

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249 Newsletter Editor: Jim Hand

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
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All Saints' Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1. The day is dedicated to the saints of the Church, that is, all those who have attained heaven. Although millions, or even billions of people may already be saints, All Saints' Day observances tend to focus on known saints --that is those recognized in the canon of the saints by the Catholic Church.

Generally, All Saints' Day is a Catholic Holy Day of Obligation, meaning all Catholics are required to attend Mass on that day, unless they have an excellent excuse, such as serious illness.

Prayer for All Saints Day

Dear God, thank you for the example of the Saints. We desire to join in their company, worshipping you forever in Heaven. Please help us follow their footsteps, and yours, Jesus Christ. Please help us to conform ourselves to Your image, seeking Your will in all things, as the Saints did. Please help us to devote ourselves, and all that we do, to Your glory, and to the service of our neighbors.
Amen.

All Souls Day is a holy day set aside for honoring the dead. The day is primarily celebrated in the Catholic Church, but it is also celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and a few other denominations of Christianity.

According to Catholic belief, the soul of a person who dies can go to one of three places. The first is heaven, where a person who dies in a state of perfect grace and communion with God goes. The second is hell, where those who die in a state of mortal sin are naturally condemned by their choice. The intermediate option is purgatory, which is thought to be where most people, free of mortal sin, but still in a state of lesser (venial) sin, must go.

Purgatory is necessary so that souls can be cleansed and perfected before they enter into heaven.

Immortal God, holy Lord, Father and Protector of all You have created, we raise our hearts to You today for those who have passed out of this mortal life.

In Your loving mercy, Father of all, be pleased to receive them in Your heavenly company, and forgive the failings and faults they may have done from human frailty.

Your only Son, Christ, our Saviour, suffered so cruelly that He might deliver them from the second death. By his merits may they share in the glory of His victory over sin and death.

For all the faithful who have died we pray, but in particular for those dear to us, parents, relatives and friends, nor do we forget all who did good to us while on earth, who helped us by their prayers, sacrifice and example. We pray also for any who may have done us harm, and stand in special need of Your forgiveness.

May the merits and prayers of our Virgin Mother, Mary, and those of all the Angels and Saints, speak for us and assist them now.

*This we ask in Christ's name.
Amen*

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Pete McCabe

Brothers, November will be an important month for our council. We will be conducting our first membership drive - ever! Moving forward, we will

be conducting these events twice a year (November and April) led by our Worthy Membership Director, Gregg Appel. It is important to recruit new Knights and keep our council active and refreshed with new ideas.

The first important event is the Ministry Fair on Sunday, November 12. Our council will have a table in the Parish Center which needs to be manned after each Mass. We will have Form

100s and other membership material available; however, talking about our council with prospective Knights will win the day. Hopefully each of you can relate your experience in this council in a positive way.

Then on the weekend of November 18 and 19, we will be conducting our membership drive. We will speak before each Mass, wear our blue shirts to Mass, and help man the table in the gathering space.

Finally, on Monday evening (7p) on November 20, we will have a Fraternal Benefits Night in the Parish Center. Tony Crevello, our insurance agent, will present to existing and prospective Knights the benefits available from the Knights of Columbus. A good turnout by members will make a good impression on the new folks. Please help when asked for these important membership events. Thanks again for all you do!

LAUGHTER
is the best
MEDICINE

A jellyfish has existed as a species for 500 million years, surviving just fine without a brain. That gives hope to quite a few people. Doing nothing is hard, you never know when you're done.

Don't vacuum and listen to loud music on your headphones at the same time. I finished three rooms until I realized the vacuum wasn't even on.

Don't drink while driving - you might spill the beer.

Every rule has an exception. This rule is no exception.

Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.

An opportunist is the guy who drinks the water while the pessimist, the optimist and the realist are arguing about how full the glass is.

Somebody said today that I'm lazy. I nearly answered him.

I made a huge to-do list today. I just need to figure out who's going to do it.

**CONSIDER THIS: JESUS
BECAME ONE OF US AND
LIVED OUR LIFE IN ORDER TO
EXPERIENCE OUR DEATH,
SO THAT HE COULD BREAK
THE POWER OF DEATH.**

DON'T BE AFRAID.
for I am with you
ISAIAH 43:5

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. --Eleanor Roosevelt

A wise man can learn more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer.

The best exercise for the heart is to reach down and help someone up.

