

St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church NEWSLETTER

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Volume 17



Fr. Steve Witt

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PASTOR'S LETTER

Article By Fr. Steve Witt

I use this occasion to affirm the call from our Pope and from Bishop Zinkula to all of us Catholics that we need to consider morally both our own welfare and the welfare of others in making decisions in regard to both the wearing of masks in public places and in the receiving of the various Coronavirus vaccines. Please note that the FDA has officially approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for administration in individuals 16 years of age and older. Bishop Zinkula has issued a statement that, based on the understanding that we all need to work for the common good as a premise of Catholic moral teaching, there is no Catholic moral ground for refusing to receive the vaccine. This statement addresses the basic moral teaching authority of the Church that the freedom of the individual is limited by the need and safety of the whole community.

human, my action or inaction could be deemed morally wrong. The same applies to trusting those sources generally approved by society to make complicated and scientifically understandable decisions for the good of the whole. There is a need for all of us to consider in our own decision making the purpose for which such organizations as the CDC and the FDA exist. Those agencies were constituted to protect the common good. So I beg you, please make a concerted effort as you make your decisions, to do as the Pope and Bishop Zinkula recommend, take into account both the common good of this nation and the advice of institutions that were constituted for the purpose of protecting us all.

God's blessings to you all,

MORALLY THE RIGHTS OF ANY INDIVIDUAL ARE LIMITED BY THE RIGHTS OF ANY OTHER; IN OTHER WORDS MY FREEDOM TO ACT IS LIMITED BY THE IMPACT OF MY ACTION ON ANOTHER.

I know that for some this is difficult, but in forming conscience, we must all consider the limits of individual freedom. In all sincerity, that is the defining principle in making law. Morally the rights of any individual are limited by the rights of any other; in other words my freedom to act is limited by the impact of my action on another. If my action or inaction creates harm or potential harm to another

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

Parish Profile:

Kirk and MJ Phillips

Article By: Dan Teets

Recently Kirk and his wife, MJ, shared their story of their family getting COVID and Kirk's serious case.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MEMBERS OF ST. MARY PARISH?

MJ since 1982 and Kirk since 1996; we were married by Fr. Ken Kuntz with Sr. Agnes helping with marriage preparation in 1996.

WHAT MINISTRIES AND COMMISSIONS HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH?

MJ is a parish nurse volunteer for blood pressure checks; Kirk is a cantor, instrumental musician, videographer, and trainer of videographers.

CAN YOU PLEASE DESCRIBE THE WEEKS LONG ORDEAL THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY EXPERIENCED DUE TO COVID-19, SETBACKS, ETC?

As we cared for MJ's 99-year-old Mom in her home, my wife (MJ), her sister, their Mom and I all caught COVID. They had minor symptoms and I came up with a severe case, ending up in the hospital for a month of treatment. MJ continued to care for her Mom, visited the hospital daily, updated our family and prayed often.

Staying in bed on my belly (proning) and trying to breathe was uncomfortable, yet nothing to whine about. I tried to focus on the short term of getting through moment-by-moment, and day-by-day. Worrying about longer-term possibilities was self-defeating and caused me to ride an occasional emotional roller coaster. Healing is a lot of work, which became my focus—to breathe carefully, exercise, and simply survive each day. It was very helpful to focus on instructions by the hospital staff and MJ. She gave me hope and joy in an otherwise difficult setting.

The staff that cared for me were remarkable—doctors, nurses, therapists, housekeeping, and all staff seemed dedicated to my healing. They were truly skilled human beings and I continue to be thankful for their compassionate care. I'm very thankful to Fr. Regan who anointed me and heard my confession.

HOW IMPORTANT WAS YOUR FAITH IN THE PROCESS? IN WHAT WAYS? PLEASE CITE EXAMPLES.

"Lord, thank you for bringing me here"

was my daily prayer. My faith continues to be that God guides us, and that His "will be done". My daily prayers continue to be in thanks to God and to all of His hands and feet on earth that help us work through difficult times.

