

July 2021

Spiritual Catalyst

“The truth is like a lion. You do not have to defend it. Let it loose. It will defend itself.” – St. Augustine



Welcome to the July 2021 edition of the Spiritual Catalyst. I hope and pray that this month will be a month in which God will bring to completion the good work that He has. For more reflections and information please check out www.mayjesuschristbepraised.com.

Thank you and God bless.
Fr. Tom Pastorius

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD



All the troubles of the Church, all the evils in the world, flow from this source: that men do not by clear and sound knowledge and serious consideration penetrate the truths of Sacred Scripture.

- Teresa of Avila

July 4, 2021

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 101

Gospel Mk 6:1-6

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are

wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house.” So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Reflection: On the spiritual website Aleteia.org has a beautiful story about two sisters who create their own TikTok videos. “In the video, the young women can be seen doing each other’s hair. They goof around, make faces and do all the moves you’d expect of youngsters these days. However, while the young ladies look fab, the insight into their relationship is even more beautiful.” What makes these videos special is Kalista’s motivation for making these videos with her sister who has down syndrome is amazing. “Kalista wants everybody to see how Worthy’s extra chromosome means she can “outshine in other areas.” We so often miss finding the image of God in the people closest to us.

Questions:

1. How hard do you find it to find God in other people?
2. Who do you find it hard to see God in?
3. What prevents you from finding God in those around you?
4. What do you do when people reject you?
5. How can you promote the dignity of people?

July 11, 2021

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 104

Gospel Mk 6:7-13

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick— no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.” So, they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reflection: “Your life as a Christian should make non-believers question their disbelief in God.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Questions:

1. What does your material possessions tell people about us?

2. When people see you eating out do they think of you as a Christian?
3. What are some public ways that you show you love others?
4. What do you do when people reject you?
5. How can you handle rejection better?

July 18, 2021

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 107

Gospel Mk 6:30-34

The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So, they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Reflection & Spiritual Questions: Jesus shows us his leadership is not about what He wants but it is about the needs of others. When you are a leader what are you most concern about? Pope Francis gives us a small examination of conscience: Feel superior to those who work for me? ◇ Demonstrate an imbalance between work and other areas of life? ◇ Substitute formality for true human intimacy? ◇ Rely too much on plans and not enough on intuition and improvisation? ◇ Spend too little time breaking silos and building bridges? ◇ Fail to regularly acknowledge the debt I owe to my mentors and to others? ◇ Take too much satisfaction in my perks and privileges? ◇ Isolate myself from customers and first-level employees? ◇ Denigrate the motives and accomplishments of others? ◇ Exhibit or encourage undue deference and servility? ◇ Put my own success ahead of the success of others? ◇ Fail to cultivate a fun and joy-filled work environment? ◇ Exhibit selfishness when it comes to sharing rewards and praise? ◇ Encourage parochialism rather than community? ◇ Behave in ways that seem egocentric to those around me?

July 25, 2021

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 110

Gospel Jn 6:1-15

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near. When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline." Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the

fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted." So, they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat. When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world." Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

Reflection: People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do. - Dorothy Day

Questions:

1. What are you doing to make this world a better place?
2. How are you making your parish better?
3. How are you making your family better?
4. What small things might God be calling you to do?
5. What small acts of kindness have had a big effect on you?

Spiritual Ponderings



"The truth is like a lion. You do not have to defend it. Let it loose and it will defend itself." – St. Augustine

The following is an Archive of my Spiritual Ponderings Columns from the month of June To see my Current Spiritual Ponderings please check out St. Joseph Parish Bulletin.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

June 6, 2021

Spiritual Ponderings

Theology of Church Building

In the year 315 A.D. two big things happened in Catholic Church history. The first thing that happened was Constantine legalized Christianity. Christians no longer had to worship God in fear. The second was that Constantine gave the Church the Lateran Castle complex as a place to worship. Not only are Catholics free to worship in public but now they have a place to do it. This first Church will eventually be dedicated to St. John the Apostle and St. John the Baptist and be called Basilica of St. John Lateran. As the Church began

to adapt to its new surrounding the Church building became not only a place of worship but also a sort of theological textbook that would help people understand the Catholic Faith. Please remember that most people at this time were illiterate. People would therefore pass on lessons by telling a story next to an object or image of an object; then later seeing the object the person would be able to recall the story and the lesson.

