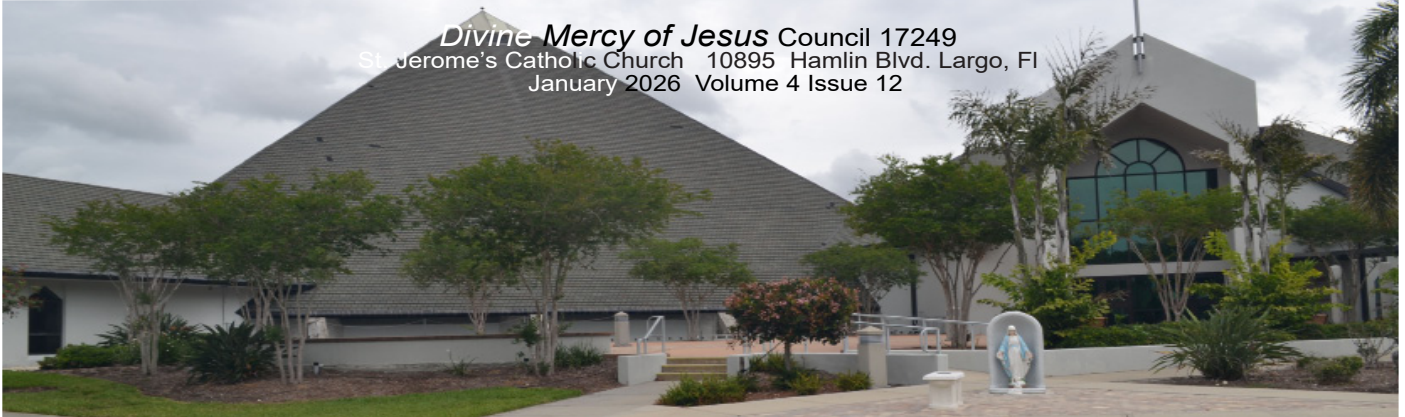
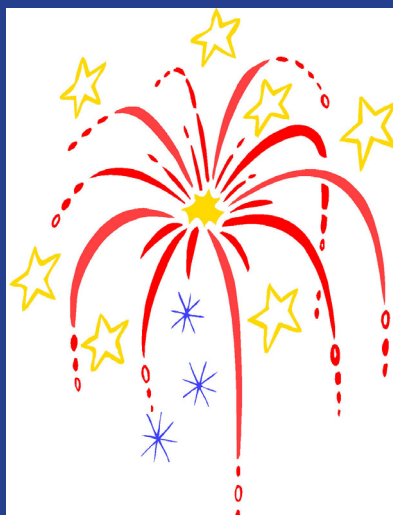


# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

*Divine Mercy of Jesus* Council 17249  
St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL  
January 2026 Volume 4 Issue 12



## Happy Birthday, America! 250 Years!



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FROM AROUND THE WORLD  
OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

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Most Americans say that a college degree isn't worth the cost.

Pope Leo says that dialogue is always the answer to tense situations.

European Union recognizes homosexual marriages on all member states.

Catholics with disabilities look forward to International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Florida protects unborn children after 12 weeks.

Catholic organizations may now dismiss trans employees.

American artist to paint Pope Leo's portrait.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Rocco Totino

Happy New Year!

The first half of our fraternal year is over, and the majority of our man-hours are in running Bingo (2400 man-hours). The revenue generated provides financial assistance to our parish and community needs. We will continue to be good stewards of this money and get it in the hands of those who need it most. Thank you to all Bingo volunteers.

From July to December the council has logged 875 man hours offering a helping hand to tend our parish grounds. Our monthly Knights' breakfast is well-received, serving over 110 guests each month. We helped with the Alpha spaghetti dinner, participated at a Eucharistic Encounter at Amalie Arena and the International Festival. Knights volunteered to work two weekend Masses assisting our Life Director Kevin Manning's Baby-Bottles Drive. 100% of donations (over \$7K) went to Foundation of Life pregnancy center. Knights volunteered to set up the Nativity scene and participated in the Our Lady of Guadalupe rosary precession. We had a good turnout at our Advent/Christmas Dinner. Knights who are able to attend these events make our council stronger.

