publication of Adult Faith Formation Team

Winter Issue (December 2013 - February 2014)



About Us

The Adult Faith Formation ministry came into being as a result of the Envision program held in the parish in 2006. From the meetings of the Envision committee came a vision statement for the parish: "A Eucharistic community in continual transformation, surrendering ourselves to God to be His instruments for world change."

The objective of Adult Faith Formation ministry is to seek to foster life long learning, Catholic education and faith development of adult parishioners. It is the primary educational ministry for adults of our parish.

Adult Faith Formation ministry uses several different facets of learning in the presentation of programs. There have been well-known speakers who lectured in his/her specialty, small group discussions (Study of the Catechism for Catholic adults), movies, and a play.

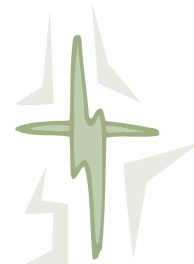
We look for topics in which our parishioners say they are interested. This knowledge came from a survey done in the infancy of this ministry and we search for speakers well known for the topics they present. Agreement on topics and speakers are reached by consensus rather than majority and our annual educational year started in 2007.

In order to continue with these programs we need to almost continually add new members to the ministry. Whether you are new to the parish or have been here for several years, you can bring in fresh and different ideas. Your presence and knowledge will generate fresh energy. While the ministry has made great progress, it still has a long way to go.

Our meetings are held once a month in the evening in the Educational Building. Please come and see the team in action. After a visit we are certain you will want to join us.

If you are interested in finding more about this rewarding ministry, please contact us. We will be happy to visit with you.

Adult
Faith
Formation
Ministry



Team

Active Members

Adele Baxter
Allen Faulk
Tommie Holt
Margaret Kana
Joe Lesnau
Genie Packard
Pam Walker

Editors

Ruth Stone
Margarita Prinz

To contact us:

Allen Faulk

Facilitator, Adult Faith Formation
Ministry

Phone: 979-798-5333

e-mail: arfaulk@brazoriainet.com



Clergy's Corner



A Message from the Deacon-in-Training, Gary Forse

Once again we find ourselves nearing the conclusion of another Liturgical year in the Church. What makes this year unique and special is the fact that Pope Benedict XVI declared this past year a Year of Faith. As we conclude this year of "authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the One Savior of the world" (Porta Fidei 6), let us each take a moment to reflect on how we opened the door of faith in our lives and the lives of others.

The Year of Faith coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. In my formation to become a Permanent Deacon over the past four years, I have spent a great deal of time reading and studying the documents which continue to shape the Church today. It was the Second Vatican Council which called for the renewal of the Permanent Diaconate in the Church. If you have not spent time with the rich and beautiful writings of the Council it is not too late. There is so much more to the Council documents than the one or two hot topics which seem to dominate the average Catholic's understanding.

Every baptized Catholic is called through baptism to be a disciple of Christ and proclaim the Gospel. The Year of Faith is an opportunity for each and every Catholic to renew our baptismal call by living out the everyday moments of our lives with faith, hope and love. This everyday witness is necessary for proclaiming the Gospel to family, friends, neighbors and society. In order to witness to the Gospel, Catholics must be strengthened through celebrating weekly Sunday Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This past June, Pope Francis released his encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, which speaks of how we should live out this renewed faith. We must nourish our faith, Pope Francis writes, so it can illumine our lives and the world we live in. Faith doesn't "draw us away from the world or prove irrelevant to the concrete concerns" facing humanity. Instead, it means "building in charity a city based on relationships," with God's love as the foundation (*Lumen Fidei*, no. 51). We live our faith—and proclaim the Gospel—when we are channels for God's love, working to transform human suffering and build societies that prioritize human dignity, care for creation, and the common good.

Evangelization always includes loving our neighbor and working to uphold his or her dignity. Echoing the Gospels, Pope Benedict XVI writes in *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*), "Love of God and love of neighbor have become one; in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God" (no. 15). Faith must be *lived* through the witness of love and solidarity. As Pope Francis notes, "Words without witness are hot air. Words do not suffice" (addresses, 5/18/13 and 6/17/13).

I pray the Year of Faith has been a time of renewal and conversion. Let us use our time of Advent to focus on how we can continue the work God has started and bring others the wonderful gift we have received through Jesus Christ.





For Your Information



This year Catholic Charities celebrates 70 years of working with the poor and indigent. But the authorities say that the needs are just as necessary and great today as they have ever been. They thank you for your help in keeping them active.

Coin for Pope Francis' First Year

The Vatican was prepared to publish a new coin honoring Pope Francis. However, on further examination it was found that the coin makers had erred in printing the name of Jesus. It was spelled Yesus on the coin. Immediately all work on the coin stopped after the Vatican confirmed that the mistake had been made and 6,000 coins were withdrawn. The Vatican is undecided about minting new coins, but if it does, the value of the withdrawn coins will skyrocket.



May you and your family enjoy the happiest of New Years' and may the Holy Spirit guide you through the year to see that you make few errors on your spiritual journey.

Winter Solstice - Winter inspires both joy and woe. Some people can't wait for the cooler weather, snow, skiing, curling up by a fire, and the holiday spirit. Other people dislike the frigid temperatures, blizzards, and wild weather.

The word solstice comes from the Latin words for "sun" and "to stand still." In the Northern Hemisphere, as summer advances to winter, the points on the horizon where the Sun rises and sets advance southward each day; the high point in the Sun's daily path across the sky, which occurs at local



noon, also moves southward each day. At the winter solstice, the Sun's path has reached its southernmost position. The next day, the path will advance northward. However, a few days before and after the winter solstice, the change is so slight that the Sun's path seems to stay the same, or stand still. The Sun is directly overhead at "high-noon" on Winter Solstice at the latitude called the Tropic of Capricorn. In the Northern Hemisphere, the solstice days are the days with the fewest hours of sunlight during the whole year. <http://www.almanac.com/content/first-day-winter-winter-solstice>



By Gin Crawford,

I was born and raised in the Deep South into generations of “hard shell Baptists.” As far as my mother was concerned it was the ONLY church to attend. My mom’s youngest sister moved to California and met the love of her life...he was Catholic. I remember as a teenager hearing the family talk about how awful that was. My grandmother

couldn't figure out where she had gone wrong for her to do such a thing. I had friends that were Catholic and I couldn't see any difference between them and me. Of course being a preteen and teenager religion wasn't discussed a whole lot. Certainly not when there were boys and cheer leading to talk about. But I did take note, that when they found out that my new aunt's husband was loaded with money; all of a sudden he didn't have two heads nor was he possessed by the devil.

Most of the time, I was sent to church, and of course there was bible school every summer. I memorized a lot of verses, made stuff and had fun. Mom and dad would go occasionally. One reason for that was, we lived in Velasco right next door to the First Baptist Church and my best friend was the daughter of Reverend Gordon A. Johnson. Jo Ellen played piano for the choir then joined me on the very front row where we would talk and giggle...that is until Brother Johnson stopped right in the middle of his sermon and told us to either get quiet or he would separate us. Whew, I was so glad my mom and dad weren't there that day.

After we moved to Clute my best friend and I would go to church because that way we would either get to drive her family car or mine to go in. Yes, I'm afraid and ashamed to say we resorted to going to church so we could drive, and then go the Hart's drive inn and get an olive coke. (Back then we got our driver's license when we were fourteen). We always sat in the back of the church so when the preacher finally ran out of breath we could sneak out first. Some genius put up the only clock in the back of the building right over the top of the front door. (Which would make it the front of the building, but facing the preacher it would be the back.... get it?) If you wanted to know what time it was you had to turn your head around from the preacher and look behind you. When a lot of us thought he had screamed hell fire and damnation long enough the heads would start to turn. Annette and I could hardly contain our laughter when the later it got most of the entire congregation was turning their heads and looking to see how long this had been going on. Did it shorten his sermon? NO! It seemed to make him go on and on until he finally ran out of things to scream and pound the podium about. Did we get anything out of the sermon NO!

After Henry and I got married and had children I believed they needed to grow up knowing what church was all about so we started taking them when they were so young they had to stay in the nursery. As they got older we took them into the chapel with us. I am from the old school and told them if they acted up they would get it when they got home. They acted up from time to time and on those occasions they got it when they got home. And what I mean by that is they got the seat of their pants warmed up.

I don't mean this as harsh as it sounds. They didn't get a beating they got a spanking. I don't really care if anyone who is reading this approves of that method or not, it worked. When we went out with our four kids whether it was to eat or go to church they knew we said what we meant and we meant what we said. We had four kids that no one hated to see coming.

As the kids grew up we all stopped going to church; the excuses are real easy to come up with. Mostly because we worked six days a week and Sunday was the only day I had off to catch up on household duties and have a little time for myself. I talked myself into believing I could worship God on the golf course as well as I could in church. And besides I wasn't sure I wanted to go back to being a Baptist.

Eons later I was talking to my sister-in-law, Cathy Crawford, when she mentioned she had to go to St. Michael's the next morning and help with a funeral meal. I asked her what that was all about and she



Becoming Catholic

told me. She also told me sometimes they needed some extra help. I asked her even though I wasn't a Catholic could I come help when needed. She said I could and lo and behold she called me later to ask if I could come to help. I was glad to go, loved the ministry and meeting such nice folks. I helped with several meals and really liked the feeling of being there. It felt like something was telling me I belonged there. Cathy, Dinah and Ken Prochaska whom I worked the funeral meals with never tried to get me to become a member. As a matter of fact, we called me an honorary Catholic and let it go at that.