MJ kept Fr. Steve and our St. Mary's community up to date and many of them prayed for my healing. Patti McTaggart and family members spread the word to other religious communities who prayed for me. Their prayers worked, as many people have told me that my healing was a miracle.

Prayer is usually personal for me, as I quietly go about my work and daily living. On the other hand, I was moved to tears when hearing about the family members, friends, prayer chains, and communities that prayed while I was in the hospital.

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO REMAIN PATIENT AS A PATIENT?

Outside of the hospital, my recovery has been guided by MJ as a nurse and as my soulful wife. She remains the center of my being on earth, with her soothing presence, patience and love.

As a scientist teaching in the field of epidemiology, I constantly asked questions of the hospital staff to better understand COVID treatments and possible outcomes. Everyone provided answers, which sometimes included "we don't know". In a strange way, I was comforted to learn what they didn't know about this disease; they were honest and candid in helping me know what was going on. In many instances of my life, mysteries and unanswered questions create anxiety. With COVID, there are many unknowns about how the disease progresses, including cardiovascular, neuropathic, pulmonary and other problems, including death. Most of all, my faith in God removed those mysteries and my fear. I took comfort in knowing that I was in the best of care.

HAS YOUR FAITH BEEN STRENGTHENED BY THE EXPERIENCE?

Yes, my faith has been strengthened. I pray daily with gratitude. I continue to be cautious about earthly concerns about COVID, and practice guidance from the CDC including vaccination. I appreciate many aspects of life that I may have taken for granted, including the ability to breathe. New opportunities have arisen

with COVID, to help sanitize our church, livestream and record video of our Masses, and help St. Mary's staff and our community in light of this pandemic.

I like this prayer:

Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time.
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as He did, the sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it.
Trusting that He will make all things right

if I surrender to His will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with Him forever.
—Reinhold Niebuhr, 1892-1971

ARE THERE ANY HEALTH CHALLENGES REMAINING THAT YOU CARE TO SHARE?

My feet and a few fingers are numb. While I can function almost normally with daily activities, I need extra oxygen when exercising or riding my bike. I'll be attending pulmonary therapy for the unforeseen future.

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU LIKE THE PARISHIONERS OF ST. MARY CHURCH TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I've been playing trumpet since I was in elementary school; playing and singing in church has always been a form of prayer. It seems trivial, but while in the hospital, MJ and I thought that I'd never play again. When I came home, I played the Ave Maria.

I don't feel extraordinary for surviving COVID thus far. Many of us experience illness daily, asking for prayers and caring from our community. For the rest of my life, I will be thankful for God's healing through the many caretakers and communities that brought me back. I'm most thankful to my wonderful wife for her loving care.

Kirk and MJ gave their talk about surviving COVID-19 in the Faith Journeys Speaker Series on Sunday, October 24th, at St. Mary Church. You may access their talk here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXJjEhKnnLM>. You may also access the presentation: A Patient's Perspective that Kirk put together for the UIHC on his experience as a COVID patient, here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYGwAg4ZUs>.

We Are Many Parts

We Are All One Body



We Are Many Parts—We Are All One Body
How many times over the years, in a variety of settings, have I sung these words?

It was only in the last few months that these words sparked a whole new meaning. As many of you know, we have a group of women who make prayer shawls for adults and for young people who are to be baptized. In addition to the actual activity, the women pray for whomever will receive it and then the prayer shawls are blessed by Father Steve before distribution. There is a card in each one of them, which reads:

YES, WE ARE MANY PARTS. PEOPLE SHARE THEIR TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE. EACH PART IS IMPORTANT. EACH PART IS NEEDED

For adults: "Lord, wrap your arms around those who are hurting today and let them feel how much you love them."

For children and babies: "Welcome to the World! You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works! Psalm 139"

I am the messenger of the shawls, the one who has the privilege of delivering them and witnessing the smiles, the joy, the hugs, the expressions of gratitude, along with heartfelt stories. I try to share as much as possible with the women who make them.

