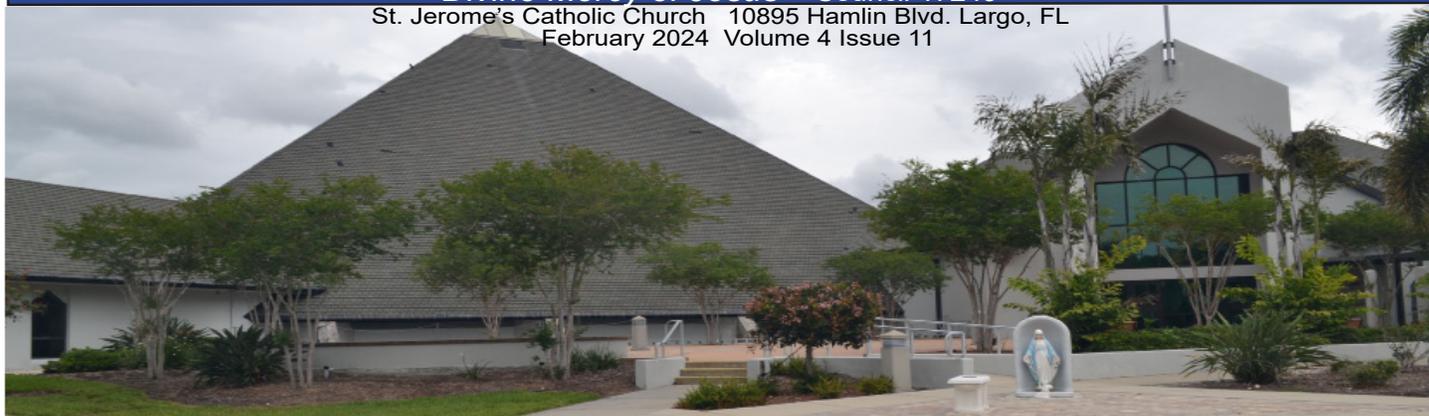


KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Divine Mercy of Jesus Council 17249

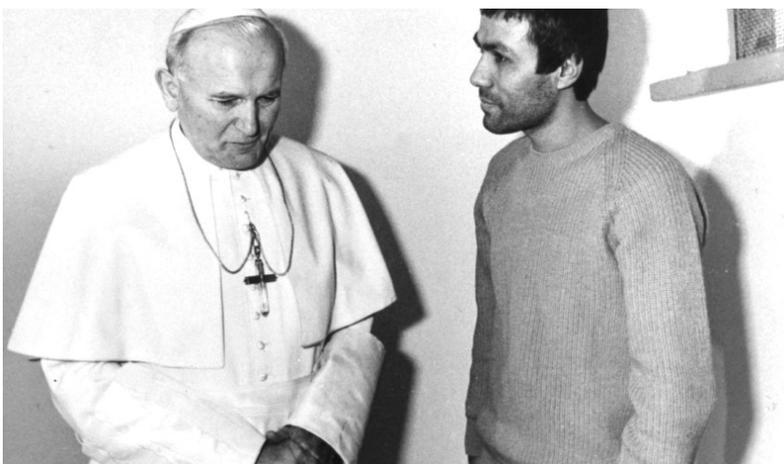
St. Jerome's Catholic Church 10895 Hamlin Blvd. Largo, FL

February 2024 Volume 4 Issue 11



Near Assassination of Pope John Paul II Revisited 40 Years Later

Forty years ago on December 27, 2023, Pope John Paul II showed the world that radical forgiveness is possible when he visited his would-be assassin in prison.



Two-and-a-half years earlier, Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Ağca shot the future saint with a 9 mm Browning semi-automatic pistol during the Pope's general audience in St. Peter's Square.

The Pope forgave Ağca moments after bullets struck him. Before he lost consciousness on the way to the hospital, he told his longtime personal secretary that he forgave the shooter. "I was suffering — there was reason to fear, but I had a sort of strange confidence that I would survive," he wrote in 2005.

The Holy Father asked the world from his hospital bed to "pray for my brother ... whom I have sincerely forgiven." He then lobbied the Italian president to pardon him. The pardon came in June 2000.

But what most intrigued the world was John Paul's visit with Ağca in prison on Dec. 27, 1983. The Pope requested the meeting.

The two met two days after Christmas in Ağca's cell. They spoke privately, seated close together in a corner of the cell. Ağca kissed John Paul's hand, and they talked for 21 minutes.

As John Paul rose to leave, he gave Ağca a rosary in silver and mother-of-pearl. After the event, many were astounded to learn that Ağca had not been handcuffed and that his cell door had been left ajar. A Vatican photographer captured the event at the Pope's request to show the world that forgiveness and mercy are possible in a fallen world.

Ağca served 19 years in an Italian prison before a pardon. Italy then deported him to Turkey, where he served a 10-year sentence. He converted to Roman Catholicism in 2007 and was released from jail three years later.

Ağca has repeatedly expressed remorse for shooting the Pope.



