

Mary Mother of the Church

Area Catholic Community

February 2021



St. Joseph, Bertha | St. Hubert, Bluegrass | St. John the Baptist, Bluffton | Assumption of Our Lady, Menahga

St. Michael, Motley | Sacred Heart, Staples | St. Frederick, Verndale | St. Ann, Wadena

Mary Mother of the Church Area Catholic Community

Information

Peace be with you! You are reading the first formal print publication of our *Area Catholic Community of Mary, Mother of the Church* (ACC-MMC). The purpose of this monthly newsletter is to weave our lives and stories together in a way that is personal and relational, our coming together as faithful Catholics who share in each other's stories, a celebration of what brings us joy as people of faith. We hope you enjoy it!

The Diocese of St. Cloud has brought our eight parishes into an Area Catholic Community in order that we might share in the one mission of Jesus Christ, to be missionary disciples for Him. On our own, our parishes do not have the resources to accomplish this well. We need each other. The Church is the people of God; its buildings and programs are meant to serve the people. Maintenance of facilities and activities only get us so far. Together, we have the opportunity to prepare for a future of living faith which is vibrant in our area. Jesus wants us to be witnesses of a living faith, building up the kingdom of God here and now, not just investing in our children for the future. We adults need to connect to people outside of our registered parishioners, like networking, connecting people to Jesus and our parishes. We need to know who each other is and what each other does. Our prayer needs to be together and personal.

Our staff is working hard to build up our eight parishes as a unified community for Christ's mission. In the next six months, along with this monthly newsletter, we hope to create a shared bulletin and website, as well.

The bringing together of our parishes is no small undertaking. All of us play a part. We want our parishes and ACC to be vibrant with missionary disciples. To help us in planning, we have an excellent *ACC-MMC Planning Council*, made up of two representatives from each parish, who have been working with our staff to prepare for and implement our goals and objectives of our ACC plan, approved by the bishop last Spring. Of course, the pandemic has affected the timing of some of our goals, but the planning committee is dedicated to fulfilling them. The main goals are focused on: (1) Evangelization; (2) Faith Formation & Youth Ministry; (3) Liturgy & Sacraments; and (4) Administration and Staffing. We will elaborate on these goals more in future publications.

Again, we hope this newsletter brings you joy and is a sign of our shared mission. As we begin this year together, may "the Lord bless and keep you. The Lord let His face shine on you, and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Numbers 6:24-26).

+ Fr. Aaron Kuhn



Stay Informed & Keep Up To Date!

- “Like” our social media page: (facebook.com/marysacc).
- Download the “MyParishApp” on your mobile device,
(Find our parish “Mary Mother Church ACC”, and Click on ‘groups’ to join in order to receive specific notifications and content provided by our staff and group leaders.)
- Keep using the parish websites until our joint website is created:

