

Mary

Mother of the Church Area Catholic Community

March 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

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Information

Peace be with you! Visiting churches as a personal pilgrimage in lent is an ancient tradition for us Catholics. Rome, Italy is famous for having over 400 Catholic churches in the metropolitan area, sometimes even built right across the street from one another.

Some churches were built to honor a saint that was buried there, like *Chiesa Nuova*, which holds the relics of St. Philip Neri, or *Chiesa di Santa Agnese*, which has the relics of the virgin martyr St. Agnes. Most all of those names listed in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer 1) occasionally prayed by our priests at Mass point to churches you can find in Rome: *Peter and Paul ... James, Philip, Bartholomew ... Simon and Jude; Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John & Paul, Cosmas & Damian ... John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecelia, Anastasia ...* and many more.

Some of the churches are memorials of miracles, like *Santa Maria Maggiore*, the first Marian church in Rome, which marks the spot where the Blessed Mother appeared and had a miracle of snowfall in July on that spot.

Some churches are parishes for residents of differing ethnic backgrounds, like the American parish of *Santa Susanna*, where Mass is always in English and people of the United States who work in Rome call their "home parish."

Some churches are rededicated landmarks, such as former temples to Roman gods, like the famous *Pantheon*, which still has Mass in it on Sundays, or former Roman judicial buildings made into churches under Emperor Constantine.

Whatever the reason for their creation, these churches signify the breadth and beauty of the Catholic faith. Pilgrims visit them in Lent as a means to remember who they are as pilgrims on the journey to heaven, sharers in a pilgrimage that has been walked by generations before us and will be walked by generations after us.

Each of our parishes in our Area Catholic Community of Mary, Mother of the Church, have buildings that have served our families, our relatives, and will serve our descendants. Might I recommend that each of us take time over the next number of weeks and months to visit each other's churches as a kind of spiritual pilgrimage, a sharing in each other's history as pilgrims? Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the blessing of our Catholic faith and for the faith of the people who have and are worshipping there. Pray for those who are in need. And pray for our parishes to unite under the patronage of Mary, who was spiritual mother for the Apostles, especially after Jesus ascended to heaven to prepare our true home.

Know of my prayers for all of you.

+ 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.

Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen said, "The greatest love story of all time is contained in a tiny white Host." Taking those words to heart, in January we were able to have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with incense and music for 35 of our kindergarten – 6th graders. For many of them, actually for almost all of them, this was the first time they had ever seen Jesus exposed. They were told they could get as close as they wanted, without touching the Monstrance, and they did. They sat on the floor right in front of Jesus looking, praying, and taking it all in.

To see Jesus through the eyes of a child is the most remarkable experience. To see their faith explode, to hear them pray to Jesus, and talk about Jesus, it is something we as adults often forget (the unquestionable love of Jesus). One little girl, when asked if she could see Jesus said, "Oh yes, I see Him - and there's an angel there, too."

This is exactly why Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder the Kingdom of Heaven long to such as these." -Matthew 19:14

Nicki Fink
Director of Religious Education K-6
Sacred Heart and St. Michael Parishes

all you who are weary and burdened,

Come to me,

In the midst of restrictions and suspension of all in-person meetings, it was easy for me to get discouraged. But God works all things for good. In the month of January, we had several Holy hours scheduled with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In another year, another time, we would probably have passed by these opportunities, filled them with class time, or not have wanted to add one more thing to the calendar.

We came together to spend time with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Since the Adoration Chapel has been closed, I haven't had my early morning meeting once a week with Jesus. This is one of those things that I didn't realize how much I needed it, until it was gone. As much as I hate to admit it, I would often find myself dozing off at 4 am. But just showing up made a difference. When I was tired, when I didn't know how to pray, when I didn't have a desire to pray...I showed up. Then Jesus gazed lovingly at me for an hour and renewed my strength, whether I realized it or not. I sometimes like to think of it like the sun's rays. I can feel the warmth of the sun on cloudless days and if I am outside very long, I will see the effects on my skin. However, even on cloudy days, I can get sunburned. Jesus, the Son, has a similar effect, on my soul. I look at the monstrance with its rays outstretched and I see Jesus right in the middle. Just being in His presence can bring peace and joy.

