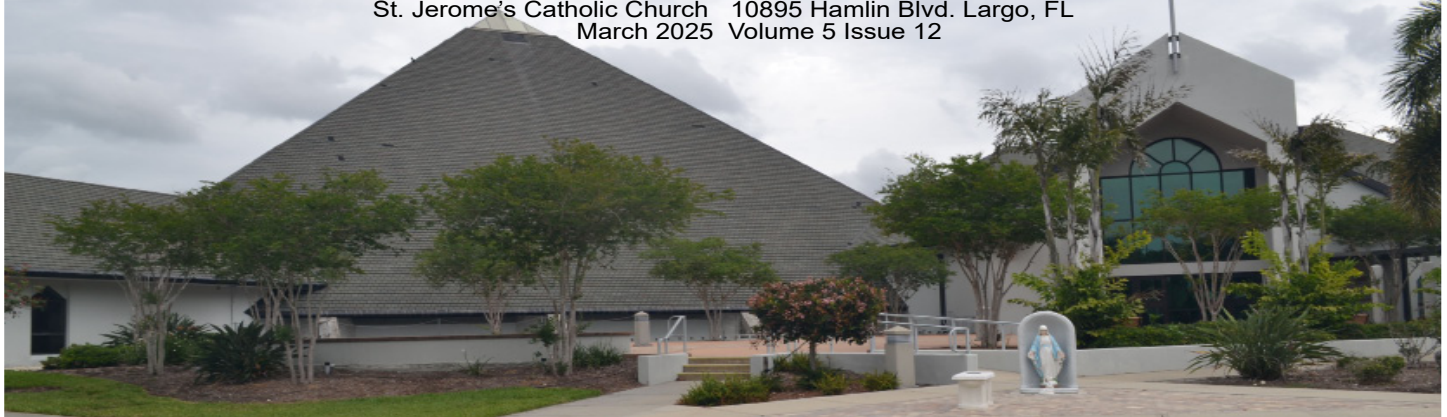


KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
March 2025 Volume 5 Issue 12



Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Ash Wednesday is a holy day of prayer and fasting in many Western Christian denominations. It is preceded by Shrove Tuesday and marks the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter.

Ash Wednesday is observed by Catholics, Lutherans, Moravians, Anglicans, and United Protestants, as well as by some churches in the Reformed, (including certain Congregationalist, Continental Reformed, and Presbyterian churches), Baptist, Methodist and Nazarene traditions.

Many Christians attend special Ash Wednesday church services at which churchgoers receive ashes on their foreheads or the top of their heads, as the wearing of ashes was a sign of repentance in biblical times. Ash Wednesday derives its name from this practice, in which the placement of ashes is accompanied by the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The ashes are prepared by burning palm leaves from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations.



FROM AROUND THE WORLD
OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Does the death penalty deter crime?

Cardinal Koch rejects extreme traditionalists

St. Josephine Bakhita's feast day marks anti-human trafficking campaign

Young Christians, Muslims, Jews live together in peace

U.S. bishops' conference lays off 50 amid migrant funding

Catholic bioethicist details 'significant concerns' of in vitro fertilization

Trump touts American Heroes garden that would honor Catholic figures including Kobe Bryant

Planned Parenthood resumes abortions after judge rules regulations unconstitutional

Pope Francis is 'fragile and not out of danger,' doctors say

21 Facts About the Bible Most Christians Don't Know

- 1) There are more than a dozen different translations of the Bible in English.
- 2) The Bible was originally written in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.
- 3) The shortest verse in the Bible is 'Jesus wept.' - John 11:35.
- 4) The word 'Bible' comes from the Greek word 'Biblia', meaning books.
- 5) Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible.
- 6) The Book of Esther does not mention God.
- 7) The Bible contains around 611,000 words.
- 8) The Gutenberg Bible was the first book printed using movable type.
- 9) The Bible is the best-selling book of all time.
- 10) The King James Version was first published in 1611.
- 11) There are 66 books in the Protestant Bible.
- 12) The Dead Sea Scrolls contain some of the oldest known copies of the Hebrew Bible.
- 13) The Book of Job is considered one of the oldest books in the Bible.
- 14) The Bible was divided into chapters in the 13th century.
- 15) Verses were not added until the 16th century.
- 16) Methuselah, the oldest person mentioned in the Bible, lived to be 969 years old.
- 17) The Bible has been translated into over 3,000 languages.
- 18) The New Testament consists of 27 books.
- 19) The Old Testament in the Catholic Bible includes 7 additional books.
- 20) The Bible features literary styles including poetry, prophecy, and epistle.
- 21) The word 'Christian' appears only three times in the Bible.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT

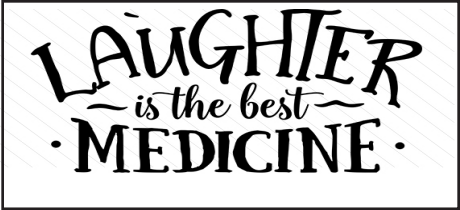


Pete McCabe

Happy St. Patrick's Day! This fraternal year is flying by and before you know it we'll be having elections again. At the March General meeting we will be starting the election process. To that end, we'll be taking nominations for all officer positions. I have asked the trustees to be the nomination committee. You might get a call from them asking whether you are interested in any of the officer positions.