FROM AROUND THE WORLD OF INTEREST TO CATHOLICS

Christian school sues Vermont after ban from sports league over transgender policy

Indiana Catholic women's college now accepting men who identify as women

The first church dedicated to the Miraculous Medal is in South America

Vatican draws line on women's ordination and homosexuality

Alabama priest marries teen after abandoning post, leaving for Europe

At least three killed in explosion during Mass on Philippine campus

America's Catholics weigh in on Pope Francis' climate change priorities

At least three killed in explosion during Mass on Philippine campus
At least three killed in explosion during Mass on Philippine campus

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND KNIGHT



Pete McCabe

Greetings, Brothers!

I am amazed that January has already flown by, but we accomplished a lot. Bingo has been very successful in January. We averaged 88 players a week, which

is fantastic. Increased players mean increased revenue which translates to more resources for charitable giving. Please submit your ideas to help our parish and community by filling out a motion form (found on the council website) or come to the general meeting and share your ideas. Besides Bingo, the council helped take down the nativity scene from the church gathering space and put it back into storage. A group of knights also helped clean up the grotto, take down a palm tree as well as clear out the brush along the church's north fence line. More opportunities will present themselves in the future to help keep the grotto and church property looking great. I hope to see you there.

Knights also gathered to support Brother Ed Palus and his family

at the funeral of Ed's wife Diane. Please keep Brother Ed and his family in your prayers.

The busy month continued with helping the Foundations of Life (Catholic Charities) move into their new building on Seminole Blvd on two different occasions. Our council will continue to support this Life program through our donations and manpower.

Our Knights' Breakfast continues to be a popular event. It was a cold morning, but our warm breakfast kept everyone happy. Please stop by and help or just stop by to have breakfast on the third Sunday of every month. Finally, our Corporate Communion took place on the last Sunday in January along with the Columbiettes. We hope to schedule more of these in the future. As you can see, there are many events to lend a hand. No one is expected to do it all but pick one event that interests you and make a difference.

What's coming up in February? Great question - here's a list:

- 1 Feb - Bingo (Team A)
- 7 Feb - Officers' Meeting
- 8 Feb - Bingo (Team B)
- 15 Feb - Bingo (Team A)
- 15 Feb - 4th Degree Meeting
- 17 Feb - Grotto Cleanup
- 18 Feb - Knights' Breakfast
- 29 Feb - Bingo (Team A)

Thanks for all you do.
Pete



It might look like I'm doing nothing. But, in my head, I'm quite busy. No one notices how hard you work until you stop working.

My wallet is like an onion. Every time I open it, it makes me cry.

Your bank account can always be overdrawn. It'll never be overfilled.

I'm not weird. I'm a limited edition.

Of course I talk to myself. Sometimes I need expert advice.

Somebody said today that I'm lazy. I nearly answered him.

If money doesn't grow on trees, why do banks have branches?

I actually sold the vacuum cleaner. All it was doing was gathering dust.

Don't tell me the sky is the limit when there are footprints on the moon.

I finally found a machine at the gym that I like: the vending machine.

I'm glad I don't have to hunt for my food. I have no idea where sandwiches live.

No, you're not adopted, but we've placed an ad.

Died from not forwarding an email to 10 people.

I raised three daughters with only one bathroom and still loved them.

Me: Alexa—Remind me to go to the gym.

Alexa: I've added gin to your shopping list.

Me: Close enough.

One of these days you'll find someone who is obsessed with you. It will probably be a dog, but it is what it is.

You, texting: One of these days I'd like to take you out for some coffee.

Me, texting back: You spelled wine wrong.

Sign: NO TRESPASSING; We're tired of hiding the bones.

Every time a bird craps on my car, I eat a plate of wings on my front porch to show it what I'm capable of.

My favorite part of watching a marathon is watching a runner's expression when he grabs my plastic cup of vodka.



Actor Shia LaBeouf Converts to Catholicism

Welcome home to the Catholic Church, Shia LaBeouf!

"Once I finish RCIA, I'm scheduled to be confirmed and I hope Bishop [Robert] Barron comes down to confirm me. Once a week I get on the horn with Father Bobby and we talk shop."

LaBeouf's hopes turned into a reality when Bishop Barron confirmed him into the Catholic Church on Dec. 31, 2023.

Brother Alex Rodriguez, OFM Cap., LaBeouf's friend, confidant, and confirmation sponsor, spoke about the event. He said LaBeouf was crying after receiving communion. "He started crying a lot after receiving communion," Brother Rodriguez said. "It was very moving."

Brother Rodriguez also addressed

the many controversies surrounding the actor, including the Padre Pio movie, which resulted in backlash from many Catholics. He explained LaBeouf would have never considered Catholicism if it had not been for the film's production.

"Just as Padre Pio went through his own difficulties that you see in the film which are connected to or are part of his personal life, Shia himself, though he's now fully Catholic, also shows that in his personal he should be seen as an imperfect figure, as a sinner wanting to be holy," Brother Rodriguez said.

Brother Rodriguez concluded by saying, LaBeouf is "...Someone who is working on himself as best as he can so that he can be of service to others in whatever God wants him to do."