However, in the last couple of

months, I received two emails from people who received a shawl, both of whom came from a distance. One message was from a young mother who said, "Thank you for the shawl. It means so much to us coming from your church because both my parents and my grandparents were married there." A picture of the baby with the shawl was attached.

About two weeks later, another shawl was sent to a friend of a friend whose husband had just been diagnosed with stage 3 cancer. Two days after it was mailed, she responded, "When I presented him with the shawl last night, his eyes filled with tears. As I was leaving for work in the morning, he had it around him as he sat in his chair."

It was at that point that the Spirit worked. This is not about me—these gifts were from the people of St. Mary's—the women as parts, shared their gifts—but we are one body—I was the representation of the whole

community.

Over the years these shawls have been distributed to many people. They have been given to the homebound, those in hospitals, those grieving, as well as those in retirement centers, assisted living, and healthcare facilities. They have been used in facilities to welcome new residents and they are used as Christmas gifts for people who may not have any family or visitors. People have wanted them with them as they go to surgery. The list is endless. The bottom line is: they are from all of us, because we are the Body of Christ.

After reflecting on the emails, I realized that the shawl group was just one of the many parts of the St. Mary's community touching

Article By: Sr. Agnes Giblin

the lives of others for all of us.

Who and what are some of the other parts representing all of us as they share their time, talent, and treasure?

We are many parts:
The youth who make cookies and deliver them
Those who prepare and serve Free Lunch
Those who serve at the Catholic Worker House
Those who serve Funeral dinners
Those who assist with the Thanksgiving Dinner
Those on the Prayer Line
Those who provide Baptismal garments
Liturgical ministers
Those who serve on parish commissions
Catechists
Money counters
Those who care for the beauty of nature both inside and out

Many are helped by St. Anthony's Bread and all over through our Sacrificial Giving program. The list goes on and on. Whether or not you can specifically identify with one part—each of us is a part. Each of us has and continues to be a strong member of our powerhouse of prayer. You share your treasure so that all others can be helped.

Yes, we are many parts. People share their time, talent, and treasure. Each part is important. Each part is needed—just as each part is necessary in our bodies.

Let us thank God for the gift of each other. No matter who we are, or where we are, we can pray. Let us remember to pray for each other. God knows who needs the prayers. He will do His part.

Let us never forget:
"We are many parts; we are all one body". The Body of Christ.

BAPTISMS

GABRIEL JAMES CINTEL

TIRSSA NSONGO
BEKANGACHARLOTTE JAMES
ENGELMANOREL PRECIEUX OKE-
AGBOROBERT TATE
SCHNORENBURGCLARK MICHAEL
HAXTONMURPHY ROSE
GAUGHANMAXWELL JAMES
PARKER

EVERETT LEE PARKER

LEO BENJAMIN PARKER

RONAN VINCENT
LEHMKUHL-BECKHANNAH ROSE
DANNEN**FUNERALS**

ANTHONY SOHM

JUANITA ELICK

JOSEPHINE GIBBS

JOHN MUHINDO

DORIS BARNES

LORRAINE DUNLAP

JONATHAN THULL

LORAS STEFFEN

ANNA PUSATERI

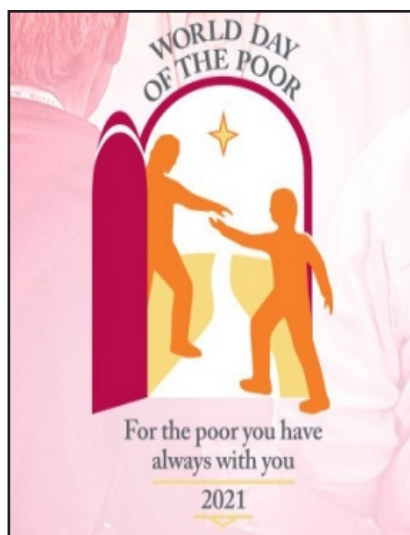
DANIEL WELU

THELMA MEADE

LYNNE PARSONS

World Day of the Poor

Celebrated November 14th, 2021



Article By: Deacon Ward Thompson

the story of Jesus reclining at table with friends in Bethany on his way to Jerusalem and his passion, death and Resurrection. A woman enters the room and proceeds to anoint Jesus' head with extremely expensive oil. She is admonished by one of the disciples for being wasteful: the oil could have been sold and the proceeds given to help the poor.