"Here I am standing in the church, being set up and lying to a Priest and lightning didn't strike; I think this is the church for me!" That is the moment whether I realized it or not I had made up my mind to become a Catholic"

When I did start asking questions about what it took to become a member Cathy told me about the classes that I would have to attend for nine months. Well, that immediately turned me off. I told her, "I carried babies for nine months, and that's all the nine months stuff I'm ever going to do." So we let it go.

Then one day as I was standing by the dessert table helping folks with desserts Father Leo was sitting behind me. He said, "Hey Gin, did you make these brownies for me to take hunting with me?" I turned and looked at the package, which was clearly packaged by Wall-Mart and said, "Yes, yes I did!" That was one funeral they didn't have time for folks to make their favorite dishes so they had to buy everything. Anyway, later I told him, "You know I just discovered something. Here I am standing in the church, being set up and lying to a Priest and lightning didn't strike; I think this is the church for me!" That is the moment whether I realized it or not I had made up my mind to become a Catholic. Not because I was set up by Father Leo (he would never do anything like that), but because it really sunk in to me that this church is where I belong. I just had a thought about that day as I sat here writing this. What power he has that he could set me up and neither one of us got struck by lightning! I tell ya' it WAS meant to be!

Later that day while eating lunch with all the helpers, Father Leo sat with us and told us a story of helping someone he thought was worthy and shortened their learning process by a little so they could join. I said, "Would you do that for me?" He answered, "Why do you think I told you the story!" The rest is history. I am now a Catholic and I'm very happy about it. (He might wonder now what in the world did I do...but oh well, it's too late now)

Father Leo is a mystery to me in a lot of ways. We are the same age (so Leo don't you dare tell anyone how old you are! And before he has the chance to tell you, let me be the first to tell you so it will take some wind out of his sails, I'm 4 or 5 months older than he is!

I asked him some tough questions I thought and he never batted an eye and explained it to me in a way that I believed it as much as he does. He is such a gentle person, but I know there lurks a hard person when he has to be.

If you have been a Catholic all your life you may not see it through my eyes. Every Mass is a wonder to me. I love the way Father Leo takes the scripture and relates it to our modern times. I love the traditions and the history of the Church. And I love the new Pope Francis!

Another thing that long time Catholics may take for granted is the congregation taking part in the readings. If I read something out loud it means something to me. I have to think about it and what it is telling me. I love the fact that we as individuals have to take responsibility for ourselves in learning how to be a better person. I got this from my daughter Cheryl Bailey who lives in Alaska; "Just get up every morning and try to be the best person you know how to be." I can't believe we raised such a wise kid. And besides that she is without a doubt the most generous person I have ever met. I just wish I had taught her that. I know that little bit from Cheryl has nothing to do with anything, but every time I read the readings I think of that and that is what those reading are trying to tell us.

I dismiss all the bad things I have heard about the Catholic Church because I know "stuff" happens in every church, in every office, in every place where a lot of folks gather. I only know that



Becoming Catholic

at St. Michael's I love what goes on under that roof. I think Father Leo is directly responsible for that. And for as long as I live he better be there!

I love the fact that communion is given every day. Again that helps to renew my faith. So if you have been a Catholic long enough that you may have forgotten how it feels to experience these things, please try and look it from my perspective, and I hope it gets you as excited as I am. I can hardly wait for Saturday Mass. (I'm too lazy for Sunday Mass).

I know there is so much I have to learn that you all have probably forgotten. I just know that I learn something new every week. I'm not saying joining the Catholic Church is going to change my basic personality, I don't think there is a church on earth that could do that, besides I spent a life-time getting to like who I am. I know there are some not so pretty things about me that I could work on, and I will in time, when I feel the need, but in the mean time thanks to all I have met for taking me, as what you see is what you get!

See you at Saturday Mass! *Gin Crawford*

The Catholic Church – What Have We Done and How Are We Now

By Mike Caserta



The Catholic Church is made up of every race, including young and old, rich and poor, men and women, sinners and saints. Starting with the incarnation and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we have grown from the small band of Jesus' original disciples to a family numbering over 1 billion strong.

Our Church is responsible for starting hospitals and orphanages, growing into the largest charitable organization on this Earth, educating

more children than any other scholarly or religious institution, developing the scientific method, laws of evidence and founding the college system. We defend the dignity of all human life and uphold marriage and the family. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit we compiled the bible and continue to be transformed by sacred scripture and sacred tradition for over 2000 years.

One of the great advances in our Church with the 2nd Vatican Council was the renewal of the catechumenate rite for new members to become Catholic Christians. Over the past several years, our archdiocese has initiated nearly 2,500 persons at the Easter Vigil. Unfortunately many more have left the practice of their Catholic faith.

Of those who have identified themselves as Catholic at some point in their lives, only 77% do so now. Of those persons who identify as Catholic today, 68% attend Mass on Christmas or Easter, 24% attend Mass weekly, and only 4% are very involved in the parish outside of Mass. The decline in Mass attendance can be directly categorized by generational groups. Only 45% of those of age 65 and over, 20% of those of age 47-64, 13% of those of age 26-46, and 10% of those of age 18-25 attend Mass weekly.

It was not uncommon in past times that when Catholic teens fell out of the practice of their faith after high school, they would return when they were ready to get married and especially, when they had children. Unfortunately marriages being celebrated in the Catholic Church are on the decline. This is due to many electing to remain single and a growing percentage of marriages occurring outside of the Church. In the U.S., there are now 22 million ex-Catholics, big enough to be the second largest religious denomination in the country. Statistics show that only through immigration does the Church continue to grow in numbers.

If these signs of the times for our Church alarm you and cry out for our attention, there is a solution: Evangelization, both of ourselves and of others. Please stay tuned to catch the next installment in our series in the next issue of The Light.

This is the first in a series of articles on Evangelization by Mike Caserta of St. Michael's. Mike is the chairperson of the Evangelization Commission of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.



The Liturgical Season



These quotes and reflections from the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, are excerpted from: "Christmas: Pope Benedict XVI Spiritual Thoughts Series."

Presence

Advent, this powerful liturgical season that we are beginning, invites us to pause in silence to understand a presence. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us, signs of the attention he has for each one of us.

---Homily at First Vespers of Advent, November 28, 2009

Waiting

The question is: Is the humanity of our time still waiting for a Savior? One has the feeling that many consider God as foreign to their own interests. Apparently, they do not need him. They live as though he did not exist and, worse still, as though he were an "obstacle" to remove in order to fulfill themselves. Even among believers—we are sure of it—some let themselves be attracted by enticing dreams and distracted by misleading doctrines that suggest deceptive shortcuts to happiness. Yet, despite its contradictions, worries and tragedies, and perhaps precisely because of them, humanity today seeks a path of renewal, of salvation, it seeks a Savior and awaits, sometimes unconsciously, the coming of the Savior who renews the world and our life, the coming of Christ, the one true Redeemer of man and of the whole of man.

---Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience December 20, 2006

Preparation

Christmas is a privileged opportunity to meditate on the meaning and value of our existence. The approach of this Solemnity helps us on the one hand to reflect on the drama of history in which people, injured by sin, are perennially in search of happiness and of a fulfilling sense of life and death; and on the other, it urges us to meditate on the merciful kindness of God who came to man to communicate to him directly the Truth that saves, and to enable him to partake in his friendship and his life. Therefore let us prepare ourselves for Christmas with humility and simplicity, making ourselves ready to receive as a gift the light, joy and peace that shine from this mystery.

---General Audience, December 17, 2008

Sign

God's sign is his humility. God's sign is that he makes himself small; he becomes a child; he lets us touch him and he asks for our love. How we would prefer a different sign, an imposing, irresistible sign of God's power and greatness! But his sign summons us to faith and love, and thus it gives us hope: this is what God is like. He has power, he is Goodness itself. He invites us to become like him. Yes indeed, we become like God if we allow ourselves to be shaped by this sign; if we ourselves learn humility and hence true greatness; if we renounce violence and use only the weapons of truth and love.

---Homily at Mass for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, December 24, 2009

Changing

Only if people change will the world change; and in order to change, people need the light that comes from God, the light which so unexpectedly [on the night of Christmas] entered into our night.

---Homily at Mass for the Solemnity, of the Nativity of the Lord, December 25, 2008

Ref: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/advent/pope-benedict-xvi-spiritual-thoughts-advent-christmas.cfm>



The Liturgical Season

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 9



The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in its oldest form, goes back to the seventh century, when churches in the East began celebrating the Feast of the Conception of Saint Anne, the mother of Mary. In other words, this feast celebrates the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the womb of Saint Anne; and nine months later, on September 8, we celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Development of the Doctrine:

Because of the doctrine of *original sin*, some in the West began to believe that Mary could not have been sinless unless she had been saved from *original sin* at the moment of her conception (thus making the conception "immaculate"). Others, however, including St. Thomas Aquinas, argued that Mary could not have been redeemed if she had not been subject to sin - at least, to *original sin*.

The answer to St. Thomas Aquinas's objection, as Blessed John Duns Scotus (d. 1308) showed, was that God had sanctified Mary at the moment of her conception in His foreknowledge that the Blessed Virgin would consent to bear Christ. In other words, she too had been redeemed - her redemption had simply been accomplished at the moment of her conception, rather than (as with all other Christians) in Baptism.

Promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception:

On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX officially declared the Immaculate Conception a dogma of the Church, which means that all Catholics are bound to accept it as true. As the Holy Father wrote in the Apostolic Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful."

Ref: http://catholicism.about.com/od/holydaysandholidays/p/lmm_Conception.htm

Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 12



An excerpt from the Liguori pamphlet "The Lasting Gift of Our Lady of Guadalupe" by Alicia Maria Arrellano:

We are all familiar with the story of the Blessed Virgin as she appeared almost 500 years ago in the New World. God's mother appeared in what was then called New Spain as a dark-skinned Aztec princess in brightly colored clothes, not as a light-skinned European Madonna. She spoke to Juan Diego in his native language, *Nahuatl*-not in the language of the Spanish conquerors and the missionaries - so the message of the Lady was immediately understood by even the simplest person: The Mother of God was close to the native people of the New World, and God and his mother would protect and care for them.

The Guadalupe event in 1531 led to the greatest mass conversion in the history of the Catholic Church. About 9 million native people were baptized in the decade that followed—an average of almost several thousand converts per day.

Today, people throughout America have a special devotion to Our Lady



The Liturgical Season

of Guadalupe. People proudly wear jewelry and clothing stamped with her image in homes and businesses. Some people are dismayed that the image appears on mundane possessions as blankets, water bottles, and belt buckles but, others celebrate it. Our Lady has brought them hope and comfort, and they want to see her image everywhere.

Each year on December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated in parishes and villages throughout North, Central and South America with festive processions, special liturgies, fireworks, and traditional music, dances and food.

According to the Dallas Morning News, the Basilica of Guadalupe in México City is the second most popular Catholic shrine in the world (after St. Peter's Basilica in Rome). Regina Tours says the shrine receives over 14 million visitors every year.

One December morning in California, 15,000 people representing countless cultures and races gathered in the East Los Angeles College Stadium after the annual procession in Our Lady's honor.

This is the lasting gift of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Even today, she brings America together in faith and hope. And this is the true miracle: *Even you and I can spread her message by our kindness and care for all people.* We can act in such a way that the words of Our Lady of Guadalupe come true today.

Christmas

December 25



An excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI
General Audience on January 9, 2013:

He became a man

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
In this Christmas season let us reflect once again on the great mystery of God who came down from heaven to enter our flesh. In Jesus God was incarnate, he became a man like us and in this way opened for us the road to his heavenly Kingdom, to full communion with him.

In these days the term the "Incarnation" of God has rung out several times in our churches, expressing the reality we celebrate at Holy Christmas: the Son of God was made man, as we say in the *Creed*. But what does this word, so central to the Christian faith, mean? Incarnation derives from the Latin *incarnatio*. St Ignatius of Antioch -at the end of the first century- and, especially, St Irenaeus used this term in reflecting on the Prologue to the Gospel according to St John, in particular in the sentence "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). Here the word "flesh", according to the Hebrew usage, indicates man in his whole self, the whole man, but in particular in the dimension of his transience and his temporality, his poverty and his contingency. This was in order to tell us that the salvation brought by God, who became man in Jesus of Nazareth, affects man in his material reality and in whatever situation he may be. God assumed the human condition to heal it from all that separates it from him, to enable us to call him, in his Only-Begotten Son, by the name of "Abba, Father", and truly to be children of God.

I would like to stress a second element. At holy Christmas we generally exchange a few gifts with the people closest to us. At times this may be a conventional gesture, but it usually expresses affection; it is a sign of love and esteem. In the Prayer over the Offerings at the Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of Christmas the Church prays: "may the oblation of this day's feast be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we may be found in the likeness of Christ in whom our nature is united to you. Who lives and reigns for ever".

The idea of giving is therefore at the heart of the liturgy and makes us aware of the original gift of



The Liturgical Season

Christmas: on that Holy Night, in taking flesh God wanted to make a gift of himself to men and women, he gave himself for us; God made his Only Son a gift for us, he took on our humanity to give his divinity to us. This is the great gift. In our giving too it does not matter whether or not a gift is expensive; those who cannot manage to give a little of themselves always give too little. Indeed, at times we even seek to substitute money or material things for our hearts and the commitment to giving ourselves.

The mystery of the Incarnation shows that God did not do this: he did not give some thing but he gave himself in his Only-Begotten Son. We find here our model for the giving so that our relationships, especially those that are most important, may be guided by giving love freely.

I would like to offer a third thought: the event of the Incarnation, of God who became man, like us, shows us the daring realism of divine love. God's action, in fact was not limited to words. On the contrary we might say that he was not content with speaking, but entered into our history, taking upon himself the effort and burden of human life. The Son of God truly became a man. He was born of the Virgin Mary in a specific time and place, in Bethlehem during the reign of the Emperor Augustus, under the Governor Quirinius (cf. Lk 2:1-2); he grew up in a family, he had friends, he formed a group of disciples, he instructed the Apostles to continue his mission and ended the course of his earthly life on the Cross. The way God acted gives us a strong incentive to question ourselves on the reality of our faith, which must not be limited to the sphere of sentiment, of the emotions; rather, it must enter into the practicality of our existence, that is, it must touch our everyday life and give it practical guidance. God did not stop at words, but showed us how to live, sharing in our own experience, except for sin.

The Second Vatican Council reasserted this forcefully: "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.... Christ the new Adam... fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling". (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 22; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 359). In that Child, the Son of God contemplated at Christmas, we can recognize the true face not only of God but also of the human being; and only by opening ourselves to his grace and seeking to follow him every day do we fulfill God's plan for us, for each one of us.

Dear friends, in this period let us meditate on the great and marvelous richness of the Mystery of the Incarnation, to permit the Lord to illuminate us and to change us, more and more, into an image of his Son made man for us.

Ref: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2013/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20130109_en.html

Feast of The Holy Family

December 29



The Feast of the Holy Family, celebrated on December 29, is the time to recognize the family unity and try to get it more in line with the family unit represented by Jesus, Mary and Joseph. How we celebrate this day tells us and outsiders just what kind of people we are. The Holy Family unit represents a model of what God expects from us as family. If we examine what we know about the Holy Family, we should come to know that through love for each other, we may come to live a happier life.

The Holy Family unit, as we know it, consists of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; the foster father of Jesus. We know very little of their lives together. What we do know is from the canonical gospels. They present very little of his life accurately and religious authorities prefer not to believe them because of the light in which they present Jesus.

The gospels tell of the early years of the family—from birth until Jesus reaches about the age of 12. At that age Jesus returns home with his parents

and begins to prepare for his ministerial and public life. We hear no more of him until the wedding feast of Cana when he responds to the wishes of His mother and changes the water into good wine. This is His first miracle. He continues to astound people with his miracles and activities—healing the sick mainly.



The Liturgical Season

When we read about the Holy Family, we are reading about what possibly our families are doing (out side of the miracles). The feast of the Holy Family was put on the liturgical family so that we could learn more about this group integration and come to accept this family as the model of Christian family life. Gradually our families learned how to live out the Church as a family. The more we try to live the family life as did the Holy Family, the more sanctified we become. This is called the "domestic church" or the "church in miniature". But how is this model life attained? The best way is by making the Church and Christ the center of our family lives and individual lives. To do that we should read the scripture, attend mass on Sundays and Holy Days and imitate the actions of the Holy Family. We should avoid all things contrary to God's plan for us and focus on making the plan succeed. St. Paul gives us some advice in his writing to the Colossians: 3:12-21 (how many of you can quote part of this letter from memory?).

"Wives be subject to ...

Solemnity of The Holy Mother of God

January 1



On New Year's Day, the octave day of Christmas, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God. The divine and virginal motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a singular salvific event: for Our Lady it was the foretaste and cause of her extraordinary glory; for us it is a source of grace and salvation because "through her we have received the Author of life" (127).

"Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell

among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom." — *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 721

In the West, January 1st is an inaugural day marking the beginning of the civil year. The faithful are also involved in the celebrations for the beginning of the New Year and exchange "new year" greetings. However, they should try to lend a Christian understanding to this custom making of these greetings an expression of popular piety. The faithful, naturally, realize that the "new year" is placed under the patronage of the Lord, and in exchanging new year greetings they implicitly and explicitly place the New Year under the Lord's dominion, since to him belongs all time (cf. Ap 1, 8; 22,13)(128).

New Year greetings also include an expression of hope for a peaceful New Year. This has profound biblical, and Christological origins. The "quality of peace" has always been invoked throughout history by all men, and especially during violent and destructive times of war.

The Holy See shares the profound aspirations of man for peace. Since 1967, 1 January has been designated "world day for peace."

Popular piety has not been oblivious to this initiative of the Holy See. In the light of the new born Prince of Peace, it reserves this day for intense prayer for peace, education towards peace and those values inextricably linked with it, such as liberty, fraternal solidarity, the dignity of the human person, respect for nature, the right to work, the sacredness of human life, and the denunciation of injustices which trouble the conscience of man and threaten peace.

Excerpted from the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*.