Bishop Robert Barron and actor Shia LaBeouf

How Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton's Trials Led Her to Love the Blessed Mother Before Becoming Catholic



Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton was a wife, mother, teacher, and a convert to the Catholic faith. She holds a special place in the hearts of many, especially in the United States.

While everyone has a unique conversion story, something about the journey of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton is especially relatable.

Mother Seton's childhood was filled with difficult relationships that left her wounded. Yet God brought her one relationship later in life that helped her heal.

Sister Regina Bechtle, Sister of Charity, reveals that Elizabeth Seton's first recorded memory is the death of her mother and younger sister, both named Catherine. This traumatic event occurred when the future saint was merely three years old.

The absence of her mother weighed heavily on Elizabeth.

She then experienced the messiness

of her father's remarriage. She often struggled to navigate the distant relationship between her and her new stepmother.

Furthermore, the mother of five young children was widowed at a young age.

It wasn't until her time in Italy that she was introduced to the Blessed Mother. At this point in her life, she had been raised Protestant, but felt something deeper upon learning about the different aspects of the Catholic faith. By the time she returned to New York, she had decided to enter the Catholic Church.

It was then that she discovered the maternal nature of the Virgin Mary. Elizabeth turned to the Blessed Virgin Mary for guidance in her faith journey, especially when she was discerning her conversion to the Catholic Church, but also for day-to-day support in the trials and sorrows of caring for others.



The National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, Maryland,

Message from 4th Degree Faithful Navigator

Brothers,
You may be aware that our 4th degree assembly recently donated over \$2,000.00 in goods to the Bay Pines VA. Our focus was to provide assistance to veterans in need, which included a wide variety of personal care items from shampoo to clothing. The Patriotic degree of the Knights of Columbus is focused on patriotism. Assembly #1448 is planning to run our "Patriotism in your Pocket" program again this year, for which St.

Jerome and Council #17249 were our largest contributors. Additionally, we are exploring ways we can get copies of the Constitution in as many hands as possible. Both of these endeavors are intended to increase national identity and awareness through a focus on patriotism. I encourage and appreciate your support, questions and input. Vivat Jesus, Bill McClelland, PGK Faithful Navigator Assembly #1448



Most Needed

Men	Women
Deoderant	Deoderant
Shaving Cream	3 ml Body Wash
3 ml body wash	Razors
Razors	Toothpaste
Toothpaste	Floss
Floss	Body Lotion

Why Is It Appropriate for a Nun to Wear a Habit?

The habit sets nuns apart from others - This distinction is appropriate because nuns are set apart from the world by being brides of Christ.

The habit inherently evangelizes- Souls may inquire into or research the reason for a nun's special dress, and they may even convert a soul to Catholicism!

Wearing of a habit prevents men from being drawn into lust - In con-

trast, a nun without a habit may risk becoming the object of a man's lust.

Wearing a habit is an act of humility. This humble attitude, often mentioned favorably in scripture should obviously be the desired attitude of nuns.

Wearing a habit may be penitential (e.g. if it is less comfortable than other clothes)

Wearing a habit may prevent a nun from being exposed to sin. People may act differently when a habited nun is around.

The wearing of a habit saves a nun's time as she does not have to spend hours deciding on and preparing outfits & hairstyles and maintaining a variety of clothing and accessories. This leaves the nun more time for prayer and spares her from engaging in various vanities.

Knights Ed Palus' Wife Dies



Diane Palus

Diane Palus was born in Stockton, Illinois. Diane died surrounded by her family. She is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 56 years, Edward Palus, her two sons, Peter Palus and Mark Palus

and their wives, Karen Palus and Lisa Palus, her three grandchildren, Carly Palus, Joseph Palus and Jackson Palus, and her brother, Robert Folgate and his wife, Susan Folgate, and their son, Ben Folgate.

Diane received a nursing degree from St. Mary's Nursing School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and worked as an emergency room nurse for 20 years at a Florida hospital. She then worked as a rehabilitation nursing consultant for CNA Insurance in Orlando, Florida, until she retired.

After retiring Diane enjoyed swimming, walking, reading, playing bridge and spending time with her family and friends.

Diane was a loving wife, mother, and friend, and she was extremely generous with her time. Diane's deep faith and belief in God was what kept her strong and

happy throughout her life. Being a grandmother and watching the children become the young successful adults brought the greatest joy to Diane. She spent countless hours with them playing dress up, swimming at the beach, going to their sporting events, and seeing them graduate from high school, college, and nursing school.

Diane's second passion and love was the theater and she spent 15 years as a volunteer at the Straz Theatre in Tampa, Florida.

Diane was loved deeply by her family and friends. She will be missed but always kept close in their hearts and memories. Diane's funeral mass was at St. Jerome Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations be sent to Moffitt Cancer Center Foundation or any other charity.

An Update on Bingo 2023

Bingo has been going on for almost 2 years now, and we have learned a lot in that time.