Sacred Heart & St. Michael
staplesmotleycatholics.org

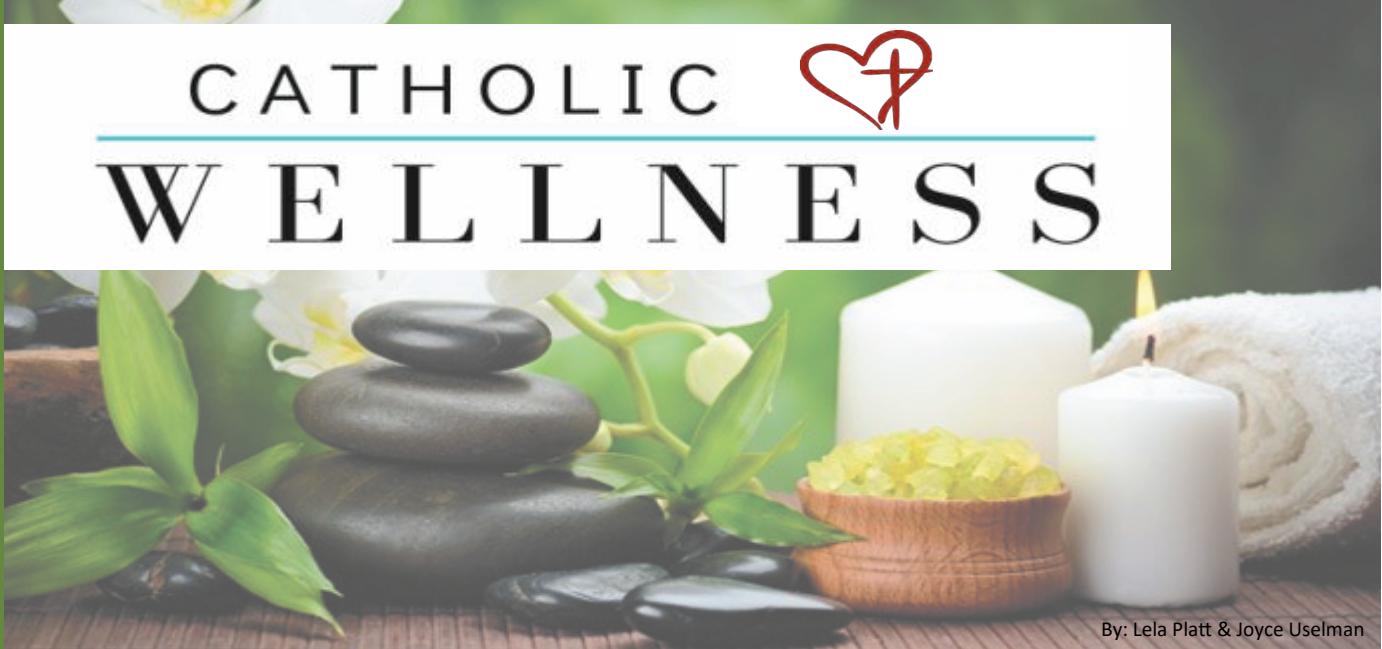
St. Frederick, St. Hubert &
Assumption of Our Lady:
vbm catholic.org

St. Ann, St. Joseph &
St. John the Baptist:
wadenaareacatholic.org

- Keep reading our weekly bulletins.

Our volunteers have said, they are amazed at how they feel after helping those in need.

They feel exhilarated and gain more from helping than they thought possible.



By: Lela Platt & Joyce Uselman

Helping people stay healthy, physically, mentally, and spiritually has been a goal of the Church for a long time. Unfortunately, with COVID, that need is even greater than ever. Not just because of people getting sick, probably even more because of the amount of sadness, depression, grief, and mental health problems. Fortunately, the Parish Nurses have been there for us, well before COVID.

In 2009 the Parish Nurses of the Three Catholic Faith Communities in Bluegrass, Menahga, and Verndale started doing blood pressure checks once a month following Sunday Mass at St. Hubert's in Bluegrass, in an effort to help prevent a silent killer - hypertension. As time went on, it was clear people needed more help, in different ways. The program evolved and added programs and services that focus on many aspects of life, which lead to the start of a Wellness Committee which, included registered nurses and amazing volunteers from the Parishes of St. Hubert's in Bluegrass, St. Fredrick's in Verndale, and Assumption of Our Lady in Menahga. St. Ann's in Wadena saw how beneficial the committee and programs were and in 2019 they established "The Wadena Area Catholic Wellness Committee," focused on educating people.

Anybody from our ACC church communities are welcome to get help and services or to serve as a volunteer. This includes you and your family members.

The programs offered in Bluegrass, Verndale, & Menahga are focused on depression, mental disorders, preparing living wills, teaching CPR to the ushers (and anyone interested) and a grief support group. Unfortunately, the pandemic has limited important activities like visiting nursing homes to lead rosary and to help with Mass.

The programs offered by The Wadena Area Catholic Wellness Committee focused on "Managing Health Emergencies" (while at church) "Hypertension & Stroke Awareness", and the "End of life seminar/funeral planning." The committee also hosted the "MCCL Speaker." The committee is planning for 2021 with a seriously needed topic, "Suicide Prevention & Education Training".

Together, nurses & volunteers make home visits for those who cannot attend Mass due to illness or other personal circumstances. At each visit the nurses assess each resident's health condition and work to facilitate further assistance, if needed. A Eucharistic Minister goes with the nurse and they provide Holy Communion if someone wishes to receive. Home visits have been so greatly appreciated by both the residents and the visitors.

