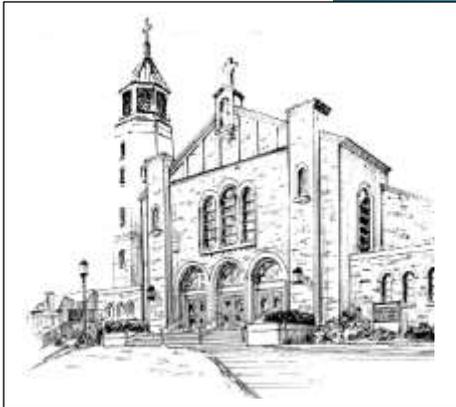


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Editor's Note

FAREWELL

Msgr. Charles Cicerale has retired as the pastor of our church. I would like to wish him well in his retirement years. "Ad Multos Annos" or a wish for a long life.



Being of polish heritage I would add "Sto Lat" (One Hundred Years) which comes from a traditional polish song that is sung to express good wishes, good health and long life to a person.

Wherever you go and whatever you do Fr. Charles you can be sure that the people of God at St. James appreciated your help and support as you helped us become closer to God. To all of us you were our Priest, Pastor, Servant, Shepard and a friend.

WELCOME

I would also like to welcome our new pastor, Father Thomas Naduviledathu S.D.V. Fr. Thomas was born in India on July 1980. He joined the Vocationist Fathers in 1996 at Thalore Father Justin Vocationary and continued his priestly studies in Marymatha major Seminary at Mulayam Thrissur Kerala, India.



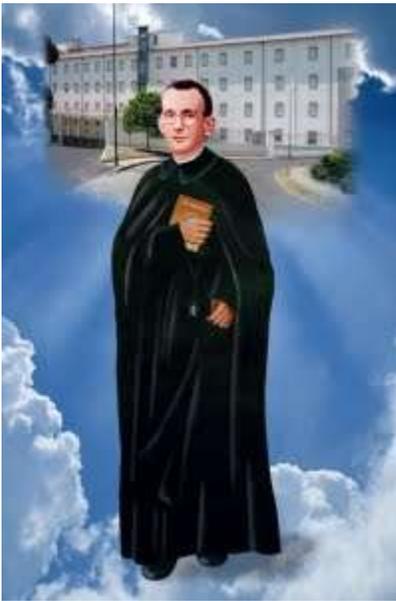
He took his perpetual vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience on May 9th 2004. He was ordained as a deacon by Most. Rev. Jacob Thoomkuzhy, Archbishop of

Thrissur, on March 7th 2007 at Marymatha Seminary. He was ordained as a priest by Most. Rev. Mathew Areckal bishop of Kanjirappally on January 7th 2008. His first assignment was as an assistant Vicar at Sacred Heart Church Erumapetty Thrissur Kerala, India until October 2009.

When he came to the USA he served in the Diocese of Burlington from November 2009 to August 2014, as Associate Pastor at Mater Dei Parish in Newport, VT, which is a cluster of five parishes, at St. Mary Star of the Sea in Newport, St. Edward the Confessor in Derby Line, Saint Benedict Labre in West Charleston, St. James the Greater in Island Pond and St. Bernard of Clairveaux Mission in Norton.

For the past six years Fr. Thomas was the pastor of St. Cecelia's church in Iselin.

Who are the Vocationists?



HISTORY

Fr. Justin Maria Russolillo, the Founder of the Society of Divine Vocations, was born in Pianura (Naples, Italy) on January 18th, 1891. He was ordained a priest on September 20th, 1913. No sooner he became the pastor of Pianura

on September 20, 1920, than he began working for the realization of his dream. That same year, the first community of the Society of Divine Vocations, which became known as the **“VOCATIONIST FATHERS”** came into being. The Society of Divine Vocations received its first Diocesan approval on May 26, 1927. It became a Congregation of Pontifical right on May 24th, 1947.

Fr. Justin established the Vocationist Fathers and their special charism to foster and promote vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and holiness among all God’s people. To carry on this vocational work Fr. Justin established the Vocationary, a special house of formation that would supply vocations to both religious order and diocesan seminaries.

