

# St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church NEWSLETTER

February 2021

Volume 14



New Facility at St. Joseph's Cemetery

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## St. Joseph's Cemetery

Article By: Fr. Steve Witt

**A**fter Pope Francis announced the dedication of this year to St. Joseph, it dawned on me that many of us don't know much about the Catholic Cemetery that serves the Iowa City area, named after Joseph himself. The "New Lot" is located on North Dodge Street across from the Hy Vee store and the "Old Lot" is located across the ravine to the south West of the "New Lot." St. Joseph Cemetery has a long and storied history. In 1843 Bishop Loras, the Archbishop of Dubuque, at the urging of Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli (the founder of St. Mary's) purchased 80 acres northwest of the city at the cost of \$1.25 per acre for the purpose of a cemetery as well as a convenient supply of fire wood for the new church. Originally, 20 acres were designated as a sight for the cemetery. However, with money being in short supply, a good share of the plot was sold off for various needs in the 1850s and 60s. The "Old Lot" as it sits was the original plot for the burial of church members. A board was formed with the bishop as the head and that board was in charge of conducting business for the cemetery. Over the years additional property was purchased as need for space continued to grow. There were purchases of 5 acres on the east side in 1894, 2 acres at the entrance to the cemetery which formed a circle, which was eventually returned to use for burial and in 1916, 27-3/4 acres were purchased to the east.

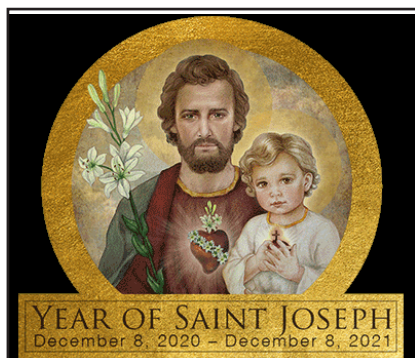
The board has continued to operate the cemetery for all these 175 plus years with many familiar names serving. Originally, serving just St. Mary's, the board expanded to include members of St. Patrick's and St. Wenceslaus. Over the years the board has been served well by several highly dedicated Sextons. All of the names of those are not currently recorded in the files, but we do know that John Vorwald served and more recently,

the cemetery was under the care of Mike Bartlett, who served meritoriously for 25 years. Since Mike retired, the cemetery has depended on the continuing efforts of the board, which now includes all four parish pastors as well as a lay representative from each parish. Karla Peiffer now acts as Administrator and has taken over many of the duties that Mike had always done. She continues to do a fine job of managing the finances of the cemetery. In the immediate period of time, following Mike's retirement, the Sexton duties were assumed by Ann Thomas of St. Mary's Parish. Having done a marvelous job for 18 months, she has been offered a wonderful opportunity to serve as editor for a well-known publication, Dappled Things, in conjunction with the Collegium Institute out of Penn State University. Replacing her as Sexton, is Beverly Miller, who joined the cemetery within that last few weeks. The ministry of burying our dead could not be accomplished, however, without some incredible volunteers who are the heart of St. Joseph. Mr. Bill Greazel, Dennis Parrott, Bob and Dick White and Bob Peiffer have been critical in making St. Joseph's what it is. Bill particularly was responsible for updating and computerizing all the plots and gravesites.

St. Joe's is currently undergoing a long needed remodel. The old office and garage have been torn down and replaced with a brand new facility, which has been erected on that sight; plans are also being made to re-side the machine shed adjacent to match the facility. There are also plans to redo the Chapel. That wonderful facility was erected on the cemetery grounds in the mid 1970s by the Vogel and Seemuth families according to an article published by Irving Weber, renowned local historian. As was the vision of Fr. Mazzuchelli, St. Joseph Cemetery will continue to serve the Catholic Community of Iowa City for many years to come.