However, Jesus says: "Let her alone. She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Jesus is associating this woman with the great mission of evangelization. Our greatest gift is our Lord's sacrifice which saved us. This realization impels us to share our faith with others – to be in daily communion with the Holy Spirit and with all the people we encounter. There are countless ways that people experience poverty – financial, spiritual, physical and emotional health, oppression, human dignity – the list goes on and on.

The World Day of the Poor is a Roman Catholic observance, celebrated on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time since 2017. It was established by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et Misera*, issued on November 20, 2016 to celebrate the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

This year, the 5th World Day of the Poor, will be celebrated on November 14th.

Previous themes for this celebration include:

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION IS FROM MARK 14:7: "THE POOR WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU."

"Let us love, not with words but with deeds." (2017)

"The poor man cried out and the Lord heard him." (2018)

"The hope of the poor shall not perish forever." (2019)

"Stretch forth your hand to the poor." (2020)

The theme for this year's celebration is from Mark 14:7: "The poor will always be with you."

Chapter 14 of Mark's Gospel relates

Pope Francis: "The poor always and everywhere, evangelize us, because they enable us to discover in new ways the true face of the Father. Thus, we are called to discover Christ in them, lend our voices to their causes, listen to and understand them, and welcome them, because Jesus not only sides with the poor but also shares their lot."

The full text of our Holy Father Pope Francis' message for 2021 World Day of the Poor is available on www.vatican.va. Francis>Messages>Fifth World Day of the Poor.

Stephen Ministry

at St. Mary's

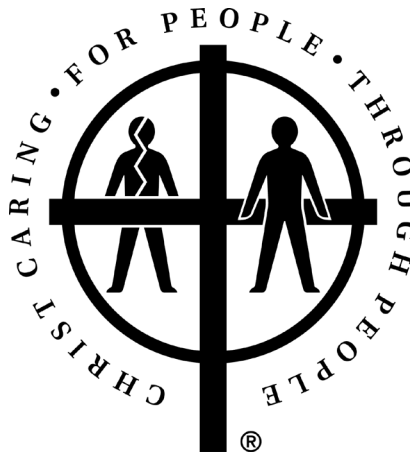
Article By: Bill Doucette

Difficult times are contributing to many people feeling pain, grief, anger and facing health issues for their loved ones or themselves. While many people try to endure difficulties alone, we are in this life together. Jesus called upon us to help each other when challenges of life come upon our neighbors. He said, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." [John 15:12]

One way we can take care of each other is through Stephen Ministry, which is one-on-one Christ-centered lay care. Stephen Ministers are trained to meet regularly with a care receiver to accompany them during difficult times, such as illness, grief, loneliness and other challenges. They have a compassionate heart for those who are hurting, and they're equipped with caring ministry skills by our parish's Stephen Leaders. A Stephen Minister typically has one care receiver at a time and meets with that person once a week to listen, care, pray, encourage, and offer emotional and spiritual support.

Stephen Ministers are committed Christian men and women who:

- Express God's love through giving time and care to others.
- Receive training in caring ministry skills including: How to listen; how to manage feelings; how to express empathy; how to help in times of crisis and difficulty
- Are commissioned as Stephen Ministers after completing their initial training
- Visit his or her care receiver regularly and dependably
- Participate in regular supervision twice a month under the guidance of trained Stephen Leaders for purposes of ongoing support
- Are committed to preserving the confidential nature of the caring relationship
- Serve for at least two years



- Receive continuing education and skill-building throughout their time of service
- Recognize when a care receiver's needs go beyond the care a Stephen Minister can provide and work to refer the care receiver for additional care

When people experience loss, grief, or other stressful changes

may suggest a referral to an appropriate professional.