Of course, none of this could be possible without the help of our volunteers: WE THANK AND APPRECIATE YOU! You are a big part of what makes these committees so successful. From making phone calls, helping with home visits, helping with parish needs like mailing cards, being part of the parish prayer chain and in so many more ways. We still need more volunteers, with all kinds of talents! Please consider it - you don't even need health care experience.

If you are in need of services in the Bluegrass, Verndale or Menahga areas please contact Lela Platt at 218-234-8966 or Shirley Malone at 218-445-5204.

If you are in need of services in the Wadena area please call Mary at 218-631-4753 or Joyce at 218-631-1231.

My faith goals for 2021 are: to repent when I sin and then fix the problem, to love my neighbor as myself, to love God and praise Him, to try and go to Church more often and to respect all people. I hope I succeed!
- Ronnie, 6th Grade

My Faith goal for 2021 is to grow closer to God. I am going to try to achieve this goal by repenting from my sins, praying more often and being kind to others. I am also going to spread the Word of God.
– Madison, 6th Grade

We are going to follow Fr. Mike Schmitz on YouTube as he reads the Bible over the next year.
-Stroeing Family,
-Matt & Lecia Parker
&
-Maria & Jake Uselman

Join Church when possible, join or contribute to Church funds and functions, let go and let God take care of the situation because I can't control people, places, and things. - Mia, 6th Grade

As a family we want to make sure that we are going to confession once a month!
-Bulcher Family

Receive my First Communion
- Alexis, Age 8 &
- Natalee, Age 11

We plan to continue to slow down and see Christ in everything, have a grateful heart and know all things are through Him! We will also continue our "Family Book Club" ☺
-Simpson Family

Learn more about the sacrament of reconciliation and more about Jesus and God. And learn more about First Communion. -Tyson, Age 8

FAITH

*The heart of man
plans his path,
but the
Lord directs
his steps.*

~Proverbs 16:9

2021

By: Victoria Bulcher

GOALS

I want to pray more, get angry less and I want to receive my First Communion.
Andrew, Age 8.

Continue with my Lay Carmelite formation.
-Jori Church

Read a chapter from the Bible everyday as a family.
-Hobbs Family

I'm going to try to say a divine mercy chaplet every day. -Jack Tyrrell

My faith goal for 2021 is to "let God handle it". I want to worry less about things I have no control over. My hope is that I can pray about it and leave it up to the Lord.
- Trudy Irons

Learn as much as I can about God and Jesus. Receive my First Communion.
- Evan, Age 9



Why Losing



Catholic Education Matters

As we all know, children are the greatest gift and responsibility God gives us. They are an unbelievable blessing and need our help from being newly born and even into adulthood. And while there are many responsibilities we all have to our children, none is greater than doing everything in our power to raise them to be detached from the world and to become completely attached, only to Jesus himself. We have the responsibility to do all we can to raise our kids to be saints. Now, I don't know about you, but when I stop and think about that, I realize I can't do it alone. I need a lot of "Grace from above" and help from our community. Thank God for Catholic Schools!

Catholic Schools are good for our children, our families, our communities and The Church as a whole. We as parents are the primary teachers of the faith and the schools help by providing more structured religious and moral

In sharing our Catholic faith in Christ, we foster spiritual and academic formation in a positive and welcoming atmosphere that reflects love and respect for all.

~Sacred Heart Catholic School

teachings, in an environment that allows kids to be around other kids growing to love Christ. In a world that needs God, His love and His teachings, we can't afford to lose any more Catholic schools. Sadly, this year in particular, Catholic schools have had many hardships, some have had to close and some remain open with low attendance. We however have been very blessed to have two great Catholic Schools in our area, Sacred Heart in Staples, and Christ the King in Browerville. Families have been attending these schools for decades, and as a result, many of our families have been blessed by the supportive teachers and staff. Please do what you can to help by having your children (and even grandchildren) start attending Catholic schools. We can't afford to lose another school and we definitely can't risk the chance of losing another innocent soul to the ways of the world.

As a united family at Christ the King Catholic School, we strive to promote Catholic values, academic achievement, and life long skills to develop responsible Christians on their life long journeys .

We are thankful for Catholic Education because of the values it instills in our children. Not only is Catholic teaching beautifully combined in core subjects, our children are taught life values such as respect and the importance of treating others as family (anyone who spends time in our school can see it is really one big family, with the older and younger children all interacting and interested in each other's lives).

