

# Our Lady of Victories Church

(serving Harrington Park, River Vale and the Pascack/Northern Valley)

150 Harriot Avenue, Harrington Park, New Jersey

www.olvhp.org

## WELCOME

To the Parish Family of  
**OUR LADY OF VICTORIES**

(THE LITTLE CHURCH WITH THE BIG HEART)

## COME WORSHIP WITH US

Rev. Bryan F.J. Adamcik SFO, KCHS

*Pastor*

Rev. Duverney Bermudez

Rev. Anthony Mastroeni

Rev. Christopher M. Ciccarino KCHS Rev. John O'Connor

Rev. Brian Muzás

*Latin Mass Assistants*

*Weekend Assistants*

Br. Angelus CFR

*Parish Seminarian*

Sr. Elizabeth Holler, SC

Sr. Mary Corrigan, SC

*In Residence-Convent*

Mr. Thomas Lagatol Mr. Albert McLaughlin

*Deacons*

Susan Evarella

*Religious Education*

Deacon Al McLaughlin

*Parish Catechetical Leader*

Selena Piazza

Lesa Rossmann

*Ministers of Music*

Elizabeth Gulfo

Martin Coyne II

*Parish Trustees*

Michael Flynn & Meagan Mullany

Curtiss & Katie Stella

*Jr. High School Ministry*

*High School Ministry*

Maria Hellrigel

*Parish Secretary*

Jorden Pedersen Esq.

*President Parish Council*

Jon Fischer CFA

*Chairman Finance Committee*

### SPECIAL MASSES OR DEVOTIONS:

**First Friday:** 7:00pm, Mass of Sacred Heart & Devotions

**First Saturday:** 8:00am, Mass of Immaculate Heart of Mary

**First Saturday:** 12:00pm, Mass for Souls in Purgatory

Novenas prayed after 8:00 a.m. Mass:

**Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal:** Monday

**St. Jude and St. Anthony:** Wednesday

**Infant of Prague:** 25th of the month

**St. Peregrine:** First Friday of the Month

**Rosary:** Recited M - Sat after 8:00am & 12Noon Mass.

**Tuesday-Novena Prayer and Adoration:** 12:30pm-3:00pm

**Thursday-Holy Hour with Adoration & Benediction:** 7:00pm

**Friday-Exposition & Adoration:** 12:30pm-3:00pm

**EASTER SUNDAY, April 1, 2018 A.D.**



### THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/CONFESSION:

Monday - Friday 7:30am - 7:50am.

First Friday at 6:30pm

Saturday at 11:00a.m.-Noon; 3:00pm - 3:30pm

### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:

To register for Baptismal preparation and Baptism, call the rectory.

### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:

Call the Religious Ed Office for requirements/class schedule.

### THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY:

Please call the rectory for an appointment.

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE SICK/LAST RITES:

Sick calls at any time in emergency.

### THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS AND VOCATIONS:

Anyone contemplating a vocation to the Priesthood or Religious Life should contact the Vocations Office at 973.497.4365.

**Latin Mass every Sunday 8:15AM**

**Spanish Mass every Sunday 1PM**



OLV Rectory  
Phone: 201-768-1706  
Email: olvrectory.hp@gmail.com

OLV Fax  
201-768-3962

Religious Education  
201-768-1400  
olvhpccd@gmail.com

OLV Convent  
201-768-1705

### **PRAY FOR OUR SICK**

Please **PRAY** in the name of **JESUS**, the Healer, that the **SICK** of **OLV PARISH** may be restored to health and all those who **ASSIST** and **CARE** for the sick will be given the **STRENGTH** to continue **GOD'S GOOD WILL**: Bill Carpenter, Kathy Freeburn, Marietta Flahive, Tom Giuliano, Marylou Goreb, Thomas Haring, Peter Kellar, George Loder, Lisa LoSchiavo, Anne Matthaei, Timothy O'Shea, Canice Prince, Dan Ragusa, Mary Rinner, Suzanne Rothschild, Wendy Ruggiero, Michael Tobia, Kathryn Turrell, Therese Vaglio, Jim Walsh, Bill Weissmeier.

