

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd, Largo, FL Council 17249



The Divine Mercy of Jesus

December 2020
Volume 2 Issue 9

Teenager Sacrifices Life to Save the Holy Eucharist

A 19-year-old Spanish martyr who gave his life while protecting the Eucharist was beatified at a Mass in the Sagrada Família Basilica in Barcelona. "Joan Roig Diggle, a lay man and martyr killed at the age of 19 during the Spanish Civil War, was proclaimed Blessed," Pope Francis said in his Angelus address Nov. 8. "May his example arouse in everyone, especially the young, the desire to live the Christian vocation to the full," the pope said.

Blessed Joan Roig Diggle was killed "in hatred of the faith" in 1936 during the Spanish Civil War. The young man was known for his devotion to the Eucharist at a time when churches in Barcelona were being closed, burned, or destroyed, so a priest entrusted Joan Roig with a ciborium containing the Blessed Sacrament to distribute Holy Communion to those most in need in their homes, as it was not possible to attend Mass.



Blessed Joan Roig Diggle

During one of these visits, Joan Roig told a family that he knew that red militiamen were trying to kill him. "I fear nothing, I take the Master with me," he said. When those seeking his life knocked on his door, the young man consumed the hosts he had been guarding to protect them from potential desecration.

The Libertarian Youth patrol then took him to the Santa Coloma cemetery where he was killed on Sept. 11, 1936, with five shots to the heart and one to the head. Blessed Joan Roig's last words were: "May God forgive you as I forgive you."

At Joan Roig's beatification on Nov. 7, Cardinal Juan José Omella, archbishop of Barcelona, said in his homily that the young man was an "ardent defender of the Social Doctrine of the Church" and provides youth today with a "testimony of love for Christ and for his brothers."



FROM AROUND THE WORLD
OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Mexico: Guadalupe pilgrimage canceled due to COVID

Horrified by deadly attacks, French Muslims protect church

Chinese officials seize 'underground' priests, nuns, seminarians

Kentucky dioceses keep Masses open despite governor's request

Vatican cancels public Advent and Christmas liturgies

There Is Power in Meditating Daily on Your Death, According to the "Mystic of the Desert"

'A really joyful journey': Preparing people with intellectual disabilities to receive the sacraments

Pro-life Democrats are gone from Congress, now what?

Arkansas senate passes abortion ban in new challenge to Roe

Pandemic conditions have increased Christian persecution

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



Jim Hand

thing, but as Frank

Brothers: I'm sure many of you are thinking the same thing I am: why do days pass so quickly? We have great memories of days gone by and wouldn't trade them for anything, but as Frank Sinatra sang:

*But now the days are short
I'm in the autumn of the year
And now I think of my life
as vintage wine
From fine old kegs
From the brim to the dregs
It poured sweet and clear
It was a very good year*

Even so, my aches and pains tell me that the time is coming to say goodbye to this wonderful life. But before these comments become too maudlin, though, let me say that the life of a Christian is the only life for me. Look

at the wonderful friends we have as Knights and parishioners of St. Jerome's Parish. I can't imagine any other activity that would bring such closeness among us. Some people seem to lose themselves in the world of sports, but there's no payoff there. Your team wins or loses, but your life pretty much stays the same. Not so with the life of a Christian. I have several good friends outside the church, but how many of them would I bet my life on? I trust so many of you that I would bet my life on your word, and that's only because Jesus has already done that for all of us. I know little of what awaits us in heaven. Will I be sitting on a cloud, playing a harp, constantly straightening my halo? But sharing masses, songs, homilies, and the eucharist with you cannot be compared to any other activity in my life on this earth. In fact, (get ready for this; it takes some courage for me to say it) I would be a Christian even if there weren't a heaven, because I think it's the only way to live. I don't need to think about living eternally to be happy; if you fill me completely. Heaven is icing on the cake, as far as I'm concerned. Merry Christmas!
Vivat Jesu!

