

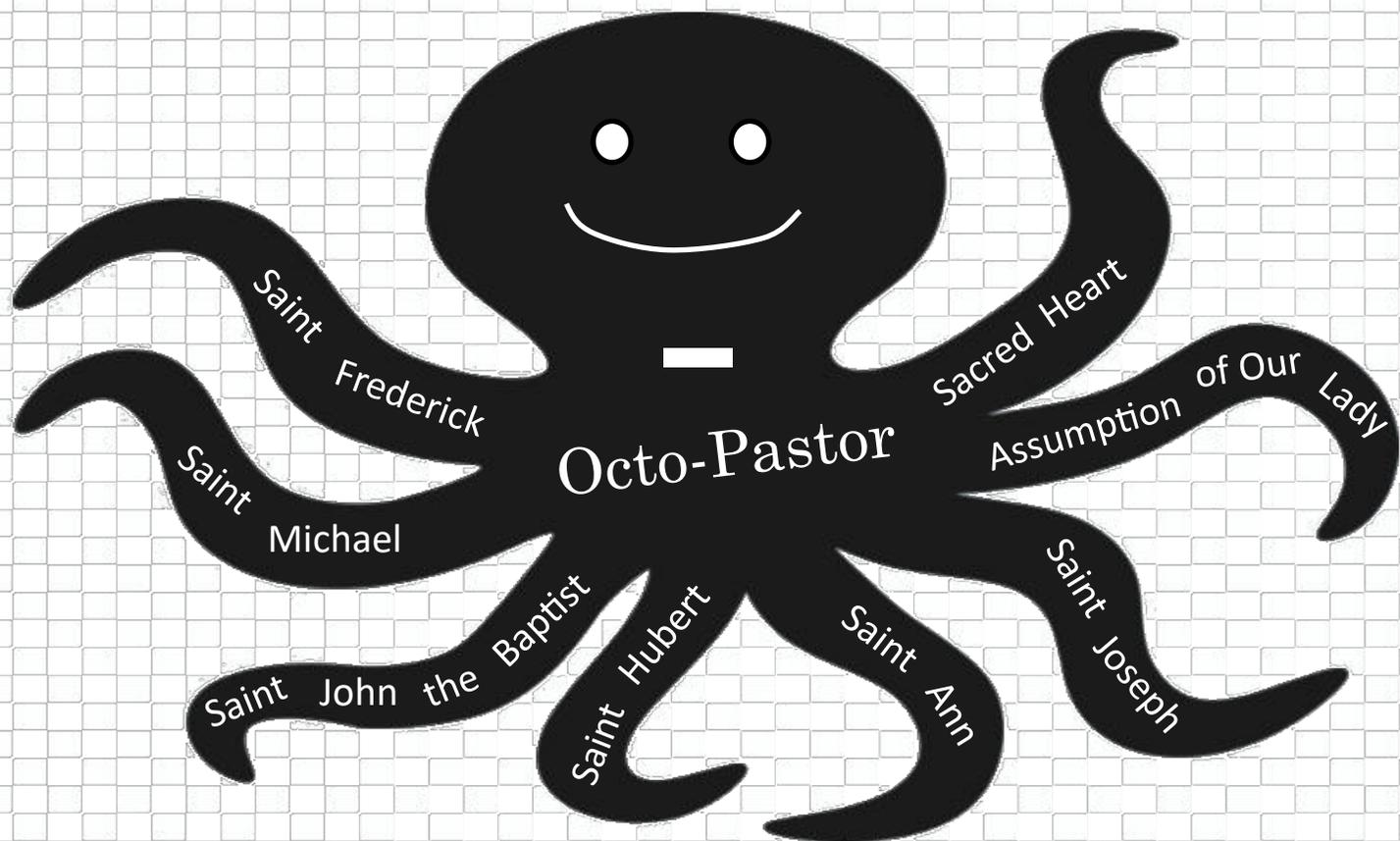
Mary

Mother of the Church Area Catholic Community

August 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



TALES OF AN OCTO-PASTOR

When a friend of mine heard that I would be pastor of eight parishes, she called and said, “Congratulations, Octo-pastor!” a sly reference to the famous “Octo-mom” of 2009, an American woman who gave birth to octuplets. I guess Father Gabriel and I are spiritual fathers of sorts, so the name has merit. It has stuck in my mind since then, and I find myself using it in a joking manner with staff all the time now.

