



# THE EAGLE

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## *'Til Death – Not Divorce – Do Us Part*

# Know thyself – and you may wish to change thyself!

*“If you don’t sign it,” said the King, “that only makes things worse. You must have meant some mischief, or else you would have signed your name like an honest man.”*

*There was a general clapping of hands at this: it was the first really clever thing the King had said all day.*

*“That proves his guilt, of course,” said the Queen: “so, off with [his head].”*

*“It doesn’t prove anything of the sort!” said Alice. “Why, you don’t even know what they’re about!”*

*“Read them,” said the King.*

*The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. “Where should I begin, please your Majesty?” he asked.*

*“Begin at the beginning,” the King said very gravely, “and go till you come to the end: then stop.”<sup>1</sup>*

**W**hat is personality, when/how is it formed, and how can we “use” it to better friendships/marriage? In Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, where does personality find its origin in the King, the Queen, Alice, and the White Rabbit?

Long before conception, personality IS.



*“Why do couples argue and disagree with passion? It is most often due to personality differences.”*

How can this be? *Before* conception? Research describes human transgenerational patterns as patterns of behavior or personality characteristics that appear in successive generations, transmitted both across and within generations.

At conception, at the very edges of cognition, rests the Id, the component of personality soon to contain the instinctual, biological drives that supply one’s psyche with its basic energy, the libido. Id is the most primitive component of personality, located in the deepest level of the unconscious; it has no inner organization and operates in obedience to the pleasure principle – the foundations of desire. Add to personality transference and the awakening of Id, the mechanics of body memory – a human function of memory that begins soon after conception and continues to operate until about age 3: it is frequently the result of “trauma occurring during the period of infantile amnesia, leading to a sensimotor, rather than cognitive, encoding of traumatic events.”<sup>2</sup>

As personality gathers its instruction and momentum within its origins,

➤ PLEASE TURN TO ALICE ON PAGE 2

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the Ego, one's self, collaterally develops, particularly the conscious sense of self. In the quasi-technical sense, ego refers to the psychological phenomena and processes that are related to the self and comprise the individual's attitudes, values and concerns.<sup>3</sup> Ego is the component of personality that deals with the external world and its practical demands and controls the personal impulses that direct actions. It operates by the rules and principles of the Superego.

The cloak that enwraps self, and Id's desires, is the Superego – the moral component of the personality that represents society's standards and determines personal standards of right and wrong, or conscience, as well as aims and aspirations.<sup>4</sup>

Personality, in its awakening, is shaped by both environment and genetics: the former by home, parental, and guardian influences, the latter by inheriting a condition such as a mental disorder. Psychologists define personality as the configuration of characteristics and behavior that comprises an individual's unique adjustment to life, including major traits, interests, drives, values, self-concept, abilities, and emotional patterns shaped by hereditary and constitutional (physiological) tendencies; physical maturation; early training; identification with significant individuals and groups; culturally conditioned values and roles; and critical experiences and relationships.<sup>5</sup>

Judgments about personality functioning must take into account the individual's ethnic, cultural, and social background, differences attributed to acculturation following immigration, and with the expression of habits, customs, or religious and political values professed by the individual's culture of origin. All agree that personality helps determine behavior: patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

Personalities differ, as do fingerprints; no two are the same. Lewis Carroll imbued his characters with interesting personalities. Alice, for example, could be considered a normal young

girl, conceived and raised under the influence of mannered, normal parents, experiencing no trauma, and with the potential for good self-value and self-esteem. The White Rabbit, always shy in his vulnerability, would be illusive and timid. The King of Hearts, on the other hand, could be characterized as impulsive, demanding, and grandiose in his expectations – and imaginatively so, for he is the King. The Queen of Hearts' desire is to execute everyone first, and then have them testify later. She would represent an antisocial personality with little or no sense of good conscience or fair play.

Friends make friends with persons whose personality characteristics are generally similar. Though they sometimes clash, their disagreements usually weather their friendship and even strengthen it. Should the friendship become courtship, all the better, as good friends can form their courtship to eventually shape positive family values, enliven their children with beneficial underpinnings of Id, Ego, and, subsequently, foster positive personal values of high self-esteem and high self-confidence. Friendship offers the opportunity to understand a significant other's feelings and values and to be a considerate and helpful companion. This is especially true with friends who are engaged or who are married.

There are ways to discern not only your personality type, but also that of your favorite other(s). Inter-communication is best!

It is good for couples and friends to be aware of the other's personality traits and values. Why do couples argue and disagree with passion? In a healthy relationship it is simply most often due to personality differences: an "Alice" personality linked with a "White Rabbit" personality or, worse, a "Queen of Hearts" personality with a "King of Hearts" personality!

There are excellent personality assessments available for both individuals and couples through certified Life Coach analysis and, more cursorily, through the Internet. A licensed Life Coach can provide a systematic personality analysis that may not only identify the personality traits that could be the cause of inner conflict and interpersonal tension, but also offer suggestions for lifestyle change and personal growth directed toward both social and workplace benefit.

Understanding what underlies one's personality can offer personal insights into one's behavior and be the cursor to identifying needed areas of personality change and behavioral coping. Awakening self to one's inner strengths and potential can set the stage

for change, and thence to improving existing relationships.

As a start, readers can search the Internet. Enter "Personality Tests for Free" on Google, and choose from the list "Personality Test Based on Jung - Meyer-Briggs." Selecting this program offers personality tests that identify your traits and characteristics. Compare them to your spouses' and friends – are there conflicting traits or energies?

Know thy self... and perhaps you may wish to change thy self! Good, good friends are easy to keep; the secret is to listen, to understand, and to cultivate!

– Rev. Al Audette

NOTES

1. *The Annotated Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, Bramhall House, 1960. *Alice in Wonderland* first published in 1865.
2. *American Psychological Association Dictionary*, Washington, DC, 2007. Paraphrased in part for easy reading.
- 3-5. *Ibid.*



*“The secret to good friendships is: listen, understand, and cultivate.”*

*A new focal point for devotion in our Basilica*

## Through the centuries, statues of St. Peter inspire

**T**he Apocalypse, the final book of the New Testament, outlines the battle between the powers of Satan, incarnate in Imperial Rome and classically referred to as Babylon, and the powers of God, incarnate in the Church. “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great” (Revelations 18:2); “And a mighty angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying: ‘With such violence as this shall Babylon, that great city, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all’” (Revelations 18:21).

St. John the Evangelist himself had first hand experience of imperial persecutions, whose tens of thousands of victims included Saints Peter and Paul during the persecution of Nero. By those martyrdoms, the end of the persecuting Empire was planted as the seed of the Church, as expressed in the ancient hymn for the June 29th Solemnity of Peter and Paul, *O, Roma Felix, quae duorum Principum es consecrata glorioso sanguine*:

“Oh, Happy Rome, consecrated by the glorious blood of the two (Apostolic) Princes (*Decora lux aeternitatis*).

There are many reminders of the life, ministry, and martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome today: the houses where they stayed, now the ancient churches of Santa Pudens, St. Prassede, St. Prisca; the chapel of *Domine Quo Vadis?* on the Appian Way; the Mamertine Prison where they were both imprisoned; the chains that bound St. Peter in the Church of San



THE MAGNIFICENT NEW STATUE OF ST. PETER, INSTALLED IN OUR BASILICA

Pietro in Vincoli; the small chapel beyond the Latin Gate, marking the final meeting of the two Apostles; the Basilica of St. Paul outside-the-walls built over St. Paul’s tomb; and the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican, built over St. Peter’s tomb; and the Catacombs of San Sebastiano, where the bodies of Saints Peter and Paul were temporarily translated during the 258 A.D. persecution by the Emperor Valerian.

