

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249 Newsletter Editor: Jim Hand

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL  
October 2023 Volume 4 Issue 7



## ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

October 4th

The feast of St. Francis of Assisi was an Italian deacon who brought renewal to the Church through his decision to follow Jesus' words as literally as possible.

Unlike many medieval saints, St. Francis was neither studious nor pious in his youth. His father's wealth gave him access to a lively social life among the upper classes, where he was known for his flashy clothes. He aspired to great military feats in his youth and fought in a war with a rival Italian city-state.

A period of imprisonment during that conflict turned his mind toward more serious thoughts, as did a recurring dream that suggested his true "army" was not of this world. He returned to Assisi due to illness in 1205, and there began consider a life of voluntary poverty.

Three major incidents confirmed Francis in this path. In Assisi, he overcame his fear of disease to kiss the hand of a leper. Afterward, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he deposited his money at Saint Peter's tomb and exchanged clothes with a beggar. Soon after he returned home, Francis heard Christ tell him in a vision: "Go, Francis, and repair my house, which as you see is falling into ruin."

Francis began to use his father's wealth to restore churches. This led to a public quarrel in which the cloth-merchant's son removed his clothing and declared that he had no father except God. At Mass one morning, he heard the Gospel reading in which Christ instructed the apostles to go forth without money, shoes, or extra clothing.

Through his imitation of Christ, Francis also shared in the Lord's sufferings. He miraculously received Christ's wounds, the stigmata, in his own flesh during September of 1224. His health collapsed over the next two years, a "living sacrifice" made during two decades of missionary preaching and penance.

St. Francis of Assisi died on Oct. 3, 1226. Pope Gregory IX, his friend and devotee, canonized him in 1228.



### FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Pope Francis opens clinic on 1st papal visit to Mongolia. He says it's about charity, not conversion

Sinead O'Connor fans gather to sing Nothing Compares 2 U in Dublin tribute

Cosby accusers push laws that let sex-assault victims seek justice years later

'Here Lies Love' musical about Imelda Marcos ignores Philippine Catholicism

Anti-fascist graffiti discovered in Vatican's Apostolic Palace

'God was with us on the stairwell': A hero of 9/11 finds his vocation

Miracle at Catholic school leads cancer survivor to launch pediatric charity foundation

Seminar in Nigeria burned alive in botched kidnapping

Pro-life doctors respond to OB-GYN group's call for abortion without restrictions



# FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT

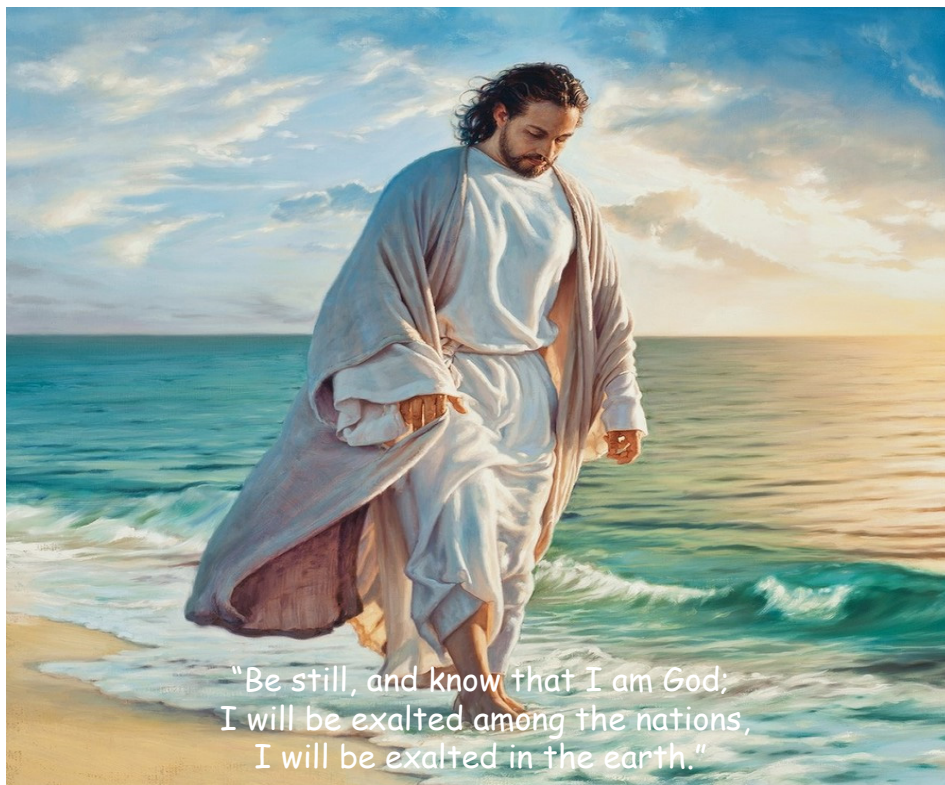


Pete McCabe

Brothers,  
October will be another busy month. Please keep an eye out for opportunities for you to volunteer your time and talent. Haven't been to an event lately? No problem. We welcome all brothers back with open arms. Can't make it to events? No problem. Keep praying for us! We need it!  
As you know, our council, with the great work of our Life Program Director Kevin Manning, has funded two bus bench ad signs for one year. By October 15th, they will be placed on Ulmerton and 49th in front of the Checkers and the other at Park and 126th. Here is what the ad will look like:



Another Life event Kevin has coordinated is with Special Olympics Florida. Kevin is looking for volunteers to help on Sunday, 1 October at the Cove Cay Golf Club, Clearwater. Please contact Kevin directly to help.  
Other activities in October include Bingo (every Thursday in the Parish Center), the Knights' Breakfast on the 15th, fixing the Grotto altar (date TBD), working on the Fr. Sean Garden (date TBD), and cutting down some trees around the Parish property (date TBD). As you can see, we are busy and could use help. Please consider volunteering.  
Thanks for all you do.  
Pete McCabe, GK



# LAUGHTER is the best MEDICINE

I used to think air was free until I bought a bog of potato chips.