Ideas of how to market the name came quick in conversations. “What if you produced a vlog (video log) on YouTube or Facebook and called it ‘Tales of an Octo-pastor?’” It would provide a regular opportunity for people to know what pastoring eight parishes is like, to hear stories and background to the everyday activities, and maybe even some interviews of staff, visitors, and parishioners. Hmm... this could work! Stay tuned.

The reality of bringing eight parishes together seems like science fiction or some kind of plot twist to a dramatic story. “Are you all crazy?” I get that question a lot from outsiders. The answer is yes, but I hope it is because of our love for Jesus, not because of ambition or foolhardiness.

“How are you going to make that work?” ... another question heard with regularity. If I am being honest, unless we rely on God’s grace and our dedication it will not work. It has great potential if we are willing to pray, fast, and give alms to the cause. Please join me in doing so a little bit every day.

The early Church disciples did not have a business plan to follow. They had God’s grace and their personal effort. They shared their faith with whomever would listen. They built communities around this faith. They chose to invest themselves in their Community, which blossomed into parishes and church buildings for Mass and catechesis. Likewise, our effort to build our Community of Mary must be grounded in our faith, supported by prayer and belief that Jesus has a purpose for us, otherwise it is just another effort to adapt to diminishment.

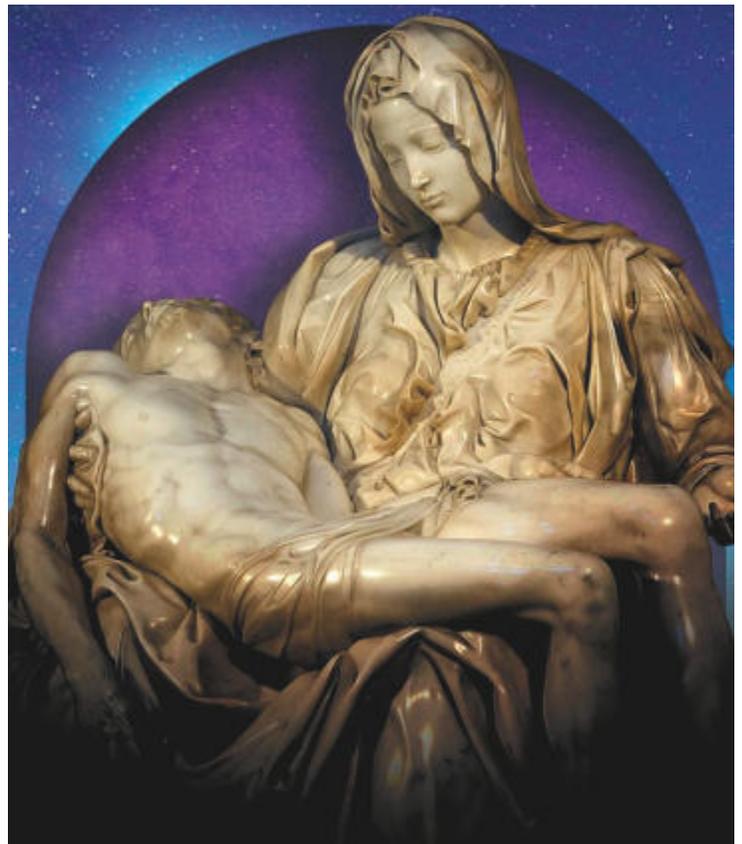
Congratulations, Octo-parishioners! We are in this together. Let’s show the world that we are crazy for Christ and are determined to make this work.