I am so grateful for Jesus in the Eucharist. I am grateful that I can visit Him in our Churches. I am grateful for our Priests who can transform the bread and wine into Jesus. As we move into Lent, I encourage you to make use of the added times for prayer and sacraments—Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession, Stations of the Cross. If you can't get to the Church, make a space at home and just spend time resting in His love. Maybe you will get a sunburn.

and I will give you rest. - Matthew 11:28



them, for

Let's Get to Know

Q Have you experienced God in your life?

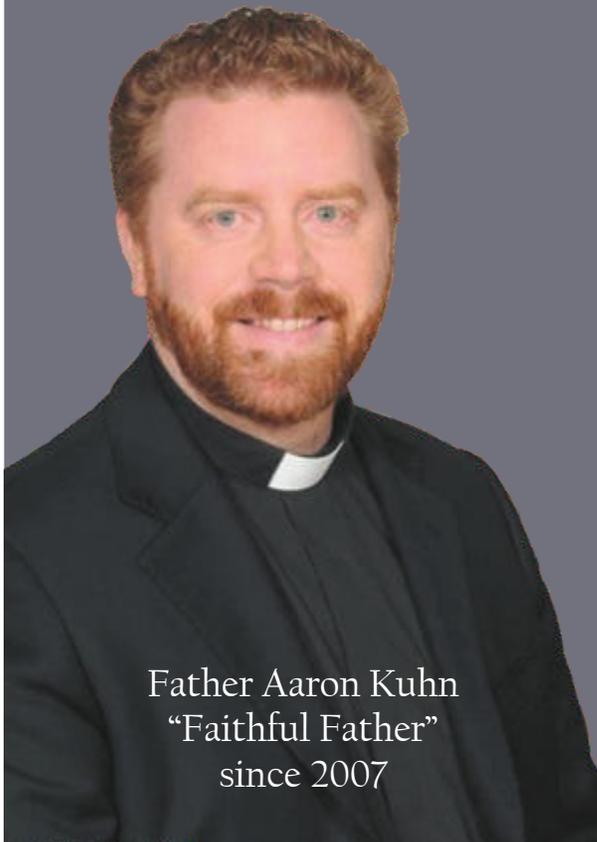
Fr. Aaron: Yes, we can experience God at the level of our thoughts (intellect), our imagination (dreams), and senses (like him appearing in the upper room in physical form to the apostles after his resurrection). There are people in my life who are privileged to have talked to Jesus through their imagination and sensible apparitions, and I often wish that would happen to me too. But most of my experiences are intellectual, with thoughts of inspiration from the Lord, as if he were speaking in my thoughts. It is more than just an “ah-ha” moment of making connections, like when finding an answer to a puzzle. It is a peaceful grace, like when someone looks at you with affection or gives you a compliment. There is a contentment and satisfaction that God is real and cares. Jesus likes to show off in subtle ways, like the joy a person feels after going to confession, or the peace experienced after having been prayed over or anointed. It can be the movement of the Holy Spirit in being given the words to speak in a moment when we don't know where they came from. The most regular way I hear the voice of God in my intellect is during the Mass, usually during the Eucharistic prayers.

Fr. Gabriel: When I was a just a baby our trailer-house burned down in fire caused by a lightning strike during the night; fortunately, the storm had been so bad that we had left our trailer-house to spend the night in my grandma's basement. But that meant we were homeless for a time. An uncle lent us an old school bus to use while my parents built (mostly by themselves) the home in which I grew up. As we could afford, my parents added bedrooms and made improvements. In those early years, I remember my parents coming in to “tuck us in” at night, praying with us, then my dad would read a story of the saints or from scripture. I remember going to sleep at night thinking about these holy men and women, boys and girls who loved the Lord so much; they had a special passion burning in their hearts for the Lord. Their desire filled my heart with so much joy! And I remember growing up wanting to have that passion always burning in my heart as well!