WORDS OF WISDOM

Wit is often a mask. If you could tear it, you would find either a genius irritated or cleverness juggling. Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future. Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. He who is untrue to his own cause cannot command the respect of others. Sometimes you have to shut your eyes, so you can see the real beauty. To be truly positive in the eyes of some, you have to risk appearing negative in the eyes of others. Do not be lured by the need to be liked: it's better to be respected, even feared. We can see through others only when we can see through ourselves. Character is what we have when no one is looking. No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. Where there is no exertion, there is no appreciation. If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there. Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PASTOR



Fr. Tom Morgan

I would like to invite you to participate in some upcoming events during Advent. We will not be conducting an Advent Penance service this year but we have scheduled additional times

for drive-through confessions on Monday, December 14 at 9:45 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the northern entrance of the church, at the southern entrance of the church, and at cottage north of the church. I would like to thank all those brother Knights who have assisted with our drive-through confessions.

The St. Jerome Choir Christmas Concert will take place outside Friday December 18, at 7:30 p.m. in the Plaza on the south side of the church.

We have faithfully had an Oplatek blessing each year on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. The blessing will take place on Sunday, December 20, following the 11:00 a.m. Mass in the church. The service includes a brief prayer

gathering and sending families home with the Oplatek for Domestic Church use. Historical background: For centuries on Christmas Eve, families in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech and Slav Republics have practiced a beautiful tradition. It is the breaking and sharing of the Oplatek, a Christmas Wafer. Oplatek, taken from the Latin word *oblatum*, meaning Sacred Bread, has been the symbol of Christianity and Jesus Christ-our bread of life-since the Last Supper. On the Holiest Night of the year a festive 12-course meatless dinner is prepared for the gathered family and friends. An extra setting is placed for a beggar (our Lord) who may come to the door, or a poor family (the Holy Family) looking for a place to stay. The host or hostess leads in a special prayer and distributes an Oplatek to the participants. Each person breaks off a piece of the other's Oplatek and continues until they have exchanged good wishes and blessings with everyone. Traditionally at midnight the head of the household takes the pink Oplatek and shares it with the animals on his farm or at his home. This custom brings us back to that Holy Night when even animals were able to speak, and to remind us that we are all God's creatures

Please see below for the Christmas Mass schedule.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Morgan

Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Vigil Mass
Church, Parish Center,
East Parking Lot

Thursday, December 24 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Vigil Mass
Church

Christmas Day

12 Midnight Friday, December 25

Christmas Mass Church

7 a.m. Christmas Mass Church

9:00 a.m. Christmas Mass Church

11:00 a.m. Christmas Mass Church

Youth Enjoy Kayaking on the Gulf of Mexico

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati lived in Italy in the early 1900s and died at 24 years old. He is known for seeing God in nature and taking teens and his friends to climb mountains to experience the awe of our Father and have a priest celebrate mass.

On Saturday, November 22, our youth group took eight teens to the heights, but in Largo, Florida, we can not go to the maintain tops, so we adapted and went to the Gulf.

The teens--along with one of our Youth Ministers Mr Mike and Father Rob--went kayaking under the guidance of another parishioner, Joe Blum.

While kayaking we had to paddle a lot, draw our kayaks across a sand bar, brave a storm together, see the birds drive under our kayaks, see too many fish to count, and celebrate Mass on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and so much more.

When we asked what the teens en-

joyed the most, they all said, "Mass on the deserted Beach."

We Thank God for opening the teens at St Jerome's to say Yes and experience God in nature.

~~Mike Guarino

Editor's Note: Many of you might not know that Mike is a member of the Knights of Columbus. We are happy to have him and his wife leading the Youth Ministry, and we as Knights are willing to help them whenever asked.



Fr. Rob celebrates Mass on the beach with the teens.

Brothers Donate Beds to Catholic Charities for Pinellas Hope

We received an appeal from the housing director of Pinellas Hope II, a group of small apartments that are leased by our diocese to formerly homeless adults. They were in need of new six single beds with frames. Our brotherhood responded within days with a "yes" vote in our Zoom meeting, and 3 brothers each bought a bed! Terrific generosity.