Stephen Ministry is appropriate for people experiencing:

- Grief from any kind of loss
- Hospitalization
- Declining health, disability, or terminal illness
- Death or illness of a loved one
- Divorce or separation from a spouse
- Severe financial setback
- Difficulties associated with aging
- Isolation or loneliness
- Job crisis
- Struggles in faith
- Childbirth or adoption
- Intense stress or an overwhelming burden
- Many other life struggles

St. Mary's will be starting a Stephen Ministry in 2022. All of St. Mary's Parish can support the Stephen Ministry through prayer. In addition, any parishioners interested in serving as a Stephen Minister are asked to contact: Julia Blake [319-541-1906] or

ONE WAY WE CAN TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER IS THROUGH STEPHEN MINISTRY, WHICH IS ONE-ON-ONE CHRIST-CENTERED LAY CARE.

in their lives, there is often need for an empathetic listener. Family and close friends can be too emotionally involved to meet this need. Stephen Ministers are trained to be Christian caregivers who can help hurting individuals sort out options. They do not give advice or provide solutions. Stephen Ministers are not professional counselors, psychologists or social workers, but neither are they merely casual visitors. God is viewed as providing the cure while Stephen Ministers provide the care. Most people find that they are helped simply by having someone with whom they can share their concerns. In some instances, the Stephen Minister

Bill Doucette [319-541-9814].

We will hold a training class that will meet weekly at St. Mary's from January to May 2022. A third way to help our Stephen Ministry grow is to serve as a Stephen Leader, those who help coordinate the Ministry. Again, contact Julia or Bill if you are interested in learning more about being a Stephen Leader. Together, with God's grace, we can support each other through these difficult times, and Stephen Ministry can play a key part in that work. Learn more about Stephen Ministry by visiting their website:

www.stephenministries.org.

MARRIAGES

MADLINE
BELLEMARE AND
JARED VAN
SPEYBROECK

COLLEEN
CAMPBELL AND
KYLE COLLINS,
JR.

JILLIAN
FINNEGAN AND
JUSTIN
MCINTOSH

SAMANTHA
MILDER AND
FLETCHER
GREEN

JEAN LOUISE
LAREW AND
TRENT SMITH

CHRISTINA
CERRATO AND
STEVLAND
SONNIER

NATACHA
KADIAMBA AND
RICHARD
MVUNGBO

MONICA
HEMINGWAY
AND KEVIN
HOMANN

ARIANE
DINKENGI
NZUZU AND
LIONEL SUMBU
MAKELA

SHANNON
MOORE AND
JOHN FRAKES

Book Review of:

Consecration to St. Joseph By Fr. Donald Calloway

In this year of St. Joseph, it is fitting for us to work to get closer to him, so he can bring us to Jesus. One way to get to get to know St. Joseph is to consecrate ourselves to him. The book, *Consecration to St. Joseph*, by Fr. Donald Calloway provides an informative path for us to turn to St. Joseph. The book helps us learn about St. Joseph and leads us to a consecration to him. In turn, our consecration can enrich how we live our faith and increase the presence of God in our lives.

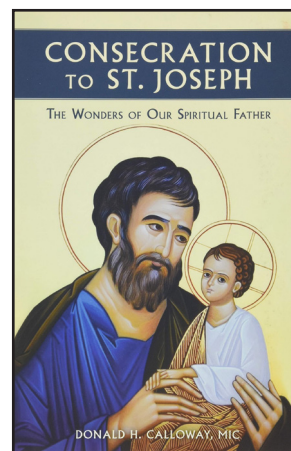
What does it mean to consecrate ourselves to St. Joseph? Fr. Calloway states that, it means we acknowledge that St. Joseph is our spiritual father, and we want to be like him. We entrust ourselves to him so he can help us gain his virtues and become holy. The consecration is a formal action in which we commit ourselves to St. Joseph so he can pray for our spiritual health and lead us to Jesus. This brings us close to St. Joseph, so he can provide support and guidance to God.

