

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

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FUNCTIONALITY OF DEATH PENALTY TO BE CHALLENGED IN 2021

Multiple bills have recently been introduced in Congress to end use of the federal death penalty.

On January 11, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) introduced the Federal Death Penalty Prohibition Act of 2021, which would end federal use of the death penalty, bar the imposition of the death penalty for



violation of federal law, and mandate that federal inmates on death row be re-sentenced. "Ending the federal death penalty—which is as cruel as it is ineffective in deterring crime—is a racial justice issue and must come to an end," said Pressley. "The death penalty is deeply flawed and disproportionately imposed on Black and Brown and low-income people in America," Durbin, a Catholic, said.

More than 70 members of Congress sponsored or co-sponsored the legislation. The effort comes after Rep. Adriano Espillat (D-N.Y.), a Catholic, introduced H.R. 97 Jan. 4, "To abolish the death penalty under Federal law." In 2020, 10 federal inmates were executed by the U.S., and three more on death row were scheduled to be executed before President-elect Joe Biden was inaugurated Jan. 20. However, a district court judge granted Lisa Montgomery—one of the three federal death row inmates—a stay of execution Jan. 11, "to allow the Court to conduct a hearing regarding Ms. Montgomery's competence to be executed." According to Montgomery's attorneys and expert testimonies, she is suffering from mental illnesses and brain impairments.

In December, Pressley led a letter by more than 40 House members to Biden asking him to end use of the death penalty once he takes office. U.S. bishops have been outspoken about ending the death penalty, and have repeatedly implored the Trump administration to stop the federal executions. Leading bishops also asked Biden to declare a moratorium on the federal use of executions and commute federal death sentences to life imprisonment.

OUR MISSION

Knights are Catholic men who build a bridge back to faith. There is much good and necessary work to be done in this world, and that's what Knights do every day.



FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

'Amen' is not gendered, and 'A-woman' is nonsense, Hebrew scholar says

Argentine boy saved from stray bullet by crucifix

Catholics must engage Biden on extreme abortion positions to save the unborn, expert claims

Largest earthquake ever recorded in Croatia kills 7, destroys homes and churches

Bioethicists alarmed by ruling to withdraw food and water from Catholic patient

Ash Wednesday 2021: Vatican offers guidance on ash distribution amid COVID-19 pandemic

Catholic bishops reject proposal to decriminalize abortion in Dominican Republic

Pope Francis' doctor dies from COVID-19 complications

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Pete Grasso

Brothers:

January has been another great month for us in that we are nearly complete with the grotto project. I say nearly, because this is a garden and most likely will never be completed.

As of Friday, Mary has been placed in the grotto and is very beautiful there. A bunch of guys have worked tirelessly over these past few months to make this

project come alive and we are ready for the dedication and presentation to our parish family. Fr. Tom has approved Sunday, February 7, at 12:30 pm as our presentation and dedication date and time. We will have a few chairs on the grounds, but it is good to suggest to anyone who wishes to be there to bring their own folding chair.

One of the blessings we have been given as we worked on this project is that we have received significant donations to cover the cost of the grotto. God will always provide. This is not to say that we cannot use some additional funding, so please feel free.

It would be nice to have as many Knights as possible to

attend this event. Please wear your blue shirts to stand proudly by the grotto during the presentation and also for a photo.

We find ourselves still on quarantine lock-down. Many things are still not happening as they were in the past, but I don't need to tell everyone that the numbers of the virus continue to go up and the contact for the shot is going to be slow in coming. We will continue with the ZOOM meetings for the upcoming months; everyone is invited.

Moving forward, we will assist with Ash Wednesday with the drive-through (similar to communion) at 12 and 5 pm; more information will be forthcoming. Our brothers continue to assist with the sacraments of confession on Saturday mornings and communion on Saturday afternoon and Sunday mornings

Continue to pray for one another. God bless you and your families.

Vivat Jesus, Pete

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PASTOR



Fr. Tom Morgan

Dear Brother Knights:

We begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday February 17. We make this journey with Jesus as we accompany Him into the desert. We focus on three areas: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Catherine Doherty once said that, "Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God?

Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation."