# The Year of Saint Joseph

*As Declared by Pope Francis*



**P**ope Francis used an Apostolic Letter, “*Patris corde*” (With a Father’s Heart) as an occasion to announce a Year of Saint Joseph to run from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021

This date recognizes the 150th anniversary of Saint Joseph being declared the Patron of the Universal Church by Pope Blessed Pius IX. Pope Francis’ letter echoes the description of Saint Joseph’s contribution to God’s plan of salvation written by Pope Saint John Paul II in his exhortation *Redemptoris Custos* (Guardian of the Redeemer) in 1989. This current recognition of Saint Joseph by the Church gives us an opportunity to reflect on how his life can be a model for loving God and living with faith.

Saint Joseph was the husband of Mary when she became with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph was considering quietly divorcing Mary when an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him to take Mary in his house as his wife, that the child was conceived through the act of God. Saint Joseph trusted God and said yes to being the husband of Mary and earthly father to the Son of God. He joined his faith with Mary’s in trusting God and being a parent of Jesus. Together they created a home in which Jesus grew from a baby to an adult ready to live out His mission of salvation. Saint Joseph is an example for us to trust God in difficult times, choosing to follow His way rather than the ways promoted in this world.

Also, we can join Mary and Jesus in trusting Saint Joseph to be our spiritual father and intercessor.

God picked Saint Joseph to be the protector of Mary and Jesus as head of the Holy Family. In this role Joseph was with Mary at the birth of Jesus. He witnessed the visitation to baby Jesus by the shepherds and Magi. Saint Joseph responded to the warning from an angel in a dream that Herod wanted to kill baby Jesus. He took the Holy Family from Bethlehem during the night to flee to Egypt. In doing this, Saint Joseph trusted and obeyed God – taking a difficult path to preserve the safety of Jesus and Mary. For us, protecting our loved ones can mean working to put food on the table, leading prayers at home, and ensuring the family lives in the Church. Living in the Church can mean going to Mass, being active in the parish and serving the greater community at large.

The Gospels do not report any words of Saint Joseph. His actions were powerful and he did not use words to convey his faith and willingness to serve God. This silence of Saint Joseph points to his strong interior life of prayer. We can learn from him that we should have both a life of prayer and a life of service. The Year of Saint Joseph brings us a time to attend to improving our prayer life and our service to others.

Parishes and the Diocese of Davenport are planning activities for us to participate in the Year of Saint Joseph. Watch for them in the parish bulletin, in the Catholic Messenger and on the Diocese web site. In the meantime, we can reflect on Saint Joseph as an inspiration for how we live our faith. A simple way to improve our prayer life is to regularly pray to Saint Joseph for his intercession. For example, we could pray the Litany of Saint Joseph every Wednesday. Or, we could read the apostolic exhortation about Saint Joseph written by Pope Saint John Paul II, *Redemptoris Custos*, to

Article By: Bill Doucette

learn about how Saint Joseph has been viewed by the Church and Catholic saints/writers over the years ([http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_15081989\\_redemptoris-custos.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_15081989_redemptoris-custos.html)).

Another idea for the Year of Saint Joseph is to consecrate ourselves to him. This means that we learn more about Saint Joseph and devote ourselves to him to be an intercessor and model for us. Father Donald Calloway has published a book that can help us do this. His book, *Consecration to St. Joseph*, uses a 33-day approach to learning about and praying to Saint Joseph before our consecration on Day 33. Father Calloway recommends that we start our 33-day preparation period so that Day 33 falls on one of the feasts of Saint Joseph. For example, to consecrate yourself on March 19, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, you would start the preparation on February 15. Similarly, to have Day 33 fall on the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, on May 1, you would begin on March 30. Such a preparation and consecration could be done on our own or with family or friends interested in calling on Saint Joseph to help them move closer to Jesus.

At the conclusion of his letter, Pope Francis added a prayer to Saint Joseph which he encourages us to pray together:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son;

in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap\\_20201208\\_patris-corde.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20201208_patris-corde.html)



# The Fathers of St. Joseph



Article By: Dan Teets

**W**hat are men saying about The Fathers of St. Joseph? "Through Fathers of Saint Joseph, God speaks directly to me and challenges me to be a better husband and father. God challenges me through the carefully crafted and beautiful course materials and topics. God speaks through sharing with the group, in prayer, and the everyday struggles of being a husband and father," Deacon Joe Welter. "FOSJ is a portal for community and faith sharing – and building. The secular world with all of its deadlines, responsibilities, etc. beats us all down over time. To connect with my brothers on FOSJ raises my spirit and faith each and every meeting. I am reminded that we all walk down the path together in the light and that we need each other to stay on that path," David Drake. "FOSJ helps us grow in love of God, love of family, and love of neighbor by fostering a deeper relationship with all of them through the powerful intercession of St. Joseph," Isaac Doucette.