It's better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot.

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.

Take my advice — I'm not using it.

Love may be blind but marriage is a real eye-opener.

If Plan A doesn't work, the alphabet has 25 more letters. Keep calm.

If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative.

If you cannot convince them, confuse them.

Keep the dream alive: Hit the snooze button.

Silence is golden. Unless you have kids. Then it's suspicious.

Of course I talk to myself. Sometimes I need an expert opinion.

Whoever said, "Out of sight, out of mind" never had a spider disappear in their bedroom.

When people tell me, "You're going to regret that in the morning," I sleep until noon because I'm a problem solver.

If you're not supposed to eat at night, then why is there a light bulb in the fridge?

Doesn't expecting the unexpected make the unexpected expected?

Beauty fades. Dumb is forever.

I'm glad I don't have to hunt for my food. I have no idea where sandwiches live.

They say don't try this at home... so I went to my friend's home!

The more people I meet, the more I like my dog.



## Rome Announces Major Construction Project in Preparation for 2025 Jubilee Year



In anticipation of the Catholic Church's 2025 Jubilee Year, the city of Rome presented a major infrastructure project Friday that will create a pedestrian pathway from St. Peter's Square to Castel Sant'Angelo. The city's mayor is calling the project an "embrace" between Italy and the Vatican.

The infrastructure developments are in preparation for an estimated 35 million pilgrims headed to the eternal city for the yearlong "Jubilee of

Hope."

When the Vatican announces a Jubilee Year, the faithful are invited to take part in the spiritual benefits offered by the Church, including passing through the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome — which only the pope himself opens — in order to receive an indulgence.

The project will include the "redevelopment and pedestrianization" of the piazza, which will connect the Cas-

tel Sant'Angelo to the famous road leading to the Vatican, the via della Conciliazione, costing approximately 70 million euros. That translates to about \$77 million dollars.

Alfredo Mantovano, Italy's undersecretary to the presidency of the council of ministers, said in the press release that the city plans to complete the infrastructure improvements by Christmas Eve of 2024. Construction was slated to begin in August.

## St. Januarius' Blood Liquefies Once Again

The blood of St. Januarius again liquefied on the martyr's feast day in Naples as it has annually since the first recorded instance of the miracle in 1389. "Every year we see firsthand how the witness of a man who generously gave his life for the Gospel, until his last breath, until his last drop of blood," said the Archbishop Domenico Battaglia of Naples.

The abbot of the chapel of the treasury of the Naples Cathedral, Abbot Vincenzo De Gregorio, declared that the miracle had taken place at the start of a Mass. "We had just taken from the safe the reliquary with the blood of our patron saint, which immediately completely liquefied," he announced.

As the archbishop demonstrated the liquid state of the blood, the audi-

ence applauded and the deputy of the wisdom of the people waved a white cloth.

St. Januarius, a patron saint of Naples and of blood banks, was a 3rd-century bishop and martyr whose dried blood was collected at his martyrdom and reserved in a glass ampoule in the shape of a rounded cruet. Traditionally, his blood liquefies on his feast day and two other occasions every year — the first Saturday of May and December 16.

Though there have been investigations of the phenomenon in the past, there is no scientific explanation of the liquefaction of the saint's blood. The relic of St. Januarius' blood remained on display for veneration in the Cathedral of Naples until September 26.





## Catholic Community Grants Wish of Girl Fighting Cancer to See Luke Bryan Live



Mary Stegmuller

Seven-year-old Mary Stegmuller is a fighter. She has been battling cancer since she was 4 years old, but her cancer is spreading. It has left her weak and unstable. She finds joy in music, especially that of Luke Bryan. Thanks to the local Catholic community where she lives, she gets to live out her dream of hearing him live. Stegmuller is a student at Frassati Catholic Academy, and her family are parishioners of St. Scholastica Parish in Erie, Colorado. In 2020, Stegmuller

was diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), an extremely rare form of cancer with no known cure. After her diagnosis, she was given weeks to live, but thanks to a cutting-edge cell trial at Stanford University and an outpouring of prayers and support, she is still here, 33 months after her initial diagnosis. The dire reality of DIPG diagnoses is that 10% make it to the mark Stegmuller is currently at. Zero percent make it to five years.

She, along with her mom, Kristin; dad, Bobby; 5-year-old brother, Robbie; and some other family and friends will all be enjoying a country singer Luke Bryan concert.

Since her diagnosis in 2020, Stegmuller has undergone more than any person — let alone any child — should ever have to. This includes 42 rounds of radiation to the brain stem (12 of them awake), two brain surgeries before the age of 5, 12 rounds of chemo, hair loss twice, 17 rounds of stage 1 CAR-T cell trial, four rounds of apheresis, five PICC line surgeries, one port surgery, 55 MRIs, 70 times under anesthesia, four X-rays, three CT scans, 17 EKGs, three ECHOs, 19 trips to California for treatment (270 days total), 74 ommaya taps (spinal taps in the brain), five walking braces, two walkers, 11 blood trans-



Luke Bryan

fusions, two chemical burns from medical cleaner, and has learned to re-walk twice.

As her mother said in 2021: "She's going to be a miracle, and she believes it, too." This certainly holds true for Stegmuller's miraculous journey.

The next time you hear Luke Bryan playing on the radio, say a prayer for Mary Stegmuller!

