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“There is no need of great things”

St. Joseph, an inspiration and hope for all fathers

“Life holds only one tragedy, ultimately: not to have been a saint.”
– Charles Peguy (1873-1914)

To be perfectly honest, I often find reading about the saints disheartening.

Which obviously defeats the purpose. Learning about their lives should be inspiring, but I almost always get frustrated when many of the books or articles that describe those now in heaven go something like this: *“St. Oswald was born into a wealthy family, but at age 11 decided to renounce all his possessions and devote himself to a life of penance. Throughout his life, he consumed three ounces of rice per day and wore a loincloth and hairshirt, sleeping only when he stopped preaching to lepers. He founded an order, built six schools, and translated the Gospel into 13 tribal languages.”*

Of course, this is an exaggeration. But it represents something very real – that often saints are made to appear these mythical characters with the resumes of Nobel Prize winners and a sort of



STATUE OF ST. JOSEPH AND THE CHILD JESUS
ON THE CHARLES BRIDGE IN PRAGUE.

heavenly perfection. They’re supermen and superwomen.

And this isn’t necessarily false: They are extraordinary and heroic in their virtue. They did transform the world with the orders they founded, the schools they built, the poor they fed, the books they

“St. Joseph is, at first glance, shockingly ordinary. He’s just a carpenter, just a dad. That gives me hope.”

wrote, and the hardships they endured.

But this often discourages me, because it makes me think that I’m a lost cause. I’m no mystic. I haven’t founded any worldwide charitable institution. I haven’t preached to lepers. Heck, I have a tough time getting through a Hail Mary without thinking about the weather or last night’s ballgame. I’m just a dad. Basically, these inspirational stories of the saints – instead of breathing life into me – are deflating: You’ll

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never be that great. Just look at yourself.

And that is why I love St. Joseph so much.

Among the extraordinary titans of faith, among the mystics and popes and abbots and abbesses, among those whose good works have been documented in the annals of history – among all of them, the most powerful saint in heaven besides the Blessed Mother is, at first glance, shockingly ordinary. He’s just a carpenter, just a dad. Pope Pius VI called St. Joseph “*the proof that in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need of great things. It is enough to have the common, simple, and human virtues, but they need to be true and authentic.*”

That gives me hope.

How many spiritual masterpieces did Joseph of Nazareth write? How many organizations did he found? What was his noble profession? Confessor? Missionary? Soldier?

Nope. He was a carpenter and a dad.

He made chairs, tables, and shelves. Where other saints traveled to far-

away lands and were martyred as missionaries, he spent the bulk of his life in a small, oak-smelling workshop in Palestine – planing wood, sanding boards, sawing planks – simply protecting and providing for his family. As far as we know, he never made a sermon or wrote a word. He wasn’t known for eloquence or healing powers. He wasn’t martyred, either. His life was a whisper.

Of course, Joseph was more than a carpenter – he was the saint whose great humility and faith prepared him for the greatest task of all time: protecting, feeding, clothing, and rearing the Son of God. And while his life had some fantastic elements to it – a dream from an angel, holding the Messiah in his arms, being exiled to Egypt with God’s Son and His mother – when those events had passed, Joseph passed the remainder of his life in a way that, to the rest of the world, probably looked mind-numbingly boring. Wake up, say a prayer, eat breakfast, repair the table, eat lunch, sand the drawer, say a prayer, sweep the shop, go inside for dinner with your wife and son, pray together, clean, and, finally, go to sleep dog-tired. And repeat. For 30 years.



work of the laborer is not only not dishonoring, but can, if virtue be joined to it, be singularly ennobled.”

Ennobled, yes. St. Joseph’s life as a father and a worker attests to the utter strangeness of God, who has a way of flipping things around on us. Sometimes, doing the most important task can

“As we celebrate Father’s Day, we might remember something that Christ’s earthly father seemed to whisper for all fathers to come: If the greatest tragedy in life is not to have been a saint, then perhaps the second greatest tragedy is thinking yourself too ordinary to be one.”

look and feel like the lowliest – cleaning up wood chips, doing the laundry, or driving the kids to baseball practice. St. Joseph’s great trait, then, was his ability to recognize that all that really matters in the end is living your life in love and service to God, your family, and your neighbor, because this is what all true fathers do. It’s what all true saints do.

Sometimes that love for God will impel you to do something great – to build a school, to start a non-profit, to write a book. But sometimes it will simply tell you to clean the dishes at 11:30 p.m. when you’re utterly exhausted.

And so, as we celebrate Father’s Day, we might remember something that Christ’s earthly father seemed to whisper for all fathers to come: If the greatest tragedy in life is not to have been a saint, then perhaps the second greatest tragedy is thinking yourself too ordinary to be one.

– Ricky J. McRoskey

Ricky, a member of the Basilica who lives in Norwalk, writes for a New York-based financial firm.

These 30 years that Joseph is believed to have been with Jesus in the woodshop were far from pointless, for in a sense they demonstrated the importance of silence, patience, and endurance. If the Creator of Heaven and Earth spent 30 years of His life with His dad in a woodshop, then it must not have been for nothing. It must have carried with it great dignity.

Pope Leo XIII wrote, “*Joseph, of royal blood, united by marriage to the greatest and holiest of women, reputed the father of the Son of God, passed his life in labor . . . it is then true that the*

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Beware a new worship of the golden calf of old

“There is a need for financial reform along ethical lines that would produce in its turn an economic reform to benefit everyone,” Pope Francis told new Ambassadors to the Holy See in a major address on May 16. “The Pope has the duty, in Christ’s name, to remind the rich to help the poor.” The Holy Father’s address follows.

Our human family is presently experiencing something of a turning point in its own history, if we consider the advances made in various areas. We can only praise the positive achievements which contribute to the authentic welfare of mankind, in fields such as those of health, education, and communications. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that the majority of the men and women of our time continue to live daily in situations of insecurity, with dire consequences. Certain pathologies are increasing, with their psychological consequences; fear and desperation grip the hearts of many people, even in the so-called rich countries; the joy of life is diminishing; indecency and violence are on the rise; poverty is becoming more and more evident. People have to struggle to live and, frequently, to live in an undignified way.

One cause of this situation, in my opinion, is in our relationship with money, and our acceptance of its power over ourselves and our society. Consequently the financial crisis which we are experiencing makes us forget that its ultimate origin is to be found in a profound human crisis. In the denial of the primacy of human beings, we have created new idols. The worship of the golden calf of old (cf. Exodus 32:15-34) has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.

The worldwide financial and economic crisis seems to highlight their distortions and, above all, the gravely deficient

human perspective, which reduces man to one of his needs alone, namely, consumption. Worse yet, human beings themselves are nowadays considered as consumer goods which can be used and thrown away. We have begun a throw-away culture. This tendency is seen on the level of individuals and whole societies, and it is being promoted!

In circumstances like these, solidarity, which is the treasure of the poor, is often considered counterproductive, opposed to the logic of finance and the economy. While the income of a minority is increasing exponentially, that of the majority is crumbling. This imbalance results from ideologies which uphold the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation, and thus deny the right of control to States, which are themselves charged with providing for the common good. A new, invisible, and, at times, virtual tyranny is established, one which unilaterally and irremediably imposes its own laws and rules. Moreover, indebtedness and credit distance countries from their real economy and citizens from their real buying power. Added to this, as if it were needed, is widespread corruption and selfish fiscal evasion which have taken on worldwide dimensions. The will to power and of possession has become limitless.

Concealed behind this attitude is a rejection of ethics, a rejection of God. Ethics, like solidarity, is a nuisance! It is regarded as counterproductive: as something too human, because it relativizes money and power; as a threat, because it rejects manipulation and subjection of people: because ethics leads to God, who is situated outside the categories of the market. These financiers, economists, and politicians consider God to be unmanageable, even dangerous, because He calls man to his full realization and to independence from any kind of slavery. Ethics – naturally, not the ethics of ideology – makes it possible, in my view, to create a balanced social order that is more humane.

In this sense, I encourage the financial experts and the political leaders of your countries to consider the words of St. John Chrysostom: *“Not to share one’s goods with the poor is to rob them and to deprive them of life. It is not our goods that we possess, but theirs”* (Homily on Lazarus, 1:6).

Dear Ambassadors, there is a need for financial reform along ethical lines that would produce in its turn an economic reform to benefit everyone. This would nevertheless require a courageous change of attitude on the part of political leaders. I urge them to face this challenge with determination and farsightedness, taking account, naturally, of their particular situations. Money has to serve, not to rule!

The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but the Pope has the duty, in Christ’s name, to remind the rich to help the poor, to respect them, to promote them. The Pope appeals for disinterested solidarity and for a return to person-centered ethics in the world of finance and economics.