+ Fr. Aaron Rubin

TO JESUS THROUGH MARY

I vividly remember certain images from the night of the 15th of August in the year of our Lord 2005. Our backs were sore from several days of carrying in our packs everything we needed for the events of World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany. We'd walked for hours! Just on the outskirts of Düsseldorf, where most of our host-families resided, we found a small parish-church dedicated to Saint Francis. With sagging arms and a heart racing with anticipation for what I was about to do, I slowly journeyed through the nave of the Church to a side chapel in which stood an image of Our Lady, Mary the Mother of the Lord. There I was joined by my home-parish pastor and several parishioners and friends from home. Standing next to my pastor beneath the statue of Mary, I unzipped my backpack to bring out my bible and the handwritten prayer of consecration I prepared for the occasion. I had spent months studying and preparing for this moment!

As I read aloud the prayer of Total Consecration to Mary composed by Saint Louis De Montfort, some of the weariness of our pilgrimage faded from me. It was the first time I'd ever attended a World Youth Day, the first time I'd ever flown on a plane, the first time I'd ever made a formal consecration of my life to the Lord through the patronage of His Blessed Mother. In that moment I stood beside the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross and heard the words of Jesus to Mary, "Woman, behold your son," then to me, "Behold your Mother!"



With those words beneath the cross, Mary had become the Mother of the Church. And, from the moment of my consecration, I have sought to be a faithful son and to dedicate all that I have and everything I accomplish to my Lord Jesus Christ through her.

This year marks the 16th anniversary of my consecration to the Lord through Mary. To be clear, this consecration is not something greater than the grace I received through the sacramental life of the Church: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Ordination. You can think of it, rather, as a particular way in which I focus my devotion to God and the graces He offers me. Mary is my guide in following Jesus; what better guide than His Mother if I want to grow closer to Him? As she brought the beloved disciple back to stand beneath the foot of the cross, who had fled in fear at the arrest of Jesus, so she invites her priests and all who heed her guidance to remain always close to Him. He was scourged, beaten and mocked, the nails of our sinfulness driven through His hands that He might bear the marks of His love of us for eternity.

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption this year, remember that our patroness, Mary Mother of the Church, desires us to always remain close to Jesus!

+ Fr. Gabriel Walz

MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH WAS AT THE FAIR!!



It was a fun opportunity for visitors to meet parishioners from our Area Catholic Community, play Plinko, grab some great literature and ask any questions they may have had about our Catholic faith.



DAUGHTERS OF MARY, MOTHER OF MERCY

The Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) congregation is an Institute of Apostolic religious life with a Pontifical Right, whose members take the three evangelical vows of Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity.

Their Charism is to bear witness to the Mercy of God by following the footsteps of Christ, the Merciful Savior, and that of Mary, the Mother of Mercy. This Mercy is expressed as Compassion, Forgiveness and Kindness.

A few of the Mary's ACC parishes were privileged to have Sr. Obinna Okpala come and visit and share about her communities Mission work and her life as a Religious Sister. The Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy, work with orphans that are abandoned in cardboard boxes at birth and those that have mental or physical disabilities. The sisters also run schools, in her country. It is hard and heartbreaking work at times because people are actively killing her family and friends just because they are Christians. Sr. Obinna's main goal is to raise money to put in wells, so more people would have clean water. A new well costs \$5,000 in her country and she is praying that she will be able to raise enough money to build 5 new wells this year. For more information about The Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy community please visit: <http://dmmmsisters-usa.org/>



"I admired how strong Sr. Obinna's faith was in following Jesus, no matter the cost to her even with reservations from her family."
-Macey Goeden



"I was very impressed with the mission of her nuns and getting a chance to talk at length with Sr. Obinna increased my admiration even more. I was shocked that the nuns spend time going around opening boxes and in about 80% of the boxes they find an abandoned baby! Then they commit to not only raising them, but also educating them.

It got me thinking of how I don't have the capability to do that work. I felt remorseful and kind of guilty. I should be doing more. One phrase that I like is 'just because you can't do everything, doesn't mean you can't do something.' During my formation as a Lay Carmelite, my work is focused more on prayer and the spiritual works of mercy. I am an extreme introvert, so this vocation suits me well.