General Who Headed Notre Dame Cathedral Rebuilding Dies at 74 While Hiking in Mountains

The French army general appointed by President Emmanuel Macron to oversee the reconstruction of Notre Dame Cathedral will not see the reopening of the pearl of France Dec. 8, 2024. Army Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin died Aug. 18 while hiking in the Pyrénées mountains.

He is believed to have fallen on Mount Valier in southwest France at an altitude of 8,694 feet, according to The Guardian, which reported "mountain gendarmes" discovered the general's body after he did not report to a mountain checkpoint. He was 74.

Philippe Jost, chief operating officer of the Rebuilding of Notre Dame Cathedral said in a statement that "It is with infinite sadness that we have learned of the accidental death of Army General Jean-Louis Georgelin."

A practicing Catholic, he was asked by Macron to lead the efforts to rebuild Notre Dame Cathedral in what is seen as a record speed of five years after the April 2019 fire.

"The determined pursuit of the cathedral's restoration, to ensure its reopening to worship and visitors in 2024, so dear to the general's heart, is the best tribute that all of us, with all our partners, architects, craftsmen and artisans, can pay to his memory. In our grief, we are working towards this goal with a determination stronger than ever," Jost wrote. Georgelin was known for his kindness and sense of humor.

Four years after a devastating fire, the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is to reopen Dec. 8, 2024.



General Jean-Louis Georgelin

The History of Bingo and Its Ties to the Catholic Church



Bingo arose in the U.S. during the Great Depression. By 1934, Americans were organizing 10,000 Bingo games a week. Is there any other single word that expresses both exuberant success and one that is closely associated with Catholicism as Bingo?

Though Bingo is closely associated in the public imagination with Catholicism, the game's origins are by far more interfaith and ecumenical.

An early version of this game was created in Italy called Il Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia. ("The Italian Lottery Game") around 1530. French and German versions developed later in the 19th century.

It was popularized and commercialized by Edwin Lowe, a New York toy

salesman and the son of Jewish Polish immigrants. He came across the game being played in Atlanta in December 1929. Lowe took the idea home with him and produced two versions — a 12-card set for \$1 and a \$2 set with 24 cards.

This is where the game got interesting — and Catholic. Several months after the game hit the market, Lowe was approached by an unnamed Catholic priest from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, who had seized upon the game thinking it the solution to his problem of financing the parish school. He bought several sets of the game and invited his parishioners to play the game. But as each set had multiple copies of the same cards, Father was saddled with handing out a lot of prizes each time Bingo! was called.

So he approached Lowe. The manufacturer instantly saw the great possibilities of Bingo being used as a fundraiser, but to make it possible, a great many more cards with unique combinations of numbers would have to be created to make it feasible.

Lowe approached Columbia University mathematician Carl Leffler, asking him to create unique, non-repeating numbered Bingo cards. By 1930, Leffler was printing 6,000 different Bingo cards.

The priest from Wilkes-Barre saved his parish school and spread the good news about Bingo to a Knights of Columbus Hall in Utica, New York, which was also saved. By 1934, Americans were organizing 10,000 Bingo games

a week. Bingo soon became as American as baseball, mom and apple pie.

However, not every Catholic was keen-o on Bing-o, labeling the fundraising mechanism as a game of chance that had no place in a house of God. Among these party poopers was New York's mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, who feared that criminals would get involved in the game and turn it into a racket. The mayor ordered a temporary Bingo ban in 1938. A few years later, the New York State Legislature passed a law that restricted Bingo to churches and synagogues as long as the proceeds went toward a charitable cause.

In 1942, the Archdiocese of New York put a halt to all Bingo games within its borders. The law was rescinded a few years later when cooler, more fun-loving heads prevailed.

But though it has a long association with Catholicism, synagogues and other Christian churches often held a weekly Bingo game to supplement their dues and collections.

In this regard, Bingo is a truly American game — or, at least, a truly Americanized game.

Some contemporary people might think Bingo old-fashioned, but they don't know what they're talking about.

~~by Angelo Stagnaro

Members Volunteer for Florida's Special Olympics

On Sunday, 1 October, the Worthy Grand Knight, Pete McCabe, Worthy Deputy Grand Knight, Bill Bannon, and Worthy Council Life Director, Kevin Manning, volunteered at the Special Olympics-Florida event at Cove Cay Golf Club in Clearwater. This event involved numerous athletes who participated in either 9 holes of golf or a skills competition. Pete, Bill, and Kevin assisted with the skills competition.