Going forward, we will need to focus on January-to-June activities. There are numerous opportunities to volunteer. Your commitment to our council says a lot about you and your desire to assist our parish and community. If you have a suggested project or activity, submit a motion prior to the officers' meeting (1st Wed. of each month) for consideration.

So, what plans do we have for 2026? We will continue to support our Life programs such as Kimberly Home, Foundations of Life (Catholic Charities), and Special Olympics. We will also continue to support our Family programs such as the St. Jerome Early Childhood Center and other Catholic education; our Community programs such as the Blessing Bags, the St Jerome Lifeline ministry, and Pinellas Hope, and our Faith programs such as seminary support. Last but certainly not least, Alpha, and the Legion of Mary. The February newsletter will report the financial support we donated to Life, Faith, Family, and Community. But we need your good ideas moving forward. Please work with our four program directors: Kevin Manning (Life), Mike Kesser (Family), Pete Ganio (Community), and Pete Nunes (Faith). Together we can make the first half of 2026 a blessed and fruitful new year.

Thanks for all you do!

Vivat Jesus



Stefan Jasienski, a Polish Catholic prisoner, etched the Sacred Heart of Jesus into the wall of Cell 21 in Block 11 at Auschwitz, using nothing but his fingernails.



LAUGHTER  
~ is the best ~  
• MEDICINE •

Coffee is the answer. but I forgot what the question was.

I tried to be normal once. Worst two minutes of my entire life.

I'd like to help you out. Which way did you come in?

Are you from Tennessee? Because you're the only 10 I see.

My favorite exercise is a cross between a lunge and a crunch. I call it lunch.

Whatever you're doing, always give 100%, unless you're donating blood.

Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it most never use it.

My neighbors are listening to great music, whether they like it or not.

Duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound.

I intend to live forever. So far, so good.

Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week.

When I was a kid my parents moved a lot, but I always found them.

Life is short. Smile while you still have teeth.

The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limitations.

I'm writing a book. I've got the page numbers done.

A lot of people are afraid of heights. Not me. I'm afraid of widths.

This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits.

Cats seem to fight a lot, but there are plenty of kittens.

Today I will live in the present. However, if it is unpleasant, I will eat a cookie.



## Various Council Activities



Fr. Mike as St. Nickolas



Youth carrying Our Lady of Guadalupe.  
L-R Casey, Mia, Daryn and Andre'

Our council's newest members



Knight of the Month



Bill Bannon and Rocco Totino

Please go to our next general meeting, introduce yourselves, and congratulate our new brothers.

If you find yourself drowning in sin, remember that your lifeguard walks on water.

If you feel like quitting, remember why you started.

Be thankful to all who said no to you. It is because of them that you are doing it yourself.



## North Dakota Supreme Court Upholds Law Protecting Nearly All Unborn Children from Abortion

The North Dakota Supreme Court cleared the way for the state's law prohibiting abortion in nearly all instances overturning a lower court decision that had temporarily blocked the measure.

In a split opinion the court reversed an earlier decision from District Judge Bruce Romanick, who claimed that "pregnant women in North Dakota have a fundamental right to choose abortion before viability exists."

Three of the five justices — Daniel Crothers, Lisa Fair McEvers, and Daniel Narum — sided with

Romanick, the North Dakota Monitor reported. But Chief Justice Jon Jensen and Justice Jerod Tufte found the law constitutional. North Dakota's constitution requires at least four justices to strike down a law.

Tufte and Jensen wrote that the state constitution "does not imply a right to abortion as such, and evolving public opinion on abortion cannot create one — only a constitutional amendment can do that."

The law prohibits nearly all abortions except in cases of rape or incest within the first six weeks of

pregnancy or when deemed necessary to prevent a mother's death or serious physical injury. Violations carry penalties of up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Pro-life leaders and lawmakers praised the decision as a major victory for protecting unborn children. North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley called the law an important pro-life legislation, enacted by the people's Legislature. He added that his office has a solemn responsibility to defend the state's laws, "and today those laws have been upheld."