For those who are undecided whether they want to be a Vocationist, a Diocesan priest or a member of another religious community, the Vocationist Fathers offer the Vocationary, a place of vocational discernment. The Vocationary was established especially to attend to the needs of those financially unable to attend the seminary and those who are still searching and discerning their vocation.

By establishing the Vocationary, Fr. Justin focused his attention not only on candidates seeking a religious or priestly vocation but also on those who had left the priesthood or who were in danger of doing so. Thus, the Vocationary has often given life to those who had abandoned the active ministry.

Fr. Justin died on August 2nd, 1955 at Vocationist Fathers Motherhouse in Pianura.



On December 18th, 1997 Pope John Paul II recognized Fr. Justin heroic virtues and proclaimed him a Venerable. On July 1st, 2010 Pope Benedict XVI signed the decree of validity of the miracle by Fr.

Justin intercession to Ida Meloro of East Hanover, New Jersey (USA). The ceremony of beatification was on May 7th, 2011 in Pianura (Naples, Italy), the birthplace of Fr. Justin.

The Vocationists’ spirituality stems from Fr. Justin’s conviction that all people are called to holiness. Their “first duty” is to be with God. Their ultimate goal is to achieve Divine Union. They are called to establish and live the relationship of “child, parent and spouse” of God on the pattern of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Catholic Church, the Holy Family, and the Blessed Trinity are the heart and center of their spirituality, which may be summarized thus: “Ascension to the Trinity with the Holy Family in the Church.”

Blessed Fr. Justin M. Russolillo, S.D.V.

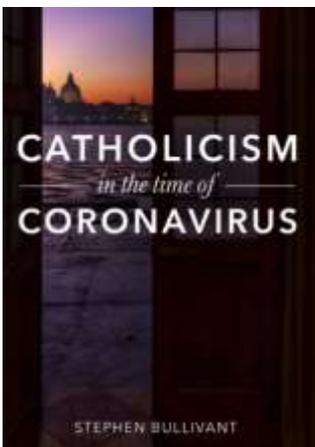
*O my God and my all!
Grant that I may dedicate my life to
knowing, loving and serving Your
Divine Persons in every creature, and
Your Will in every event which takes
place independently from my will.
Grant that I may be an act of love, a
gift of love, a service of love,
a conversation of love, a communion of
love,*

O my God and my all!

A Covid 19 perspective ¹

by Bishop Robert Barron

It seems that for the last few months all that we are hearing and doing is reacting to the pandemic. I was intending to write an article about this for the newsletter but on Saturday May 9, 2020 I received an eBook entitled "Catholicism & Covid 19" by Dr. Stephen Bullivant. This book is published by the Word on Fire ministries which is headed by Bishop Robert Barron.



First some information about Bishop Robert Barron. He is an author, speaker, theologian, and founder of Word on Fire, a global media ministry that reaches millions of people by using the tools of new media.

In the foreword to this book Bishop Barron gives some us some insights. Below are his thoughts:

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been, for countless people around the world, a great and unexpected trial. At the time of this writing, over two million cases of coronavirus have been confirmed worldwide (with America comprising over a quarter of that number), and over one hundred thousand people have died. Shopping malls, movie theaters, restaurants, school campuses, sports stadiums, and airports are all emptying out, countless people are self-quarantining in their homes, and the economy is showing signs of serious distress. What seemed just a short time ago a fairly stable state of affairs, medically, politically, and economically, has been turned upside down—and we will likely be dealing with the virus and its impacts for months to come.

In the midst of this crisis, Catholics have faced another trial, one that is not only economic, social, or medical, but spiritual. Catholic dioceses throughout the United States and around the world have suspended public Masses, restricted access to Confession, and postponed Confirmations and other sacramental celebrations. Meanwhile, many priests and lay ministers have put their own safety on the line in ministering to those affected by the dangerous pathogen.



Over one hundred priests have died in Italy, which has been one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe. And who can forget the haunting image of Pope Francis walking through an empty and silent St. Peter's Square to deliver his extraordinary Urbi et Orbi blessing?