### **SPIRITUAL EXCERPT WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE**

"A woman was dragged by a friend to the monastery one afternoon. I met her and offered her a set of my mini books on the spiritual life. She declined. I said, "Why don't you want to take them with you?" She said, "Because I don't want to change." Boy, I thought, this woman is bad off. We must be constantly willing to change into what the Father wants us to be. What you want is unimportant. After all, what do you know?"

*Mother Angelica, Little Book of Life Lessons page 41.*

### **CROSSES**

We complain about the cross we bear, but don't realize it is preparing us for the dip in the road that God can see and we cannot. Whatever your cross, whatever your pain, there will always be sunshine, after the rain... Perhaps you may stumble, perhaps even fall; But God's always ready, to answer your call.... He knows every heartache, sees every tear, a word from His lips, can calm every fear... Your sorrows may linger, throughout the night, But suddenly vanish, by dawn's early light... The Savior is waiting, somewhere above, to give you His grace, and send you His love. May God fill your day with blessings!! Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle!

### **FRIDAY ADORATION**

Just a reminder we have Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Fridays from 12:00Noon – 3:00PM.

**So stop by and adore Our Eucharistic Lord.**

### **REVERENT CLOTHING**

In our much less formal culture, gone are the days of "Sunday best", but have we gone too far with beachwear, gym attire, work-out rags and the like at Mass? We are a Church of outward signs; what does your clothing say about your understanding of what happens at Mass? While the Lord loves everyone and accepts us as we are, and there are emergencies, are we giving witness to the sacred nature of the Mass if we just "come as we are"?

### **DEAR PARENTS**

It is a genuine cause for alarm that so many of children who attend our Parish's Religious Education Classes (CCD) **DO NOT** go to Mass on the weekends. **ALL the MONEY, TIME and COMMITMENT** to our Catholic Religious Education is **WASTED** if **PARENTS** fail to impress upon their children the importance of worshipping on Sunday. **There is no substitute for fulfilling your Sunday Mass obligation.**

**Check out OLV's website [olvhp.org](http://olvhp.org)  
and find us on Facebook:  
Our Lady of Victories Parish**

## **DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY APRIL 8**

**Led by the**

### **THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE RENEWAL**

Sunday, April 8, is the feast of DIVINE MERCY. Beginning at 3:00PM OLV will have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Devotions associated with the Day. Confessions will be heard during the hour to fulfill OUR LORD'S request. Our Lord made a great promise to all those souls who would go to Confession and then receive Him in Holy Communion on the Feast of His Mercy, now called Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the Catholic Church. Jesus promised that "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain the complete forgiveness of sins and punishment." He went on to say "I want to grant a complete pardon to the souls that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion on the Feast of My Mercy." (Diary 1109) **There will be an additional Mass at the end of the Holy Hour at approx. 4:15PM on Sunday, April 8. This Mass will be offered by Fr. Innocent CFR.**

### **SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

We are constantly under attack and tempted by the forces of EVIL. Every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00-3:00PM members of OLV parish meet and pray the Mary Mother of All Nations Novena which focuses on this daily battle. All are welcome. Join us.

### **DID YOU KNOW???**

The word "Easter" is of uncertain origin. Some say it is the Anglo-Saxon name for an old Teutonic god of spring. Others say it is an old German word for "dawn." It is, by any account, the oldest and greatest Christian feast. Easter falls anywhere between March 22 and April 25; since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the date for its celebration has been fixed for the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, i.e. the first day of spring. Although the Church celebrates Easter every Sunday of the year, it sets aside fifty days – seven weeks of seven days (seven is considered a holy and perfect number) to ring out its Easter joy. In fact, the next eight days are considered by the Church to be one big Easter Day. That is why this week is known as Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, Easter Tuesday, etc.