-Nicholas & Janessa Harren

Catholic Education provides our children with a faith filled environment where they learn about their faith & their academics. They are able to attend Mass weekly and Holy Days together and are given the opportunity to serve as lectors and participate at an early age. Our kids have beautiful examples of faith filled teachers and staff who show them how to better love those around them. It is a huge blessing for our family to be a part of a small Catholic school and know our children are receiving an education grounded and presented in the faith. -Loren & Stephanie Heinze

Where Ya Been?



The story is told of a man named John the coal back from John, and returned it "prowling around" and starts chasing a who had once been faithful to attend his to the roaring fire... and in just a few herd of wildebeests. It runs and gets church regularly, but had grown lackadaisical recently. The Pastor knew that he hadn't seen the gentleman in a while, so he went for a visit.

The Pastor then got to his feet, put his

John greeted the Pastor and welcomed him in, directing him to the chair beside the fireplace. He asked the Pastor what brought him to visit, but the Pastor didn't say a word... he simply grabbed the fireplace tongs, picked up a hot coal from the fire, and set it away from the fire, out on the hearth. Both men then watched the coal.

While the fire roared on, the coal which had been red hot began to lose its heat. It gradually lost its red color, and then cooled off so that it became cool to the touch. The Pastor picked up the coal, and handed it to John for a moment... neither man said a word.

Then the Pastor reached out and took

hat on, and shook John's hand. At that point, John looked at the Pastor with tears in his eyes, and told him "Thank you for coming, Pastor, and I'll be back in church this coming Sunday!"

Hopefully you are seeing how this message applies to everyone of us. There is always room for us to improve in our love of Christ and our relationship with Him. Whenever we feel we have "arrived" in our faith, we easily start falling into the "Deadly Sins" of "pride and "sloth."

Why is this such a dangerous situation? If you have ever watched the nature related shows that show how predators hunt for food, like when a cheetah is

up. The predator then pounces on the isolated one. The same is true when it comes to your soul. Over 2000 years ago, Jesus gave us the Church to bring souls, including yours, to heaven. Rooted in Sacred Tradition, Scripture, the Sacraments, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the community support of attending Mass regularly, participating in the faith, gives us the best chance to avoid becoming isolated and ensnared by the evil one.

I pray that as you examine this area of your life, that God would move in your heart and give you an intense desire to return to the sanctuary of the church - and that you can once again find the joy of worshipping God with other believers!

PRAYER

The best armor
against all evil!

**St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the
wickedness and snares of
the Devil.**

**May God rebuke him, we
humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince of
the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God, thrust
into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.**

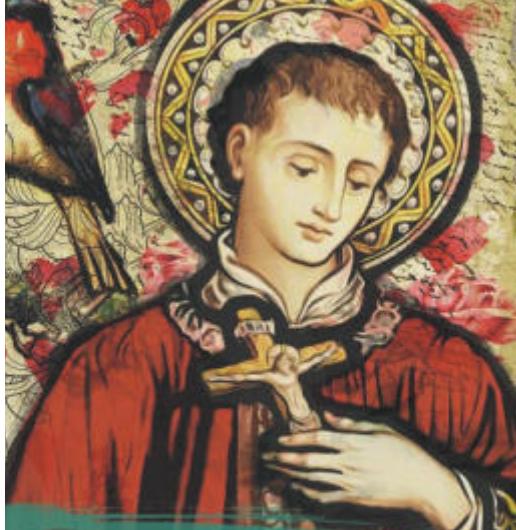


In 1886 Pope Leo XIII instituted what would later be known as the “Leonine Prayers” after Mass. This included three Hail Mary's, the Hail Holy Queen, and the St. Michael prayer, along with a specific intercessory prayer. He requested these prayers for the church because he saw problems arising in the church that would lead to the loss of many souls and because of a reported vision he saw of the devil working harder than ever to try and destroy the Church.

Pope Pius XI asked the prayers be continued for the conversion of Russia, as it was falling under the rule of Communism. Communism always requires atheism and persecutes Christians. In 1964, with the changes to the liturgy it was decided to no longer request the prayers.

