

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
October 2021 Volume 3 Issue 7



Where Does **Halloween** Come From?

Halloween is a holiday celebrated each year on October 31, and Halloween 2021 will occur on Sunday, October 31. The tradition originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints. Soon, All Saints Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, donning costumes and eating treats.



This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth.

In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort during the long, dark winter.

To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.

When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter.

By the 9th century, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands, where it gradually blended with and supplanted older Celtic rites. In 1000 A.D., the church made November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead. It's widely believed today that the church was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, church-sanctioned holiday.

As the beliefs and customs of different European ethnic groups and the American Indians meshed, a distinctly American version of Halloween began to emerge. The first celebrations included "play parties," which were public events held to celebrate the harvest. Neighbors would share stories of the dead, tell each other's fortunes, dance and sing.

In the late 1800s, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers than about ghosts, pranks and witchcraft. At the turn of the century, Halloween parties for both children and

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FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Priest suspended in Costa Rica for saying Mass in Latin

Six nuns from the same convent in Brazil die in less than a week

Pope Francis greets Afgan refugees after a screening

Catholics, Eastern Orthodox are united in belief in Christ's Real Presence

UK court rejects challenge to Down syndrome abortion

San Francisco Episcopalian Cathedral now requires all visitors to be vaccinated

Priest attacked with glass bottle at St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh

Polish cardinal who defied communism and blind nun to be beatified

Abortion and Contraception – Fruits of the Same Tree

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Bill McClelland

Brothers,

At this writing, I am still in Pennsylvania. When I return for our monthly meetings, I will have a report on the first PA Walk for Life. I am looking forward to sharing my experiences on this version of the annual D.C. walk, which I also plan to attend this fraternal year.

The October 6 officer meeting marks the first time we will be in our new meeting space. The east side of the Parish Center (nearest the kitchen) has been reserved each month for both the officers' and general meetings. I am excited about the opportunity to include more of our members in our meetings with the additional space we will have for social distancing.

Finally, we have some exciting projects planned for the near future. I am disappointed I will not be able to attend the St. Jerome feast day festivities, but I do hope someone saves me a cookie or at least a prayer card! After many months of planning, it looks like the Christopher Columbus statue from St. Petersburg will finally come to rest at St. Jerome. A special thank you is due to the Spiritual Garden construction crew and especially Pete Grasso for helping to make the movement of this monument a reality. Additionally, we are committed to continuing to help with the Alpha dinners, the "Raise the Roof" fundraiser and "Baseball for Chickens" this month. I am so proud to be surrounded by faithful men who go out of their way to make this the active parish and council that it is. Vivat Jesus,

Bill

Words OF WISDOM

You'll never get anywhere if you stop along the way to throw stones at every dog that barks at you.

The positive thinker sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible.

Success consists of going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm.

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

One man with conviction will overwhelm a hundred who have only opinions.

However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.



March for Life in Pennsylvania

St. Jerome Youth Advisors Have Audience with Pope Francis

Parishioners Mike and Melissa Guarino recently had an audience with the Pope in tandem with the work they do for our youth ministry, plus work he is a part of because of his knowledge of the health industry.

Mike is part of the International Catholic Legislative Network because he is considered an expert in health care. The Network members meet once a year in Rome to study various situations. This group includes prime ministers, cabinet members, secretaries of state, etc. Because they work under the auspices of the Chatham Rules of Order, they cannot talk about any details of any discussion that took place and before they present anything to the Pope, they must be 100% agreed on all topics after their 3-day meeting.

In the picture you can see Mike presenting a t-shirt to the Pope. It has the signatures of our youth group on it. Mike said wherever he and the youth go, they have a fantastic time together.

Mike also had a blue tote bag that contained medals. The Pope put his hand into the bag and blessed the medals which Mike gives out wherever he goes. He has given talks around the country to young catholic professionals about living the catholic faith in the workplace.