## Boy Expelled from Catholic School Because of Parents' Unorthodox Belief in Catholicism



Front of Parish and Pastor Fr. Sean McCaffery

Will Muller, a rising sixth grader at St. John LaLande Catholic School in Blue Springs, MO, has been kicked out — "disenrolled" — after much prayer, according to the principal, Susan Martin.

trouble." He's being expelled because his parents, Paul and Hollee Muller, have stated both verbally and in writing that they do not agree with or support the teachings of the Catholic

This is not because Will, who is 11, was struggling academically or did anything wrong. On the contrary, "He's an 'A' student," said the mother of a classmate, "and liked by everybody. My son would say Will is the only one who never talks or gets in any

Church. "After prayerful consideration and discussion among our school administration, it is obvious we no longer have a partnership with you, since the values of your family are not in alignment with those of our school. Therefore, the school administration has made the decision to disenroll your child from our school," said Martin.

As it happens, the Mullers are mainstays of the parish and the school, where they are volunteer basketball and track coaches, run a Tuesday night "open gym" for the kids, and "volunteer to do a lot of things other parents won't," said that same St. John mother, who like all four other parents did not want her name used out of fear that she, too, might be shown the door and left scrambling to find a new school three weeks before classes begin. "Their whole life was that church. It's just wrong, and it's going to hurt a lot of the kids."



# Actor Dennis Quaid Shares His Journey of Faith



Dennis Quaid

Since his breakthrough role in the 1979 cycling film *Breaking Away*, Dennis Quaid has worked steadily in Hollywood, starring in movies such as *Great Balls of Fire!* (1989) and *The Parent Trap* (1998). But the actor has also faced his fair share of adversity and has publicly struggled through divorces and experienced drug problems.

The actor has been open about his struggle with cocaine addiction in the past and has opened up about how bad his problem was before he sought help. The star said that he grew up in the '60s and '70s when "there was

a completely different attitude" and cocaine use was allegedly the norm. "I was basically doing cocaine pretty much on a daily basis during the '80s," he admitted. "I spent many, many a night screaming at God to 'Please take this away from me and I'll never do it again, because I've only got an hour before I have to be at work.' Then at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I'd go, 'Oh it's not so bad.'"

The actor said he decided to get help when he had a vision of what his life would look like if he continued. "I had what I call a white light experience where I saw myself either dead or losing everything that meant anything to me," he said. Quaid went to rehab in 1990. He has relied on his faith during the toughest of times.

"I'm grateful to still be here; I'm grateful to be alive really every day. It's important to really enjoy your ride in life as much as you can, because there's a lot of challenges and stuff to knock it down."

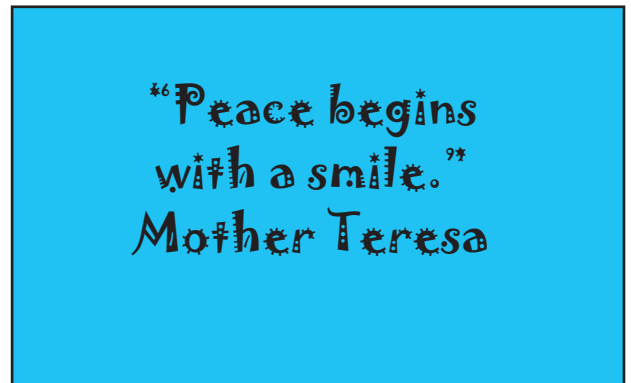
Aside from his acting career, Quaid

is also an avid musician and plays in a band. He got to combine his two passions in the hit Christian movie *I Can Only Imagine*, which was released in 2018 to surprising success, making nearly \$90 million at the box office. The actor plays the abusive father of MercyMe lead singer Bart Millard, who wrote the song "I Can Only Imagine," the most successful Christian song in history.

As a child raised in Houston by his Southern Baptist parents, Quaid fell in love with the music of Elvis Presley, Hank Williams and the Beatles. "I just started writing songs because it seemed natural. That's how I got through my teenage years."

In 2000, the actor began singing and playing guitar and piano with his band, The Sharks, in between acting gigs. Now more than two decades later, they continue to perform around the country. "We're going to be the oldest guys to make it in the music business," Quaid said, laughing. "I love making movies and I love to act, but playing music is very present. It moves people."

What saved the Houston, Texas, native was returning to his Christian roots. Addiction forces people "to fill a hole inside us," Quaid explained. "When you're done with the addiction, you need something to fill that hole, something that really works."



## "The Use of Solitary Confinement," Says Pope Francis, "Is a Form of Torture"



Typical Solitary Confinement Cell

On January 23, 300 inmates in Texas concluded a three-week hunger strike organized to protest the broad use of solitary confinement in the Texas penal system. Michele Deitch, director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas at Austin, told the Texas Tribune that prisoners in Texas have been restricted to solitary for months, even years, with their only human contact the occasional brush of a hand through their food slot

while receiving a dinner tray. Solitary confinement as a tool of security, control, and punishment remains a "normal" aspect of life inside the nation's criminal justice system. Reliable figures are hard to come by, but each day in the United States there are at least 80,000 people sealed off behind concrete and steel in units designed to diminish or eliminate sensory stimuli.

Activists who hope to end the use of solitary confinement argue that human beings are programmed for socialization, not isolation. Under long-term confinement, inmates can begin to suffer paranoia, crushing anxiety, hallucinations, and violent mood swings. People predisposed to mental illness or who are already diagnosed can be especially affected. The psychological and physical impact of prolonged solitary confinement can be long-lasting, if not permanently debilitating. It is hard to argue that such confinement merits the description of cruel and unusual punishment. South Africa's Nelson Mandela served 18 years in solitary confinement while imprisoned by the apartheid regime. He famously said that "A nation should not be judged by

how it treats its highest citizens but its lowest ones."