Steps for our Lenten Journey:

- Make use of our special Lenten bulletin available at our church and online.
- Attend Mass on Ash Wednesday, February 17th at 7:00 am, 9:00am, 11:00 am, 4:00 pm, or 7:30pm. (Ashes will be distributed through the use of a disposable cotton ball for each individual. (Livestreamed). Drive-through Ashes and Holy Communion will be distributed following the 11:00 am and 4:00pm Masses on Ash Wednesday at 12 noon and 5:00 pm.
- Observe the regulations for fast and abstinence prescribed by the Church. Please see below.
- Attend Stations of the Cross during Lent on Fridays at 9:30 am or 7:00 pm in the church or pray them privately at home. (Livestreamed).

• Participate in almsgiving and sacrificial giving by participating in the "Operation Rice Bowl" program. Rice Bowls are available at the church entrances.

• Pick up a Lenten nail to carry with you throughout the 40 days of Lent as a reminder to imitate Christ's sacrifice for us.

• Attend Daily Mass if possible. Our Daily Mass schedule is: Monday through Friday: 7:00 am and 9:00 am, Wednesday 7:30pm, and on Saturday 9:00 am. (Livestreamed).

• Receive the Sacrament of Penance. Drive-through Confession are heard on Saturday at the northern entrance of the church from 9:30 am to 10:30am.

May God bless you on your Lenten journey.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Tom Morgan





1. The St. Valentine who inspired the holiday may have been two different men. Officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, St. Valentine is known to be a real person who died around A.D. 270. However, his true identity was questioned as early as A.D. 496 by Pope Gelasius I, who referred to the martyr and his acts as "being known only to God."

2. In all, there are about a dozen St. Valentines, plus a pope. The saint we celebrate on Valentine's Day is known officially as St. Valentine of Rome in order to differentiate him from the dozen or so other Valentines on the list. Because "Valentinus"—from the Latin

word for worthy, strong or powerful—was a popular moniker between the second and eighth centuries A.D.

3. Valentine is the patron saint of beekeepers and epilepsy, among many other things. Saints are certainly expected to keep busy in the afterlife. Their holy duties include interceding in earthly affairs and entertaining petitions from living souls. In this respect, St. Valentine has wide-ranging spiritual responsibilities. People call on him to watch over the lives of lovers, of course, but also for interventions regarding beekeeping and epilepsy, as well as the plague, fainting and traveling. As you might expect, he is also the patron saint of engaged couples and happy marriages.

4. You can find Valentine's skull in Rome. The flower-adorned skull of St. Valentine is on display in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. In the early 1800s, the excavation of a catacomb near Rome yielded skeletal remains and other relics now associated with St. Valentine. As is customary, these bits and pieces of the late saint's body have subsequently been distributed to reliquaries around the world.

5. English poet Geoffrey Chaucer may have invented Valentine's Day. The medieval English poet Geoffrey Chaucer often took liberties with history, placing his poetic characters into fictitious historical contexts that he represented as real. No record exists of romantic celebrations on Valentine's Day prior to a poem Chaucer wrote around 1375. In his work "Parliament of Fowles," he links a tradition of courtly love with the celebration of St. Valentine's feast day—an association that didn't exist until after his poem received widespread attention.

6. You can celebrate Valentine's Day several times a year. Because of the abundance of St. Valentines on the Roman Catholic roster, you can choose to celebrate the saint multiple times each year. Besides February 14. You might decide to celebrate St. Valentine on November 3. Or maybe you want to get a jump on the traditional Valentine celebration by feting St. Valentine of Raetia on January 7. Women might choose to honor the only female St. Valentine (Valentina), a virgin martyred in Palestine on July 25, A.D. 308.

The Healing Miracle of Confession



A priest once gave a sermon about a penitent who confessed having lustful desires. This person had confessed the same sin many times and wanted to know when this fault, this temptation, would be gone. Father responded, "Probably five minutes after you die." That might not seem like an encouraging thought,

but our part is to persevere and rely on God's grace; as the saying goes, the saints are the sinners who kept trying. In any case, whether the victory comes instantly or after a lifetime of struggle, God's mercy is always there for us, calling us to repent and begin anew.

