

Recently Fr. Peter Shaw, Pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Bryson City, NC, told me about an act of vandalism that happened, in which their crucifix was destroyed. He asked if we would be willing to share our rectory chapel crucifix with his parish as an act of solidarity. I felt very moved by his request and agreed to it. Printed here are the correspondence that led to this promise of a gift of our crucifix to this parish in need.

We will let you know when the actual exchange takes place. However, it will mean for us that we will need to obtain a new crucifix for the rectory and especially for our Good Friday devotions. This will be easier for us as the bigger parish with more resources than for this missionary parish in the mountains. Please join me in prayer and solidarity with the good people in Bryson City.



Very Rev. Fr. David Carter, J.C.L.
 Pastor & Rector
 Minor Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul
 214 E 8th St.
 Chattanooga, TN 37402

Memorial of
 Our Lady of the Rosary
 October 7, 2019

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

Four Hundred Forty-Eight years ago, Catholics from varying places throughout Europe gathered together to confront a threat to their lives & to our Beloved Faith. Through their solidarity and trust in the grace of Christ through His Blessed Mother, they were victorious at the Battle of Lepanto. Sadly, though we are now many years removed from the triumphant day, there are still challenges and persecutions that we are given to endure as we continue to seek to glorify Our Lord and lead others to know & love Him.

As you are aware, at the beginning of August of this year, a man vandalized our small parish church of St. Joseph's in Bryson City, North Carolina. First, he used a sledgehammer to destroy the Corpus of the Crucifix we had in the front yard of our church. Then, while ranting that "the children of this town are going to hell because you have a dead Jesus on the Cross", he used the altar crucifix to tear the hanging crucifix off the wall from above our Tabernacle. It smashed into the ledge that is in front of the tabernacle, severely damaging the face, shoulders, & arms of this beloved image of Christ. Needless to say, the parish was shocked & saddened by this unprovoked & inexplicable desecration.

I write to you today because we ask your help in replacing the Crucifix that formerly hung in our sanctuary. As our forefathers found strength & comfort by mutually supporting each other, though they hailed from differing peoples & places, I hope that we might share in some of that spirit today. Having stayed at the rectory of the Basilica several times over the past few years, I always appreciated that the crucifix that hung above the altar in the rectory chapel is an exact duplicate of the one that formerly graced our church. To aid in the healing from this terrible injury, I ask if you and your parish would be willing to donate your crucifix to our parish? I realize what I ask is extraordinary and understand the weightiness of it. I am sure that your image of our Lord is precious to your parish, as ours was. Please be assured that we will care for it to the best of our ability and, since we are relatively close to each other, perhaps our parishioners will be able to make pilgrimages: the Basilica parishioners to Bryson City to see the crucifix and St. Joseph's parishioners to the Basilica to see truly one of the greatest gems of Catholicism in the South.


Regardless of what you & your parish decide, please know that you are all in our prayers, especially asking the Blessed Mother's, as we celebrate this Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and St. Joseph's intercession for all at the Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul I am humbly...

Yours in Christ,



Very Rev. Fr. Peter J. Shaw
 Pastor

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church
 & Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission



Very Rev. Fr. Peter J. Shaw, V.F.
 Vicar Forane of the Smoky Mountain Vicariate and
 Pastor of St. Joseph Parish and Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission
 P.O. Box 727
 Bryson City, NC 28713

October 9, 2019
 St. Denis and Companions
 Martyrs


Dear Reverend Father,

With great sadness I received your letter of October 7, 2019 in which you relate the incidents surrounding the recent desecration and destruction of the crucifixes at the Parish of St. Joseph in Bryson City, NC. However, your letter came on a very auspicious day, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, as you well pointed out. I pray that through our Lady's intercession there will be healing in your community and conversion of the one who perpetrated these violations of the sacred images of your parish church.

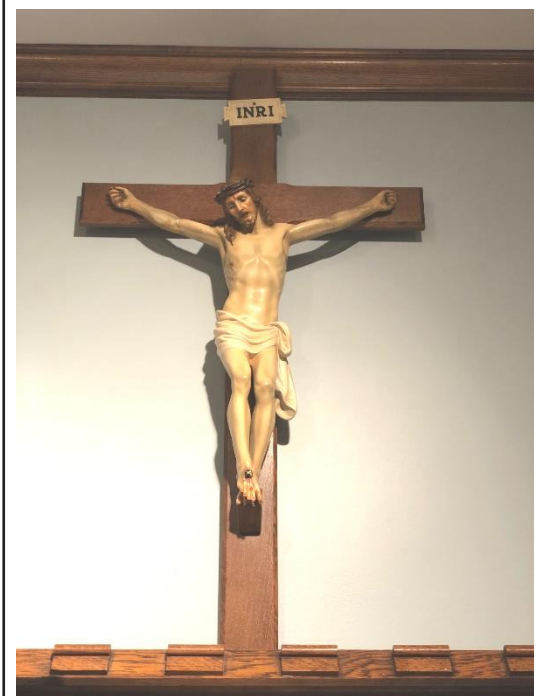
I write to you today on the feast of Martyrs, whose blood became the seed of the Church among the Gallic peoples. As the tragic death of these witnesses led to a flowering of the Catholic Faith in France, I have confidence that this present desecration that has shocked and saddened your parishioners may, by the Grace of Almighty God in His Divine Providence, lead to a flowering of the Catholic Faith among the peoples of Western North Carolina.

I am very happy to receive your request for the donation of the Crucifix hanging in the Rectory Chapel of the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul. This crucifix has adorned the Rectory Chapel for many decades and is the one used for our Good Friday Veneration of the Holy Cross. Many pious souls have looked upon this image of our savior and rendered devotion to Him through it. By the working of Divine Providence, it is, as you said, an exact duplicate of the one that formerly graced your church. Animated by the spirit of mutual support and fraternal charity, I am positively disposed to your request and agree to donate this precious sacramental to aid the piety and devotion of your parishioners. Though separated by a chain of mountains, our two parishes will henceforth have an intimate connection through this image of our Lord's passion; the tragedy of the former's destruction giving way to the joy of solidarity and charity by means of the latter. You happily even mention the possibility of establishing a pilgrimage between our parishes as a result of this exchange. I pray that Divine Providence may further show its fruit through such devotions in the years to come. Trusting in the intercession of the Noble Army of Martyrs, especially our own Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, as well as that of St. Joseph and Our Lady, may Jesus Christ be praised, now and always!

Sincerely,



Rev. J. David Carter, J.C.L.
 Pastor and Rector



Crucifix in our Basilica Rectory Chapel, which we use for Good Friday Veneration of the Cross. It matches the one that was destroyed at St. Joseph Parish, and we will donate it to them.