I encourage you to seriously consider helping out the council and be an officer. Please ask any of the current officers about their position. You will find that they enjoy contributing to the council. Nominations will continue in April and May with the election taking place at the May general meeting. The new officers will start in July.

This month is our second membership drive of this fraternal year. Brother Jim Cullinan, our membership director, will need your help. Please wear your blue shirt to Mass on the weekend of 15/16 March. Jim will need help manning the table in the Gathering Space at church. In addition, we will be having our monthly Knight's breakfast on the 16th. We need the usual help plus other Knights to engage the men at breakfast. A simple introduction to start and then asking if they would like to join the Knights. Form 100s will be available as well as promotional material. Please join us that weekend as we continue to grow the council. Thanks for all you do!



"It is useless to try to hold a person to anything he says while he's madly in love, drunk, or running for office."

"I remember it like it was yesterday. Of course, I don't really remember yesterday all that well."

"The reason I talk to myself is because I'm the only one whose answers I accept."

"I'm not superstitious...but I am a little stitious."

"Here's something to think about: How come you never see a headline like 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?"

"I'm sure wherever my dad is, he's looking down on us. He's not dead, just very condescending."

"When my kids become wild and unruly, I use a nice, safe playpen. When they're finished, I climb out."

Due to my time alone, I finished three books yesterday. And believe me, that's a lot of coloring.

What did our parents do to kill boredom before the internet? I asked my 26 brothers and sisters and they didn't know either.

There's nothing scarier than that split second when you lose your balance in the shower and you think, "They are going to find me naked."

Today, I melted an ice cube with my mind just by staring at it. It took a lot longer than I thought it would.

Struggling to get your wife's attention? Just sit down and look comfortable.

Just sold my homing pigeon on eBay for the 22nd time.

One minute you're young and having fun. And next, you're turning down the stereo in your car to see better.

Not in jail, not in a mental hospital, not in a grave—I'd say I'm having a good day.

Perfection is achieved
not when there is
nothing
more to add but when
there is nothing left to
take away.



St. Jerome Parish Center
10895 Hamlin Blvd.
Largo, FL 33774

Please join us on Friday, March 7, 2025
For a fun day of sharing health-care services, information,
And education with our community.

Wellness Screening, Blood Pressure Testing,
Advanced Directive, Estate Planning,
Self-Defense Information,
and much more.

St. Jerome's Health Fair is a non-profit community event
and all are welcome.

Bring the whole family.

Email: stjeromehealthfair25@gmail.com

Or

Call 321-403-3356 for more information.

The Bloodmobile will be at St. Jerome's during the Health Fair.

Every two seconds someone needs blood.
One in three of us will need a blood transfusion.
Three drops of blood have more than a billion red blood cells.
The # 1 reason donors give blood is because they want to help others.

Detroit Basketball Player Pivots to Religious Life

A former Michigan basketball star says she never imagined that religious life was her calling, but a homily and her formation at the University of Detroit Mercy changed the course of her life toward a vocation of faith and service to God.

Sister Rita Clare Yoches went to the University of Detroit Mercy in the late 1990s on a full-ride scholarship for basketball. She started as a forward but ended her basketball career as a point guard her senior year. She was just outstanding," her college coach said. "She knew all the plays, knew where everyone was supposed to be, was able to get the ball into the post, and was a great leader." Yoches said that during her college years, she never expected that she would become a nun. After graduation, the sports medicine major worked as a strength and conditioning coach at Notre Dame and played on the Detroit Demolition women's football team.

"I always thought I would be in the world, maybe getting married, but definitely working in the world," Yoches told Detroit Catholic. "God really broke in and did something I wasn't expecting."

She shared that when she was 23, a homily completely changed her life. "The homily was 1 Corinthians, 11:27.

It says, "Anyone who eats and drinks the body and blood of Christ without first discerning himself eats and drinks condemnation on himself. That's why many among you are sick and dying," she recalled. "I was like, 'That's me.' I've got a great party life, a great job, I was playing women's professional football in Detroit for the Detroit Demolition, and I had awesome family and friends, but I was dying on the inside because I wasn't taking care of my soul."

She said she was convinced to return to the Sacrament of Confession, slowly transform her life, and let God back in.

Yoches made her temporary vows in 2012 and professed her final vows in 2018. She then became a campus minister at Florida State University and eventually moved to a convent in Steubenville, Ohio, in early 2024.