The Fathers of St. Joseph is a group that was started in the Quad Cities by Devin Schadt. Devin is a husband and father of five daughters. He has written several books and has given many talks on St. Joseph.

In 2014 Dan Teets and several other men from St. Mary Church and St. Wenceslaus in Iowa City started attending The Fathers of St. Joseph meetings 2x/month at St. Mary Church in Rock Island. The meetings begin in the church with The Little Office of St. Joseph, a prayer that includes exposition and benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. After prayer time the men dismiss to the parish hall for coffee, juice, fruit and donuts and a brief talk and discussion. The Fathers of St. Joseph format is very encouraging for husbands, fathers and mentors. We are encouraged to take St. Joseph as our role model in our spiritual, work, and family life.

In August of 2015 Dan and the others started a Fathers of St. Joseph chapter in Iowa City. We meet two times each month. The first monthly meeting is at St. Mary Church on the 2nd Wednesday at 6:30-7:30am, and the second monthly meeting is on the 4th Saturday after the 7:00am Mass at St. Wenceslaus Church, about 7:45-8:45am.

During COVID-19 we have moved the Wednesday meeting to Zoom, and the Saturday meeting offers an in-person option (socially distanced with face masks) at St. Wenceslaus with other men Zooming in on the large screen TV in the parish hall after the prayer time in the church. Everyone brings their own coffee to the current meetings. We hope to eventually get back to in-person meetings in both places with coffee and food provided.

If you'd like to receive the e-mail reminders about The Fathers of St. Joseph meetings in Iowa City please contact Dan Teets at: [dteets@icstmary.org](mailto:dteets@icstmary.org). There is no fee to be part of this group and all men are welcome! There is a freewill offering for coffee and donuts (when we again meet entirely in-person) and a small charge for the materials. All materials are available at The Fathers of St. Joseph website: <https://fathersofstjoseph.org/>

On the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker in 2020 the Core Team for the Iowa City chapter of The Fathers of St. Joseph got together to record The Little Office of St. Joseph for use in our Zoom meetings. You may pray The Little Office any time with us by going to this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW4au9xeJ\\_I&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW4au9xeJ_I&feature=youtu.be)

Pope Francis has declared this to be the Year of St. Joseph (please see separate article in this newsletter by Bill Doucette). One way that we can observe this year in honor of Jesus' earthly father is to do a consecration to St. Joseph. There is a book by Fr. Donald Calloway called Consecration to St. Joseph that may be ordered online. It is a 33-day preparation to consecrate yourself to St. Joseph. This book is designed for use by anyone. Another way is the book Custos: Total Consecration Through St. Joseph by

Devin Schadt. Devin's book is geared more toward husbands and fathers. I recommend both books! I used Fr. Calloway's book to consecrate myself to St. Joseph in 2019. I will be using Devin's book to renew my consecration during The Year of St. Joseph.

On Friday, March 19th, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, we will have Morning Prayer including the Litany of St. Joseph at 9:00am at St. Mary Church in Iowa City. On Saturday, May 1st, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, there will be an opportunity after the 7:00am Mass at St. Wenceslaus to pray The Little Office of St. Joseph and be enrolled in the Custos brown scapular for those who choose to use Devin Schadt's book to prepare for consecration to St. Joseph.

If you'd like to connect with other men or women who will be doing the Consecration to St. Joseph this year, please e-mail me at: [dteets@icstmary.org](mailto:dteets@icstmary.org) and I'll connect you with others to support you in this devotion.