Ref: <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2013-01-01>



Bible Studies

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

The Lectionary

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



Adult Faith Sharing

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

Men's Faith Sharing

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



St. Paul's Letters

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

Re-Discover Advent

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



Pilgrim People

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



St. Paul's Letters

<i>Day</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Time	9:30 am
Location	Library
Leader	Doris Hickner
Tel.	979-297-7726



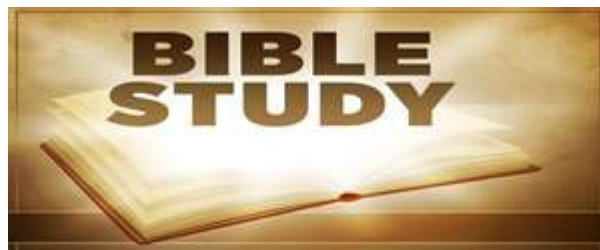
For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. *Matthew 18:20*



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
2 nd Monday	7:00 pm	Lay Apostle Meeting Luminous Mysteries	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



By Doris Hickner

Dear Reader of The Light--Bless and thank you for your continuing interest in your Adult Faith Formation. Each issue of The Light provides a small chart of local Bible study groups which meet on the church property. Some are recent in their beginnings and

others date back to the 1970's before the present facilities existed. Some met in members' homes and others still do.

Bible study has always been encouraged through the years and often can be traced back to efforts of Fr. Emil Furlong and Sister Irma Endres, to Seasons of Faith groups and Christ Renews His Parish.

Our parish library offers a wide variety of resource materials for scripture study. Audio Visuals are available covering many topics of scripture study.

We invite you to investigate our local groups and the support material available right here in our parish. May God continue to bless us as we grow in our Faith.



What is Hospice?



By Genie Packard

Hospice originally referred to resting places along the road where religious orders provided food and shelter to medieval pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. As time went by, this function became linked to caring for the sick, from whence the word “hospital” came into use. In 19th century Ireland, Sister Mary Akenhead gave the term new meaning when she established “resting places” for people who were dying.

Today, hospice is defined as a coordinated and comprehensive program of care for terminally ill patients and their families. The philosophy emphasizes quality of life in which to carry out meaningful activities rather than focusing on the remaining quantity of life. Hospice goals allow the patient to remain in familiar surroundings, to be in control of his/her life for as long as possible, to be pain free, and to die with dignity. It can be carried out in the patient’s home, in an in-patient setting, in nursing homes, or in other alternative residences.

Hospice recognizes dying as a normal process, whether or not the death is a result of disease. Hospice neither hastens nor postpones death. Patients and families are given the opportunity to attain a degree of mental and spiritual preparation that is satisfactory to them. These services are available to persons who can no longer benefit from curative measures; the typical patient has a life expectancy of six months or less, and is served by an interdisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, social workers, clergy/chaplains, home health aides, and volunteers.

The team focuses on palliative (comfort) care and supportive services for the patient as well as for the entire family as they, too, are considered a unit of care. Assessments for pain, psychological needs, spiritual issues, financial and legal concerns and other practical arrangements are formulated into a plan of care which is approved by the team, the physician, and the patient/family unit. It is continually revised and individualized to meet changing needs. Referrals for services may be made by a physician, hospital discharge planner, social worker, clergy, family, friends or the patient himself/herself.

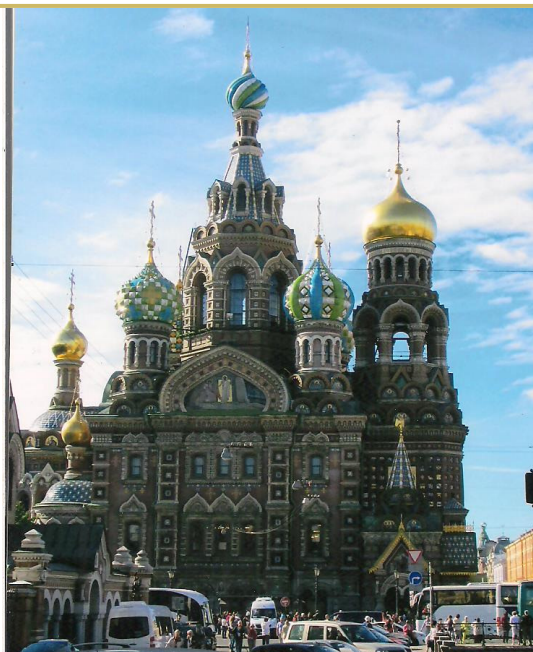
Following the death of a patient, bereavement services are available to the family for support, education, and assistance in returning to a productive life.

Prayer for the Dying

Jesus, I ask you to pour down your blessings on the dying. Give them grace to bear their sickness, and strength to conform themselves to your blessed will. Pity them and help them by your mercy, that in the final hour they may not lose courage, but may have fortitude to fight the good fight for you to the end.



The Russian Orthodox Church



By Elizabeth Betczynski:

This past August, I was privileged to tour St. Petersburg and Moscow in Russia and was interested in visiting the Orthodox churches there to learn more about their Faith, Devotions, and Rites.

As the Roman Catholic Church grew under the leadership of St. Peter, as Pope in Rome, the Russian Church grew under the evangelization of St. Andrew. The Rites were the same, the Mass the same, and the Sacraments the same, but the Russians would not agree to recognize the Pope in Rome from the line of St. Peter, so the churches remained separate.

The Roman Church calls its head the Pope. The Russian Church calls their head the Patriarch. The first attempt at unification was in 381 at the Council of Constantinople where the Bishops set up the Pope in Rome as the First authority and then the bishop of Constantinople, but this was rejected. The Great Schism between the West and the East occurred in 1054.

The Russian churches contain floor to ceiling

pictures or Icons of Jesus, Mary, and scenes from Scripture. The Russian people use these Icons to focus on during Mass and prayers. In the Orthodox church there are 2 doors, made of Aspen wood, that open to the Sanctuary where only the priest and deacon are permitted to enter for Mass. Above the door are 3 rows of Icons. Directly above the doors is a large Icon of Jesus and next to Him is an icon of Mary. Above this Icon are icons of the prophets from the Old Testament and above them are scenes from the New Testament such as John baptizing Jesus, the Sermon on the Mount, etc. There are many other icons of Mary around the sides of the Church because the Russian people have a great devotion to her as the Theotokos or God Bearer.

A noticeable difference in the church as you enter is that there are no pews! People stand or kneel during the entire Mass or service which can be longer than one hour. I did notice some benches along one wall for the seniors and disabled. I was told that the Easter services could take 3-4 hours.

Another difference between the churches is the crucifix that is used. The Russian cross has 3 horizontal pieces across the one vertical. The top one denotes the sign above Jesus as the King of the Jews which Pilate had placed there. The bottom one represents the "good thief" who was told by Jesus that he would be this day in paradise.

The overall impression was that the Russian church had not changed at all the last 1,000 years. The doors would be open during the Liturgy of the Word and the homily. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is prayed with the priest's back to the congregation as it was in the pre-Vatican II era. The priest's vestments are slightly different in that he wears a shawl over his vestments.

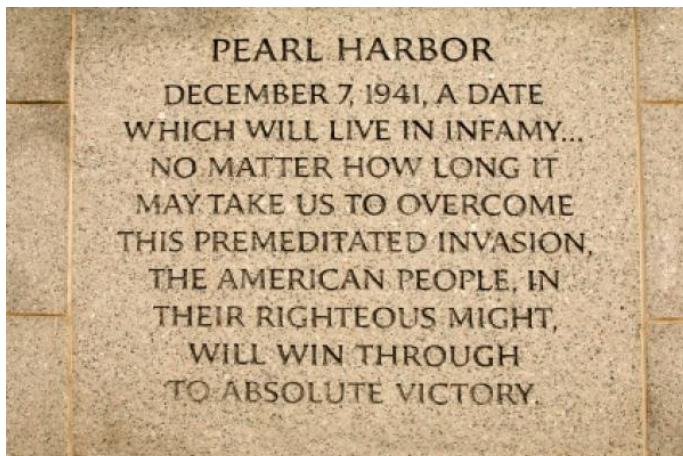
Since the collapse of communism in 1989, the Russian people and church have renovated and reopened many churches. The older generations still have a deep faith but unfortunately the younger generation is slow to return to the Catholic Faith and the services are poorly attended as yet. I am sure through Mary's intercession and many prayers offered, their current leader, Vladimir Putin, is encouraging people to come to church and renew their Faith.

The Russian churches survived because the Russian people look upon their art work – their Icons – as part of their culture and even the past leaders could not bring themselves to destroy the Icons.

I was encouraged by the pride of the people for their churches and heritage and am sure this will filter down to the young.



The Holidays



December 7

For many years the day was called Pearl Harbor Day in Commemoration of the day the Japanese Navy struck Pearl Harbor with a sneak attack. Pearl Harbor had been our safeguard in the Hawaiian Islands. However, this proved how vulnerable we could be.

Today it is called Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day and any celebration is dedicated to those who lived, fought, died and survived that infamous day 72 years ago.

At the direction of the President of the United States all flags shall fly at half staff commemorating those who were killed in the battle or died later from wounds inflicted during the battle.

In 1991 (the 50th anniversary of the “infamous” day) the United States Congress established the Pearl Harbor Commemorative medal. This is also known as the Pearl Harbor Survivor medal and is given to the veterans of the United States military services who were present in or around Pearl Harbor during the attack. Countries may be awarded the medal also.