More recently, Pope Francis asked we pray the St. Michael Prayer to protect the Church from division. Again, when we are apart, not participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we are becoming more divided. Please get back to Mass and the sacraments, and include this prayer , so that you and your love ones won't be divided from the Church, before it's too late.

In the Kitchen with the Saints!



Prayer to Saint Valentine

Dear Saint and glorious martyr,
teach us to love unselfishly and
to find great joy in giving.
Enable all true lovers to bring
out the best in each other. Let
them love each other in God and
in God in each other.

Love

Love is patient and kind
it does not envy or boast
and it's never proud,
love is not rude or selfish,
it does not get angry easily,
or keep track of wrongs.

Love does not delight in bad
things but it rejoices
in the truth.

Love always protects,
trusts, hopes and perseveres.

Love never fails.

Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Heart Cinnamon Rolls



Cinnamon Roll Dough:

- ◆ 1 cup warm milk
- ◆ 2 1/4 teaspoons yeast (1 yeast packet)
- ◆ 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- ◆ 1/2 cup melted butter
- ◆ 2 teaspoons Kosher salt
- ◆ 2 large eggs
- ◆ 4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour + a little for handling if needed - adjust flour as needed for humidity by adding 1 tablespoon at a time as needed for the dough to be soft, tender, and resilient.

Cinnamon Roll Filling:

- ◆ 1 cup packed brown sugar
- ◆ 2 1/2 tablespoons cinnamon
- ◆ 1/2 cup butter

Instructions

Cinnamon Roll Frosting:

- ◆ 1/2 cup butter softened
- ◆ 1 1/2 cup confectioners sugar
- ◆ 1/4 cup cream cheese
- ◆ 1/2 tablespoon vanilla
- ◆ 1/8 teaspoon Kosher salt

Cinnamon Roll Dough:

1. Add yeast and sugar to warm milk in a large bowl. Stir gently to combine and allow the yeast to foam to proof. Once the yeast has proofed, stir in melted butter, salt, eggs, and flour into yeast mixture. Gently mix until well-combined.
2. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 10-12 minutes. Form the dough into a large ball and place into a large buttered glass bowl. Cover lightly with plastic or with a tea towel and place in a warm spot. Allow to rise so that the dough is doubled in size.

Cinnamon Roll Filling:

1. Place dough on a large lightly floured surface and roll to a 1/4 inch thickness. Spread softened butter over the top of the dough.
2. Stir together the brown sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle generously all over the buttered dough.
3. Rather than rolling them like a jelly roll as you normally would, by beginning on one side and rolling all the way to the other, you roll on one side to the center and then roll the other side to the center so that the two rolled areas meet in the middle.
4. Cut the dough into 3/4-inch to 1-inch slices and place onto a lightly buttered baking sheet pan or into two buttered 9x13 baking dishes.
5. Once they've doubled in size, you pinch the bottom of the heart to make sure that the heart shape is defined and then bake.

Baking and Icing:

1. Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit.
2. Allow rolls to rise for 30 minutes.
3. Place rolls into oven and allow to cook until lightly browned and cooked through about 15-20 minutes.
4. While cinnamon rolls are baking, prepare cream cheese frosting by creaming together butter, confectioner's sugar, cream cheese, vanilla and salt.
5. Remove cinnamon rolls from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
6. Spread frosting generously over rolls while they are warm.

S GARAGE L E THEOLOGY

I love going to garage sales and thrift shops, you never know what treasures you will find. I came across a picture that says "What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday?" This saying really got me thinking. What would I do if I woke up with nothing because I didn't say thank you to Him for the many gifts he continually gives me? How many things in this world, how many blessings do we take for granted?

Is it because we don't know how to say, "thank you"?

Is it because we don't realize that all things come from God?