Since antiquity, it has been the custom to Baptize adults only at the Easter Vigil; in fact, the liturgical prayers and rituals of Easter are still centered around Baptism: the renewal of the Baptismal promises and sprinkling with newly consecrated Easter Holy water. It still is a venerable custom to bring home some Easter water to bless the home, the gardens, the family and the first major meal of Easter. Every Catholic home should have some Holy Water. It is a shame that many of our pious Catholic customs have fallen by the wayside; now more than ever, Catholics need to start or perhaps return to these prayerful rituals and customs at home.

Other Easter customs are also closely tied to Baptism. Many hymns, songs and decorations highlight the theme of new life, the end of winter and spring's reawakening of nature. The wearing of new colorful clothes to express our new life in Christ, and our being clothed in Christ at our Baptism; the Easter parade mirrored the heavenly procession in which Jesus led all those who died before His death and Resurrection through the newly opened gates of Heaven, dressed in their finest robes. Eggs, the hardened shell of which represents the rock tomb from which Christ emerged... the joyful ringing of bells; the warm exchange of peace, and the lighting of candles are also signs of Easter joy.

**Carry a heart that never hates,  
A smile that never fades and  
A touch that never hurts.**

## Upcoming OLV Parish Events

Apr 3 - Tue – Marian Novena Prayer 2:00-3:00PM  
Apr 4 - Wed—Bible Study Group—10:00AM  
Apr 4 - Wed—OLV Needlers 6:30PM  
Apr 8 - Sun—Divine Mercy Sunday Holy Hour 3:00PM / Mass 4:15PM

## PRAY for THOSE in the MILITARY

Lance Corporal Matthew Brady, U.S. Marine Corps;  
Lieutenant Julia H. Cheringal, US Navy;  
Captain Ben Clemente, US Army;  
Ensign Jon Clemente, US Navy;  
1st Lieutenant Ryan Colomeo, U.S. Marine Corps;  
Specialist Peter Dippolito, U.S. Army;  
Major Michael Franson, US Army;  
Sergeant First Class Charles Greene, US Army;  
Lieutenant Tara Harris, US Air Force;  
Lance Corporal Thomas Iafrate, U.S. Marine Corps;  
Lieutenant Joseph Jaeger, US Navy;  
Lieutenant Andrew Jaeger, US Navy;  
Chief Master Sergeant Shawn Llewellyn, US Air Force;  
Captain Shawn Linn, US Army;  
SN Daniel T. LoVecchio, U.S. Navy;  
Colonel John McLaughlin, US Army;  
Captain John G. Miele, US Army.

## CLOTHING BINS

Christ is risen! These words fill the festive celebrations of Catholic Churches throughout the world. Some people, however, have difficulty experiencing these joys in the depth of their hearts due to their circumstances in life. Catholic Charities aims to help relieve the suffering of many in our society through its various programs. Please help Catholic Charities continue its mission by donating your unwanted clothing to the bin located on our property. May the spirit of the Risen Christ resound through your generosity. Thank you.

## SAVE USED EYEGLASSES

The Knights of Columbus collects used and old eyeglasses for the less fortunate. Old or "retired" glasses may be left in the basket in the back of Church.

## CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard EVERY Saturday from 11:00AM to Noon and 3:00-3:30PM, every weekday morning at 7:30AM, as well as every First Friday at 7:00PM. A Priest is also available to hear Confessions daily by appointment.

## New Hope - Hands of Hope Gala

Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 6:30 - 10:30pm. Seasons, 664 Pascack Road, Washington Twp. 07676, \$90 per person. Cocktail hour, gourmet dinner, Silent Auction, Tricky Tray, raffle, huge 50/50 and dancing. Your generosity enables us to reach out to first-time single mothers and their babies so please celebrate with us! To make a reservation, contact: Kathy Turlick at (201) 573-8697.

## DADS CHECK THIS WEBSITE

**FathersforGood.org**

"I used to approach Jesus frequently saying, 'What do you wish from me?' He would reply, 'that you die to yourself, that you rise above your worldly interests; die to everything, even to those affections that seem to be holy, live at a level where life's contradictions don't disturb you, where attentions don't flatter you. Seek only God and His interests.'"