This is another day in our history which shall always remain in our memories—those of us who are old enough to remember that day. It will always remain as President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated: “a day of infamy”.

There are several memorials commemorating this day. The one probably favored is the marble memorial placed on the Arizona which contains the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt .

Ref: <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/pearl-harbor-remembrance-day>

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

January 21



An excerpt from Nobelprize.org:

Martin Luther King, Jr., (January 15, 1929-April 4, 1968) was born Michael Luther King, Jr., but later had his name changed to Martin. His grandfather began the family's long tenure as pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, serving from 1914 to 1931; his father has served from then until the present, and from 1960 until his death Martin Luther acted as co-pastor. Martin Luther attended segregated public schools in Georgia, graduating from high school at the age of fifteen; he received the B. A. degree in 1948 from Morehouse College. After three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, he was awarded the B.D. in 1951. With a fellowship won at Crozer, he enrolled in graduate studies at Boston University, completing his residence for the

doctorate in 1953 and receiving the degree in 1955. In Boston he met and married Coretta Scott, a young woman of uncommon intellectual and artistic attainments. Two sons and two daughters were born into the family.



The Holidays

In 1954, Martin Luther King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. In December, 1955, he accepted the leadership of the first great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States, the bus boycott which lasted 382 days. On December 21, 1956, after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared unconstitutional the laws requiring segregation on buses, Negroes and whites rode the buses as equals.

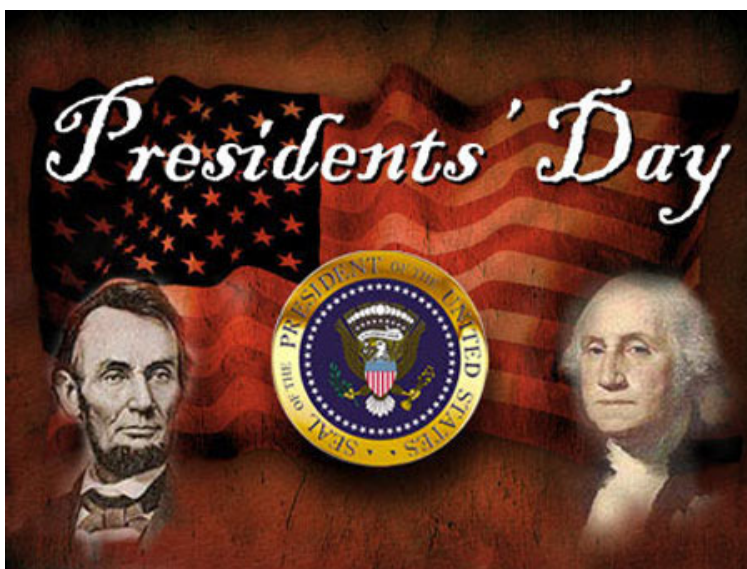
In 1957 he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide new leadership for the now burgeoning civil rights movement. The ideals for this organization he took from Christianity; its operational techniques from Gandhi. In the eleven-year period between 1957 and 1968, King led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama, that caught the attention of the entire world, providing what he called a coalition of conscience. and inspiring his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail", a manifesto of the Negro revolution; he planned the drives in Alabama for the registration of Negroes as voters; he directed the peaceful march on Washington, D.C., of 250,000 people to whom he delivered his address, "I Have a Dream".

At the age of thirty-five, Martin Luther King, Jr., was the youngest man to have received the Nobel Peace Prize. When notified of his selection, he announced that he would turn over the prize money of \$54,123 to the furtherance of the civil rights movement.

On the evening of April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his motel room in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was to lead a protest march in sympathy with striking garbage workers of that city, he was assassinated.

* Note from Nobelprize.org: This biography uses the word "Negro". Even though this word today is considered inappropriate, the biography is published in its original version in view of keeping it as a historical document.

Ref: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-bio.html



February 17

Washington's Birthday officially honors the life and work of George Washington, the first president of the United States. The day commemorates past presidents of the USA and it is sometimes known as Presidents' Day. This is because while most states have adopted Washington's Birthday, others officially celebrate Presidents' Day. Some states pay particular attention to Abraham Lincoln, as his birthday was also in mid-February.

Washington's Birthday was first celebrated as a holiday in the District of Columbia in 1880. It was made a federal holiday in 1885.

The holiday was originally held on the anniversary of George Washington's birth, on February 22. In 1971, this holiday was moved to the third Monday in February.

Ref: <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/washington-birthday>



Featured Ministries

Adoration Chapel



By Lynette Okruhlik

This is one of the most beautiful mysteries of our faith! Christ is present. He is hidden in the consecrated bread just as he was hidden under the veil of human flesh. One must see with the eyes of faith. Just as the woman with a hemorrhage reached out to touch Christ so must we do the same. Power flowed out from Him and she was healed by her faith. **Come!**

Jesus did not have to leave us His Sacred Presence during the Last Supper. He could have accomplished mankind's salvation in His crucifixion without leaving us this great gift of His loving presence. **Come! Believe.**

Many times we receive Jesus in Holy Communion in a hurry with little love. Our mind is filled with other thoughts. We rush to leave church and become busy with the day. In the chapel, you are in His Sacred Presence. This is a special time to express gratitude, pray for others, allow Jesus to fill you, strengthen you in times of trial, heal you, just share all our your concerns, or listen to Him. **Come! Do not be afraid.**

You are invited to make a short visit if you cannot sign up to take an hour. This time spent with Christ makes it easier to sacrifice for others. You will know.

He is present with you when you are with the sick, the sorrowful, the spiritually lost, all who come to you. He imparts His grace as you sit in His presence. Make time for the one who loved so much that He would leave such a gift of Himself. He is our teacher, our food, our light, our truth, our loving God. Seek Him with all your heart and He will let you find Him. He has plans to give you hope and a future.

There are no human words to express the mystery of Christ's presence in the consecrated host. **Come! He waits for you.** By name, He has called you. **Come!**

*Hours: 9:00 am - Midnight, daily in the Family Life Center
Contact: David Konvicka at (979) 297-0051
When: Just visit or take a permanent hour of adoration.*

Our Prayer for Pope Francis

SOUL OF CHRIST

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood
be my food and drink.
May your passion and death
be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side
enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek
be the shadow of your cross.

Let me not run from the love
which you offer,
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings
shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes,
When with your saints,
I may praise you forever. Amen

*Daniel L. Fleming, SJ
Adapted from Anima Christi
Loyola Press—a Jesuit Ministry*



Featured Blessed and New Saints



St **Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin** (1474-1548). Little is known about the life of Juan Diego before his conversion, but tradition and archaeological and iconographical sources, along with the most important and oldest indigenous document on the event of Guadalupe, "*El Nican Mopohua*" (written in *Náhuatl* with Latin characters, 1556, by the Indigenous writer Antonio Valeriano), give some information on the life of the saint and the apparitions.

Juan Diego was born in 1474 with the name "Cuauhtlatotzin" ("the talking eagle") in Cuautlitlán, today part of Mexico City, Mexico. He was a gifted member of the Chichimeca people, one of the more culturally advanced groups living in the Anáhuac Valley.

When he was 50 years old he was baptized by a Franciscan priest, Fr Peter da Gand, one of the first Franciscan missionaries. On December 9, 1531, when Juan Diego was on his way to morning Mass, the Blessed Mother appeared to him on Tepeyac

Hill, the outskirts of what is now Mexico City. She asked him to go to the Bishop and to request in her name that a shrine be built at Tepeyac, where she promised to pour out her grace upon those who invoked her. The Bishop, who did not believe Juan Diego, asked for a sign to prove that the apparition was true. On December 12, Juan Diego returned to Tepeyac. Here, the Blessed Mother told him to climb the hill and to pick the flowers that he would find in bloom. He obeyed, and although it was winter time, he found roses flowering. He gathered the flowers and took them to Our Lady who carefully placed them in his mantle and told him to take them to the Bishop as "proof". When he opened his mantle, the flowers fell on the ground and there remained impressed, in place of the flowers, an image of the Blessed Mother, the apparition at Tepeyac.

With the Bishop's permission, Juan Diego lived the rest of his life as a hermit in a small hut near the chapel where the miraculous image was placed for veneration. Here he cared for the church and the first pilgrims who came to pray to the Mother of Jesus.

Much deeper than the "exterior grace" of having been "chosen" as Our Lady's "messenger", Juan Diego received the grace of interior enlightenment and from that moment, he began a life dedicated to prayer and the practice of virtue and boundless love of God and neighbor. He died in 1548 and was buried in the first chapel dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe. He was beatified on May 6, 1990 and canonized on July 31, 2002 by Pope John Paul II in the Basilica of *Santa Maria de Guadalupe*, Mexico City. His feast day is December 9.

The miraculous image, which is preserved in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, shows a woman with native features and dress. She is supported by an angel whose wings are reminiscent of one of the major gods of the traditional religion of that area. The moon is beneath her feet and her blue mantle is covered with gold stars. The black girdle about her waist signifies that she is pregnant. Thus, the image graphically depicts the fact that Christ is to be "born" again among the peoples of the New World, and is a message as relevant to the "New World" today as it was during the lifetime of Juan Diego.

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20020731_juan-diego_en.html



Featured Blessed and New Saints

BEATIFICATION OF 522 TWENTIETH-CENTURY SPANISH MARTYRS

Vatican City, 13 October 2013 (VIS) - We publish below the full text of Pope Francis' video message, broadcast at the beginning of the beatification ceremony for 522 twentieth-century Spanish martyrs, which took place in Tarragona, Spain.

