

St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church NEWSLETTER

May 2021

Volume 15

CHRISTIANITY IS A THERAPEUTIC RELIGION

Article By: Robert Tomanek



"Christ Healing the Mother of Simon Peter"
by: John Bridges

Prayers for people who are ill or injured are common for faithful Christians, but a physical healing does not always occur. Despite this disappointing outcome, the prayer was not rejected by God, because He is always faithful and works in mysterious ways. Often a spiritual healing has occurred that is not readily evident to us. Our Catechism (1503) notes that Christ came to "heal the whole man, soul and body." Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Jesus of Nazareth* that "healing is an essential dimension of the apostolic mission and Christian faith in general." He stated that "Christianity is a therapeutic religion, a religion of healing." Of our seven sacraments, two directly concern healing: 1) penance or reconciliation, and 2) anointing the sick.

PENANCE OR RECONCILIATION. Penance is an encounter with the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Absolution for sincerely confessed sin enables reconciliation with God and is a healing experience. This sacrament also helps free us from harboring unforgiveness of those who have hurt us. Our Catechism (1468-1470) teaches us that reconciliation "is usually followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong consolation."

ANOINTING THE SICK. This sacrament conveys several graces, and strengthens the faithful in the Holy Spirit against anxiety, discouragement and temptation. Oil is soothing and associated with radiance and a sign of healing. James 5:14-16 states: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders (priests) and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord..." If it is God's will, a physical healing may occur, but spiritual healing is a certainty. This sacrament is not limited to the seriously ill, but to all Christians who seek healing of the mind, body and spirit. **VIATICUM** (provision for the journey) is the administration of the Eucharist, which may or may

not include Anointing of the Sick to a person on the verge of death.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING. Such prayers should be universal, because everyone needs freedom from painful memories, as recognized by both Spiritual theologians and psychologists. The Catechism of the Church (739) notes that Christ pours out the Holy Spirit among its members to nourish and heal them, and sends them to bear witness. Four categories of healing are: physical, psychological, spiritual and exorcism or deliverance (the later must be performed by a priest).

EUCCHARISTIC HEALING POWER. In the Eucharist Jesus draws close to us and during the liturgy the priest prays "deliver us Lord, from every evil and grant us your peace in our day." These words ask for deliverance from any spiritual disorders and attacks of demonic forces. We need to focus on the miracle of transubstantiation that occurs and recognize the intimacy that we have with Jesus in this sacrament.

MINISTRY OF HEALING. The Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church (origins in 1967) has placed emphasis on healing prayer. Our four most recent popes have acknowledged the importance of the movement. Charisms, gifts of the Holy Spirit, are noted in St. Paul's writings, and consequently, various Christian prayer groups have been formed to pray for healing. Praying for healing of individuals means to call for the power of the Holy Spirit and is of special value if we pray with the person, if possible. We need to invite Christ into the places of our lives that experience physical, emotional or spiritual pain. As history documents, many miracles have occurred in response to prayer, as well as natural healings prompted by faithful prayer. Every Christian is called to pray for healing. Even if the person is not healed as requested, the prayer is never wasted, and the one praying is blessed.

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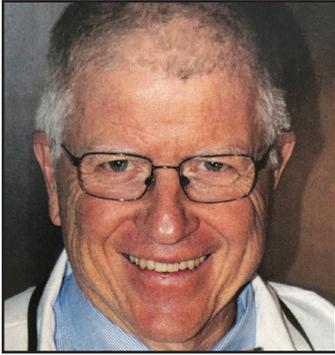
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Covid-19

A Personal and Professional Perspective Pt. 1



Dr. Rick Larew

It was in March of 2020 that Covid stepped out of the newspapers and television news services and literally into our lives. The infection became an epidemic and then a pandemic. Long before most of us knew anyone who was ill with Covid, we were in the midst of a nationwide lockdown of businesses, schools and churches. Epidemiologists, medical scientists, and doctors told us that we needed to “flatten the curve” of the pandemic so as not to overwhelm our healthcare system which would be unable to handle the projected number of ICU and ventilator patients. We did not have enough PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) or ventilators. We did not have enough negative airflow pressure rooms (so that the virus would be sucked out of the patient rooms and exhausted outside, rather than escape into the hallways and infect patients at the hospitals for other reasons). We did not have a good understanding of the virus and the illnesses it caused. We did not have effective medicines. We did not have vaccines to help keep us from getting sick in the first place.

It is hard to think back and recreate a timeline that accurately portrays what happened then and simultaneously correlate that timeline with our understanding or lack thereof at that same time. Some good decisions were made, sometimes for the right reasons, sometimes by luck. The same could be said for the bad decisions. Not infrequently decisions were made based upon our past experiences and understandings of other viral infections. Our early aggressive use of ventilators sometimes may have been a mistake and we have subsequently changed our protocols such that we wait much longer before we recommend intubation and mechanical ventilation. Our early use of prednisone was doing more good than we realized and we eventually went full

circle from using it in critical care cases, then having misgivings about its use, and eventually back to using it again as perhaps the single most important medication for ICU (Intensive Care Unit) patients.

We went through a variety of testing techniques and testing protocols. It was often difficult to sort out if we were using the best testing technique and protocol, or just the only one that was available at that time. It was confusing to the general public and it was confusing to medical professionals. Early on it seemed to make sense that we use only the very best diagnostic tests in an effort to ensure that a positive or negative test was just that: truly positive or truly negative. This has been common practice for a long time in many other illnesses. If you are going to tell someone that they do or do not have a disease, you want to be sure that you know that they do or they do not have it. However, then we learned that a person was most infectious 1-2 days before symptoms started. Furthermore, many infected people were asymptomatic. Hence, it made sense to test as many people as possible (including those with minimal or no symptoms) in an effort to quarantine those who were ill and/or infectious and in an effort to reduce transmission rates.