## Study Finds Women Can Experience Emotional Distress Decades after an Abortion

A new study of U.S. women aged 41-45 found that nearly half of those who had abortions report moderate to high emotional distress — even decades later.

While most post-abortive women reported little or no distress and felt confident in their decision, a "significant minority" — about one-quarter — continue to experience

strong negative emotions such as grief or sadness.

The study found no evidence that emotional distress fades with time, suggesting that for some women,



the distress can persist long-term. Nearly half of women in the U.S. who have had abortions report moderate to high post-abortion emotional distress (PAD) decades after the

decision, a study recently published in the International Journal of Women's Health Care found.

Father D. Paul Sullins, a senior research associate at the Ruth Institute who recently retired from being a sociology professor at the Catholic University of America, conducted the study. He examined the emotional states of 226 women who had undergone

an abortion an average of 20 years earlier — women who were part of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 women who were between 41 and 45 years old in 2022.

## Pope Leo XIV appeals to Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker to veto a bill legalizing assisted suicide

The Pope said he made his opposition to the bill clear in a November conversation with the governor.

Leo told Pritzker it was important to defend the value of life and that every life is important before his return to Rome.

Pritzker signed the assisted suicide measure, ardently opposed by Catholic leaders, into law Dec. 12, 2025.

"I spoke very explicitly with Gov. Pritzker about that," the Pope said, "But we were very clear about the necessity to respect the sacredness of life from the very beginning to the very end. And unfortunately, for different reasons, he

decided to sign that bill. Very disappointed about that."

People should use Christmas-time to think about the value of life, the pope added.

"I would invite all people, especially during this Christmas season, to reflect upon the goodness of human life. God became human like us to show us what it means really to live a human life. And I hope and pray that the respect for life will once again grow in all moments of human existence, from conception to natural death," the Pope said.



Pope Leo

## Pope Leo Suppresses Fundraising Started During Pope Francis' Final Days

Less than a year after its creation, Pope Leo XIV has formally dissolved the Commission for Donations to the Holy See, a fundraising body established by Pope Francis in early 2025. The decision follows months of study and recommendations from the Vatican's top financial oversight authorities.

In a papal decree, Pope Leo XIV formally shut down the initiative that Pope Francis had launched to spur contributions from the episcopal conferences and other potential benefactors in support of the mission and charitable work of the Holy See.

The move followed an extensive review of the Vatican's fundraising system. According to Vatican News, the Council for the Economy has devoted particular attention to the issue and issued several recommendations aimed at reshaping the cur-



rent institutional structure responsible for managing funds. A separate working group will design proposals for a revised, more effective fundraising model for the Holy See.

## Google Has Unveiled Its Searches for 2025

It spotlights the events, people and pop-culture moments that prompted the biggest spikes in search interest.

Charlie Kirk topped this year's list as the No. 1 trending search in the U.S. The Turning Point USA founder was shot and killed while speaking at a campus event at Utah Valley University on Sept. 10, fueling a nationwide surge in search activity.

Rounding out the top five were Netflix's hit film "KPop Demon Hunters," the viral plush collectible Labubu,

Apple's iPhone 17 and the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," which was signed into law in July.

Other major spikes in search activity included New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, the AI platform DeepSeek, the government shutdown, the FIFA Club World Cup, and tariffs, according to Google.



## 17 Pro-Life Activists Arrested in Memphis

Seventeen pro-life activists were arrested last month during a peaceful blockade at a Planned Parenthood center in Memphis, Tennessee. Event organizers described the blockade as the largest act of pro-life civil disobedience in more than three decades.

Participants blocked entrances to the Memphis facility before officers carried them away. Police had issued repeated warnings before making arrests for trespassing on private property. Videos of the arrests were also taken. Among those taken into custody were several well-known figures in the pro-life movement.

Earlier this year, a woman named Joan Andrews Bell spoke shortly

after her release from federal prison, where she reflected on the conviction that drives her to continue pro-life civil disobedience.

"If they're gonna kill their children in my neighborhood, they will have to do it over my body," she said. "You can beat me up, drag me away, throw me in prison, but you have to get rid of me first if you're going to kill their children where I live."