This involved six events: chip, short-putt, long-putt, pitch, drive with iron, and drive with wood. The athletes have five attempts at each event and scored by how close they got to the pin or how far they drove the ball. It was great to see how much these athletes enjoyed competing no matter how they did. One athlete, Max, was able to get two holes in one and then proceeded to dance with joy each time. A T-shirt and meal were provided, and a short awards ceremony concluded the event. Highly recommend these events to anyone wishing to spend a few hours with these amazing athletes. Brother Kevin Manning will keep us apprised of future opportunities.



GK Pete McCabe and DGK Bill Bannon



Council Life Director Kevin Manning



Special Olympics Athlete Oath

Let me win.

But if I cannot win.

let me be brave
in the attempt.

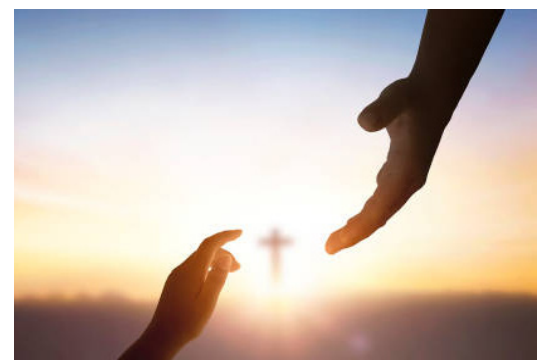
The Hour of Our Death: A Sacred Moment

Have you ever been with someone as they passed from this life to the next? As a priest, I have been. I also hear many stories about someone's last moments before drawing their dying breath. The richness of our Catholic tradition preserves the stories of holy men and women and the last moments of their life. The reasons vary, but often these stories testify to the holiness of the individual, or that someone witnessed something so profound they had to share it.

Scripture tells us about the death of St. Stephen, who saw the heavens open and later prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:59). St. Bernadette Soubirous, near death, prayed: "Holy Mary, pray for me a sinner." St. Padre Pio died with the

names of Jesus and Mary on his lips. St. Teresa of Kolkata professed her love for Jesus: "Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love." St. John Paul II said, "Let me go to the Father's house."

One of my elder parishioners, a gentleman whose memory was stolen by dementia, in the moments before his death began saying the name of his wife, who died a few years earlier. Could he have experienced something other worldly? Another parishioner, a 35-year-old husband and father whom I accompanied during the final weeks of his life, called out the name of Jesus as he took his last breath. Did he, in that moment, see his Lord and Savior, the one in whom he believed?



The hour of death is a sacred moment because it is a passing from this life to the one promised by the Lord. It marks the end of our earthly pilgrimage and the beginning of our pilgrimage to the kingdom of heaven. ~ Fr. Edward Looney

Rocco Totino Shares His Life Story

I emigrated from Italy to NYC on my 11th birthday and began learning to speak English. Five years later my English had improved, so I took an aptitude test, hoping to be accepted at Aviation High School in Long Island City, the only FAA certified high school in the country. Over 2500 students from the five Boroughs apply each year; only 20% are accepted. I was one of them.

My high school teachers, along with my family, provided guidance that I hold dear to this day.

To take the FAA Power plant and Airframe exam I had to become a US citizen, which I did at age 17. I sent an application to attend a college located in Manhattan, and to my surprise I was accepted.

College was difficult. I was an average student and struggled to maintain a C in English classes. I waited to take the required English class till my junior year. Linda, a freshman and my future wife, was enrolled in the same English class.

As a college freshman I enrolled in ROTC, but I did not complete the last year in order to look for work and marry Linda.



The college office gave me a lead to contact a company that was looking for an Italian-speaking individual with some mechanical or electronic engineering knowledge. I interviewed and was hired. I was employed at that firm as a buyer for 5 years.

In 1977 Linda and I made the decision to move from Brooklyn to Long Island. We thought it was a better place to find work and to raise our children. Over the next 5 years I was employed by several major electronic distributors. My work experience from 1973 to 1984, along with my aviation background and fluency in Italian, was a perfect fit working at GEC Marconi UK/Italian Company in the USA.