"Around the country our culture is under attack, so we're not just mentoring the youth," he said, "we're involving the whole families." On Sundays the middle schoolers meet from 3:30 to 5 p.m., Mass from 5:30 to 6, and from 6 to 7 we eat with the families. Then Mike and Melissa take the high schoolers from 7:30 to 8:30. They have plans to build a youth center on top of where the youth trailer used to be. They hope to have community support for funds, plus he and Melissa will make a major commitment, he said. His plans will soon be presented to the Finance Council, he said. "The new building will come from the ashes of the old one," he laughingly said.

"Our group is on fire," he said. "Last year we went kayak-



Mike and Melissa Guarino give St. Francis a t-shirt from the Good Samaritan Project.

ing, we had an adoration procession through the streets for Corpus Christi, we did a procession for St. Joseph through the streets, and for March for Life, they had Eucharistic Adoration on the grounds of the campus." This year they will be doing 4 or 5 processions also. "Fr. Rob is a part of all of this as well. He's the best," Mike said. "We are taking 12 – 15 teenagers to the March for Life this year. We also have two families going with us."

"I'm a big kid at heart," Mike said. "I love to play and pray with the youth."

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PASTOR



Fr. Tom Morgan

Dear Brother Knights:

Once again our parish thanks you for all the ways that you are serving God and neighbor through your generous service. We are looking forward with you to dedicate the statue of Christopher Columbus that we have been working to obtain. We are anticipating dedicating the statue during this month of October. We expect to confirm that this will happen soon. In addition, to this great event we also want to invite you to

participate in the parish events listed below.

Oct. 2 Sat. 9:30am - - First Saturday Exposition/Benediction
10:00am St. Francis Pet Blessing under tree old oak tree north of church

Oct. 2/3 Sat. /Sun. - - Respect Life Sunday

Oct. 10 Sun. 10am – Anointing of the Sick – following the

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9:00am Sunday Mass

Oct. 16 Sat. 9:30am – Liturgical Ministers Morning of Reflection and Workshop

Oct. 18 Mon. 6:30pm – 8:30pm – Human Trafficking Awareness event

Oct. 21 Thurs . 6:30pm – 7:30pm ALIVE – Exposition/Benediction

Oct. 23 Sat. 7:00pm – 9:00pm Beer & Wine Tasting Fund-raiser! – Raise the Roof

Oct. 29 Fri. 6:00-8:00pm - Trunk or Treat!

Oct. 30 Sat. 9:30am – 10:00am – Drive-through Confessions – north entrance of the church

Oct. 30/31 Sat./Sun. Board of Remembrance in church with photos of the deceased.

We Bid Farewell to Brother Knight Michael Hurtack



Luz and Michael

“Thank you for posting all of these beautiful pictures! I will never forget that smile! RIP good and faithful servant! Your work on earth is done.”~~ Sandy Augustyniak Clarke

Michael had a bigger heart than the universe. He put his whole self into everything he did and would have given his very last breath if it kept his loved ones safe and happy. He was a natural-born leader who had no patience for drama queens and fakers. He had a heart of gold, but if you abused his trust, his anger was as powerful as a wildfire, dangerous to mess with but beautiful as well.

“Michael, you were a warrior, a protector. You fought for those who needed help, and you held justice and fairness close to your heart. You were a loyal friend, and there was no stopping you when you got serious. If someone crossed you, you turned into an unstoppable leader, meant to always be at the front of the pack.”



Heaven now has the perfect Artist to help God paint those skies. I will miss my friend’s smile and all of his beautiful posts.” RIP Michael~~ Cheech Williams



You both look great!”~~Odinma Victoris Nwogu



Michael and some long-time friends walking on the beach in Reddington Shores, FL.



Michael with Luz at Mission of Guadalupe Catholic Church..

October 2021 - Overview for the Month

October falls during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time, which is represented by the liturgical color green. This symbol of hope is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection. It is used in the offices and Masses of Ordinary Time.



Highlights of the Month

St. Luke was a physician from Antioch and a disciple of St. Paul. He is the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. In his Gospel he highlights the universality of salvation.

