

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

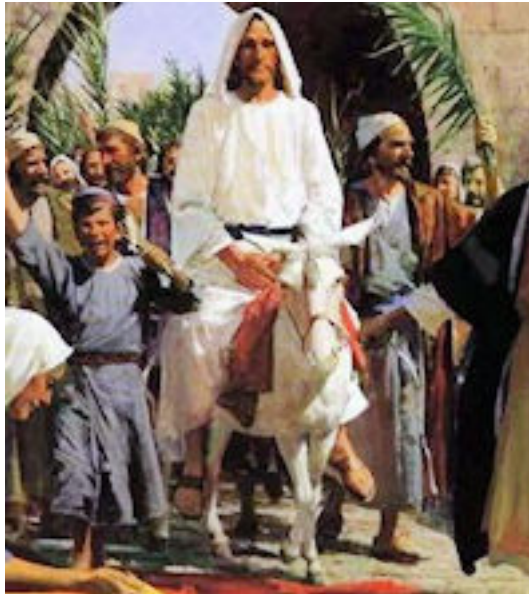
Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL
March 2021 Volume 2 Issue 12



PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2021

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt (Jn 12:13-15)."



Sunday, March 28, we commemorate Christ's entry into Jerusalem for the completion of the Paschal Mystery. In the old calendar before Vatican II, the Church celebrated Passion Sunday two Sundays before Easter, and then Palm Sunday was the beginning of Holy Week. The Church has combined the two to reinforce the solemnity of Holy Week.

The Palm Sunday procession is formed of Christians who, in the "fullness of faith," make their own the gesture of the Jews and endow it with its full significance. Following the Jews' example we proclaim Christ as a Victor... Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord. But by our faith we know, as they did not, all that His triumph stands for. He is the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God. He is the sign of contradiction, acclaimed by some and reviled by others. Sent into this world to wrest us from sin and the power of Satan, He underwent His Passion, the punishment for our sins, but issues forth triumphant from the tomb, the victor over death, making our peace with God and taking us with Him into the kingdom of His Father in heaven.

OUR MISSION

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



FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Blessed Sacrament found intact after explosion at Madrid parish

Vatican cardinal speaks out against social stigma for leprosy patients

Portugal's Catholic bishops express 'sadness and indignation' as parliament backs euthanasia bill

Iowa lawmakers advance constitutional amendment to exclude 'right to abortion'

Catholic doctor calls for independent inquiry into DNR notices for COVID-19 patients with learning disabilities

Irish bishops decry bill to legalize euthanasia

Petition asks Amazon to avoid nudity in Lord of the Rings series

Pope to soccer players from Sampdoria: "Sports are a path to holiness"

Chinese officials move to demolish Catholic church

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Pete Grasso

Brothers:
We are soundly in Lenten season. Thank you to all who assisted in the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday. We are all experiencing new ways to assist our priests and deacon in unusual times. Thanks to Brother Bill Bannon as he has figured out a traffic control system that rivals Disney. Today (Saturday) we assist with two confession locations; and thanks to all the brothers who assisted with putting this together. This went very smoothly.

This month marks one year since we began helping with outdoor confessions. We are meeting our mandate of assisting our clergy in providing the very important sacraments of the church. Very well done to all of our brothers who are giving. We constantly receive gratitude from our church family.

The grotto project continues to grow with a blessing by Fr. Tom and Fr. Rob on the 7th of February. As it has been said, this is a garden project and we continue to expand. We are seeing our church family spending time there under

the trees; we even had a visit from the 3 and 4 year olds from our church school. We will be initiating a program of selling bricks with names on it as we go forward, and also placing the Stations of the Cross close by. Our council will also be working with our other ministries to provide mutual means to honor our Mother.

Meanwhile, we are coordinating the placement of an old statue of Christopher Columbus from the city of St. Petersburg on church property. There is a long history of the statue in St. Petersburg near the old pier. The city decided to remove the statue to the "Bone Yard." There were some inquiries made; we connected with some interested Knights from Council 2105 and lo and behold the city has released the statue to St. Jerome's for safe keeping. We will be preparing a site selected by Fr. Tom on the north side of the church to place the 11 foot, 8 thousand pound statue. The statue was donated by the Knights of Columbus and the Sons of Italy back in 1960 to the City of St. Petersburg. We are honored to take possession and represent our Knights' councils throughout the region in addition to Catholics everywhere and those of Italian heritage.

