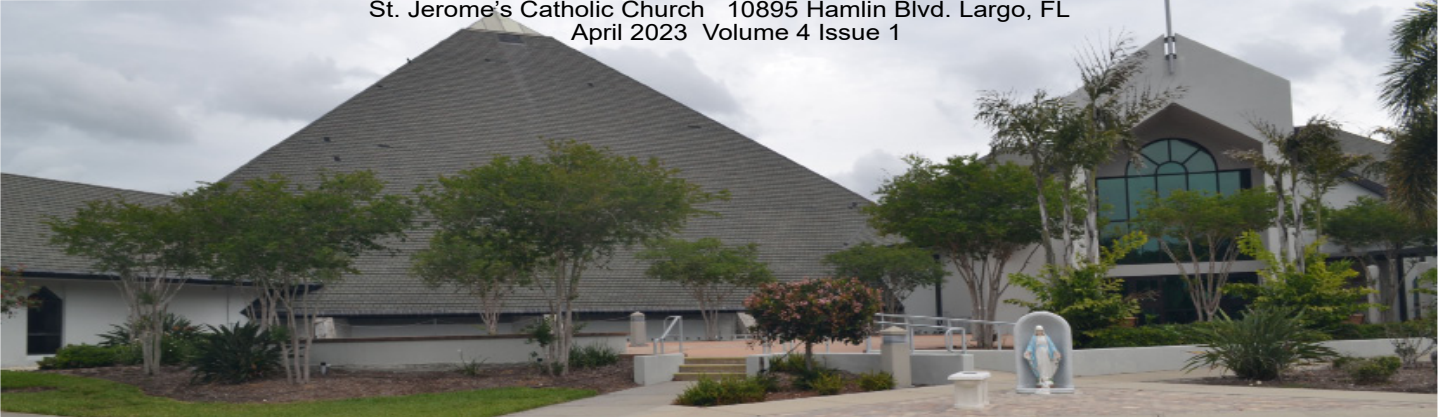


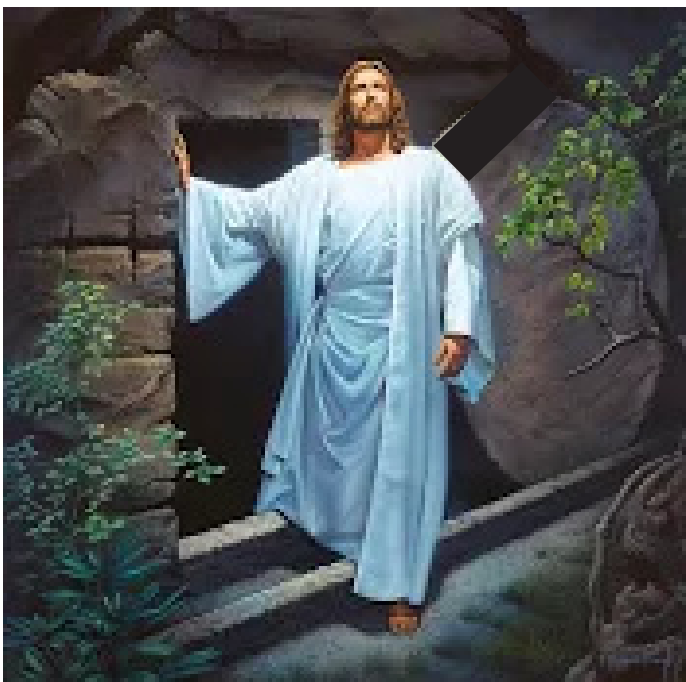
# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

*Divine Mercy of Jesus* Council 17249

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL  
April 2023 Volume 4 Issue 1



## Easter Sunday - April 9, 2023



MAY THE GLORY  
OF THE  
RISEN LORD  
FILL YOUR  
HEART WITH JOY.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Bill McClelland

Brothers,  
This month, we are continuing our nominations for the slate of officers who will lead this great council next year. We have nine new third-

degree Knights from our last exemplification and I hope some of you will consider taking a leadership role next year.

Speaking of new Knights, we continue to recruit to our council at an impressive pace. In fact, we had two new recruits from our last breakfast and one from the men's retreat. Keep up the good work and continue to strive toward 110 members by June.

We will not have Bingo on Thursday, April 6 in observance of Holy Thursday.

Additionally, we will not have drive-up confessions on Saturday, April 29.

Vivat Jesus,  
Bill

they are to keep coming for graces to the fountain of mercy. That vessel is this image with the signature: Jesus, I trust in You." (Diary 327) The two rays denote Blood and Water. The pale ray stands for the Water which makes souls righteous. The red ray stands for the Blood which is the life of souls. These two rays issued forth from the very depths of My tender mercy when My agonized Heart was opened by a lance on the cross. Happy is the one who will dwell in their shelter, for the just hand of God shall not lay hold of him." (Diary 299) About the feast day, Divine Mercy Sunday, Jesus said "tell the whole world about My inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon the souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. On that day, all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though the sins be as

## FROM THE DESK OF OUR PASTOR



Fr. Tom Morgan

Dear Brother Knights:

Jesus told St. Faustina that this Feast of Mercy would be a very special day when all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened

(Diary 699). Our Lord made a great promise to all those souls who would go to Confession and then receive Him in Holy Communion on the Feast of Mercy, on the Sunday after Easter, which is now called Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Catholic Church. Jesus promised that "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment." (Diary 699) He went on to say "I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy." (Diary 1109) We want to encourage everyone to take advantage of this incredible promise and the additional Plenary Indulgence on this great Feast of Mercy, Divine Mercy Sunday. We want you to benefit fully from these promises, and we also want you to notify all of your family and friends about them and urge them to return to the practice of their faith! The Image of the Divine Mercy, which our Lord

requested to be solemnly blessed and venerated on this day, will be on display in our church. Pope John Paul II said that the image portrays the Risen Jesus Christ bringing mercy to the whole world. Our Lord said "I want the image to be solemnly blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, and I want it to be venerated publicly so that every soul may know about it. I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish." (Diary 341, 48) Please take the time to visit with this Image of the Divine Mercy and venerate Jesus. Jesus said to St. Faustina, "I am offering people a vessel with which



scarlet. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy." (Diary 699) The Church allows for one to go to Confession for up to about 20 days, before or after Divine Mercy Sunday.