I thought it would be interesting to take a spiritual tour if you will of St. Joseph Parish (Manchester, MO where I am currently assigned). I know that I will not be able to point out all the interesting things going on in the church building, but I do think I can point out quite a few items of spiritual interests and hopefully pass on a few lessons of the faith as well.

The Gathering Space & Doorways

Most Churches have been developed now to have a space for the people of God to gather together before entering to the main body of the Church. St. Joseph our Gathering place is relatively small but we also have a great outdoor courtyard that helps during good weather. Gathering spaces are considered an important part of Church structure because they are meant to remind us of who is called to God's table and what a special honor it is to be called to the Lord's Table. John 3:14 tells us that when the Son of Man is lifted up, He will bring all people to Him. We begin to see this first in the gathering area of the Church: people of all races, social and economic backgrounds. All are welcome!!!

As you enter into the Church you pass through a couple of sets of doors. Doors are important theologically symbols as they represent change. In the ancient Roman world, a man would enter a doorway (archway), reciting an oath (also known as a Sacramentum) and he would come out the other side a member of the Roman Army. A person cannot stand in the middle of a doorway, he or she has to choose to go in one room or the other. We have to make a choice to follow Jesus or the devil and doorways remind us of this.

Doorways also help us transition from one place to another and so we transition from ordinary space into sacred space. We are like getting on Noah's Ark to be saved from the stormy world of sin. This is why some areas of the Church have boat names like the nave.

At St. Joseph's gathering space we have our ambassador station. It is here that our ambassadors try to serve parishioners to the best of their abilities. Need a Mass card or want to know who to talk to at the parish about becoming a member. These are all things that our ambassador's can help you with. Ambassadors, greeters, and ushers are in most Churches to make people feel welcome and comfortable. We are all family now! In St. Joseph's gathering space, we also have resources for people to learn more about the faith and different parish activities. The more we learn and do things together the more tight knit our family becomes.

Another item in St. Joseph's Church is an icon of St. Joseph the Worker because St. Joseph is our patron saint. My devotion to St. Joseph has grown even deeper in my short time at this parish. He is a reminder to us of many things. One important thing is that inside our Church building heaven and earth come together in a special way. Our building is not only filled with people but it is also filled with saints and angels in heaven. The

saints can be great role models for us today. For example, we have started praying the prayer of St. Joseph the worker as a staff and this has inspired me to

Prayer to St. Joseph the Worker: *St. Joseph, by the work of your hands and the sweat of your brow, you supported Jesus and Mary, and had the Son of God as your fellow worker. Teach me to work as you did, with patience and perseverance, for God and for those whom God has given me to support. ♦ Teach me to see in my fellow workers the Christ who desires to be in them, that I may always be charitable and forbearing towards all. Grant me to look upon work with the eyes of faith, so that I shall recognize in it my share in God's own creative activity and in Christ's work of our redemption, and so take pride in it. ♦ When it is pleasant and productive, remind me to give thanks to God for it. And when it is burdensome, teach me to offer it to God, in reparation for my sins and the sins of the world. Amen.*

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

June 13, 2021

Spiritual Ponderings

Theology of Church Building

Let us continue our Spiritual Tour of St. Joseph Church.

Resurrected Christ

Another piece of art in the vestibule (gathering space) of the Church is a statue of the Resurrected Christ. When I look upon this statue, I call to mind St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians 15:14-19:

If Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to God, because we testified against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all.

When I have a few moments after seeing the statue and remember the above Scripture passage, I will call to mind the reasons why I believe Jesus has risen from the grave. One such reason, is that the Catholic Church could not have lasted this long if it was not being protected by God.

Holy Water Fonts

Normally when you enter a Church building you will find a holy water font filled with holy water. As you dip your fingers into the font and make the Sign of the Cross with them, the Church invites us to remember three different Scripture Passages. The first Scripture Passage is the story of Moses leading the Israelites from slavery to freedom through the Red Sea. We seek freedom from our sins. The second is the story of Joshua leading the people across the Jordan River and into the Promise Land. Another reminder that we are encountering heaven, the promise land, through veiled signs and wonders. Finally, we are to remind ourselves Jesus' baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist and thus remind ourselves of our own Baptism.