In 1982 I joined my first K of C council, helped with the Boy Scouts and coached kids' soccer. Our young family of three boys and one girl kept Linda busy. She managed to attend

evening classes to complete a master's degree in early education. To supplement our income I worked Saturdays in my uncle's business driving a truck and supervised his tree-planting business.

In 1990 GEC Marconi Division on Long Island closed. I was asked to transfer with a promotion. It was a difficult decision. We sold our home of 14 years and moved to Georgia. Linda agreed to move, provided the

church was close to our house and all four kids could be placed in Catholic schools. We found a home one mile from St John Neumann Regional Catholic School. Our kids were accepted. In time, Linda completed her second master's degree, this one in Theological Studies. She was offered a job at St John Neumann Regional School as teacher and later, Religion Coordinator. Linda enjoyed working with young kids.

I remained employed by GEC Marconi for 36 years before I retired. Our plan was to keep our home in GA and travel a lot. I liked working on old cars. I hoped to finish work on my 1936 Dodge and my 1965 Mustang. Linda often said that if I didn't have grease on my new white shirt I wasn't happy! We moved to Florida to look after our only grandson.

Reflecting on my life experiences, I thank God for the blessings I've received and friends and business associates that became part of my life. I have friends in Scotland, England and too many to count in Italy. As time passes, a handful of true friends continue to keep in touch. The Knights of Columbus is a brotherhood of people from all walks of life dedicated to perform good deeds for the Church and community. America has given me the opportunity to grow as a person. I look back and thank God for watching over me and my family. I have tried to make a small contribution to the community. The Knights give me that platform.

Vivat Jesus! And God Bless America!

Woman Released after Being Arrested outside Abortion "Buffer Zone"

Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, the woman twice arrested for silent prayer outside U.K. abortion clinics, has received a police apology and confirmation that she will not face charges for violating a local "buffer zone" protection order.

Though Vaughan-Spruce said she would return to the clinic to pray, she warned that her treatment has implications for the future of basic freedoms in the U.K.

"I should never have been arrested or investigated simply for the thoughts I held in my own mind," Vaughan-Spruce said. "Silent prayer is never criminal."

She was arrested for praying in a buffer zone outside an abortion clinic. Local authorities had declared a

Public Space Protection Order near the clinic, using a legal mechanism intended to prevent antisocial behavior.

Vaughan-Spruce is the director of March for Life UK and helps support women in crisis pregnancies. She has regularly prayed near abortion clinics for 20 years.

"Now that authorities have twice settled on the conclusion that silent prayer is not a crime, I am thankful to resume my practice of praying silently for women in crisis pregnancies," she said.



Knights of the Month

July 2023

August 2023

September



Jim Cullinan



Ralph Frizzle



Kevin Manning

Alpha Begins another Season of Serving Actual and Spiritual Food

On Saturday, October 10, the Knights supported the Alpha Ministry Dinner. A total of 9 Knights assisted that day by cooking, cleaning, and serving beer and wine for a total of 4 service hours. The support by this council is a contributing factor to the evening's success.



Our Council Continues Serving Sunday Breakfast

As you all know, on the 3rd Sunday of every month, our council provides breakfast for our parish community after the 7:30, 9:00, and 10:45 Masses. This delicious fare consists of pancakes, bacon, and scrambled eggs. The baconator (Worthy Deputy Grand Knight) and Worthy Grand Knight get there at 5:00 am to start cooking the bacon. Volunteers stream in all morning to help with

setup, cooking, serving, and cleaning. This month a few Columbiettes also showed up to help. In October we served 104 people, which included Fr. Blum, Deacon Fred, and Sr. Lucia. Happily, we more than covered our cost of the event which is always a positive. Hopefully, you can help at a future breakfast or stop by to eat and say hello. We are always happy to see our Brother Knights.



This picture is of JoAnn Bannon using our latest tool to scramble our 30 dozen eggs!

Annual Blessing of the Pets Take Place

On Saturday, October 7, a few Knights (Brother Tim Condron, Brother Rick Hendrickson, Worthy District Deputy Pete Grasso, Brother Fred Belzel, DGK Bill Bannon, and GK Pete McCabe) assisted with the St. Jerome Pet Blessing. The group setup two dozen chairs for the event and directed traffic to the north side parking lot near the Christopher Columbus statue. Fr. Blum presided over the event with a group blessing and then individually blessed each pet and owner. Erica provided some lovely mu-

sic throughout the event. Cleanup (putting the chairs back) was done in no time at all.