Q What is most rewarding about being a priest?

Fr. Aaron: People want to know that God cares and loves them. The most rewarding part of being a priest is watching God change someone's life. Being a priest puts you in the front row of God's performance, up close, where you get to be right there as he graces souls.

Fr. Gabriel: As in any vocation, the most “rewarding” thing about being a priest is responding “yes!” to that part of the beautiful unfolding of the dynamic Plan of God's providential love for us entrusted to my care. I marvel to see what each little “yes” brings: as a priest, I get the opportunity to drop whatever I might be doing to rush to the side of someone who is dying. In such moments I get to behold the peace of heaven descend into the heart of persons on the threshold of death. In His Mercy, God works His Power through me to wrest free the shackles of bondage to sin those who have traded peace, hope, and joy for the cheap counterfeit-alternatives of this world. When, as a priest, I bestow the Sacrament of Baptism, I see that same light of heaven bestow a new identity through which we become brethren. And in the celebration of the Eucharist at Mass, He through whom all things came into being is made present there upon the altar... and in such moments as these I am most grateful to God that I am a priest of His Church.



Father Aaron Kuhn
“Faithful Father”
since 2007

Our Faithful Fathers!

Q Who is your favorite saint? Why?

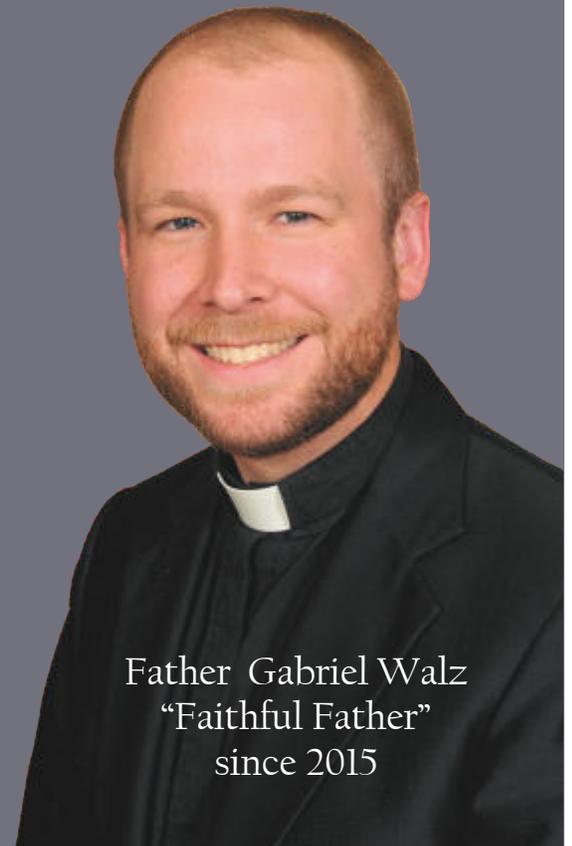
Fr. Aaron: My favorite saints are Philip Neri and Philomena, though I have lots of other favorites. Philip is the patron of practical jokers, joy and humility, who lived in Rome during the 1500s. He worked hard to build up oratories, places where the faithful gathered daily or weekly to share stories of faith, scripture, lives of the saints, and fellowship. He was an incredible preacher but wanted the attention to be on Jesus. Philomena was a young woman martyred during the early church in Rome, who has many miracles attributed to her intercession. Many saints had devotion to her, including Jean Vianney, patron of parish priests. God rescued Philomena from three forms of martyrdom before she was killed: an anchor was tied to her neck and thrown into the river, but she was untied by angels and walked out completely dry; a squad of archers' arrows turned around mid flight, started on fire and killed the archers; and finally, she was beheaded. She stood against these attacks out of love of Jesus and her chastity.

Fr. Gabriel: I have many favorites, but to choose one?: Mary, the Theotokos. My name-sake is the Archangel Gabriel. The scene of the Annunciation has always been very special to me because it is the moment of encounter between two of my "most" favorite "saints," and in that moment, our Lady speaks "the word" through which the human race receives its hope, "fiat."