Kenneth Savich, the Housing Manager for Pinellas Hope phases II, III, IV, V was happy to receive the donation on September 29th. "I will place your K of C decal prominently on the side of all 6 beds," Ken told us. He reminded us of the continuing support that our local brother Councils provide to Pinellas Hope, ever since the first permanent housing was erected in 2013. The Knights of Columbus were also responsible for the development and placement of Hope Cottages, which house homeless, disabled folks in the adjacent homeless shelter.

As a community, our brother Knights in Pinellas and Hillsborough have contributed over \$700,000 to homeless relief efforts of Catholic Charities in our diocese. Our gift of beds was modest by comparison, but not to the six souls that now sleep on them.

~~Jim Blackwell



L-R: Rick Hendrickson; Kenneth Savich, Housing Manager; and Jim Blackwell



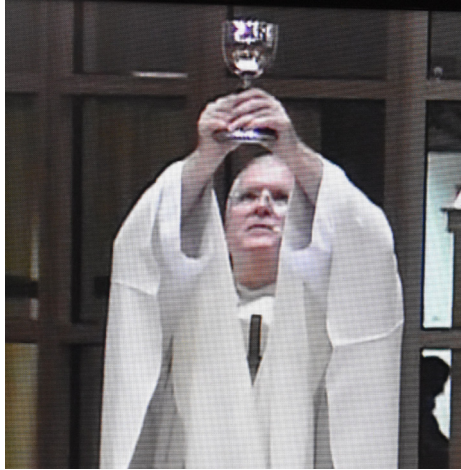
All Souls' Day

Once again, St. Jerome's Parish had a special Mass on All Souls' Day, an opportunity for parishioners to join together in a shared grief to remember a departed love one who had died within the last year or perhaps even farther back. All were welcome.

All Souls' Day is a traditional Catholic day of remembrance at which time special prayers, readings, and songs are sent forth to our beloved parted ones, be it family members, friends, or associates. There is great comfort in being able to meet with those of like faith to share in our grief. Even though we know that God is love, it's also an emotion that causes hurt when the loved one is no longer with us. However, we wouldn't want it any other way.

This year, after Fr. Tom's homily, some of our Knights of Columbus brothers went forth to help direct the mourners to a candle they lit and put in a box of sand. They also said the name of their loved one, since in the past we have had trouble pronouncing some of the names correctly.

Now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Council Helps with Trunk or Treat

Despite having to continue dealing with the Coronavirus, our council took part in several activities in our parish since the last newsletter came out.

For starters, this year's Trunk or Treat was an abbreviated version of past years. Several cars and their decorations did show up, but no children got out of their vehicles for treats. Instead treats were handed out as cars drove by. Definitely missed this year was the music, hotdogs, and dancing of years gone by.

Knights helped put up traffic cones and direct traffic, but it just wasn't the same. Surely by this time next year Covid-19 will be in our rearview mirror.