As a child, St. Thérèse the Little Flower had "sacrifice beads," which were a small string of beads to help her count the "presents" she offered to God. Each time she would make a sacrifice such as letting someone else have their way, St. Therese would secretly reach into her pocket and "pull a bead" to Jesus on the Crucifix. Find out more about the sacrifice beads and implement the practice in the family.

October 3rd - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus said, "Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

October 10 - 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Gospel tells the story of the rich young man who could not part with his possessions.

October 17 - 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

October 24 - 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

This Gospel recounts the story of Bartemeus, the blind man, who Jesus cured.

October 30 - 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

In this Gospel Jesus gives us the greatest commandment.

SYMBOLS

St. Jude

The sailing vessel here represents the Church, which St. Jude (also known as Thaddeus or Lebbaeus) carried to many ports as he journeyed as a missionary.



St. Simon

The companion of St. Jude on many missionary journeys, St. Simon was known as a great fisher of men through the power of the Gospel.



St. Francis

St. Francis, the father of the Franciscan Order, for two years before his death bore the marks of the Lord's Passion upon his hands, feet and side. The tears on the cross represent the marks of the stigmata.



St. Ignatius of Antioch

A convert of St. John, reputedly consecrated Bishop of Antioch by St. Peter, St. Ignatius was an important link between the first and second centuries of the Church. He was the writer of seven epistles as he proceeded to his martyrdom when condemned by Trajan.



OCTOBER: THE MONTH TO SAY THE ROSARY



The feasts in October also include two of the most popular, time-honored devotions of Catholics, the devotion to the Holy Rosary (October 7) and the Guardian Angels (October 2). In October 2002 our Holy Father John Paul II wrote the Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae (the Rosary of the Virgin Mary)." This letter introduced five new mysteries, called the Luminous or Mysteries of Light, which are (1) Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan, (2) Jesus' self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana, (3) Proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with

the call to conversion, (4) the Transfiguration, and (5) the Institution of the Eucharist. Try to make a more concerted effort to pray the Rosary together as a family during the month of October, read the Apostolic Letter to understand the beauty of this devotion more deeply, and pray the Luminous mysteries. October 16 is known as "Pope Day" on which we celebrate the gift of the papacy and our current pope.

On October 2 the Church celebrates the role of Guardian Angels. We should show devout gratitude to God for placing these angels at our service. Having a guardian should give us confidence during all of life's difficulties. Every Catholic should know the Angele Dei (Angel of God) prayer and pray it often. The Directory on Popular Piety suggests that families pray it at morning and evening prayers or after the Angelus.

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Chuck Lake
October 3



Joe Moore
October 8



Gene Sanders
October 14



Paul Grant
October 25



Wesley Stanick
October 25



Blessing Bags at Work: "Pray for Murray" by Jim Blackwell

I was pulling into a parking spot at Ace on East Bay, and noticed an older man leaning against a wall, in the shade. He looked exhausted, and had his shirt pulled off his shoulders to cool down. He had no 'luggage' with or around him, so I thought he probably was not homeless. I made a note to look for him after I left the store. But as I got out of the car, he was on the move, walking away, and I could see he struggled. I decided to go after him, and by the time I got the Blessing bag from the car, he was 200 ft away.

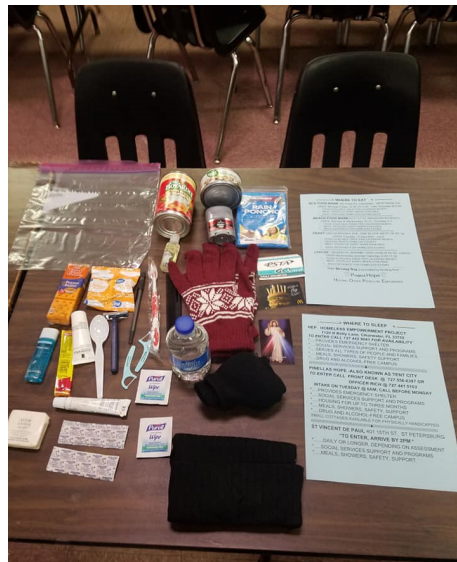
My cynic self said, oh, you can't run him down. But I tried, and called to him from a distance, hoping he would stop, which he did. I asked, as I always do, "Are you living on the street?", to which he nodded. He had a beard like Santa Claus, probably my age and portly, long hair, and tired eyes. His dark undershirt was sweaty. I offered him the Blessing bag, showed him the contents and urged him to drink the water.