The Memphis location was deliberately chosen for its civil-rights



symbolism. Organizers pointed to the city's history as the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and the home of the National Civil Rights Museum, framing the blockade as an echo of earlier conscience-driven protest movements.



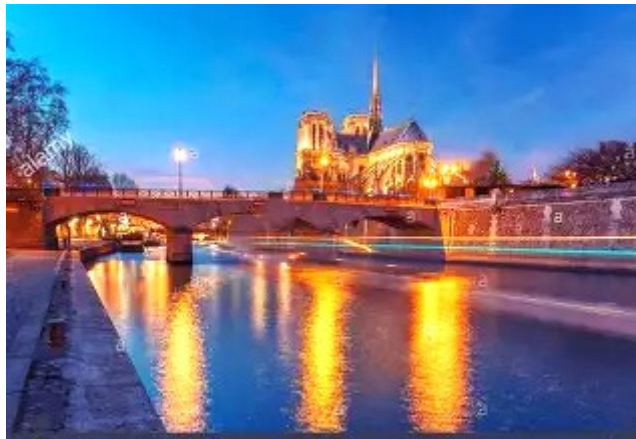
## Notre-Dame Welcomes More Than 11 Million Visitors Since Its Reopening

After the blaze that devastated the landmark, the Paris cathedral was reopened following several years of renovations.

A year after reopening to the public, Notre-Dame cathedral has drawn more than 11 million visitors, flocking to admire its restored pale stone and minimalist furnishings after the blaze that devastated the Paris landmark.

The cathedral was reopened after several years of renovation work, in the presence of heads of state, including French President Emmanuel Macron and US president Donald Trump.

Notre-Dame has welcomed approximately 11 million visitors since reopening, about 30% more than before the fire. In comparison, the Louvre museum in Paris welcomed 8.7 million visitors last year and seven mil-



lion tourists pay to see the Eiffel Tower each year.

The cathedral has surpassed its annual attendance levels of an estimated eight to nine million people before the fire, which tore through the roof and framework of the masterpiece of 12th-century Gothic art.

Since reopening after a colossal renovation project funded by €843 million in donations, the site draws lines of people stretching across the cathedral's front.

Individuals can still enter for free without reservations, but faced with the influx, Notre-Dame

has sought to regulate entries, particularly during services. More than 1,600 services are scheduled to be held, and the cathedral has seen a boom in pilgrimages, with over 650, a third of them from abroad.

While €140 million remain from donations, money is needed for future renovations.

## Priest Walks from Illinois to New York Against Inhumane Immigration Enforcement

After a month and a half of walking an average of 17 miles a day, 67-year-old Father Gary Graf said he is starting to get a little pain in one shin, but his broken ribs are getting much better, he said.

Graf, a Catholic priest from Chicago, began a journey on foot from Pope Leo XIV's childhood home in Dolton, Illinois, to New York City to bring attention to the plight of immigrants amid the sometimes-inhumane ways the Trump administration is treating them during its immigration enforcement actions.

He hopes to arrive at the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, where his own great-grandparents entered the country as immigrants.

A few weeks ago, when visiting a parish in Indiana, he was invited to ride a horse. He fell off as it galloped and broke several ribs, which led him to take one day off to recover. That day, friends walked in his place.

Graf, the pastor of the mostly Hispanic Our Lady of the Heights

Catholic Church in Chicago Heights and a longtime member of Priests for Justice for Immigrants, has committed his life to helping immigrants. Ordained in 1984, he spent five years as a priest in Mexico, serving a people with whom he fell deeply in love, he said.

He said that after initially feeling helpless watching the raids taking place against his beloved community in his hometown of Chicago, he felt a call that was directly from above to start walking.

Within weeks, he was on the road. He first spoke to an old friend about his idea, who immediately connected him with Lauren Foley, the head of a public relations firm. She immediately embraced the idea, and between her help and that of some young people who understand social media, a website as well as social media accounts were set up to chronicle his journey and to share the stories of immigrant families.

Of the immigrants on whose behalf he is walking, Graf said, "I look to

help people who get up every single morning to work and raise their families. If I am able to do this small gesture on their behalf, what a blessing it would be, what a privilege."