**Venerable Julia Navarrete Guerrero**

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

An Acceptance of Suffering: Jesus promised us that suffering would be a normal part of a disciple's life (see Lk. 9:23-24). So, when we mark our bodies with the Sign, we are embracing whatever pain comes as a consequence of our faith in Christ. Making the Sign is our taking up the cross and following Him (Lk.9:25). At the same time, however, it comforts us with the realization that Jesus, who endured the Crucifixion for us, now joins us in our suffering and supports us. Signing ourselves also announces another significant truth: with St. Paul, we are celebrating that our afflictions as members of the Body of Christ contribute to the Lord's saving work of perfecting the Church in holiness.

## High School Open Houses

**Thursday, April 26, Don Bosco Prep** (Ramsey, NJ) 6:30-8:30PM, 7th & 8th graders & parents. Register at [www.donboscoprep.org](http://www.donboscoprep.org).

**Wednesday, May 2, Saint Joseph Regional HS** (Montvale, NJ) 6:30PM Register online at [www.sjrnj.org/openhouse](http://www.sjrnj.org/openhouse).

## THE MASS and HOLY EUCHARIST

It's the "source and summit of the Christian life"! The Mass is extremely important to the Christian life. As such, the Church has developed a number of different names to refer to it, all of which capture some important aspect of it. The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists and explains 11 such names (CCC 1328-1332). There are more names than that in our tradition, but these are particularly important. Here are the 11 names for Mass given by the Catechism:

- 1) Eucharist**—The Greek word this comes from means "thanksgiving." The Mass is an act of thanksgiving to God – the best we can give!
- 2) Lord's Supper**—The Catechism gives two explanations of this name: first, because of the Mass' connection to Christ's "Last Supper"; second, because the Mass anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven.
- 3) Break of Bread**—First, because Jesus used a part of the Jewish Passover tradition that involves the breaking of bread to institute the Eucharist. Second, because his disciples on the road to Emmaus "recognized him in the breaking of the bread." (cf. Luke 24.35) Lastly, because this is how early Christians referred to the Mass. (cf. Acts 2.42)
- 4) Eucharistic Assembly**—Because the Mass is ordinarily celebrated with a group of Christians, visibly manifesting the Church.
- 5) Memorial**—Because in the Mass we remember and make present Christ's once-for-all sacrifice on the cross.
- 6) Holy Sacrifice**—Because Christ's sacrifice on the cross is made present during Mass, allowing us to unite our selves with him in offering to the Father.
- 7) Holy and Divine Liturgy**—Because of all the liturgies in the Church's life, the Mass is the most important one.
- 8) Sacred Mysteries**—Because the Mass contains the greatest mysteries of the Christian life: God's revelation, the incarnation, Christ's death and resurrection, and communion.
- 9) Most Blessed Sacrament**—Because of all the 7 Sacraments, the Eucharist – the centerpiece of the Mass – the most important. This is because the Eucharist is Christ himself!
- 10) Holy Communion**—Because when we receive the Eucharist, we are mystically uniting ourselves to Christ and his Body.
- 11) Holy Mass**—"Because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (missio) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives."

**If you are depressed you are living in the past.**

**If you are anxious you are living in the future.**

**If you are at peace, you are living in the present.**

**Read this fascinating history of the \$1 bill**

On the rear of the One Dollar bill, you will see two circles. Together, they comprise the Great Seal of the United States. The First Continental Congress requested that Benjamin Franklin and a group of men come up with a Seal. It took them four years to accomplish this task and another two years to get it approved. If you look at the left-hand circle, you will see a Pyramid. Notice the face is lighted, and the western side is dark. This country was just beginning. We had not begun to explore the west or decided what we could do for Western Civilization. The Pyramid is uncapped, again signifying that we were not even close to being finished. Inside the Capstone you have the all-seeing eye, an ancient symbol for divinity. It was Franklin's belief that one man couldn't do it alone, but a group of men, with the help of God, could do anything. 'IN GOD WE TRUST' is on this currency.