For her part, the Church always works for the integral development of every person. In this sense, she reiterates that the common good should not be simply an extra, simply a conceptual scheme of inferior quality tacked onto political programs. The Church encourages those in power to be truly at the service of the common good of their peoples. She urges financial leaders to take account of ethics and solidarity.

And why should they not turn to God to draw inspiration from His designs? In this way, a new political and economic mindset would arise that would help to transform the absolute dichotomy between the economic and social spheres into a healthy symbiosis.

– Pope Francis



“Money has to serve, not to rule!”

June 21 through July 4

Two weeks of prayer in support of religious liberty

The second annual “Fortnight for Freedom” will take place from June 21 to July 4, and will consist of national and local efforts to educate Americans on challenges to religious liberty both at home and abroad.

The 14 days from the vigil of the Feasts of St. John Fisher and Thomas More to Independence Day serve as a great hymn of prayer for our country. The liturgical calendar celebrates martyrs who remained faithful in the face of persecution by political power – St. John Fisher, St. Thomas More, St. John the Baptist, Saints Peter and Paul, and the First Martyrs of the Church of Rome.

“The need for prayer, education, and action in defense of religious liberty has never been greater,” explains Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. “The Fortnight for Freedom exists to meet that need. This year’s Fortnight occurs just weeks before August 1, when the Obama Administration’s mandate coercing us to violate our deeply-held beliefs will be enforced against most religious non-

profits. And during the Fortnight, the Supreme Court’s decisions on the definition of marriage will likely be handed down. Those decisions could have a profound impact on religious freedom for generations to come.”

Further details can be found online at www.Fortnight4Freedom.org. The site hosts resources such as fact sheets outlining threats



to religious freedom in the U.S. and abroad; frequently-asked questions about religious liberty (with quotes from the Founding Fathers); a study guide on *Dignitatis Humanae*, Vatican II’s document on religious liberty; and how to contact your legislators.

Please also pray the “Prayer for the Protection of Religious Liberty” daily:

O God our Creator, from Your Provident Hand we have received our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit

of happiness. You have called us as Your people and given us the right and the duty to worship You, the only true God, and Your Son, Jesus Christ. Through the power and working of Your Holy Spirit, You call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world, bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel to every corner of society. We ask you to bless us in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty. Give us the strength of mind and heart to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened; give us courage in making our voices heard on behalf of the rights of Your Church and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith.

Grant, we pray, O heavenly Father, a clear and united voice to all Your sons and daughters gathered in Your Church in this decisive hour in the history of our nation, so that, with every trial withstood and every danger overcome – for the sake of our children, our grandchildren, and all who come after us – this great land will always be “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BASILICA CALENDAR: JUNE 2013

Every Monday: Holy Hour, with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary: 7 p.m. in the Basilica. All are welcome to attend.

Every Wednesday: Latin Reading Group, 6:15 p.m. in the Rectory. • **Legion of Mary**, 7:30 p.m. in the Rectory.

Every Thursday: Introduction to Biblical Greek class, 6:30 p.m. in the Rectory.

Every Friday: Holy Name Men’s Society, 7-8 a.m. in the Rectory.

Sunday, June 2: Solemnity of Corpus Christi. There will be a Eucharistic procession inside the Basilica following the 11:30 a.m. Mass.

Friday, June 21: “Fortnight for Freedom,” continuing until Thursday, July 4. See above for more information.

Saturday, June 29: Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. **A plenary indulgence is offered to all on this day, subject to the usual conditions: Sacramental Confession, Communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father.**

**IGNATIUS CARDINAL
KUNG PIN-MEI**
1901 - 2000



Please pray one “Hail Mary” daily for the opening of the cause of canonization for Cardinal Kung.

A mystery that is known through Jesus

Mirror the Trinity by choosing to do God's work

There are many different ways to illustrate the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. St. Joseph of Cupertino used the analogy of a blanket folded into the shape of a triangle. The blanket has three edges, but it is still one blanket. St. Patrick used the example of the shamrock. Patrick would hold up a shamrock and challenge his hearers, "Is it one leaf or three?" "It is both one leaf and three," was their reply. "And so it is with God," he would conclude. God is only one, but exists in three persons.

Despite the many different ways to illustrate the Trinity, the fact that there are three persons in one God is a mystery. It is a mystery that can only be known through Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus that we come to know and experience God as love. It is through Jesus that God has revealed to us that God is not infinite loneliness, but infinite love and an infinite relationship of self-giving. If God were alone and solitary, God could not love from all eternity.

We see evidence of God's Trinitarian Being and loving relationship from the beginning of creation. In the first three verses of Genesis we learn that God created heaven and earth. The Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters and then there was light. The Father, the Creator; the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier; and Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

We are created in God's image. God's very essence of being is a harmonious loving relationship. It is in this relationship that the three divine persons of the Trinity know each other and give to each other. God's eternal happiness flows from this communion of love. Therefore, our happiness, since we are created in God's image, will flow from the same thing. When we use our God-given gifts to build up those around us, we find happiness.

Last month we celebrated the memorial of St. Damien. A Belgian priest who

served in Hawaii, St. Damien volunteered in 1873 to move to Moloka'i, known as Devil's Island, to minister to a colony of about 800 Lepers. Once a month a ship would pull into the dock to drop off supplies. Sometimes a priest would be on board to hear Fr. Damien's confession. Of course the priest wouldn't get off the boat. Fr. Damien had to stand on the dock and shout his confession while the supplies were being unloaded.

After 12 years of service on the island, Fr. Damien began his sermon one morning, "My fellow lepers." He had finally contracted the disease. He served the community for four more years until his death in 1889. St. Damien explained his ministry in this way: "I make myself a leper with the lepers to gain all for Jesus Christ." St. Damien was canonized October 11, 2009.

St. Damien's love for the lepers is a mirror of the love of the Trinity. It is a love that finds meaning in life by choosing to do the little things and the big things each and every day for the Glory of God.

I often hear people say though, "I've already made my choices. My life is pretty much set." Last year I attended Mass at St. Catherine of Siena in New York City. As it turned out, it was the parish's sixth Annual Mass honoring all men and women of health professions who bring healing and hope to the sick and the dying. At the end of Mass the friars presented the annual St. Catherine of Siena Award to Sr. Elaine Goodell, the hospital chaplain at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

Sr. Elaine walked up to the podium, accepted her award, and then shared a

few thoughts about her ministry. An extremely articulate and energetic woman, she said that her 26 years of ministry at Sloan Kettering were the most rewarding of her ministry. She went on to say that she never thought she was going to get the job because when she interviewed for the position she was 60 years old.

What drives a woman at age 86 to minister to the sick and the dying? Similar to St. Damien, Sr. Elaine gives all she has for her love of the Trinity in complete solidarity with Jesus' love for humanity. We may feel that we will never measure up to the examples of the saints. Each of us is called to build up God's Kingdom in a unique and special way. No matter what our calling, though, it is our life's work to mirror the love of the Trinity.

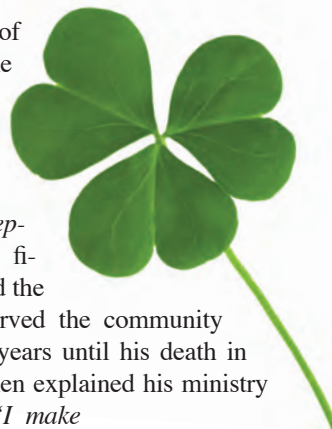
Perhaps the best place to focus is within our own families. It is there that we discover and fulfill the deepest meaning of our lives. Pope Emeritus Benedict called the family an anal-

ogy of the Trinity, a community of love and life where differences must contribute to forming a story of truth and communion. Family life may provide more opportunity to mirror the Trinity than any other aspect of our lives. It is a community like no other where we have the opportunity to practice patience, forgiveness, and selfless service.

May God help us grow in love and understanding of the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, and may we mirror this Trinitarian love in all of our relationships.

— Deacon Patrick Toole, Jr.

Deacon Toole serves as Permanent Deacon at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Fairfield.



"Family life may provide more opportunity to mirror the Trinity than any other aspect of our lives."

Masterpieces by a “dream team” of Renaissance artists

The Sistine Chapel transports the mind and spirit

Dwarfed by the grandeur of St. Peter’s Basilica, the unobtrusive Sistine Chapel may appear to be merely a humble attendant. The brick exterior makes for drab attire compared to the polished travertine of the basilica, and the whole thing would fit into one of the wings of a St Peter’s transept. Yet this space witnesses one of the most important moments of the Church, the conclave or the papal election.



Most people know the chapel for either the formidable contribution made by Pope Julius II when he hired a reluctant Michelangelo to paint the ceiling, or the glorious conclusion given by Paul III Farnese when years later he persuaded a still-reluctant Michelangelo to paint the Last Judgment. But to the attentive viewer, the Sistine offers other, more subtle messages to the cardinals during that critical time.