Father Gary Graf

## Illinois Becomes First Midwestern State to Legalize Assisted Suicide

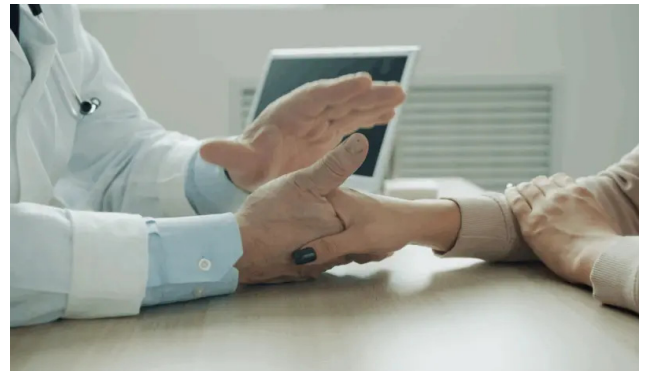
Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker recently signed legislation allowing terminally ill patients to take life-ending medication prescribed by a doctor, making Illinois the first state in the Midwest to legalize medical aid in dying. The governor announced his decision in a press release.

Senate Bill 1950, formally titled the "End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act," is commonly referred to as "Deb's Law" after advocate Illinois resident Deb Robertson, who has a rare terminal illness.

Death certificates will list the underlying terminal illness, not suicide, as the cause of death. Under the law, applicants must be adult Illinois residents with a prognosis of six months or less to live and must be deemed mentally capable of making their own medical decisions. The process requires multiple requests, confirmation by two physicians, and waiting periods. Patients must self-administer the medication. It prohibits coercion, permitting patients

to withdraw a request at any time. Cases must be reported to the Illinois Department of Public Health. The measure does not affect wills, insurance policies, or other legal agreements. The law does not require medical professionals to prescribe the medication if they don't want to. Death certificates will list the underlying terminal illness, not suicide, as the cause of death.

The law will take effect in September 2026, according to the release. "I have been deeply impacted by the stories of Illinoisans or their loved ones that have suffered from a devastating terminal illness, and I have been moved by their dedication to standing up for freedom and choice at the end of life in the midst of personal heartbreak," the governor said in his press release. "To-



day, Illinois honors their strength and courage by enacting legislation that enables patients faced with debilitating terminal illnesses to make a decision, in consultation with a doctor, that helps them avoid unnecessary pain and suffering at the end of their lives. This legislation will be thoughtfully implemented so that physicians can consult patients on making deeply personal decisions with authority, autonomy, and empathy."

## The Backstory of Why Pontious Pilate Washed His Hands in Public

Pilate washed his hands as a symbolic act to declare himself innocent of Jesus' death, despite his role in authorizing the crucifixion. Though he knew Jesus was innocent, Pilate feared the people and ultimately chose political safety over justice. During the trial, Pilate made repeated efforts to release Jesus. He publicly stated his belief in Jesus' innocence: "I find no fault in this Man." (Luke 23:4)

He attempted to placate the crowd by offering to release Jesus under the Passover custom, and even had Him scourged, hoping that would satisfy their bloodlust. (John 19:1-4). But the crowd, incited by the religious leaders, insisted on crucifixion.

Pilate's wife warned him through a divine dream: "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." (Matthew 27:19) Still, Pilate hesitated. He questioned Jesus privately, asked the crowd again, and even reminded them of Barabbas' crimes. But the people cried louder: "Let Him be crucified!" (Matthew 27:22)

Faced with mounting pressure and the threat of political repercussions, Pilate gave in. Before doing so, he made a dramatic gesture. When Pilate saw that he could not

prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You see to it."

This act was rooted in Jewish custom, where washing hands could signify innocence in a death (Deuteronomy 21:6-9). However, Pilate's hand-washing did not absolve him. He had the authority to release Jesus but chose not to exercise it. By handing Jesus over, he bore responsibility regardless of the gesture.

The crowd responded, "Let His blood be on us and on our children." (Matthew 27:25) This tragic statement underscored their rejection of Christ and willingness to take the blame, though they did not grasp the gravity of



what they were saying. Pilate's washing of hands is remembered not as a noble act, but as a failure to stand for truth. He feared man more than God and chose compromise over conviction.