Here is what others are saying about The Fathers of St. Joseph: "Being part of the brotherhood of FOSJ has helped my faith journey grow immeasurably, as a man and a husband. We look to our patron St. Joseph as a timeless example of a man who took care of the Holy Family with great courage, strength, devotion, and complete trust in God. My brothers in FOSJ have helped me to continually strive to become a better man, better husband, and help me lead my family to God our Father," Tim Blake. "Until you take a step back from life and ponder how truly powerful St Joseph is in the life of the Church and even in my own life you will miss the beauty and grace that can flow from his intercession. FOSJ has been that opportunity to pull myself out from the day to day and really get into how his role in the Church overlays my role as husband and father," Deacon Chris Kabat. "St. Joseph is a great role model of Silent, Obedient, Sacrifice (S.O.S)!" Dan Teets.

Why not take a few moments out of your busy life to honor St. Joseph during The Year of St. Joseph?

## BAPTISMS

BAKER COLIN  
WIEBELEVEREST HAZE  
GUILLARIHANK DANIEL  
MCCORDMACK JOSEPH  
MCCORDIMMACULEE FEZA  
MILUALAHARRISON DAVID  
CLARKKELLEN JAMES  
OLMSTED

## MARRIAGES

BREANNA  
HIMSCHOOT  
AND  
JOSHUA SARNECKYVICTORIA DAHLEN  
AND  
BRANDAN  
PENALUNAVICTORIA BEAVER  
AND  
TYLER CAREWJACQUELINE  
TIMMINS  
AND  
DOMINIC CORSOKYLE DUCHMAN  
AND  
JULIA PARRA

# Pastor's Letter

## *A Call to Reflection and a Vow to Do Better*



Fr. Steve Witt

**B**rothers and Sisters in Christ,  
It has been a hectic couple of weeks with the celebrations of Christmas, the Feast of the Holy Family, Mary the Mother of God and Epiphany all occurring

**NOW I THINK IS A GOOD TIME FOR ALL GOOD FOLKS TO STEP BACK AND TAKE STOCK OF OURSELVES, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF OUR EXPERIENCES OF THE YEAR WE HAVE JUST FINISHED LIVING.**

within days of one another. Throw in two snow storms and family celebrations and it gives new meaning to crazy hectic. Now I think is a good time for all good folks to step back and take stock of ourselves, particularly in light of our experiences of the year we have just finished living. Some might suggest that the experience of 2020 was so fraught with hardship and pain, particularly those who lost loved ones that we should just forget the whole thing and move on. I beg to disagree. If there is anything that can come out the experience of this year, it has to be an awareness that we need to do something to bring us all closer together as people. The political sniping, the injustice of who is able to get the health care that they need, the question of racism in our midst, all of these need to be addressed by us, both as a society and individually. We

Article By: Fr. Steve Witt

need to put away the blaming that has taken place in this last year and deal head on with all the societal problems we have in a way that gives us the best opportunity of overcoming them. We need to deal with each other with a sense of decency and respect as opposed to the extremes of baiting and name calling. Those tactics have no place in a society that claims to have its foundation in Christian principles. It is not insignificant that, after the calamity that was the intrusion on the Capitol Building, that senators from both parties stepped forward to speak about how we must acknowledge ways that we can move forward together as a nation and as a people who are totally interdependent on the welfare of all. I applauded the efforts of those who spoke wisely of our need to rely on our system to make our society better and more just.

Please my friends, let us take some time to reflect both on our joys and our sorrows; our successes and our failures and vow to do a better job of being the kind of Christian men and women, who make our God, our Church, and our country proud of the individuals and communities that we have become.

Blessings to all in 2021  
Fr. Steve

### Your Input Requested

If you have any comments, concerns, suggestions, ideas, or if you would like to write for the St. Mary's quarterly newsletter, please contact Jeanette Roush-Krafka at [jeanette.roush@gmail.com](mailto:jeanette.roush@gmail.com)

# Resounding Kindness

Article By: Jeanette Roush-Krafka

**T**his past year has been incredibly burdensome for everyone, from a pandemic and the loss of countless loved ones, to our necessary yet wearisome social distancing that has led to so many being lonesome and isolated, to the devastating derecho that ravaged cities, towns, and farms across Iowa, to our growing awareness of rampant racism, to political upheaval that culminated in a brutal insurrection. A lot of difficult and terrible things were called to our attention over the past year, the weight of which, at times seemed impossible. Without hope it becomes unfeasible not to give into fear and anxiety crumbling under the weight of the horrors we have witnessed.