Minister Sign in Book

Once you enter the main door of St. Joseph Church and you look to your left, you will find a small lectern with a binder on it. This is where the ministers of the liturgy sign-in. This allows the priests (and the rest of the community) know that the lector or lectors (reader) for Mass are present for example. It also allows us to know if another minister is in need of a substitute or has not arrived yet. This gives us an opportunity to fill in for them and helps the Mass precede forward as smoothly as possible. When I see this Minister sign-in book, I am reminded of two important things. The first is that God chose frail human beings to minister at His altar and not angels. A small reminder of how much our God loves us. The second thing the sign-in sheet reminds me of is that God saves us as a community. What we are entering into is not an individual act of worship but a community celebration. The word "Liturgy" came from a Greek work that meant "public work" or "work for the benefit of the public".

Attached to our Minister Sign-in Book is a series of pegs that hold two things. The first is a "Minister's Cross" that we ask the Extraordinary (Eucharistic) Ministers to wear to help remind them of the special task they are undertaking and through the Eucharist we are participating in the Cross of Christ. The other item that hangs from these pegs are giant wood circles painted white. We at St. Joseph use these to mark the pews where people who cannot process to the Altar for Communion are sitting. We want to make sure that everyone who desires to receive the Lord in Communion is able to and the visible sign is a simple reminder.

Parish Intention Book

The next item you will discover in the back of St. Joseph's Church is our Parish Intention Book. This book provides people an opportunity to write their prayer intentions somewhere so that the whole parish may pray for them as well. We include the prayers in this book in a special way at our Sunday liturgies during the petitions.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

June 20, 2021

Spiritual Ponderings

Theology of Church Building

Let us continue our Spiritual Tour of St. Joseph Church.

Pieta & Candles

As we keep moving, we will soon come across a statue called a Pieta. Pietas are images that depicted the moment when the Blessed Virgin Mary was able to hold the dead body of her Son Jesus, after the crucifixion but before the burial. It is a moment of great sadness as we see how much Jesus suffered for our sins and just how much He loves us. The Blessed Virgin Mary serves as a role model as she sorrowfully holds her Son's body. There is no cursing, blaming, or desire for revenge. She offers her sorrows to the Father and continues to hope in God.

It is next to this statue that St. Joseph has votive candles. Votive candles (or lights) are an opportunity for a person to physically manifest an interior prayer. It is kind of like hanging a yellow ribbon in one's yard to support our troops or wearing a pink ribbon to support people battling breast cancer. Candles are a great symbol of prayer because for the candle to remain lit it must give of itself. It is not like a flashlight that uses the energy from batteries to produce lights. For safety concerns, we do use electronic candles, but this does not lessen or weaken our prayers in anyway.

In this area we also have to paintings. The paintings are of Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. They were painted by one of St. Joseph's high school students. Sometimes we will celebrate Mass at a place that is not our Church, and we try to bring these two paintings with us so that we can always have an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph with us.

St. Ann Family Room

If we keep moving along the back wall past the Pieta and candles, we will find the St. Anne Family Room (a.k.a. The Cry Room). One of the things that I am

particularly proud of at St. Joseph is the different opportunities we provide families.

I believe that these opportunities show our desire to have young families feel welcome to Church and realize that one option may be good for one family and not for another. We have the St. Ann Family Room (for those who prefer the cry room experience). We also have Children activities bags for families to pick up and use to entertain their kids during Mass and then they can return them after Mass. During our 9AM and 11AM Mass we offer Children's Liturgy of the Word. This is an opportunity where we take little children over to our Atrium in the St. Joseph Center and explain the Scripture Readings on their level. St. Joseph also has Little Church. Little Church is a time for really small children to be cared for by dedicated volunteers and learn a little about Jesus while mom and dad are free to dive more deeply into the Mass. We do Little Church in our church basement.

Divine Mercy Picture

In between the windows that look into the St. Ann Room and the windows that look into the Adoration Chapel, there is a small picture of the Divine Mercy image hanging on the wall. The Divine Mercy is a devotion to Jesus Christ associated with the apparitions of Jesus to Saint Faustina Kowalska. In St. Faustina's vision, Jesus appeared to her informing her of His immense desire to show mercy to people. The image has two distinct rays of light (symbolizing the blood and water that flowed from Jesus side shooting forth from where Jesus' heart would be and the words "Jesus I trust in you" written on a scroll underneath the image of Jesus.