Because sin requires atonement, we are obliged not only to be sorry but to do something by way of reparation. We must make satisfaction for our sins, not because God wants to punish us, but because our souls will be embarrassed to come before the Lord stained with sin. Thus, we must be cleansed of our sins. God's healing is a pure gift of grace, but we must make the choice to accept what He offers. Our access to this grace is beautifully simple. As Catholics, we are blessed to receive it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, also known as Confession. Jesus instituted this Sacrament after His Resurrection, when He told His Apostles, "Receive

the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Some people feel that confession makes matters too easy.

They may think that "God forgives me if I say three Hail Marys and I'm good until next time." It is so much more than that. The prayers we say are the symbol of God's mercy towards us and help to straighten what has become crooked in our souls. Yes, sometimes there are stricter penances; for example, in the case of theft, one must make recompense to the person who was robbed. The graces God bestows upon us in Confession are more precious than silver or gold.

Never let anyone disparage the powerful Sacrament of Reconciliation with the dismissive "I don't need to go to a man to confess my sins" nonsense. Christ knew that we would need to make our confession to His representative, not simply to Him directly. First, confessing to another human being helps to keep us humble. Second, hearing the words of absolution gives us concrete assurance that our sins are indeed forgiven. Third, we receive a penance, something we can do to atone for our sins.

The Sacrament of Confession is a powerful cleanser of sin and even bodily sickness. By the grace of Holy Orders, the priest does not remember your sins either. I know this because I once asked a good priest friend of mine if he remembers the sins of his penitents. In all sincerity and truthfulness, he told me that he does not and that it is by the grace of Holy Orders.

So we have nothing to fear in Confession and much to desire. When we confess our sins and receive absolution, Jesus forgets them. As with all sacramental operations, an indelible change occurs in our souls. We are forever cleansed and our sin is remembered no more. God is so loving and merciful to us, and yes, it is that simple.

LITTLE BY LITTLE, GROTTO TAKES SHAPE

Brother Joe Ghezzi and his band of brothers have been busy lately continuing the work on trying to complete the work being done on the grotto.

The weather has been somewhat cooperating and several of our brothers have been available to help. Joe said they are wonderful guys and very happy to be helping out.

There have been no major complications as the work has progressed. As a reminder, the pavers will be done in stages since they are so expensive and not everyone has heard that they can be donated with their names on them. We think that once all of the work is done and parishioners see how beautiful it is, more will want to donate towards a paver/brick. They will be there forever as a lasting legacy of those who love the Blessed Mother.

Other items that need more attention are installing conduit for electricity. Also,

there will be a 4-foot cross near one of the trees. You will notice in one of the pictures that a tree has been chopped to make room for the cross which starts the rosary.

Joe also said that the altar will be available for any parishioner to use who has a logical reason to need it. Some benches have been added.

Fr. Tom is very enthusiastic about the bricks that can be inscribed. More information will come later about how much a suggested donation will be.

Even more good news: an anonymous donor gave us \$2,000 toward the expenses of the project. St. Jerome Parish is blessed in many, many ways.

To the right is a reminder of how Our Lady of Lourdes looks.

There will be a dedication of the grotto Sunday, February 7, after the 11 a.m. Mass, around 12:30 p.m.



L-R: Charlie Scott, Danny McConnell, Joe Ghezzi, and Fr. Tom admire the painted grotto.

(More pictures on the next page)



To the left, a tree limb has been chopped off to make room for a 2-foot statue of St. Michael the Archangel. Above, left, some cement circles slowly veer to the right, going entirely around the grotto grounds, symbolizing the beads of the Rosary. Then to the right you will see some other stones veering to the left to continue encircling the rosary plot of ground. The large square cement block will be for saying the *Our Father*.... There is also a seat or two that will be situated for anyone who wants to meditate, plus some benches placed around the grotto.



Bill Bannon stands inside the grotto as he helps get the structure ready for the stones which will be attached all over it. It has recently been stuccoed and is now curing. Also, the inside background will be painted in at least three colors in order to enhance the Blessed Mother. The team is hastening to finish the grotto in order to be ready for the Walk of Life to be held January 30. The square opening behind Bill is for strong winds to blow through the structure to help keep it upright.