Of all these, the Vatican Basilica, built over the tomb of St. Peter, is the most recognizable. The first Basilica was built by the

Emperor Constantine, with southern foundations built upon those of the ancient Circus of the Emperors Nero and Gaius, in which St. Peter was crucified. His body was cut down from the Cross and thrown into an open pit as a pauper’s grave next to the circus, which soon became a shrine to the Founder of the Church in Rome.

Most of today’s visitors to the Basilica of St. Peter never visit his tomb (*see page 4*), the reason why the church was built on this spot in the first place. The closest most come is to the *Confessio*, that marble-lined cavern before the high altar, that allows them to gaze at a mosaic of Christ created inside the small 2nd century monument above the Apostle’s grave. Yet, there is one memorial of the Apostle that everyone visits: the bronze statue of St. Peter by Arnolfo di Cambio, located against the last pier on the right side of the main aisle, nearest the high altar.

Tradition held that Pope St. Leo I erected a statue of St. Peter in gratitude for the divine protection of the City from Attila the Hun’s threats in 452 A.D. It was said that he had taken an ancient bronze statue of Jupiter from the Roman Capitolium, removed the thunderbolt from his hands, and replaced them with Peter’s keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two centuries later, Pope St. Gregory II wrote to the Byzantine Emperor,

➤ PLEASE TURN TO *PETER* ON PAGE 6

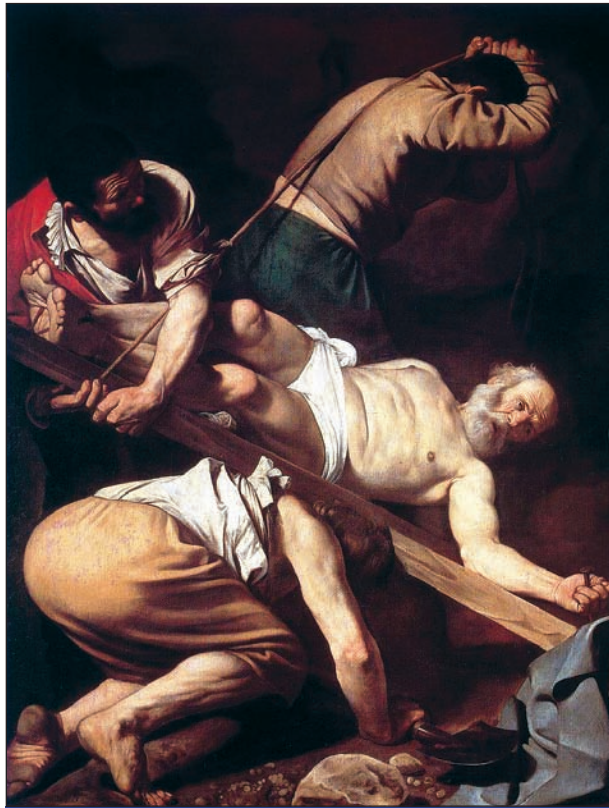
## The tomb of St. Peter, the “Rock” of our Church

*“You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* – Matthew 16:18

**T**hese words adorn Michelangelo’s dome crowning St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. This famous line was first uttered by Christ to Peter, before Our Lord’s Passion and death. Despite the human weakness of Peter, who would betray Jesus three times before His death, his role as rock upon which the Church was built was never revoked by Our Lord but, rather, reaffirmed after Jesus’ Resurrection (John 21:15-20).

Nearly 2,000 years after Peter’s own crucifixion, millions of pilgrims still flock to Rome to venerate the tomb of this prince of the Apostles. With the arrival of the magnificent statue of St. Peter to our Basilica, which will make us even more of a pilgrimage destination, it is fitting to recall the history of the tomb of our first Pope.

In 69 A.D., at the outbreak of Emperor Nero’s fierce persecutions of Christians, Peter fled Rome, fearing a sure and imminent death. Tradition tells that as that, while walking on the Appian Way just outside the city, the apostle saw Christ walking the opposite direction, into the city. *“Quo vadis Domine?* (Where are you going?) Peter asked Our Lord, who replied that He was going to die once again for His faithful in Rome. In that moment, Peter remembered Our Lord’s words to him, prophesying Peter’s own martyrdom by crucifixion: *“Truly, truly I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands [a common phrase about crucifixion], and another will gird you and carry you*



*“According to tradition, St. Peter requested he be crucified upside down, to reflect his unworthiness to be crucified as was Our Lord.”*

*“THE CRUCIFIXION OF ST. PETER” BY CARAVAGGIO (1600), IN THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO IN ROME*

where you do not wish to go” (John 21:18).

Peter at once turned and processed back into the Ancient City, to be crucified by Nero at the foot of the Vatican Hill in the Circus of the Emperors Nero and Gaius. According to tradition, Peter requested that he be crucified upside down, to reflect his unworthiness to be crucified as was Our Lord.

Once dead, a soldier would have removed the crucified body from the cross simply by hacking off the hands and feet, instead of removing the nails that held them to the instrument of his martyrdom. The body was then thrown into an open pauper’s grave, covered by a few terracotta roof tiles, with no gravestone marking the place, since

the crucified was considered an enemy of Rome.

But Peter was different. During World War II, as archaeological excavations were being carried out beneath St. Peter’s Basilica, ancient graffiti was discovered, indicating that the site had, early on, been a place of Christian pilgrimage for the Apostle’s tomb, despite it being in the midst of a pagan cemetery.

The tomb was officially marked some three centuries after Peter’s death. Following the victory of the Emperor Constantine at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 A.D., the Catholic Church was permitted to legally exist in the Roman Empire for the first time. Property confiscated by the State during the previous centuries was restored, and churches built.

Special care was shown by the Emperor for the tomb of St. Peter. In one of the largest construction projects of the ancient world, Constantine ordered that the Vatican Hill, rising above the Apostle’s grave, be cut in half, and more than one million cubic

feet of dirt and rubble be carted to the bottom of the hill, used to bury the pagan cemetery in which was found Peter’s tomb. But that tomb and its tiny monument, built above it about the year 180 A.D., was to be preserved, and now seen on the pavement level of the new church. The Basilica was built using the existing mausoleums which surrounded St. Peter’s tomb as the foundation, and the High Altar was positioned directly over the tomb of the Apostle.

As the faith spread in the East and West, St. Peter’s tomb became one of the most important pilgrimage sites of the Church. Despite the decline of

the Roman Empire and the decay of the city of Rome itself, thousands of pilgrims came yearly to visit the tomb of the first Pope and to come and see his successors, the Bishops of Rome. The pilgrims who could no longer travel to the Holy Land because of the danger that existed there, came to Rome, the heart of the Church.

Following the fall of Rome in the fifth century, the City fell into such ruin that it could not accommodate the large masses of people. Even St. Peter's Basilica was in such disrepair that, eventually, Pope Julius II would destroy it. Under the guidance of architects such as Bramante and Michelangelo, a new St. Peter's was erected, the crown jewel of the Roman Renaissance.

Fast-forward four centuries. In 1939, as a tomb was being prepared for Pope Pius XI in the lower undercroft of the Basilica, workmen unexpectedly dug into the cornice of a second century, two-storey pagan tomb. From there, the most important archaeological excavation of the 20th century proceeded to uncover first-century streets and dozens of ancient pagan tombs in perfect condition: their frescos, mosaics, carved marble and alabaster funerary urns, decorative plaster masterpieces and ornaments in perfect condition, thanks to Constantine's burial of them to create a foundation for his basilica

above. This Necropolis, an ancient city of the dead, revealed vast treasures from the ancient world, but somewhere in the heart of it all lay the bones of St. Peter. Since the first Basilica was built, the bones had not been seen, though pilgrims throughout the centuries had continued to venerate the spot that tradition had long spoken of.