Now, years after her athletic career, Yoches still uses the lessons she learned as an athlete.

"I want to be all or nothing for God — just like I was in sports — so it doesn't matter what trial or temptation I'm up against," she said. "Whatever suffering is coming at me, I'm going to give everything for other people — for love, or for conversion, for prayer — just for others."

In November, her alma mater be-



Sister Rita Clare Yoches

stowed on her one of its most prestigious awards, the Fr. Norbert Huetter Award. The award was created in 2000 in honor of the priest, who was a Jesuit philosopher and teacher at the university and worked with student athletes. The award is presented by the school to live and serve in the mission of St. Ignatius Loyola as men and women for others, according to Detroit Catholic.

"I'm grateful to be back, and I'm grateful for my experience here," Yoches said. "I definitely feel like the 10 lepers in the New Testament. Only one returned to say thank you to God for healing him, and I feel like this is my opportunity to return and say thank you."

The Power of Bowing Your Head at the Holy Name of Jesus

There is a special practice that can help increase your devotion.

Upon saying or hearing the name of Jesus, gently bow your head.

This is not limited to the context of the Holy Mass. It can be part of our daily lives, too.

Whether it is in the middle of a normal conversation, during prayer time, or even upon overhearing someone mention Jesus, you can honor His Holy name by bowing your head as an act of reverence.

The custom of bowing your head at the name of Jesus is largely inspired by the letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ

is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." - Phil. 2:9-11

Since physically bowing at the knee is not always practical, Pope Gregory X offered a solution during the Council of Lyons. "Each should fulfill in himself that which is written for all, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow; whenever that glorious Name is recalled, especially during the sacred Mysteries of the Mass, everyone should bow the knees of his heart, which he can do even by a bow of his head."

Tradition says this gesture makes amends for the blasphemous use of the name of Jesus, especially if someone uses the Lord's name in vain in front of you. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20:7

Making this reverent gesture also honors the fact that the name of Jesus is incredibly powerful.

Everyone is welcome to make this pious gesture as a small exterior act to remind us internally of God's presence in our lives and the power of His name.



Josiah Presley: The Story of a Child Almost Aborted



Among the speakers at this year's March for Life was 29-year-old Josiah Presley, who survived an abortion attempt. His testimony includes the

story of his survival, adoption, and personal journey. He is a survivor of a first-trimester abortion.

Presley was born on Oct. 7, 1995, in South Korea. When his mother was two months pregnant, she decided to have an abortion. The procedure was not successful, and Presley survived. Following this, his mother chose to carry him to term and put him up for adoption. He was born with a deformed arm as a result of the attempted abortion.

After his birth, Presley spent 13 months in a foster home before being adopted by Randy and Kathy Presley from Norman, Oklahoma. He grew up with 11 siblings, nine of whom were also adopted. His father is a pastor, and his mother is an elementary ministry director. Despite his disability, Presley actively participated in sports during his childhood. At age

13, his adoptive parents informed him about his biological mother and the attempted abortion. This revelation was difficult for him to process, and he struggled with emotional issues during his teenage years.

Presley found Christ while at a camp. Although raised in a Christian household, Presley fully embraced Christianity at Falls Creek Youth Camp. He reflects that this experience significantly changed his life and helped him find forgiveness and purpose.

Presley now serves as a student minister at North Pointe Baptist Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, and leads student groups to Falls Creek. He speaks publicly on the topic of abortion, sharing his perspective as a survivor. He now has a family of his own.

Presley and his wife, Bethany, welcomed their daughter in 2023.

Firefighters Reunite with Safe-Haven Baby 21 Years Later



Firefighters in Florida recently reunited with Baby Hope, an infant they rescued through the station's safe-haven program 21 years ago.

On Father's Day, 2003, the firefighters met the baby girl at their station in Deerfield Beach, Florida. The baby's birth mother knew that the station was a safe haven, a place where parents can legally and anonymously surrender infants they are unable to raise.

The mother told the firefighters, "Please take care of my baby." Those at the station called the baby Hope in honor of Father's Day.

Jim Burge, one of the firefighters, said "I had a three-year-old daughter and a nine-year-old daughter. My family was on their way to the station to visit me. That's where we met Gloria's birth mother who handed us her daughter and we were kind of shocked. But we knew what was going on."

He also said that because of Florida's laws regarding the privacy of safe-haven babies, they knew they couldn't ask any questions even though they had many.

Firefighter Chris Florea added that they spent four to six hours with Baby Hope.

"It was just awesome, and, in that time, we had a connection with her," he said. Florea also commended the bravery of the birth mother.

"I've seen a lot of bad things, especially when it comes to newborn babies throughout my career," he said.

"For that woman to show the kind of responsibility she did and do the

right thing under that much stress, that's special."