All Sunday Masses on the weekend of April 15/16 will be Divine Mercy Masses. In addition, our celebration of this great Feast of Mercy will include a Divine Mercy Holy Hour, beginning at 3:00pm on Sunday April 16th in the church. All are invited to join in our Divine Mercy Holy Hour.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Fr. Tom Morgan

## In the Spotlight

When Bob graduated high school in 1967, he decided to join the Air Force to beat the draft.

However, when the draft was close to ending and it wasn't close to his number, he changed his mind and looked around for a good job. He was living in Chicago at the time.

He did find a good job, selling industrial pumps to interested parties. To do this, he had to make cold calls. "It was a challenge," he said, but he was good at it and continued doing it for 25 years.

Among other things, industrial pumps are used for mixing paints such as Valspar and Sherwin-Williams, and when on a roof, for helping an a/c system cool the area.

He met his wife, Lynn, at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago while doing some volunteer work. "She was in a cage," he laughingly said. "I thoroughly enjoyed volunteering at various jobs at the zoo," he said, and now that he lives in Largo, he continues volunteering at the Tampa Zoo. "Brookfield Zoo is 4 times as large as the Tampa Zoo, but that doesn't matter to me. I

really enjoy helping the zoo as often as I can, usually three or four times a week," he said. He and Lynn were married in 1990. They continued living in Chicago until 2008 at which time he retired and moved to Largo. As far as his Catholicism is concerned, he made his first communion at age 11 and in 2011 was confirmed as a Catholic, he said.

A few days ago he had his right hand operated on. He was suffering what could be called trigger finger in two or three fingers. Previously, about two years ago, he contracted shingles and is still suffering from the after-effects, namely very sensitive nerve endings. (Editor's note: if you haven't had your shingles shot, get it NOW. It's the worst disease I've ever had.) Two years ago he had a heart attack and had to give up his work with in-



Bob Kimsel

## Ed Bob Kimsel Shares His Life Story

dustrial pumps, and upon recovery, Bob took minor jobs here and there, just to have something to do.

Bob has an interesting hobby: he plays a guitar and has written several songs. He also used to be a member of ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) and NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.)

Bob said he is happy with his life, but he's certainly tired of dealing with the after-effects of shingles.

### Words of Wisdom about Marriage

"You will now provide full details about the quality of your sleep, the number of times you went to the bathroom, and any areas of pain before you even open yours in the morning."

"Marriage is just listening to your wife talk about what she wants you to grill on the weekend."

"Seventy percent of marriage is yelling WHAT? from a different room."

"Marriage is having separate tubes of toothpaste because your spouse squeezes it wrong."

"Marriage is just your spouse perpetually standing in front of the kitchen drawer or cabinet you need to open."

## Pro-Life Doctors Banned from Attending National Medical Conference

The American Association of Pro-Life OB-GYNs was kicked out of a major medical conference this week because its doctors oppose killing unborn babies in abortions.

Dr. Christina Francis, an Indiana OB-GYN and incoming CEO of the medical association, said the association has had an exhibit at the annual CREOG OB/GYN medical education conference for the past 15 years. However, when she arrived in Maryland for this year's conference, Francis said she learned that pro-life doctors had been banned at the last minute. "Despite multiple requests for an explanation as to why, the only explanation we've received is a vague explanation that we disagree with ACOG, presumably on the issue of abortion," she said.

A project of the American College of OB-GYNs (ACOG), which is pro-abortion, is for doctors who are educating the next generation of OB-GYNs.

Francis said she believes ACOG banned their pro-life exhibit because their doctors tell patients the truth about how abortions harm women and kill babies. She criticized the organization for suppressing scholarly debate, especially at an event focused on training new OB-GYNs.



Although ACOG continues to be quoted as a reputable, unbiased source in many media outlets, the association has grown increasingly pro-abortion in recent years. Last year, Francis told Fox News that ACOG clearly has a pro-abortion "political agenda." For example, the group suddenly developed an "aversion to the word 'heartbeat'" after Texas passed its heartbeat law in 2021.



# APRIL BIRTHDAYS



Deacon Fred Kunder



Wayne Nuñez



Fr. Tom Morgan



John Francks



## Blessing Bags Fill a Need and Continue to Inspire

Sending a HUGE THANK YOU to all our blessing bag volunteers that gave up over 2 hours of their time yesterday to sort an incredible amount of donations! Enclosed are some pictures which don't even describe the amount of donations we received! We had already sorted the first weekend's donations last week, and this is just part of this weekend's donations, because we brought another dozen bags from the church when we thought we were almost done! And this team rolled up their sleeves and got it done!

Special Kudos to everyone for pulling off what I consider a miracle! It looked like a daunting task, but many hands made light work! We don't have a finished picture but the cabinet is absolutely stuffed and we also sorted out 2 huge boxes of larger items that will go to Lifeline.

Next week we look forward to starting to assemble more blessing bags. We typically start around 1:00 PM Monday in the Parish Center after the Pinellas Hope homeless food ministry, if anyone else wants to join us. Thank you to such an incredible team!  
Bonnie Prudlow



## Knights of Columbus Council 17249 Holds 2nd and 3rd Degree Exemplification

On Tuesday, March 14, in the Parish Center a 2nd and 3rd Exemplification was held to install new members.