Archaeologists excavated beneath the



*ST. PETER'S BASILICA WAS BUILT ATOP A FIRST CENTURY NECROPOLIS (ABOVE), WHICH CONTAINS INTRICATE MOSAICS (BELOW) AND THE TOMB OF THE APOSTLE.*



high altar where tradition had

stated that Peter's tomb lay. There, a marble box was unearthed. Inside, they found bones wrapped in a cloth of imperial purple linen with gold threads. Outside, on a small wall, the Greek words, *Petros Eni* – "Peter is Within," scratched into ancient plaster, identified the man buried there.

The bones were subjected to scientific analysis, which revealed that they were of

one elderly man, accustomed to hard physical labor – as a fisherman would have been – who died in the later part of the first century. Missing were his head, which tradition stated had been removed in 258 A.D. during another imperial persecution, that of the Emperor Valerius; and there were neither feet nor hands, which proved the man had been crucified. Short of a death certificate, this was the closest that could be discovered, and most are convinced that they are, truly, the bones of the Fisherman.

This reality, already known to be true by the millions of pilgrims that traveled to Rome since the first century, was confirmed; the tomb of St. Peter was, indeed and incontrovertibly, beneath the high altar of the Basilica bearing his name; and it seemed very likely that the bones, too, were his.

To this day, millions of pilgrims flock to Rome each year to pray at the tomb of St. Peter, whose ministry continues through his direct successor, Pope Benedict XVI, in the same Church Our Lord began upon the shoulders and faith of the Fisherman. A limited number of tickets are available each day for the *Scavi* tour of the Necropolis beneath the Basilica.

The Apostle's tomb is clearly visible from the center of the Basilica. Indeed, if one were to drop a long rope from the center of Michelangelo's dome, down through Bernini's Baldacchino and through the center of the high altar, it would hang directly over the burial spot of the Rock upon which Jesus built His Church, bringing fresh life to the saying, *Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia* – "Where Peter is, there is the Church."

– Alessandro Marchetti

Leo the Isaurian, who had condemned the use of images of saints. Gregory said that the imperial judgment was wrong, and told the emperor of the statue of St. Peter in the basilica: "As Christ is my witness, that when I enter the temple of the Prince of the Apostles (St. Peter's in the Vatican) and contemplate his image, I am filled with such emotion that tears roll down my cheeks like the rain from heaven."

There is another statue that is even more ancient, and bears a striking re-

and above the altar in the Basilica of St. Cecilia, to name just two of his works.

Arnolfo's St. Peter is of cast bronze, darkened by age. He may have used the ancient marble statues of St. Peter and St. Hippolytus as his models, since they are so very similar: a figure dressed in the tunic and pallium of a Roman philosopher. The draping alone suggests a gothic touch, such as might be hinted at in the drapery of statues in Florence or in the cathedrals of France.

His right hand is raised in blessing; but it is the papal blessing he offers: thumb resting

of the apostle replacing that of Jupiter. The work is of one casting; it is a complete and solid bronze work, a little stiff in composition, and stylized in dress, but otherwise a magnificent work of bronze casting, the art of which was only beginning to be understood and practiced anew in Arnolfo's time, with his work at the cutting edge of technical design and execution.

The artistic merits of the statue aside, it is the focal point for scores of thousands of people visiting St. Peter's each year, since it is the only work of art that



semblance to the present-day bronze version. Possibly dating from the third century, it originally was placed in the portico of the ancient St. Peter's Basilica of Constantine. It is a marble statue of a philosopher, dressed in tunic and pallium, the traditional vesture of philosophers of ancient Rome. The head was later replaced by one bearing a closer resemblance to the traditional portrait of St. Peter; the right hand, likewise, replaced in the familiar blessing position, the left hand clutching two keys. Another ancient statue is that of St. Hippolytus, also third century, and similar in design and execution, with differences primarily in the faces, which are portraits of the subject.

The most famous of these images of St. Peter is that presently installed in our Basilica. The bronze statue, a gift from a family in our parish, is an exact modern replica of this statue. It is believed to be the work of one of the most important Italian gothic sculptors, Arnolfo di Cambio (circa 1296). His talents were highly sought after, and his genius created some of the most beautiful examples of gothic design in all Italy: the baldacchino above the altar at the Basilica of St. Paul outside-the-walls,

on the fourth finger, with the pinky slightly bent forward, and the index and middle finger, likewise, slightly bent forward: they form the ancient Christian symbol for Christ, which is the Greek word for fish: *IXTHUS*: each letter being the first letter for a creedal statement about the Savior: Jesus-Christ-Son-Of-God-Savior. In his left hand, he holds the two keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, given him by Our Lord at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:17-18). He is seated in a Roman philosopher's chair of marble, carved with ancient decorative floral and geometric motifs, with two Stars of David on the side lintels, and clawed feet.

The head is a portrait of St. Peter, following the details of third and fourth century portraits in gold glass, abundant throughout the Roman catacombs: an elderly man with curly hair. His hands are not those of a philosopher, however, but of a man accustomed to hard physical labor: a fisherman, heavily veined, with calluses on the palms. Arnolfo patterned his St. Peter on those of earlier works – standardized general forms, but with individualized portrait head and other physical characteristics.

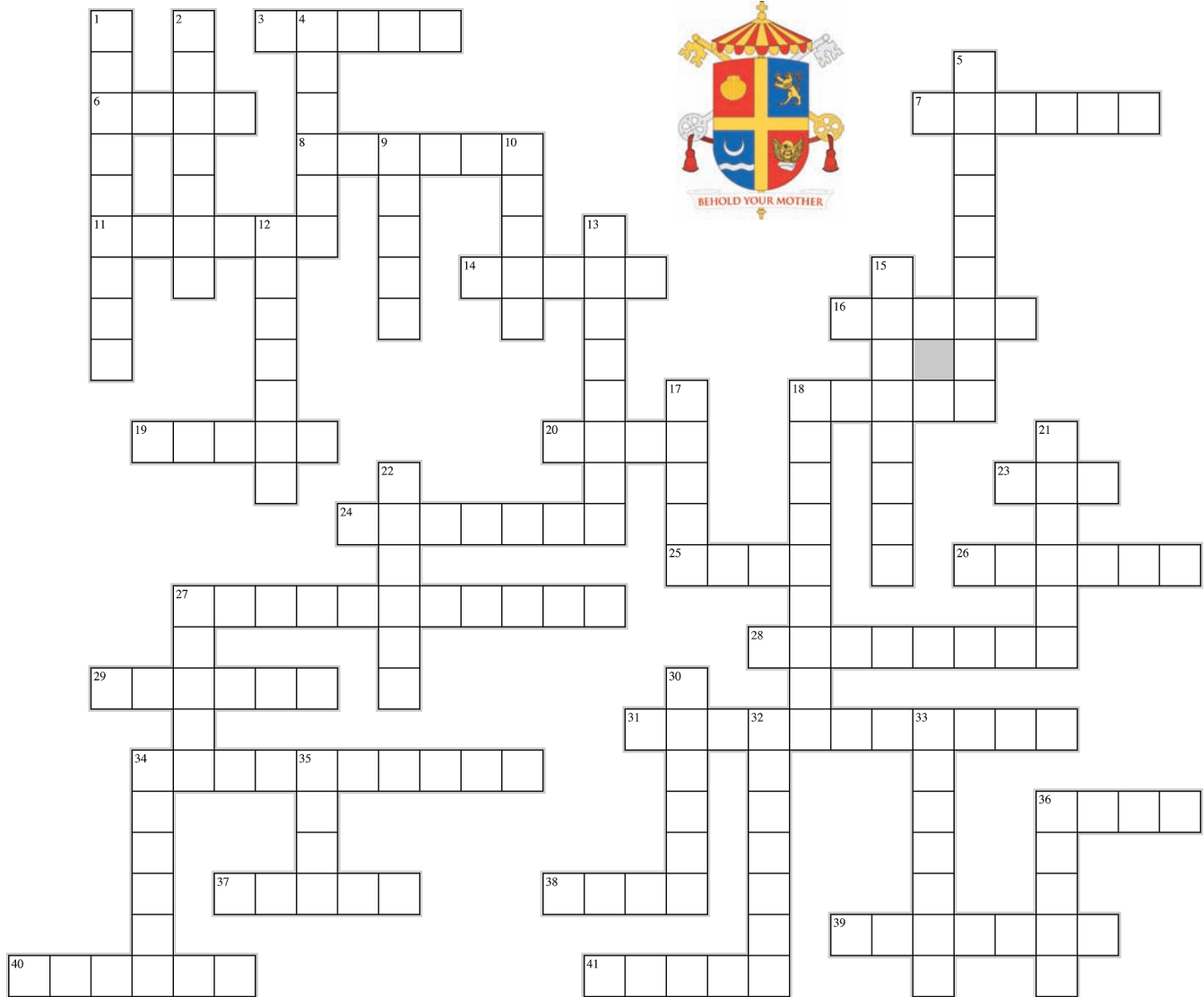
The statue is not that of Pope Leo I, of a reworked ancient bronze, with keys replacing thunderbolts and a new head