COUNCIL 17249 PARTNERS WITH COUNCIL 4892 TO BUY CATECHISMS FOR KIDS IN INDIA

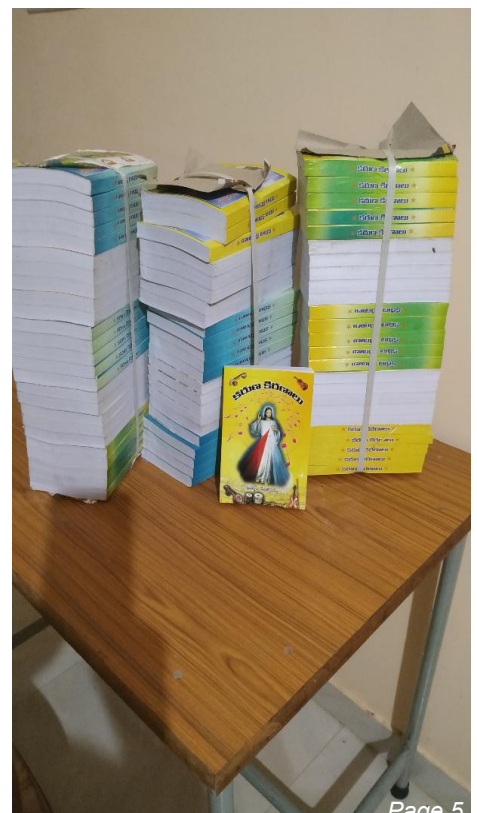
Way back in our January meeting our brothers agreed to contribute \$50, along with \$50 from our friends at St Pat's, to a priest that serves three parishes in rural India. This priest, Father Pakrash, was parochial vicar at St Patrick's from 2011-2015. He called Danny McConnell with his request, who presented it to our brothers; our council voted 'yea' and then I arranged a wire transfer with Western Union. We heard nothing until June. Fr. Pakrash was not able to travel the 90 miles to Western Union until then, and apparently transfers are void after 90 days. We finally got that transfer replaced,

and Father got the books and has been using them with youth there. He wrote, in part "Thank you very much for your kindness and generosity. I got the money you sent through Western Union. I was able to buy 50 Catechism books. Thank you very much again. Tomorrow I will say Mass for your intentions."

Father Prakash regularly travels to pastor to the needs of three churches. I correspond with Father every few weeks; the conditions sound quite poor. Brothers within Council 4892 may be working to provide aid to Father Prakash, as the needs arise.
 ~~Jim Blackwell

"O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me forget myself entirely so to establish myself in you, unmovable and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing be able to trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my unchanging God, but may each minute bring me more deeply into your mystery! Grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action.102"

— Pope John Paul II, Catechism of the Catholic Church



Faithful Knight's Funeral Service Held



Charles O'Toole
1929-2020
rest in peace



Richard Tomaino and Gregg Appel sing *Panis Angelicus* and *The Lord's Prayer* before the Mass begins



Brother Knight Joe Ghezzi
read from the book of Romans



L-R: Msgr. Muldoon, Fr. Morgan, and Fr. Cradecha said the Mass



Charlie's daughter shared some touching memories with us



Honor Guard Knights follow the procession.

What is Advent and Why Is It Important to Catholics?

Happy New Year! No, it is not January 1. The liturgical year does not match New Year's Day, the beginning of the calendar year, nor July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year for many organizations. The church year is distinctive. It always begins on the first Sunday of Advent, and with it comes a shift in the cycle of readings. The feast of Christ the King signaled the end of Ordinary Time.

Advent is the four-week liturgical season that precedes Christmas. The term "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming," and it focuses not only on the past coming of Jesus on the first Christmas, but also on the present coming of Jesus in the gospels, the sacraments, other people, prayer, love, truth, and personal experience; and the future coming of Jesus at the Second or Final Coming at the end of the world, the Parousia or the Last Judgment.

Advent is not Lent or a miniature



version of Lent. In fact, the two seasons are extremely different. Advent stresses hope and joy, Lent stresses penance and sorrow; Advent emphasizes what we need to add to our lives (e.g., grace, light, joy), while Lent emphasizes what we need to remove (i.e., sin); Advent lasts for four Sundays and 28 days, Lent lasts for six Sundays and forty days; Advent is a liturgical season, Lent is an ascetical season (i.e., fasting, almsgiving, prayer, acts of charity); Advent stresses preparation with fes-

tivity, Lent stresses preparation with sackcloth and ashes; Advent features the prophet Isaiah, Lent features the prophet Jeremiah.

The main saint of Advent is John the Baptist. He is "the prophet of the Most High" (Lk 1:76), the immediate forerunner of Jesus, and the link between the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself. His story is recounted on the Second and Third Sundays of Advent. The Baptist was the voice crying out in the desert, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" (Is 40:3; Mt 3:3), which

is what we are called to do during this holy season. He also directed peoples' attention from himself to Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29,36), and made one of the momentous statements in the gospels as he declared, "He [Jesus] must increase; I must decrease" (Jn 3:30).