Bingo proceeds fund our council's charitable giving, specifically, those events in our four program areas: Faith, Family, Community, and Life. Besides funding charitable giving, ibingo is also a place where our players come to be with their friends to socialize and have a good time.

As we approach our two-year anniversary this April, let us keep in mind that we are making connections with our local parish and outside community. Starting our bingo game off with a prayer reminds everyone in the room that our little game is different from other bingo operations. A huge shout-out to our bingo volunteers (both Knights and Columbiettes) who steadfastly show up each week like clockwork. This only works because of you!

The following figures summarize our bingo operations in 2023:

- Bank Deposit (to St Jerome account): \$36,497
- Donut Expenses: \$2,951
- Bingo Expenses (game sheets, license, etc.): \$4,962
- Payment to church (20%): \$5,791
- Knights bingo income: \$22,793
- Number of players: 3,172 (average 66 per session)

Moving forward, our council will be giving 20% of our bingo proceeds each month to the Columbiettes, based on their continued support of bingo operations. Two of our four callers are Columbiettes and often you will find 3 of our 5 cashiers are Columbiettes.

Working together, the success of bingo will continue.
--Pete McCabe GK



Several Knights Help Take Down the Nativity Scene

What goes up must come down! Now that we are passed Advent, the church nativity scene had to be put away for another year. The church maintenance guys (Mike and Bruce) asked the Knights to help them take down the nativity scene in the gathering space of the church. NOTE:

The Knights helped Mike and Bruce pull everything out of storage before Advent and set it up. A total of six Knights showed up to help with the addition of Chris (St Jerome parishioner). Before you ask, yes, we all asked Chris to become a Knight. While he said no, we'll continue to work on Chris. This small team moved numerous heavy boxes via church van and Tim's Truck to the storage area behind the Lifeline food pantry. Mike and Bruce were very grateful for the help since they would

be stuck moving those items by themselves and it would have taken much more time and effort. These types of activities around our parish are very important albeit routine. Our council should look for other areas around our parish to help out.



Pete McCabe, Rich Pettit, Tim Condron, Mike Shaunessey, Pete Nunes, Chris (not a Knight), Bill Bannon, and Bill McClelland. Not pictured: Bruce Villeneuve

Group of Knights Help Clean up the Grotto

On an early Saturday morning, a hearty group of Knights gathered to clean up the grotto. The group gave the Blessed Mother statue a good washing and scrubbing. General weeding was conducted, and Chris did a great job of raking up all of the leaves in the grotto area. Three new engraved bricks were placed at the grotto and new pavers were placed on the north side of the grotto. The whole grotto got a much-needed cleaning and face lift. Besides the grotto work, the group also cut down a palm tree along the parish north boundary fence. Dan "Cutter" Timmons worked his magic once again and placed the tree exactly where he wanted it to fall. Additionally, bushes and trees along the fence line were cut back and the entire area

cleaned up. All of the branches were gathered and disposed of, tidying up the whole area. This type of work saves the parish a lot of money with the added benefit

of beautifying the parish campus. Grotto cleanups (along with other projects) will be scheduled once a month to ensure that the area is suitable for prayerful reflection.



From left to right is: Pete McCabe, Dan Timmons, Bill Bannon, Tim Condron, Chris (not a knight), and Rich Pettit. Missing is Bill McClelland.



Dan "Cutter" Timmons.

Boy Walks 7 Miles on Muddy Roads to Receive Confirmation, Gets Blessing from Pope



An Argentine boy recently made the special effort to walk about seven miles on muddy roads to receive the sacrament of confirmation, and when the news reached Pope Francis, he sent him a blessing. Maximiliano Pavillaux, 11, has been living along with his parents and four siblings in a small town in Buenos Aires province, since December 2022. Throughout the year, the boy has been preparing to receive the sacrament of confirmation, which was scheduled for Nov. 11. To help him prepare, week after week, his catechist, Eva, sent the

study materials to his house. However, as the date for the sacrament approached, worsening weather conditions threatened his being confirmed. The night before confirmation and in the midst of incessant rain, Carola and Rolando, Maximiliano's parents, began to worry because the family vehicles were not going to be able to make it to town on the muddy country roads, and the tractor they use to work the fields had broken down that same week. There was an alternative, but the parents thought the child wouldn't accept it: walk seven miles in the mud. However, to their surprise, Maxi said yes. The boy and his parents left at 7 a.m. so they could reach the church in time for the ceremony that would begin at 10:30 a.m.

"Our boots sank in the mud, we slid," Maximiliano recalled. On the way, the father joked with the little boy: "When you grow up, you're going to have a good story to tell." But they didn't expect his story to reach so many people. Upon arriving at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Eva, his catechist, was waiting for him in tears: "She was very happy," Maxi said. The priest who offered the Mass mentioned the little boy's feat as an example to follow, and many came up later to congratulate him. After the ceremony, "we came away relieved. I was 'on cloud nine' all week," the boy's mother confessed. "We were so happy." But the impact did not end there. In recent days, Maximiliano's story reached the ears of Pope Francis, who sent him his apostolic blessing and a gift from Rome. The framed apostolic blessing and the gifts of the Holy Father were given to Maxi at a Sunday Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Mauricio Landra who made a special trip to Suipacha to place the recognition from the pope in the boy's hands. "I can't stop crying," Maxi's mother said, highlighting the warmth of the Suipacha community, which came to visit her son and also brought him gifts. "It's a paradise," she said.