Baby Hope, whose adoptive family named her Gloria Hope Lewis, is now a thriving 21-year-old studying criminal justice and social work. She reunited with her rescuers for the first time in October 2024, at the A Safe Haven for Newborns' annual gala.

Lewis sang the national anthem at the gala, and Burge said she was a big deal for the program.

"The hug she gave us, I'll never forget it," Florea added. "We've been waiting for a really long time to meet her, and it was really cool."

Lewis received gifts from the firefighters, including a firefighter helmet with the number 66 on it, since they received her at Deerfield Station 66.

"We talked a lot after the ceremony was over and we talked the next morning over breakfast. I liked spending time with them, getting to know them. It gave me a sense of closure," Lewis said. "These are people that met my birthmother. These are the people I was handed to, so it gave me a sense of closure."

Let your religion
be less of a theory
and more of a
love affair.

"Don't put off until
tomorrow
the loving words you
can say today.

When people want to destroy religion, they begin by attacking the priest; for when there is no priest there is no sacrifice, and when there is no sacrifice, there is no religion.

Nebraska Man Describes Meeting Christ

It was a hard hit on the football field, but 12-year-old Derek Ruth of Lincoln, Nebraska, was able to answer all his coach's questions correctly, so it looked like he was okay.

Suddenly, he ripped off his helmet, screamed, "My head!" and collapsed into his coach's arms.

As he was life-flighted for emergency surgery, Ruth had a remarkable meeting with Jesus, the first of many tangible encounters he would have as he battled back from the traumatic brain injury. Now, 16 years later, he has written a book about his experiences to help people and to bring them to Christ: *The Eight-Minute Flight*.

"After my first initial encounter with Jesus in heaven, I kept quiet about that experience and told only a few people, such as my parents and brothers. I decided to write a book about my life because Jesus kept appearing to me on somewhat of a regular basis when I was in my late teenage years, early 20s."

His memory remains clear of standing before Jesus in heaven while emergency medical technicians were fighting to save his life.

"I had no real sense of leaving my physical body," Ruth said. "I could feel all my extremities when I was standing in front of Jesus. It was like I still had my earthly body, but

everything was purified and glorified. The quality of the air in heaven made my body feel amazing, especially my hands and feet.... I just felt perfect."

"The only way I can describe it is to say that the physical presence of Jesus is awesome!" Ruth revealed. "His face was perfect. It had a beautiful glow that was completely white — the whitest white I have ever seen. The heart of Jesus was bursting with unconditional light."

After his first surgery, Ruth was comatose and resting on a tilt table that elevated his head, a proven method of increasing successful recovery. Doctors also employed induced hypothermia, cooling his body to further protect his brain. A second surgery ensued when his brain continued to swell.

When he finally awoke, he was unable to do anything for himself. The once-healthy athlete only had the use of his left hand.

"Words cannot even come close to giving a comparison to that feeling," Ruth remembered. "It was just flat out brutal, and at that point I was scared to death."

Day by day, he fought to regain everything he had lost in the head injury. His family — including his mother and grandfather, who are both physical therapists — remained at his side to help, and countless people prayed for his recovery.

When things got tough, Ruth, a member of North American Martyrs Parish in Lincoln, turned to prayer.

"My faith has gotten me through every trial and tribulation I have faced," he stated. "My faith has only grown stronger, along with my personal prayer life."

While still an inpatient at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, he finally told his mother about meeting Jesus in heaven.

"My mom was not surprised or shocked when I told her about being in heaven with Jesus, because Mom knew the person I was and understood how important my Catholic faith is to me," he said. As his recovery progressed, he would occasionally be in prayer when Jesus or the Blessed Mother would appear to him. After learning about Mother Teresa from a priest in the Diocese of Lin-

coln, he began praying for her assistance, and she, too, appeared to him.

"Every appearance I have had up to this point came as an unexpected surprise, and it is scary," he admitted, "... praying to Jesus and Mary and just having them appear to me unexpectedly!"

Now a University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate with a sociology degree, Derek lives independently despite some lingering effects from the brain injury. He is limited in his gait and fine motor movements, and he uses a text-to-speech device for verbal communication.

"The visible marks such as my numerous scars are a constant reminder of what I have been through," he said.

Overall, Ruth emerged with stronger faith and gratitude. "This experience has changed me by [teaching me to] not take anything for granted, even the little things, because I have learned the hard way how life can change just like that."