"I would like to express my heartfelt participation in the celebration taking place in Tarragona in which a great number of pastors, consecrated persons and lay faithful are being proclaimed Blessed martyrs.

"Who are the martyrs? They are Christians won over by Christ, disciples who have understood fully the path to that "love to the extreme limit" that led Jesus to the Cross. There is no such thing as love in consignments or in portions. Total love: and when one loves truly, one loves to the very end. On the Cross, Jesus felt the weight of death, the weight of sin, but He entrusted Himself entirely to the Father, and He forgave. He barely uttered a word, but He gave His life. Christ precedes and awaits us in love; the martyrs imitated Him in loving to the very end.

"The Holy Fathers say, 'Imitate the martyrs!' It is always necessary to die a little in order to come out of ourselves, to leave behind our selfishness, our comfort, our laziness, our sadness, and to open ourselves to God, and to others, especially those most in need.

"We implore the intercession of the martyrs in order to be true Christians, Christians not only in words but in deeds; so as not to be mediocre Christians, Christians painted with a superficial gloss of Christianity but without substance; the martyrs were not glossed and painted Christians, they were Christians to the very end. Let us ask their help to stay firm in faith, in spite of difficulties, and let us too nurture hope and be architects of brotherhood and solidarity.

"And I ask you to pray for me. May Jesus bless them and the Holy Virgin protect them".

DECREES OF THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

Vatican City, 31 October 2013 (VIS) - Today, during a private audience with Cardinal Angelo Amato S.D.B., prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Pope Francis authorised the Congregation to promulgate the following decrees:

MARTYRDOM

- Servant of God Anton Durcovici of Iai, Romania (1888-1951), killed in hatred of the faith in the Sighet prison, Bucarest, Romania in 1993.

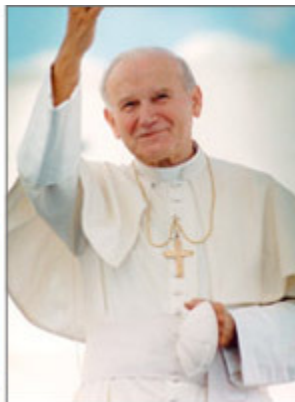
HEROIC VIRTUES

- Servant of God Honoria "Nano" Nagle (Joan of God), Irish foundress of the Union of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1718-1784).

- Servant of God Celestina Bottego, foundress of the Xaverian Missionary Sisters of Mary (1895-1980).

- Servant of God Olga della Madre di Dio (nee Olga Maria Fortunata Gugelmo), Italian professed nun of the Congregation of the Daughters of the Church (1910-1943).

Date for Canonization of John XXIII and John Paul II



September 30, 2013, (Vatican Radio) Pope Francis on Monday morning held the Public Ordinary Consistory for the forthcoming Canonization of Blessed Pope John XXIII and Blessed Pope John Paul II. During the course of the Consistory in the Vatican's Consistory Hall, the Pope decreed that his two predecessors will be raised to Sainthood on **April 27, 2014**, the day on which the Church celebrates the Second Sunday of Easter and Divine Mercy.



VIS

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE

Vatican Information Service

FRATERNITY - THEME FOR THE 47th WORLD DAY OF PEACE

Vatican City, 31 July 2013 (VIS) - "*Fraternity*, the foundation and pathway to peace": this is the theme of the 47th World Day of Peace, the first during the pontificate of Pope Francis.

The World Day of Peace was an initiative of Pope Paul VI and it is celebrated on the first day of each year. The Message for the World Day of Peace is sent to particular churches and chancelleries all around the world, drawing attention to the essential value of peace and the need to work tirelessly in order to attain it.

As the theme of his first Message for the World Day of Peace, Pope Francis has chosen Fraternity. Since the beginning of his Petrine Ministry, the Pope has stressed the need to combat the "throwaway culture" and to promote instead a "culture of encounter", in order to build a more just and peaceful world.

Fraternity is a dowry that every man and every woman brings with himself or herself as a human being, as a child of the one Father. In the face of the many tragedies that afflict the family of nations - poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, conflicts, migrations, pollution, inequalities, injustice, organized crime, and fundamentalisms - fraternity is the foundation and the pathway to peace.

The culture of personal well-being leads to a loss of the sense of responsibility and fraternal relationship. Others, rather than being "like us", appear more as antagonists or enemies and are often treated as objects. Not uncommonly, the poor and needy are regarded as a "burden", a hindrance to development. At most, they are considered as recipients of aid or compassionate assistance. They are not seen as brothers and sisters, called to share the gifts of creation, the goods of progress and culture, to be partakers at the same table of the fullness of life, to be protagonists of integral and inclusive development.

Fraternity, a gift and task that comes from God the Father, urges us to be in solidarity against inequality and poverty that undermine the social fabric, to take care of every person, especially the weakest and most defenseless, to love him or her as oneself, with the very heart of Jesus Christ.

In a world that is constantly growing more interdependent, the good of fraternity is one that we cannot do without. It serves to defeat the spread of the globalization of indifference to which Pope Francis has frequently referred. The globalization of indifference must give way to a globalization of fraternity.

Fraternity should leave its mark on every aspect of life, including the economy, finance, civil society, politics, research, development, public and cultural institutions.

At the start of his ministry, Pope Francis issues a message in continuity with that of his predecessors, which proposes to everyone the pathway of fraternity, in order to give the world a more human face.

NEW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE VATICAN

On August 31, 2013 Pope Francis announced that he had appointed Archbishop Pietro Parolin, the nuncio for Venezuela and a long time Vatican diplomat as the new Secretary of State. At that time he said that he had accepted the resignation of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone as the present Secretary of State. However, he had asked Cardinal Bertone if he would remain in office until October 15, 2013 and the Cardinal acquiesced to the request. This will give Archbishop Parolin time to attend to his business in Venezuela and return to Rome with nothing but his new position ahead of him.

On October 15, 2013 the Holy Father will receive Cardinal Bertone thanking him for the many years of service he has given to the Vatican. On that date the Pope will also reconfirm those retaining their present positions -the Substitute for General Affairs, the Secretary of Relations with the States, the Prefect of the Papal Household the Assessor for General Affairs and the Undersecretary of Relations with the States.

The Secretary of State is one of the most important positions available in the Vatican. At the present time he is second in power and responsibilities only to the Pope. However, this may change as the Pope has ideas about how he wants to arrange his household.

Archbishop Parolin, 58 years of age, has served the Vatican in various diplomatic positions, always



with success. His work in the Holy See diplomatic Service began in 1986 as part of the Pontifical representation in Nigeria and following that in 1989 in Mexico. From 1992 he worked in the Secretariat of State office for 17 years. It was then that he received his appointment as Papal Nuncio to Venezuela where he has remained until the date of August 31, 2013. He is now a member of the papal family and will take over his new office October 15. On that date also, the Pope will take over his official quarters although many believe he will continue to spend time in the quietness of his little cottage on the Vatican grounds.

As this appointment was being announced Archbishop Parolin issued a statement of his own which read: "At this moment, in which my appointment as Secretary of State is made public, I desire to express deep and affectionate gratitude to the Holy Father, Francis, for the uninhabited trust he is showing me, and to make known to him once again my willingness and complete availability to work with him and under his guidance for the greater glory of God, the good of the Holy Church, and the progress and peace of humanity that humanity might find reasons to live and to hope". "I feel very strongly", he continued, "the grace of this call, which is yet another and the latest of God's surprises in my life. Above all, I feel the full weight of the responsibility placed upon me: this call entrusts to me the difficult and challenging mission, before which my powers are weak and my abilities poor. For this reason, I entrust myself to the merciful love of the Lord, from whom nothing and no one can ever separate me, and to the prayers of all. I thank all those who have shown and who, starting now, will show me the understanding as well as for any and all manner of help that anyone might desire to offer me in my new undertaking".

He then spoke of his family and to all those who had been part of his life; in the parishes in which he was born and those in which he had served, the foreign countries he had been called upon by Rome to help and Venezuela from which he was sorry to leave. He talked of His Eminence, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, his superiors, colleagues and collaborators and of the whole Roman Curia (in which some changes can be expected), as well as of all those who represent the Holy Father and the Holy See around the world.

The Archbishop continued with his statement: "It is with trepidation that I place myself in this new service to the Gospel, to the Church and to Pope Francis, but also with trust and serenity – disposed - as the Holy Father has asked us from the beginning - to walk, to build and to profess. May Our Lady whom I like to invoke under her titles as Our Lady of Monte Berico, Guadalupe, and Coromoto, give us the courage to walk in the presence of the Lord, with the Lord's Cross, to build the Church on the Lord's blood which was poured out on the Cross and to profess the one glory; Christ crucified. And in this way, the Church will go forward.

And as they say in Venezuela, "Que Dios los bendiga."

THE FAMILY IS A COMMUNITY

Vatican City, 25 October 2013 (VIS) - "The family is a community of life with its own consistency. It is not the sum of the persons by whom it is constituted, but rather a 'community of persons'", said Pope Francis, quoting Blessed John Paul II's encyclical "*Familiaris consortio*", in an address to participants in the twenty-first plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family taking place in Rome during these days, whom he received in audience this morning.