But there are signs of change. Nine states are currently contemplating broad criminal justice reforms. Other states have outlawed solitary confinement for teenagers or mentally ill inmates. In several states, notorious facilities have been shut down.

Pope Francis has been celebrated for his decision to declare capital punishment "inadmissible." Less noted has been the pope's consistent unease with lifetime sentences, which he calls "a hidden death penalty," and the use of solitary confinement, which he describes as a kind of torture.

But if his moral appeal for the humane treatment of people behind bars isn't sufficient, let's recall that the vast majority of the 2 million people locked up in America's prisons and jails will eventually return to its streets and communities. They can return to those communities whole individuals with the best possible chance of reintegrating into society or they can return damaged and broken beyond repair because of excessively cruel treatment. In a merciful, rational society, the choice is easy.

## Why Does the Church Exhume Candidates for Sainthood?

The canonization process is comprehensive and exhaustive. No proverbial stone is left unturned when the Church investigates whether someone is in heaven. Canonization is pronounced with divine verification. Part of the process includes a thorough examination of a person's writings and statements made about them. A main task of the canonization process

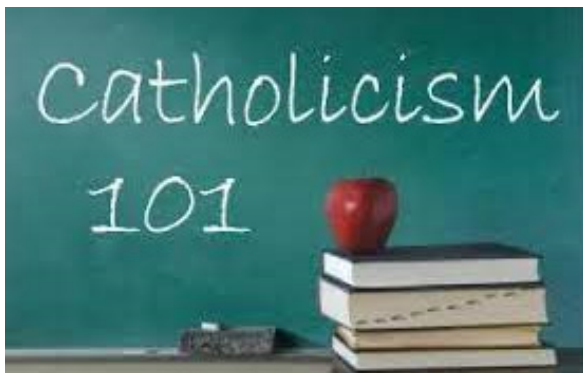
is to prove that the candidate lived a life of heroic virtue and to substantiate that miracles can be legitimately attributed to their intercession.

Another part of the canonization process is to exhume the candidate's mortal remains. This is done for several reasons. Exhumation confirms that the person lived and died. That might sound strange, but the Church

wants to be positive of even the most basic, simple facts. Professionals such as anthropologists examine the remains to see if they match the known historical information known about the candidate. And perhaps new information is learned from the exhumation itself. In some cases, the candidate's body is incorrupt. If scientifically inexplicable, this no doubt adds to the

reputation of holiness for the candidate — although incorruption itself is not a miracle fulfilling those required for canonization.

Many times sainthood candidates' mortal remains are enshrined in a church or chapel at some point after the person is declared Venerable, and so exhumation is necessary for that. Exhumation also allows for relics to be distributed to churches, etc., for veneration by the faithful, typically after the beatification process.



St. Bernadette



## Challenging and Changing the Toxic Environment Created by Contraception

As a newlywed, Julia Ibarra was more than a little nervous about using Natural Family Planning (NFP). She had grown up non-Catholic, with the assumption that the Pill would be part of her married life. Stepping away from that place felt insecure and raised a host of questions for her.

Increasing her anxiety, there seemed to be remarkably few resources for newly married couples to learn about NFP. The sparse page of information the couple was given in a Catholic marriage prep course sparked Ibarra's curiosity but offered little else.

Ibarra's challenging journey with NFP inspired her to found Magenta. Named after the birthplace of pro-life heroine St. Gianna Molla, Magenta aims to make NFP attractive, accessible and understandable; to be a means for women to learn about and embrace their fertility.

"My husband and I were married only three months before he was due to deploy in the armed services. So after we were married we quickly tried to figure out NFP. We found a class nearby, but my husband's schedule made it impossible for him to attend all the classes with me, and the instructor would not make an exception. We decided to do a home study program but had no success," she said.

"We soon had our first baby. I wanted our baby and was excited about her. During a postpartum doctor's visit, I was asked what type of birth control I wanted to use, and I said I would be using NFP. The doctor laughed at me.

Pregnancy was difficult for me, but I loved my babies, and within a few years we had four children. We decided again to try to learn to use NFP—this time to pace my pregnancies. I learned a method and had some



Julia and Jaime Ibarra and their seven children

success, but one time I assumed that I was in my infertile period and God gifted us with our fifth child. I felt like a failure with this method, too.

After my fifth baby, feeling overwhelmed, I decided that I needed to be on birth control. By this time, I had converted to Catholicism and knew it was against the Church's teachings. Nonetheless, I consulted a priest who said it was okay for me to use birth control due to the fact that I had a medical condition. My mind was set. I told my husband that I needed to be on birth control," she added. "Thankfully, he said no."

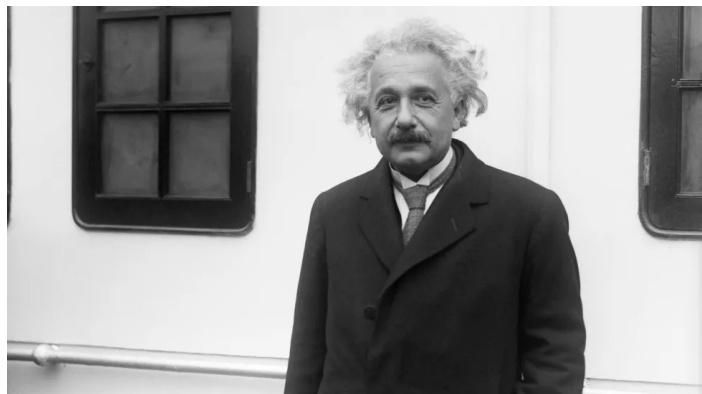
"Eventually I called a doctor who had been recommended to me. She was far away in San Diego, but I prayed she could help me somehow. One of her staff members dedicated an hour to talking with me. She told me she had eight children, that each

was a blessing, and she wouldn't give any of them back. She said she understood that having a lot of small children was difficult at times but reminded me that things would get easier as the children got older."