The Latin above the pyramid, ANNUIT COEPTIS, means, 'God has favored our undertaking.' The Latin below the pyramid, NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM, means, 'a new order has begun.' At the base of the pyramid is the Roman numeral for 1776. (MDCCLXXVI) If you look at the right-hand circle, and check it carefully, you will learn that it is on every National Cemetery in the United States. It is also on the Parade of Flags Walkway at the Bushnell, Florida National Cemetery, and is the centerpiece of most heroes' monuments. Slightly modified, it is the seal of the President of the United States, and it is always visible whenever he speaks, yet very few people know what the symbols mean.

The Bald Eagle was selected as a symbol for victory for two reasons: First, he is not afraid of a storm; he is strong, and he is smart enough to soar above it. Secondly, he wears no material crown. We had just broken from the King of England. Also, notice the shield is unsupported. This country can now stand on its own. At the top of that shield there is a white bar signifying congress, a unifying factor. We were coming together as one nation. In the Eagle's beak you will read, 'E PLURIBUS UNUM' meaning, 'from many - one.' Above the Eagle, we have the thirteen stars, representing the thirteen original colonies, and any clouds of misunderstanding rolling away. Again, we were coming together as one. Notice what the Eagle holds in his talons. He holds an olive branch and arrows. This country wants peace, but we will never be afraid to fight to preserve peace. The Eagle always wants to face the olive branch, but in time of war, his gaze turns toward the arrows. An (untrue) old-fashioned belief says that the number 13 is an unlucky number. This is almost a worldwide belief. You will almost never see a room numbered 13, or any hotels or motels with a 13th floor. But think about this:

America, which relies on God (not a number) to direct and lead, boldly chose:

- 13 original colonies,
- 13 signers of the Declaration of Independence,
- 13 stripes on our flag,
- 13 steps on the pyramid,
- 13 letters in 'Annuit Coeptis',
- 13 letters in 'E Pluribus Unum',
- 13 stars above the eagle,
- 13 bars on that shield,
- 13 leaves on the olive branch,
- 13 fruits, and if you look closely,
- 13 arrows.

And finally, notice the arrangement of the 13 stars in the right-hand circle. You will see that they are arranged as a STAR OF DAVID. This was ordered by George Washington who, when he asked Haym Solomon, a wealthy Philadelphia Jew, what he would like as a personal reward for his services to the Continental Army. Solomon said he wanted NOTHING for himself, but he would like something for his people. The Star of David was the result. Few people know it was Solomon who saved the Army through his financial contributions ... then died a pauper.

Haym Solomon gave \$25 million to save the Continental Army, money that was sorely needed to help realize America's (our) freedom and independence from England. Therein lies America's Judeo-Christian beginning. Most American children do NOT know any of this. They are not taught because their history teachers do not know this. On America's Freedom: Too many veterans gave up too much to let the meaning fade. Many veterans came home to an America that did not care. Too many veterans never came home at all. They served, they died for you ... for me. I hope you will share this page with many so they can learn about the UNITED STATES DOLLAR BILL, and what it stands for. America is at a critical juncture. Let's do whatever we can to save her while never, ever forgetting: It is God in whom we put our trust!

**Mass Intentions****Monday, April 2 – St. Francis of Paola, Hermit**

8:00 Gina Ottomanelli Bender R/b the Ottomanelli Family  
12:00 Richard Ferrara R/b Rita McNamara

**Tuesday, April 3– St. Richard, Bishop**

8:00 Joe Degnan R/b the Barrett Family  
12:00 Giacomina Morin R/b Michael and Barbara Fizulich

**Wednesday, April 4–St. Isidore, Bishop and Doctor of the Church**

8:00 George McNamara R/b Rita McNamara  
12:00 John "Pat" Bland R/b the Bland Family

**Thursday, April 5–St. Vincent Ferrer, Priest**

8:00 Michael Andreano Sr. R/b the Adamcik Family  
12:00 Catherine Fallon R/b Sr. Elizabeth

**First Friday, April 6- St. William of Eskilsoe, Denmark- Abbot**

8:00 Kathleen Musante R/b Eugene and Loretta Dvorak  
12:00 Giron Family R/b Rafael and Margoth Giron  
7:00 In thanksgiving R/b George and Gail Fabiano