In the midst of such dread, hope can be found. Through our faith and with a few tricks of psychology we might be able to find great hope within the smallest acts of kindness.

Jesus tells us, through his statement to the blind beggar in Luke 18:42, "receive your sight, your faith has been restored to you. And with that sight in Matthew 7:7 we are told, "Seek and ye shall find."

When I found myself in an emotional rut earlier this year, I heard about Baader Meinhof phenomenon also known as frequency illusion. This phenomenon is when your attention has been called to something in particular and all of a sudden you begin to recognize whatever caught your attention initially everywhere, when in reality it's no more prevalent than it was before your attention was called to it. A common example is a car you decide to buy that you thought was relatively obscure, but as soon as you drive it off the lot, you recognize that make and model everywhere you go. The reason this happens is because our brains get excited about learning something new and they are called to pay attention for that

specific thing. When we actively look for it and find it a few times, confirmation bias occurs and we agree with ourselves that the thing our attention was called to is everywhere.

After hearing about the frequency illusion I wondered how much of my believing everything was in chaos and falling apart had to do with my attention being called to the worst of humanity so regularly. I then began to wonder if I could consciously change my perspective by actively using the Baader Meinhof phenomenon and confirmation bias to recognize the goodness that surrounded me. This is what I found within the first week;

## THROUGH OUR FAITH AND WITH A FEW TRICKS OF PSYCHOLOGY WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND GREAT HOPE WITHIN THE SMALLEST ACTS OF KINDNESS.

I went to Thoma's on Christmas Eve to pick up a package for my husband. When I entered, I made sure the elderly man who was already in the shop when I arrived rightly got served before me. Some time went by before my order was ready; more customers flowed in and out of the small market. In that time, the elderly gentleman received his order, paid and was getting ready to leave when he called out to me, "hey young lady, merry Christmas," he said kindly with a twinkle in his eye. In that one small gesture, I felt loved by a stranger.

A neighborhood family, that often stops by our house to visit the penguin mailbox my husband made, trekked up the street one winter afternoon so that the youngest girl could place a wind-up toy penguin at the foot of our mailbox, so, "the penguin family could be together." I saw that selfless act of kindness, for what it was, pure love from a child and it warmed my heart. She gave up one of her toys so that the "family" could be together.

The morning after the snow storm in December, we went out to find

three feet of snow piled up from the plows at the end of our driveway. Just as I got out to shovel, a woman I was not formerly acquainted with, rode up the street on a John Deere equipped with a blower attachment. She asked if I needed help and proceeded to clear the end of the driveway. Wanting nothing in return, she continued down the street to help other neighbors that found themselves in a similar predicament.

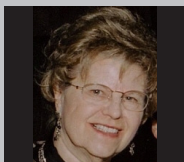
These are just a few examples of acts of reciprocal altruism, as most acts of kindness are. These people acted in the benefit of someone or something other than themselves in the hope that one day the favor might be returned.

This year, and especially this Lenten season, I am challenging myself not to give up chocolate or television as usual, but instead to seek out and find the small acts of kindness in my life that are the seeds of love. In finding such examples of love in every day life, I will be convinced once again that there is hope for us yet in the faith that love will prevail over greed, apathy, and the injustices we have seen, if we choose to act it out. Once faith in humanity is restored, it becomes easier to perform those acts of reciprocal altruism, knowing that those acts of selfless kindness, once enacted will inevitably spark and give rise to another, and another, and another, and so forth and so on, until someday after that love has traded hands a multitude of times, it might come back to us, and we might recognize it as a matured blaze from the glimmer of hope within that initial spark.