The Miracle of St. Lawrence

Saint Lawrence, born around 1125, faced a turbulent childhood. At the tender age of ten, he was handed over as a hostage to Dermot Mac Murehad, the King of Leinster. This period was marked by harsh treatment until his father intervened, ensuring Lawrence's transfer to the care of the Bishop of Glendalough in Wicklow.

Demonstrating remarkable spiritual maturity, Lawrence became a beacon of virtue. His commitment led to his election as abbot of the monastery at just twenty-five, after the bishop's passing in 1150. His tenure as abbot was distinguished by his exemplary leadership and wisdom.

In 1161, Lawrence's virtues led to his unanimous selection as the first

Archbishop of Dublin. His responsibilities soon extended beyond Ireland. Around 1171, he journeyed to England to meet King Henry II in Canterbury for diocesan matters.

During this visit, while preparing to officiate a service, he was violently struck on the head by a maniac, hoping to replicate the martyrdom of St. Thomas. Miraculously, after blessing and applying water to his wound, Lawrence recovered swiftly and proceeded to celebrate Mass.

His diplomatic skills shone in 1175 during a mission to reconcile Henry II with Roderic, the Irish monarch. Lawrence's piety and wisdom impressed Henry, who entrusted him with full negotiation powers.

Saint Lawrence's earthly journey



concluded on November 14, 1180. He was laid to rest in the abbey church at Eu, on the Normandy border.

Babe Ruth's Catholic Conversion and the Sacramental He Took to His Grave

Babe Ruth is considered the greatest baseball player of all time. He was also known for his drinking, partying, womanizing, and for his appetite. But he was also a baptized Catholic. In a letter written shortly before his death, Ruth explained his lifelong faith journey. And it was, quite literally, lifelong.

He explained that even if children do not understand or appreciate their upbringing in the Catholic faith, "once religion sinks in, it stays there—deep down."

This proved true for him, as he attended Catholic school and maintained a good relationship with one of the school's religious brothers. He added, "The lads who get religious training, get it where it counts—in the roots. They may fail it, but it never fails them."

While chasing worldly pleasures, faith remained a part of his life, even if he went astray for a little while.

"While I drifted away from the Church, I did have my own 'altar,' a big window of my New York apartment overlooking the city lights. Often I would kneel before that window and say my prayers. I would feel quite humble then. I'd ask God to help me not make such a big fool of myself and pray that I'd measure up to what He expected of me."

In Dec. of 1946, Ruth underwent surgery two years before his death. His close friend, Paul Carey, said, "They're going to operate in the

morning, Babe. Don't you think you ought to put your house in order?"

Ruth then explained that he "didn't dodge the long, challenging look in his eyes. I knew what he meant."

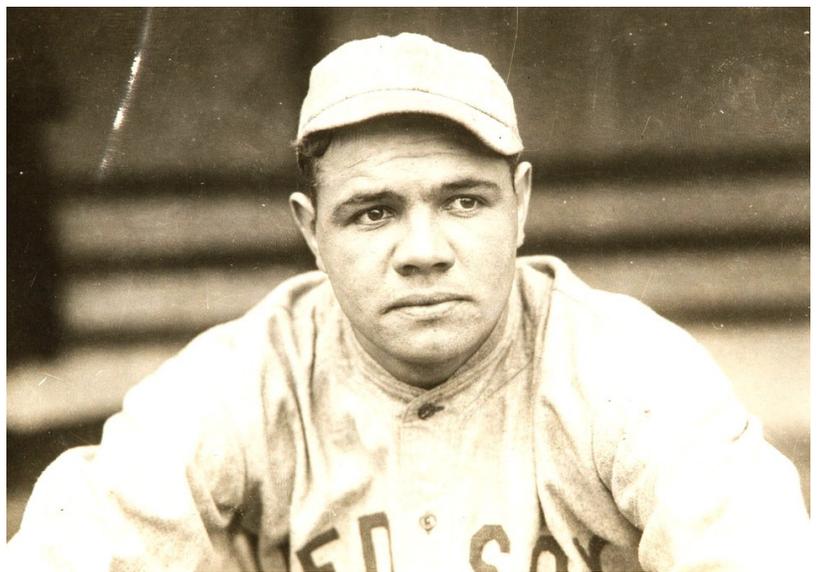
For the first time, I realized that death

might strike me out. I nodded, and Paul got up, called in a Chaplain, and I made a full confession," Ruth revealed.

While visiting him, the chaplain said to Ruth, "I'll return in the morning and give you Holy Communion...but you don't have to fast."

Ruth responded, "I'll fast," adding that he didn't have even a drop of water.

He continued: "As I lay in bed that evening, I thought to myself what a comforting feeling to be free from fear and worries. I now could simply turn them over to God."