The family, continued the Pontiff, is "the place where we learn to love, the natural centre of human life". Each one of us builds his or her own personality within the family. It is there that we learn the art of dialogue and interpersonal communication". For this reason "the community-family ... asks to be recognized as such, even more nowadays, when the protection of individual rights prevails".

"The family is based on marriage. Through an act of free and faithful love, Christian couples give witness that marriage, as a sacrament, is the foundation upon which they base their family and strengthens the conjugal union and mutual self-giving. Conjugal and familiar love also clearly demonstrate the vocation of the person to love in a unique and everlasting way, and show that the trials, sacrifices and crises in the lives of couples, as in the family as a whole, represent stages of growth in goodness, truth and beauty. It is an experience of faith in God and of reciprocal trust, profound freedom, and holiness, because holiness presupposes self-giving with trust and sacrifice every day throughout life!"

The Holy Father continued by placing special emphasis on two phases of family life, childhood and old age, commenting that, "Children and the elderly represent the two poles of life and are also the most



vulnerable and often the most forgotten group. A society that abandons its children or marginalizes its elderly members not only carries out an act of injustice but also sanctions the failure of that society. Taking care of the young and the elderly is the choice of civilization”.

Pope Francis expressed his approval of the new icon of the family, created by the Pontifical Council, which depicts the scene of the Presentation of Jesus at the temple with Mary and Joseph who bring the Child, as required by the law, and the two elderly figures of Simeon and Anna who, moved by the Spirit, welcome him as the Savior. The title of the icon is 'His mercy extends from generation to generation'.

“The 'Good News' of the family”, he concluded, “is a very important part of evangelization that Christians can communicate to everyone through the witness of their lives; and they already do so – this is evident in secularized societies. We therefore propose to all, with respect and courage, the beauty of marriage and the family, illuminated by the Gospel! And for this reason we draw close, with attention and affection, to families in difficulty, to those who are compelled to leave their homeland, who are divided, who do not have homes or work, or who suffer for many reasons; to couples in crisis or those who have separated. We wish to be close to all of them”.

Pope' Catechesis: Charismas a way of Growing in Faith

Vatican City, 6 November 2013 (VIS) – The communion of holy persons who grow through participation in spiritual goods, and above all the Sacraments, the charismas and charity, was the theme of Pope Francis' catechesis during today's general audience.

In the Sacraments, each one of us is “incorporated in Christ and united with the entire community of believers. Therefore, in one hand there is the Church who 'makes' the Sacraments, on the other there are the Sacraments which 'make' the Church, edifying her, generating new sons and daughters, and joining them to the holy people of God”. Furthermore, “the Sacraments offer us the impetus to become missionaries, and the apostolic commitment to taking the faith to all places, even the most hostile, is the most authentic fruit of a steadfast sacramental life, inasmuch as it constitutes participation in God's salvific plan, which aims at bringing salvation to all”.

The second aspect of communion in holy things is the communion of charismas. “The Holy Spirit dispenses a multitude of gifts and spiritual graces to the faithful for the edification of the Church”, explained the Pope. “Therefore, they are not given for the benefit of the recipient, but for use by the people of God. The charismas are particular graces, given to some for the good of many others”, and “they are born in the conscience and experience of certain persons, called to put their gifts at the service of the community. In particular, these spiritual gifts are of benefit to the sanctity of the Church and her mission”.

Charity is the third aspect of this communion with spiritual goods. “The charismas are important in the life of the Christian community, but they are always means of growing in charity, which St. Paul places above the charismas. Without love”, Pope Francis emphasized, “even the most extraordinary gifts are in vain, while the smallest of our gestures of love brings good to all. This brotherly solidarity is not a rhetorical figure, a figure of speech, but rather an integral part of communion between Christians. If we live this solidarity, we are a sign to the world, a 'sacrament' of God's love”.

“This is not that easy charity that we offer between ourselves, but instead something deeper: it is a communion that makes us able to enter into the joy and the pain of others in order to sincerely make them our own. And often we are too arid, indifferent and detached, and instead of transmitting brotherliness, we transmit ill-humor, coldness and selfishness. And with ill-humor, coldness and selfishness, cannot help the Church to grow; the Church grows only with the love that comes from the Holy Spirit”.

“And I would now like to ask of you an act of charity”, said the Holy Father to the tens of thousands of faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, and added jokingly, “Don't worry! It's not a collection! Before coming to the Square, I went to see a seriously ill child aged just one and a half. Her mother and father pray and implore the Lord to cure their daughter. Her name is Noemi. Let us carry out an act of love; we do not know her but she is a baptized child, she is one of us, a Christian. Let us ask the Lord to help her in this moment and to give her health: first in silence, and then let us pray the Hail Mary”.

Silence fell over the square for a moment, after which the Pope said, “And now let us pray together to the Virgin for the health of Noemi. Thank you for this act of charity”, he concluded, after more than fifty thousand people recited the Hail Mary in unison.



The Saints

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

St. John of Damascus

Feast: December 4



Practically all of the information concerning the life of John of Damascus comes from the records of John, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Scholars note that these writings date back to the tenth century, but are lacking in detail. John of Damascus (c 676-12-5-749) was born and raised in Damascus and was at times known as John "Damascene, Chrysorrhoas (streaming with gold) meaning he was a very eloquent speaker. He was reared in Damascus, probably in the Monastery of Saint Sabbas southeast of Jerusalem.

John was reared under the Muslim rule of Damascus. However, this did not affect his rearing or his family's Christian faith. Neither did they have any problems with the Muslims in authority. He was personally held in high esteem by these men of power. His father had a high public office along with which went a high credibility in his father. He was chief financial officer for the Caliph leader of the Muslims at this time. It was to this man that John's father was responsible as the chief financial officer of Syria and head of the tax department for Syria.

When John was 23, his father began looking for a Christian tutor-someone to provide the best Christian education possible for the children. The father loved to roam through the market places and one day he came upon some prisoners imprisoned as a result of a raid from a war that had taken place on the coasts of Italy. One of the men, in particular, impressed him and his name was Cosmas, a man of great knowledge and wisdom.

He was also a Sicilian monk which made John's father think he had found the perfect tutor for John. The father was able to arrange for the monk's freedom. John made great strides under the tutelage of Cosmas, particularly in music, astronomy and theology. According to his biographer he soon equaled Diaphanous, the father of algebra), in algebra and Euclid in geometry, (the most prominent mathematician of Greco-Roman antiquity and best known in geometry).

In spite of his Christian background, his family continued to hold a high hereditary public office and when John's father died, John was able to succeed him in his duties. John the Damascene was made "protosymbullus" or chief counselor of Damascus.

It was about this time of year that the insurrections began and the iconoclasts began to appear in the form of Heresy. Such activity disturbed the Church very much - especially the Church in the East. It was the Patriarch of Constantinople, Emperor Leo the Isaurian who issued his first edict against the veneration of images and their exhibition in public places. John de Damascene quickly initiated his literary defense against the monarch in three "Apologetic Treatises against those decrying the Holy Images. This was John's earlier work and it was through these treatises that his fame as a writer began to spread. That he attacked the monarch was a help, but that he wrote in a simpler writing style brought the controverter closer to the common people, inciting revolt among the Christian faith.

Because of the popularity of John among the people, Leo could not punish John openly so he used a forged letter to spread among the people as being written by John. Although John openly denied what was written, the Emperor paid no attention to the denial and discharged him from his post. He ordered that the right hand of John (his writing hand) to be severed at the wrist.



The Saints

According to the tenth century biography his hand was miraculously restored after fervent prayer before an icon of the Virgin Mary. This convinced the caliph of the innocence of John's writings and he wished to reinstate him to his former office. However, John had retired to the monastery of Saint Sabbas near Jerusalem where he continued to write. He wrote on everything contemporary -commentaries, hymns, apologetics, writings, including the "Oktoechos (the Church's service book of eight tones). The one thing he wrote that was not contemporary was "An exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith a summary of the dogmatic writings of the Early Church Fathers.

He died December 5, 749. He was and still is a revered Father of the Church and is now universally recognized as a saint.

Kontakion (tone 4)

Let us sing praises to John, worthy of great honor,
the composer of hymns, the star and teacher of the Church, the defender of her doctrines:
through the might of the Lord's Cross he overcame heretical error
and as a fervent intercessor before God
he entreats that forgiveness of sins may be granted to all.

Ref: http://orthodoxwiki.org/John_of_Damascus

St. Peter Canisius

Feast: December 21



In 1565 the Council of Trent was in session and the Vatican was looking for a special person who could take some documents to the bishops without being stopped. In reality they were looking for a secret agent. The person chosen had to travel through Protestant territory and also possibly be besieged by thieves along the way. The one person they had thought could do the job had befallen a lot of misery and had failed. The mission had turned out to be more dangerous than originally thought.

The Papal office had discovered that not just anyone would do. They needed someone courageous and above suspicion. Peter Canisius, a Jesuit was found to be the perfect person. Peter was a well known Jesuit, 43 years of age and had founded colleges that even the Protestants respected. These educational edifices provided the needed cover for Peter as he traveled frequently on college business and became known as the "official visitor."

The "official visitor" was unable to hide the official documents on his personage as do modern day spies. Peter traveled from Rome and

crisscrossed Germany successfully loaded with the Tridentine tomes-250 pages each. This did not include the sacks of books he also carried to give to the Jesuit universities.