Meeting with Sr. Obinna was inspirational. I am not called to join her order, but I will support it financially. Furthermore, it confirmed that I was on the right path in my own vocation." -Jori Church



"She is so sweet, and the work they do is so important. She doesn't let anything get her down. She keeps trying and striving to help make a difference in these children's lives, not to remove them but to make a positive change right where they are at. May God bless them with all they need!"
-Susan Hobbs



Have you ever had one of those times when God blessed you in a wonderful way and then right afterwards you were tempted to do something wrong? It might have been after a wonderful worship service at church or a time of personal enrichment through Bible Study, when suddenly an evil thought came knocking on the door of your imagination.

Have you ever wondered why that is? Know this: You are not the first one this has happened to, nor will you be the last. And do not despair; it does not indicate that you are failing spiritually.

The fact is, it indicates that you are on the right track. You might be surprised to learn that it even happened to Jesus.

After the dove, came the devil.
After the blessing, came the trial.

Immediately following His Baptism, Jesus marched into the wilderness to be tempted. Yet, Jesus, as our champion and representative, met Satan face-to-face and won. We can both share in His victory and follow His example. The way that Jesus dealt with waves of spiritual attack gives us a model to follow, a template to apply, in our own times of testing and temptation.

FIRST TEMPTATION: MEET YOUR PHYSICAL NEEDS

Satan first tempted Jesus by suggesting that He turn a stone into bread [see Luke 4: 3]. It's as if he said, "Jesus, I just happened to be listening around the corner at your Baptism. I heard Your Father say that 'You are His Beloved Son.' So, seeing as You are who You are, command these stones to become bread. Don't worry about the long-term repercussions. Just enjoy the comment. Satisfy Yourself. Play now, pay later." Jesus replied, It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." [Luke 4:4]. In essence He told the devil, "I am not here to deal with you today as God – that day will come when you are cast into the bottomless pit. I am dealing with you now as a man, on humanity's behalf." Jesus stood on ground that we can occupy. Our Lord used the Word of God as His primary weapon against temptation. He did not use "executive privilege," but instead gave us a model for winning our own spiritual battles. We are to follow Jesus' example.

"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil."

- Luke 4: 1 – 2

SECOND TEMPTATION: TAKE A SHORTCUT

Next, the devil tempted Jesus to take a shortcut to His objective: “Taking Him up on a high mountain, [the devil] showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” [Luke 4: 5-7]. Note that Jesus did not refute Satan’s claim. The Bible calls Satan “the god of this age” [2 Corinthians 4:4] and “the prince of the power of the air” [Ephesians 2:2]. Satan was offering Jesus an opportunity to bypass the cross and rule anyway. How? Just by giving Satan the momentary of worshiping him. That’s really all the devil has wanted all along: the top job. He lost his once-exalted place in heaven because he wanted to be God [see Ezekiel 2:8]. Now he was saying to Jesus, “Just bow once; look at all You’ll gain!” But Jesus answered, “Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.” [Luke 4:8]. Notice that Satan had said nothing about serving—he wanted only a moment’s worship. But Jesus recognized that a moment of worship can mean a lifetime of service. It always starts with that first time. Just once. You’ll know when to stop. When you get this one thing, this one possession, this one experience, this one win at the gambling table. But “just once” never satisfies. It’s never enough. Give Satan an inch and he will take a mile.

To Jesus, Satan offered “all the kingdoms of the world.” Others sell out far cheaper. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of beans [see Genesis 25]. Married men and women sell out their spouses and children for a one-night fling that leads to a lifetime of regret. Judas sold his soul for thirty pieces of silver [see Matthew 26:15]. Achan lost his life for a Babylonian garment [see Joshua 7]. The problem with the Father of Lies is that even when he does deliver on his promises, you still lose out. Just a moment at the altar of greed can lead to a lifetime of regret. That “one time” can lead to a ruined marriage, a destroyed reputation, a devastated family. And too late you discover that all that glitters is the point of a dagger.