people can touch, other than the enormous holy water stoups supported by winged *putti*, each the size of a New York Giants linebacker. The right foot of the saint is entirely worn down as the result of over 700 years of kisses and touches. There's no teaching or instruction by the Church about kissing the right foot of Arnolfo's statue. It's simply one of those actions that developed on its own. On any given day, there are thousands of people who do just that, whether out of superstition or for good luck, like throwing coins in the Trevi Fountain. Or, for very many, out of true piety, as a personal sign of devotion to the person imaged in the statue, St. Peter. This devotion will now continue in our own Basilica.

On great feast days, such as the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, February 22, and the Solemnity of Peter and Paul, June 29, the statue is vested in full pontifical vestments: papal crown, rich red cope, pectoral cross, and episcopal ring, honoring St. Peter as the beginning of the line of his successors we call Pope, of the Church established by Our Lord on a Rock named Peter, son of John.

– Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni

# Test your knowledge of the Faith and the Basilica



**ACROSS**

- 3. Innocent Victim
- 6. The Lion
- 7. He anointed David King
- 8. Led Israelites to Promised Land
- 11. Prophet who spoke of the Virgin Birth
- 14. Number of hours Jesus lay in the tomb
- 16. Slew Goliath
- 18. Sin of Adam
- 19. Michelangelo masterpiece
- 20. The Beloved Disciple
- 23. Lost and later restored ten-fold
- 24. Monsignor's team
- 25. A Physician and an Evangelist
- 26. Fr. Walsh's team (two words)

- 27. Mysterious Priest in Genesis
- 28. Parish Green Thumb (two words)
- 29. "The Worker"
- 31. Legalized Christianity in 4th Century
- 34. August 15
- 36. Formerly Saul
- 37. The flight into \_\_\_\_
- 38. Number of Evangelists
- 39. Formerly a Tax Collector
- 40. Witness by blood
- 41. Necessary for Baptism

- 9. Number of Sacraments
- 10. Moses' brother, the priest
- 12. Basilica Players' Director
- 13. The number 14
- 15. Parish recognition from Pope
- 17. Messenger
- 18. 50 days after Easter
- 21. Where Jesus was baptized
- 22. Prophet of Visions
- 27. Led the Israelites out of Egypt
- 30. "Behold Your \_\_\_\_"
- 32. Keep holy
- 33. The Greatest Mystery of our Faith
- 34. The Liturgical Cycle's beginning
- 35. Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- 36. The Rock

**DOWN**

- 1. Order of Preachers
- 2. Our Father in Faith
- 4. Founder of the Carmelite Order
- 5. Holy \_\_\_\_ of the Mass

*Answers on page 16*

## Our Lady of Mount Carmel

# Special protection comes through Elijah and Mary

*O Virgin Mary, blessed and venerable art thou: who without blemish to thy maidenhood, didst become the Mother of the Savior. O Virgin Mother of God, He whom the whole world cannot contain, enclosed Himself within thy womb, and became man.*

– Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16

**A**s I entered the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome for the very first time, I was completely overwhelmed. The Baroque architecture seemed to pull heaven down to earth. Walking through the Basilica became a walk through time as I saw beautifully carved monuments at the side altars which called to mind the lives of great Saints who contributed to our understanding of the union between God and man. There seemed to be a palpable feeling that they lingered still, standing guard, pointing to the Sacrifice.

As I approached the Altar of the Chair of St. Peter just beneath the great stained glass image of the Dove, the Holy Spirit, I glanced to the side walls that surrounded the sanctuary



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND JESUS OFFER SCAPULARS TO THE FAITHFUL

and gazed upon the towering statues of Founders of great Religious Orders that were actually built into the Pillars of the Basilica. In effect, these spiritual pillars of the Church formed their Religious

Congregations on the Evangelical Counsels of the Gospel: poverty, chastity, and obedience. Ah, yes, St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Dominic, and . . . wait a minute. Elijah? Wasn't he in the Old Testament? How, then, could he be considered the 'Founder' of the Carmelites? After all, the Carmelite Order began nearly 2,000 years after the Prophet Elijah.

Ah, yes. The answer is found in the First Book of Kings, chapter 18: in a word, Purity.

It was atop Mount Carmel that the Prophet Elijah challenged the 450 false prophets who had corrupted the Israelites, leading them into their impurity – infidelity to the Holy Covenant. Indeed, the people had strayed after false gods and had forgotten their unique relationship with the One True God. Elijah challenged their fickle hearts which had grown impure and duplicitous: "How long will you straddle the issue? How long will you go limping with two different opinions?"

Elijah challenged the people to choose.

### From the Liturgy of the Hours

## “A royal virgin of the House of David is chosen.

*Reflecting on the Virginité of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Pope St. Leo the Great (d. 461 A.D.), Doctor of the Church, shed light on the magnificence of the purity and faith of Mary in his ancient sermon on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16.*

“A royal virgin of the house of David is chosen. She is to bear a holy child, one who is both God and man. She is to conceive him in her soul before she conceives him in her body. In the face of so unheard

of an event, she is to know no fear through ignorance of the divine plan; the angel tells her what is to be accomplished in her by the Holy Spirit. She believes that there will be no loss of virginity, she who is soon to be the mother of God.

“Why should she lose heart at this new form of conceiving, when she has been promised that it will be effected through the power of the Most High? She believes, and her faith is confirmed by the witness of a previous wonder: against all expectation Elizabeth is made fruitful.

*“The kind of birth was fitting for Christ; he was one with us.”*

God has enabled a barren woman to be with child; he must be believed when he makes the same promise to a Virgin.

“The Son of God who was in the beginning with God, through whom all things were made, without whom nothing was made, became man to free him from eternal death. He

stooped down to take up our lowliness without loss to his own glory. He remained what he was; he took

Either follow God or go your own way, but do not pretend to love God when you are clearly disobeying His holy will. Elijah demanded purity of intention from the Israelites, and to prove that he actually spoke on the authority of God, he challenged the false prophets to a contest – a sacrifice.