Pope Sixtus IV had been elected in the haphazardly constructed papal palace at the Vatican in 1471, a time of political unrest and frequent violence. Sixtus hired Baccio Pontelli, an architect with military experience, for the construction of the chapel, which boasts thick walls,



PAINTINGS ON THE SIDE WALLS OF THE SISTINE CHAPEL (SHOWN AT LEFT) FEATURE SCENES FROM THE LIVES OF MOSES AND JESUS CHRIST, INCLUDING PERUGINO’S “DELIVERY OF THE KEYS” (ABOVE) AND BOTTICELLI’S “PUNISHMENT OF KORAH” (BELOW).



high windows, and defensive additions. Completed in 1477, it was christened with the pope’s name. The security measures assured the protection of the papal court while they prayed, preached, and, as of 1492, picked the next pope. The exterior may be sturdy and simple, but the interior transported the spirit as only the Renaissance knew how – through glorious art and inspiring music.

To adorn the chapel, Sixtus called in a “dream team” of Florentine art including Botticelli,

Perugino, and Ghirlandaio (who would become Michelangelo’s painting teacher). These giants of painting decorated the side walls with the stories of Moses and Christ in parallel along the nave. As Moses escapes into the desert, so Jesus retreats for forty days; as Moses gives the Ten Commandments, Christ delivers the Sermon on the Mount. Like the polyphonic harmonies of the Sistine choir, these frescos boast a startlingly variegated palette; they shimmer with

gold leaf, and hypnotize with lapis blues. Vast landscapes carry the spirit to faraway lands, while the newly constructed hospital of Santo Spirito returns the viewer to the Rome of Sixtus. Studied with portraits, the paintings are a veritable Who's Who of Renaissance celebrities.

The two most important works speak directly to the cardinals of the conclave: Perugino's *Delivery of the Keys* and Botticelli's *Punishment of Korah*. In these two panels, these Renaissance rivals employed their wildly divergent styles to send a powerful message: the need for unity. Perugino presents a vast piazza with stately flagstones that lead the eye from Christ giving the keys to St Peter in the foreground to three monumental constructions framing the horizon. Botticelli, on the other hand, narrates the tragedy of the Korah family, who contested Moses' decision to pass his staff of authority to his brother Aaron. Where Perugino's apostles pose peacefully, Botticelli's characters are caught up in the turbulence of their dispute. Both painters drew on ancient art for their backgrounds, but the triumphal arches of Perugino stand pristine in the *Delivery*, while Botticelli's Arch of Constantine, symbol of the hard-won religious liberty earned in 313, is crumbling. Only Perugino has a Christian structure, an eight-sided edifice, symbol of renewal and regeneration.

Placed on either side of the entry into the voting area, these two panels, painted by competitors who learned to collaborate for the sake of the Church, admonish the cardinals to stand by the decision made in that room.

Imagine Michelangelo's chagrin when he was charged with decorating the space above the work of his masters, and yet he overshadowed them all with his revolutionary painting. In four years, Michelangelo frescoed the 12,000 square feet of the vault with the stories of Genesis, a perfect iconographical complement to the works below. When he unveiled it on October 31, 1512, his contemporaries were stunned at the achievement of making a narrative readable from 68 feet above the ground.

Eschewing the diversified palette and sumptuous settings of his masters, Michelangelo drew upon his sculptural training to produce figures that seem hewn from stone to propel his story. God the Father is seen as a dynamic force of energy that, ultimately, in the Creation of Man, transfers His own divine spark to Adam, elevating him above all creation. Even though the fever pitch of Creation is followed by the Temptation and Fall, the Great Flood, and, finally, the banality of Noah's Drunkenness, the story does not



MICHELANGELO'S "JONAH" (ABOVE)
AND CHRIST AND MARY AT THE CENTER OF HIS
MONUMENTAL "LAST JUDGMENT" (BELOW).



end in the last dark panel of Noah sprawled in a tragic parody of Adam's awakening.

From that dark scene, Michelangelo's palette shifts to brilliant hues as prophets, sibyls, and the ancestors of Christ lead the viewer back to the altar. There, perched in the most challenging position of any figure on the ceiling, is Jonah, appearing to fall from the heavens to the altar. The quintessential symbol of Christ's death and resurrection, Jonah brings the Old Testament into the real time of the liturgy.

Twenty-two years later, in the heat of the Reformation, Michelangelo returned to the Chapel to paint the Last Judgment. This

massive work, covering the entire altar wall, looms sternly above the cardinals as they cast their votes. The swirl of bodies draws the eye from the newly resurrected through the souls assisted by saints, angels, or, in one case, a Rosary, to the heroic line-up of the elect.

An awe-inspiring Christ sits at the heart of the work. He turns His head away, but Mary, nestled by the wound in His side, draws souls to her Son. The powerful nude bodies that caused so much commotion over the years that several were "fig-leaved" with painted drapes, are meant to remind us that the crown of Heaven is a prize to be won by Heaven's athletes, and the man the cardinals must elect is the spiritual trainer.

Invisible beginnings and endings delineate the chapel, the bookends of the Bible. Blessed Pope John Paul II, who ordered the cleaning of the chapel, and chose the Sistine as the permanent home of the conclave, dedicated the second poem of his *Roman Triptych* to the chapel:

*"A final clarity and light.
The clarity of the events –
The clarity of consciences –
It is necessary that during the Conclave, Michelangelo teach them –
Do not forget: Omnia nuda et aperta
sunt ante oculos Eius" [Everything is naked and open before the eyes of God].*

In this room, mass media, demographics, and public opinion all diminish in importance, as the cardinals realize that they are not only bared before the eyes of God, but, thanks to Michelangelo, the true role of the Pope, that of saving souls, is revealed.

– Dr. Elizabeth Lev

Dr. Lev, a renowned art historian and author, is a member of the faculty of the University of St. Thomas Catholic Studies Program in Rome, Italy.

Are we open to “God’s surprises” via the Spirit?

“God always brings newness – and demands our complete trust,” Pope Francis said in his homily for Pentecost Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square on May 19. More than 200,000 people attended the morning Mass, which concluded a pilgrimage organized for ecclesial movements as part of the Year of Faith. The Holy Father’s homily follows.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Today we contemplate and re-live in the liturgy the outpouring of the Holy Spirit sent by the risen Christ upon His Church; an event of grace which filled the Upper Room in Jerusalem and then spread throughout the world.

But what happened on that day, so distant from us and yet so close as to touch the very depths of our hearts? Luke gives us the answer in the passage of the Acts of the Apostles which we have heard (2:1-11). The evangelist brings us back to Jerusalem, to the Upper Room where the Apostles were gathered. The first element which draws our attention is the sound which suddenly came from heaven “like the rush of a violent wind” and filled the house; then the “tongues as of fire” which divided and came to rest on each of the Apostles. Sound and tongues of fire: these are clear, concrete signs which touch the Apostles not only from without but also within, deep in their minds and hearts. As a result, “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit,” who unleashed His irresistible power with amazing consequences: they all “began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” A completely unexpected scene opens up before our eyes: a great crowd gathers, astonished because each one heard the Apostles speaking in his own language. They all experience something new, something which had never happened before: “We hear them, each of us, speaking our own language.” And what is it that they are they speaking about? “God’s deeds of power.”

In the light of this passage from Acts, I



POPE FRANCIS GREETES THE FAITHFUL ON PENTECOST IN ST. PETER’S SQUARE. (AP PHOTO)

“The Holy Spirit makes us look to the horizon and drives us to the very outskirts of existence in order to proclaim life in Jesus Christ.”

would like to reflect on three words linked to the working of the Holy Spirit: newness, harmony, and mission.

Newness always makes us a bit fearful, because we feel more secure if we have everything under control, if we are the ones who build, program, and plan our lives in accordance with our own ideas, our own comfort, our own preferences. This is also the case when it comes to God. Often we follow Him, we accept Him, but only up to a certain point. It is hard to abandon ourselves to Him with complete trust, allowing the Holy Spirit to be the soul and guide of our lives in our every decision. We fear that God may force us to strike out on new paths and leave behind our all too narrow, closed, and selfish horizons in order to become open to His own.

Yet throughout the history of salvation,

whenever God reveals Himself, He brings newness and change, and demands our complete trust: Noah, mocked by all, builds an ark and is saved; Abram leaves his land with only a promise in hand; Moses stands up to the might of Pharaoh and leads his people to freedom; the Apostles, huddled fearfully in the Upper Room, go forth with courage to proclaim the Gospel. This is not a question of novelty for novelty’s sake, the search for something new to relieve our boredom, as is so often the case in our own day. The newness which God brings into our life is something that actually brings fulfillment, that gives true joy, true serenity, because God loves us and desires only our good.