THE CONSECRATION IS A FORMAL ACTION IN WHICH WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO ST. JOSEPH SO HE CAN PRAY FOR OUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND LEAD US TO JESUS.

The book *Consecration to St. Joseph* is divided into three parts. Part 1 is a 33-day preparation for the consecration to St. Joseph. Part 2 is descriptions of wonders attributed to St. Joseph. Part 3 is full of prayers to St. Joseph, including the Litany of St. Joseph. The 33-day preparation follows the Litany of St. Joseph. That is, each day a line of the Litany is the focus and includes a reflection on that line and a description of a related wonder attributed to St. Joseph. The wonders described include the building of St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, St. Joseph being named Patron of the Universal Church, St. Joseph as our Spiritual Father, the Holy House of Loreto, and Sleeping St. Joseph.

The book is rich in quotes from many saints who turned to St. Joseph in their own lives. These include St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Pope St. John Paul II, St. Peter Julian Eymard, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Josemaria Escriva, St. Francis de Sales, St. Thomas Aquinas and Pope St. Paul VI. It is

Article By: Bill Doucette



remarkable how broad and consistent St. Joseph's influence has been on the saints. We will be in good company if we turn to St. Joseph in our prayers.

One example from the book is Day 16 Joseph Most Just, Pray for Us. In Scripture Joseph is called a just man. St. Josemaria Escriva notes

that in Hebrew, a just man is a good and faithful servant of God and also someone who is charitable toward his neighbor. The virtue of justice refers to giving another his due. Joseph gave God his due by following the law and by doing what he was asked when God spoke to him in his dreams. He showed his justice by staying with Mary during time of doubt and by taking his young family far away to relative safety in Egypt. We can follow the ways of St. Joseph and live with justice by doing the will of Jesus through loving God and each other.

Spending a month with St. Joseph by reading *Consecration to St. Joseph* will be time well spent. God will reward you with lessons learned by many saints about the virtues of St. Joseph. In these difficult times it is reassuring to have a saint who is close to Jesus and can be our advocate and guide. Fr. Calloway has pulled together some amazing stories about wonders of St. Joseph, our spiritual father. I hope you are able to enjoy them.

Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

A Miracle that Occurs during the Mass

Article By: Robert Tomanek



THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES THAT "AT THE MOMENT OF CONSECRATION" (1377), THE BREAD AND WINE OFFERED DURING THE MASS "BECOME CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD" (1333).

eternal life and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:53-54). This indicates that the *Eucharist is the food of salvation*.

Did the early Church embrace this message and preach it to all Christians? St. Paul was very emphatic regarding the Eucharist. "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *participation* in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a *participation* in the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:16). "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily *will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 11:27). Without reservation, the early Church Fathers understood the consecration of the bread and wine to be the Savior's body and blood as confirmed by St. Ignatius of Antioch in A.D. 110: "I desire the bread of God, *which is the flesh* of Jesus Christ... and for drink, I desire his blood which is love incorruptible." St. Justin Martyr [A.D. 151] wrote that the eucharistic prayer set down by Jesus that nourishes our blood and flesh, "is both the flesh and blood of that incarnated Jesus." St. Irenaeus, who wrote *Against Heresies* in A.D. 151, stated that Christ "declared the cup, a part of creation, *to be his own blood*, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as *his own body*, from which he gives increase unto our bodies."