After the utter failure of the false prophets to demonstrate any power whatsoever, Elijah prepared his sacrifice. Then, he cried out to God, “Let it be known this day that you are God . . . Answer me Lord! Answer me, that this people may know that you, Lord, are God and that you have brought them back to their senses.” Immediately, a great fire swept down from heaven like lightning and consumed the entire sacrifice, even the wood and the dust and the water.

Elijah’s powerful prayer made from the holy depths of his heart was heard. The sacrifice was completely consumed, demonstrating a certain perfection, a sacrifice that foreshadowed the One Perfect Sacrifice that Jesus would offer to the Father centuries later atop Calvary in order to pay the debt of the sins of repentant souls.

Like the great Prophet Elijah, pious Christian souls of the 12th century fled to Mount Carmel in the hope of

entering into that same deep and abiding contemplative prayer demonstrated by the Prophet; a spiritual way of life that yielded oceans of grace and revealed the love of God in a more perfect way. The Carmelite Monks claimed Elijah as their Founder because of his pure and faithful love. Likewise, we hear the echo of the cry of Elijah, who beckons all people to conversion of heart. Indeed, the Carmelites have taken up this cry and have entered into true spiritual warfare through contemplative prayer and a rigorously disciplined way of life. The faithful hermits who found themselves on that same mountain centuries after Elijah sought the fire of God’s love through the New and Eternal Covenant – the graces that are poured out from that Perfect Sacrifice on Calvary which now flow into the hearts of all believers, purifying us through love.

In his *Sermons*, St. Augustine wrote: “Elijah prayed and offered sacrifice, and




*“Carmelite Monks claimed Elijah as their founder because of his pure and faithful love.”*

STATUE OF ELIJAH  
IN ST. PETER’S BASILICA

Christ offered himself as a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. Elijah prayed that rain might fall on the earth; Christ [prayed] that divine grace might flow into human hearts. Elijah’s command to his servant: ‘Go up and look out seven times,’ is a foreshadowing of the seven-fold grace of the Holy Spirit to be given to the Church. And the small cloud rising up out of the sea that the servant saw is a symbol of the Incarnate Christ born in the sea of this world.”

Our Lord became Incarnate in the Virgin Mary. She who is the Immaculate Conception was chosen by the Carmelites to be their Patroness because of her purity, her ardent faith, her undying love. (see the sermon by Pope

*St. Leo the Great, below*). Our Lord comes to us through Mary, the Vessel of Purity, the Virgin Mother of God.

Indeed, Our Lady offers us a great  
 PLEASE TURN TO **MARY** ON PAGE 14

## She is to bear a holy child, who is God and man”

up what he was not. He wanted to join the very nature of a servant to that nature in which he is equal to God the Father. He wanted to unite both natures in an alliance so wonderful that the glory of the greater would not annihilate the lesser, nor the taking up of the lower diminish the greatness of the higher.

“What belongs to each nature is preserved intact and meets the other in one person: lowliness is taken up by greatness, weakness by power, mortality by eternity. To pay the debt of our human condition, a nature

incapable of suffering is united to a nature capable of suffering, and true God and true man are forged into the unity that is the Lord. This was done to make possible the kind of remedy that fitted our human need: one and the same mediator between God and man able to die because of one nature, able to rise again because of the other. It was fitting, therefore, that the birth which brings salvation brought no corruption to virginal integrity; the bringing forth of Truth was at the same time the safeguarding of virginity.

“Dearly beloved, the kind of birth was fitting for Christ, the power and the wisdom of God: a birth in which he was one with us

in our human nature but far above us in his divinity. If he were not true man, he would not be able to give us an example.

“And so the birth of our Lord, the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to his people on earth as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world.

“If the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God’s goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?”

*Scandal cannot conceal “the radiance of the priesthood”*

## “Reawaken our joy at how close God is to us”

*On Friday, June 11, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated a Mass in St. Peter’s Square to conclude the “Year for Priests.” This year coincided with the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, who was frequently cited by the Pope this year as a model of priestly dedication. As he celebrated the Mass, the Pope used the chalice that once belonged to the French saint. More than 15,000 priests, who had come to Rome at the Pope’s invitation for the final celebrations of the year, joined in concelebrating Mass. The Holy Father’s beautiful homily on the priesthood follows.*

The “Year for Priests” which we have celebrated on the 150th anniversary of the death of the holy Curé of Ars, the model of priestly ministry in our world, is now coming to an end. We have let the Curé of Ars guide us to a renewed appreciation of the grandeur and beauty of the priestly ministry.

The priest is not a mere office-holder, like those which every society needs in order to carry out certain functions. Instead, he does something which no human being can do of his own power: in Christ’s Name he speaks the words which absolve us of our sins and, in this way, he changes, starting with God, our entire life. Over the offerings of bread and wine he speaks Christ’s words of thanksgiving, which are words of transubstantiation – words which make Christ Himself present, the Risen One, His Body and Blood – words which thus transform the elements of the world, which open the world to God and unite it to Him. The priesthood, then, is not simply “office” but sacrament: God makes use of us poor men in order to be, through us, present to all men and women, and to act on their behalf.

This audacity of God who entrusts

Himself to human beings – who, conscious of our weaknesses, nonetheless considers men capable of acting and being present in His stead – this audacity of God is the true grandeur concealed in the word “priesthood.” That God thinks that we are capable of this; that in this way He calls men to His service and thus from within binds Himself to them: this is what we wanted to reflect upon and appreciate anew over the course of the past year. We wanted to reawaken our joy at how close God is to us, and our gratitude for the fact that He entrusts Himself to our infirmities; that He guides and sustains us daily.

In this way we also wanted to demonstrate once again to young people that this vocation, this fellowship of service for God and with God, does exist – and that God is indeed waiting for us to say “Yes.” Together with the whole Church we wanted to make clear once again

that we have to ask God for this vocation. We have to beg for workers for God’s harvest, and this petition to God is, at the same time, His own way of knocking on the hearts of young people who consider themselves able to do what God considers them able to do.

It was to be expected that this new radiance of the priesthood would not be pleasing to the “enemy”; he would have rather preferred to see it disappear, so that God would ultimately be driven out of the world. And so it happened that, in this very year of joy for the sacrament of the priesthood, the sins of priests came to light – particularly the abuse of the little ones, in which the priesthood, whose task is to manifest God’s concern for our good, turns into its very opposite. We, too, insistently beg forgiveness from God and from the persons involved, while promising to do everything possible to ensure that such abuse will never occur again; and that in admitting men to priestly ministry and in their formation we will do everything we can

to weigh the authenticity of their vocation and make every effort to accompany priests along their journey, so that the Lord will protect them and watch over them in troubled situations and amid life’s dangers.

Had the Year for Priests been a glorification of our individual human performance, it would have been ruined by these events. But for us what happened was precisely the opposite: we grew in gratitude for God’s gift, a gift concealed

in “earthen vessels” which, ever anew, even amid human weakness, makes His love concretely present in this world. So let us look upon all that happened as a summons to purification, as a task which we bring to the future and which makes us acknowledge and

love all the more the great gift we have received from God. In this way, His gift becomes a commitment to respond to God’s courage and humility by our own courage and our own humility. The word of God, which we have sung in the Entrance Antiphon of the liturgy, can speak to us, at this hour, of what it means to become and to be priests: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart” (Matthew 11:29).

We are celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in the liturgy we peer, as it were, into the heart of Jesus opened in death by the spear of the Roman soldier. Jesus’ heart was, indeed, opened for us and before us – and thus God’s own heart was opened. The liturgy interprets for us the language of Jesus’ heart, which tells us above all that God is the shepherd of mankind, and so it reveals to us Jesus’ priesthood,

*“The priest is not a mere office-holder. He does something which no human being can do of his own power: in Christ’s Name he speaks the words which absolve us of our sins and, in this way, he changes, starting with God, our entire life.”*



*MORE THAN 15,000 PRIESTS JOINED POPE BENEDICT XVI IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE ON JUNE 11 FOR MASS MARKING THE END OF THE "YEAR FOR PRIESTS." (AP PHOTO/PIER PAOLO CITTO)*

which is rooted deep within His heart; so, too, it shows us the perennial foundation and the effective criterion of all priestly ministry, which must always be anchored in the heart of Jesus and lived out from that starting-point. . . .