He said God bless you, and I told him that God has, and that is why I was there, speaking with him. He said his name was Murray, and he asked my name. I told him to turn to God, that he will shelter him. He smiled and said, thank you over and over. I said, "Just thank God, because he has more blessings to give you". As I turned and

walked away, I heard him say, "Keep doing what you are doing". He repeated "Keep doing what you are doing". I could not respond, for my throat filled with joy, and I began to cry. I could only muster a wave.

And so, here I am, with you folks, keeping on doing the work of this ministry. I restocked bags in the chapel and church office today.

Look for our fall campaign coming up in October.



The items that go into a Blessing Bag:

- 2 pr Socks
- Rain Poncho
- Hat
- Gloves
- Canned Pasta
- Canned Chicken
- Peanuts
- Crackers
- \$5 McDonalds Coupon
- Water
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Lotion
- Razor
- Comb
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Band Aid
- Pen
- Saniwipes
- Jesus Picture
- Shelter Information

The Development of Doctrine

by John Henry Newman



the fundamental truth of the Gospel. Then he goes on to identify several principles of the Christian religion: dogma, faith, theology, sacraments, Scripture etc.

In reference to these principles, Newman says: "While the development of doctrine in the Church has been in accordance with these principles, the various heresies, which have from time to time arisen, have in one respect or other, violated those principles with which she rose into existence."

Thus it is with the authentic development of doctrines as well.

Anticipation of Its Future

The fifth note of genuine development is anticipation of its future. Doctrines in some way imply or allude to their later development. So authentic developments will have some logical connection to the original deposit of faith, however vague the "embryonic" form might have been in the earliest days of the Church.

For example, the Church solemnly declared at the fourth-century Council of Nicaea that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was himself truly and fully God, one in substance (or being) with the Father. Such a declaration is nowhere found explicitly in Scripture. Yet it expounded a point of doctrine that was implied by Scripture and the ancient baptismal formula of the Church.

Conservative Action

The sixth note of genuine development is conservative action upon its past. In other words, a development is not a corruption if the doctrine proposed builds upon the doctrinal developments that precede it, often clarifying and strengthening them.

Chronic Vigor

The seventh note of genuine development is chronic vigor.

As long as a doctrine maintains its life and vigor, its ongoing development is assured. However, once a corruption enters into the process, it leads, by its nature, to death and decay.

Necessary Change

When we talk with our Protestant friends about the development of doctrine, we should point out that nearly every Christian tradition accepts this reality in some form or another. For example, the Nicene Creed's profession of the Blessed Trinity doesn't appear explicitly in Scripture; instead, it's a development of truths found in Scripture. Yet most Protestant denominations affirm this doctrine.

Newman's criteria help us see that some kinds of doctrinal change, resulting in greater complexity, are not only legitimate but also necessary. To borrow Newman's analogy: An acorn that somehow changed into a walnut would be a mutation. But an acorn that never developed into an oak would be lifeless.

So it is with the "acorn" of the Gospel.

Power of Assimilation

Newman notes that in the physical world living things are characterized by growth, and that this growth comes about by making use of external things. For example, as human beings we grow by taking into our bodies' external realities such as food, water and air.

When we make use of these resources, we are assimilating them. The food, water and air we consume don't change who or what we are in any meaningful way. Rather, they serve a valuable function in that they ensure our continued growth and vitality.

For Newman, a true doctrinal development is capable of assimilating external realities (such as non-Christian philosophical concepts,) without in any way violating its principles. In fact, in the process of assimilation it's the external realities themselves that are transformed (once they are assimilated), not the doctrine.

