

Religious Education PREP Newsletter

Issue: August 2021 St. Mary Magdalen Church



Some of you may recognize the picture to the left – not just as a lion but as Aslan, the lion from the C.S.Lewis children’s book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

This book was written after World War II (1949) and it’s part of a series of seven books. For those who are

Lord of the Rings fans, Lewis and Tolkien were great friends and both wrote fantasy novels with a lot of Christian imagery and meaning.

So why am I telling you all this? I’ve decided that while it looks like we won’t be able to do the family catechesis programs again this year (too many question marks with the variants out there) I am going to start a family reading night for the children. When I taught 4th grade at Christ the Teacher (the year they opened) we had hideous weather, and had to spend many recesses indoors. I read this book with the children (and another favorite, *A Wrinkle in Time*) and the children loved it so much that years later when the movies came out one mom emailed me to say that her teenager said, “You have to let Mrs. Yasik know, it’s one of her most favorite books of all time!” I hope it will be a favorite for all of you too – and maybe encourage you to read the rest of the series! We’ll read the chapter out loud on Google Meet, and then discuss it for a little and I’ll send home some family activities that are related. I’ll read initially, but I am hoping to get some students looking for service hours (or even younger students who just like reading!) to do guest appearances too! So if you’re interested, shoot me an email and I’ll start working on a group to begin maybe by the end of August!

Also, just a reminder – be sure to register by the end of this month if you haven’t already, we are assessing a late fee this year for those who wait – this way I can ensure enough books will be on hand opening day of classes (September 19th!)

Enjoy what’s left of summer! I will be at the shore this month myself! *Karen Yasik*



Hard to believe, I know, but PREP has come into the 21st century! You can now sign up for PREP **and** pay online! Just go to the parish website [here](#) and you can sign up to 4 children without having to repeat all the same information! It’s a miracle LOL! Pay by the end of the month to avoid a \$25 late fee (assessed after July 31st so don’t be late!)

NEW THIS YEAR

Besides my children’s book club (yes, this is another shameless plug) we have decided to make the preschool every week just like the other grade levels. So many parents said their kids wanted to stay longer – a total tribute to Eileen Montgomery, who’s been here teaching longer than me (and I’ve been a catechist since 1988!)

SAFETY MEASURES FOR THIS YEAR

I have not received final safety protocols from the school for this year, so things may change to accommodate what they do – but the guidance we have right now is from de.gov. They are recommending that we follow CDC guidelines, which should be available soon. For now, they are saying masks for everyone; 3’ between individuals (the desks are set that way) and the continuation of sanitizing procedures. As you know, SMM invested in a major air purification system last year in the school, and use a special cleaning agent on everything in the school, the church, the hall, and on the playground.

We will continue to update as we receive information, but for now we will also continue to use the front door drop off/gym door pickup model and ask that parents not enter the building. Let’s pray for an end to all this!

DID YOU KNOW?

INTERESTING THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OUR FAITH

Every day, I get a variety of emails from different publishers. The one I really enjoy started out being called “Catholic Snacks – bite-sized things to know about your faith” and then they changed it to “Get Fed – Bite-Sized Faith” Here are two of their posts!

The Holy Grail

Just as the famous sword in the stone is not found in England but in Italy (a story for another day), the Holy Grail, despite what all the Arthurian legends woven around it claim, **is in Spain.**

At least, that’s what Galicians and Valencians say: **they both have the Grail. Or, at least, a grail.**

History and legend have more often than not merged when it comes to locating the chalice used by Jesus during the Last Supper. **Forgeries and ancient artifacts believed to be the holy cup have been found from Turkey to Scotland and more.** The most widely venerated relic of Holy Grail is the one kept in **the Basilica of the Assumption of Our Lady of Valencia, in Spain.** There, a relatively simple, barely adorned cup is preserved inside a golden case. It is referred to as the *santo cáliz* — Spanish for “Holy Chalice.” **It is a relatively small artifact, made of agate stone and polished with myrrh.** It has been dated to 100-50 B.C. The two gold handles and the base (decorated with pearls and precious stones) were most likely added. Tradition claims **the *santo cáliz* was taken by Peter from Jerusalem to Rome.** It was only in the year 257 when the cup was carried from there to Huesca, in Aragón (northern Spain) **in an effort to protect it from Valerian’s persecutions against Christians.** During the Islamic occupation of the Peninsula, the chalice was taken to the monastery of San Juan de la Peña, where it was carefully guarded for centuries until it was handed over to the King of Aragon, Martin the Humane, who kept it until 1410. In 1424 the second successor of King Martin, Alfonso the Magnanimous, handed the chalice over to the reliquary of the Palace of Valencia, and **it was finally transferred to Valencia Cathedral in 1437, where it is preserved today. It has been used to celebrate Mass by many popes, including Pope St. John Paul II in 1982, and Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.**

But Galicians also have their own miraculous cup. **It is even featured, some say, in its coat of arms.** Since the Middle Ages, this chalice has been considered to be a canting metaphor. In heraldry, cantings are heraldic bearings that represent the bearer’s name in a kind of visual pun. The chalice in the coat of arms represents “Galice” (chalice, Galice). In any case, **the Galician Grail is found in a small village along the most famous pilgrimage route in Christianity, the Camino de Santiago.**

Can St. Joseph help with your house?

Today’s housing market can cause a lot of anxiety, especially for families looking to find a new home. St. Joseph’s intercession can help alleviate the stress of buying or selling a home. As protector and provider of the Holy Family, St. Joseph has often been associated with the protection and provision of homes.

When trying to buy or sell a house, many families will ask for St. Joseph’s intercession and invoke to St. Joseph the Worker through this beautiful prayer:

O Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

O Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, so that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers.

O Saint Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

Saint Joseph, Patron of departed souls – pray for me. (Mention your intention.) Amen.

In addition to this prayer, a fun tradition for people trying to buy or sell their home is to bury a small Statue of St. Joseph in the yard. Once the home is sold, sellers dig up the St. Joseph statue and give him a special place of honor in their new house to remind them of his powerful intercession.

It is unknown how this tradition came to be, but some believe it began from European nuns who would bury a St. Joseph medal on property they hoped to purchase for their convents. Over time, these medals were replaced with St. Joseph statues.

Burying a St. Joseph Statue is not a magic trick to sell your home; rather, it is a pious tradition that reminds us about how powerful St. Joseph’s intercession can be on our behalf. We can continue to pray to St. Joseph the worker when trying to buy or sell a home. Since this year is devoted to him by the Pope, it’s a good time to ask him for help!