The cumbersome job of applying the bricks has now begun. They are bought in Tampa in many different sizes and shapes and then chiselled down to size, a very time-consuming process. There is a mastic applied to the back of each brick which helps the brick adhere to the stucco. It takes about a minute for the adherent to attach the block to the stucco. Much care must be taken to apply the bricks correctly, because once they are set, it's almost impossible to get them off. All in all there were hundreds of pounds of bricks used.

(More pictures on the next page)



Jim Hand works on painting the grotto while Edgar Lecuyer works in the rear putting up the bricks, which was a very time-consuming process for all the workers.



Charlie Scott, left, Danny McConnell, center, and Pete Grasso, right, work in tandem to continue adhering the bricks to the stucco. The team of brothers, plus other Knights, barely finished most of the grotto by Saturday, January 30.



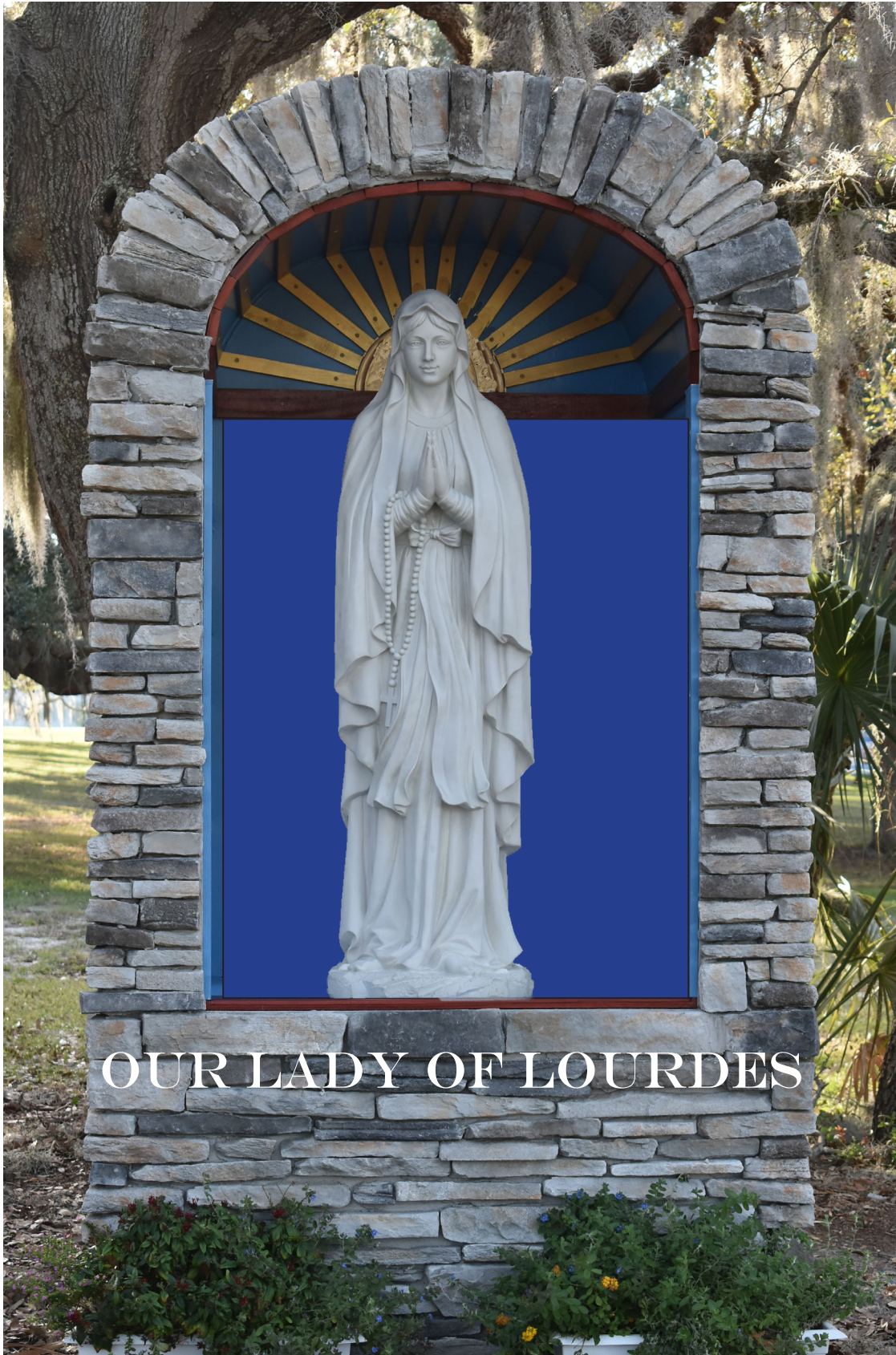
This is a work in progress. It's one of a few cement-block chairs that will be placed around the rosary for parishioners to rest or contemplate the grounds while visiting the grotto. The Knights of Columbus want the time spent at the grotto to be both relaxing and uplifting.