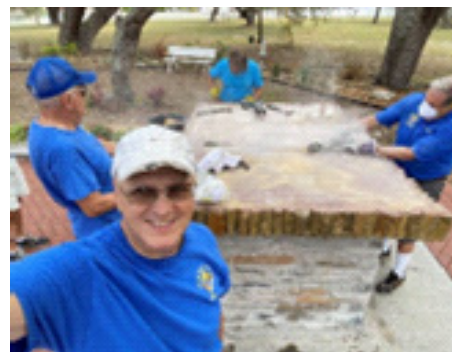
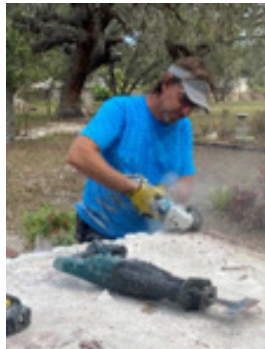
Altar Top Gets Makeover from Brothers

On Saturday, October 7, a few Knights (Brother Mike Keeser, Brother Rocco Totino, Brother Dan Timmons, DKG Bill Bannon, and GK Pete McCabe) gathered to repair the Grotto Altar top.

As many of you know, the altar top has been bubbling and discoloring since its creation.

The repair began by removing the existing top which was a dusty and sticky job. Once it was removed the work crew headed to Floor and Décor in Clearwater to purchase tile for the altar. The pictures should give you a good idea of the work involved. On Saturday, October 14, the second half of the job included adding border tile to the three large tiles in the center of the altar. On Sunday, October 15, the final phase of the project added the grout between the tiles and surrounding stone.

We recommend that everyone get out to the grotto to see the new altar top. We hope you are as impressed and proud of the project as we are. Special thanks to Mike Keeser who provided his expertise to this effort and allowed the rest of us to be his helpers.



Catholic Farmer Booted from Farmers Market for Views on Same-sex Weddings Wins in Court



The Tennes family at their farm, Country Mill Farms, outside of Charlotte, Michigan.

A Michigan farmer can continue selling his products at a farmers' market after a court ruled that city officials in East Lansing, Michigan, violated his religious freedom when they barred his participation in the event because of his Catholic views

on marriage. "We're very grateful for all the prayers and support we've received," Country Mill Farms owner Steve Tennes," said. "This is a victory for all Americans to live out our beliefs." Country Mill Farms was banned from

selling fruit from his orchards at the farmers' market after Tennes posted on Facebook that he and his business adhere to the Catholic teaching related to same-sex marriage. Because Tennes offers part of his property as a wedding venue but does not rent out the property for same-sex weddings, officials claimed he violated the city's nondiscrimination policies.

U.S. District Court Judge Paul Maloney found that the city's refusal to allow Tennes to participate in the farmers' market violated his constitutional rights under the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. Tennes said that he and his wife "always made faith part of our business," noting that the company's mission statement mentions glorifying God and the farm hosts an annual "Pick a Peck for People" event, in which customers pick apples for four hours and then donate them to local food banks.

"Our faith has always been a central part of our life," Tennes said. "Our Catholic faith is something we try to incorporate in everything we do. It goes far beyond Sunday morning." It took seven years for the issue to be resolved.

Eternal Wall of Answered Prayers Being Constructed

The building of a major Christian monument in the heart of the United Kingdom is expected to be completed by 2026.

The Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer will be an interactive monument made up of 1 million bricks, each representing an individual's answered prayer, and will be situated between the M6 and the M42 motorways near Birmingham, England.

Using an app, visitors will be able to hold their phone up to a brick and discover the specific answered prayer it represents with either audio, video, or text.

The founder of this ambitious project, Richard Gamble, a Christian, said that the inspiration for the prayer monument first began during Easter 19 years ago when he heard God's voice telling him to carry a cross around his U.K. hometown of Leicester.

"At the time I was considering being a pastor of a church," he said. "And I just sort of prayed and said 'God, what do you want to do now?' And it's difficult to describe, but it was sort of like a flash image through my head and this idea of building a national landmark wall made of a million bricks where every brick represents a story of an answered prayer."

"So, I just sort of went home and my wife recognized the little twinkle in my eye and was like 'ohh, what's going on here?' And I said, 'I think we're going to build a national landmark.' So that was 19 years ago, in 2004, and I had 10 years of praying not knowing what to do because I'm not an architect, I'm not an engineer, I can't even put up a set of shelves in the house. But nine years ago, I just felt like it was time to get it started. And you know, it's been an amazing roller coaster journey."