One last reminder, it is that time of the year to consider the leadership for the upcoming year. We have a very talented council. Continue to pray for each other and our families. Vivat Jesus, Pete

FROM THE DESK OF OUR PASTOR



Fr. Tom Morgan

Dear Brother Knights:

How is your Lenten journey going? I thought I would share with you some suggestions made by RENÉE LAREAU FROM THE "BUSTED HALO," <https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/25-great-things-you-can-do-for-lent>

Here are 10 of Renee's list of 25. See the previous link for the complete list.

Sincerely Yours in Christ, Fr. Tom Morgan

1. Make a commitment to read the Sunday scriptures before Sunday Mass. In the same way that reading up on football players, opposing teams, and coaching strategies will help you experience a game more fully, familiarizing yourself with the readings ahead of time will help you experience them in a deeper way on Sunday.

2. Use Busted Halo's Lent Calendar, filled with Lenten-themed Daily Jolts and MicroChallenges to find new ways to practice the disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Each day of Lent, we'll offer an inspirational quote paired with a practical, challenging task that you can do that day to help keep your spiritual life on point. You can also find these challenges on our website, or when you follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

3. Try a new spiritual practice. Sign up for an hour of Eucharistic Adoration. Experience Mass at a parish that's made up of people from a different racial/ethnic group. Sign up for a silent retreat or spend at least one hour in silent meditation each weekend.

4. Think about what you usually spend your money on. Do you buy too many clothes? Spend too much on dinner out? Pick one type of expenditure that you'll "fast" from during Lent, and then give the money you would usually spend to a local charity.

5. Take something on — 40 days of letter writing, 40 acts of kindness, 40 phone calls to the important people in your life.

6. When you first sit down in front of your computer at work, or at the very end of your workday, try a 10-minute guided prayer from Sacred Space based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.

7. Go to (or watch) a weekday Mass one day during the week. Many parishes offer them early in the morning, at noon, or after work. Daily Masses are often more intimate and shorter than Sunday Mass.

8. If you don't have a cross in your apartment or house, buy a simple one and put it in your bedroom.

9. Use Busted Halo's InstaLent Photo Challenge for daily, creative doses of Lenten spirituality. Post a photo each day and encounter the themes of Lent on a visual, personal level.

10. Instead of turning on a streaming service for your next binge-watching session, read the entire Gospel of Mark in one sitting. As the shortest Gospel, it is the most concise story of Jesus' life, and the cross, a central Lenten symbol, plays an even more prominent role than in the other Gospels.

<https://bustedhalo.com/>



MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Richard Gregorio
March 2



Phillip Monnig
March 8



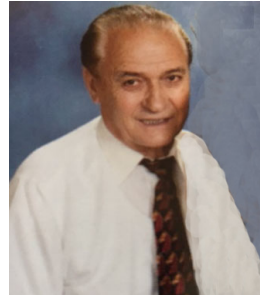
Jim Hand
March 11



Fred Melchiorri
March 12



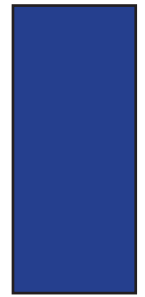
Jason Peterson
March 12



Frank Cortonuto
March 16



Danny Elliott
March 16



Bob Mills
March 20



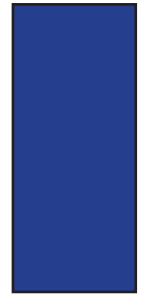
John Connova
March 20



Richard Bovin
March 22



Manny Barros
March 29



JOURNEY OF Faith

by Jim Hand

You're looking at the license plate of a friend of mine who owns a red Ferrari. When I first saw it, I scratched my head, wondering what the plate meant. Then the name on the plate started to look familiar. In a few moments it came to me. It was the name of John Galt, the main character in a book written in 1957: *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. In her book, she proposes a new philosophy, one she called Capitalism. It was very appealing to the masses for a while. Among its tenants are these ideas: Everyone needs to learn to be selfish. Selfishness, in her philosophy, means the following:

- Follow reason, not whims or faith.
- Work hard to achieve a life of purpose and productivity.
- Earn genuine self-esteem.
- Pursue your own happiness as your highest moral aim. Prosper by treating others as individuals, trading value for value.

These tenants are an over-simplification of her philosophy, but what strikes me the most is her disregard of a faith in a God.

She had quite a following for quite a while, but I'm guessing that few of you have not heard of her or her philosophy. She died in 1982. Apparently my friend has heard of her and believes in at least some of what she taught.