Babe Ruth received a letter from a little boy while lying in his hospital bed.

The letter said, "Dear Babe. Everybody in my seventh-grade class is pulling and praying for you. I am enclosing a medal which if you wear will make you better. Your pal—Mike Quinlan."

Enclosed was the Miraculous Medal. "I asked them to pin the Miraculous Medal to my pajamas. I've worn the medal constantly ever since. I'll wear it to my grave."

Babe Ruth died from esophageal cancer on Aug. 16, 1948.

Foundations of Life Move

On Saturday (20 Jan), a group of Knights gathered to help Catholic Charities Foundations of Life Pregnancy Center move into their new facility on Seminole Blvd in Seminole. The morning started with everyone meeting at a storage facility in St Petersburg to load up bins of baby clothes and other supplies. Then everyone drove over to the new facility in Seminole to offload everything including an exam table that Brother Ralph Frizzle was able to find for the Foundations of Life staff. Additional duties included moving tables and chairs from storage over to the new offices. Overall, the move was a huge success due to the outstanding response from Brother Knights. Many hands make light work! Our council will be working alongside Foundations of Life in the future with additional volunteer opportunities as well as financial support. Finally, kudos to Brother Kevin Manning, our Life program director, for all his efforts on behalf of our council.



Top row from left to right is Zeke Ganio, Chris (non-Knight), Pete Ganio. Lower row from left to right is Pete McCabe, Joe Moore, Matt (non-Knight), Bill Bannon, Keving Manning, Rich Pettit, Ralph Frizzle, Ken Koster, and Charlie Scott.



Thanks to Brother Ralph Frizzle for supplying this exam table.

Daddy Yankee Abandons His Singing Career and Converts to Christianity



Ramón Luis Ayala Rodríguez
AKA Daddy Yankee

Ramón Luis Ayala Rodríguez, known as Daddy Yankee, is a 46-year-old Puerto Rican singer and author of urban genre songs such as "Gasolina," "Shaky Shaky," and "Con Calma." His songs and music videos primarily discuss and visualize sexual promiscuity. Recently Social media users were surprised when Daddy Yankee published an ex-

cerpt from his farewell concert in Puerto Rico. He announced the end of a 30-year musical career and the beginning of a new stage with Jesus in a life of Christianity.

"For me, this day is the most important day of my life and I want to share it with you because living a life of success is not the same as living a life with purpose," he said. "For a long time, I tried to fill a void in my life that no one could fill. I tried to find meaning in my life. Sometimes I appeared to be very happy, but something was missing to make me complete, and I have to confess that those days are over. Someone was able to fill that void that I felt for a long time."

"I realized that for all of my fans I was someone, but I was nothing without Him. I was able to travel the world for years, win many awards, applause, and praise, but I realized something that the Bible says: 'For what shall it profit a man if he shall

gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'"

Yankee also noted that he is not ashamed to tell the entire world that "Jesus lives in me and that I will live for Him."

"A new story is going to begin, a new beginning, all the tools that I have in my possession, such as music, social networks, platforms, a microphone, everything that Jesus gave me is now for His kingdom," he highlighted.

"Thank you very much Puerto Rico and I hope that you walk with me in this new beginning, and I hope that something very important is recorded in you: do not follow any man, I am a human, so to all the people who have been following me, follow Jesus Christ instead. He is the way, the truth and the life. Thank you very much. God bless you."

The Puerto Rican singer closed his message by asking God for His mercy to allow him to evangelize the world from Puerto Rico.

Why Does a Priest Put Water in Wine at Mass?

As the French saying goes, "Water spoils wine, wine improves water." But couldn't we say that this also makes good theological sense? If water is the sign of humanity and wine that of divinity, the former is indeed called upon, through Christ's sacrifice, to unite with the latter. St. Irenaeus said, "He who was the Son of God became the Son of man that man ... might become the son of God." The opposite — when humanity strays from its vocation as son of the Father by wasting his gifts — is sin. This central reality of Christian life is recalled at every Mass by a discreet gesture from the priest or deacon. Dur-



ing the offertory, as he dilutes the wine intended for consecration with a small amount of water, the minister prays under his breath: "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share

in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity."

Beyond the symbolism evoked above of the Eucharist joining our humanity to Christ's divinity, the cup also symbolizes the union of the two natures (human and divine) in the person of Christ. During his offering on the Cross, his two natures truly give themselves out of love. This love was already manifested on Golgotha by the water and blood that gushed from the pierced side, and which are also symbolized in the chalice filled with wine to which the minister adds a dash of water.

Colorado Parents Protest after Daughter Told to Share Bed with Male Student on School Trip



Parents of an 11-year-old girl are demanding that a Colorado school district change its transgender policies after their daughter was instructed to share a bed with a biologically male 11-year-old student who identifies as a transgender girl during an overnight school trip.