Let us ask ourselves: Are we open to “God’s surprises”? Or are we closed and fearful before the newness of the Holy Spirit? Do we have the courage to strike out along the new paths which God’s newness sets before us, or do we resist, barricaded in transient structures which have lost their capacity for openness to what is new?

A second thought: the Holy Spirit would appear to create disorder in the Church, since He brings the diversity of charisms and gifts; yet all this, by His working, is a great source of wealth, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which does not mean uniformity, but which leads everything back to harmony. In the Church, it is the Holy Spirit who creates harmony. One of Fathers of the Church has an expression which I love: the Holy Spirit himself is harmony – “*Ipsa harmonia est.*” Only the Spirit can awaken diversity, plurality, and multiplicity, while at the same time building unity.

Here, too, when we are the ones who try to create diversity and close ourselves up in what makes us different and other, we bring division. When we are the ones who want to build unity in accordance with our human plans, we end up creating uniformity, standardization. But if instead we let ourselves be

guided by the Spirit, richness, variety, and diversity never become a source of conflict, because He impels us to experience variety within the communion of the Church.

Journeying together in the Church, under the guidance of her pastors who possess a special charism and ministry, is a sign of the working of the Holy Spirit. Having a sense of the Church is something fundamental for every Christian, every community, and every movement. It is the Church which brings Christ to me, and me to Christ; parallel journeys are dangerous! When we venture beyond the Church's teaching and community, and do not remain in them, we are not one with the God of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 John 9).

So let us ask ourselves: Am I open to the harmony of the Holy Spirit, overcoming every form of exclusivity? Do I let myself be guided by Him, living in the Church and with the Church?

A final point. The older theologians used to say that the soul is a kind of sailboat, the Holy Spirit is the wind which fills its sails and drives it forward, and the gusts of wind are the gifts of the Spirit. Lacking His impulse and His grace, we do not go forward. The Holy Spirit draws us into the mystery of the living God and saves us from the threat of a Church which is gnostic and self-referential, closed in on herself; He impels us to open the doors and go forth to proclaim and bear witness to the good news of the Gospel, to communicate the joy of faith, the encounter with Christ. The Holy Spirit is the soul of mission.

The events that took place in Jerusalem almost two thousand years ago are not something far removed from us; they are events which affect us and become a lived experience in each of us. The Pentecost of the Upper Room in Jerusalem is the beginning, a beginning which endures. The Holy Spirit is the supreme gift of the risen Christ to His Apostles, yet He wants that gift to reach everyone. As we heard in the Gospel, Jesus says: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to

👉 PLEASE TURN TO **POPE** ON PAGE 16

The Catholic Difference

Tribulations and blasphemies

As the Revised Standard Version renders the 14th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas remind the proto-Christians of Antioch that it is only "through many tribulations" that we enter the Kingdom of God. The New American Bible translation drives the point home even more sharply: "It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God."

Christians in the United States who imagined that, whatever tribulations or hardships they have to endure, they would not include speeches by the President of the United States and the policies of the United States Government had better reconsider, in light of President Barack Obama's April 26 address to the annual Planned Parenthood Gala at Washington's Marriott Wardman Park Hotel.

It was an appalling speech that had the sole benefit of clarifying the last-ditch commitment of the present administration to the most open-ended abortion license possible. And it drew a line in the sand that those committed to the biblical view of the sanctity of human life cannot ignore – and must challenge.

Planned Parenthood is a multimillion-dollar industry, funded in no small part by the federal government, that has been directly responsible for the deaths of millions of unborn children and is currently responsible for over one thousand such deaths every day; yet the President described Planned Parenthood's work as "providing quality health care to women all across America."

"Perhaps because the Obama speech to Planned Parenthood coincided with Kermit Gosnell's homicide trial, the president did not utter the word 'abortion' once."



Pro-life advocates' efforts to craft state laws requiring Planned Parenthood clinics and other abortionists to follow the minimal sanitation and safety standards required of true medical facilities are, according to the President, a matter of "shutting off communities that need more health care options for women, not less."

The clinic-regulation laws that have been passed in states across the country are, the President charged, part of an "orchestrated and historic effort to roll back basic rights when it comes to women's health" – as if abortuaries that do not meet the health and safety standards required of your local McDonald's are contributing to anyone's "health."

Moreover, such laws are an attempt to mandate "government injecting itself into decisions best made between a woman and her doctor" – as if a butcher like Philadelphia's Kermit Gosnell, who severed the spinal cords of infants born alive in botched abortions, was any woman's personal physician.

Perhaps because the Obama speech to Planned Parenthood coincided with Gosnell's homicide trial, the president did not utter the word "abortion" once. But the timing notwithstanding, that omission was hardly surprising in an

👉 PLEASE TURN TO **ABORT** ON PAGE 19

One wedding, two funerals, and a treasure of gold

CHAPTER TWELVE The Conclusion

The blue skies of arid, central eastern Spain barely transformed the stark hillsides of the city of Cuenca. The presence of its famous fortress-like Parador Nacional dominated everything within miles. Once an enormous convent-monastery, it now attracts wealth and those seeking elegance. Small windows betray little of its tradition and luxury. Perched cliff-like and well above the village streets, the Parador is stark and solitary in its amber-aged walls, accenting the privacy its guests seek.

Dianna, dressed as black as the night, slipped from her bedroom in the Royal Suite. Its tapestried walls hushed the room, lavish in alabaster, silk, and gold; the quiet noise covered her secretive movement along the balcony that opened from the suite's three bedrooms. The posada was at its darkest this part of the night.

She listened to be sure the Director and Q were asleep; they'd had a long day. Good wine and tales of Medusa's flight from Canada to her hillside villa a few kilometers nearby had finally lulled the three to deep yawns.

Dianna paused, cat-like and silent against the wall. It was time. First the Director, then Q, and before dawn, the villa and Medusa. They all had to die; only they had the information that could link her as the mole that threatened national security.

Heavily gloved, she slipped a small wooden cask from her side-pocket, opened it, and looked inside for the needle-pin protruding from a single, rubber glove-like finger. She slipped it snugly on her left forefinger, smiled, and took a soft and deep breath; so far all had gone well. Now, she whispered to herself, "One small prick each, and both will die and I will be home free."



Moments later the satin-slipped bride stepped onto the crimson carpet that led to the altar. Breathless, Harry turned to his best man. "Billie, do you believe this is happening? That woman is to be my wife! How can this be?!"

Just as the crescent moon slipped into sight, a gentle breeze separated the drapes enough for Dianna to slip into the bedroom and, as quietly, to the Director's bedside. Gently, she pressed the fingered needlepoint into the Director's scalp. It was done!

As she moved away, the envelope of silence suddenly changed! She froze, mesmerized in prickly fear. It was another presence, close, but in the room! The Director's distinctive sigh froze her in mid-step; light suddenly filled the room.

The Director's voice was cold and detached. "Dianna, you played the evening well. It was interesting being the hunted for a change. You are very thorough. By the way, that's a dummy under the sheet. Your

pin-prick would have been quite fatal. Ah!" Beckoning to the door, the Director added, "Q! Please come in."

Q was standing inside the same window. "You were right as usual, Director. She went for you first."

Dianna's mask hid all but disbelief in her eyes. She smiled at Q, then the Director, and as quickly, took a short, deep breath. Reaching to her cheek, she tapped it with her fingertip. In a moment, she fell to the floor, very dead!

"And now, Q, on to Medusa."

Minutes later, their black Ferrari Enzo slipped through the Posada gates and sped toward Ursula Williamsburgh's villa. The black night to forever seal the lives of Dianna and her friend, the very evil Ursula.



Addie, Lillie, Isz Parker, Joanna, and Doc Hendricks' mother, Beth, sat comfortably in the great Tutter House living room. It was late Friday eve; the wedding was just two days away. They'd long since finished tying the loose ends of their pre-wedding meeting. All attention was on Lillie while she proudly described the new addition to the house, especially the nursery. Looking at the bride, her smile betrayed her love. "Addie, I can't wait for the future, your babies, and Isz's cousins!" she said.

"Don't rush the future, Lillie," Isz laughed. "Everything is so new for us! The big news goes public this Sunday in the Center Section of *The Tutterville News Times*. A front-page story, too!"

Addie laughed. "That picture of you and I, Isz, *Reunited Lost Cousins*, will be the talk of the Tuttervilles for weeks! If it weren't for Lillie's suggestion to open great-grandfather Tutter's second Will, none of this would have

happened for another 12 years.”

Beth interrupted. “That was truly an extraordinary thing you did, Addie. Your decision to share what you already have, and then to give all great grandfather Hosea’s hidden treasure to us, the Parker family – all this will become a centerpiece of Tutter history forever!”