Q What are some of your favorite Bible Scriptures?

Fr. Aaron: I love the New Testament letters of Peter because they reveal the mysteries of life, suffering, and salvation. 1Peter 3:9: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an inexpressible and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

Fr. Gabriel: The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38); The "Greatest Commandment" (Matthew 22:36-40); The "Great Commission" (Matthew 28:16-20); The Conversation of Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21); The "Bread of Life Discourse" (John 6); and many others!



Father Gabriel Walz
"Faithful Father"
since 2015

In the Kitchen with the Saints!



St. Katharine Drexel

Feast Day March 3

Patron: of racial justice & philanthropists

As a young woman, St. Katharine Mary Drexel had an excellent education and a privileged life. Her life changed when she nursed her step-mother through terminal illness. St. Katharine realized that no amount of money could prevent suffering. She joined the Sisters of Mercy convent in Pittsburgh, at the age thirty-one.

St. Katharine and several other nuns founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to aid Native Americans and African Americans. Her congregation opened the first boarding school in Santa Fe, New Mexico. By the mid-1900s, St. Katharine's order founded 145 missions, 49 elementary schools, and 12 high schools.

Vegetarian Taco Soup

For the Soup:

- ◆ 1 Tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 1/2 large yellow onion, peeled & diced
- ◆ 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. cumin
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. paprika
- ◆ 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ◆ 1/2 tsp. ground pepper
- ◆ 2 -14.5 oz cans diced tomatoes
- ◆ 2 -15 oz cans black beans, rinsed & drained
- ◆ 1 - 4 oz can diced chilies
- ◆ 2 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- ◆ 1 1/2 cups frozen corn
- ◆ 1 Tbsp fresh lime juice

For the Garnish:

- ◆ Tortilla chips
- ◆ Lime wedges
- ◆ Fresh chopped cilantro
- ◆ Sour cream
- ◆ Shredded cheese
- ◆ Hot sauce



Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large sauce pan or stock pot over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until softened, stirring frequently for 3-4 minutes. Add garlic and stir frequently, about 30-60seconds.
2. Stir in cumin, chili powder, paprika, cayenne, salt, pepper, tomatoes with the juice, beans, chilis, broth and corn until combined.
3. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to low. Continue to simmer for 15 minutes, until liquid is reduced by a quarter.
4. Remove from heat and stir in lime juice. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste.
5. Serve with your favorite toppings.

By: Karen Sakry

“The patient and humble endurance of the cross, whatever nature it may be, is the highest work we have to do.”

~St. Katharine Drexel

The Year of St. Joseph

I have had a devotion, love, and admiration for St. Joseph for as long as I can remember. Even as a child I remember thinking that he must have been a great man to be given the responsibilities that he was given. God surely would not have given Jesus an earthly father that was not able to do the job. I pictured him as strong and capable, fearless, and above all, loving. We know that St. Joseph was a great protector of Mary and Jesus, he maneuvered them to safety more than once. What great love he must have had for them. Even though we never hear a word from St. Joseph in the scriptures it is obvious of his commitment to his family and his trust in God. St. Joseph clearly shows us how to lead in a quiet and trusting way.

This past December Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the saint's proclamation as patron of the Universal Church. Pope Francis said he was establishing the year so that "every member of the faithful, following his example, may strengthen their life of faith daily in the complete fulfillment of God's will." Pope Francis also wrote "Each of us can discover in Joseph -- the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence -- an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble."

We celebrate two Holy Days for St. Joseph throughout the year. Coming up first is the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the church on March 19th and again on May 1st the church celebrates St. Joseph the worker.

We have much to look forward to as we honor St. Joseph throughout the year 2021. I was recently gifted the "Consecration to St. Joseph – The Wonders of our Spiritual Father" this book was written by Fr. Donald Calloway. It is nearly 300 pages of the 33 days of writings & prayers preparing for consecration, several writings on The Wonders of our Spiritual Father and also litanies and prayers for St. Joseph.