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Plunged into the darkness of uncertainty, illness, and death, and separated from the life-giving power of the sacraments and the support of their parish communities, Catholics are feeling, understandably enough, quite disheartened.

Yet this might also be a time of great spiritual opportunity and transformation. In the first place, the coronavirus—like many tragedies before it—has forced us to confront a general truth about the nature of things, a truth that we all know in our bones but that we choose, typically, to cover-up or overlook: the radical *contingency* of the world.

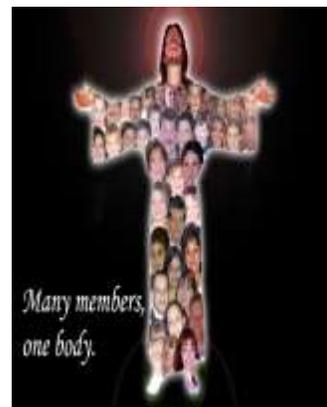
This means, to state it simply, that everything in our experience is unstable; it comes into being and it passes out of being. And though we habitually divert ourselves from accepting it, this contingency principle applies to each of us. Whenever we get really sick, or a good friend dies, or a strange new virus threatens the general population, this truth manages to break through our defenses. When we are shaken, we seek by a very healthy instinct for that which is ultimately stable, and for that ultimate cause that is not itself contingent—namely, God.

The coronavirus has also provided countless people in quarantine with an invitation to some monastic introspection, some serious confrontation with the questions that matter. Blaise Pascal said that all of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone, and this observation has come to my mind a good deal as our entire country has gone into shutdown mode. Suddenly, people are finding themselves with plenty of time to get out their Bible and read it slowly, prayerfully; to pick up a spiritual classic like St. Augustine's *Confessions* or Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain*; and to use the solitude and silence as an occasion for prayer.

There are new opportunities to take in the beauty of God's creation, or to practice concrete works of mercy, love, and solidarity, especially for those suffering the effects of the coronavirus.

Finally, this crisis has accentuated the power of the new media for evangelization and building up the kingdom of God as perhaps never before. The suspending of Masses and closing of churches is a very serious blow to our incarnational faith, and both priests and laity are feeling the heartache of it. We will, and we must, return to the sacraments. But the Church is not shut down, because the Church is the

Mystical Body of Jesus. And as I heard a bishop remark recently, by the providence of God, we still have these extraordinary media tools to connect the Church. ... There are offerings of daily Mass online ... and there has been a dramatic rise in virtual rosaries, retreats,



and Eucharistic Adoration. This digital outreach is also offering non-Catholics a unique opportunity to see and experience the Catholic faith online. During one of our Masses, one commenter on YouTube remarked that this was his first time seeing a Mass. Who can say what good might come of this harnessing of digital media to spread and practice the faith—not only in the present but in the years to come?

Yet the practical questions remain. The laity and clergy alike are wondering not only about the long-term impact of the crisis on our own spiritual lives, but on the Church's institutions and its mission of evangelization.

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The Church finds itself once again in rough waters. Down the ages, across space and time, the barque of Peter has been beset by similar storms ... but our hope is not finally in the comfort and security of this passing world.



Our hope is in Jesus Christ—the Christ who died for us, and by dying, destroyed our death. This Christ is alive; he guides the Church and is present to it even now. He is sending each one of us, in our own way, on mission—even now, even during this crisis. If we look around at the waves, we will sink. But if we keep our eyes fixed on him, we will walk on the water”.

—Bishop Robert Barron

I would like to recommend that members of our parish go to the word on fire website and register for their free resources. There is a variety of items available that can be emailed to you and help strengthen your faith. The website is:

<https://www.wordonfire.org/>.

The free book is an insightful and encouraging book from “Dr. Stephen Bullivant, a former Oxford researcher, expert in Catholic disaffiliation, and Fellow of the Word on Fire Institute ... Looking at the coronavirus pandemic from the historical and sociological as well as ecclesial perspective, and weaving in his own personal reflections as a convert to the faith and a Catholic husband and father, Dr. Bullivant sheds light on the spiritual implications of the coronavirus, offering Catholics a unique roadmap for this challenging time”².