Doc Hendricks mother, Beth, shook her head. “The whole story is like a fairy tale. I’d love to know the particulars! Is it too long a story for tonight?”

Not for Lillie. “Well, the second sealed Will was in the Courthouse safe. I remembered seeing it some years past. It was to be opened before August of 2022 only by a direct heir and only if a case of dire emergency existed. Of course, with Will’s stutter being hereditary, just as Addie’s was, Addie wanted it read. The Will was succinct and quite clear:

“Beneath my dear and most loved brother Hosea’s vault is a sealed crypt, carved from stone. I divided all of the gold we mined – one half I took with me, Hosea’s half is in his crypt. Sally Hunter was to be my brother’s wife. This gold is for her descendants, for her direct heirs and no one else! I am responsible for my dear brother Hosea’s death! I love him so, so very much. This century is a difficult one with few to trust, and so I have delayed making known this treasure, prayerfully hoping that a new generation will honor this Will, as my dear Hosea’s bequest. Signed: Tutter, This 4th day of August, 1822.”

Isz filled the silence. “My husband’s great-grandmother Sally Hunter died in childbirth at word of Hosea’s death. Imagine how much they loved each other.”



The phone brought them back into focus. Addie went to her desk. “Hello? Yes, just a moment. Joanna, it’s Chief Detective Westerly for you.”

“Mont, what’s going on? Chief Kilmein from Toronto? Patch him in. Good evening Chief! Oh . . . Oh how sad. Yes, things do have a way of working themselves out. Yes. As a matter of fact, Lillie is right here . . . Oh . . . How amazing! Thank you. You have a safe and peaceful weekend as well. Yes . . . Goodnight Chief. We’ll talk on Monday. Goodnight.”

Joanna had to sit. “The Toronto Chief says that if it were not for your diligent work, Lillie, Merryweather Rhue’s murder would not have been discovered and Ussie Willow – Williamsburgh as she is now known – would be a wealthy and quite prosperous woman. As it is, both Ussie and our friend, Dianna, were discovered dead this morning by the Cuenca, Spain, police! Dead of natural causes – I wonder about that!”

“Lillie, the Chief claims that they both planned to harm national security! And you, Lillie Atterby, are to be awarded their National Citizen’s Award for Diligence and Bravery!”

“Good Lord!” Lillie sprung to her feet. “Natural causes? The Spanish police?”

“Chief Kilmein reports they were found in a villa. The circumstances imply that they were, how shall I say, more than friends!”

Joanna straightened her shoulders to police-like attention. “Lillie, the Chief claims that they both planned to harm national security! And you, Lillie Atterby, are to be awarded their National Citizen’s Award for Diligence and Bravery!”

With that declaration, the cheers and yells of five wedding planners moved the old Tutter homestead at least five inches from its foundation!



Had anyone predicted that this wedding-weekend would exhaust every form of media within 500 miles of all the Tutterville cities, as well as draw national

media, they would have underestimated the event by half! The big headlines: *Bottomless Wealth in the Old Tutter Tomb! Our own Hunter Family, the Tuts of Tutterville! The last of the Old Tutter Family to Marry Today! Canada’s Citizen Award to Lillie Atterby! Judge Addie’s Wedding Dress and THE Honeymoon!*

The groom and Billie, his Best Man, with Fr. Russ DiPasqual and Cardinal von Hertzog, sat comfortably in the Cathedral sacristy lounge watching Addie’s wedding cortege move slowly along the crowd-packed boulevard leading to the Cathedral.

The voice-overs went from one network to the next: “*There’s the bride! Oh . . . She’s beautiful! The last to carry the Tutter name . . . Soon it will be Her Honor, Judge Adeline Adamson Tutter Hendricks . . . the family says they’ve been in love since they were teens! How romantic is that!*”

Fr. DiPasqual knocked. “Your Eminence, looks like it’s time. This way, Doctor Hendricks. The Bride’s carriage is just about here.”

Moments later the satin-slipped bride stepped onto the crimson carpet that led to the altar. Breathless, Harry reached for Billie’s arm. “Billie, do you believe this is happening? That woman is to be my wife! Lord, Billie, how can this be?!”



Silvery-blue water caressed the hull of the *Lover’s Waltz*. The shallows south of Turks were warm and almost still. Addie and Doc sat tanned and dozing in their deck-chair. The boat’s butler coughed softly, “Ahemm. Doctor and Mrs. Hendricks, dinner is served . . .”

Addie raised her glass to her husband. “To us, for always.” “For always,” Harry replied . . .

THE END

– A. Moses Attleboro

Summer is here!

Make the family vacation a bit of a pilgrimage, too

Summer is here! It seems to offer such wonderful promise of new and exciting opportunities for wholesome adventure.

Looking back on the days of my youth and the anticipation of the summer break from school, I remember what wonderful experiences we had packing up the family station wagon to visit new and interesting places. The six of us would pile into the car in the wee hours of the morning before the sun rose and off we went on some new adventure. Of course, only Dad had to stay awake to drive. The rest of us would wake up when we pulled into some rest stop on the highway and break out the Cap'n Crunch and feast on a scrumptious breakfast of Ring Dings and Yodels (a.k.a. chocolate). There were no TV's or DVD players in the cars in those days, and air conditioning meant rolling down the windows.

Despite a lack of gadgets, there was no shortage of interesting things to see – each new day brought exciting new “firsts” for us. In a mere two or three weeks each summer, we would manage to camp out in the Smoky Mountains, wade in the Wisconsin Dells, traverse the dusty Badlands, wake to a magnificent sunrise at the Grand Canyon, or visit the stunning Montreal Cathedral.

Reflecting on those extraordinary grace-filled experiences, the fondest memories seemed to be “between the lines.” Of course, visiting National Landmarks such as Mount Rushmore or the Great National Parks, such as Sequoia, gave us a deeper appreciation for our country. As a teenager, these various summer adventures also taught me that things which at first seemed somehow beyond my reach were, in fact, attainable. Indeed, our country became our classroom and the most valuable lessons learned had more to do with virtues than the wonderful places we visited.

The simplest things were actually a



THE ORNATE CHAPEL AT THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE DIVINE MERCY, INSPIRED BY ST. FAUSTINA (RIGHT)

source of pure joy – crossing into a new state usually led to a “Kodak Moment” – we all piled out of the wagon and took a picture to prove we actually went to Wyoming. But the real joy was experiencing these joys together and learning lessons – together. A deeper appreciation of the bountiful graces we were actually receiving throughout those wonderful adventures would become more clear years later – through more mature eyes – especially understanding the sacrifices made by Mom and Dad and the lessons they imparted to us: patience, kindness, sacrifice, and joy were part of each and every day.

It's amazing what can be accomplished with a little simple planning, a few boxes of cereal, and a map. As summer approaches, why not consider planning a family adventure? Start local and see how it goes. And why not consider including a little pilgrimage as part of the itinerary? After all, what could be more natural for a faithful Catholic



family than to make a holy pilgrimage to a holy place once a year. There are so many possibilities “just around the corner.”

One pilgrimage site I would highly recommend is a scenic two-hour drive from Stamford: the National Shrine of the

Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Stockbridge is a beautiful New England town nestled in the Berkshires and is also home to the Norman Rockwell Museum as well as Tanglewood. Begin at the Shrine and go from there.

The Divine Mercy Shrine offers a variety of programs and liturgies. Visit the Grotto, walk the outdoor Stations of the Cross, or join the other pilgrims for the Chaplet at 3:00 p.m., the Hour of Mercy, in the beautiful chapel. For the more adventurous, I recommend picking up a copy of *The Diary* written by St. Faustina, and read a little bit before visiting the Shrine. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the sprawling fields that line the hilltop property. Don't be surprised to enjoy immediate fruits from such an endeavor, although the greater portion will likely be welling up the rest of your lives – all because you went out of your way to meditate in a special way on the gift of faith and to offer thanks by incorporating a simple pilgrimage into the summer trip. What could be better than that?

After visiting the Shrine, camping out is optional. While it was always a regular part of the Walsh family itinerary, there are hotels and B&B's that might be a bit more appealing. One possibility would be the historic Red Lion Inn in the center of town. The Inn has quite an interesting history. It actually began as a stagecoach stop in the 1770's.

The kids can research the places that you visit with their iPods in the back seat. Of course, we only dreamed of iPods and the like in our travels back in the 70's (especially when traveling through Pennsylvania – ok, there were some boring parts, but that's life). When we hit a bit of a lull, Mom would pull out the *Mobil Travel Guide* and read to us about the places we would see later that day – much more entertaining than an iPod.

From Stockbridge, travel about 90 minutes northwest to the Shrine of the North American Martyrs and the birthplace of St. Kateri Tekakwitha in Auriesville (Fultonville), New York. It rests in the Mohawk Valley.