Adoration Chapel

Next to the St. Ann Room is our parish Adoration Chapel. You actually have to go through the St. Ann Family Room to enter the chapel. Inside the chapel you will find a tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament inside it. A 'tabernacle' is the resting place for the Blessed Sacrament between Masses. The word comes from the Hebrew word meaning "tent". We hear God instruct Moses to make a meeting tent (a tabernacle) in the dessert as they wandered in the dessert. The temple in Jerusalem was consider a tabernacle – the place where God presence was and so now the Church refers to the special box where the Eucharist is kept as a tabernacle. This small little room allows a person to adore the Blessed Sacrament in an up close and personal way.

Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

June 27, 2021

Spiritual Ponderings

Theology of Church Building

Let us continue our Spiritual Tour of St. Joseph Church.

Station of the Cross

Going back to the Adoration Chapel window and moving forward you come to the wall of the Church building with the Stations of the Cross on it. These fourteen scenes on the wall take us on a spiritual pilgrimage back to Jesus' crucifixion. It helps us understand how much he endured in order to save us. He was the hero that would not stop until He had accomplished His mission – no matter how many times they beat Him down. I personally find it spiritually helpful to travel the Stations of the Cross from different points of view. Sometimes, I think of myself as the Blessed Virgin Mary and thus grow in appreciation for all that she went through. Sometimes I think of myself as Simon of Cyrene and realize how doing things that I would prefer not to do can help lead to my salvation. Sometimes I recognize myself in the criminal who refused to ask Christ for pardon.

Baptismal Font

At the end of the Stations of the Cross in front of the far-right bank of pews, we come to our Baptismal Font. The first thing a person should notice looking at this Baptismal font is that it has eight sides. While seven is the number of days of the week that God used to complete creation and is considered the perfect number, eight symbolize a new day, a new creation, and something beyond perfection. At Baptism a person is washed clean of original sin and more importantly he or she becomes a child of God. They become a new creation in Christ.

Easter Candle (a.k.a. Paschal Candle)

During most of the liturgical year, the Easter Candle can be found near the Baptismal font. During the Easter Season and at Funerals, the candle maybe moved to the center of the Sanctuary or near the ambo. This candle is normally a tall white candle. Every year at the Easter Vigil, a new Easter Candle is blessed. The Easter Candle in a special way represents Christ to the community. For me it is kind of exclamation point, in the sense that when it is lit something extra special is going on for example a baptism, wedding, or funeral.

Most Easter Candles are displayed with several common symbols:

1. The cross, which is the most prominent symbol and most clearly identifies it as the Paschal candle
2. The Greek letters alpha and omega, which symbolize that God is the beginning and the end (from the Book of Revelation)
3. The year when the particular candle is being used, which represents God amidst the present congregation
4. Five grains of incense (most often red), which are embedded in the candle (sometimes encased in wax "nails") during the Easter Vigil to represent the five wounds of Jesus: the three nails that pierced his hands and feet, the spear thrust into his side, and the thorns that crowned his head.

Pews

The benches where most people sit are called the pews. Pews were actually a Protestant invention. As they developed their own liturgies focused more on the sermon and not the Eucharist, sermons grew and grew in length. It soon became clear to those given the sermons that they could speak longer if their audience was sitting. Sooner or later, Catholics adopted the idea of pews and added kneelers to them. Catholics believe that we express our souls through our bodies and thus we need a space that allows us to sit and be attentive, stand to give witness, and kneel to request pardon.

Gift Table

Normally in the back of a church building between two sections of pews, one will find the gift table also known as the offertory table. It is here that the bread and wine that will be used for Mass is placed before they are presented to the priest for consecration. The fact that

the gift table is in the middle of the congregation should encourage us to remember that the Eucharist is the sacrifice of the entire people of God and not just that of the priest.

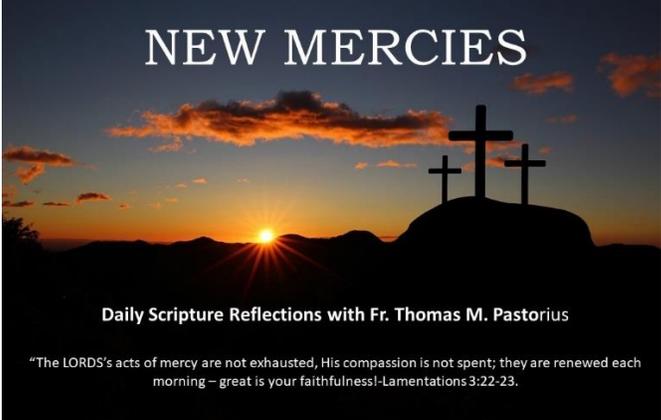
Important Dates

July 4 – Independence Day

July 25 – World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

July 25-31 – Natural Family Planning Awareness Week

NEW MERCIES



Daily Scripture Reflections with Fr. Thomas M. Pastorius

"The LORDS's acts of mercy are not exhausted, His compassion is not spent; they are renewed each morning – great is your faithfulness!-Lamentations 3:22-23.