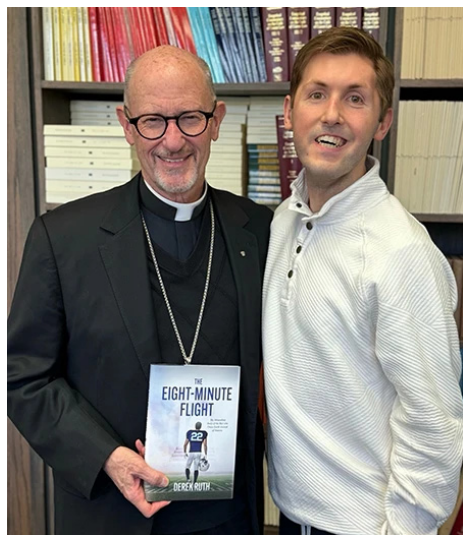
Through the years, Ruth has journaled about his recovery, faith, and encounters with Christ. During college, he determined to put it all into a book so that he could share it with a wider audience. He also finds himself in high demand from various retail outlets and organizations who want to book him for speaking engagements.

"I would love to continue telling my story in hopes that it will inspire others," he said.

One person who shared a testimonial is Bishop James Conley, who met Derek in 2013 shortly after he was installed as bishop of Lincoln.

"Getting to know Derek as a friend and hearing his remarkable story of faith, courage, trust, resilience, and acceptance has profoundly moved me as a bishop," Conley said.

"Derek's deep Catholic faith, nurtured by devout parents, continues to inform his life, providing him with a firm foundation for his hope, purpose, and motivation to move forward in life day after day. Through hard work, discipline, and perseverance, and with the heart of a true athlete, Derek continues to provide true hope for all of us, particularly as he describes in vivid language the long and enduring road of rehabilitation."



Bishop James Conley, the bishop of the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, and Derek Ruth.

St. Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and Doctor of the Church

St. Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva and doctor of the Church, was known as "the saint of kindness." He reportedly had a bad temper, but he relied on divine grace and the maternal care of the Virgin Mary to temper that vice and become a man of virtue. St. Francis de Sales is also the patron saint of the Catholic press, journalists, and writers. He is considered a spiritual master, inspiring saints such as St. John Bosco and St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus.

Francis was born in 1567. He was the eldest of six siblings. He had a restless and playful character, to the point that his mother and his wet nurse had to redouble their efforts to take care of him and be attentive to his wanderings.

As a child, Francis had an irascible temperament. His biographers tell that one day a Calvinist visited the castle in which he lived and little Francis, when he heard about it, took a stick and went running around the chickens shouting: "Heretics out, we don't want heretics."

His father, on the other hand, wanted Francis to grow up well disciplined and chose a priest, a demanding man, as his tutor. The priest gave Francis a hard time, but it helped him in his human and Christian formation.

Nevertheless, Francis' bad temper would continue to play tricks on him. Sometimes his blunders or outbursts made him the object of ridicule and humiliation, and his soul had to bear the weight of resentment and a desire for revenge. As an educated man of manners, he would control himself to the point that many had no idea of his bad temper.

In spite of this, over time bad experiences accumulated in his heart and Francis suffered a lot. At one point he even feared that he would be condemned to hell forever. The mere possibility of such a thing hap-

pening tormented him for a long time, and he lost his appetite and began to have difficulty sleeping.

One day Francis said to God in prayer: "I don't care if you send me all the tortures you want, as long as you allow me to continue loving you always." Determined to find a way out of his predicament, he began to frequent churches and to pray. One day, in the Church of St. Stephen in Paris, kneeling before the image of the Virgin Mary, he pronounced the famous prayer of St. Bernard: "Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary..." And for the first time in a long time, Francis found some of the peace for which he longed.

This experience cured much of the pride that had tormented him for so long. Francis could better understand the people around him and he realized how imperative it was to treat them with kindness. In his heart had sprung up the desire to know the things of God more deeply.

At the age of 24, already with a doctorate, he returned to his family to live the ordinary life of a young man of nobility. His father wanted him to marry and obtain an important position, but Francis possessed the desire to consecrate his life totally to the service of God. He confessed to his father his desire to become a priest. At first he was met with stiff resistance, but finally his father agreed. Francis was ordained a priest on May 10, 1593.

Upon the death of the dean of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Geneva, a group of influential people asked the pope to grant the vacant position to Francis. Despite the initiative of his friends, Francis presented himself to the pontiff as a volunteer to go to the region of Chablais where Calvinism had become dominant and Catholics were being harassed.

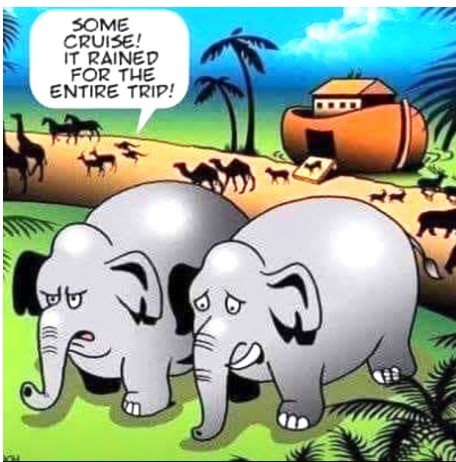


He began to write and publish his homilies. In them he expounded the doctrine of the Church and refuted the Calvinist positions.