Logical Sequence

The fourth note of genuine development is logical sequence. By this Newman means that a doctrine that's defined and professed by the Church at a point historically distant from its original founding can be considered a development, and not a corruption, if it can be shown to be the logical outcome of the original teaching.

Newman compares this process to the growth of a tree. Someone looking at an oak tree could very easily draw the conclusion that it has nothing at all in common with an acorn. Yet the mature oak tree is the logical development of the acorn.

Over time an acorn grows roots, bursts forth from the soil, begins to soar toward the sun, develops branches and grows leaves. Each step along the way is the logical development of the previous step.

Our Protestant brothers and sisters often wonder at the complexity of Catholic doctrine. In particular, they may find it difficult to reconcile what they view as the "simplicity" of Jesus' teachings with those of the Church today.

One Catholic theologian who sought to provide an answer to this question was the eminent English convert Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890). Newman identified seven characteristics of authentic developments, as opposed to doctrinal corruptions, in his famous work "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine." Let's examine these characteristics one at a time.

Unity of Type

The first note of genuine development Newman calls unity of type. What he means by type is the external expression of an idea. This refers to the continual presence of a main idea despite its changing external expression. When we see change in the teaching on a subject, can we discern nevertheless that the main idea remains unchanged? If so, we know that the change is a genuine development, not a corruption.

Newman warns that the presence of any alteration in the external expression of an idea shouldn't lead us to conclude that it's a corruption, instead of a development, of the essential idea. For example, a full-grown bird is the development of an egg and not its corruption, even though they bear little physical resemblance to one another.

Continuity of Principles

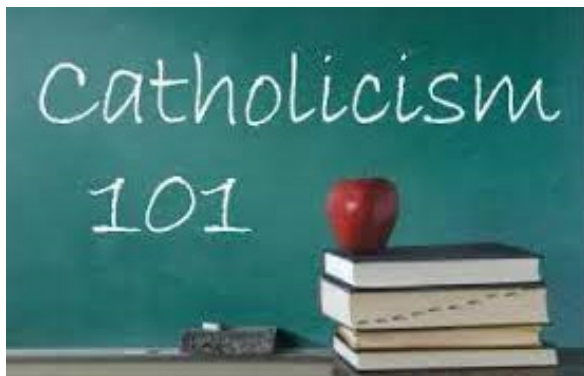
Newman insists that for a development to be faithful, it must preserve the principle with which it started. While doctrine may grow and develop, principles are permanent.

Newman identifies the Incarnation as

A Small Box for the Eucharist

Catholic Churches today feature a large box called a tabernacle, where consecrated hosts are kept after Mass. This custom took many centuries to be established, as early Christians did not have their own permanent churches. Instead, they were constantly on the move, celebrating Mass in people's homes or in hiding. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that there were no fixed tabernacles to house consecrated hosts, but only portable boxes.

James Monti, in the book published by Our Sunday Visitor called *In the Presence of Our Lord*, notes this early cus-



tom. From the Vatican catacombs there are surviving examples of the arca, a small box used by the early Church for carrying the reserved Blessed Sacrament, made of gold

and thought to date from the second or third century.

This was a way for Christians to protect the Eucharist from desecration by the pagans of Rome, and also to provide the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and homebound.

The Catholic Encyclopedia further confirms this early practice, and recounts one of the first Eucharistic miracles that occurred in the Church's history.

A box in which the Eucharist was kept by the primitive Christians in their homes. St. Cyprian (*De lapsis*, 26) tells of a woman "who with unworthy hands" attempted "to open her box in which was the Holy (Body) of the Lord," but was unable to do so because of fire which issued therefrom the moment she touched it. A representation of the Eucharistic Arca is believed to exist in a fresco of the catacomb of Sts. Peter and Marcellinus. The scene depicts Christ seated, reading from an open roll; on His right are three amphoræ, and on the left a square box filled with loaves, symbols of the Eucharist.

Eventually, when Christians were able to build permanent structures for the liturgy, they also created different kinds of tabernacles to house the consecrated hosts.

This shows that even from the very beginning, Christians knew that this "bread" was different and was the very presence of God.