In the right picture, you see the back view of the structure. The vent in the middle is there to help any strong winds pass through without doing any damage to Our Lady. The vent was another fabulous idea from Joe Ghezzi, the overseer of the grotto.

Brother Knights worked to meet a deadline of January 30 for a partially completed grotto so we would be ready for a Walk for Life which was held after the 9 a.m. Mass.



(Continued on the next page)



OUR LADY OF LOURDES

We are talking about a ceremony that began about 171 years ago in Lourdes, France, in 1858. At the time, an apparition of the Virgin Mary appeared to a 14-year-old girl named Bernadette who was gathering wood in a cave with her sister and a friend. Years ago a grotto usually meant a cave surrounded by water. Eighteen times that year Mary appeared to various people, eventually coming to call herself the Immaculate Conception. Over the years as many as 69 apparitions and physical ailments occurred, often describing the vision as taller and dressed differently. Even so, the Catholic church has investigated these visions and declared them inexplicable. Eventually a chapel very similar to this one was built as for years pilgrims have visited Lourdes, often experiencing cures and bringing small vials of water home with them.

(Continued on the next page)



Joe Ghezzi, project manager, planned for the grotto to be both a place of contentment and reflection. We think he did a grand job of planning a location where all who wish can get closer to God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and



Since ancient grottos were always near water, we felt blessed to have a pond so close to ours.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



Art Corby
February 4



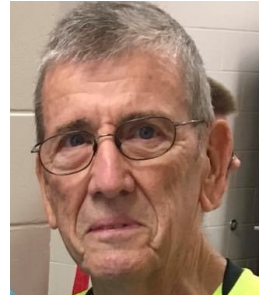
Pete Grasso
February 12



Andy McClane
February 14



Nick Cambardello
February 17



Jim Patton
February 19

JOURNEY OF Faith

Just before Thanksgiving Day 2020, Larry D. was admitted to

Bay Pines VA Hospital. Whether it was from a progressive and deteriorating heart condition or Service-related issues, none of his fellow Legionnaires at a Post, where he was Commander, bothered to ask. With two combat tours as an infantryman in Vietnam, including action during the Tet Offensive and battle for Imperial City of Hue, the "issues" could have been many. He didn't care to discuss it at length, rather burying himself in Legion affairs. It wasn't his first admittance to the Hospital. As always, at the beginning of a meeting or event, the announcement was made and appended with "Our thoughts and prayers are with him."

Thoughts and prayers? Heck, most of the folks probably can't recite the Lord's Prayer or haven't seen the inside of a Church since they were

children, I snarled. So, when Larry was moved to Intensive Care around Christmas time, it was assumed it had all caught up with him. However, still annoyed over the "thoughts and prayers" matter, I felt compelled to do my own 'thing, a 'thing' that worked for me in the past. Without fanfare--I didn't let anyone know, for as Jesus said to a crowd about the Pharisee preaching on streets: "They do it to be seen..." – I stopped by St. Jerome Chapel and prayed one of 3 Rosaries. No one was there, though I had a feeling that someone WAS there.

Another time, at a daily Mass there was a Gospel about Jesus telling a cripple: "Rise and you shall walk." . Hmm! A second time I passed by the Chapel, stopped in, and said the second of three Rosaries. Again, no one was physically there but there WAS somebody there.