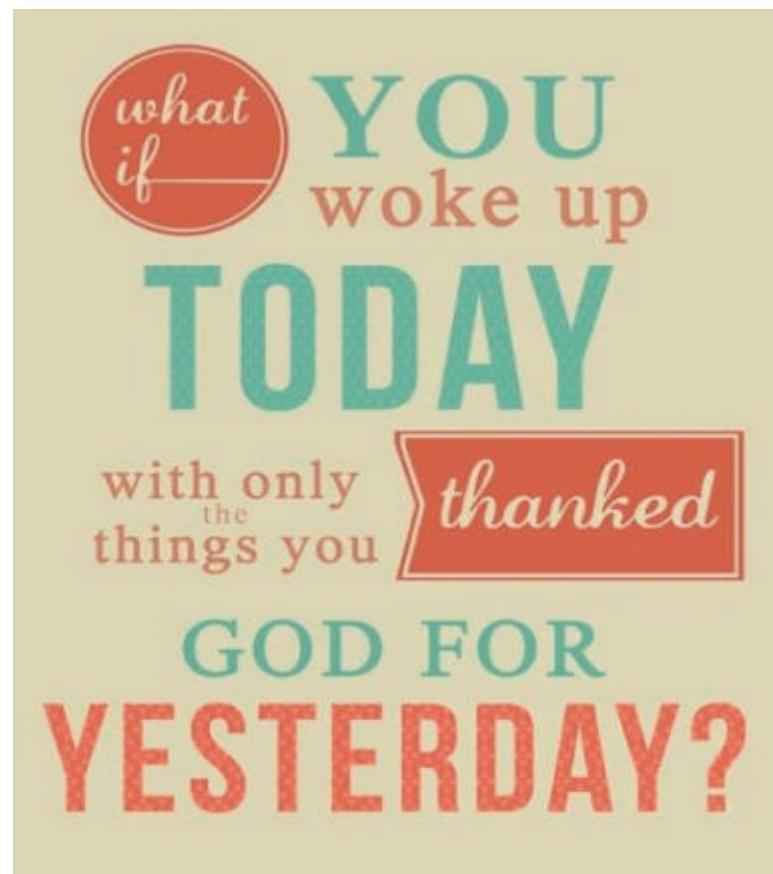
Is it because He gives certain blessings so often like food, water, and the air we breathe that we start thinking we deserve them and don't realize we should say "thank you?"

Think about the Bible story about "The Cleansing of Ten Lepers". As Jesus continued His journey to Jerusalem, He traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As He was entering a village, ten lepers met [Him]. They stood a distance from Him and raised their voice saying "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when He saw them, He said, "Go show yourselves to the priests" As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; he fell at the feet of Jesus and He said in reply "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God? Then He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you." Luke 17:11-19

There is a lot to learn from this parable. Unfortunately, all too often we are like the 9 lepers, myself included.

The good news is that gratitude is a choice. We can all choose to become more like the grateful leper who came to show Jesus his gratitude or we can continue to be more like the other nine and take our blessings for granted. In this world, where there is so much evil and darkness, a little gratitude with love is one thing we all can do to make the world a little brighter.

Start counting your blessings and saying "Thank you" to God, He truly loves you and wants you to be happy. Try to share those blessings with others because it may be the bit of hope they need and could change their life. It helps spread God's goodness to others.