I am very excited to dive into the book and learn even more about one of my favorite saints during this year. St. Joseph is the patron saint of many things, including the universal Church, fathers, the dying, social justice, unborn children, travelers, immigrants, a happy death, families, expectant mothers, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general. I have to believe that each one of us fall into at least one of those areas. What a gift we have in St. Joseph.



By: Stephanie Heinze

To you, O blessed Joseph

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ;

O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven.

Amen.



God loves us so much that He gives us the opportunity to experience Him in the good times and the bad.

I know that can be hard to believe because we are all sinners. Jesus says to St. Faustina –“If my death on the Cross does not convince you of My love, what will convince you?” We just have to choose to let go and let God be in us!

I pray your Lenten journey is off to a great start and that you can grow in your attachment to Jesus through your sacrifices. Remember there are always opportunities for you to draw closer to Jesus, going to Confession, attending or watching the Stations of the Cross, going to Adoration and praying with Scripture. Reach out to those around, ask them how their Lent is going and share your love for Jesus! You never know who will need to see Jesus through you.

Ember Days

The Ember Days are clusters of three days, 4 times a year, observed by fasting. The three days of fasting are:

- Wednesday - remembering the day Christ was betrayed.
- Friday - remembering the day He was crucified
- Saturday - remembering the day He was entombed.

Each cluster has a specific significance:

- Spring: the Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday after Ash Wednesday For giving thanks for the rebirth of nature and the gift of light. Traditionally, flowers are offered at this time.
- Summer: Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after Pentecost. For giving thanks for the wheat crop.
- Fall: the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14). For giving thanks for the grape harvest.
- Fall: the Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday after the Feast of the Holy Cross (September 14). For giving thanks for the grape harvest.
- Winter: the Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday after the Feast of St. Lucy (December 13), during the third week of Advent. For giving thanks for the olive crop.

2021 Ember Days

- Lenten /Spring Ember Days - February 24, 26, 27
- Summer Ember Days - May 26, 28, 29
- Fall Ember Days: September 15, 17, & 18
- Advent Ember Days: December 15, 17, & 18

Try using the Ember Days as a way to further support your growth away from sin and toward God!

LENT

Are You Off To A Good Start?

We are a couple of weeks into Lent. This can be the time for "a fresh start" in our spiritual lives, but only if that's what we choose. Lent is one of the greatest opportunities for us to become immersed in God and His love. And then we can appreciate it all the more in Holy Week!

When I was a young adult, I never really knew what Lent was about, I mean I knew we had to give things up, go to Ash Wednesday Mass and I knew of the Holy Days. I never truly knew what all of it meant. I always gave up things, but never took that seriously. I would give up things that weren't that difficult for me, just so I could say I did it. Who would know anyway, if I was really trying or just going through the motions?

Over the years I have learned that was so wrong. As we know, God is always watching, and there is nothing that we can get past Him.

In addition to God watching and seeing, I realized that I let someone else down by not putting in a real effort. That person being MYSELF! I could have used the opportunities of each Lent to grow in my faith and to grow closer to God and I let myself down.

Over the years I am realizing more and more that the goal of our spiritual journey on Earth is detachment. Detachment from all worldly things and ATTACHMENT only to God Himself.

To assist us on the journey, the Church provides us with tools to help us:

- Lenten fasting - as an opportunity to focus on those strongest attachments and really work to let them go, especially our attachments to sin. God knows that if we work on detaching from one major sin per year is doable and can help us on our journey to be saints.
- Ember day fasts - are shorter periods of fasting and prayer, following the changes in season. They are designed to help support us throughout the year, so we can finally be free of the sins we are most attached to.
- Sacrament of Confession - where the chains of sins are broken by Christ, through the priest, until we decide to pick them up again. That's why Confession is recommended monthly.
- The Eucharist - we need food for our souls to keep us strong through this journey called life. Just like our physical bodies need food regularly, so does our soul.

When we use the tools, we can have truly miraculous conversions in our lives, with steady growth and progress, year after year.