THIRD TEMPTATION: MISUSE OF GOD’S PROMISES

Last, Satan set Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: “He shall give His Angels charge over you, to keep you,” and, “In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone,” [Luke 4:9-11]. Satan quoted Scripture – yet note that he left out a crucial part [Psalm 91:11-12] that says, “He shall give His Angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” [emphasis added].

Satan omitted “in all your ways” shows us the importance of those words. In the context of Satan speaking to Jesus, “your ways” refers to God’s Ways, not to whatever path we might choose. Leave that out and we void the promise. We cannot violate God’s Word and yet expect His blessing and protection. None of us enjoys temptation, yet it is a reality of the Christian life. But temptation can have a positive effect. Martin Luther once quipped, “One Christian who has been tempted is worth a thousand who haven’t.” And it has been said, “Christians are a lot like teabags. You don’t know what they are made of until you put them in hot water.” Follow Jesus’ example the next time you are faced with temptation. Remember what you know of God’s Word, then ask God to help you fight the battle. And guess what? You are on the winning side!



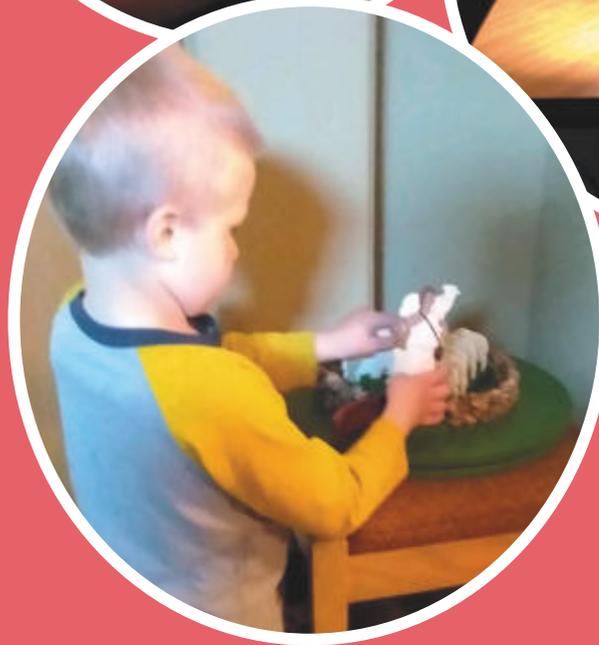
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Training

On June 21-26th we had 7 individuals from our Area Catholic Community, Victoria Bulcher, Anna Uselman, Eva Blashack, Molly Mertens, Jenn Trout, Emily Radniecki, and Monica Broz, participate in Level 1B training for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS). The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level 1 is a catechetical program for children ages 3-6 that truly allows Christ to be the teacher through Scripture, the Liturgy, and the materials that are made. It is a Montessori faith formation that has the main goal of prayer and religious life while also teaching them real names for items used at Mass such as paten, chalice, and Ciborium and the actual location of cities in the Holy Land and places in the city of Jerusalem.

St. Ann's is already in the process of developing an atrium and had its first group of children this past year and now after the training we are hoping to expand this opportunity to more young people in our parishes.