**First Saturday, April 7 – St. John Baptiste de la Salle - Brother**

8:00 George and Dorothy Kelly  
12:00 Souls in Purgatory  
4:00 Intentions of Rose Spincken  
5:00 Susan Elizabeth Crowley R/b Joan Crowley

**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY, April 8 -St. Julia Billiard of France - Nun**

7:30 Frank Muggeo R/b Susan Polles  
8:15 Samuel Burruano R/b Al and Lenore Villavecchia  
9:30 Dan Gallagher R/b the Barrett Family  
10:45 Joanne Mastro Stevens  
12:00 John Plinio R/b Stephen and Robin Hartman  
1:00 People of the Parish  
4:15 Emma Lombardi R/b OLV CCD  
6:00 John Bolger Jr. R/b Sara Korn  
7:00 Christine McManus R/b the Zocco Family

**The Church Sanctuary Lamp** burns this week for the repose of the soul of **Dr. Al Burchell**, r/b James and Louise Januzzi.

**The Convent Sanctuary Lamp** burns this week for the unemployed.

**The Blessed Virgin Mary Votive Lamp** burns this week for the repose of the soul of **Giacomina Morin**, r/b Michael and Barbara Fizulich.

**The St. Joseph Votive Lamp** burns this week for a special intention r/b the Werner Family.

**The Infant of Prague Votive Lamp** burns this week for the intentions of **twins Lincoln and Mateo**, r/b the Leyden Family.

**The Pope John Paul II Votive Lamp** burns this week for the those who serve in defense of our country.

**The Hosts and Wine** used at Mass this week have been donated in memory of **Dr. Al Burchell**, r/b James and Louise Januzzi.

**Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are XL.**

### A Priest Tells the Powerful Truth About What His REAL Job As a Pastor Is by Fr. Bill Peckman - 12/1517

I am your pastor...  
You don't need me to be your buddy but your shepherd.  
You don't need me on the barstool beside you but in the breach between you and the devil.  
You don't me to spout pious platitudes but to offer comfort and truth.  
You don't need me to be silent and turn a blind eye but to charitably correct and offer guidance.  
You don't need me to be 'a regular person' but a fearless leader and shepherd.  
You don't need me to tell you to be nice but to encourage you to be holy.  
You don't need me to set the bar low so you will like me but to set the bar high and then help you reach the goal.  
You don't need me to be hip, cool, or relevant by worldly standards but to be steadfast, accountable, and strong in the face of worldly standards.  
You don't need me to be entertaining but to point to the transcendent.  
You don't need me to be a Messiah...you need me to point to the Messiah.  
I can be friendly, kind, charitable, empathetic to be sure.  
I can be bold, brave, and strong.  
I know to do my job means you might get very mad at me.  
I can't be so afraid of that that I leave you to destructive forces.  
I have to love you more than myself.  
I have to lead you to holiness, not popularity.  
You need me to be forthright and charitable.  
You need to be able to trust that I want what is good and holy for you.  
It is not easy.  
My job in the parish is very much like the role of a dad in a family. My job is to be in the breach between the flock and what would prey on the flock.  
My place is where Christ placed Himself.  
Pray that I do this job well...that I lead where Christ would have us go.  
I want to go to heaven.  
I want you to go there too.  
I know the way there is a narrow and winding path.

Pray for the strength and perseverance to make each step as it comes. In the Scriptures, the most dominant image of the relationship between God and us is that of family. We use familial terms such as groom/bride, son/daughter/father/mother, and brother and sister to describe the relationships that are supposed to exist between God and us and among ourselves.

However, when the Scriptures speak of the relationship between good and evil, between God and the devil, and between us and the devil, war and battle imagery is almost exclusively used. The Scriptures understand that the battle lines are drawn and the fighting has been fierce. In his pride, the devil truly believes he will win this battle. He has waged war on billions of battlefields: each and every human heart.