Please check out www.stjoemanchester.org or www.mayjesuschristbepraised.com St. Joseph's Facebook Page for my "New Mercies" Video reflections. Every morning, I reflect on one of the Scripture readings for the day.



Personal Penance Service Child of God

Beginning:

(+)God come to my assistance, Lord make haste to help me.

Opening Prayer:

Father in heaven, Creator of All, look down upon me in my moment of need, for you alone are the source of my peace. Bring to me the dignity of the poor in spirit and show me how great the call is to serve so that everyone may share in the peace of Christ. Amen

Scripture Reading 1 John 3:1-3

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Quick Reflection:

At our Baptism we (or our parents) made certain vows or promises to God and at Confirmation we “confirmed” that we desire to make these promises our own. At our Baptism all sin including original sin was removed from our soul but more importantly we were made sons and daughters of God. God literally adopted us and made us a part of His divine family after having paid our ransom through the death of Jesus. Every time that we sin, we bring shame not only upon us but on all of God’s family. We also in some way break one of our baptismal promises. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation though we are restored and made new.

Examination of Conscience

Do you reject Satan? And all his work? And all his empty promises?

1. Do I allow myself to be led into temptations by frequenting places that often lead to sins?
2. Do I allow myself to associate with others who do not promote values opposite of the Gospel?
3. Do I allow myself to believe in the false truths that media produces about life, beauty, and morality?
4. Do I try my best to avoid sins by following best practices (i.e. putting computer in public setting)?
5. Do I allow myself any “private sins?”

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

1. Do I believe God is a Father who desires to spend time with me and so do I take time to pray?
2. Do I believe that God is almighty and desires what is best for me or do I try to keep parts of my life to myself?
3. Do I believe God is the creator of heaven and earth and so do I try to take time to reverence everything as a gift from God?
4. Do I take time to take care of the environment?
5. Do I see others as brothers and sisters of the same Heavenly Father?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

1. Do I believe that Jesus is my Lord and Savior or do I see Him only as some wise teacher?
2. Do I respect Jesus’ mother and see Mary as a role model of what it means to be a perfect disciple?
3. Do I make sacrifices out of love for others or do I avoid sacrifices out of selfishness?
4. Do I remember to pray for the dead?
5. Do I live my life to show others that I believe that Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

1. Do I believe that God is love and that He is my advocate?
2. Do I dismiss Church teaching with no thought to the fact that the Catholic Church is the Body of Christ and that the Holy Spirit dictates what the Church teaches?
3. Do I study the saints as examples of holiness?
4. Do I seek forgiveness of my sins? Do I offer forgiveness?
5. Do I treat my body with respect?
6. Do I live as if destined for eternity?

Time For Individual Confession

At this time you should go and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the priest and afterwards come back and pray your prayer of thanksgiving in addition to your penance.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God and Father, I praise you, the source of all that I have and am. Teach me to acknowledge always the many good things your infinite love has given me. Help me to love you with all my heart and all my strength. I ask this through Christ our Lord Amen.