The parents, Joe and Serena Wailes, claimed that the school violated their constitutional rights by failing to notify them of the sleeping arrange-

ments policy and the practice of the school district violates the parents' deeply held religious beliefs, and their parental rights in the education and upbringing of their children. The letter also details the parents' difficulty in getting their daughter moved to a different room when the arrangements made her uncomfortable. "Parents have the right for the upbringing and education

of their children, and that includes making informed decisions to protect their child's privacy," senior counsel Kate Anderson said.

"Schools should never hide information from parents, yet that's exactly what Jefferson County Public School officials did here," Anderson added. "And that put the Waileses' 11-year-old daughter in a very challenging situation where she had to choose between sleeping in the same bed with a biological boy and advocating for her

privacy in front of her teachers and peers. Understandably, the Wailes family is asking JCPS to cease its practice of withholding information about rooming accommodations from parents. Legal counsel Mallory Rechtenbach said that they hope to settle the dispute with the school district amicably by providing parents with an opt-out option for such sleeping arrangements when registering the children for a trip.

The current policy states that in the context of overnight trips, "in most cases, students who are transgender should be assigned to share overnight accommodations with other students that share the student's gender identity. Any student who is transgender or not, who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided with a reasonable accommodation, which may include a private room" and "Under no circumstance shall a student who is transgender be required to share a room with students whose gender identity conflicts with their own."

Italy's 'Most Handsome Man' Leaves Modeling Career to Become Priest

Young Edoardo Santini, considered "the most handsome man in Italy," has decided to leave his promising career as a model and enter a seminary to become a priest.

Dancer, swimmer, actor — these were a few of the dreams of Santini, a 21-year-old Italian who in 2019 when he was 17 earned the title of the most handsome young man in his country after winning a national contest.

This award opened the doors to the world of fashion, and his future seemed clear: He was destined to become a big star. However, God's plans were different. Santini was going to continue shining, but away from the spotlight and catwalks.

In November, Santini explained that he is on his way "to become, God willing, a priest."

He says that over the years he has met people who, "by showing me what it means to 'be Church,' have given me the strength to investigate this question that I had been carrying around since I was little" but which, he says, "I didn't delve into because of fear."

In January 2020 he discovered "the real Church," and that was when on

social media he began to talk about God and the call he felt.

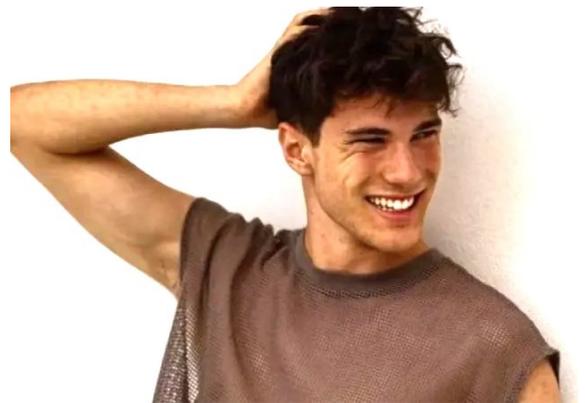
"Living in God doesn't mean locking yourself inside the church but rather living one's life more fully," he told his more than 11,000 followers on Instagram.

He also mentioned the opposition of his grandmother, who "expected something else" from her grandson. However, he stressed that he didn't feel "alone" in his decision and that he was "tired of satisfying the will of others."

The young man from the Tuscany region took a first step last year when he went to live with two priests he described as "the most beautiful experience of my life. "I found in everyday life the answer that I hoped for, which has come to me from above."

"At the end of the year, it was natural for me to ask the bishop to enter the preparatory course, the year preceding life in the seminary. And here I am, studying theology and serving in two parishes of the Diocese of Florence," he said.

He also shared that he was slow in



taking the first step "for fear of not being accepted" and that making this decision was something "that terrified him" although, he said honestly, "I built more walls for myself than there were."

Santini also shared on Instagram his experience during World Youth Day in August in Lisbon, Portugal.

Between "laughter, dancing, jumping up and down," and new friendships, Santini discovered that "the Church is beautiful." Now, at the age of 21 and after having dared to say "yes" to the call of the Lord, he said he feels really happy.

Work Continues on Rebuilding the Cathedral of Notre Dame



An aerial view shows the ongoing restoration work at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris



The Virgin of the Pillar statue is seen inside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in 2018

Many of us can recall that horrible April day in 2019 when fire engulfed the venerable cathedral of Notre Dame. All the cable networks suspended their regular programming to watch as the fire grew and spread.

As the flames leapt higher and higher, it seemed like a darkness was descending upon the spirit of all who have worshiped within the walls of the cathedral at the heart of Paris. After the ancient roof had come crashing down, like a clap of evil thunder, silence and sorrow seemed the only thing anyone could manage.

Why did that tragic event so capture the imagination of the world?

Partly because we humans identify our humanity with specific places. We observe this in the liturgical calendar when we celebrate various feasts. We witness it in the tenacity with which people resist the closing of a much-loved parish, because we associate that space with the great events of our families' lives: baptism, first communion, marriage, and funerals.