If we hope to have a spiritually profitable Advent, we must diminish, while Jesus increases in power and brilliance in our lives.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception To Be Celebrated December 8

On December 8, we honor Mary, our Mother. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a Catholic feast celebrating Mary's conception without sin. Even though this feast day occurs in the liturgical season of Advent, which prepares for the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Immaculate Conception refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception asserts that, "from the first moment of her conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of Mankind, kept free from all stain of original sin."

The observance of this feast began with a Papal encyclical by Pope Pius IX, when he formally defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, *INEFFABILIS DEUS*, on December 8, 1854. Several years later, in 1858, the Blessed Mother gave her name to St. Bernadette at Lourdes stating, "I am the Immaculate Conception."



**For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believes in Him
shall not perish
but have everlasting life.
~~John 3:16**



him from doing this, but such sacrifices of a body part are not uncommon. Why? Because of love.

You pet lovers, you know about love, don't you? You all adore them, snuggle in bed with them, clean up after them, and throw money at veterinarians in the hope that their skills will save your loved one.

My wife and I recently had to put down our Yorkie Poo who was 16 years old. She was blind, deaf, and had a tumor on her tummy the size of a golf ball. I will never forget the image of Maggie's little head falling onto Jean's arm as the injection took effect. Imagine how God felt when Jesus' head fell over as He hung on the cross. It's even hard for me to look at the picture of Maggie below without tearing up. We loved her so much, we would have given her any of our body parts if that had been possible. We learn of that unconditional love from God.

Thanks, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for giving us a world filled with Your love. We wouldn't have it any other way.

The Christmas season is the perfect time to reflect upon God's love because it's the time we remember God's precious gift to us--His Son--and as Fr. Tom loves to say, "God is love." (1 John 4:8)

I can't begin to imagine what a world without love would be like. Just take a look at how much evil and hate we have to deal with now, even though we are surrounded by so many people

who are filled with God's love. Would we have doctors and nurses helping with Covid-19, putting their lives on the line for someone they hate? And what about first responders, police, and firemen who always leave home in the morning, wondering if they will be going home? And the list of good people goes on.

Many years ago, I knew a man by the name of Evart Cable who, when he learned that a woman in his church was going to lose one of her eyes, offered to give her one of his. Complications prevented

Laughter
is an
instant
vacation 😊.
- Milton Berle



I am done with my 90-day trial with 2020. How do I cancel my membership?

Remember: Rapunzel was quarantined and met her future husband. Let's think positive here!

Day 7 of Social Distancing. I struck up a conversation with a spider today. He seems nice. He's a web designer.

If these last few weeks have taught us anything, it's that stupidity travels faster than any virus.

People are scared of getting a ticket for congregating in large crowds, as if getting Covid-19 and dying a horrible death wasn't scary enough!

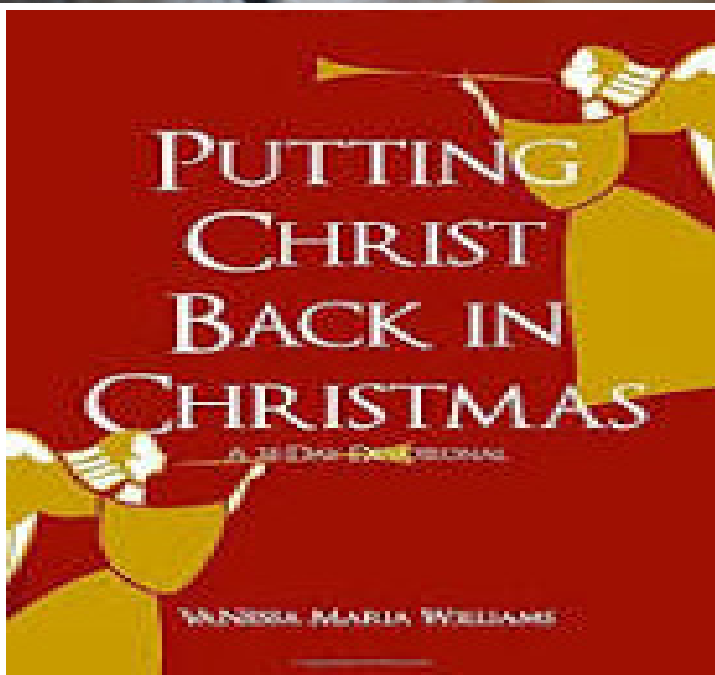
If you believe that we'll get back to normal soon, raise your hand. Now slap yourself with it!