Blessing

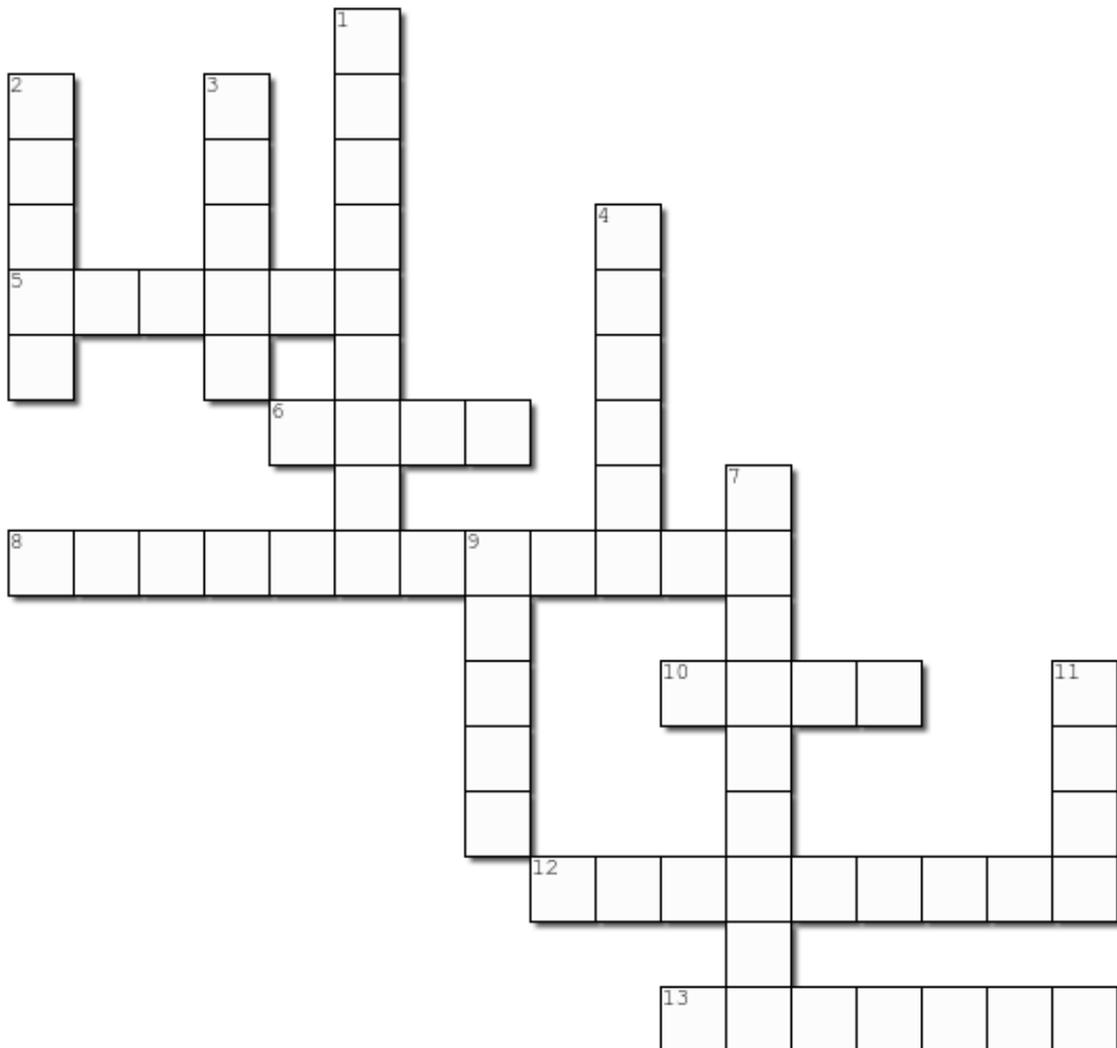
May almighty God bless me(+), protect me from all evil and bring me to everlasting life. Amen



July Crossword

Answers after Prayer Section

Name: _____



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

5. First name of Native American who became a saint
6. First Name of First Bishop in the United States
8. Catholic Charles Carroll signed the Declaration of _____
10. First King of Israel
12. Another word for Courage
13. Last Name of First Bishop in the United States

Down

1. First Diocese in United States
2. One, Holy, Catholic, & Apostolic = Four ____ of the Church
3. brother of Aaron and Miriam
4. Old Testament Joseph' oldest brother
7. Last name of Native American who became a saint
9. Youngest of Jesse's sons in the Old Testaent
11. Faith, _____ & Charitiy



A Prayer for Independence Day



God, source of all freedom,
this day is bright with the memory
of those who declared that life and
liberty
are your gift to every human
being.

Help us to continue a good work
begun long ago.

Make our vision clear and our will
strong:

that only in human solidarity will
we find liberty,
and justice only in the honor that
belongs
to every life on earth.

Turn our hearts toward the family
of nations:

to understand the ways of others,
to offer friendship,
and to find safety only in the
common good of all.

We ask this through Christ our
Lord.

R/. Amen.



Blessing of Grandparents



Cetty Images

This blessing may be used at special family visits (such as holidays), at the beginning or end of a visit, or at another appropriate time. If possible, the oldest grandchild might serve as the leader.

When the grandparents, parents, and children have gathered, all make the sign of the cross.

Leader: Blessed be God, who is faithful through all generations.

R/. Blessed be God forever.