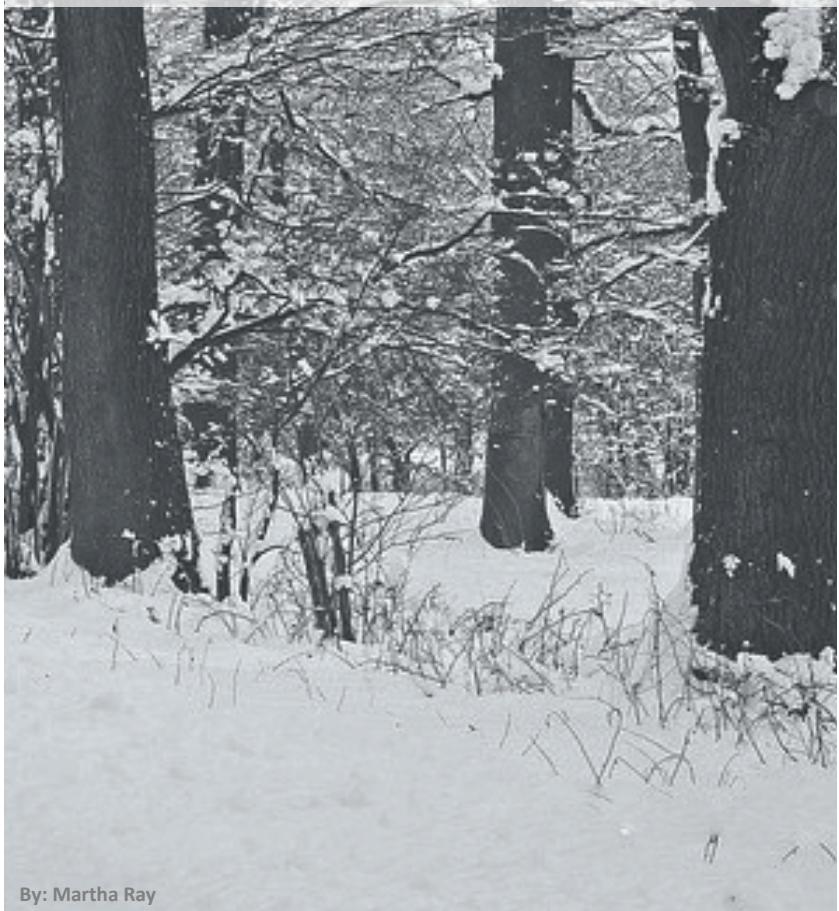




SILENCE MAGNIFIES



WAITING PURIFIES



As I am writing this, we are still in the Days of a very different Christmas season and I find myself contemplating Lent. That's the story of my life... always looking ahead. I am an extravert and I think through my ideas out loud (my husband loves it...)! I get energy from being around people. However, as this pandemic drags on, I find myself more and more isolated. It isn't good for me, my family, or my soul. For that matter, it isn't good for any of us!

While out doing chores yesterday, I was listening to one of Fr. Mike's homilies (yes, I am that weird person who listens to extra homilies during the week). He was speaking about "waiting" and "silence." He said that "waiting purifies and silence magnifies." I am impulsive by nature. I am the one for whom the stores place all the extras by the checkout.

But waiting through this pandemic, it's different. Facing the unknown everyday, the lack of control? Perhaps the waiting really can purify me. Purify my intentions, my desires...my spiritual life??

I don't know about you, but for me I so often resist. I want control. I want knowledge. I don't want to wait. I want to know what is going to happen! I guess if I knew all of that I wouldn't need faith.

On the other hand, what would happen if I willingly worked WITH God? If I leaned into this time of waiting and silence? Fr. Mike told the story of students signing up for a Holy Hour and being angry and impatient. They told him that perhaps they should stop praying because the silence made them angry! However, it wasn't the silence that made them angry, it only magnified what was already there.

That makes me think, what is the silence in my life magnifying? Once I recognize it, I can decide if there is something that I need to change (Spoiler: Yes. Yes, there definitely are things I need to change.)

I made the decision to start today, and lean into this time of waiting and silence. If you see me out, feel free to ask me what I am learning and how I am growing? I'm happy to share (it's the extrovert part of me) and I may also ask how you are leaning and growing. As members of the same Church Family, it's a way we all can support each other, as we grow in our faith together.



Don't waste
your suffering!

-St. John Paul II

LENT

is coming soon!

By: Martha Ray

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving. I have always been drawn to the Stations of the Cross and the suffering of Jesus. In college, I took a symposium on the writings of John Paull II and had to choose a selection on which to write a paper. My obvious choice was, *On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering*.

God did not create suffering. We did that. Read the book of Genesis. God *redeemed* suffering. Jesus *was incarnate of the Virgin Mary*-- He became one of us in all things but sin. Through His suffering and death, He gave purpose to our suffering. We can offer it alongside Christ's suffering for the redemption of the world! Perhaps you have had someone tell you to "offer it up" when you are in pain?

My mom tells a story that when I was little, I was complaining about something and she pointed to Jesus suffering on the Cross and reminded me that surely, my ailment was small in comparison to His. I replied, "But He freely chose it."

We may not always choose to suffer, but we *can* choose how we respond to it. Let us not waste our sufferings.

"Pain and suffering have come into your life, but remember pain, sorrow, suffering are but the kiss of Jesus — a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you."

-St. Teresa of Calcutta



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- Email Notifications: eva.us/mother-lent21
 - Text mother-lent21 to 55321
- Join the Lent 2021 group - Mary Mother of the Church on the MyParish App.