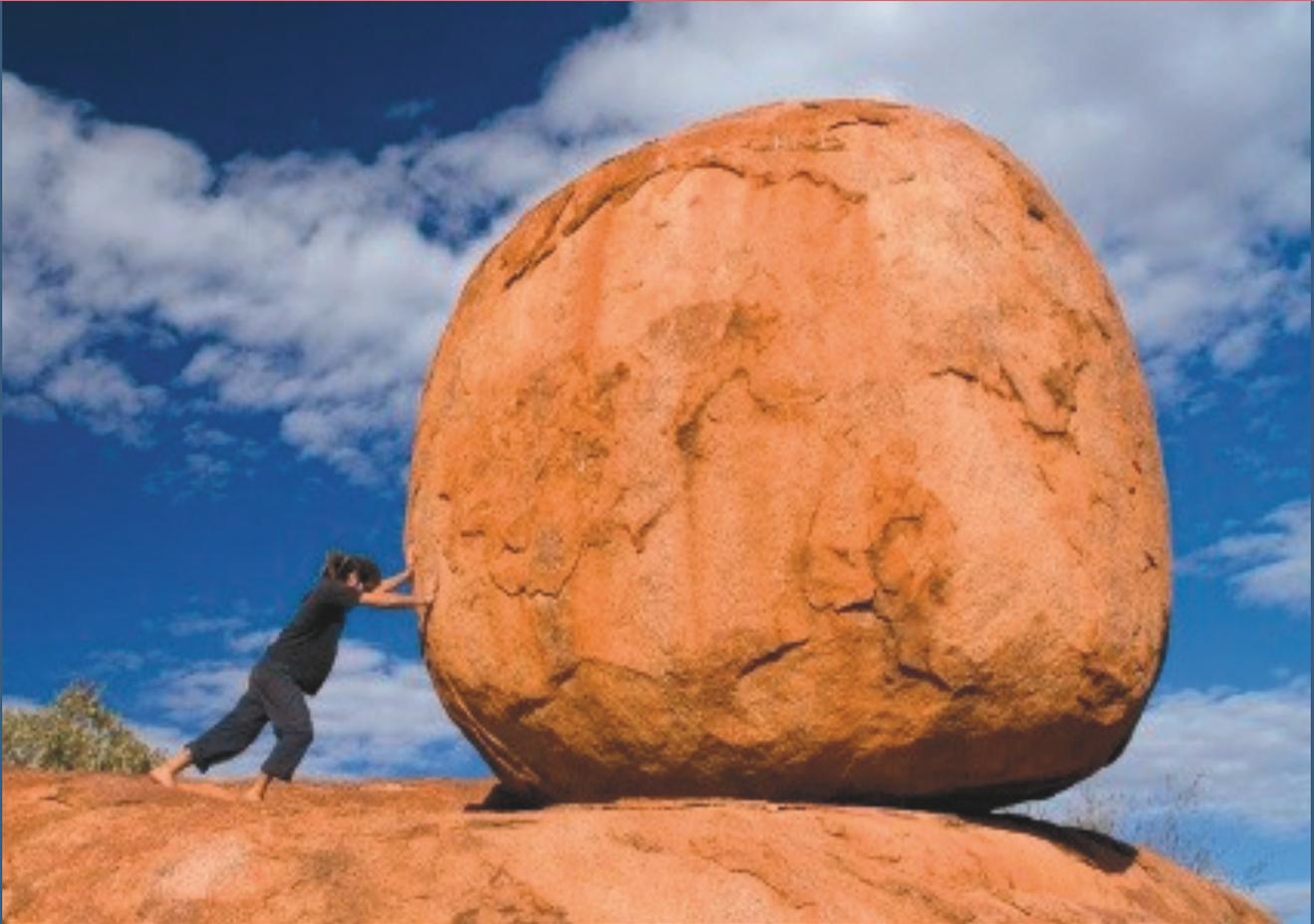
"Experiencing the CGS presentations has been a great gift. I love the focus on the beauty of our faith, and the love of Jesus, our Good Shepherd has for us. I am excited for my own kids to participate in and learn to pray with CGS."

-Jenn Trout



"CGS starts with the core message of God's love for us, his children. The training gave me the opportunity to make space and take time to reflect on this simple profound truth. The Good Shepherd is the teacher and the atrium is a place for the children to grow in relationship with Him." -Anna Uselman

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.” James 1:12



How Do You Handle Obstacles in Your Path?

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king’s wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand!

Spiritual Nourishment

Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our present condition. We often fail to see beyond the obstacle. Problems are there in every person’s life but the way we look at the problem is what matters. We can make a mess of our lives or we can choose to handle our problem. We need to go beyond the problem to get the solution. Trials make us stronger. Life is full of challenges but God will help us to face these challenges and make us bold. Trust in God and seek Him at all times.