The leader introduces the blessing in these or similar words:

Grandparents are cherished members of our family. They bring gifts of wisdom, experience, and love and share with us their life of faith. We thank God for their example and ask that he bless them with happiness and good health.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of Psalm 128:
Happy are you who fear the Lord,
who walk in his ways!

For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
happy shall you be, and favored.
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
Your children like olive plants

around your table.

Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion:
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

May you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!

(The family Bible may be used for an alternate reading, such as Ezekiel 37:24b-27.)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer. Then the leader prays:

Lord God almighty,
bless our grandparents with long life,
happiness, and health.

May they remain constant in your love
and be living signs of your presence
to their children and grandchildren.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen

All make the sign of the cross as the leader concludes:

May God bless us and keep us
all the days of our lives.

R/. Amen



Catholic
Current

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PRAYER RESOURCE



Faith and Perseverance
Saints Anne & Joachim

NOVENA

Saints Anne & Joachim

Each year the Church venerates the memory of Saints Anne & Joachim on July 26th. An ancient story dating to the first centuries of the Church's life recalls how Saints Anne & Joachim, like Abraham and Sarah, were scorned by their neighbors because they had no children.

Years of longing did not weaken their trust in God, but grief eventually drove Saint Joachim into the wilderness to fast and pray. Saint Anne, remaining at home, dressed in mourning clothes and wept because she had no child of her own. Seeing her mistress distressed, a servant girl reminded Anne to put her trust in God. Saint Anne washed her face, put on her bridal clothes and went to a garden to plead with God for a child.

Angels appeared to Saint Anne in her garden and Saint Joachim in the desert, promising that, despite their old age, they would give birth to a child who would be known throughout the world. The new parents ran to meet one another at Jerusalem's Golden Gate, and with a kiss rejoiced in the new life which God had promised would be theirs.

Saints Anne and Joachim are powerful intercessors for all married couples, expectant mothers and married couples who are having difficulty conceiving, as well as all who have grown old.



About the Mosaic

The art of mosaic dates back some five thousand years to ancient Babylon. The mosaic of Saints Anne and Joachim, depicted on the cover of this novena, was made of an Italian glass called smalti. Its intentionally uneven surface makes it highly reflective. The gold around the halos of Saints Anne and Joachim is 14 kt gold-leaf pressed onto the smalti. The thousands of pieces that make up the mosaic were hand cut to form the design. The mosaic depicts the moment of the meeting of Saints Anne and Joachim at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem.

The words surrounding the mosaic are from the Marriage Liturgy. They echo something we already sense in our hearts and souls, that "the very meaning of life is found in the giving and receiving of love" (Evangelium vitae). As the beauty of a mosaic is in its reflected light, so we too are all called to be reflections of the love in which we were created.

Artist: Adrienne M. Keogler © 2004

Novena

Good parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
grandparents of our Savior, Jesus Christ,

When life seems barren,
help us to trust in God's mercy.

When we are confused,
help us to find the way to God.

When we are lost in the desert,
lead us to those whom God has called us to love.

When our marriage seems lifeless,
show us the eternal youth of the Lord.

When we are selfish,
teach us to cling only to that which lasts.

When we are afraid,
help us to trust in God.

When we are ashamed,
remind us that we are God's children.

When we sin,
lead us to do God's will.

You who know God's will for husband and wife,
help us to live chastely.

You who know God's will for the family,
keep all families close to you.

You who suffered without children,
intercede for all infertile couples.

You who trusted in God's will,
 help us to respect God's gift of fertility.

You who gave birth to the Blessed Mother,
 inspire couples to be co-creators with God.

You who taught the Mother of God,
 teach us to nurture children in holy instruction.

You whose hearts trusted in God,
 hear our prayers for . . . (*mention your requests here*)

Pray with us for the ministry of Catholic family life.

Pray with us for the ministry of Natural Family Planning.

Pray with us for all who give their time,
 talent and treasure to this good work.

Hail Mary . . . Our Father . . . Glory to the Father . . .

God of our fathers,
 you gave Saints Anne and Joachim
 the privilege of being the parents of Mary,
 the mother of your incarnate Son.