Let us return to our Psalm [Psalm 23(22), "The Lord is my shepherd"]. There we read: "He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me" (23[22]:3ff.). The shepherd points out the right path to those entrusted to him. He goes before them and leads them.

Let us put it differently: the Lord shows us the right way to be human. He teaches us the art of being a person. What must I do in order not to fall, not to squander my life in meaninglessness? This is precisely the question which every man and woman must ask and one which remains valid at every moment of one's life. How much darkness surrounds this question in our own day! We are con-

stantly reminded of the words of Jesus, who felt compassion for the crowds because they were like a flock without a shepherd. Lord, have mercy on us, too! Show us the way!

From the Gospel we know this much: He is Himself the way. Living with Christ, following him – this means finding the right way, so that our lives can be meaningful and so that one day we might say: "Yes, it was good to have lived." The people of Israel continue to be grateful to God because in the Commandments He pointed out the way of life. The great Psalm 119(118) is a unique expression of joy for this fact: we are not fumbling in the dark. God has shown us the way and how to walk aright.

The message of the Commandments was synthesized in the life of Jesus and became a living model. Thus we understand that these rules from God are not chains, but the way which He is pointing out to us. We can be glad for them and rejoice that, in Christ, they stand before us as a lived reality. He Himself has made us glad. By walking with Christ, we experience the joy of Revelation, and as priests we need to communicate to others our

own joy at the fact that we have been shown the right way of life.

Then there is the phrase about the "darkest valley" through which the Lord leads us. Our path as individuals will one day lead us into the valley of the shadow of death, where no one can accompany us. Yet He will be there. Christ Himself descended into the dark night of death. Even there He will not abandon us. Even there He will lead us. "If I sink to the nether world, you are present there," says Psalm 139(138). Truly you are there, even in the throes of death, and hence our Responsorial Psalm can say: even there, in the darkest valley, I fear no evil.

When speaking of the darkest valley, we can also think of the dark valleys of temptation, discouragement, and trial through which everyone has to pass. Even in these dark valleys of life He is there. Lord, in the darkness of temptation, at the hour of dusk when all light seems to have died away, show me that

➤ PLEASE TURN TO *POPE* ON PAGE 13

# The Mass is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving

*“The Mass is the sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine.”*

— Baltimore Catechism

**T**his concise definition of the Mass gives us much to contemplate. Let’s focus our thoughts on the word **sacrifice**. What does sacrifice mean? What are the biblical roots of sacrifice? The Mass was instituted at the Last Supper during the annual feast of the Jewish Passover. Why do we celebrate Jesus’ sacrificial meal weekly, if not daily?

According to theologian Scott Hahn, the biblical definition of sacrifice “is a liturgical rite that gives outward and public expression to man’s innermost acts of devotion toward God.” Through a sacrifice we acknowledge our total dependence on God. The sacrificial offer that we make is a representation of our complete surrender to God. The gifts that we sacrifice represent an offering of ourselves to God.

Prior to Jesus Christ’s perfect sacrifice on the cross, man offered bloody (animals) and unbloody (cereal, wine, etc) sacrifices to God. These sacrifices to God began soon after man was exiled from the Garden of Eden.

As St. Vincent Ferrer said, “From the beginning of the world, God has willed that all men should offer sacrifice. Since He is Himself the source whence all things come to us, He wills that we should make some offering to Him.”

Adam’s sons, Cain and Abel, were the first to give an offering to God (Genesis 4:1-7). Cain, a farmer, gave the Lord fruit from his fields. Abel, a shepherd, gave the Lord some of the “firstlings” from his flock. God preferred Abel’s sacrifice to Cain’s. Perhaps this seems a little puzzling. Could Cain help it that he was a farmer?

The issue is not the offering, but what the offering represents. Cain’s offering was just a random selection of fruit and vegetables from his farm. Abel, on the other hand, gave the Lord the first fruits of his flock, the best he had to offer. Abel, therefore, sets the standard for sacrifices. We see this repeated when Abraham offered his son, Isaac; when Moses tells the people to sacrifice a year-old male lamb without blemish (Exodus 12:5); and, finally, the perfect sacrifice when God gave us His only son, Jesus Christ, who restored what was lost by Adam’s sin.

For Israel, the two most significant days each year when sacrifices were offered to God were the Passover and the Day of Atonement. The Passover feast made present for the Israelites the time of Moses when the angel of death passed over their homes. Thus, they were liberated from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. The Day of Atonement occurred once a year when the high priest made a sacrifice to atone for the sins of Israel. Our Eucharistic celebration finds its roots in these two annual Jewish feasts, manifested from the time of Our Lord’s Last Supper through His glorious Ascension into Heaven.

If this is so, then why do we celebrate the Mass daily? Scripture scholar Tim Gray makes a compelling argument that the Mass is not only associated with these two Jewish feasts, but also the Israelite sacrifice called the *Todah*. A person offered this sacrifice to God after they had been delivered from great peril. Gratitude was shown to God by a gathering of family and friends for a special sacrificial meal. A lamb was sacrificed in the Temple while, at the same time, bread was consecrated. The lamb, bread, and wine then were consumed during the *Todah* meal. Prayers were recited and songs

of thanksgiving were sung. Perhaps the Last Supper was not only a Passover meal, but a *Todah* meal as well.

*Todah* in Hebrew means “thanksgiving.” During the first century, rabbinic

teaching proclaimed that once the Messiah comes, all sacrifices will cease except for the thank offering (*todah*). The thank offering will be perpetual. This is consistent with Malachi’s prophesy that one sacrifice would replace all Jewish sacrifices: “From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place there is a sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts (Malachi 1:11).



*“The word ‘Eucharist’ in Greek means ‘thanksgiving.’ Our Eucharistic Sacrifice fulfills what was foretold.”*

The word *Eucharist* in Greek means “thanksgiving.” Our Eucharistic Sacrifice fulfills what was foretold.

The verb form of *todah* is *yehudah* or *Judah*. Jacob’s wife Leah named their fourth son Judah in thanksgiving to God for a son. Judah is the line from which the Messiah, Jesus Christ, descended from according to his human nature.

There are also *Todah* Psalms. These Psalms begin with a lament by the person whose life was in peril and then end with thanksgiving and praise to God, for God heard the person’s prayers and delivered the person from death. An example of a *Todah* Psalm is Psalm 22: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” This is the Psalm Jesus cried out from the cross. Jesus’ lament

➤ PLEASE TURN TO [MASS](#) ON PAGE 13

🔴 *POPE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11*

You are there. Help us priests, so that we can remain beside the persons entrusted to us in these dark nights. So that we can show them your own light.

“Your rod and your staff – they comfort me”: the shepherd needs the rod as protection against savage beasts ready to pounce on the flock; against robbers looking for prey. Along with the rod there is the staff which gives support and helps to make difficult crossings. Both of these are likewise part of the Church’s ministry, of the priest’s ministry.