Gamble's vision began to bear fruit after a successful crowdfunding appeal to buy a piece of land. Then the project began to gain momentum.

"I needed somebody who understood building, so I prayed," he said. "That day I met somebody who understood how to build it and he said, 'I know how to build it. I'll help you.'"

"Then another day I was at church and I'm praying that somebody will be there to help me with planning permission, and it just happens that one of the leading barristers in the country on planning applications for faith projects is in the room! Some people might put this down as a coincidence but I think a wise man once said 'the

more I pray, the more coincidences happen.'"

Gamble and his team are hoping to have 200,000 prayer testimonies by the time the project opens and had already received 36,726.

He said among the testimonies was the story of a single mother who had run out of food and prayed the Our Father for "daily bread" when her doorbell rang and it was a supermarket delivery man offering her a free delivery of food.

Gamble also stressed that the Eternal Wall of Answered Prayer was not simply about sharing testimonies where God has answered prayers with a "yes."

"When we pray, God listens and he answers, but sometimes the answer is no, and so we've got some stories where people have prayed and the answer's been no but that the outcome is really powerful," he said.

Gamble also received a powerful story from a young couple who lost a child at an early age.

"They look back on it years later and say actually the experience, and God walking with them through that grief and suffering, has enabled them to find comfort and contentment in life, whatever their circumstance. I think that's a really powerful story."

The Eternal Wall project has been supported by a variety of different Christian denominations, including Catholics.

Monsignor Timothy Menezes, dean of



St. Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham and pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Aston, was invited to support the project as a Catholic representative during the summer of 2016 and has been involved ever since.

In an email exchange with CNA on Aug. 14, Menezes said the wall will be "a Christian symbol in an increasingly secular society."

Menezes' main hope and prayer for the wall is that it will give Christians "a sense of pride that our faith is still as relevant as ever in the modern world; that those who do not know prayer in their life will be able to ask their questions; that people can come to see that faith, in general, is a power for good, when people of faith unite."

Menezes also explained that he had arranged for a tree to be planted on the same site as the Wall of Prayer, sponsored by the Catholics of Birmingham, as part of a larger organizational effort for a number of trees to be planted, with each one representing a hero of faith.

"The faith hero we identified is St. Maximilian Kolbe," Menezes



"If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

Oncology Doctor Discusses Near-Death Experiences

Thirty-seven years ago I was an oncologist resident, learning about how best to treat cancer using radiation. These were the pre-internet days, so I did my research in the library. One day I was flipping through a large volume of the Journal of American Medical Association when I came across an article describing near-death experiences.

It stopped me in my tracks. All my medical training told me you were either alive or dead. There was no in-between. But suddenly, I was reading from a cardiologist describing patients who had died, then come back to life, reporting very distinct, almost unbelievable experiences.

From that moment, I was fascinated with near-death experiences or NDEs. I define a near-death experience as someone who is either comatose or clinically dead, without a heartbeat, having a lucid experience where they see, hear, feel emotions, and interact with other beings. Learning more about these experiences has fundamentally changed my view of the universe.

When I finished my residency, I started the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation. I started collecting stories from people who had NDEs and evaluating them with the mind of a scientist and doctor. I make opinions based on evidence and came into this as a skeptic. But in the face of overwhelming evidence, I've come to believe there's certainly an afterlife.

No two NDEs are the same. But as I studied thousands of them, I saw a consistent pattern of events, emerg-

ing in a predictable order. About 45% of people who have an NDE report an out-of-body experience. When this happens, their consciousness separates from their physical body, usually hovering above the body. The person can see and hear what's happening around them, which usually includes frantic attempts to revive them. One woman even reported a doctor throwing a tool on the floor when he picked up the wrong one—something the doctor later confirmed.

After the out-of-body experience, people say they're transported into another realm. Many pass through a tunnel and experience a bright light. Then they're greeted by deceased loved ones, including pets, who are in the prime of their lives. Most people report an overwhelming sense of love and peace. They feel like this other realm is their real home.