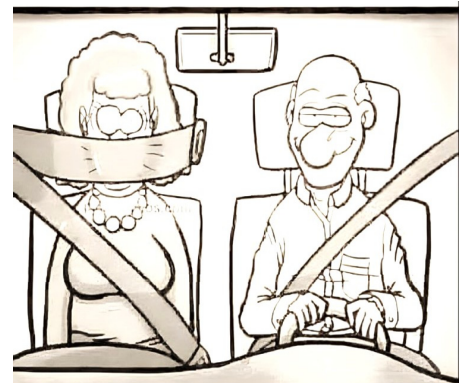
However, what people admired most about Francis was the patience with which he endured the difficulties and pains that his office caused him.

In 1622, the duke of Savoy invited Francis to join him in Avignon. The trip, however, was risky because of the harsh winter and his declining health. After meeting with the duke, Francis began his return journey. That journey would be his last.

Francis stopped in Lyon and stayed in the gardener's cottage. From there he attended to the nuns spiritually for a whole month. It was during this time that he wrote about humility. He continued his journey preaching and administering the sacraments until his strength left him. Francis de Sales died on Dec. 28, 1622, at the age of 56.



New seatbelt design:
45% fewer car accidents!



JOURNEY OF Faith

"It's all good," he said.

He was leaning over to talk to me and Jean, my wife. He and his wife were taking us out to dinner at Bone Fish Grill

His name is Bill Grosse; hers is Alice Grosse. They were members of St. Jerome's Parish for many years. I'm sure that many of you reading this remember them, even though both have been dead for several years now.

I don't remember what either of them died from, but that has nothing to do with why I'm writing about them.

Bill was a smart man. He worked for a yacht company, but I'm not sure what he did. He wasn't a grease monkey;



that I'm sure of.

Bill died almost to the day of the year that Alice had died. He had taken care of his financial obligations, so no family member would be left with a surprise debt when he died.

I count it a blessing to have known

Bill. He and Alice helped out with donuts many Sundays. They both seemed to be the type of person who would say, "Sure, I'll help."

Above all, Bill was a man of faith. He was a convert, Alice, a cradle catholic. They both worked with RCIA.

I was honored to give some words of remembrance about Alice as her funeral was beginning. Bill handled her death with dignity. That's what struck me most about him, I think. He was content to take up his cross and follow Jesus.

As I wind down my tribute to Bill, I want to call up the lyrics of an old song you might know: *It Is Well with My Soul*. Here are the lyrics:

"When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot,

Thou hast taught me to say,

It is well, it is well... with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul."

That's it! When Bill said, "It's all good" he meant that it was well with soul, Why? Because he had finished his Journey of Faith.

St. John Paul II National Shrine to Host Lent 2025 Shroud of Turin Exhibit

The Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C., is set to host a special exhibit on the Shroud of Turin during Lent in response to the saint's call for greater devotion to Christ's burial cloth.

Aiming to help pilgrims encounter the mystery of the burial cloth of Jesus, the exhibit will explore its historical significance and scientific analysis, along with the faithful devotion it inspires.

"The Shroud does not hold people's hearts to itself, but turns them to him, at whose service the Father's loving providence has put it," St. John Paul II said. "Therefore, it is right to foster an awareness of the precious value of this image, which everyone sees and no one at present can explain."

The exhibit will feature a replica of the Shroud on loan from the National

Shroud of Turin Exhibit and a sculpture titled "The Sign," which depicts a life-size, three-dimensional image of the Shroud. There will also be prayer resources and more than 30 gallery panels with images and text.

"The Shrine is proud to offer this exhibit about the Shroud of Turin and Saint John Paul II because it resonates so deeply with his legacy. It illustrates how human beings can approach the deepest mysteries fruitfully with faith and reason together; how the human body can express the most radical love; and — especially during Lent — the power of redemptive suffering."

The St. John Paul II National Shrine is a designated Jubilee 2025 Pilgrimage site. It has a first class relic of the saint's blood available for veneration.

Lent runs from March 5 to April 17.

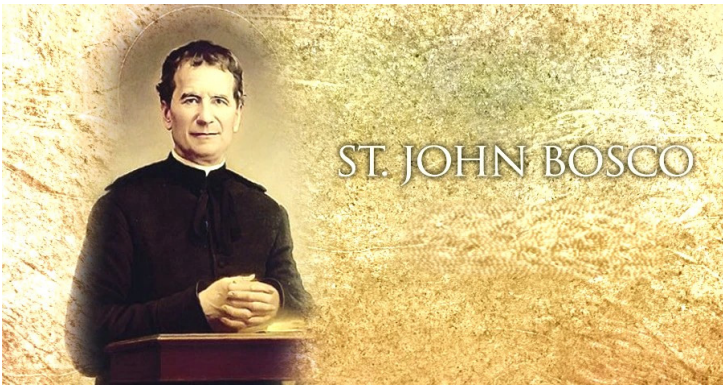


Prayer is the bridge
between
panic and peace

Whether you think you
can or think you can't,
you're right.