The Church, too, must use the shepherd’s rod, the rod with which he protects the faith against those who falsify it, against currents which lead the flock astray. The use of the rod can actually be a service of love. Today we can see that it has nothing to do with love when conduct unworthy of the priestly life is tolerated. Nor does it have to do with love if heresy is allowed to spread and the faith twisted and chipped away, as

🔴 *MASS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12*

gives way to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven, delivering all humanity from the death of sin.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. According to the Council of Trent, it is also a pleasing act to God when we offer ourselves “with a pure heart, a lively faith, and a true inward sorrow for our transgressions.” We do this through the ministry of the priest who is acting in the person of Christ (*In Persona Christi*). When we offer ourselves as a sacrifice in this way, we obtain mercy from God and grace in the time of our need (Hebrews 4:16).

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass truly makes present the one sacrifice of Christ. The Mass continues the sacrifice of Christ with infinite value to save us until the end of the world. In the words of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, “It would be easier for the world to exist without the sun than without Holy Mass.”

– Patrick Toole, Jr.

if it were something that we ourselves had invented. As if it were no longer God’s gift, the precious pearl which we cannot let be taken from us. Even so, the rod must always become once again the shepherd’s staff – a staff which helps men and women to tread difficult paths and to follow the Lord.

At the end of the Psalm we read of the table which is set, the oil which anoints the head, the cup which overflows, and dwelling in the house of the Lord. In the Psalm this is an expression first and foremost of the prospect of the festal joy of being in God’s presence in the temple, of being His guest, whom He



*“In faith we drink, so to speak, of the living water of God’s Word. The believer himself becomes a wellspring which gives living water to the parched earth of history.”*

Himself serves, of dwelling with Him. For us, who pray this Psalm with Christ and His Body which is the Church, this prospect of hope takes on even greater breadth and depth. We see in these words a kind of prophetic foreshadowing of the mystery of the Eucharist, in which God Himself makes us His guests and offers Himself to us as food – as that bread and fine wine which alone can definitively sate man’s hunger and thirst.

How can we not rejoice that one day we will be guests at the very table of God and live in His dwelling-place? How can we not rejoice at the fact that He has commanded us: “Do this in memory of me”? How can we not rejoice that He has enabled us to set God’s table for men and women, to give them His Body and His Blood, to offer them the precious gift of His very presence. Truly we can pray together, with all our heart, the words of the Psalm: “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” (Psalm 23[22]:6).

Finally, let us take a brief look at the two Communion Antiphons which the Church offers us in her liturgy today. First there are the words with which St. John concludes the account of Jesus’ crucifixion: “One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out” (John 19:34). The heart of Jesus is

pierced by the spear. Once opened, it becomes a fountain: the water and the blood which stream forth recall the two fundamental sacraments by which the Church lives: Baptism and the Eucharist. From the Lord’s pierced side, from His open heart, there springs the living fountain which continues to well up over the centuries and which makes the Church. The open heart is the source of a new stream of life; here John was certainly also thinking of the prophecy of Ezekiel who saw flowing forth from the new temple a torrent bestowing fruitfulness and life (Ezekiel 47):

Jesus Himself is the new temple, and His open heart is the source of a stream of new life which is communicated to us in Baptism and the Eucharist.

The liturgy of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus also permits another phrase, similar to this, to be used as the Communion Antiphon. It is taken from the Gospel of John: “Whoever is thirsty, let him come to me. And let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture has said: ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’” (cf. John 7:37ff.) In faith we drink, so to speak, of the living water of God’s Word. In this way the believer himself becomes a wellspring which gives living water to the parched earth of history. We see this in the saints. We see this in Mary, that great woman of faith and love who has become in every generation a wellspring of faith, love, and life.

Every Christian and every priest should become, starting from Christ, a wellspring which gives life to others. We ought to be offering life-giving water to a parched and thirsty world. Lord bless us, and bless all those who in our time are thirsty and continue to seek. Amen.

– Pope Benedict XVI

gift through the Carmelites. It is the Scapular, revealed through private revelation to St. Simon Stock on Sunday, July 16, 1251. In the *Viridarium*, written by Johannes Grossi circa 1430, he related how Our Lady appeared to Simon Stock with the scapular of the order in her hand. She gave it to him with the words: “*Hoc erit tibi et cunctis Carmelitis privilegium, in hoc habitu moriens salvabitur* (This shall be the privilege for you and for all the Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit shall be saved).”



The Catholic Church teaches: “The Scapular of Mount Carmel is an external sign of the filial relationship established between the Blessed Virgin Mary,

Mother and Queen of Mount Carmel, and the faithful who entrust themselves totally to her protection, who have recourse to her maternal intercession, who are mindful of the primacy of the spiritual life and the need for prayer.

“The Scapular is imposed by a special rite of the Church which describes it as ‘a reminder that in Baptism we have been clothed in Christ, with the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, solicitous of our conformation to the Word Incarnate, to the praise of the Trinity, we may come to our heavenly home wearing our nuptial garb’” (*Popular Piety and the Liturgy, Congregation for Divine Worship & the Discipline of the Sacraments*, p. 144).

The Feast has a very special significance for our parish here at St. John’s. One year ago, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, 2009, as written on the Papal Document from the Vatican, St. John the Evangelist Parish was raised to a Basilica. What a blessing to know that this wonderful grace took place through Our Lady’s love and protection!

– Rev. Terry Walsh

## Book review

# Survival by Faith – and mother

*My mother began circling the perimeter of Stonim prison, hoping to catch a glimpse of her husband. Suddenly, in one of the prison windows, she saw his silhouette – a chance in a thousand. My father had just enough time to make the sign of the cross in her direction. She was then surrounded by an armed patrol, and taken inside . . . Later the news filtered out that my father paid for that glimpse of his wife with solitary confinement. It was to be his last sight of her.*

There are many searing moments like this one in *Crater’s Edge* (Bene Factum Publishing, \$25), Michał Giedroyc’s extraordinary memoir of his childhood in Poland at the onset of World War II. There is a cinematic sweep to Giedroyc’s writing as Stalin’s reign of terror descends on his family: father imprisoned; mother, homeless with three children, then forced into exile in Siberia. Their eventual escape, a perilous journey thousands of miles to freedom, is nothing short of miraculous.

Giedroyc (whose daughter, Kasia, was a *Fairfield County Catholic* columnist), does a great service to remind American readers of the “forgotten” war in the East and the tragedy which befell the Polish people. As a memoir, it could become a model. The reader is immersed quickly and easily into the author’s world, sharing the curiosity – and horror – of a 10-year-old who grows up much too fast.

Giedroyc’s father, Tadzio, descendant of royalty, was a military hero, senator, judge, and benevolent estate owner. His staunch patriotism made him a target when the Soviets invaded Poland. When Tadzio is arrested, Michał’s world turns upside down, as the family

is forced into the streets. Soon they are part of a desperate mass deportation of hundreds of thousands to the East.

*Crater’s Edge* gets its title from the writer Melchior Wańkowicz’s apt description of life in wartime: “Grass shoots struggling on the edge of a crater.” Enduring deprivation, maltreatment, and humiliation, the Giedroyc unit survives, thanks largely to Michał’s mother, Ania. She emerges as one of the great heroic women of

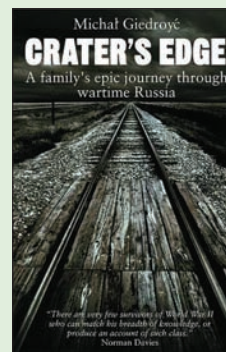
her age, sustained by faith but also an ingenuity and cleverness that win the daily battle of life.

One can spot the finger of God throughout this memoir. Out of nowhere, with hope all but gone, a stranger will appear, with food, transportation, or, in one amazing instance, a

simple potato. Fleeing Siberia, Ania and her children come to a crossroads, lacking the necessary papers to board a crucial train. A Polish sergeant in a British uniform offers his assistance, carving the impression of an official transit stamp out of a potato. It worked. “We missed several heart-beats at every check, but the potato stamp created by our guardian angel in battledress passed the test every time,” Giedroyc recalls.