These experiences may sound cliché: the bright light, the tunnel, the loved ones. But over twenty-five years of studying NDEs, I've come to believe that these descriptions have become cultural tropes because they're true. I even worked with a group of children under five who had NDEs. They reported the same experiences that adults did—and at that age, you're unlikely to have heard about bright lights or tunnels after you die.

Other people report seemingly unbelievable events, which we can later confirm. One woman lost consciousness while riding her horse on a trail. Her body stayed on the trail while her consciousness traveled with her horse as he galloped back to the



Dr. Jeffery Long

barn. Later, she was able to describe exactly what happened at the barn because she had seen it despite her body not being there. Others, who hadn't spoken to her, confirmed her account.

I'm a medical doctor. I've read brain research and considered every possible explanation for NDEs. The bottom line is that none of them hold water. There isn't even a remotely plausible physical explanation for this phenomenon.

While I'm passionate about NDEs, my day job still revolves around helping patients fight cancer. I don't tell my patients about my NDE research. And yet, my work with NDEs has made me a more compassionate and loving doctor.

I'm able to help my patients face life-threatening diseases with increased courage and passion. My goal is to help them have more healthy days here on Earth. But I firmly believe that if and when they pass, they will be at peace.

~~by Jeffery Lon

Columbiettes Continue to Grow, Assist the Divine Mercy of Jesus Knights of Columbus Council

The Columbiettes, Divine Mercy of Jesus, celebrated the initiation of six more parish women on October 11 before the general membership meeting. To date, the Columbiettes have 47 active members with more women scheduled to be initiated in January.

The Columbiettes assist the Knights in their commitments and projects. In the near future, the Columbiettes will establish their own projects to benefit the parish and the community.

On the second Wednesday of each month, the Columbiettes meet in the St. Jerome Parish Center. For additional information about the Columbiettes, please contact Claudia McClelland, President, at 724 766-2615 or lilmacteacher@gmail.com



The Miracles of Lourdes, Part 2 of 5

Editor's note: The stories of the miracles at Lourdes are very inspirational. I will include one at a time for the next few newsletters.

In 1902, Marie Bailly and Dr. Alexis Carrel's paths crossed on a train from Lyons, France, to Lourdes. Carrel was agnostic (despite his Catholic upbringing) and was set to figure out what scientific reason why so many cures were happening at the Grotto of Lourdes. Marie Bailly was a faithful Catholic traveling to Lourdes to hopefully receive a cure for her acute tuberculous peritonitis and considerable abdominal distension with large hard masses.

When they arrived at Lourdes, Marie received three pitchers of water poured over her stomach—with Carrel close behind taking notes. By the third pour, a fantastical sensation overtook her; her stomach flattened, and her pulse returned to a normal rhythm.

Marie then stood up and the next day was able to attend to herself without help and began her journey home on hard train benches and seemed to be completely healed. After her healing, Marie joined the Sisters of Charity—to work with the sick and the poor

in a very strenuous life—and died in 1937 at the age of 58.

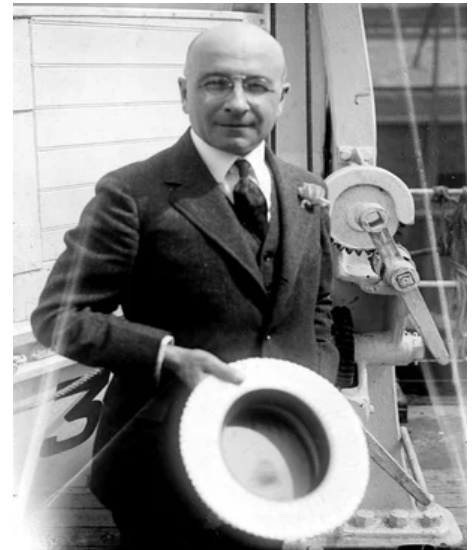
As the rapid and inexplicable cure of Marie Bailly became public, news outlets were publishing that Carrel did not believe that the cure was miraculous. These publications prompted a response from Carrel that the religious community was too quick to assume the nature of the cure and that the medical community was stubbornly refusing the idea the cure may have been miraculous.

His response saw reality to his fears, and Carrel's career on the faculty of Lyons came to an end. However, this change in direction led him to receive his Nobel Prize for his work in vascular anastomosis.