Another Saturday night at home, Heck, the trash goes out more than I do.

It may take a village to raise a child, but it will take a whole vineyard to homeschool one!

Are any of you getting a tan from the light in the fridge?

I think I'm finally getting grounded for things I didn't get caught for when I was a teenager.

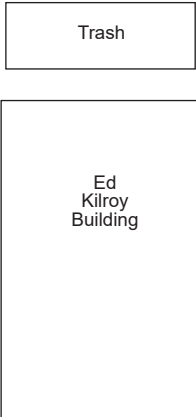


Grotto Plans Begin to Take Shape

Plans for the grotto are picking up speed. A layout drawing has been made and places for various articles have been established. At a meeting November 21, Knights learned that a rosary will encircle the grotto for about 300 feet. One-foot in diameter stones will be set in dirt, level with the grass, for the Hail Marys; two-foot in diameter stones will also be set in dirt, level with the grass, for the Our Fathers. The land we are speaking about is directly south of the Ed Kilroy building

building, under the beautiful oak trees that are covered with Spanish moss. A 4-foot wide path made of cement will go from the road directly north of the grotto area for those who use a wheelchair or walker. This path will lead to a perfect place for meditation or prayer. (See the diagram below.) Joe Ghezzi is going to make a 4-foot wooden cross, which will have a brass 2-foot cross imbedded in it. It will sit on the SW corner of the property, by a tree and large stone.

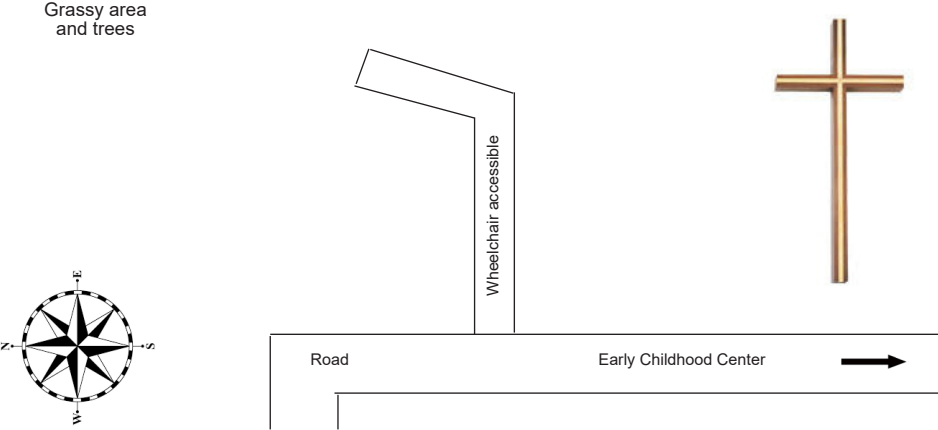
There will also be a spiritual table (see diagram) for speakers or communion. The project will be done in phases since our money is limited. There might be a light fixture behind the statue of Mary which will have rebar running up its base to help stabilize it. The Knights hope to fund the grotto by themselves, although some unsolicited contributions have come in. The parish still has to concentrate on funding the new roof, so we don't feel right in asking for money.