I have found that as I keep working at this, I see how sacrifice is a gift. It may not always be an easy gift, because suffering and fear can sometimes follow. However, if we use it to help us grow closer to God, it is a gift. It really is our choice.

Every time I am struggling with this, I think of the words of St. Mother Theresa "Suffering is a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you."

When it's tough, I picture that for a moment. Imagine Jesus kissing you! Just writing this brings tears to my eyes.



By: Deacon Jerry Snyder

The original “Pieta” (1498-99) is a work of Renaissance sculpture by Michelangelo housed in St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City (Rome). It is made of Carrara marble and is the only piece that Michelangelo signed; it was moved to the first chapel on the north side of the entrance to St. Peter’s in the 18th century.

The theme of the Blessed Mother holding her Son’s body after it was taken down from the Cross is a common one; it may have originated in the 13th century in Germany. “Pieta” is an Italian word for mercy or pity. The words of the prophet Jeremiah are often recalled in connection with this scene: “All you who pass by the way, look and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow.”

(Lamentations 1:12)

Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Dolours, the Sorrowful Mother or Mother of Sorrows, and Our Lady of Piety, Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows or Our Lady of the Seven Dolours are names by which the Virgin Mary is referred to in relation to sorrows in her life.

In Latin the Sorrowful Mother is rendered by “Mater Dolorosa”, a key subject for Marian art in the Church.

One of the more celebrated paintings, “Seven Swords Piercing the Sorrowful Heart of Mary”, found in the Church of the Holy Cross in Salamanca, Spain, depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary in a mournful state, tears, bleeding heart pierced by seven daggers.

The “Seven Sorrows of Mary” is based on Simeon’s prophecy. The feast of Our Lady of Sorrows is celebrated every 15th of September and such remembrance is common on Fridays, especially Good Friday. The seven daggers or the sword piercing the Blessed Virgin Mary seven times commemorate:

1. the prophecy of Simeon;
2. the flight of Joseph, Mary and the Child Jesus into Egypt;
3. the loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem;
4. Mary meeting her son, Jesus, on the Via Dolorosa (the Way of the Cross);
5. the Crucifixion of Jesus on Mount Calvary;
6. Jesus being taken down from the Cross;
7. the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea.

It is a tradition for Catholics to say daily one Our Father and seven Hail Marys for each of the “sorrows”. The Black Scapular of the Seven Dolours of Mary is a sacramental dating back to the 13th century worn by members of the Confraternity of the Seven Dolours of Mary, associated with the Servite Order; the Servites are dedicated to Mary. From the National Shrine of Saint Peregrine spread the Sorrowful Mother Novena, at the core of which is the Via Matris. In eastern Christianity devotion to the Sorrowful Mother reaches great heights in iconography and prayer.

As we approach Lent and the Triduum, devotion to the Sorrowful Mother is particularly appropriate. A beautiful expression of reverence for us is prayer before the Pieta which can include lighting a candle.

The Christian Mothers of St. Ann’s parish purchased “the Pieta” in 1906.

- The Pieta has occupied a special place in the church - for many years below the stained glass window on the southwest wall.
- Since 1982 it has been in the northern transept.
- In 2016 the Pieta was repaired and refinished.



BITTER OR BETTER?

WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE?

“No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.” ~ 1 Corinthians 10:13

At one point in time, my life had many obstacles, things were rough and I had a lot of ugly personal times. During those ugly times I had a falling out with one of my kids. You know being a parent isn't always easy. There are many times in life when a parent and their child do not always see eye to eye, especially as children grow older. I was sad, hurt, and suffering. I read an article called "Bitter or Better". The article mentioned that everything happens for a reason and sometimes we do not come out of an experience in a very good light. However, this should not define you. You still have a choice. I could have gotten stuck in the bitter. After reading the article I knew bitter was not an option, I had to take responsibility for my actions and not get caught up in someone else's ugly.