The link to obtain a free copy of the book is:

wordonfire.org/covid

I should warn you that the book is 139 pages long. There are options to obtain the book on kindle for a nominal charge of \$0.99.

A look back at Fr. Charles’s accomplishments

He was bestowed with pontifical honors as part of the Diocese of Metuchen’s 30th anniversary celebration on January 29, 2012.

What really impressed me the most is that during our first memorial Christmas tree event Fr. Cicerale worked with his parishioners in setting up the Christmas trees as the following pictures show. On day 1 Fr. Cicerale helped unload the truck.



On day 2 Father helped decorate the trees in the middle of a snowstorm.



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As Pope Francis puts it Father truly is part of his sheep! Just to give you an idea of what St. James provides to its parishioners, Camilla, our business administrator shared with me the following 2019 statistics. Please keep in mind that these statistics only represent one year of the 17 years Fr. Charles has been at St. James.

Catechumens (RCIA)	8
RCIA Candidates	7
Infant Baptisms	62
Candidates Received into Full Communion	6
First Communicants	68
Children Confirmed	60
Adults Confirmed	8
Catholic Marriages	9
Mixed Marriages	1
Validations - Catholic Marriages	1
Validations - Mixed Marriages	1
Declarations of Nullity granted	
Declarations of Nullity pending 1 since 2018	
Funerals	47
Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick	1200*

*This is an approximation as it includes 6 healing masses per year offered at the parish. Monsignor estimates that approximately 175 individuals come forward for an anointing; plus an additional 100-200 requesting individual reception of the sacrament throughout the year.

A **very, very** rough approximation of the impact Fr. Charles has had at St. James can be found by multiplying some of these number by 17. Doing that for selected categories yields the following numbers:

Candidates Recvd into Full Communion	102
First Communicants	1,156
Children Confirmed	1020
Adults Confirmed	136
Catholic Marriages	153
Funerals	799
Anointing of the Sick	20,400*

What a legacy!!!

A personal Perspective

One of the things that people never realize is how many parishioners Fr. Cicerale has touched with his words & deeds during his years at St. James.

I would like to share with you some personal insights on how Father Cicerale has changed my life. I remember when he first became administrator at that time. I was a typical Catholic and went to church on Sunday but did not do much of anything else.

I knew Fr. Charles as someone who was on the altar on Sundays and preached but had no interactions with him.

In 2009 my wife of 35 years suffered major medical problems. She went into the hospital for a fever and died on November 6, 2011. Even though it was expected Marie's death was a traumatic event for me.

I remember Fr. Charles coming over to me after he celebrated Marie's funeral mass and telling me that he thought that I would really benefit from going to the St. James Bereavement group.

I often wonder if he actually remembers that one act. However, that simple suggestion was a life changing experience for me.

After several years of being a Eucharistic Minister the Catholic Chaplain at Raritan Bay Medical Center the chaplain suggested Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). I took his advice.

In 2019 I graduated as a clinically trained Chaplain. What I want to point out is that my journey to being a chaplain started with Father Charles's suggestion that I go to bereavement.

What I wonder is how many other lives Father has touched and the changes that parishioners have made in their lives because of his suggestions

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I hope that you will all take some time to reflect on how Father Charles has impacted your life.

Additional Clergy Assignments

In addition to Fr. Charles's retirement several other priests at St. James have been moved. The picture below is of the Last Mass celebrated at St. James by Fr. Sebastian with his fellow priests & deacons. Fr. Sebastian has taken up residence at Our Lady of Peace in Fords and still remains as the Catholic Chaplain at Hackensack Meridian – JFK Medical Center



Photo courtesy – Terry Falco

As we all go through this Corona virus pandemic I take comfort in the word of Christ and also in the words of one of our recent Saints, Pope St. John Paul the II who said:

“Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.... I plead with you--never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. Be not afraid.”²

References

- 1 Foreword to “Catholicism & Covid 19” by Dr. Stephen Bullivant by Bishop Barron. Reprinted with permission.
- 2 World: Thoughts, Stories & Prayers”, p.17, New World Library

Words of wisdom for 2020