She was the first person who had ever told her that having a large family was a gift. Finally, she gave Julia the name and phone number of a woman who was willing to teach her and her husband an NFP method over Skype. "That was life changing," she said. "I was able to learn the new method and I began to understand my fertility successfully. I had a new perspective on my fertility and children. If I got pregnant again, I knew it would be a gift from God rather than my failing at NFP. My husband and I were blessed with two more children and I'm grateful for them every day," she concluded..

"The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

--Albert Einstein  
1875-1955



# US Bishops Reject Human Composting, Alkaline Hydrolysis



the Church's requirements for proper respect for the dead."

In human composting, the body of the departed is placed in a metal bin with plant material to enable microbes, bacteria, heat and oxygen, to break down bones and

is dissolved, except for some bone material which is then dried and pulverized.

Burial is "the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body," wrote the bishops, quoting the 2016 instruction "Ad resurgendum cum Christo: Regarding the Burial of the Deceased and the Conservation of the Ashes in the Case of Cremation" by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

According to the instruction, flame-based cremation is permissible, so long as the ashes are gathered and laid to rest in a sacred place.

Both human composting and alkaline hydrolysis leave nothing that could be properly interred, said the bishops.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine said it had evaluated two new alternatives to burial or cremation — human composting and alkaline hydrolysis — and concluded that both "fail to satisfy

tissues. The resulting mixture is then used for lawns or gardens.

Alkaline hydrolysis dissolves the body in some 100 gallons of water and alkali under high temperature and pressure. Within hours, the body

## Unborn Martyr "Shakes Our Consciences"



On March 24, 1944, in occupied Poland, all nine members of the Ulma family were killed by the Nazis — including a child still in the womb — for hiding a Jewish family in their home in Poland.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of the first unborn child on the way to sainthood marks a moment to pray for the protection of every human life, according to the postulator for the Ulma family, Father Witold Burda who stated that the Catholic Church's decision to beatify an unborn child "shakes our consciences."

In an interview with EWTN, Burda called it "a reminder for us of the sanctity of every human life that begins at the moment of conception until natural death."

"It is a great reaffirmation, a great hymn of the sanctity and dignity of every human life," he said.





# Flannery O'Connor and a Little Girl Named Mary Ann



Flannery O'Connor

Mention Flannery O'Connor's fiction, and many people will shudder. After all, her stories feature disturbing events like a child drowning, a woman being gored by a bull and a family gunned down on the roadside.

O'Connor, a faithful Catholic, shaped such shocking scenes to show how grace works in our world, which she called "territory largely held by the devil." In her stories, moments of grace and spiritual insight often accompany horrific events, which shake people out of complacency.

She considered her introduction to *A Memoir of Mary Ann* the most important thing she had ever written. As she noted, "Anyone who writes anything about me is going to have to read everything I have written, in order to make legitimate criticism, even and particularly the *Mary Ann* piece."

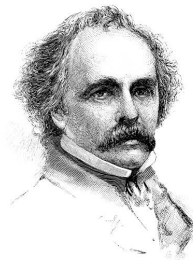
In the spring of 1960, O'Connor received a letter from Sister Evangelist, who was in charge of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Home in Atlanta.

The home was run — and to this day, still is — by the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, who tend to terminally ill, indigent cancer patients.

In her letter, Sister Evangelist wrote about a little girl named Mary Ann Long, who began living with the sisters in 1949, when she was 3 years old, and died nine years later. The child had been born with a disfiguring, cancerous tumor on her face, which had grown so large that one eye had been removed. Sister Evangelist said the child had a beautiful, brave spirit and asked if O'Connor would help the sisters write a book about her.

Soon, O'Connor grew intrigued with the story of this little girl, who bore the cross of cancer with tremendous grace. Her introduction to *A Memoir of Mary Ann* is a moving, insightful and thoroughly Catholic reflection on the salvific nature of suffering. She noted that many people use children's suffering to discredit God's goodness and to stop believing in him. True, Mary Ann had suffered terribly, she said, but hers was not hopeless suffering, because the sisters saw an image of Christ in the child and treated her with great tenderness.

O'Connor saw the child's suffering as a thread woven within the fabric of believers called the Communion of Saints, which she described as "the action by which charity grows invisibly among us, entwining the living and the dead." This quote referred to author Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had



Nathaniel Hawthorne written about vis-

iting a children's ward in a Liverpool workhouse, where orphaned, disabled children lived. There, he encountered a "wretched, pale, half-torpid child," who immediately repulsed him. Still, the child took a liking to him and begged to be held — and Hawthorne obliged. "I should never have forgiven myself if I had repelled its advances," he wrote.

His daughter, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, called these the most important words her father ever wrote. A convert to Catholicism, Rose became a religious sister who devoted her life to caring for dying cancer patients in New York. At the time, cancer was considered contagious, and cancer victims were shunned. In 1900, Rose founded a religious order, eventually called the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, which ministered to the "throwaways" of society.

O'Connor saw God's hand in Mary Ann's life, since the child might have missed the joy of living with the sisters, had the writer Hawthorne refused to pick up that "wretched" child long ago. For O'Connor, Mary Ann represented all the imperfect human beings whom the Dominican sisters treated in a Christlike fashion. "Their work is the tree sprung from Hawthorne's small act of Christ-likeness and Mary Ann, its flower."