A STATUE OF ST. KATERI TEKAKWITHA ENSHRINED IN THE "HALLS OF HEAVEN" AT THE SHRINE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS IN AURIESVILLE, NY.

Perhaps a visit to nearby Cooperstown could round out the day. It's only an hour from the Shrine of the Martyrs to the Baseball Hall of Fame – America's favorite pastime. And while a visit to the Hall of Fame would be fun, it would also offer a wonderful opportunity to teach the kids about true greatness. On the one hand, Cooperstown celebrates the accomplishments of truly gifted athletes

“When parents plan the vacation trip around the faith, they are making a statement to their children: This is important to us as a family. It becomes an occasion of grace.”

at the game of baseball. The Shrine of the Martyrs, on the other hand, celebrates the lives of the heroes of the faith, such as St. Isaac Jogues, who are enshrined forever in the “Halls of Heaven.” They bore witness to our Lord Jesus Christ even to the shedding of their blood for love of God and neighbor. And they did it right here in America.

Perhaps on the drive home to Stamford, you might consider stopping by one of the holy places in New York City, such as St.

Patrick's Cathedral, or in New Jersey, such as the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Washington Township. There are many holy places just a short distance from home and each of them helps make the home a holy place.

When parents plan the vacation trip around the faith, they are making a statement to their children: This is important to us as a family. It becomes an occasion of grace and is quite naturally woven into the fabric of the family identity, not to mention yielding an increase in knowledge and understanding of the faith we profess.

Who knows where a little pilgrimage will lead – today Litchfield, tomorrow Rome? Jerusalem? Such an excursion would emphasize the evangelical spirit of our faith, especially in this “Year of Faith.” Get an early start . . .

– Rev. Terry Walsh

Fr. Walsh is Parochial Vicar and Director of Religious Education at the Basilica. Useful websites for more information:

- www.thedivinemercy.org/shrine
- www.nrm.org (N. Rockwell Museum)
- www.martyrshrine.org
- www.baseballhall.org (Cooperstown)
- www.saintpatrickscathedral.org
- www.wafusa.org (Fatima Shrine)

“The Sabbath soul”

Remember that Sunday, “a day set apart,” is special

“The seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.”

– Exodus 20:10

In our Christian faith, the “Seventh day” has become the first day; Sunday is our Sabbath, “a day set apart from other days of the week” (Exodus 20:9).

The Sabbath is a distant memory for many Americans. There is only the recollection of a quaintly tranquil day when stores were closed, streets were quiet, and a festive dinner was had. There was that certain slowness and sweetness. Even today banks and post offices are closed, most corporate businesses are shut, and regular weekday newscasters are replaced by substitutes. But overall, a religious sense of the Sabbath seems outmoded in our desacralized society.

Lately, I’ve come more and more to love that vision of the Sabbath that ancient Judaism fostered – that the Sabbath was given to us by God, for delight, for rest. There was what was called the “Sabbath soul,” another spirit that holds sway than on other days of the week. The Sabbath was an opportunity to mend our tattered lives.

As far back as the time of the prophet Nehemiah, it was expressly forbidden to profane the Sabbath by work and marketing:

“I saw in Judah people treading wine presses on the Sabbath and bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem to sell . . . I said to them, ‘What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day! You bring wrath on the nation by profaning the Sabbath.’”

– Nehemiah 13:15-21

Nehemiah even advises that the Sabbath be a day on which one uses no money, the world’s chief idol. Handling money was considered a desecration of the Sabbath.

A 16th-century Jewish sect known as the Kabbalists maintained that even thinking of business should be avoided.

According to the Jewish Talmud, the Sabbath is to be an atmosphere, a different climate. Comfort and pleasure were to be an integral part of the Sabbath. We are told to “sanctify the Sabbath by choice meals, by beautiful garments, delight our soul with pleasure.” The Kabbalists taught that it was a sin to be sad on the Sabbath, and it was a

became law-laden. A complexity of Sabbath rules and rituals were developed. I’ve heard some Jewish people say that it is with a sense of relief that they no longer observe the Sabbath.

I reject much of the stuff the Orthodox rabbis added, but do try to live that one day of the week differently from the others, try to capture the Jewish “*Oneg Shabbat*,” the joy of the Sabbath. I see it as that pause we insert, that chance to remember what is really real. It’s a day to stop seeking dust balls, the bills, the laundry – not a day to balance the checkbook. It’s a day when these things lose their power over us. I can



I can understand Abad-Ha-Am’s famous encomium: “More than we keep the Sabbath, the Sabbath keeps us.”

double sin to express anger on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was no time to remember sins and make petitions to God. Certain topics were to be avoided on the Sabbath, particularly politics and war (compare this to our Sunday morning talk shows). A nap and a walk were recommended.

How fond I am of the Talmudic words: “*The Sabbath comes like a caress wiping away any fear, sorrow, and somber emotion.*” The Sabbath is to be a time for some contact with nature, and a time for interpersonal relationships.

Lately, I try to practice some of these injunctions about the Sabbath, try to draw back and enjoy the present. I see the Sabbath as a day at one’s disposal, not a day confined and constrained. It’s a day to lay down the profanity of commerce and acquisitiveness.

At its best Judaism tried to foster the vision of the Sabbath as a day that releases peace and gaiety, a day of detachment from the vulgar. Unfortunately, the Jewish Sabbath

understand Abad-Ha-Am’s famous encomium: “*More than we keep the Sabbath, the Sabbath keeps us.*”

As the Sunday sun sets I begin to feel the “Sabbath soul” slipping away, that pleasant sense of Sunday indolence fading as Monday and the long week looms ahead. But up to late Sunday evening, with its tinge of melancholy, I try hard to follow that injunction of Nehemiah (8:9-10):

“Today is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad, and do not weep; for today is holy to our Lord. Do not be saddened this day, for rejoicing in the Lord must be your strength.”

– Dr. Thomas Hicks

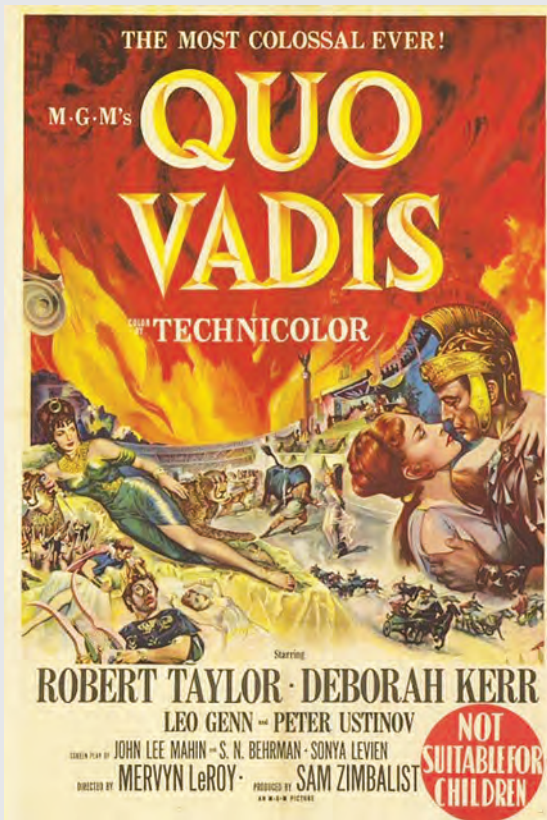
Dr. Hicks, a member of St. Theresa Parish in Trumbull, is Professor Emeritus of Theology and Psychology at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield.

“Quo Vadis” (1951): Sts. Peter and Paul in Rome

A question that has long divided Christians is: was St. Peter ever in Rome? Our separated brethren may have their doubts, but we Catholics know that he established the Church and was martyred there. Furthermore, legend has it that St. Peter, while fleeing Rome during the Neronian persecution, was met on the Appian Way by our Lord, carrying His Cross. Confused, Peter asked him, “*Quo vadis Domine?*” (“Where are you going Lord?”) To which Jesus replied, “*I am going to Rome to be crucified again.*” Shamed and emboldened, Peter returned to Rome and, ultimately, to his own crucifixion on the Vatican Hill.

There are only a few Hollywood movies concerning St. Peter and even fewer about St. Paul; but to my knowledge there are none that feature them both, and in Rome to boot. And this – along with gorgeous Technicolor, stirring music by Miklos Rozsa, and inspired direction by Mervyn LeRoy – is what makes 1951’s MGM epic, *Quo Vadis*, so special. And epic it was. To this day, it still holds the all-time record of 32,000 costumes produced for the 30,000 members of its cast and extras.