Although I somewhat understood her philosophy, it never was very appealing to me and even less appealing now. I'm guessing my Ferrari-owning friend of mine is a capitalist and a materialist, I'm not judging him, for I have concluded that material things do not bring happiness. Well, maybe for a while they do, then it's on to a wish list for the next material item: a larger TV, a newer car, that latest smart phone, etc. It's a never-ending cycle. Through advertisements and commercials we have been trained to believe that newer, better, larger, and faster is to be desired, that that is where happiness lies. The key word here is lies; it's all lies, aimed at getting us to buy more and more. Aren't you glad you are not a part of that?

Where would we be if Jesus had thought only of Himself? Do you really think that He would have given His life for us, suffering as He did? Why would He? It's counter-productive to capitalism and atheism.

Just as is the case with other false religions, Ayn Rand's philosophy has evaporated into the annals of time. Jesus Christ remains, of course, the same today and forever. Amen!



GROTTO IS DEDICATED

On Sunday, February 7, after the 11 a.m. Mass, a dedication of the new grotto of the Divine Mercy of Jesus Knights of Columbus Council 17249 was held on the new grotto grounds. There was a total of about 45 people there: Knights of Columbus, 2 priests, 1 sister, parishioners, and the head sacristan.

Fr. Tom's comments were like a homily as he praised the talents, hard work, and faith of the Knights, especially Joe Ghezzi who headed up the project. Fr. Rob also helped by leading the prayer of the faithful.

It was a windy, chilly day but hearts

were warm with a glow of love for one another as we basked in the beauty of the grotto and the work that went into it for generations to come. And all is not finished yet. There is still some ground work to be done, electricity to be hooked up, an altar to construct, some inscribed pavers to put down, and other odds and ends.

Grand Knight Pete Grasso thanked all the Knights for their dedication and perseverance and reminded them to stay tuned for more instructions.

Advocate Gregg Appel added to the ceremony by singing the *Ave Maria*, accompanied by prerecorded music.

Sacristan Joanne Biamonte aided Fr. Tom by holding his book and holy water container as he blessed the statue of Mary.

There are stones that circle the rosary for anyone who would like to walk it. There are also benches for anyone who needs to rest and enjoy the harmony of being under the oak trees with the Blessed Mother. Hopefully, the time spent here will fill our faith reservoir.

At the end of the ceremony, Music Director Tom Kurt led us in *Salve Regina*. Vivat Jesus, the Blessed Mother, Our Father Who art in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit.



OUR
LADY
OF
LOURDES





Jim Hand

Friends:

I thoroughly enjoy writing my Journey of Faith articles each month. By doing that, I remind myself of how good God has been to me. Without his graces and my good sense to become a Christian and be guided by Jesus's principles, I don't know what my life would have been like.

Likewise, I think I should give any and all of you the opportunity to reflect on your Journey of Faith, to

live them and share with us. Please give this some thought. I will be overjoyed to include your journey memories instead of just mine. Just email them to me, and I'll take it from there. On another note, I want to personally thank all of you who have been helping Joe Ghezzi on the grotto project. I have

been trying to share with you in each newsletter how things are progressing, and indeed they have. Little by little we can see how the grotto has come to fruition. What a joy it was to see it completed and to have it dedicated.

As a reminder, there are still other touches to be made. Too much remains to be done to hold up the entire project, so now that things look completed enough to function for any parishioners who want to use it, we will certainly begin using it. We hope that electricity can eventually be added, plus some brick pavers. Also Fr. Tom would like to see Stations of the Cross around the pond. You will hear about that eventually. In the meantime, continue to thank God for all the talent He gave Joe Ghezzi and for the willing Knights who have helped him with willing minds and sore muscles.

If you have any ideas on how to make our newsletter better, please don't hesitate to let me know. I want it to be the best it can, all for the Glory of God.

LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK



nothing in this life is worth keeping if it means losing eternal life, not a job, not a family, not a group of friends, not even our very identity. The call is tough, but the eternal reward is well worth the temporary pain. The multitudes that followed Christ were convinced that He was going to bring a glorious kingdom to earth, freeing them from the oppressive Roman rule.

Even His own disciples were thinking this way (Luke 19:11). Misunderstanding the prophecies, they were shocked when He began to talk about carrying the cross (Luke 9:22). They left Him in droves because of these teachings. Simi-

larly, sometimes believers today misunderstand the call of Jesus as a call to health, wealth, and prosperity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The call of Jesus is a call to die, but today some, unwilling to accept a call to die, leave Him or simply change His message to something more pleasant.