Tom Kurt was council member 100. We now have 104 members and several candidates. GK Bill McClelland's goal is 110 members around the time we elect new officers.

The next and final step in their journey is the 4th Degree: Patriotism. Meetings are held at St. Pat's Parish. The Faithful Navigator (the equivalent of the Grand Knight) is Gregg Appel.

They are the men who have chosen to embrace the Order's fourth principle of patriotism, the men who lead the efforts to reach out to veterans and active military and to embody the fact that one can be



a faithful Catholic and also be a faithful citizen.

## Another Eucharistic Miracle?

A local Connecticut television station is reporting that the Archdiocese of Hartford is investigating a possible Eucharistic miracle that may have taken place during the celebration of the Mass at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Thomaston.



erful, very awesome, very real, very shocking, Fr. Crowley said. In other similar news, a Vatican-endorsed exhibit "Eucharistic Miracles of the World," featuring documentary evidence

of 152 such miracles, has visited over 3,000 churches on its international tour. In the 21st century, there have been four Eucharistic miracles recognized by the Catholic Church. In 2013, in a church in Legnica, Poland, a consecrated host that fell to the floor was put into water so that it would dissolve. Instead, it became streaked with red stains. Forensic testing concluded, "In the histopathological image, the fragments were found containing the fragment-

ed parts of the cross-striated muscle. It is similar to the heart muscle." In 2006, a consecrated host at a parish in a Diocese of Mexico appeared to be bleeding. Tests later found the presence of blood. "The reddish substance analyzed corresponds to blood in which there are hemoglobin and DNA of human origin," the study found. And in 2008, at a church in Sokolka, Poland, a priest dropped a consecrated host which then appeared to bleed. Tests later found that "the altered fragment of the host is identical to the myocardial (heart) tissue of a person who is nearing death. Additionally, the structure of the muscle fibers and that of the bread are interwoven in a way impossible to produce by human means."

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## Majority of Women Who Got Abortions Were Pressured Into Them, Study Finds



Over 60% of women who aborted their unborn baby reported high levels of pressure from other sources, a new study from the Lozier Institute, the research arm of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, found. And that same group of women also reported higher levels of mental health struggles and quality of life issues following the abortion. "We surveyed

women between 41 and 45 years of age, so they had had most of their reproductive life, and we asked about their experiences with pregnancy and abortion," David Reardon, Ph.D., a Lozier Institute associate scholar and lead author of the new study, shared.

"And of those women, we had 226 who reported a history of abortion. "Over 60% reported that they felt very much pressured to abort by either their male partner, family members, other people, or circumstances," he added. "The feeling of pressure to abort was strongly correlated with more negative feelings after the abortion and more mental

health problems that they attributed to the abortion."

Women who said that they were pressured into an abortion also said that they experienced significant levels of negative emotions related to the abortion; intrusive thoughts, including flashbacks to their abortion; frequent feelings of loss, grief, and sadness; and increased levels of stress answering questions about their abortion. "No woman should ever feel pressured into accepting an unwanted abortion. Clearly, abortion clinics need to provide better pre-abortion screening and counseling in order to prevent unsafe and unwanted abortions," Reardon added.

"In a country torn by political debate over abortion, surely these findings underscore one point on which we should all be able to agree," he added. "This is why surveys about abortion will always underreport negative outcomes. It is precisely the women feeling the most negative emotions who are most likely to not want to talk about it."



St. Jerome Catholic Church  
Health Care Ministry

A Free Community Health Lecture Series  
Sponsored by the  
St Jerome Health Ministry, Largo, FL

“NAVIGATING THE STORM”



A LECTURE ON MEDICARE, MEDICAID,  
SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY,  
SURVIVOR, CHILDREN'S AND  
WOMEN'S BENEFITS

Monday, April 17, 2023, 2-4 pm  
Parish Center, St Jerome Catholic Church  
10895 Hamlin Blvd, Largo, FL 33774

Speaker: Liz Montefu, ADR, EDPNA, CWC  
Disability Advocate  
Monteful Consulting, Inc.  
10150 Highland Manor Dr. #200  
Tampa, FL 33610

# Spiders Declare the Glory of God



As a child, sometimes I woke in the morning to a thumping sound from the living room, as though someone was hitting the floor with a wooden mallet. That sound was Dad, shaking any ants or beetles out of the firewood before throwing it into the stove.

The house was more than 100 years old, in disrepair, not weather-tight. In the winter, we checked our beds for spiders before settling in. Once I opened the door to my chilly bedroom and saw a pair of green glowing eyes. A rat darted from the room and scurried past me into Dad's prayer room. Another time, Mom went into the bathroom and saw that a large black-snake was curled around the toilet.

Usually, we removed the unwelcome guests gently. As far as they knew, they had found an ideal refuge, before these human trespassers evicted them. We had no way of explaining to the spiders and rats that it was our place.

Sharing space with those interlopers was not comfortable. I was not delighted at the prospect of a wolf spider in my bed or a snake in my bath. I have no compelling desire to repeat that experiment in primitive off-grid living. Dad shaking reluctant ants and beetles out of the firewood to save them from burning made a strong impression on me, and not only because removing them was noisy. It reminded me to pause and reflect, consider whether my actions might do harm, and take time to mitigate that harm, even a creature tiny and alien and with no saving grace.

Our contemporary culture does generally understand that harming nonhuman living things is wrong, but often we are selective about which beings get our protection. People who are appalled at the idea of kicking a puppy may be unmoved at the idea of clubbing a snake to death. We have even decided that it's acceptable to eat some animals and not others,

based entirely on our sentimental attachment to the ones we view as companions versus those we view as livestock.

We've made a little progress in some respects. We are starting to become cognizant of animal rights. We understand that horses should not be beaten, starved, and forced to do painful labor just to get us from one place to the next. Nevertheless, we have a long way to go, considering how animals are treated at many farms and the many cases of abuse and neglect that go unattended.