His weapons are deadly. He trains his soldiers well how to use his armaments. He uses pride, fear, greed, sloth, lust, gluttony, wrath, envy, and indifference to arm his foot soldiers. His soldiers cannot hurt God so they attack that which God loves: us. The devil has managed to wage war successfully, tearing apart every civilization, every human enterprise, even to do significant damage among God's holy people. He has us battle one another. He has us inflict the brutality of sin on each other as frenzied soldiers in the heat of battle. The devil and his minions mean us not merely harm but an eternal destruction as well.

As the father of lies, he has deluded himself with the ultimate lie: that he will win. The created cannot defeat the creator. Jesus Christ, by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection has defeated the devil. The devil cannot win. His war on humanity only deepens. However, Christ does not send his followers unarmed into the battle that life is.

In Ephesians 6:10-20, St. Paul uses this image of war to explain the defenses and weapons Christ gives us to do battle every day. He reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood (each other) but against the powers of darkness. We are given the armor that is righteousness, the

Gospel, faith, and salvation. We are given the Word of God as a weapon to combat the devil. These God offers us. But how do we use them?

In the military, no professional fighting force is given weaponry and sent out on the field the nanosecond they sign up. Basic training takes place. A regimen of education and discipline takes place. The new soldier is taught how to use his weapons effectively, what to do when hit, and the basics of warfare. To simply hand weapons to a new soldier, pat them on the head, and send them into battle is to basically create cannon fodder. No general who wants to win would be so foolish. No king who wants to win would be so haphazard. When God gives these weapons and armor, He also has a plan on how to teach us to use them. Without instruction, both the armor and weapons are relatively useless. How are the armor and weapons given us?

We Catholics believe that the armor and weapons are given us from the moment of baptism forward. It is God's transforming grace that deposit these gifts within us. The seeds are all there. Like any armor and weapon, we do need to know how to use them. The purpose of education in the Catholic Church is not merely to teach us the same classes that can be taught in the secular world, but to teach us how to use these weapons and armor given us by God's gracious action in the sacraments. For we believe that in the proper reception of the sacraments, the Holy Spirit is deposited within us to breathe into us the grace of God.

When we are sloppy about the training, we create not soldiers for Christ, but cannon fodder for the devil. This is why a woeful education apparatus is leaving so many of our brothers in arms easy to pick off in battle. This is why pabulum from the pulpit is akin to poisoning the troops.

Christ gives us the armaments of humility to conquer pride, faith, hope, and love to conquer fear, generosity to combat greed, industry to combat sloth, justice to combat lust, temperance to combat gluttony, forgiveness and patience to combat wrath, thankfulness to combat envy, and mercy to combat indifference. Furthermore, because all of these are bound in the Holy Spirit, we also are given the boldness of courage and fortitude to use these arms effectively. The use of these weapons and armor does require a deep discipline and cognition of what we are doing.

But we know that God wins.

That said, there are going to be times, especially in that period where we are unsure about how to use our armor and weapons effectively, where we will be injured (usually by our own hand) and the wounds created will need to be addressed. The medicinal value of Reconciliation is at the heart of the healing. The medicinal value of Anointing of the Sick also can be used in some circumstances, when life has inflicted a bodily blow.

God will not leave us on the field of battle to die. His Church acts as not merely a means of preparing for battle, but as a field hospital for the wounded. It is horrifying that any priest would limit or close these field hospitals by limiting access to Confession or eliminating them altogether. At the end of the day, though, we must choose a side. We cannot fight for both sides. We cannot fight on God's side when it suits us and the devil's side when it suits us. We will side with the side that we think will win. We can share in the delusion the devil has and believe he wins and so drop our armor and weapons and pick up his. We can believe that God wins and pick up our armor, our weapons, and engage in the battle. There is no middle ground. In fact, trying to stake out a claim in the middle ground between two armies is probably the deadliest place to be.

Jesus Himself says that "you are either with me or against me." He compels a choice. Whose side you are on determines whose camp you stay in for eternity. The battle wages on whether we want to acknowledge it or not. Too much ground has been lost because we dropped our guard, our armor, and our weapons. We can either surrender in defeat or rally the troops and retake the field. We will have to decide whose side we are on – to whose army do we belong. **Ramblings of a country priest**

**Never look down on anyone  
unless you are helping them up.**