But His message never guaranteed a pleasant life. Jesus instead guaranteed that trials would come to His followers (John 16:33). Discipleship demands sacrifice, and Jesus never hid that cost. He also promised that He would be there to give us the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-19), comfort us in our trials (James 1:12), and act as a faithful high priest who understands our struggles (Hebrews 2:17) and accomplish for us peace with God by His blood (Romans 5:1). In Luke 9:57-62, three different men expressed a willingness to follow Jesus. When Jesus asked them a few more questions, He revealed that their willingness was ill-considered. They had not counted the

cost of following Him. None of them was willing to take up his cross and forsake his own interests for Christ's. It seems clear that then and now, people always struggle to put their own ideas, plans, ambitions and desires to death and exchange them for His.

Have you ever wondered if you would be like these men? Consider these questions:

- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your closest friends?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant alienation from your family?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant the loss of your reputation?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your job?
- Would you still follow Jesus if it meant losing your life? In some places in the world, actual death is a real possibility when a person becomes a Christian. In other places, the consequences are different. The cost may be exacted emotionally rather than physically. But the lesson is clear: although following Jesus doesn't necessarily mean actual death, we should be willing to go to death or suffer anything rather than deny Him. Many times the temptation is more subtle. For most of us, there comes a point in our lives where we are faced with a choice—Jesus or the comforts of this life—and which one we choose speaks volumes about our love for Him.

Taking up our cross to follow Christ means, simply, commitment to the point of giving up our hopes, dreams, possessions, even our very life if need be. This is the attitude – the only acceptable attitude – of a true disciple. Jesus' followers regard the reward as worth the price. Jesus set the example for us in His death, to give us the gift of life: "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 16:25).

The phrase "a cross to bear" is a popular derivation of the words of Jesus: "Take up your cross and follow Me." While the phrase is commonly understood to mean acceptance of some burdensome task, the command to take up the cross is much more than a symbol of the difficulties experienced by humanity. Any person, whether a follower of Jesus or not, will suffer frustration and pain in this life. Taking up one's cross and following Jesus is something completely different.

The cross was an instrument of death. What Jesus is referring to is commitment to Him, even unto death—obedience to the extreme measure and willingness to die in pursuit of obedience. Death on a cross was not pleasant. It was painful and humiliating. The implication is that even if obedience is painful and humiliating, we should be willing to endure it for Christ.

By saying, "Take up your cross and follow Me" Jesus was giving us a word picture of the concept of "death to self," which originates in another saying of Jesus, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" (Luke 9:24-25). The idea is that



Early Childhood Center Enjoys Shoebox Nativity Project

The St. Jerome Knights of Columbus sponsored a Shoebox Nativity project to bring the spirit of Christmas to those who are isolated due to the pandemic. Families from our parish and Early Childhood Center participated in the creation of dioramas depicting the birth of Jesus. The requirements were that they use household materials and collaborate together as a family. The results were amazing! The best part, however, was sharing these Nativity scenes with residents of our local nursing homes. The staff at Palm Garden in Seminole relayed that they were very happy to select residents to receive the shoeboxes for Christmas. One resident was a 94-year old-woman who had been living there since November. At that time, she had



fallen at a friend's funeral and broken her hip. This deceased friend was a Catholic priest. The woman herself had been a member of a religious order earlier in life but had been obligated to leave in order to care for her aging parents. She cried tears of gratitude and joy upon receiving the Nativity which was a symbol of the faith she held so dear. Likewise, the other residents were touched by their gift of love. At a time when loneliness and isolation felt most painful, the shoeboxes brought a glimmer of hope to the Christmas season. You never know how much one small act of kindness can bless another person!
 ~~Phyllis Steele
 Early Childhood Center Administrator



Does Old Testament Expression Apply to New Testament Times?

The first time the expression "an eye for an eye" is used in the Bible is in Exodus 21:24. It is in a series of commands regarding assault and injury. The previous chapter of Exodus contains the Ten Commandments. God gave Moses these commands only three months after the Hebrews escaped slavery in Egypt (Exodus 19:1). Over 600,000 men, not including women and children, left Egypt, and scholars estimate about 2.5 million people were in the Exodus (Exodus 12:37).

Successfully traveling across the desert with 2.5 million relatives meant having a common set of rules and standards for everyone in the community. In Egypt, the Israelites had been slaves of Pharaoh. The Egyptian rulers were arbitrary and unjust. The expression, "Might makes right" summarizes the rule of law in ancient times.