# Bible Sales Are Rising Dramatically



Bible sales in the U.S. are booming this year, experiencing a 14% increase

from last year and hitting 18.4 million sold copies.

The Christian Science Monitor reported that the 2025 spike comes on the heels of another increase over 2023, when sales rose 20%. Another report stated that this

September alone, 2.4 million copies were sold "as part of a surge that coincided with the death of conservative Christian activist Charlie Kirk.

As the Monitor reported, increasing interest in the Bible has led publishers and religious leaders to consider possible causes, with some saying it signals a religious revival, some hypothesizing that more people are discussing religion now, and others crediting political figures who openly highlight their faith.

Amy Simpson, publisher of the Bible division of Tyndale House Publishers, told the Monitor that the sales increase "seems to be sustaining itself," making her believe that it's not just a fluke.

"There's another interesting thing that we see happening around us,

just in the public square, about people's openness to spiritual answers and to the Bible specifically," she continued.

According to the Monitor, Americans are turning to "specialty Bibles" with unique features and study Bibles rather than traditional text-only Bibles.

Some hope that rising Bible sales are an indication that more people are turning to religion amid anxiety, loneliness, or unstable situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. While some trends could encourage that belief — including large amounts of conversions and a report that shows young Catholics driving Christianity's rise in the United Kingdom.

Gallup found that more U.S. adults than ever say that religiosity's influence is increasing on society.

## Common Myths and Facts about the Rosary

**Only Catholics can pray the rosary.**

False. While rosaries are typically associated with Catholics, non-Catholics can certainly pray the rosary — and in fact, many credit it to their conversion. Even some Protestants recognize the rosary as a valid form of prayer.

**Praying the rosary is idolatry.**

False. Some have objections to the rosary, claiming it idolizes Mary and is overly repetitive.

Just like any practice, the rosary can be abused — just as someone might idolize a particular pastor or priest, a form of worship, or fasting. But the rosary itself is not a form of idolatry.

The rosary is not a prayer to Mary — it is a meditation on the life of Christ revealed in five mysteries "with the purposes of drawing the person praying deeper into reflecting on Christ's joys, sacrifices, sufferings, and the glorious miracles of his life."

When we pray the Hail Mary, we are not adoring Mary, we are asking for her intercession — just as we might ask a friend or family member to pray for us.

Second, any prayer can lose its meaning if we do not intentionally meditate on it. Focusing on the mysteries with purpose and intention is key to the rosary's transforming power. As one author encourages: "The rosary itself stays the same, but we do not."

**One can wear a rosary as a necklace.**

It depends. It is typically considered disrespectful and irreverent to wear a rosary around one's neck as jewelry, even though the Church does not have an explicit declaration against doing so.

However, Canon 1171 of the Code of Canon Law says that "sacred objects, set aside for divine worship by dedication or blessing, are to be treated with reverence. They are not to be made over to secular or inappropriate use, even though they may belong to private persons."

It is important to treat the rosary with respect and intention. If you intend to wear the rosary as a piece of jewelry, this would not be respectful and should be avoided. It goes without saying that wearing the rosary as a mockery or gang symbol would be a sin.

But if it is your intention to use the rosary and be mindful of prayer, then it could be permissible.

It is not uncommon in some cultures, like in Honduras and El Salvador, to see the rosary respectfully worn around the neck as a sign of devotion.

**The rosary is an extremist symbol.**

False. The Church's stance on traditional marriage and the sanctity of life could be evidence of extremism. Popes have urged Catholics to pray the rosary since 1571 — often referring to the rosary as a prayer weapon and most

powerful spiritual tool.

**The rosary is not biblical.**

Untrue! Most of its words come directly from Scripture.

First, the Our Father is prayed. The words of the Our Father are those Christ taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-13.

The Hail Mary also comes straight from the Bible. The first part, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," comes from Luke 1:28, and the second, "Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb," is found in Luke 1:42.