Peter had been born in Holland in 1521. He had proved himself to his superiors that he was a writer of renown, having written and edited several books on Church history and theology. He was a delegate to the Council of Trent and had found ways to rescue the universities from the heresy with which they seemed to be afflicted. He was called to Vienna to preach at their university. However, his preaching with fancy words spoken in his German accent did not touch them very deeply. What did touch them was seeing him ministering to the sick during a plague. He made such an impression that the people and even King Ferdinand all wanted him to remain and become Bishop of Vienna. Peter refused the offer and title, but he did remain in Vienna for a year as their bishop.

For many years during the Reformation Peter saw his students taking on the flashy and well written



The Saints

arguments of the Protestants. How he wished for a Catholic catechism –a book which would present the Catholic beliefs in the true light and not be distorted by fanatics. Finally King Ferdinand became involved in this problem and solved it by telling Peter and his friend, Fr. Lejay that they were to write the Catechism. Peter was willing to let Lejay do all the writing as he proved to be the better writer. However, as will happen, things delayed the writing of the Catechism. When Fr. Lejay died, the King would wait no longer and told Peter that he must get this book together and published. Peter did so and it was an immediate success in 1555. Probably the approach Peter used accounted for the successes - Christian doctrine in two parts: wisdom -including faith, hope, and charity, and justice - avoiding evil and doing good. This he linked to a section on sacraments. Peter wrote two more catechisms - one for the middle school children and one for the smaller children who were just beginning to learn to pray.

Peter had one more challenge in his life - that of a priest named Fr. Couvillon. Fr. Couvillon appeared to disregard anyone whose ideas conflicted with his own. It was obvious the man was mentally ill. Peter made great strides in improving the situation and made the priest his secretary. Peter asked him to remain at the university as a teacher but the priest refused. Peter thought he would improve even more if he worked harder and focused less on himself. This approach appeared to have some good effect on Fr. Couvillon and even though he continued to display signs of mental illness, he did accomplish many good things.

Peter died December 21, 1597. He is known as the Second Apostle of Germany and was named a Doctor of the Church.

Ref: http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=93

St. Angela Merici

Feast: January 27



Angela Merici was born March 21, 1474 at Desenzano. This was a small town off the southwestern shores of Lake Garda in Lombardy. She died January 27, 1540 at Brescia but only after living a life full of helping those who needed help.

Angela (age 10) and her older sister were left orphans and they were offered a home by an uncle who lived in Salo. They were all happy with this arrangement. However, her sister died suddenly and Angela took this very hard. Especially when she knew that the sister had not received the last sacraments. Angela spent her time grieving. She became a tertiary of St. Francis and increased her prayers and mortifications. In her anguish she prayed to God to reveal to her the status of her deceased sister. The story goes that she had a vision which satisfied her. She knew her sister was enjoying the company of the saints in heaven.

Her uncle died when she was 23. She had no place to go except her paternal home in Desenzano. While establishing a home there,

she noticed that the young children apparently needed instructions in the basic Christian elements. She was able to convert her home into a school for young girls. At special times during the day she would call the young girls to class and give them the instruction in the Christian faith—instructions which she thought they should have.

It is said that in a vision one day it was revealed to her that she was to found an organization of virgins who were to devote their lives to the religious training of the young girls. The school she established was so successful that she was asked to start another one of similar curriculum in the neighboring city of Brescia. Angela was most happy to do so.



The Saints

In 1524 she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She suddenly became blind on the Isle of Crete. She continued her journey to the Holy Places on her agenda and experienced a cure of her blindness when she returned home. In the Jubilee year of 1525 she went to Rome to gain indulgences. Pope Clement II, who knew of her accomplishments and her holiness, invited her to remain in Rome. Angela declined the invitation as she did not seek publicity.

On March 25, 1535 she finally chose the 12 virgins and laid the foundation for the building in which the Ursuline nuns were to live. It was a small house near the Church of St. Afra in Brescia. She had been superior for five years of the newly founded order had been in existence and felt she could continue no longer.

She died shortly. Her body is buried in the Church of St. Afra in Brescia. She was beatified in 1768 by Pope Clement XIII. Her feast is celebrated January 27.

Ref: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01481a.htm>

St. Scholastica

Feast: February 10



Scholastica was born about 480 and died February 10, 542. She is a saint in the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches through Pre-Congregation. She was born in Nursia, Umbria, Italy and was the twin sister of St. Benedict of Nursia. She died February 10, 542 Near Monte Cassino, the abbey which St. Benedict had founded for his Benedictine order of monks.

St. Gregory, the Great, in his "dialogues" writes that she was a nun and the leader of a community for women located at Plombariola which was about five miles from Benedict's abbey at Monte Cassino. The rules for the women's community were not known, but it is assumed they followed the rules Benedict developed for members of his abbey.

Those who knew Scholastica found that she had dedicated herself to God at a very young age. She preceded Benedict in leading a life of holiness. The most commonly told story is regarding her visitation to a place near Monte

Cassino to see Benedict. They would talk, plan and discuss religious problems or religious ideas on into the night. They spent the morning and daylight hours worshipping together and discussing sacred texts and issues.

Another story told is one year she came to visit and after their designated time was up, she asked Benedict if she could stay longer. He told her that he could not stay as he needed to get back to the abbey. She pleaded with him, but he remained adamant. So she bowed her head, and clasped her hands in prayer. After a moment a wild storm started outside the guest house where they were lodged. Benedict asked her: "What have you done?" Her reply was: "I asked you if I could stay longer and you would not listen. So I asked my God and He did listen. So now go off, if you can leave me and return to your monastery". Because of the bad weather Benedict was unable to leave the lodge where they were and thus they spent the whole night in discussion.

According to Gregory's "Dialogues" three days later from his cell Benedict saw his sister's soul leaving the earth and ascending to heaven in the form of a shining white dove.



From The Web



Launching Geekpriest: Where No Priest Has Gone Before

SQPN launches a new podcast, "Geekpriest", hosted by Dutch Catholic priest Fr. Roderick Vonhögen. Fr. Roderick is a Dutch Catholic priest and the founder and CEO of SQPN.com. In addition to his work in new media, he is the host of several television and radio shows in the Netherlands.

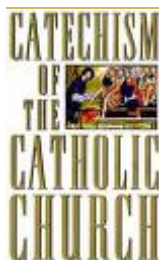
The new show connects with the world of 'geeks' and covers topics like comics, gadgets, Sci-Fi & fantasy, video games, science, technology, animation, apps, toys, collectibles and life hacks.

[Subscribe to the show via RSS or with iTunes.](#)

Among Women – Mulieris Dignitatem Silver Jubilee

POSTED ON OCTOBER 18, 2013 BY INGE

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of Blessed John Paul II's Mulieris Dignitatem – "On the dignity and vocation of women". Catch up with the news and discussion of this document and how it applies to women's lives at : <http://sqpn.com/2013/10/18/among-women-mulieris-dignitatem-silver-jubilee/>



Do you want to Read the Catechism and Study the Gospels in a Year?

Sign up at: flocknote.com/catechism for the Catechism in a Year
And: flocknote.com/gospel for the Gospels in a Year.

You will receive a daily tidbit about the Catholic faith and the Gospels (+ Commentaries) sent straight to your inbox. Read that little bit each day and you'll have studied the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church and all four gospels of the Holy Bible in a year.

Catholic Relief Services was founded in 1943 by the Catholic Bishops of the United States to serve World War II survivors in Europe.

[Our mission](#) is to assist impoverished and disadvantaged people overseas, working in the spirit of Catholic social teaching to promote the sacredness of human life and the dignity of the human person. Although our mission is rooted in the Catholic faith, our operations serve people based solely on need, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity. Within the United States, CRS engages Catholics to live their faith in solidarity with the poor and suffering people of the world.

<http://crs.org>





Important Dates In This Trimester

Date	Celebration	Date	Celebration
Dec. 1	First Sunday of Advent	Jan. 6	Epiphany of the Lord
Dec. 4	St. John of Damascus	Jan. 15	Martin Luther King's Birthday
Dec. 7	Pearl Harbor Day	Jan. 22	Day of Prayer for Legal Protection of Unborn Children
Dec. 9	Immaculate Conception of Mary	Jan. 25	Conversion of St. Paul, the Apostle
Dec. 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Jan. 28	St. Thomas Aquinas
Dec. 13	St. Lucy	Feb. 2	Presentation of the Lord
Dec. 14	St. John of the Cross	Feb. 6	St. Paul Miki and Companions
Dec. 21	St. Peter Canisius	Feb. 8	St. Jerome Emiliani / St. Josephine Bakhita
Dec. 25	Feast of the Nativity	Feb. 11	Our Lady of Lourdes
Dec. 27	St. John Apostle and Evangelist	Feb. 12	President Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
Dec. 28	The Holy Innocents	Feb. 14	St. Cyril and Methodius Valentine's Day
Dec. 29	Feast of the Holy Family	Feb. 17	President's Day
Jan. 1	Feast of the Mother of God	Feb. 22	Chair of Peter George Washington's Birthday
Jan. 3	Most Holy Name of Jesus		

St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic
Church

100 Oak Drive, South
Lake Jackson, TX 77566

Phone: 979-297-3041

Fax: 979-297-7895

E-mail: church@smlj.org

Web Page: www.smlj.org