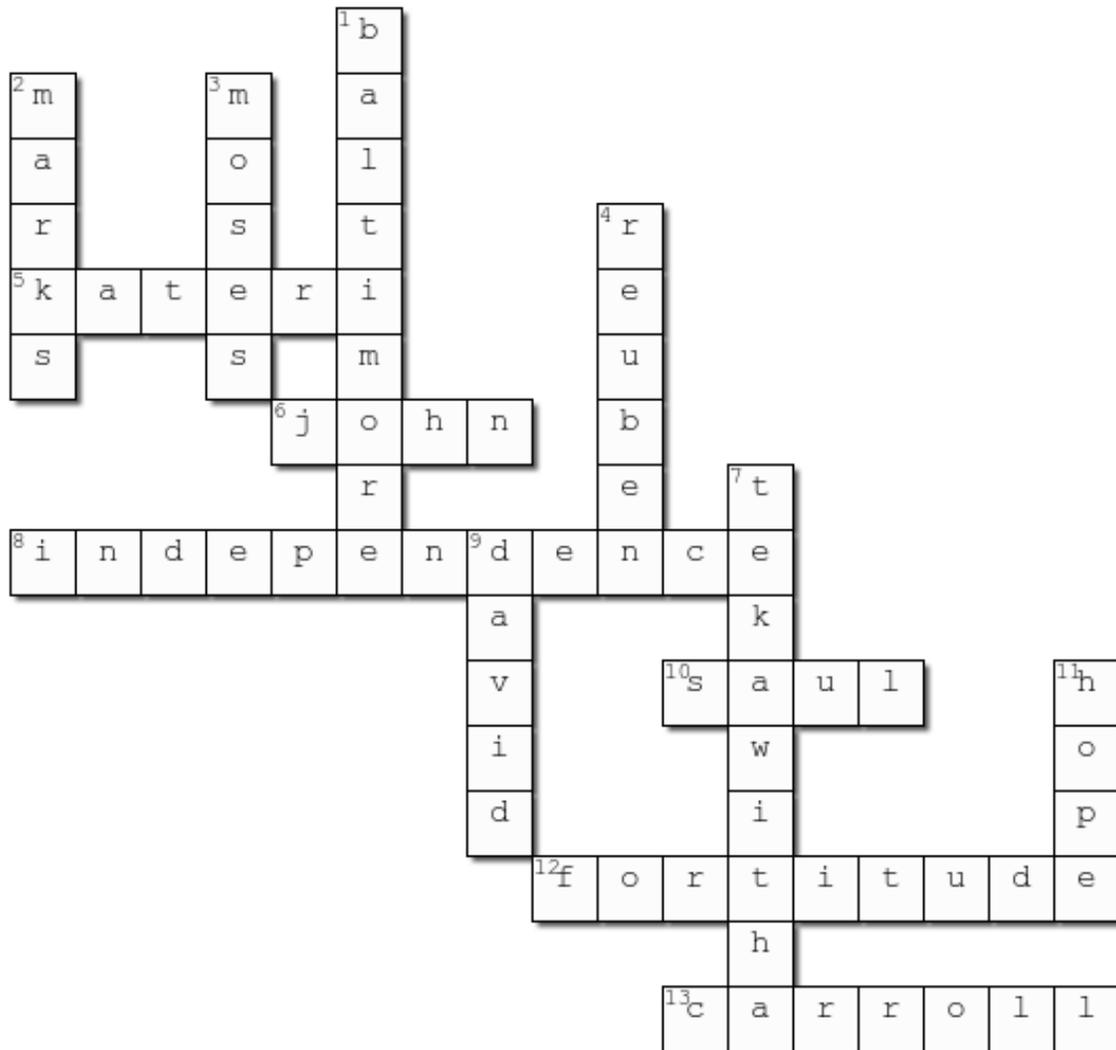
May their prayers help us to attain
 the salvation you have promised to your people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. ¹

Amen.

1. Collect from the Roman Missal. © 1973, ICEL.

Name: _____



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

5. First name of Native American who became a saint (**kateri**)
6. First Name of First Bishop in the United States (**john**)
8. Catholic Charles Carroll signed the Declaration of _____ (**independence**)
10. First King of Israel (**saul**)
12. Another word for Courage (**fortitude**)
13. Last Name of First Bishop in the United States (**carroll**)

Down

1. First Diocese in United States (**baltimore**)
2. One, Holy, Catholic, & Apostolic = Four ____ of the Church (**marks**)
3. brother of Aaron and Miriam (**moses**)
4. Old Testament Joseph' oldest brother (**reuben**)
7. Last name of Native American who became a saint (**tekawitha**)
9. Youngest of Jesse's sons in the Old Testaent (**david**)
11. Faith, ____ & Charitiy (**hope**)