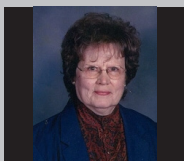
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/altruism-biological/#RecAlt>  
<https://science.howstuffworks.com/life/inside-the-mind/human-brain/baader-meinhof-phenomenon.htm>  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/memory-detection/202003/seek-and-ye-shall-find>



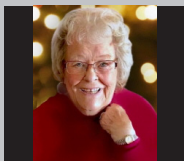
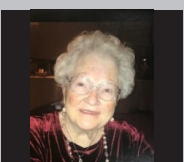
## FUNERALS

MICHAEL  
HARNEY

EMILY WAGNER

CONNIE  
DAUTREMONT

NICOLE RAITT

SHIRLEY  
DOORNBOSCHARLES  
ALBERHASKY

JEAN MCCOY



ROSE CAVUOTO

# Online Retreats and Resources

## *For Lent and Beyond*

Article By: Bill Doucette

**A**s we prepare for Easter, we can benefit from spending time in prayer and reflection on how God is acting on our lives. Lent is a great time to reflect to see how we are living, to learn how we can change to be closer to Jesus. We can try to listen to Him to hear what He has to say about how we should be living. To be able to hear God's will, we need to spend time in silence, time before God attending to what He tells us. While it is important to regularly be silent with Jesus, Lent is a time when we can retreat and more deeply listen to Him.

During a retreat or other quiet time of reflection we can attend to our relationship with Jesus. Have we made Him the center of our lives? How well are we following His teachings? Or, are we thinking of Him only occasionally when we want to ask for something? Are we living the teachings of Jesus in our daily activities? If not, how can we change to do so more fully? From the time of our baptism we are called to conversion to walk more closely with Jesus. Spending time reflecting on the blessings in our lives, as well as our sufferings, can draw us nearer to Him. By recognizing the gifts from God in our lives and by turning to Jesus we can see how He is working around and through us. Doing this interior reflection during Lent can help guide us in showing our love of Jesus through how we live our faith.

During these challenging times we can use the internet to find different resources that can guide us in our prayer and contemplation. This approach can help us limit our risks from the coronavirus pandemic. For example, we could sign up for daily reflections that get sent to us via email – video or written messages. These daily

Lenten messages can direct us to think about specific teachings of Jesus and how we can incorporate them into our lives. Similarly, blogs, regular readings of daily Scripture, and online retreats can provide us with ways to spend time with Jesus during Lent.

An online retreat can be a good option for reflective time with Jesus. The purpose of such a spiritual retreat can be to disconnect from our daily busyness to create time to relax and allow inner change to take place. Typically, an online retreat will provide a focus through a brief video or some written material such as a Scripture passage. There may be some questions for reflection on the focus material. In addition, participants often are provided with a prayer or encouraged to pray and reflect on the particular topic. The daily time commitment for these retreats can be from as little as 5-10 minutes up to 30-60 minutes, depending on how they are set up and our own level of engagement.

Other suggestions for an online retreat include the following.

1. Begin our retreat by asking the Holy Spirit to guide us in our prayer and reflection.
2. Silence external noises, find a quiet place with little to no distractions, preferably a place of solitude where one can be alone with Jesus.
3. Silence internal noises by slowly saying a familiar prayer or reading a brief Scripture passage to focus on Jesus.
4. Open up and encounter God. Listen to what Jesus is saying to us.

Some online reflection and retreat sources are shown in the table. Explore them or find others that can guide you in drawing closer to Jesus during Lent.

Resources/Retreat	Brief Description	Online Address
United States Council of Catholic Bishops	Daily Scripture readings and reflections; Other resources	<a href="http://usccb.org">usccb.org</a>
Word on Fire	Many different resources	<a href="http://wordonfire.org">wordonfire.org</a>
Dynamic Catholic	Best Lent Ever; Books & other	<a href="http://dynamiccatholic.com">dynamiccatholic.com</a>
Creighton University Online Ministries	Online retreat; Stations of the Cross & other resources	<a href="http://onlineministries.creighton.edu">onlineministries.creighton.edu</a>
Ignatian Spirituality	Many different resources	<a href="http://ignatianspirituality.com">ignatianspirituality.com</a>
Loyola Press	3 Minute Retreats	<a href="https://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer/">https://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer/</a>