The people of Israel were different than the nations around them. They didn't have a king or a pharaoh. The law was to be their guide and standard. The weakest or poorest person among them had the same rights as the wealthiest or strongest. Moses had spent significant time during the first three months of the Exodus settling

disputes among the people by informing them of God's decrees and instructions (Exodus 18:13-23). Bible scholars believe that Exodus 21 contains the summary of judgments in specific situations that form a type of case law for making future decisions.

If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. The judge took into account the husband's demands, but the final judgment was to be made by a judge as the court allows.

The law was to prevent arbitrary vigilante justice that could quickly escalate into a never-ending cycle of retaliation.

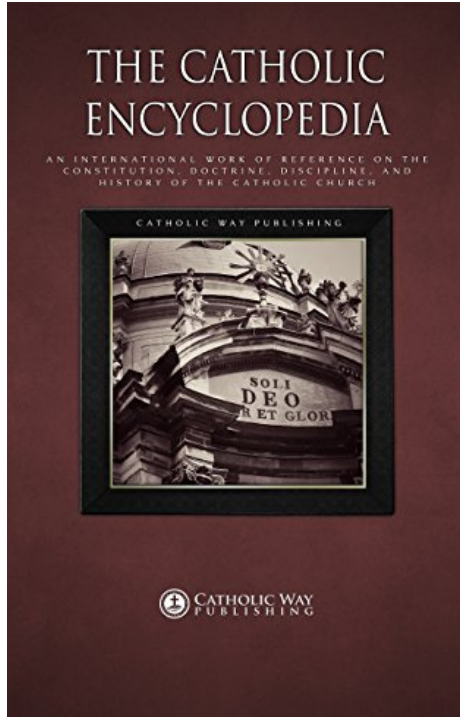
The application of "an eye for eye" had changed during the 1,300 years between the law given to Moses and Jesus' time on earth. In Jesus' time, it had become a means of justifying petty retaliation between individuals and an obligation not to overlook an insult or harm, rather than a standard by which judges award damages after a loss. The law which authorized retaliation (a principle acted upon by all primitive people) was a civil one. It was given

to regulate the procedure of the public magistrate in determining the amount of compensation in every case of injury but did not encourage feelings of private revenge. The later Jews, however, mistook it for a moral precept, and were corrected by our Lord: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Jesus is calling his followers to resist seeking revenge for petty and temporal insults. This passage is followed by Jesus' command in Matthew 5:44, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Jesus' examples of being slapped on the cheek, being sued for a shirt, or walking a mile are relatively minor compared to the original context of "eye for eye" found in Exodus. Jesus was calling his followers to rise above their desire for revenge in these minor and temporary situations. As Christians, we are to hold ourselves to a higher rule than the law. We must hold ourselves to the standard of love that Jesus gave us.



What Does the Catholic Encyclopedia Say about Stigmata?



Stigmata are so well established historically that, as a general thing, they are no longer disputed even by unbelievers, who now seek only to explain them naturally.

St. Catherine of Siena at first had visible stigmata but through humility she asked that they might be made invisible, and her prayer was heard. This was also the case with St. Catherine de' Ricci, a Florentine Dominican of the sixteenth century, and with several other stigmatics. The sufferings may be considered the essential part of visible stigmata; the substance of this grace consists of pity for Christ, participation in His sufferings, sorrows, and for the same end--the expiation of the sins unceasingly committed in the world. If the sufferings were absent, the wounds would be but an empty symbol, theatrical representation, conducing to pride. If the stigmata really come from God, it would be unworthy of His wisdom to participate in such futility, and to do so by a miracle.

But this trial is far from being the only one which the saints have to endure: "The life of stigmatics," says Dr. Imbert, "is but a long series of sorrows which arise from the Divine malady of the stigmata and end only in death: (op. cit. infra, II, x). It seems historically certain that ecstasies alone bear the stigmata; moreover, they have visions which correspond to their role of co-sufferers, beholding from time to time the blood-stained scenes of the Passion.

St. Catherine de' Ricci's ecstasies began when she was twenty (1542), and she stated that for twelve years, recurring with minute regularity. The ecstasy lasted exactly twenty-eight hours, from Thursday noon till Friday afternoon at four o'clock, the only interruption being for the saint to receive Holy Communion. Catherine conversed aloud, as if enacting a drama. This drama was divided into about seventeen scenes. On coming out of the ecstasy the saint's limbs were covered with wounds produced by whips, cords etc.

(Continued in the next newsletter)