Partly because we feel that something not only beautiful but spiritually powerful is being destroyed. Through the centuries, the prayers of pilgrims had softened the stone arches and columns, imparting the sense of the sacred to the fabric of the structure that was palpable the moment anyone walked into the nave. Partly, too, because this monument to the faith had lasted for so long, and our modern buildings, like so

many of our modern ideas, are not built to last. We unconsciously worried that it might be impossible to recapture what the builders in the 12th and 13th centuries had captured, and that with the destruction of the building in which God had been worshiped for so long, the worship itself might be diminished.

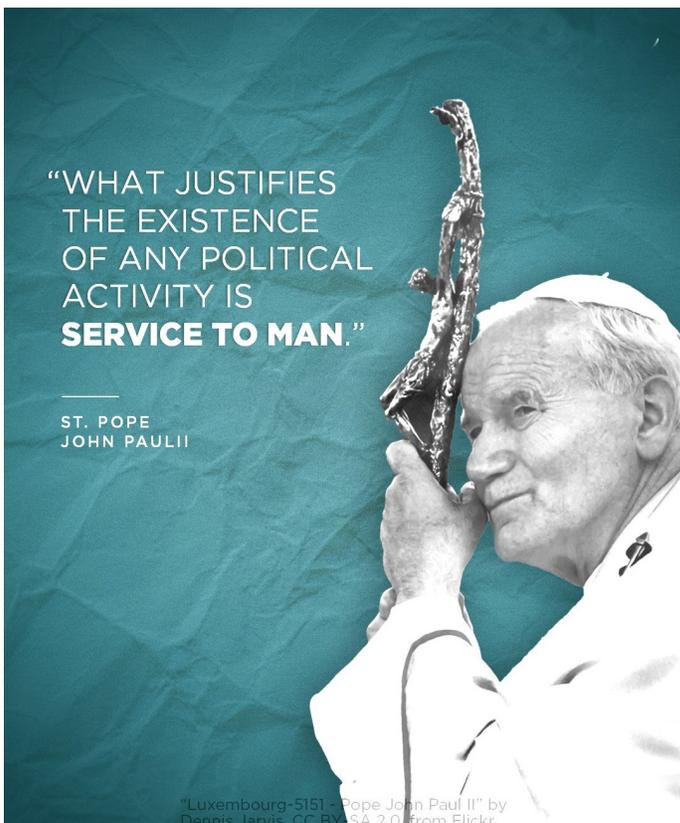
Mostly, however, because our powerful emotions of pain and loss when Notre Dame burned were the mirror image of the emotions of love and devotion for the Mother of God. Notre Dame was her cathedral. Mary, hope of Christians. Mary, refuge of sinners. Mary, untier of knots. Mary, seat of wisdom. Mary, comfort of the afflicted.

"When I visited Paris last February, I walked by the site and as I approached, I thought: 'This is the first time I have been in Paris and not gone to say a prayer in front of the statue of the Blessed Mother that stood to the right of the main al-

tar.' As I walked around to the front of the church, my heart leapt when I saw that they had placed the statue, which was not destroyed by the fire, on a column in the square. Everyone could still look upon her enigmatic expression and murmur the words, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," said one observer.

"WHAT JUSTIFIES THE EXISTENCE OF ANY POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS **SERVICE TO MAN.**"

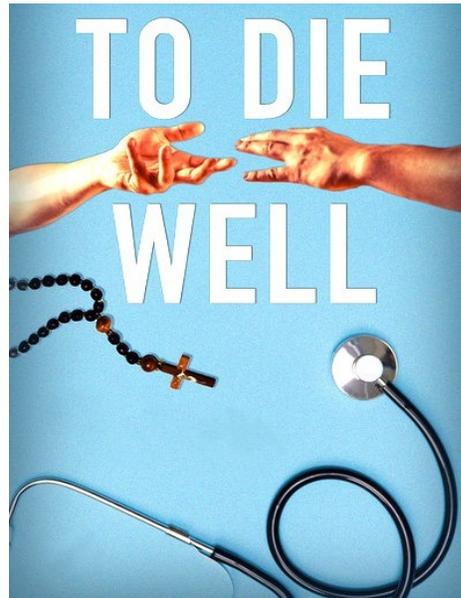
ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II



"Luxembourg-5151 - Pope John Paul II" by Dennis Jarvis, CC BY-SA 2.0 from Flickr

How to Die Well

As St. Robert Bellarmine said so succinctly, "to die well, one must live well." Living well includes the recognition and acceptance that our time on earth is limited, and that we are all destined to die. This is self-evident, yet so many people are unable to think about, much less pray about the inevitability of death. It is important for us to understand that death is more than the cessation of bodily function: death is the separation of the soul from the body. Yet this should not cause us to despair, but rather fill us with hope. We all long for union with God and death is the necessary way by which our souls join him in heaven. Through the resurrection of Jesus, we have the hope for our own bodily resurrection and the reunion of our bodies and souls.



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let your perpetual light shine
upon them.
May their souls and the souls of all
the faithful departed rest in peace.*

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

Council 17249 Divine Mercy of Jesus Officers for 2023-2024

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Worthy Deputy Grand Knight
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