Based on the novel of the same name by Henryk Sienkiewicz, history and legend come together in a sublime film that is well worth sitting through all of its three-hour length. In strict obedience to the Hollywood rule that all ancient Romans must speak with English accents, the film stars Leo Genn as Petronius, Deborah Kerr as Lygia, and the wonderful Peter Ustinov in his first featured role as a delightfully debauched Nero. The noteworthy exception to these



mellifluous British tones is the Nebraska twang of MGM stalwart Robert Taylor; he of the perfect profile, dazzling smile, and penetrating blue eyes.

The Prince of the Apostles declares of Jesus, “He has guided my feet to Rome so that, together, we might build His Church here.”

The movie centers around Taylor’s character, Marcus Vinicius: a Roman commander and nephew of Petronius; an “accomplished voluptuary” who is both an advisor and critic at Nero’s court. After leading his victorious legion home to Rome, Marcus is hosted at the villa of retired general Aulus Plautius until he can make arrangements to stay with his uncle for a few months of “relaxation.” Marcus’ major interests are

random sexual liaisons, fine wines, and furthering the military glory of the Empire. As St. Paul says of him and his tribune, “*Those two vital young men are Rome!*”

At the house of Plautius, Marcus meets Lygia, the adopted daughter of the general and a former wartime hostage, whom he mistakes for a household slave. Seeing her for the first time in the garden and instantly falling in love, he addresses her with polished Pagan poetry: “*Behold, she stands with her gown hung loose! Framed is her face in golden tresses, reflecting the milk-white beauty of her shoulders. So it was that Venus stood before Mars, welcoming her lover.*” At first taken in by the obvious charm and good looks of Marcus and already smitten with him, Lygia is soon repulsed by his tales of blood and glory.

After dinner, a visitor arrives, much to the delight of Lygia, the general, and his wife. Unbeknownst to Marcus, he has been the guest of Christians, and the man who comes to see them is none other than their “very dear friend,” Paul of Tarsus, well played by Shakespearean actor Abraham Sofaer. When they are alone with him and ask for news of “our big fisherman,” he tells them that Peter is indeed on his way to Rome and should arrive any day.

As Paul remarks that he hopes to convert Marcus and other Romans like him in order to “teach the world,” Lygia tells him he’s asking for miracles. “*I am,*” Paul knowingly replies, “*I am indeed.*” And therein hangs the tale.

➤ PLEASE TURN TO *QUO* ON PAGE 16

👉 *QUO* CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

The movie progresses to emphasize the differences that seem to doom the relationship of Marcus and Lygia. He is a Roman pagan and, as such, has little time to waste on anything that does not satisfy his physical appetites or advance the dominance of the Empire. She, already possessed by a higher love, worships the one true God and cannot admit to loving anyone who does not love Him.

But *Quo Vadis* is much, much more than your typical Hollywood love story.

For during the gargantuan scene of Marcus' triumphal parade with his legion before Nero and tens of thousands of adoring Romans, as incense is being offered by a priestess who proclaims the praises of Venus, Mars,

👉 *POPE* CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

remain with you forever" (John 14:16). It is the Paraclete Spirit, the "Comforter", who grants us the courage to take to the streets of the world, bringing the Gospel! The Holy Spirit makes us look to the horizon and drives us to the very outskirts of existence in order to proclaim life in Jesus Christ.

Let us ask ourselves: do we tend to stay closed in on ourselves, on our group, or do we let the Holy Spirit open us to mission?

Today's liturgy is a great prayer which the Church, in union with Jesus, raises up to the Father, asking Him to renew the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May each of us, and every group and movement, in the harmony of the Church, cry out to the Father and implore this gift. Today, too, as at her origins, the Church, in union with Mary, cries out: "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus! Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love!*" Amen.

— Pope Francis

Juno, and Jupiter – "*beneath whose auspices Rome rules the world*" – the camera zooms into the midst of the huge crowd to find a wizened old man dressed in homespun and carrying a shepherd's staff. He is St. Peter (the Scottish actor Finlay Currie), who has finally arrived in the Eternal City to proclaim the rule of the true King of Kings.

The rest of the film is chock-full of colorful and inspiring images. There is much court intrigue featuring the almost endearing, egomaniacal madness of Nero, as portrayed by the infectiously charming Ustinov. There is also a scene where Peter and Paul address a clandestine meeting of Christians, with the Prince of the Apostles declaring of Jesus, "*He has guided my feet to Rome so that, together, we might build His Church here.*"

Then there is the colossal depiction of the burning of Rome by Nero who, in order to deflect the anger of its citizens, blames his heinous act on the Christians. Incidentally, the impressive model that Nero uses to show his plans for rebuilding Rome was originally constructed by

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

Mussolini's government for a 1937 exhibition of Roman architecture.

The last third of the movie deals with the persecutions of the Christians and includes the artfully-staged depiction of the film's title scene, where St. Peter, accompanied by a boy orphaned by the great fire, meets his Lord while fleeing the city and returns to Rome to strengthen his suffering brethren. The martyrdom scenes – according to historical eyewitnesses, very accurate – are

gruesome and hard to watch (no wonder the movie poster warned, "Not suitable for children"), unless you remember that, as Tertullian wrote, "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*"

And this indeed is the message of *Quo Vadis*; a must-see film that, in its own way, goes far to enforce the beliefs of Roman Catholics.

— Lisa Fabrizio

Lisa is a columnist for the *American Spectator* (www.spectator.org).

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Gaining the trust of students, despite four strikes

Having taught at Kolbe Cathedral High School for four years I feel that finally I have learned how to relate to teenagers. At least I think I can. Or I could, yesterday.

When I started I had no idea how teenagers thought or operated. I admit that they even frightened me. Their ways seemed not to be those of other humans. Their vocabulary changed daily, dependent on the movies, television, and music of the day. One day some unintelligible sound or phrase would resound through the hallways and stairwells and every student would laugh hysterically upon hearing it or repeating it. When asked what it meant, or whence it came, they would laugh even more uproariously and look at me as though I had emerged from pre-history.



*“I am a Dad,”
I told her,
“and all of you
are my kids.”*

At the end of my first week I congratulated myself on having learned the names of all my students. How could I have known that all the girls would change their hairstyles for the second week of school, and again for the third, creating a maelstrom of confusion in my insensitive mind?

By the way, the only unforgivable sin according to the Bible is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (another column). This, according to high school girls, is not so. For this species of human, the only unforgivable sin is that a male high school teacher call a girl by the wrong name. They *never* forget.

I did not realize when I walked into my classroom on that first fateful day, filled with hope and burning with zeal to transmit the faith, that my eloquence would not hold these creatures transfixed for 80 minutes. Rather, I would beg, cajole, bribe, and finally threaten them with suspension if they would not stop behaving like the inhabitants of a zoological park. The final blow to

my self esteem was to discover that the bag of tricks I had so painstakingly cultivated teaching Religious Education to students in eighth grade and below once or twice a week would only elicit smirks of derision from teenagers. In a word, it was not good.

I realize now that there were other factors at work that had nothing to do with me personally. I had at least four strikes against me the day I entered the classroom. First, I am a man. It is not unusual for inner-city children to have had poor relationships, or no relationships, with men. Many of my students do not inherently trust men.

Second, I am white. It is not unusual for inner-city children to have learned from oral tradition or experience that whites

do not like blacks. History certainly demonstrates that whites have not exactly treated blacks well over the years. Many of my students do not inherently trust whites.

Third, I am Catholic. Many of my students are Protestant, and it is not unusual for Protestants to have been taught that Catholics are not really Christians. And how often have we Catholics reinforced that “misconception”? Many of my students do not trust Catholics.

Finally, I am a priest. Inner-city children and their parents read the paper, too. Many of my students do not inherently trust priests.

As I look back I can only wonder at how I survived my first year. Many new teachers in our environment do not. By the grace of God I persevered, knowing that, somehow, I would eventually figure out how to do this.

I am happy to report that the four years have not been wasted. My students today not only trust me, but love me. And I love them. We communicate this message to one another in what most “outsiders” would consider an unusual way. But after all, teenagers are the most unusual humans that I

have ever encountered. The knowledge of the fact that I have, with the help of God, succeeded in my mission to gain the trust of my students comes to me in different ways.

Some weeks ago I was joking around with some students during a break and a girl said to me, “*Fr. Ringley, you should have been a Dad!*”

“*I am a Dad,*” I told her, “*and all of you are my kids.*”

I think about this exchange often and feel that this is the greatest compliment I have ever received. At once, I am as far from being a Dad as any man could be. And at the same time, I am more a Dad than any man could hope to be. *Deo gratias.*

– Rev. F. John Ringley, Jr.

Fr. Ringley is Spiritual Director of Kolbe-Cathedral High in Bridgeport.



Pope Francis’ Prayer Intentions

JUNE 2013

General Intention: Mutual Respect. That a culture of dialogue, listening, and mutual respect may prevail among peoples.

Missionary Intention: New Evangelization. That where secularization is strongest, Christian communities may effectively promote a new evangelization.