In a world where our fellow humans are subjected to poverty, starvation, violence, and oppression, it's no wonder that the plight of nonhuman animals is often low on people's lists of priorities. Not everyone has the luxury to work for a better world for creatures of species other than our own, especially when people are simply trying to survive from one day to the next. Not everyone has the leisure to make sure no spiders are lingering in the stick of wood they throw on the fire.

Thomas Aquinas believed that cruelty to animals was immoral, because a person who made a habit of being cruel to animals would likely to be cruel to humans too. Once we become comfortable causing suffering in one area, we'll probably have few compunctions about causing more suffering somewhere else. The ability to cause pain, especially pointless pain, hardens us. Learning to pause and reflect before doing harm to another living thing is important for two reasons, first for the sake of the living things themselves. Tiny beetles and weird worms may seem repellant to

us, but that's just us projecting our emotions onto them. Theologically, an earthworm or ant may declare the glory of God just as much as we do—more, perhaps, because they tend not to wage war or wreck whole ecosystems.

Second, it's good for us to have reverence for those mysterious little lives, going about their business, and to recognize even in their strangeness and foreignness there is a kind of beauty. We become better people when our response to that which is new or different is one of wonder and respect, instead of fear and loathing. Sometimes when I find a spider in the house, I do my best to remove it gently. Sometimes, if it's a species of spider that can coexist comfortably with humans, I let them stay. Jumping spiders, for instance, are cute and entertaining. They take care of the houseflies that are inevitable in the country in the summer. Does this mean that I'm leaving houseflies out of the circle of moral protection? No. But there's a difference between killing something just because I find it gross and letting the circle of life do its thing. There are a lot of gray areas in the moral universe, and sometimes we can't avoid inhabiting one of them. And recognizing this means humbly acknowledging that we too are in nature, immersed in it, sometimes stumbling into places uninvited, sometimes a nuisance. This might remind us to be gentle toward the ant we find lost in the woodpile. It may be wildly different and strange and incomprehensible, but it's also a lot like us in many ways. We are all bumbling about in this together.

~~by Rebecca Bratten Weiss



Recently the flagpole, located outside the entrance to the parish center was blown over and damaged. It was repaired and put back up by GK Bill McClelland, Ralph Frizzle, Rick Hendrixson, and Tom Giotta. Ralph also added the spotlight. The picture was taken by Gregg Appel.

## Swiss Bishops Call for Respect for Rules after Woman Appears to Concelebrate Mass

Only ordained priests may preside at Mass, and the liturgy should not be "a testing ground for personal projects," three Swiss bishops have said. Their intervention follows internet controversy over a video of a laywoman who seemed to concelebrate Mass with priests.

"You all know that only the priest validly presides at the Eucharist, grants sacramental reconciliation, and anoints the sick. This is precisely why he is ordained. This rule of the Roman Catholic faith must be respected without restriction in our dioceses," Bishops Joseph Felix Gmür of Basel, and Markus Büchel of Sankt Gallen said in a Jan. 5 letter to people active in pastoral care.

The bishops acknowledged people's desire to participate in the liturgy but said the Catholic liturgy has a universal character, and this especially concerns celebrations of the sacraments.

"Common witness requires common forms and rules. We bishops regularly receive requests and worried reactions: the faithful have a right to religious services that respect the rules and forms of the Church," their letter said.

Their letter came after controversy over a Mass at which a longtime de facto parish administrator, Zurich resident Monika Schmid, appeared to concelebrate the Eucharist to mark her retirement.

Bishop Bonnemain quickly opened a preliminary canonical investigation into the action on the grounds of alleged liturgical abuse. Canon 907 of the Catholic Church's canon law bars Catholic deacons and Catholic laity



from offering the eucharistic prayer and from performing actions "proper to the celebrating priest."

Schmid has denied her actions constituted an attempt to concelebrate Mass or to be provocative. She acknowledged that as a woman she can't validly celebrate the Eucharist as ordained Catholic priests do. She said the controversy was based on a video clip uploaded to the internet without the knowledge of all the participants. "And some are already seeing red when they see a woman at the altar in a photo," she said.

The video of the Mass clearly shows her, in civilian clothes, at the altar, surrounded by two priests and pronouncing with them, extending her arms, the text of the consecration of bread and wine and of the Eucharistic prayer. The text of the Eucharistic prayer had been "extensively revised," the bishops reported.

In their letter, the bishops of Ger-

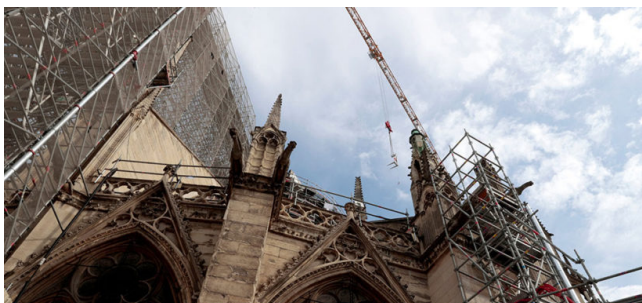
man-speaking Switzerland said they are aware that some have argued that women participate in the liturgy. "We hear the requests of many people to be able to participate in the liturgy in other ways, for example as women," they said. "However, we urge you to not make the sign of unity that is the liturgy into a testing ground for personal

projects. It is precisely in the worldwide celebration of the same liturgy that we are Catholic." The bishops rejected any claim that they were defending "patriarchal clericalism." Rather, they said, "Priests, in the service and execution of the sacraments, make visible that Jesus Christ himself acts in and through the sacraments." Priests "keep open aspace for God's action in the liturgy."

Schmid, the pastoral worker whose retirement Mass sparked the controversy, was critical of the bishops' letter. She advocated a liturgical celebration that, in her view, "reaches out to people in their daily lives, in their language and in their understanding of themselves."