BITS AND PIECES

serve whatever location we need for a meeting, event, etc.

If this is not appropriately done, chances are good that your event or meeting might have to be cancelled.

Stop in the parish office and meet Chris. He's a very pleasant young man and should do well.

1. Remember that our council will begin using the parish center for our council meetings starting next month. We are hoping this extra space will encourage some growth spurts.

2. At the induction of officers meeting Saturday, August 14, PGK Pete Grasso identified Jim Blackwell and Danny McConnell as Knights of the Year for the past two years.

3. Faithful Navigator Bob Anderson stated that St. Pat's is sponsoring a Christmas dinner Thursday, December 16, at 6 p.m. in the Msgr. McCall Hall. Tickets are \$25 a couple. Liquor will be \$2.00 each. The menu will be crab legs, shrimp, wings, ham. The proceeds will go to VAVS. Tickets will go on sale soon.

4. Chris McBride, our new Parish Manager, needs to know what is going on in the parish and where it is taking place so there will be as few conflicts as possible. This means we need to re-

5. It has been decided that our monthly breakfasts should be held the 3rd Sunday of the month. That will help us be sure

we have workers because we will have a council meeting each month before the breakfast, and that will help us twist some arms to be sure we have the workers we need.

6. PGK Pete Grasso mentioned that Fr. Tom still would like to see another men's retreat on a Saturday morning, similar to the one we had 2 or 3 years ago, which was very nice. If you went, you might remember Fr. Tom's tool box he had with him for props.

7. We are thinking about doing something special for Veterans' Day, such as saying the rosary in the grotto. Stay tuned.

8. According to DD Pete Grasso, plans for placing the stature of Christopher Columbus are back on track. Who knew?

Halloween

Continued from page 1

adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. Parties focused on games, foods of the season and festive costumes.

Parents were encouraged by newspapers and community leaders to take anything "frightening" or "grotesque" out of Halloween celebrations. Because of these efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones by the beginning of the twentieth century.

Between 1920 and 1950, the centuries-old practice of trick-or-treating was also revived. Trick-or-treating was a relatively inexpensive way for an entire community to share the Halloween celebration. In theory, families could also prevent tricks being played on them by providing the neighborhood children with small treats.



Thus, a new American tradition was born, and it has continued to grow. Today, Americans spend an estimated \$6 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country's second largest commercial holiday after Christmas.

Raise-the-Roof Campaign to be Held This Month

As parishioners have known for quite some time now, the roof on our building is sadly in need of repair, to the tune of at least a million dollars. Various recent events have hindered our attempts to raise money; the following effort is the latest.

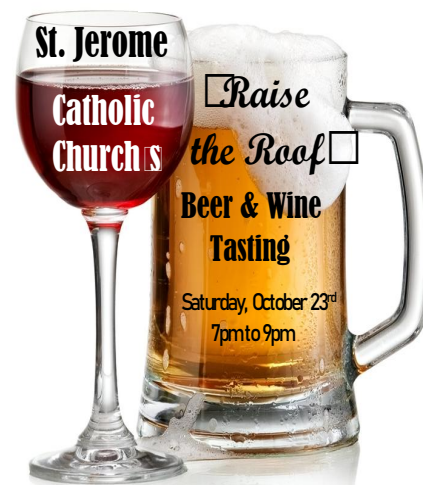
On October 23, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the plaza outside the church's front doors we will have a beer-and-wine tasting event in hopes of raising money to help replace the roof. Here's what committee chairman Carrie Conte has planned.

Tickets will cost \$10 each. In addition to that, we are going to ask each person who buys a ticket to bring one bottle of wine or a 6-pack of beer, or 24 appetizers. Each person will be given

a souvenir beer or wine glass to freely taste at their pleasure. Tickets will be sold before all Masses, starting September 18. Please check the bulletin for further details.



Join Us For...



Tickets will be on sale before and after all masses beginning the weekend of September 18.