**“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.”
Romans 5:3**

In the

Kitchen

with the Saints!



St. Lawrence
Feast Day August 10th
Patron of: school children,
poor people, cooks and
comedians

A well-known legend has persisted from earliest times. As deacon in Rome, Lawrence was charged with the responsibility for the material goods of the Church, and the distribution of alms to the poor. When Lawrence knew he would be arrested like the pope, he sought out the poor, widows, and orphans of Rome and gave them all the money he had on hand, selling even the sacred vessels of the altar to increase the sum. When the prefect of Rome heard of

this, he imagined that the Christians must have considerable treasure. He sent for Lawrence and said, “You Christians say we are cruel to you, but that is not what I have in mind. I am told that your priests offer in gold, that the sacred blood is received in silver cups, that you have golden candlesticks at your evening services. Now, your doctrine says you must render to Caesar what is his. Bring these treasures—the emperor needs them to maintain his forces. God does not cause money to be counted: He brought none of it into the world with him—only words. Give me the money, therefore, and be rich in words.”

Lawrence replied that the Church was indeed rich. “I will show you a valuable part. But give me time to set everything in order and make an inventory.” After three days he gathered a great number of blind, lame, maimed, leprous, orphaned, and widowed persons and put them in rows. When the prefect arrived, Lawrence simply said, “These are the treasure of the Church.”

The prefect was so angry he told Lawrence that he would indeed have his wish to die—but it would be by inches. He had a great gridiron prepared with coals beneath it, and had Lawrence’s body placed on it. After the martyr had suffered the pain for a long time, the legend concludes, he made his famous cheerful remark, “It is well done. Turn me over!”

Grilled Teriyaki Chicken

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each)



Directions

- In a small saucepan, combine the first 5 ingredients. Bring to a boil over medium heat; cook for 1 minute. Cool for 10 minutes. Pour into a shallow dish; add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
- Drain and discard marinade. Grill chicken, covered, over medium heat until a thermometer reads 165°, 7-8 minutes on each side .

Grilled Broccoli

Ingredients

- 6 cups fresh broccoli spears
- 2 tablespoons plus 1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Optional: Grilled lemon slices and red pepper flakes



Directions

- Place broccoli in a large bowl. Combine lemon juice, oil, salt and pepper; drizzle over broccoli and toss to coat. Let stand for 30 minutes.
- Toss broccoli; drain broccoli, discarding marinade. Place cheese in a small shallow bowl. Add broccoli, a few pieces at a time, toss to coat.
- Prepare grill for indirect heat using a drip pan. Place broccoli over drip pan on an oiled grill rack. Grill, covered, over indirect medium heat for 8-10 minutes on each side or until crisp-tender. If desired, garnish with grilled lemon slices and red pepper flakes.

Will You Take God's Loving Hand?



Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took the small boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE."

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that her son was missing. Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit, keep playing."

Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obligation. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was mesmerized.

That's the way it is with God. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results aren't exactly graceful flowing music. But with the hand of the Master, our life's work truly can be beautiful. Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully. You can hear the voice of the Master, whispering in your ear, "Don't quit, keep playing." Feel His loving arms around you. Know that His strong hands are playing the concerto of your life. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called.

ST. JOSEPH
BERTHA

ST. HUBERT
BLUEGRASS

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
BLIFFTON

ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY
MENAHA

ST. MICHAEL
MOTLEY

SACRED HEART
STAPLES

ST. FREDERICK
VERNDALE

ST. ANN
WADENA

Mary
Mother of the Church Area Catholic Community

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SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST SUMMER PICNIC

Our annual parish picnic has always been about bringing people together. Catching up on new happenings while reminiscing about fond memories. Eating great food, the many laughs and all the bright shining faces made our picnic memorable.

Thank you to everyone for coming, bringing & sharing the great food and thank you Leon for being such a great grill master.