Orthodox Eastern Churches agree with Roman Catholicism regarding the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Post-reformation churches varied in their beliefs regarding the Eucharist, although most mainline denominations accepted the importance of the Eucharist as a means of communication with

Jesus. Luther taught the "real presence," whereas the Methodist, John Wesley (an Anglican priest) taught that the Sacrament of Holy Communion is a means of grace through which the real presence of Christ is communicated to the believer, but rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation. Most Anglicans believe in the real presence and in some high Anglican Churches Eucharistic Adoration is practiced.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "at the moment of consecration" (1377), the bread and wine offered during the Mass "*become Christ's body and blood*" (1333). This teaching, called "transubstantiation," is clearly consistent with Christ's words as revealed in scripture, indicating that the bread *becomes* the body of Christ, and the wine *becomes* His blood (transubstantiation). Christ told the crowd (John 6:51): "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give *is my flesh* for the life of the world." Some of Christ's disciples did not believe that Jesus could give them his flesh. Thus, Jesus told them: "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has

Christ's words regarding the Eucharist cannot be interpreted as a metaphor for several reasons. First, *Christ emphasized His real presence* in the Eucharist. Second, some disciples walked away after hearing Christ's words *because they believed he stated it was flesh and blood that was to be consumed*. Finally, *his apostles and the early Church Fathers believed and taught the real presence* in the Eucharist. This belief is the heart of the Mass and brings Christ physically, as well as spiritually, to us. When you receive Christ in the Eucharist, remember the miracle that occurred during the consecration and focus on the presence of Jesus in your body.

St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church

302 E. Jefferson St. Iowa City, IA 52245



ST. MARY'S NEWSLETTER VOL. 17

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917) Feast day: November 13



St. Frances Xavier Cabrini was born as Maria Francesca Cabrini on July 15, 1850 in Sant'Angelo Lodigiano, Lombardy, Italy. She was born two months premature and was the youngest of thirteen children. She would live most of her life in a fragile and delicate state of health.

Frances became dedicated to living a life of religious work from a young age and

received a convent education from the Daughters of the Sacred Heart. She graduated with high honors and a teaching certificate.

When Frances was 18, she applied for admission to the religious congregation of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart but was turned down because of her poor health. Instead, a priest asked her to teach at the House of Providence Orphanage in Cadagono, Italy. She taught at the girls' school for six years and drew a community of women to live the religious way of life.

In 1877, she became Mother Cabrini after she finally made her vows and took the religious habit, also adding Xavier to her name in honor of St. Francis Xavier. When the House of Providence Orphanage closed, her bishop asked her, along with six other women from her orphanage in Cadagono, to found the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to care for the poor children in both schools and hospitals. Frances composed the Rule and Constitution for the religious institute. In its first five years, the institute established seven homes and a free school and nursery. Frances wanted to continue her mission in China, but Pope Leo XIII

urged her to go to the United States, a nation that was becoming flooded with Italian immigrants who needed her help.

On March 31, 1889, Frances arrived in New York City along with six other sisters ready to begin her new journey. However, right from the beginning she encountered many disappointments and hardships. The house originally intended for her new orphanage was no longer available. Archbishop Michael Corrigan found them housing with the convent of the Sisters of Charity.

Filled with a deep trust in God and endowed with a wonderful administrative ability, Frances founded 67 institutions, including orphanages, schools, and hospitals, within 35 years dedicated to caring for the poor, uneducated, sick, abandoned, and especially for the Italian immigrants. Her institutions were spread throughout Europe, Central and South America, and the United States, including New York, Colorado, and Illinois.

In 1909, Frances became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

Eight years later, on December 22, 1917, Frances passed away at the age of 67, due to complications from dysentery at the Columbus Hospital, one of her own hospitals, in Chicago, Illinois.

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini was beatified on November 13, 1938, by Pope Pius XI and canonized by Pope Pius XII on July 7, 1946 in recognition of her holiness and service to mankind, making her the first United States citizen to be canonized. She was named Patroness of Immigrants in 1950. Her feast day is celebrated on November 13.

<https://m.facebook.com/stjosephsummit/photos/st-frances-xavier-cabrini-st-frances-xavier-cabrini-was-born-as-maria-francesca-c/2171472252887310/>

Article By: Julia Blake