Years later, my son who had just turned 21 was airlifted to the University of Minnesota. He was diagnosed with leukemia. All I could think of was, are you kidding me? Our relationship had been compromised. What do I do? I'm sure he was confused, angry and scared. I wanted to go see him, but fear took over, I mean, how would he react if I was there? I decided to let those fears go and I went to the hospital. We had a few minutes together and my advice to him was, "You have been given the chance to be "bitter or better", but it is your choice."

God works in mysterious ways. Sometimes it takes drastic measures to find healing in the most difficult situations. My son has a slow growing leukemia and he continues to take medication to keep it in check. He has had set backs, however if you were to meet him today you would not know he is fighting every day to live. He chose to be "better" not bitter.

We now have a good relationship. He has opened up and we have had long conversations about the past and why certain things happened. With God by our sides and choosing to be "better" we will continue to have a good lasting relationship.

How a Bellybutton Grew My Faith!

I was out shopping at a thrift store with one of my sons and he found a book, that seemed a bit peculiar, but it caught my interest. It seemed to promise answers to a very perplexing question, so I decided to buy it to find out.

I brought the book up to the cashier and as she was ringing it in, the book got to her as well. She looked at me and said, "what difference does that make?"

I said, "it doesn't, just curious as to what the answer is."

As she continued to help me,

she looked at me again and said, "how is knowing that going to help your spiritual life?"

I said, "I'm just curious about the answer, I mean there are no Bible stories addressing it and God created everything. There has to be an answer."

She said again, "I just don't understand what difference it makes. Will that little tidbit bring you any closer to God?"

At the time I didn't realize it but the answer would be "YES". It got me reading about our Catholic faith.

It sure sparked an interest in me to read and learn more.

The thing is, God is looking to reach out to us from any angle He can, even through a book with a unique title.

The book if you don't know, is "Did Adam & Eve Have Bellybuttons?"

And just so you know, I am not going to give you the answer. Instead, if you need a good conversational piece, especially if you have teens, check out the book. It has been good for me and for my family.



Bellybutton Help - Please!

I don't know about you, but the title "Did Adam & Eve Have Bellybuttons?" was a really fascinating title and question. It made me stop and wonder what the answer is. Just thinking about our Heavenly Father and His creation is so powerful. It was also a really entertaining conversation starter with my kids and helped bring us together while discussing the faith.

After my own experience and with all of the isolation still going on, I am asking you to take a few minutes, consider the question "Did Adam & Eve Have Bellybuttons?" and send me an answer.

To make it even more fun and powerful, use it as an opportunity to call a friend

or family member, especially someone that has been isolated and lonely. Start by making the Sign of the Cross, call them up, bring up the book and ask them what they think the answer is and allow the Holy Spirit to work through the conversation.

After that, I want to hear about your experience. In particular I'd love to know:

- what you believe the answer to the question is?
- a little about you - as much detail as you are comfortable with - like age, marital status ?
- if you talked to someone , what they think the answer is?
- is it ok to use your name when sharing the story?

- what blessings and insights were gained from the experience?

My plan is to take and share the stories in the upcoming newsletters. It is easiest for me if you can email your answers to:

st.joseph@marysacc.org

Don't worry about perfect grammar, etc. - we will edit and help make it sound good. If you don't have email, you can call the parish office at 218-924-2144 and leave a message and I will call you back; just realize it could be a few weeks before I can call everyone.

Thank you for your help and may your Bellybutton conversations be Blessed!