The bishops referred to Pope Francis' June 2022 apostolic letter. It insists on the quality of liturgies, the careful attention to every aspect of liturgical celebration, and the observance of every rubric.

## Notre Dame Cathedral reopening date announced as reconstruction on its famous spire wraps up



Four years after a devastating fire, the date of the reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris has been set for Dec. 8, 2024, at 11:15 a.m., according to Philippe Villeneuve, the architect leading the reconstruction. The spire was destroyed when a fire ravaged the cathedral April 15, 2019. Even if Paris' famous medieval ca-

thedral won't reopen in time for the Paris Olympic Games scheduled for July 26-Aug. 11, 2024, the reopening date is a significant one for Catholics, as Dec. 8 marks the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, one of the biggest feast days of Mary, to whom French

King Louis XIII consecrated himself, his dynasty and his kingdom in 1638. The fire, which started in the afternoon, quickly spread to the roof of the cathedral. The original 13th-century oak beams burned down. While firemen protected the stained-glass windows and the famous twin towers from catching fire, crowds gathered

in shock around the cathedral and witnessed the collapse of the spire. Groups of the faithful were praying along the streets of Paris that their beloved cathedral would be saved.

Many treasures were saved from the inside of Notre Dame, including the Crown of Thorns that is believed to be worn by Jesus during his passion. The crown temporarily is on display at the Louvre Museum. When the spire crashed down just before 8 p.m. on April 15, 2019, the copper rooster perched at its tip was feared lost. However, on April 16 at dawn, Villeneuve found the battered rooster lying in the gutter of Rue du Cloître-Notre-Dame, a street right next to the cathedral square. The relics of Paris's patron, St. Genevieve, were found intact inside.



## Angus Dei Explained



The Syrian custom of a chant addressed to the Lamb of God was introduced into the Roman Rite Mass by Pope Sergius I (687-701) in the context of his rejection of the Council of Trullo of 692 (which was well received in the Byzantine East), whose canons had forbidden the iconographic depiction of Christ as a lamb instead of a man.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.  
~~Latin translation

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.  
~~English translation

## Pope Francis Approves Miracle to Pave Way to Beatification of Elisabetta Martinez



Sister Elisabetta Martinez

Pope Francis has approved a miracle to advance the cause of canonization of Venerable Servant of God Elisabetta Martinez, an Italian nun and

founder of the Congregation of the Daughters of Santa Maria di Leuca.

The miracle involved the healing of an unborn baby girl in Rimini, Italy.

Ultrasound imagery in 2017 revealed to the child's mother that her baby was suffering from several severe life-limiting and potentially life-ending conditions.

These conditions included thrombosis, complete calcific occlusion of the left fetal umbilical artery, extensive placental infarction, and severe intrauterine fetal growth retardation associated with brain sparing condition.

A family friend informed the Daughters of Santa Maria di Leuca, whose various congregations began praying novenas for a miraculous healing through the intercession of

their founder Elisabetta Martinez.

In January 2018 new ultrasound imagery shocked doctors by revealing regular quantities of amniotic fluid and regular fetal flowmetry, both major improvements to the baby's condition. Yet, the baby girl was still found to be suffering from thrombosis of an umbilical artery and fetal growth retardation.

On March 19, 2018, the baby girl was born completely healthy.

A Feb. 23 decree by Pope Francis authorized the advancement of Martinez's canonization cause based on the baby girl's miraculous healing.

The Vatican's Dicastery for the Causes of Saints will now advance Martinez to the status of "blessed," one step away from being declared a saint in the Catholic Church.

## Photo of Fetus's Finger and Arm Grasping Surgeon's Finger Still Inspires



Just as surgeon Dr. Joseph Bruner was closing the incision in Julie Armas' uterus, Samuel's thumbnail-sized hand and arm flopped out. Bruner lifted it gently and tucked it back in.

Whatever happened, a healthy Samuel was born on December 2, 1999, and almost four years later, on September 25, 2003, Alex and Julie Armas testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space about the photo and their experience with the surgery.

Samuel was also present and his father said, "Today, Samuel is nearly four years old and has not had to endure the surgeries that are common for most children with spina bifida. He's walking with leg braces, is cognitively normal, and loves looking for bugs."

## Sixty Years after His Miraculous Healing, Man Still Returns to Lourdes

In April 1962, a 23-year-old Italian soldier named Vittorio Micheli was diagnosed with a malignant tumor in his left hip. "The tumor had already destroyed part of my pelvis and was attacking the femoral head. I had very little time left to live," Micheli, now 82, told Catholic News Agency (CNA).

After oncologists at a hospital in Italy threw up their hands, Micheli's mother started to pressure Micheli's brother, a priest, to take him to Lourdes. The shrine in southern France marks the site where a young St. Bernadette Soubirous witnessed apparitions of Mary beginning on Feb. 11, 1858. The spring of water at the shrine is said to have miraculous properties, attracting millions of people every year seeking physical and spiritual healing.

Against the advice of his doctors, Micheli obtained permission from the military to make the trip.

"I did all the services, processions, Stations of the Cross, [bathed in] the pools... it's not like I noticed anything," Micheli said.

"Only [after] going back did I feel that something had changed. First of all, I no longer needed pain relievers. And then I started eating again. Before, I didn't eat any more. And there was this sense of well-being, of tranquility."

"Back in the military hospital, no one



Vittorio Micheli, who was miraculously cured at Lourdes in 1963.

paid any attention. I, however, started to get out of bed, started to walk, still with a cast and crutches. They finally decided to take X-rays and saw that the tumor was gone. They did more tests; doctors from outside also came, then they sent me home. In short, I was cured."

Ultimately, Micheli's 1963 cancer cure would go down in history as the

63rd officially recognized miraculous healing at Lourdes, declared as such by Micheli's archbishop in 1976 after more than a dozen years of investigation.