Finally, each of the decades prayed on the rosary symbolizes an event in the lives of Jesus and Mary. The decades are divided into four sets of mysteries: joyful, luminous, sorrowful, and glorious, the majority of which are found in Scripture.





# The History and Mystery of the Ark of the Covenant

The Ark was very special to God as a story about a man named Uzzah will show. The story of Uzzah and the Ark of the Covenant is found in 2 Samuel 6:1-7 and 1 Chronicles 13:9-12. As the ark was being transported, the oxen pulling the cart stumbled, and a man named Uzzah took hold of the ark. God's anger burned against Uzzah and He struck him dead. Uzzah's punishment does appear to be extreme for what we might consider to be a good deed. However, there are the reasons why God took such severe action. The Ark of the Covenant is a profound symbol of God's presence and covenant with the Israelites, representing divine guidance, law, mercy, historical, and religious importance. The Ark of the Covenant was a sacred chest built by the Israelites under God's instructions, as detailed in Exodus 25. It served as a tangible representation of God's presence among His people and was central to their worship and identity. The Ark was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold, measuring approximately 3.75 feet long, 2.25 feet wide, and 2.25 feet high. It featured a mercy seat adorned

with two cherubim, where God's presence was believed to dwell.

## Contents of the Ark

The Ark contained three significant items: The Tablets of the Ten Commandments: These stone tablets represented God's covenant and law, serving as a moral foundation for the Israelites.

A Pot of Manna: This was a reminder of God's provision during the Israelites' journey in the wilderness.

Aaron's Rod that Budded: This item symbolized God's chosen leadership and served as a sign against rebellion.

## Symbolism and Function

The Ark was not merely a physical object; it symbolized the relationship between God and His people. It was a place of atonement, where the high priest would sprinkle blood on the mercy seat during the Day of Atonement, signifying the covering of the people's sins. The Ark's presence assured the Israelites that God was with them, especially during battles.



## Legacy and Spiritual Significance

While the physical location of the Ark is unknown today, its legacy endures as a testament to God's desire for an intimate relationship with His people. It challenges believers to approach God with reverence and humility, seeking communion through faith. The Ark's disappearance marks a shift from physical symbols to a spiritual reality, where God's presence dwells within believers through the Holy Spirit.

In summary, the Ark of the Covenant is special not only for its historical and religious significance but also for its enduring symbolism of God's covenant, presence, and mercy towards humanity.

# Federal Court Upholds Ban on Crucifix in Seventh-Grade Class in Connecticut

Because of her activism from the bench, a trial judge ignored the Supreme Court precedent on religious freedom.

A grave violation of religious freedom continues in New Britain, Connecticut. The federal trial court denied a teacher's First Amendment speech and religion claims after officials suspended her for insubordination, involuntarily placing her in an administrative position for having the nerve to display a crucifix on the wall near her desk.

Ms. Marisol Arroyo-Castro, a devout Catholic, grandmother of five, with 33 years of teaching experience, regularly received exemplary evaluations" since working in New Britain in 2004. In December 2024, officials suspended Ms. Arroyo-Castro without pay for two days before placing her on administrative leave for refusing to remove the one-foot



crucifix on the wall near the desk in her classroom.

Officials disciplined her after a fellow seventh-grade science teacher and two students complained that Ms. Castro was exposing students to religion in the classroom. Officials claimed that because of the crucifix posed a threat she ran the risk of appearing to observers that she favored Christian over non-Christian students or that the school endorsed Christian beliefs, in violation of the school rules.

However, other teachers were allowed to have displays near their desks, including athletic team pennants, inspirational phrases, college decals, family and pet photos, action figures of Wonder Woman, a picture of the Mona Lisa, and other items with religious origins or connotations, including a picture of Santa Claus, a coffee mug, a Christmas tree, and a small photograph of a statue of the Virgin Mary.

After the parties were unable to resolve their disagreement through

mediation, the judge rejected Ms. Arroyo-Castro's claim that officials violated her First Amendment of free exercise of religious rights.

Denying Ms. Arroyo-Castro's request for a ruling enabling her to hang the crucifix, the judge argued that such relief was unavailable because she went beyond her official duties when she posted items on the classroom wall that students could see during instructional time. She decreed that because the wall decorations are not a part of her official duties and subject to the District's control, officials could ban the crucifix for the display of a religious message to her students.