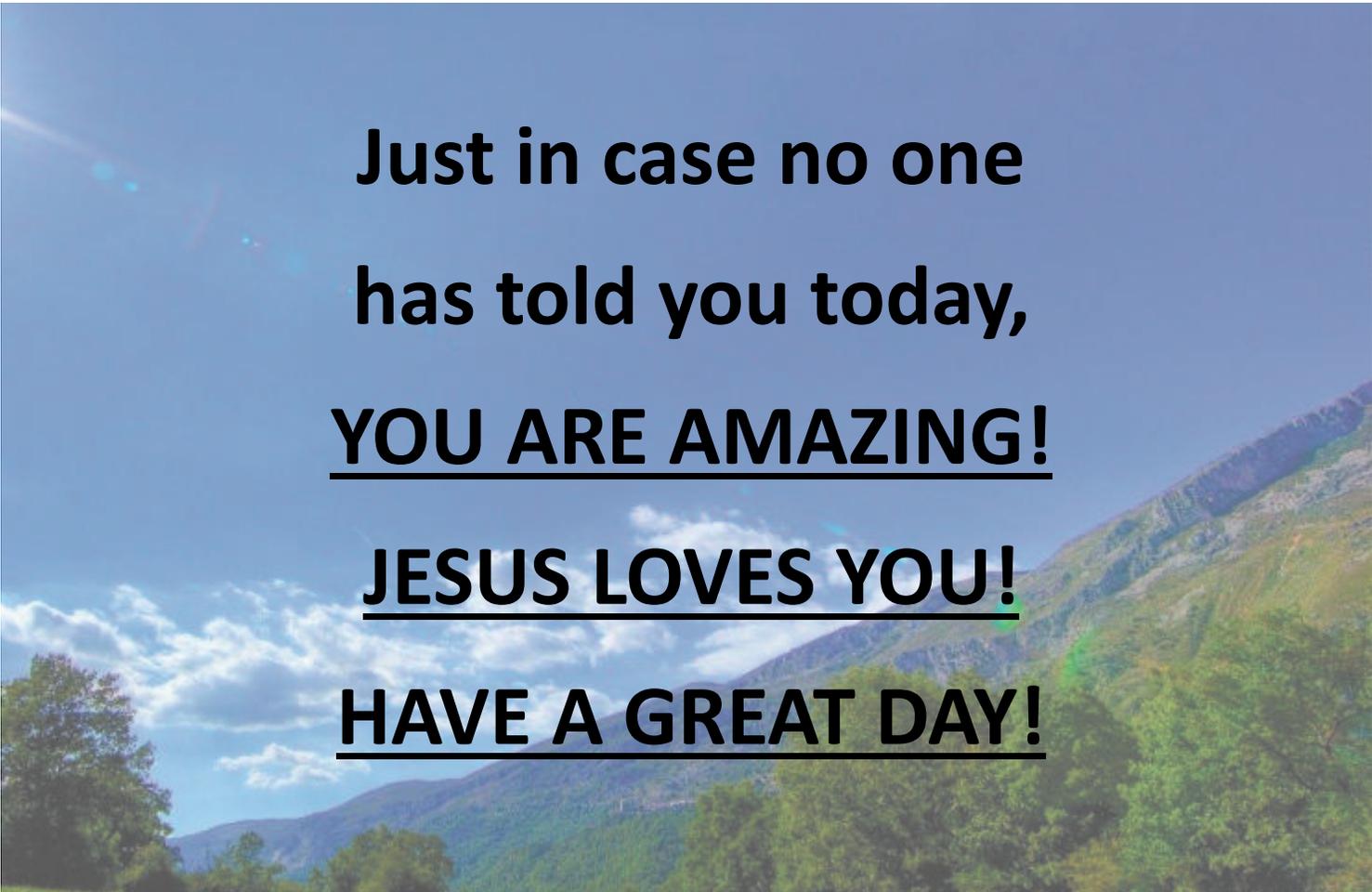
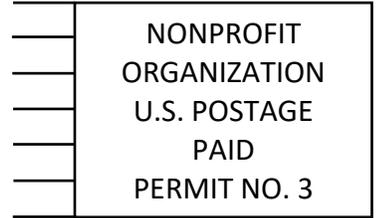
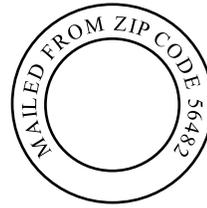


C/O THE CHURCH OF ST ANN

514 1ST STREET SOUTHEAST

WADENA, MN 56482

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Just in case no one
has told you today,
YOU ARE AMAZING!
JESUS LOVES YOU!
HAVE A GREAT DAY!**