Now, 60 years on from his cure, Micheli still returns to the site where it happened. For years, the Italian would stay for 10-15 days a year to volunteer as a "brancardier," or stretcher-bearer, for sick people seeking similar miraculous cures. During his work as a brancardier, Micheli met the woman who would become his wife.

Speaking to CNA in May 2022 during an annual military pilgrimage, Micheli said he does not know "why he was chosen" to be healed out of the thousands who come to Lourdes every year. It was not likely because of his own merit, he admitted, but "maybe the merit of my mother," who had strongly encouraged him to seek healing at Lourdes.

The now octogenarian Micheli remains grateful for the miracle that saved his life six decades ago and said he now considers himself to have a normal life, practicing his faith as a Catholic as best he can.

"I think life is like a ladder: you do one step at a time. You never know if and how you'll get there. I try to be a good Christian; however, I don't know if I am," Micheli said.

## Priest Charged for Praying for Free Speech in U.K. Abortion Clinic 'Buffer Zone'



A Catholic priest who faced criminal charges for praying for free speech outside an abortion clinic after business hours is the latest to run afoul of a strict buffer zone law in the

English city of Birmingham. "I pray wherever I go, inside my head, for the people around me. How can it be a crime for a priest to pray?" Father Sean

Gough, a priest of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, said in a statement.

Gough stood near a closed abortion clinic on Station Road in Birmingham with a sign that said, "Praying for free speech." Police officers approached him and at first told him they did not believe he was breaking Birmingham's public spaces protection order.

Officials invited him to an interview at the police station where they questioned him about his actions and criminally charged him with "intimidating service users" of the abortion clinic. He faced a second charge related to an "unborn lives matter" sticker on his parked car.

The terms of the Birmingham order bar any acts of approval or disapproval in a "buffer zone" around the clinic. This includes using graphics, verbal or written words, prayer, or counseling. It bars any effort to intimidate or harass, or at-

tempt to intimidate or harass, clinic patients or staff.

"I often pray in my head near the abortion facility, but at the time in question, I was praying for free speech, which is under severe pressure in our country today," he said. "At all times, I believed my actions to be lawful — freedom of expression, especially when peaceful, is protected in domestic and international law. It is deeply undemocratic to censor public streets, particularly those spaces where we know that many women have benefitted from peaceful offers of help about services available," Gough stated.

Legal counsel for Gough said the charges against Gough were dropped for "insufficient evidence" but the priest was warned that further evidence could be produced. The attorney said this implied that "the entire grueling process could soon restart from the beginning."

# How St. Hildegard Inspired This Nurse's Care for the Dying



Karen Cassidy, founder of Hildegard House in Louisville, Kentucky, follows God's call by standing present to people in their final moments.

"I just wanted someone to listen," said the shirtless man propped on pillows in a hospital bed, his voice cracking and eyes welling as an oxygen tank hissed and clicked at regular intervals to aid his labored breathing. A woman volunteer spooned red Jell-O and a pill into his mouth, waiting patiently as he swallowed before preparing another dose.

The patient had bounced from one health care facility to another before finding a home at Hildegard House in Louisville, Kentucky. Although he was once a local hospital medical director and psychiatrist, Tony Siegel said he fell through a hole in this country's end-of-life health care safety net. Hospitals, designed for only short-term patient visits were not an option after his diagnosis of metastatic cancer. Due to a divorce, he didn't have family to care for him at home or the financial resources to hire 24/7 care, a necessary condition for most hospice programs.

Fortunately for Siegel, one of his high school classmates now sat in a chair at his bedside, listening. Karen Cassidy, a former palliative care nurse, founded in 2016 the only "comfort care" home in Kentucky and one of only 100 in the United States. As soon as the doctor moved into one of three bedrooms in Cassidy's repurposed convent, he said he was respected by staff and volunteers, whom he called "angels on my shoulders." Cassidy adds: "Listening with the ear of our heart' is what we do here."

The 67-year-old woman's call to listen to the poor and abandoned, as well as to accompany them in the dy-

ing process, began during her professional career, but it found its fruition in her faith. Cassidy says she made three pilgrimages to Germany to retrace the footsteps of 12th-century Benedictine abbess St. Hildegard. There, she visited the saint's monastery and saw firsthand how this doctor of the church and herbalist ministered to the sisters of her abbey until their natural deaths. "So really," Cassidy notes, "she started one of the first hospices."

Cassidy says she became a Benedictine oblate to follow the example of St. Hildegard. "I want to be a feather on the breath of God," she explains. "To me that means God blows you to be the very best you can be. When your ego gets in the way, then the feather can't float."

When she was blown in the direction of opening her own care home, it came with many challenges. But her patron saint always interceded and provided solutions: "I call those moments 'Hildegard winks.'"

The first wink came in 2014 when Cassidy learned her diocese had a vacant convent available for rent. Another came when a construction contractor who recently lost a loved one to cancer arrived on her doorstep and offered to do much of the renovation work pro bono. That is why the remarkable mystic, musician, theologian, and medical practitioner is "kind of a godmother around here," Cassidy explains.

As a lay member of a Benedictine monastery in Indiana, Cassidy follows the same rule of life as her patroness, the Rule of St. Benedict. She points out that the first word in the

Rule is "listen," which became the core philosophy of Hildegard House: "Here we say, 'I'll listen to you, and when you can't talk anymore, I'll sit with you. And when you don't want anybody, I will let you be by yourself.'" Since founding Hildegard House, Cassidy has shared God's grace with some 150 souls who found final earthly rest in a homelike atmosphere, even if for only a few weeks. Based on referrals from public safety and protective services personnel, she meets potential residents who are homeless or in dire, unsafe conditions, seeing firsthand what happens when well-intentioned family members are ill-equipped to provide adequate end-of-life care between visits by hospice workers.