It takes courage to
grow up and become
who you really are.

John Bosco: Patron Saint of Young People, Apprentices, Catholic Publishers and Editors



The Cathedral of Sevilla: One of the Largest and Most Impressive Churches in the World.



The Cathedral of Sevilla is one of the largest and most impressive churches in the world. It was built in the fifteenth century at the site of a twelfth-century mosque. Inside the cathedral is a spectacular golden altarpiece.

Construction of the cathedral started in the early fifteenth century at the site of a great mosque which was built by the Moors in the late twelfth century. The mosque had been damaged by an earthquake and in July 1401, the Chapter met and decided to replace the damaged mosque with a new, grand cathedral. "We shall build such a large church that those who will see it finished will consider us crazy."

Construction of the new church started in 1402 and was completed in 1517; however, work on the interior continued until the early twentieth century. The cathedral is one of the world's largest.

The most famous sights in the cathedral are the dazzling gilded altarpiece and the tomb of Christopher Columbus. More tombs can be found in the crypt under the altar, where Castilian kings and queens from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are buried.

The most spectacular part of the interior is undoubtedly the golden Retablo Mayor (main altarpiece) in the main chapel of the Seville Cathedral. This magnificent masterpiece was designed by the Flemish craftsman Pierre Dancart, who worked for forty-four years on the reliefs, starting in 1482. The altarpiece was finally finished in 1564 with help from other artists.

St. John Bosco was a 19th century Italian priest who reached out to young people to remedy their lack of education, opportunities, and faith.

John Bosco was born in August of 1815 into a family of peasant farmers. John's father died when he was two years old, but he drew strength from his mother Margherita's deep faith in God.

Margherita also taught her son the importance of charity, using portions of her own modest means to support those in even greater need. John desired to pass on to his own young friends the example of Christian discipleship that he learned from his mother.

At age nine, he had a prophetic dream in which a number of unruly young boys were uttering words of blasphemy. Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary appeared to John in the dream, saying he would bring such youths to God through the virtues of humility and charity.

This dream would help John discern his calling as a priest. But he also sought to follow the advice of Jesus and Mary while still a boy: he would entertain his peers with juggling, acrobatics, and magic tricks, before explaining a sermon he had heard, or leading them in praying the Rosary.

John's older brother Anthony opposed his plan to be a priest and antagonized him so much that he left home to become a farm worker at age 12. After moving back home three years later, John worked in various trades and finished school in order to attend seminary.

In 1841, John Bosco was ordained a priest. In the city of Turin, he began ministering to boys and young men who lived on the streets, many of whom were without work or education.

The industrial revolution had drawn large numbers of people into the city to look for work that was frequently grueling and sometimes scarce. John Bosco was shocked to see how many boys ended up in prison before the age of 18, left to starve spiritually and sometimes physically.

The priest was determined to save as many young people as he could from a life of degradation. He established a group known as the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales and became a kindly spiritual father to boys in need. His aging mother helped support the project in its early years.

John's boyhood dream came to pass: he became a spiritual guide and provider along with his fellow Salesian priests and brothers, giving boys religious instruction, lodging, education, and work opportunities.

This success did not come easily, as the priest struggled to find reliable accommodations and support for his ambitious apostolate. Italy's nationalist movement made life difficult for religious orders, and its anticlerical attitudes even led to assassination attempts against him.

But such hostility did not stop the Salesians from expanding in Europe and beyond. They were helping 130,000 children in 250 houses by the end of John Bosco's life. "I have done nothing by myself," he stated, saying it was "Our Lady who has done everything" through her intercession with God.

St. John Bosco died in the early hours of Jan. 31, 1888, after conveying a message: "Tell the boys that I shall be waiting for them all in Paradise."

He was canonized on Easter Sunday of 1934, and is a patron saint of young people, apprentices, and Catholic publishers and editors.

Desiring the Salvation of Everyone—including My Son's Murderer

What is it about the comment sections of websites that attract one's attention?

I suppose that there's something intoxicating about sharing one's thoughts in print, utterly democratized by the internet, unfiltered and raw. Add anonymity to this cocktail and people summon the courage to say almost anything.

I usually avoid such corners of the internet, but I confess that I did linger over news comment sections when my family and I were in the news. It is admittedly hard not to be curious, wondering what people were saying about us.