GREAT CATHEDRALS

Temple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Barcelona



On 28 December 1902, the first stone was placed in a ceremony presided by the Bishop of Barcelona. The crypt was built between 1903 and 1911, and the main church was built between 1915 and 1951. The church was consecrated by Bishop Gregorio Modrego Casaus during the 35th Eucharistic Congress held in Barcelona in 1952. The towers were completed afterward, with work officially ending in 1961. On 29 October 1961 the church received the title of minor basilica from Pope John XXIII.



Located on Lake Onega in a republic of Russia situated in Northern Europe. Kizhi Island is basically one big open-air museum containing dozens of historical wooden buildings, the most famous of which is the Church of the Transfiguration. The 22-dome structure was built in 1714, and is famous for one major engineering feat: Not a single nail was used in the construction. Instead, the church was built with horizontal logs that interlock in the corners (think next-level Lincoln logs). It's definitely something that has to be seen to be believed.

How a 9/11 Fireman Became a Priest

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I was sitting in my 8th grade history class in a suburb north of New York City. Our studies were interrupted when the principal came on the loudspeaker informing us of what was transpiring just 40 miles away. Young and scared, I clutched the Miraculous Medal hanging around my neck.

On that same morning, Tom Colucci completed the night shift at his Engine 3, Ladder 12 & Battalion 7 firehouse in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. He arrived at his suburban home in Rockland County for some much-needed rest. But as soon as he walked through the front door, a general recall was sent out for he and all firemen to immediately report to the World Trade Center, where violent disaster had struck. Getting into his car and making his way to lower Manhattan, he could not have guessed what awaited him on that fateful day. He and the world would be changed forever.

As Colucci drove swiftly down the highway and through the Lincoln Tunnel, news reports on his radio made it clear that two planes had slammed into the Twin Towers. As thousands were fleeing for their lives, he and his brothers in the Fire Department of New York City ran in the opposite direction toward chaos and disaster.

While guiding people to safety and looking for survivors in the wreckage, he gazed up at the still standing North Tower every few moments, knowing that it too could collapse at any time. And before long, it did. In what felt and sounded like an earthquake, the North Tower began to crumble. He and two other firemen ducked for cover beside a nearby car and somehow survived.

Colucci spent the rest of the day looking through the debris for survivors. He arrived at what came to be called Ground Zero at about 10:00 in the morning, just after the South Tower collapsed. He remained working on site until midnight before making his way to a local firehouse for rest and recuperation. But he couldn't sleep, thinking of all his brothers in the FDNY who were able to get on site before him and make their way into the towers. They were likely all dead.

Almost three thousand people were killed that day and 343 of them belonged to the FDNY. Colucci was acquainted with about a hundred of them, thirty of whom he knew well and five he knew intimately.

The first certified casualty on 9/11, was a Catholic priest and chaplain to the FDNY named Fr. Mychal Judge, O.F.M. While in the lobby of the North Tower he was killed by debris from the collapsing South Tower. First responders carried his body to nearby Saint Peter's Church on Barclay Street. They didn't know what else to do, so they reverently laid his body on the altar.

For the next month Colucci remained at his firehouse and each day he either searched the pile of wreckage at Ground Zero for those unaccounted for, responded to other fires that routinely occur in such a big city, or attended a funeral of one of his fallen brothers.

Two days after the attacks, a clearly identifiable cross was found amidst the blasted wreckage. Against seeming insuperable odds, a 17-foot-long crossbeam, weighing at least two tons, was thrust at a vertical angle in the hellish wasteland. Images of the cross proliferated throughout the country. Holy Mass began to be offered for Ground Zero workers beneath it each day.

Colucci attended many of these Masses while working on site. He also attended the many Requiem Masses of the funerals offered for his fallen brothers in the ensuing months. While present at them, an old thought returned to his mind: "Why don't I become a priest?" He had been raised in a devout Catholic family and always practiced the Faith with great devotion. He was active in campus ministry during his



Fr. Tom Colucci at the 9/11 Memorial, the site of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York City.

college years and it was suggested to him by several priests that he should enter the seminary. But, after having worked for some years as a physical education teacher, he had instead joined the FDNY.