Only after registering a permanent address at Hildegard House and receiving care not covered by hospice—bathing, toileting, food preparation and feeding, housekeeping, and laundry—do residents qualify for visits by nurses and the pain medications they provide. Teams of five volunteers per resident take care of those physical needs 24/7, but they also do so much more. Cassidy and her staff allow the terminally ill to make all decisions about how to spend their last days, be it indulging in unlimited glasses of orange soda, taking medications, reconciling with estranged family members, or none of the above. "A lot of people who come here have never experienced that kind of love," she explains. "It's unconditional love. Compassionate companions are willing to listen to them. Listening helps people heal."

## Understanding Catholic Funerals

The slogan "Funerals are for the living" is commonplace but mistaken. That is why funerals should interrupt people's schedules: they're for the repose of the deceased, not the convenience of those left behind. Because Catholic preaching has in recent years also given short shrift to Purgatory and avoids mentioning Hell, our theology has in practice become Disneyesque: "All dogs go to heaven."

A funeral is a place to pray for the deceased in the light of Christ crucified and risen. From that angle, a focus on Christ is where the funeral liturgy - including the homily - belongs. But professional liturgical types often think in rigidly black-and-white categories. For the rest of us, it's clear that, while funeral homilies

shouldn't be eulogies, neither do they have to be coolly impersonal.

A funeral homily is personal. The Christian life provides a common canvas, but Christ the painter employs different artistic styles to individual lives. A pastor who can address how the deceased tried to live the Christian life is not eulogizing him but engaging in a kind of discernment that recognizes Christian life is not lived in the abstract but through the existential circumstances of a life. That should not be particularly hard in the case of one who lived that life publicly.

Minimalism is the most authentic way to celebrate a liturgy and honor both God and man. It is not about the living but the dead.

Editor's Note: Due to concerns that the newsletter might be hacked and thus reveal personal information such as birthday dates and various phone numbers and email addresses, such information has been removed from this and future newsletters. More info at a later date.

## Traditional Burial Practices Being Challenged by "Green" Burials



The push for environmental consciousness has sparked the rise of not only green energy initiatives but now also the move to "green burials" or "human composting" practices over more traditional methods.

Gaining increasing popularity over the last few years, green burial practices leave little to no environmental impact, with "complete decomposition of the body and its natural return to the soil, thus encouraging new growth and restoration of ecosystems," according to the Funeral Consumers Alliance. Additionally, unlike traditional burials that use toxic chemicals, only biodegradable substances are used during the burial process.

In 2019, Washington became the first state to allow human composting, followed by Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, California, and New York. Traditional burial procedures use the chemicals formalin, methanol, and benzene, among other toxins, during the embalming process, which critics

say have a harmful impact on soil, water systems, and the body.

In addition to an interest in moving towards greener practices, the cost of a green burial is often significantly less than a traditional burial, which on average cost people \$7,848. 2022. In contrast, the cost of human composting practices can range from \$4,000-\$5,500, saving consumers a few thousand dollars on death procedures. Green burials, on the other hand, can range from \$500-\$5,000, varying largely based on the cemetery in question and whether funeral director services are used.

While both methods promote natural decomposition, the difference between a green burial and human composting is that human composting decomposes a body in a closed, reusable vessel, while a burial is the placement of an unembalmed body in a designated green burial cemetery.

(Editor's note: I asked Brother Pete Grasso, who owns a funeral home in Largo, to comment on this article.)

"I am somewhat of a 'Green Burial' expert now," he said. "I wrote three green burial pre-needs this past week and I am doing a workshop on it in June. There is definitely a difference between Green Burial and Composting. I believe California has approved legislation allowing 'composting' which is grinding up the body and pouring the yucky leftovers into planting beds. It makes sense that

California would take a lead in this; no respect for the human body at all." "With regard to the chemicals they refer to, they are all wet on that as well. It would take me quite a while to explain the chemistry involved and the restricted movement in traditional burials. We have been reading these sensational articles over the past few years, and there seems to be a recycle of information almost routinely every three or four years. I am shocked there is nothing in this article about cremation. They also fail to differentiate between a Green Cemetery and a Conservation Cemetery, as apposed to what is seen as the traditional cemetery which has developed by society over the years.

I am always bothered by the total disregard for the sanctity of the human body and human feelings, but I guess that doesn't sell newspapers.

Funeral and burial customs change by location. I was just in a conversation with a family from South America where they rent the burial space for five years and then dig up the bones and reuse the space," Pete said.

"We are doing a workshop on June 16. I am going to have a representative from Heartwood Conservation Cemetery. We will be tag-teaming to educate on what really goes on with the funeral home and the cemetery. I work with them a lot and they are good people," Pete concluded.

## Why Do Catholics Eat Fish on Fridays?



Christians have fasted (gone without food) and abstained (gone without certain foods, especially meat) since the beginning. The Book of Genesis teaches that all the plants and animals that God created and entrusted to human beings are good, especially those given to us as food. Jesus taught that nothing that a person eats makes him or her evil. So why then do Christians fast and abstain? When the devil tempts Jesus in the desert with a comfortable life and a full stomach, Jesus recalls the wisdom of Deuteronomy: "One does

not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Fasting and abstaining makes this real. It also hones our appetite, training us for the basic stance of a baptized person in this world: gratitude. Doesn't something taste better once you've truly hungered for it? Aren't we more grateful for what we've hungered and thirsted for?

Jesus recommended fasting, but not as a mere formality—and certainly not as a burden to be imposed on the poor who must eat when they can. Jesus recommended fasting when one fails to sense that God is near.

What then is the significance of abstaining from meat? And why eat fish? Meat was relatively rare for most people. This certainly would have been true in the ancient Mediterranean world in late winter—our time of Lent. Today this hardly seems true, since seafood is the luxury and hamburger costs pennies. And besides, the tradition is to ab-

stain from meat, not necessarily to eat fish. Eating vegetables suffices.