# The Apostles

## *And the Apostolic Catholic Church*

Article By: Robert Tomanek

**T**ruth does not evolve. Rather it has a source, which for Christianity, is God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Many people met Jesus, and many became disciples and some apostles (i.e., those that were sent). It is essential that we listen to those who lived closer to the time of Christ and the apostles. The latter were the vehicles by which Christ's teachings were passed on, and the recipients were called "prophets" and "deacons" by St. Paul, and "elders" and presbyters by St. James. This conveying of Christ's teaching authority is called "Apostolic Succession," and Christ's Church is the "Apostolic Church." That the Church remains Apostolic is critical because it is the only way identical doctrines delivered by the Apostles can be preserved and passed on by uninterrupted succession. How then were the teachings of Jesus preserved intact until the Scriptures were codified as the New Testament in the third century? Several saints were key links in the preservation of Christ's teachings.



St. Clement by Tiepolo

**Pope Clement I**, who was pope in A.D. 88-97, knew Peter and Paul and wrote to the Corinthians that the apostles "preached, and they appointed their earliest converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers." Clement reminded Christians that Paul's letter (1

Corinthians) reveals that the Church is the very body of Christ, and saw the value of Greek philosophy as a means of preparation for a man to develop self-control and to be ready for truth and to share the heavenly truths.

**St. Polycarp of Smyrna** (A.D. 69-155). One must be impressed by Polycarp's role in teaching and authority of the early Church by the fact that there are so many links between him, the Apostles, and their students. He was Bishop of Smyrna in Turkey, and, as the record shows, had so many contacts with the other early teachers of the faith. One key relationship was his correspondence with Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 35-108), who was a student of John the Evangelist. Polycarp wrote an Epistle to the Philippians, and this writing was mentioned many times by St. Irenaeus (born in A.D. 130), who was Polycarp's student. The references to Polycarp indicate an understanding of Christ's teaching from the first into the second centuries. Polycarp also knew Papias (died A.D. 120), who was an acquaintance of the Apostles and a hearer of St. John.

**St. Ignatius of Antioch** (A.D. 35-108). Ignatius, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, was appointed the third Bishop of Antioch by Peter. He is recognized as an apostle, church father, bishop and martyr. Testimonies of Ignatius are of critical importance because he lived in a key period of the early Church (from the first to the beginning of the third generation). He provided clear testimony that the Church at Rome has the authority of Christ, as noted in his letter to Romans, where he writes that the Church was "beloved and enlightened after the love of Christ, our God" (note he refers to Christ as "our God"). Ignatius states that the Church's foundation, formed by Peter and Paul, is worthy of praise, honor, blessings and sanctification, and has the authority to teach others. The universality of Christ's Church was most vigorously expressed by Ignatius as he was the first to use the title: "Catholic Church." He

clearly expressed the leadership role of bishops as a component of the apostolic succession: "Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church."

**St. Irenaeus of Lyons** (A.D. 130-200). Known as a brilliant theologian and for his teachings against heresies, Irenaeus was linked with the generation of apostles through his mentor Polycarp. He noted that he could numerate the bishops who were instituted by the apostles and their successors and their teachings were consistent. He stressed that to know the truth, "one must contemplate the tradition of the apostles which has been known to us throughout the whole world." Accordingly, the heresies of the times were not consistent with apostolic teaching. Irenaeus, like Ignatius, taught the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist by stating that it is the invocation of God, and no longer bread but the Body of Christ.