In 1938, one year before the war, Ania gave Michał a prayer book on his First Holy Communion. Inside, she wrote, “May this little book always remind you that he who remembers God, and prays fervently, never strays.” The book, like the author, survived, thanks to God – and his remarkable mother.

Run, don’t walk, to the nearest bookstore or computer and buy *Crater’s Edge*. It will stay with you a long time, and remind you just how precious are life, family, freedom, and Faith.





## Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap"

# Basilica Players make mystery

The Ballroom of St. John's Rectory was the perfect setting for *The Mousetrap*, Agatha Christie's classic play, performed by the Basilica Mystery Theatre Players (pictured above) June 10-12. With its tall windows, marble fireplaces, and old-world furnishings, the Ballroom could easily pass for the Great Hall of Monkswell Manor, the guest house where the action takes place.

This was the second play put on by the Basilica Players, radio-style, and judging from the audience's cheers, it was the best so far. Hats off to the Director, **Fr. Al Audette**, a taskmaster whose insistence on professionalism and discipline paid off, big time.

**Lisa D'Acunto** got the evening off to a rousing start with her blood-curdling scream worthy of the best Hollywood slasher movies. We were then in the capable hands of **Joe McAleer**, our Narrator, whose voice rose and fell with the peaks and valleys of the drama, punctuating just the right moments ("the bus tick-et").

The emotional heart of the play lies in Mollie and Giles Ralston, played by **Monica O'Brien** and **Mike Guarnieri**. Their easy repartée as the young and inexperienced owners of Monkswell Manor recalled the best of Hepburn/Tracy

and Lombard/Gable.

True to Christie form, *The Mousetrap* is filled with colorful characters, and the arriving guests display varying degrees of eccentricity. **Joe Maker** had some of the funniest lines as the dandy Christopher Wren, a would-be architect (of course). With her booming voice and haughty air, **Juanita Evans** was formidable as Mrs. Boyle. Our own **Msgr. DiGiovanni** was a "veddy" British Major Metcalf. As Miss Casewell, **Trish DePhillips** made a "manly" woman most intriguing. And bringing down the house was **Dan Tomaselli** as the mysterious Mr. Paravicini. Dan's accent and gestures suggested Maurice Chevalier after a little too much Pernod.

Three loud taps on the window brought us the final visitor, **Doug DePhillips** as Detective Sergeant Trotter, a policeman on skis who sets up the murder investigation. Doug held the audience in the palm of his hand as a kind of Jack Webb on steroids.

The regal presence of understudy **Louise Munro**, dressed in black and pearls in the front row, reminded us this was a class act. Congratulations to the entire troupe! Now only one question remains: When's the next play?



## THE VIEW FROM THE BACK PEW

Why can't Catholics be more like Protestants? In the manner of dressing for Sunday worship, that is.

Summer is here, and so is casual, sloppy dress, which has actually become more of a year-round style in Catholic churches. With the exception of our Haitian faithful (who always put on their Sunday best), more and more Catholics come to Mass dressed for a day at the beach, or look as if they just rolled out of bed (many have). Protestants still regard dressing for worship as essential. Why are we so slack? What does it say about our respect for the Mass, and Our Lord?

Some priests are fearful to raise the issue, lest the faithful be offended and not return. If their faith is *that* fragile, they probably should be elsewhere. Moreover, if your favorite restaurant required a jacket for dinner, or your employer imposed a dress code in the workplace, you wouldn't think twice.

So spruce up, Catholics! At the very least, can we declare the church a zone free from shorts, flip flops, t-shirts, and halter tops? The priest wears his Sunday best; why shouldn't we?

“Our secret ingredient is passion. The passion one finds in the best homes of Mexico, not the tourist cities of Los Cabos or Acapulco. We are a restaurant of the family!”

So proclaims Francisco, manager of Riviera Maya, Stamford’s newest culinary landmark on the corner of lower Summer Street and West Park Place. Neither New York City nor the River-Walks of Texas can compare with the home-run one experiences at this extraordinary restaurant with starbursts of brilliant flavors and tastes. Simply put, Riviera Maya is Mexican food at its absolute best.

The flatware, table décor, and ample napkins are defining indicators of good taste and expectant things to come. As anyone will tell you, there’s nothing like an enthusiastic and helpful staff who leave nothing to chance.

To-die-for salsa and warm taco chips were served as soon as I sat. “Homemade?” I asked. “Yes, by our Chef, Silvino! He has cooked mostly in Mexico and, with the Sous Chef, brings the flavors, tastes, and plate presentations into great unity.”

The menu is an experience in itself

## THE SECRET INGREDIENT



SIZZLING FAJITAS STEAK AND A MARGARITA AT RIVIERA MAYA IN DOWNTOWN STAMFORD

– and the beverages? Wait until you try a Margarita or, especially, the non-alcoholic Guava Margaritas –sooo perfect for sipping through the menu. The menu lists an elegant variety of fish, fowl, and meat, as well as vegetarian – all Mexican haute cuisine. I settled on Fajitas Steak and some hot sauce. My waiter’s smile indicated I’d made a culinary triumph.

It is not an overstatement to say that the Fajitas were the best I’ve ever had: sizzling on the pan, evenly spiced with no heavy accents, onions, peppers, and lots of steak, so tender that I cut the generous pieces with my fork. With the taste of homemade guacamole and coriander-accented dinner salsa, all wrapped in an oven-fresh flower tortilla, this was culinary music at its best!

“Francisco, what’s in this superb hot sauce; smoked something?”

“Just three different roasted chili peppers, combined to accent their natural tastes. I’m happy you like the sauce.”

“What’s that secret ingredient that joins the sauce so perfectly with the Fajitas?”

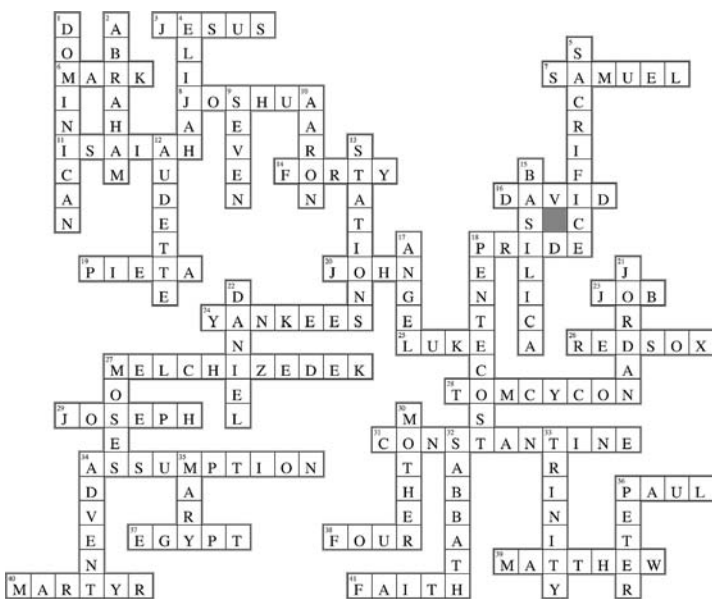
“As I said, it’s passion. . . .” Francisco replied with a smile.

Yes, that hot sauce and the Margaritas will bring me back, again and again. Stamford now boasts superb Mexican food at Riviera Maya! RM for short.

– Charles K. Roast

**Riviera Maya, 20 Summer Street in downtown Stamford. Open daily, 11:45 a.m.-10 p.m. (11:30 p.m. Thurs.-Sat.). Telephone (203) 588-9400.**

### THE EAGLE Crossword Answers



Crossword clues and answers by Fr. Terry Walsh. Another puzzle next month.

## THE EAGLE

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