The practice of eating fish is related to the day we typically abstain from meat: Friday. This is the day that Christ died, so abstaining from the shedding (and consuming) of blood seems appropriate. Friday, the sixth day, was also the day that God created animals, so abstaining from meat is a symbolic "stay of execution" for cows, pigs, and sheep—just as the cross saves us from eternal death.

Scripture also tell of Leviathan, a primordial gigantic enigmatic sea-creature (think Jonah's whale) that represents death. So carving up and eating Leviathan on the day that Christ killed death makes great sense to the biblical imagination. Because of Christ's victory, the great monster death is now nothing more than fish sticks.

Think of that next time you skip that Friday hamburger for a tuna fish sandwich.

## Vermont Moves to Drop Residency Requirement for Assisted Suicide



Vermont legislators are considering dropping the state's residency requirement for assisted suicide, which would allow doctors to prescribe life-ending drugs to anyone 18 or older with a qualifying terminal illness who comes to the Green Mountain State. If the bill passes, Vermont would become the second of the 10 U.S. states that allow assisted suicide to also allow out-of-staters to get a prescription for it. Oregon dropped its residency requirement in March 2022, after state officials decided not to contest a lawsuit challenging it. Vermont

would provide an East Coast option. "Remove the residency requirement on enough states that have assisted suicide laws, and you've pretty much got the whole United States," said Mary Beerworth, executive director of Vermont Right to Life. Assisted-suicide laws in the United States generally allow doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to a patient diagnosed with a terminal illness likely to kill the patient within six months with certain safeguards designed to ensure the patient is competent and the decision is voluntary. Advocates on either side disagree not only on whether such a policy is a good idea, but also what to call it. Supporters call it "medical aid in dying." Whatever the terminology, accessing it has become easier in Vermont, where the original version of the statute required, among other

things, two in-person visits to a doctor, two oral requests 15 days apart, a subsequent written request, and a waiting period of at least 48 hours between the final request and the prescription. Opponents say ending a patient's life on purpose undermines respect for human life generally and that ending Vermont's residency requirement for it adds a harmful and ghoulish aspect to a state best known for skiing, fall foliage and maple syrup. "And it opens this idea of 'death tourism' — that you travel there as a place to be killed," said Dwight Duncan, a professor of law at the University of Massachusetts School of Law, who opposes assisted suicide. "It's one thing to travel to Vermont because they have great ski slopes. It's another thing to travel there because they have great undertakers."

## Actor Mark Wahlberg Shares His Journey of Faith



Fans may recognize Mark Wahlberg as an actor, producer, and entrepreneur, but some may not realize he's also a devout Catholic. He spoke about his faith and values during an appearance on "Today." "[Faith] is everything; it's afforded me so many things. God didn't come to save the saints; He came to save

the sinners. We want to be better versions of ourselves, and through focusing my faith, it's allowed me to do that," Wahlberg told Savannah Guthrie. While Wahlberg is open about his faith, he doesn't want to force it on anyone. "It's a balance. I don't wanna jam it down anybody's throat, but I do not deny my faith. That's an even bigger sin," he explained. "You know, it's not popular in my industry, but I cannot deny my faith. It's important for me to share that with people. I have friends from all walks of life and all different types of faiths and religions; it's important to respect and honor them as well." "God knows the things that he wants you to detach from. We all know

those things that make us feel guilty, don't make us feel as good as we should. So being able to detach from those things and focus on good habits as opposed to bad habits challenges people to be better versions of themselves," Wahlberg remarked.



## Boy Surprises Entire Stadium During Pope Francis' Visit to the Democrat Republic of Congo

Recently the Holy Father went to the Martyrs' Stadium in Kinshasa in the Congo for a meeting with young Catholics and catechists. Images of the nearly 65,000 faithful listening to Pope Francis began circulating immediately. At a certain point, while the Supreme Pontiff gave his message to the attendees, an image of a child impressed the entire stadium. The broadcast focused on a little boy dressed as a cardinal blessing the attendees from the center of the stadium. The child's identity is still unknown,

but a few minutes after the end of the transmission, images of the little boy began circulating. Several social media users reacted to the photos. One user laughed and said, "Congo is blessed and full of talent." Another user said, "World's youngest cardinal." This user added, "Currently, this young Congolese pops up in my timeline more often than Pope Francis. I'm following a whole bunch of journalists who are with the Pope. Of course, the boy is too young to be a cardinal, but in 70 years he could be considered for the papal office."



## Atlanta Airport Gets a 24/7 Eucharistic Chapel



Atlanta Airport's new eucharistic chapel is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Interfaith chapel at Atlanta Airport

Archbishop Gregory Hartmayer of Atlanta dedicated and blessed his archdiocese's newest chapel while on his way to catch a flight Monday.

Airline workers and travelers flying through the busiest airport in the world can now spend time in the real presence of Christ thanks to the efforts of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport's chaplains and the co-operation of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Located in the international terminal, the eucharistic chapel will be a permanent fixture at the airport and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

After receiving approval from the archbishop, the tabernacle was installed in November of last year. But

because only travelers and airline workers can get past security to access the chapel, the archbishop was not able to officially bless it until this Monday, shortly before his flight departed.

The chapel was sorely needed and perfectly located given the sheer number of people arriving from all over the world to make connecting flights, chaplain Father Kevin Peek told CNA.

The Atlanta airport sees an average of nearly 300,000 passengers flying through daily, according to Business Insider. "There's about 64,000 employees at the airport at any given time," Peek told CNA. "That's like a small town or city."

The chapel has already touched many lives, allowing them to encounter Christ in the most unexpected place, Peek said.

Since the eucharistic chapel opened, Peek has already seen visitors weeping and even jumping for joy to find the presence of Christ in the airport.