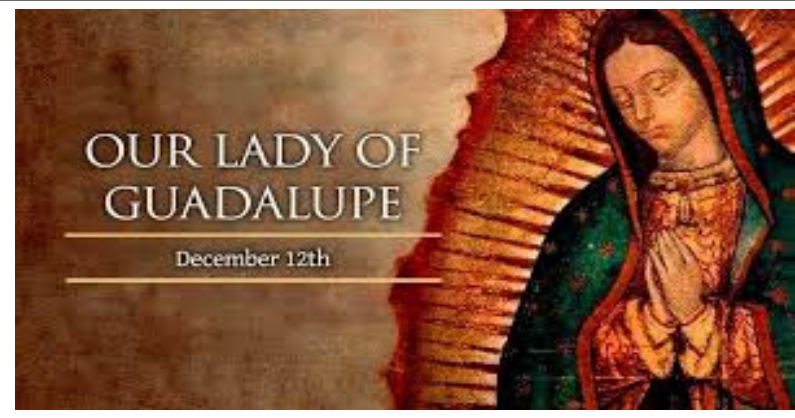
GK Pete Grasso stands where the spiritual table will be. He is facing the street. The Ed Kilroy building is to his right.



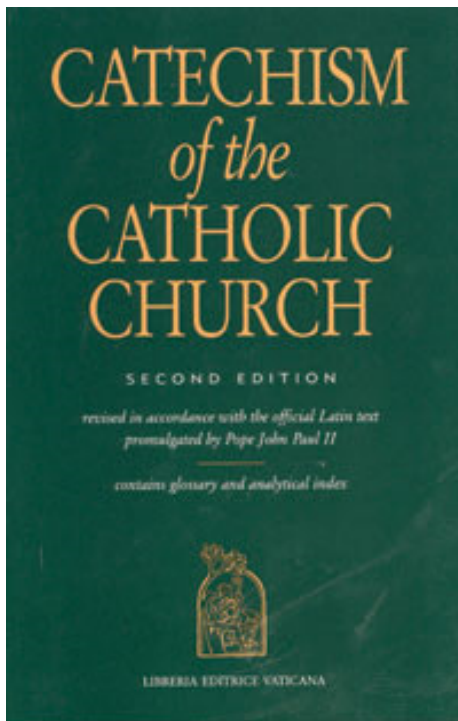
Knights Bill Bannon and Manny Barros begin digging for the cement walkway for the handicapped.



Another view of the cement walkway.



Join us on Saturday, December 12, 2020 – From 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
 The St. Jerome Hispanic Outreach invites you to join our Spanish brothers and sisters in celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of all the Americas and Honored Virgin Queen of Mexico. Mass will be celebrated at 9:00am in the church followed by refreshments and Mexican folklore.
 8:30 a.m. Rosary procession around the pond
 8:50 a.m. Rose procession into the Church
 9:00 a.m. Solemn Mass
 10:00 a.m. Refreshments, Mexican food and authentic Mexican Mariachis in the Gathering Space and plaza. We need sponsors for mariachis and food
 To donate for this event, please call the Parish office at 727-595-4610



What Does the Catechism Say about the Death Penalty?

The Fifth Commandment: "Thou Shall Not Kill"

2258 Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God, and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator. God is the Lord of Life from its beginning until its end. No one can, under any circumstances, claim for himself the right to destroy an innocent human being.

2260 The covenant between God and man is interwoven with reminders of God's gift of human life and man's murderous violence. The Old Testament always considered blood a sacred sign of life. This teaching remains for all time.

2263 The legitimate defence of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition of the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. The act of self-defence can have a double effect: The preservation of one's own life and the killing of the aggressor. The one is intended; the other is not.

2266 The effort of the state to curb the spread of behavior of human rights and to the basic rights of civil society correspond to the safeguarding the common good. Public authority has the right to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment then, in addition to the defending order and protecting public safety has a medicinal purpose; as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.

2267 Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable means of safeguarding the common good.

2306 Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after the commission of very serious crimes. In addition, a new understanding has emerged of the significance of penal sanctions imposed by the state. These systems do not deprive the guilty of the possibility of redemption. Consequently, the churches teaches that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and it works for its abolition worldwide.