Toward the end, the little girl knew death was near and readied herself to meet it. For example, she wanted to be a Dominican sister and asked that she be buried in the habit of this religious order.

On this anniversary of O'Connor's death, the little girl's life stands as a passionate witness to two Catholic beliefs O'Connor cherished: All human life is precious in God's eyes, and love always triumphs over suffering.

## California becomes first state to declare Transgender History Month

According to the resolution, transgenderism existed in California since before European colonization. The resolution refers to the state as the historical "epicenter of the trans liberation movement" and says that transgender history is being erased through "recent culture wars" in which they "are being dehumanized and politicized."

The month of August was chosen to commemorate Compton's Cafeteria Riots of 1966, according to the resolution. The 1966 events culminated in a violent transgender-led

riot against the cafeteria workers and the police, based on alleged harassment and mistreatment. The city outlawed cross-dressing until 1974, but the Tenderloin District, where the riot took place, was later legally designated as the world's first transgender cultural district.

As long as there has been a California, there have been transgender people here contributing to their communities, making history in expanding civil rights, and helping to build a California that is more inclusive and prosperous for everyone.





# Young Man Arrested for Reading Bible Outside Pride Event

Marcus Schroeder, 19, was arrested without warning or explanation as he was reading a passage from the Bible into a microphone next to a "Pride in the Park" event in Watertown, Wisconsin.

According to Schroeder, the event lasted from 10 am to 6 pm and was attended by 100-200 Christian protesters. Schroeder attended the event with a ministry group called "Warriors for Christ."

"We were preaching the Gospel, passing out tracts, holding some signs, and just kind of being a public witness against what was going on," Schroeder said.

At around 3 pm, Schroeder said he began to use the group's microphone and speaker to read Galatians 5, a passage about love, from the sidewalk outside the barrier that had been set up for the event.

"As soon as I start reading from that passage, a bunch of officers came up and surrounded me," he said, noting that the officers gave him no warning and were hostile towards him.

"One officer grabbed my hand, then my arm and kind of twisted it down as he tried to pull the mic away from me, and then all of a sudden, an officer behind me grabbed my other arm, and they handcuffed and arrested me," Schroeder said.

He was detained for about an hour and was given two citations—one for unauthorized sound amplification and one for resisting arrest. "When I asked the officer how I resisted the arrest, he said it was because

my muscles tensed up," Schroeder recalled.

Watertown's "Pride in the Park" event drew national attention, mainly, for the presence of a Nazi group that showed up to protest. Schroeder said that even though the Nazi group is allegedly based in his hometown in Wonkasha, Wisconsin, he has never encountered them before. "It's very strange that I've never heard of them before," he said. "And all of a sudden they showed up, dressed in all black, carrying flags with the swastika on them."

Schroeder said the Nazi group attended the event for approximately 20 minutes, giving a few inter-

views to news outlets and delivering a series of chants, such as "Burn the faggots," "Hang the pedophiles," and "Blood, blood, blood."

Schroeder also noted that the police were far less combative towards the Nazi group that came to protest than toward the Christians.

"The police went over when they showed up, but none of them was arrested, none of them was really shoved around by the police like our group was."

Schroeder, who is currently enrolled in Florida's Institute of Public Theology, claims that the rise of lawlessness and hate groups is proportion-



ate to the decline in respect for Christian morality.

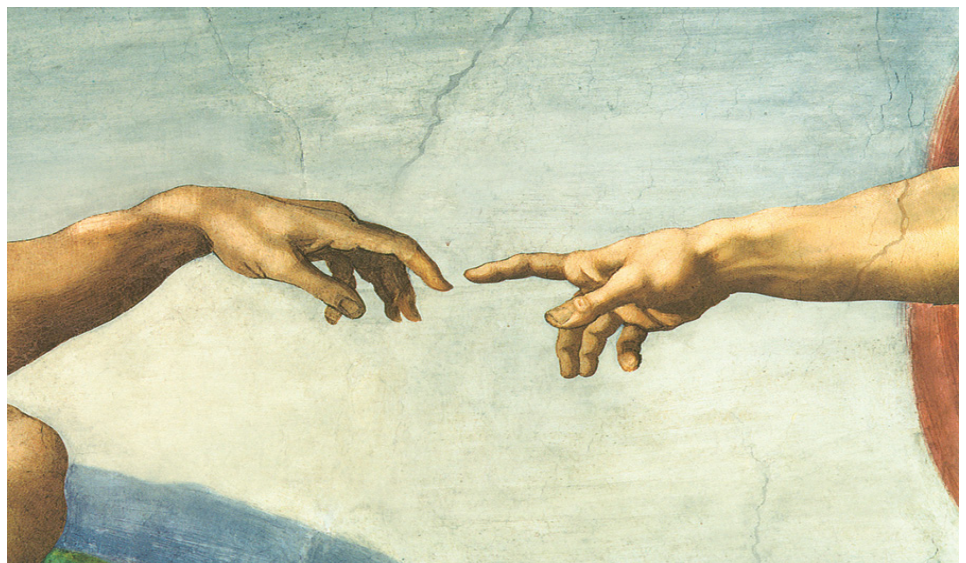
Without a Christian God, Schroeder said, "we're just going to fill that void with some other God, the god of the individual," he said.

"That's where we see increased lawlessness in our culture because we are worshiping an idol and worshiping the creature rather than the creator, and historically that's always led to trouble.

I think it's important for Christians to speak out on these issues. If we are not the ones who will take a stand on these issues, then who will?" he concluded.