Despite witnessing two miracles firsthand (Marie Bailly's cure and the curing of an 18-month-old blind baby), Carrel could still not bring himself to accept and promote the reality of miracles. It would not be until after Sr. Marie Bailly's death that in 1942, Carrel announced that he believed in God, the immortality

of the soul, and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

When Dr. Alexis Carrel passed away in 1944, he was given the Last Rites of the Church and joined the Lord in the same faith from his childhood.



Dr. Alex Carrol

Conscience and Church Teaching: Getting It Right

In June, 2023, 31 Catholic members of Congress released a statement in favor of abortion rights. They see no contradiction between the position they are taking and their Catholic faith because, they say, "The role of informed conscience is at the very heart of our faith. We are called to follow our conscience."

These lawmakers quote from the Catechism: "A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself." But they leave out the very next sentence: "Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed."

It is easy for our consciences to become faulty. They can be misled by false information or swayed by appeals to our emotions. We can also sear our consciences through sin. The first time a person steals, he may feel bad about it because his conscience tells him it is wrong, but the second or third time he feels less bad, and by the 10th time he may well have constructed for himself a believable narrative that his theft is

actually an okay thing to do.

The Bible and Sacred Tradition are markers against which we test our consciences. A person may convince himself that stealing is good, but the seventh commandment stands in judgment of that conviction, showing that the conscience is in error.

Along the path of development, it is possible for a person's conscience to be in tension with a teaching of the Church without that person being disloyal or disobedient. Even principles clearly defined by the Church might require applications to daily life that are complex, and therefore there may be more than one morally acceptable choice in certain situations. No one, not even the pope, can tell you what your conscience says nor compel you to go against it. But is this the case when it comes to the Church's teaching that abortion is contrary to the moral law?

The first direct example of this teaching came in a document called The Didache before the end of the 1st century, and that teaching has been reiterated many times since. It has been taught definitively not just by one pope or one council but by many popes and many councils. It

has a clear and easily demonstrated in God's Word, particularly the fifth commandment. If your conscience is leading you to reject this teaching, it is far more likely that there is something wrong with your conscience than that God is saying something unique to you that goes against what He has said to the whole Church consistently for 2,000 years.

"When men advocate the rights of one's conscience," said Cardinal Newman, "they in no sense mean the rights of the Creator, but the right of thinking, speaking, writing, and acting, according to their judgment, without any thought of God at all." To exercise our consciences properly as Catholics, we must always be willing to accept the Church's teaching over our individualism.



Tennis Player Thanks God for Championship Win



After 19-year-old Coco Gauff won her first Grand Slam title at the women's tennis championship in the U.S. Open, she dropped to her knees, put her elbows on the bench, clasped her hands, and brought them to her forehead with her eyes closed.

To many watching it was clear that the first American teenager to win the major since Serena Williams won in 1999 had paused her celebration to pray to God.

That's why many online, including Pro Football

Hall of Famer Tony Dungy, took issue with the way ESPN's SportsCenter described Gauff's actions following the match.

"Coco Gauff took a moment to soak it all in after winning her first Grand Slam title," SportsCenter wrote along with a video of her.

"I hate to break this to you SportsCenter, but Coco Gauff was not 'soaking it all in' at this moment. She was praying," Dungy, an NFL analyst and outspoken Christian, tweeted in response to SportsCenter.

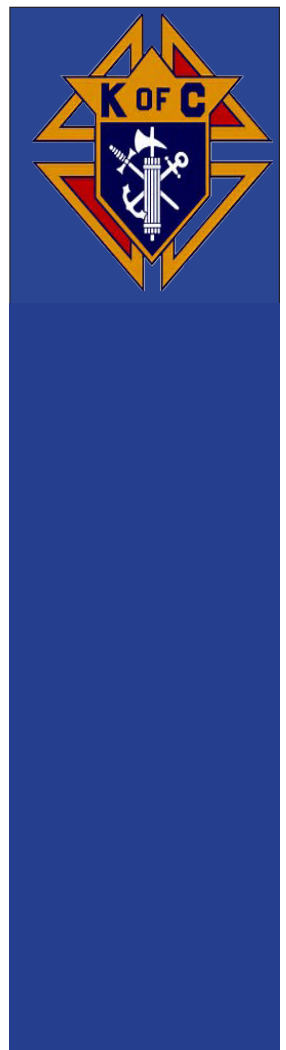
"She has been very open about her Christian faith in the past. It seems pretty obvious what she is doing here," he added.

Dozens of comments on the post echoed the same sentiments.



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Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for 2023-2024

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