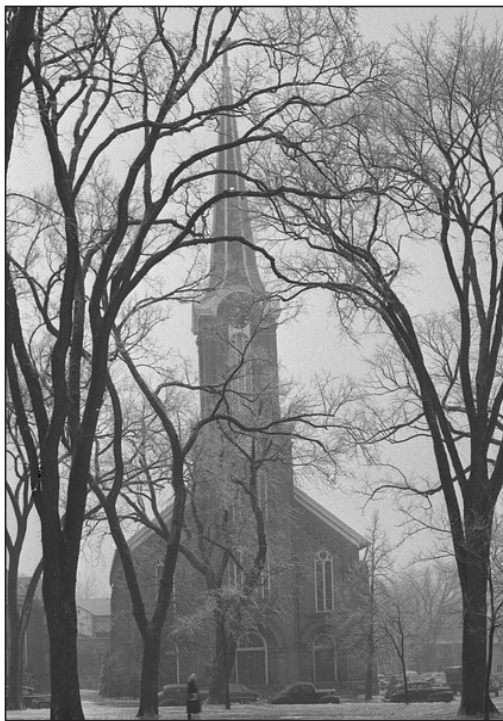
**St. Justin Martyr** (A.D. 130-165). A trained philosopher and convert, Justin debated pagan philosophers and provided explicit descriptions of the early Church's beliefs and mode of worship that correspond to the traditions of the Catholic Church. He also wrote that the Eucharist is not common food nor common drink, but rather food made into Eucharist (Christ's flesh and blood) by prayer set down by Christ.

**Tradition, Scripture, and the Church.** Our beliefs in Christ and his teachings are from these three, and form a consistent basis for our faith. Without apostles, tradition would be lost, as would consistency of Christ's teaching. Had the early Church failed to discredit heresies, our understanding of Christ and scripture would be in a state of confusion, as would scripture. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostles and their successors were blessed with a consistency of teaching, and enabled a Holy Apostolic Catholic Church.



# St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church

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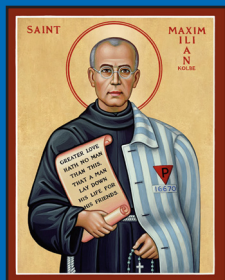


St. Mary's Church 1950's by Alan Light

ST. MARY'S NEWSLETTER VOL. 14

## Saint Gabriel Possenti (1838-1962) Feast day: February 27

Article By: Julia Blake



Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, was born Francesco (aka. Francis) Possenti. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920. This Apostle of Mary is the patron of clerics, seminarians and young people. In his early years he was prone to anger, flippancy, and disobedience. But he would always return to his father after being corrected, and beg his pardon. He began to

show an attitude of thoughtfulness and love for the poor. He would deny himself to give to them. Francis' education, which was begun at home, was continued by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and finished by the Jesuit Fathers at Spoleto.

At school Francis quickly made himself a favorite with both companions and teachers. To the suffering he was a warm-hearted sympathizer; to the weak and persecuted, a fearless champion; to companions, a staunch friend; and to masters, a willing and talented pupil. Francis' religious vocation had been kept in his heart during his school years. Twice Francis had been seriously ill, and seemed in danger of death. On both of these occasions he had promised God that, if he were spared, he would enter a Religious Order. Each time he quickly recovered. After the second of these illnesses and extraordinary cures, he asked to be received into the Society of Jesuits. As Francis was discerning his vocation, which delayed his entry into the novitiate, he began to think

of becoming a Passionist.

In the year 1856 the terrible ravages of cholera had suddenly stopped in Spoleto through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. In public gratitude for this miracle, her statue was carried in procession through the streets. Francis watched the procession, and as the statue moved past him, Mary cast upon him a glance that pierced his inmost heart. Deep within his soul, he heard the words: "Thou art not made for the world! What art thou doing in the world? Hasten, become a religious!". The procession passed on, but Francis remained kneeling in prayer. From that moment he was changed. He no longer thought of anything but of fulfilling his vocation. He was determined to become a Passionist. He entered the novitiate and took the name Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Gabriel loved the religious life from the moment he entered upon it. He fulfilled the rules of the Congregation with the greatest fervor and exactness, and was professed in 1857. Besides the usual religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, a Passionist makes a particular vow to spread devotion to the passion of our Lord. The sufferings and death of Christ were subjects of daily meditation with Gabriel. "May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ be ever in our hearts!" is the meaning of the sign and motto upon a Passionist's breast. The Passion of Christ was truly in the heart of Gabriel. Gabriel eventually began to manifest symptoms of consumption. He was not yet a priest when he died at age 24 and in the sixth year of his religious life.