He's Got the Whole World in His Hands



Leap of Faith by Michaelangelo



# Man with Muscular Dystrophy To Visit EWTN As Last Wish



Michael Ham

Michael Ham was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and placed in a wheelchair at the age of 4. At the age of 10, his father left the family, leaving his mother to raise him alone. Toward the end of college, Ham experienced worsening pulmonary issues. Doctors realized he instead had a rare form of muscular dystrophy called Limb-girdle muscular dystrophy, which is characterized by progressive muscle weakness.

Ham is a cradle Catholic and grew up watching Mother Angelica. At 33 years old, he is reaching his final days and hopes to visit the EWTN campus in as part of his last wish.

"I remember watching EWTN as a 2-year-old. It was one of my first memories," he recalled. "I remember in 1993 seeing this wonderfully-dressed nun who had such a peaceful countenance, talking about the Father's splendor. "I couldn't believe that so much grace and so much humility could pour forth from one human being. I truly looked at her and

saw a grandmother, a second mother, and a hero all in one."

Ham explained that he felt he could relate to Mother Angelica because she too had a father who left her at a young age, but her willingness to openly speak about it taught him how to unite his suffering to Our Lord's suffering.

He remembered when Mother Angelica had crutches in the late 1990s. She said: "Lord,

I've always been grateful for my handicap because it's kept me close to you and it's been a witness for others." Ham said he felt she was saying those words directly to him.

"Every part of my life she had a role in, in a strange sense, even though I had never met her directly," Ham said. "But I would call to mind her words, her practical guide to holiness, and that made my life, which already had so many challenges with being disabled with muscular dystrophy, all the much more bearable because here was somebody who had her own physical trials, who didn't hide them, but she exuded the Holy Spirit."

Throughout his life, even in college when everyone else was playing video games, Ham was watching EWTN.

"What EWTN enabled me to do was to act on my faith," he shared. "It was really wonderful because, when you're in a wheelchair 16 hours a day, you need — when you're not in school or you're not otherwise engaged in

things — you need something to focus on, and EWTN became my focus." EWTN was on Ham's television 24/7. He would fall asleep with it on because it helped him sleep peacefully. Even more incredible was the fact that his muscle spasms would stop whenever he listened to the Gregorian chants of the Franciscan Friars. Ham shared that he spent a brief amount of time in the seminary. However, due to being unable to kneel, the bishop felt it was not his vocation.

"I said, 'Well, I may not be an ordained priest, but I can certainly live the life of one,'" he explained.

Ham gets up early every day to pray, make a Holy Hour, and is involved in several Catholic charities.

So, when he was told that he would not be able to travel much longer, Ham knew that a visit to EWTN had to be his final trip.

"I said, 'Well, then the last trip has to be to EWTN to say thank you, Lord, and thank you EWTN for being a constant in my life for three decades.' It's almost like a relationship. You see them on the television, and they do become part of your family."

"I thank the Lord for the grace, and I thank everybody at EWTN for their kindness and their prayers to me. They helped me immensely."

When asked what he would have told Mother Angelica if he could have, Ham said without hesitation, "I love you. Thank you. I know that you're going to tell me that Jesus loves me, and you love me, but I love you and thank you so much." And of course with that would come a big hug because she was a very huggy person."



**EWTN**

Global Catholic  
Network



## 'Never, Never Lose Faith,' Says Man Whose Miraculous Cure As a Child Led To St. Kateri Tekakwitha's Canonization

Jake Finkbonner first decided to become a medical doctor when he was in middle school.

"I wanted to help people the same way that so many have helped me," the 23-year-old from Ferndale, Washington said.

The recent college graduate drew his inspiration from the doctors who rushed to rescue him from an aggressive flesh-eating bacteria that tore through his face more than 17 years ago. They had help: Finkbonner's family and community turned to then-Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha to intercede for the 6-year-old's life. The day after her relic entered his hospital room, the infection — without explanation — stopped.

The cure became the second and final miracle needed for the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, a 17th-century Mohawk Catholic and the first Native American woman to be declared a saint. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012.

In 2006, Finkbonner was playing basketball with the local Boys & Girls Club when he cut his lip on the supporting bar at the base of the portable basketball hoop.

At first, doctors assured his family that Finkbonner, who was almost 6 years old, would be fine. But after he visited the family doctor a third time, this time with a dangerously swollen face, he was sent to the local emergency room. From there, he flew via airlift to Seattle Children's Hospital. There medical professionals discovered that Finkbonner had contracted flesh-eating bacteria called Strep A through his cut.

His sixth birthday came and went before his parents contacted Father Tim Sauer, then-pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Ferndale, about administering last rites. He coordinated for a priest to visit and, at the same time, recommended the family turn to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha for help. Finkbonner and the holy woman shared similarities, from their Native American heritage (Finkbonner is a quarter Native American, of the Lummi nation) to suffering from attacks to their faces (smallpox scarred St. Kateri Tekakwitha's face).

Soon after, Finkbonner's mother, Elsa, began praying to God for a sign. That sign arrived when his father's aunt, who is a religious sister, visited the hospital — and brought a friend with her.

Upon arrival, his relative introduced her friend as "Sister Kateri," Finkbonner said. Sister Kateri not only shared a name with Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha, but also placed a relic of the holy woman by his bedside. "It was actually that next day that the doctors said, "The infection has stopped, and we don't know why," Finkbonner said. "It was all recovery from that point on."

A few weeks later, he returned home after months in the hospital. He faced a long road ahead. Every year, until he turned 18, he underwent reconstructive surgery.

"I had to learn how to walk again," he remembered. "Talking was a little tough because of still much scar tissue on my face. They gave me a big plastic mask to wear because so much of my skin had been exposed."

His family, friends, and school community at Assumption Catholic School in Bellingham, Washington, supported him and his family every step of the way, he emphasized. He remembered, in particular, when his kindergarten teacher held a "mask day" where all of the students wore masks that they made so that he did not feel alone.