The judge rejected Ms. Arroyo-Castro's reliance of a Supreme Court's 2022 ruling that educational officials could not prevent a football coach from praying silently on the field after games.

The judge eventually decided to transfer Ms. Arroyo to the district's central offices where she can display her crucifix.

# St. Jude: The Patron Saint of Lost Causes

St. Jude, also known as Thaddeus, was one of Jesus' 12 apostles.

He is believed to have written the letter of Jude, one of the shortest books of the Bible, and is thought to have been martyred in Beirut around 65 A.D.

He is typically depicted with a club or axe, symbolizing the way he died, as well as with a flame above his head, which refers to Pentecost.

Although Jude is not mentioned much in the Bible and had only one quote attributed to him in the Gospel of John (14:22), this quiet apostle is extremely popular among Catholics today.

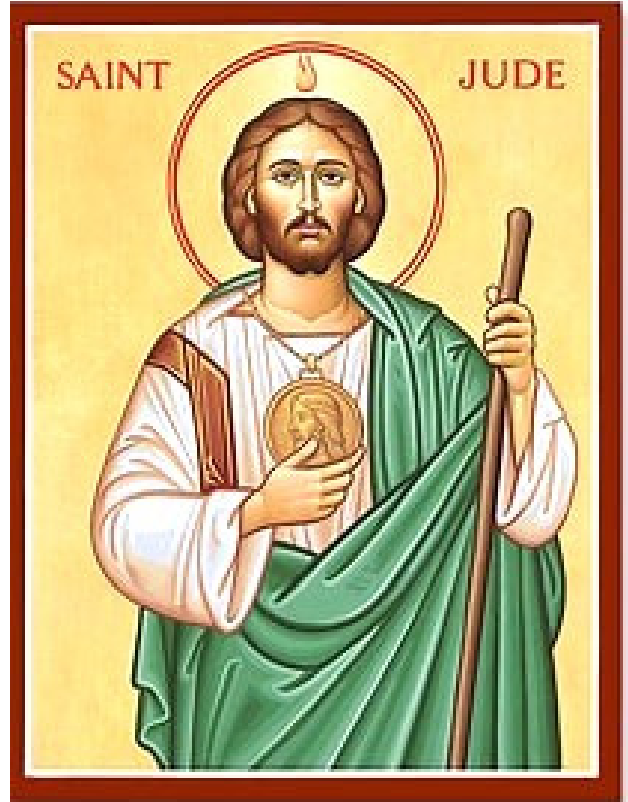
His popularity probably stems from his patronage of lost causes. An experience Jude had while in the city of Edessa is said to be the reason why he is associated with "impossible" situations.

According to the ancient Church historian Eusebius, while Jesus was still alive, the ruler Abgar V of Edessa was afflicted with an incurable and painful disease. He had heard of the miracles of Jesus and wrote him a letter requesting a visit. Jesus responded that he would send one of his disciples.

After Jesus' ascension into heaven, Jude went to evangelize near the city of Edessa and went to visit Abgar. Jude laid his hands on the sick ruler, and he was reportedly instantly healed.

Many people choose to carry the image of St. Jude on a medal or as a pendant on a necklace for comfort and call on him in their time of need and healing.

His feast is shared with St. Simon, who was also said to be a cousin of Jesus and is believed to have traveled to Persia with Jude, where they were both martyred.



## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



### Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for fraternal year 2025/2026

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

Fr Mike O'Brien  
Rocco Totino  
Rick Hendrickson  
Joe Coyne  
Bob Jodal  
Fred Belzel  
Rich Pettit  
Pete Nuñez  
Joe Ghezzi  
Clint Walker  
Joe Moore  
Jerry Kleber  
Bill Bannon PDGK  
Pete McCabe PGK  
Tim Kunish  
Rick Hendrickson  
Jim Cullinan  
Pete Nuñez  
Mike Keeser  
Pete Ganio  
Kevin Manning  
Bill McClelland PGK  
John Bucher  
Jim Hand