The circumstances that thrust us into news headlines were unpleasant. On March 10, 2022, my 23-year-old son Michael was on his way to his job as a fifth-grade schoolteacher, when he was abruptly murdered in cold blood. The young man who committed this crime is now serving a 40-year sentence in a Texas prison, parole eligible in half that time.

The online commentary was generally compassionate. People said some very nice things about the remarks I made in the courtroom when I confronted the perpetrator for the first time in person.

Mingled with the kindnesses, however, I found a lot of vengeful sentiment. Anonymous commenters spoke of the awful things they would do if they had been in my shoes. Some took pleasure in thinking about the horrors that await the perpetrator in the Texas prison system; several expressed a desire that the perpetrator burn in hell for eternity.

So many of these angry, vengeful, hateful things are very easy to say. And when it's your son that has been murdered, they're even easier to feel.

All of this came to mind again because of the recent decision by President Joe Biden to commute the death sentences of 37 prisoners on federal death row, leaving them to live the rest of their days in prison without parole. Some reactions to this decision sounded all too familiar, but one stood out from the rest.

Our former-and-new President, Don-

ald Trump, had this to say: "To the 37 most violent criminals, who killed, raped, and plundered like virtually no one before them, but were just given, incredibly, a pardon by Sleepy Joe Biden. I refuse to wish a Merry Christmas to those lucky souls but instead will say, GO TO HELL!"

Over the last two or three years, I have developed a renewed appreciation for what it means to believe what you say. Each day of my life, I would repeat the words of the Lord's Prayer: forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. We are called as Christians to forgive, and every single day, we ask Our Lord to forgive us by that same measure. If I am to be forgiven by Our Father in heaven, I need to forgive my brother.

I knew in my mind that I needed to forgive the young man who took my son's life, but I struggled to believe it in my heart. What helped to soften my hardened heart was reflecting on Jesus' parable of the lost sheep in the Gospel of Luke.

"Just so, I tell you," says, Jesus, "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Lk 15:7).

More joy in heaven? There can be more joy in an eternity with God? If a cold-blooded killer repents and turns towards the light, there will be more joy in heaven. Why not the guy who killed my son? Who am I to stand in the way of more joy in heaven at his repentance?

These were some of the thoughts, the key moments of grace that helped me on the journey to forgiveness. I can earnestly desire the eternal salvation of the young man who killed my son. Salvation is the ultimate goal of the repentance that Jesus preached constantly in the Gospels.

Put another way, if you desire some-



John Echaniz in court on January 10, 2024, addressing the man who murdered his son Michael.

one's damnation, that puts you actively at odds with the Lord. Siding with Satan is not a great place to be. None of this merciful talk is meant to dismiss the need for justice. We mustn't forget that justice is a virtue. I do not think it is a stretch to say that at least some of the 37 convicts deserved the death penalty, and I can completely understand the frustration of the families who sought that outcome and were deprived of it. I know such pain firsthand.

The young man who killed my son "only" murdered one person, so capital punishment was never even discussed. In time I came to realize that any search for justice on this earth would end in frustration; no amount of earthly retribution can return Michael to us. There is no happiness to be found in suffering. How hard do we have to look to see that "an eye for an eye" doesn't end well? The imperfections of mankind will never provide the true and complete justice found only in Our Father in heaven. I'll do the best I can in this world and focus on reunion with my son in the next one.

"Go to hell" is easy to say, trivially or earnestly. It is a sentiment in which no joy can be found. More joy can be found in repentance.

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you.

You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction.

Former Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards Dies at 67

Cecile Richards, former president of Planned Parenthood and feminist activist, passed away at the age of 67 after battling cancer, leaving behind a legacy of advocating for women's rights and abortion access.

Richards founded a new political action group called Supermajority after stepping down from Planned Parenthood, aiming to empower women as a voting bloc and encouraging them to become politically active.

President Biden and first lady Jill Biden expressed deep sadness over Richards' death, praising her as a



leader of utmost character who fearlessly championed civil rights causes and advanced women's reproductive rights and equality.

The Sweetest
time of the day is
when you pray
because you are
talking to the
one who loves
you the most.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for 2024-2025

Chaplain
Grand Knight
Deputy Grand Knight
Chancellor
Recorder
Treasurer
Advocate
Warden
Inside Guard
Outside Guard
1 Year Trustee
2 Year Trustee
3 Year Trustee
Program Director
Membership Director
Faith Director
Family Director
Community Director
Life Director
District Deputy
Field Agent
Newsletter Editor

Vacant
Pete McCabe
Bill Bannon
Greg Musick
Rocco Totino
Rich Pettit
Peter Nunes
Joe Ghezzi
Wayne Nuñez
Joe Moore
Rick Hendrickson
Bill McClelland pgk
Jim Patton
Bill Bannon
Jim Cullinan
Peter Nunes
Mike Keeser
Pete Ganio
Kevin Manning
Bill McClelland pgk
Tony Crevello
Jim Hand