I told Ellen that I had to leave early for the Saturday Vigil Mass, for I wanted to go to the Chapel. She didn't know or ask why. There I prayed the third Rosary.

At the January Knights of Columbus General Meeting, a request was made to forward Journey of Faith stories for all to read. I stated: "Count on it!" Just as boldly, the next evening while volunteering at a Legion event, I told a small group: "Larry will get better! Mark the date and my words." Where did that come from?", they must have thought.

Well brothers, the following week – 7 days – as I was volunteering at the event, an announcement was made that Larry D. had been moved from ICU to rehab. He was getting better. I don't pray on street corners or care to advertise. I DO pray as Jesus said: "When you pray to your Father, do so in private." I DO hope that my actions will prove to some that, whether it be a Chapel, Church, or any "private" area, the Father will hear your prayers.

Yes, I knew, somebody WAS there.
by Art Colby
Brothers: Please send me your own Journey of Faith and I'll be delighted to print it in the next newsletter... Editor

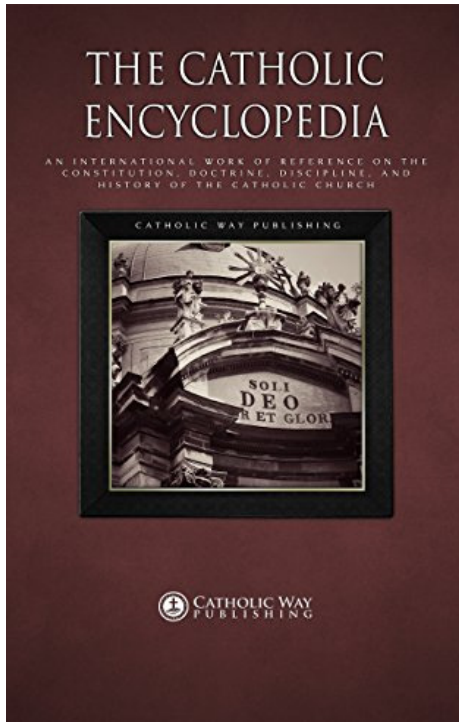


This month Bishop Emeritus Robert N. Lynch celebrated the silver anniversary of his episcopal ordination, which was held on January 26, 1996, at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle, in St. Petersburg.

Providing help and hope to those in need was a hallmark of Bishop Lynch's episcopacy. One such project was the establishment of Pinellas Hope in 2007. A ministry of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, Pinellas Hope provides emergency shelter and a wide array of services to homeless individuals. The facility operates on ten acres of land provided by the Diocese and allows for a safe living environment and resources for homeless individuals to become self-sufficient. Since its establishment, Pinellas Hope has expanded, offering more services and permanent housing options.

Catholic Charities is also expanding services to the homeless in other areas where we serve.

What Does the Catholic Encyclopedia Say about Lust?



The wrongfulness of lust is reducible to this: that venereal satisfaction is sought for either outside wedlock or, at any rate, in a manner which is contrary to the laws that govern marital intercourse. Every such criminal indulgence is a mortal sin, provided of course, it be voluntary in itself and fully deliberate.

Lust is said to be a capital sin. The reason is obvious. The pleasure which this vice has as its object is at once so attractive and connatural to human nature as to whet keenly a man's desire, and so lead him into the commission of many other disorders in the pursuit of it. Theologians ordinarily distinguish various forms of lust in so far as it is a consummated external sin, e.g., fornication, adultery, incest, criminal assault, abduction, and sodomy. Each of these has its own specific malice--a fact to bear in mind for purposes of safeguarding the integrity of sacramental confession.

As Paul wrote to the Galatians: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, . . . Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God."

This teaching applies to external and internal sins alike: "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

These scriptures emphasize the perils of lust, and point out the practical dangers of a failure to refrain. It matters not that there is not, as we suppose, an initial sinful intent. The sheerest prudence and most rudimentary self-knowledge alike demand abstinence, where possible, from things which, though not grievously bad in themselves, yet easily fan into flame the unholy fire which may be smoldering, but it is not extinct.