While he was unconscious for most of his hospital stay, Finkbonner remembers at least one incident he believed took place: visiting heaven. "I had a sensation that I was waking up, that I could hear doctors talking to my parents," he described. "I could feel my body start to be lighter. And, instead of standing, I flew upwards." When he opened his eyes, he found himself in heaven. "I remember a feeling of warmth and comfort and everything was very bright," he said. He also spotted familiar faces: his Uncle Tom, his godfather who had passed away just two weeks before of a heart attack, and his mother's

grandmother, who died before he was born.

"I went up and I gave him a hug and I remember he breathed warm air on me," he revealed. "For a moment, his heart left his body and it came into mine and I had two beating hearts." When Finkbonner asked if he could stay, Jesus responded that everyone back home still needed him. "I remember feeling super crushed and terribly sad about the whole thing," Finkbonner said, "but in my heart I knew that He was right."

Before leaving, he recalled hearing what he described as 1,000 pennies dropping on concrete all at once. His body started to feel heavy. "Just like that," he said, "I was back." One day, he said, his mother read some Bible verses where God commands Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Afterward, his parents entered the hospital chapel to pray.

"They essentially said, 'He is yours. Do with him what you will,'" Finkbonner said. "And if it was God's will to take me home, then so be it. They accepted that."

His parents' faith in that moment inspired him, he said. "For them to never lose faith and to believe in God so heavily, I can only be filled with admiration for them," he commented. In addition to attending Sunday Mass, Finkbonner participated in activities at the Newman Center, or Catholic campus ministry, at Western Washington University before graduating in June.

During his daily prayers, he regularly turns to St. Kateri Tekakwitha. He frequently prays in his car where, he said, a rosary hangs from the rearview mirror.

"As far as my daily prayers go, the majority of my prayers are for gratitude," he said. "There's a lot of stuff for me to be grateful for."

### Knights Donate 3 iPads to ECC

Local Councils 17249 proudly donated three iPads to the Early Childhood Center.

"This will facilitate the learning process of St. Jerome Parish," stated Phyllis Steele, coordinator. "Our center has been open for several years, and we are very proud of it," she stated.





# What Happened to St. Maximilian Kolbe's Beard?

Last year, the Catholic Church in Poland shared a photo commemorating the 81st anniversary of St. Maximilian Kolbe's arrest by the Nazis. The image, the last one taken of the saint before his final arrest, was notable for what it didn't show, a long beard. The beard with which Kolbe is often pictured is notable for several reasons, one of which was the fact that not many of his Franciscan counterparts in Poland sported them. He shaved his signature beard in order to blend in with his fellow Franciscans and with society at large.

The second reason is that Kolbe's

beard is the only first-class relic that exists of him. The rest of his body was incinerated in the ovens of Auschwitz after he was murdered by the Nazis in 1941.

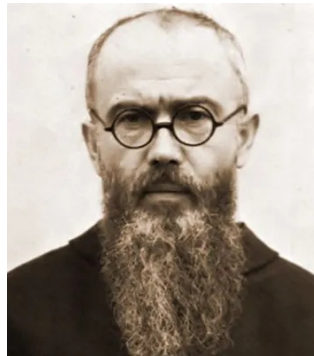
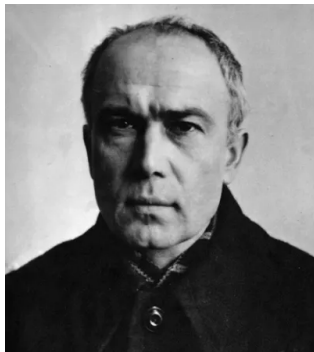
After a fellow brother cut off Kolbe's beard for him, the brother at first tried to save the beard, but Kolbe objected and told him to throw it in the stove. So, obediently, the brother threw it into the stove, but the fire was not lit, so the brother later retrieved it and stored it in a pickle jar. Today, Kolbe's beard is his only surviving first-class relic.

Franciszek Gajowniczek was the man

for whom Kolbe laid down his life at Auschwitz in late July 1941, following his arrest on Feb. 17.

Gajowniczek was one of the 10 men selected to be executed in reprisal for one prisoner's escape from the barracks. He cried out: "What will happen to my wife and children?" And in response, Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take his place. The 10 were placed, naked, in a starvation chamber.

All 10 of those condemned that day died; six starved, and the deaths of the rest, including Kolbe, were hastened by an injection of carbolic acid.



## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

### Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for 2023-2024

Worthy Chaplain  
 Worthy Grand Knight  
 Worthy Deputy Grand Knight  
 and Program Director  
 Worthy Chancellor  
 Worthy Recorder  
 Worthy Financial Secretary  
 Worthy Treasurer  
 Worthy Advocate  
 and Membership Director  
 Worthy Warden  
 Worthy Inside Guard 1  
 Worthy Inside Guard 2  
 Worthy Outside Guard  
 1-year Trustee  
 2-year Trustee  
 3-year Trustee  
 Worthy District Deputy  
 Field Agent  
 Newsletter Editor

TBD  
 Sir Knight Pete McCabe  
 Sir Knight Bill Bannon  
  
 Sir Knight Greg Musick  
 Sir Knight Rocco Totino  
 Sir Knight Fred Belzel  
 Sir Knight Paul Lee  
 Sir Knight Gregg Appel Pkg  
  
 Knight Gene Sanders  
 Knight Dave Unkrich  
 Knight Ed Wirth  
 Sir Knight Joe Moore  
 Sir Knight Rick Hendrickson  
 Sir Knight Jim Patton  
 Sir Knight Bill McClelland  
 Sir Knight Pete Grasso Pkg  
 Knight Tony Crevello  
 Knight Jim Hand