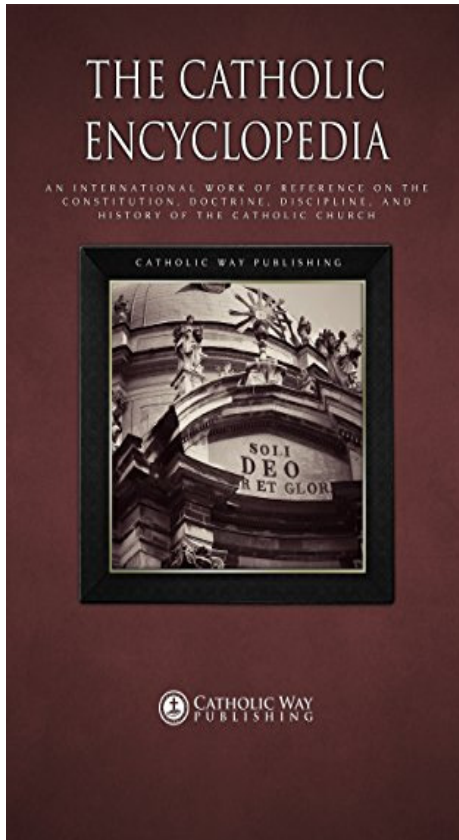
By 9/11 he had been in the fire department for sixteen years and was nearing retirement. While praying at so many Masses on site at Ground Zero and at the many funerals of his fallen co-workers, the value of Christ's priesthood in such a troubled world became clearer to him. It is the priest's mission to save souls from eternal flames, restoring fallen man's union with God. At some point, at one of these Masses, Colucci made a resolution in prayer that as soon as he retired from the FDNY in a few short years, he would become a priest.

This resolution came earlier than expected. Less than a year after 9/11 he was involved in an explosion on the job which forced him into an early retirement. He suffered a major head injury that required two delicate brain surgeries to prevent blood clotting. The experience gave him a renewed resolve to make a total consecration of his life to God. Colucci decided to forgo the parish priesthood, which would require lots of study in the seminary and decided instead to enter Mount Savior Monastery in upstate New York.

He entered the monastery in 2004, taking the name Thomas Bernadette, and spent eight happy years waking at 4:00 am for prayer and fulfilling his daily chores of cooking, mowing the lawn, and plowing the snow. As he recovered further from his surgeries, the desire to save souls through a more active ministry returned to him. In 2012 he entered Saint Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers to study to become a priest of the Archdiocese of New York. He was dispensed of his vows as a monk and in 2016, at the age of 60, was ordained at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

~~Father Seán Connolly
(Article submitted by Jim Blackwell)

What Does the Catholic Encyclopedia Say about the Archangel Raphael?



The name of this archangel Raphael does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the Septuagint only in the Book of Tobias. Here he first appears disguised in human form as the travelling companion of the younger Tobias, calling himself "Azarias the son of the great Ananias". The story of the adventurous journey during which the protective influence of the angel is shown in many ways including the binding "in the desert of upper Egypt" of the demon who had previously slain seven husbands of Sara, daughter of Raguel, is picturesquely related in Tobit 5-11, to which the reader is referred. After the return and the healing of the blindness of the elder Tobias, Azarias makes himself known as "the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord." Of these seven "archangels" which appear in the angelology of post-Exilic Judaism, only three, Gabriel, Michael and Raphael, are mentioned in the canonical Scriptures.

Regarding the functions attributed to Raphael we have little more than his declaration to Tobias that when the latter was occupied in his works of mercy and charity, Raphael offered his prayer to the Lord, that he was sent by the Lord to heal him of his blindness and to deliver Sara, his son's wife, from the devil.

The Jewish category of the archangels is recognized in the New Testament, but only Gabriel and Michael are mentioned by name. Many commentators, however, identify Raphael with the "angel of the Lord" mentioned in John 5. This conjecture is based both on the significance of the name and on the healing role attributed to Raphael in the Book of Tobias. The Church assigns the feast of St. Raphael to 24 October.