The second annual Kentucky Derby fundraiser was held on Saturday, May 4, in the Msgr. Nagle Hall. Guests – many wearing their best hats – gathered to watch the 139th “Run for the Roses” while sipping mint julep cocktails and enjoying delicious food from Columbus Park Trattoria and Grade A/ShopRite. In all, \$50,000 was raised towards the renovation of the historic Basilica Rectory.

Special thanks to the Organizing Committee, chaired by Patty Arnone and Tracy Banahan; all who attended; and all who generously donated goods and services. (PHOTOS BY ANDREW MBABAALI)



➤ **ABORT** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

address that may have set a new standard for deliberate misrepresentation of reality. For it requires willful moral blindness about reality to say that “*what Planned Parenthood is about*” is helping “*a woman from Chicago named Courtney*” make sure she could start a family, by providing “*access to affordable contraceptive care to keep her healthy*” in the face of a fertility-threatening disease. Today, President Obama noted to applause, “*She’s got two beautiful kids. That’s what Planned Parenthood is about.*”

About the millions of “beautiful kids” (many of them African-American) who were never born because of Planned Parenthood, the President had not a word to say. Not a word of remorse. Not a word of compassion, for either the slaughtered innocents of our time or the mothers suffering post-abortion trauma. Just a celebration of “your right to choose,” without the slightest moral pause over the question, “*Choose what?*”

But there was worse. For President Obama concluded his remarks as follows: “*Thank you, Planned Parenthood. God bless you . . .*” And that is nothing short of blasphemy.

Too harsh? No. For in its discussion of this grave sin against the Second Commandment, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (no. 2148) teaches that “*it is also blasphemous to make use of God’s name to . . . reduce people to servitude, to torture persons, or to put them to death.*” That is precisely what happens in Planned Parenthood abattoirs. And on that, the President called down the divine blessing.

Pray for him. Pray for the United States, which is in very, very serious trouble.

– **George Weigel**

George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, DC.



THE VIEW FROM THE
BACK PEW

On May 14, after the verdict in the trial of Dr. Kermit Gosnell, the notorious abortionist who has been sent to prison for life, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia (where Gosnell had his clinic) issued the following statement:

“The trial of Kermit Gosnell is over. His convictions will surprise very few. But nothing can bring back the innocent children he killed, or make up for the vulnerable women he exploited. We should keep the repugnance of his clinic conditions sharp in our memories, and we should remember the media’s inadequacy in covering his case, because Kermit Gosnell is not an exception. Others just like him run abortion mills throughout our country.”

“We need to stop cloaking the ugliness of abortion with misnomers like ‘proper medical coverage’ or ‘choice.’ It is violence of the most intimate sort, and it needs to end.”

Shame on the national news media for largely ignoring this so-called doctor who committed infanticide in a clinic one critic compared to a butcher’s shop. Shame on our President for bestowing his blessing on Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers (see George Weigel’s article on page 9). And shame on our clergy, few of whom preach about this modern murder of the innocents.

➤ **15 YEARS** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

That aspect of the parish most difficult to narrate is its spiritual development and growth. The priests who have served here, especially Fr. Terry Walsh and Fr. Al Audette during these past years, have done wonders. We have a superb religious education program, led by Fr. Walsh and his crack team of dedicated teachers and assistants. Their reverent Masses, superb homilies, and gentle guidance in the confessional daily form the hearts and minds of the faithful of St. John’s. Fr. Walsh began the Legion of Mary, and the very successful youth and young adult programs, Francis and Clare and The Flock, St. Maria Goretti and St. Dominic Savio Societies – all have provided great opportunities for spiritual growth and the building of friendships among our parish youth.

Likewise, our adult educational programs, including Bible Study, RCIA, St. Monica Institute for Patristic Studies, Latin Reading Group, and the Biblical Greek Group, have brought many closer to Our Lord and His Church through study of Catholic spiritual classics. Last but not least, THE EAGLE, our magnificent monthly newsletter read far and wide, with writings by the Holy Father as well as timely articles by nationally known Catholic writers and our own parishioners.

Fifteen years is a long time. Yet, I can honestly say they have been some of the happiest and most rewarding of my 36 years as a priest. I have grown much, had much of my youthful arrogance and pride knocked out of me, and come to a deeper love for the priesthood of Our Lord.

I am grateful to all our parishioners, priests, staff, and volunteers. I ask that you spread the word about St. John’s: lure more friends and relatives into our parish, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

– **Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, H.E.D.**

Msgr. DiGiovanni is Pastor of the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist.

When younger, time seemed to pass slowly. Now, I blink, and my first 15 years as Pastor of St. John's have passed, or nearly so, by June 29.

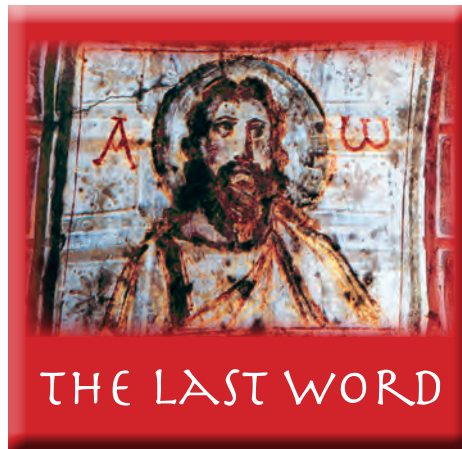
First, I am grateful that then-Bishop Edward M. Egan appointed me as the pastor in 1998. As we walked back to the rectory following the Mass installing me as pastor on the evening of June 28, 1998, Bishop Egan said to me, "Congratulations! Now, make it work." Much has happened since that evening.

The easiest part of this narrative concerns buildings. So, here is a simple list of capital improvements since my arrival, paid for by the generosity of our parishioners in various capital campaigns:

- Restoration and repair of the church's stained-glass windows, including new steel-reinforced mahogany frames for the transept and choir loft windows [\$1 million].
- Reconstruction of the church basement into the Msgr. Nagle Parish Hall, including a new heating and air conditioning system in the church and hall, construction of six classrooms, a kitchen, new bathroom facilities, and a choir practice room [\$1.6 million].
- A new slate church roof and repairs [\$1.5 million].
- Repairing of plaster walls and ceilings and repainting of the church interior in three phases [\$900,000].
- Reinforcement of the Rectory foundations, a new electrical system and Internet wiring, upgraded plumbing, air-conditioned offices and meeting rooms, reconstruction of the third floor, and a new roof [\$450,000].

Other projects paid for by one very generous parishioner (who prefers to remain anonymous) are:

- Heated granite walkway between the rectory and the church.
- Bronze statues of St. Peter and St. [Padre] Pio.



- New church restrooms.
- New altar steps and altar rail, reproductions of the 1886 originals.

Likewise, the oil paintings of Msgr. William Nagle in the parish hall and the oil painting



"Fifteen years is a long time. Yet, I can honestly say these years at St. John's have been some of the happiest and most rewarding of my 36 years as a priest."

of Our Lady (*Salus Populi Romani*) inside the church, were paid for by two other generous and anonymous parishioners.

There has been a large number of parishioners who have volunteered during these years for a whole host of activities: religious activities, feast days and processions,

fundraising events, parish entertainments, activities in time of tragedy, such as the concert to aid Haiti following the earthquake [the parish raised \$50,000 for Haitian relief], and so much more. I am very grateful.

Likewise, we have a superb parish staff, who keep the parish operating smoothly, meeting the needs of our parishioners, presenting gardens in the downtown that bring smiles to the faces of all who pass by.

The one accomplishment of which I am very proud is the raising of our parish church to the dignity of a Minor Basilica by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in 2009. Knowing the role St. John's played in establishing the Church in southwestern Fairfield County, I thought of working to become a basilica upon my arrival in 1998, but other practical projects were more urgent. The catalyst for petitioning for the papal honor came following the battles in Hartford, when various state senators supported legislative action by which the State of Connecticut would control and oversee the finances of the Catholic Church. This seemed a repeat of the 1850's, when Governor William A. Minor from Stamford succeeded in passing legislation to weaken the Church in Connecticut during the "Know Nothing" crisis.

After having addressed a crowd on the steps of the State Capitol in Hartford in March 2009, I determined to do something that would publicly and clearly state that the Catholic Church is different from other religions: we are not the product of any government. While subject to the laws of the State, we were founded by Christ on the Apostles. Being a Minor Basilica, in the very heart of the district of one of those state senators supporting the bill to subject the Church to the State of Connecticut, is a clear statement, indeed.

Now-Cardinal Egan dropped me a note of congratulations on the announcement of the papal honor: "Who was that wise old prelate that chose you to shepherd St. John's? He must be very proud indeed."

👉 PLEASE TURN TO 15 YEARS ON PAGE 19