We began to assign names and motives to the virus. We wanted to blame someone for how fast it was spreading or in what directions it was spreading. We anthropomorphized the Covid virus and talked and thought about it as if it had some sort of sinister plan. In truth, it behaves like all viruses do: it spreads from one host to another. It is perhaps more virulent or more contagious than some other viruses and not as much as others. I have believed from the beginning that until we developed an effective vaccine or medicine for the Covid virus we were all destined to get it.

In an effort to stem the tide of the pandemic we agreed to do social distancing and wear masks. We reduced our exposure opportunities by not going to the grocery store or other businesses. We agreed to shut down our churches. We shut down our schools. But the virus marched on. Only with the miraculous development, testing, manufacturing, distribution and administration of the new mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) have we finally put a

Article By: Richard Larew

significant dent in the trajectory of the pandemic. However, although the pandemic is still in front of us, not behind us, I think that most people can now see that something other than a permanent lockdown is in our future. I am not certain when we will “go back to usual”, but it is my opinion we will be safely able to open up sooner than most people think. (I might note that there are very knowledgeable professionals who disagree with this opinion and they believe we are still many months away from that time.)

I myself had Covid last October. I do not know where I contracted it. I was very careful about all safety protocols advised: masks, hand washing, and social distancing. I did keep my medical practice office open throughout the entire pandemic and I could have contracted it from one of my patients: but none of my patients became symptomatic with Covid during the incubation time that would have been required for me to have contracted it from one of them.

Covid was a tough illness for me. I had headaches and muscle aches. I experienced fevers, chills and sweats. I had 24 hours of “brain fog” which to me was the most troubling symptom I experienced. Fatigue was prominent. I was never hypoxic and I would categorize my illness as moderate and not severe. My acute symptoms lasted 10-12 days. I thought I was back to normal in about 4 weeks: but I was wrong. It took me a full 3 months for my energy and endurance to return to normal.

If you have the opportunity to get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine do it! As I am writing the Johnson and Johnson vaccine administration has just been put on hold in the USA. The AstraZeneca vaccine is undergoing further review in Europe. Please continue to socially distance when possible, wash your hands, wear your mask, and use common sense.

Dr. Rick Larew is a native and longtime resident of Iowa City. He and his wife Ann are long time parishioners of St. Mary's. They raised their six children in Iowa City as members of St. Mary's and they all attended Regina Education Center. He practices Internal Medicine at Larew Internal Medicine at 2557 North Dodge Street, Iowa City, Iowa.

Answering God's Call

An Interview with Seminarian Isaac Doucette



A parishioner of St. Mary's and graduate of Regina High School, Isaac Doucette, is currently attending Mundelein Seminary to become a Catholic priest. We talked with him about his call to priesthood and life as a seminarian. He also provided some advice to men feeling a call to priesthood or the diaconate.

1. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD. WHEN DID YOU HEAR THE CALL? WHAT WAS IT LIKE? DID SOMEONE HELP YOU DISCERN THE CALL?

When I was working, I began wondering if I was being called to something else. I enjoyed my job in the financial world, but the question remained. I went to confession more frequently and prayed more often. I talked to God and began to listen. This took some time and consistent daily prayer. I also kept a journal of my thoughts. Initially there was an ebb and flow between the seminary and not the seminary. Over time, it was more and more the seminary. The journal helped me notice how my thoughts during prayer progressed and how God was moving in my life.

I reached out to Fr. Thom Hennen who was the vocations director at the time. He helped me navigate everything I was wrestling with and gave me a book, *To Save A Thousand Souls*. The book helped answer questions I had about discerning the priesthood. It helps men discerning the priesthood work through any hesitations or concerns they may have to give them courage to apply to seminary.

Fr. Thom also suggested I pray a novena to Our Lady Undoer of Knots. At the end of the novena, I asked our Blessed Mother what was God's will for me? I heard, "Go be a priest". I was taken

aback. After work, I went into the St. Patrick's Adoration chapel. I talked to God and told Him, "If this is from you, then I'm saying yes." After that I had a lot of consolation and interior peace. I moved forward with the application process for seminary after that.

2. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR SEMINARY EXPERIENCE? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE? WHEN WILL YOU BE DONE, IF YOU FINISH AS PLANNED? WHAT ARE SOME KEY MILESTONES IN YOUR SEMINARY TRAINING? WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME HIGHLIGHTS DURING YOUR TIME AT THE SEMINARY?

I am in my fourth year out of six at Mundelein Seminary in the Northwest suburbs of Chicago. I will finish in 2023.

There are a few different tracks in seminary formation. Everyone does philosophy, and everyone does four years of theology. The philosophy tracks are what vary, and they come together for the same theology track. If you do not have an undergraduate degree, such as a man discerning into the seminary out of high school, he will have a four-year bachelor's degree in philosophy through a seminary. If a man graduated with a bachelor's degree, was working, and then discerned into seminary, he will have two years of philosophy studies. This is sometimes a master's degree program and sometimes a bachelor's degree program.

Personally, I completed a master's degree in philosophy and religious studies after two years of pre-theology. Then I went into major seminary and am currently on internship at Our Lady of Lourdes in Bettendorf. The internship is for the Spring semester of second theology. It is great to get some more parish experience and have some time of formation while in a parish.

3. GOD WILLING, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS AFTER YOU ARE ORDAINED A PRIEST?

I am studying for the Diocese of Davenport so I will be somewhere in the diocese. The diocese goes from Scott county to Jasper county along Interstate-80 with Clinton county being just north of Interstate-80. Then it goes south to the Iowa-Missouri border. The typical first assignment is one to three years as a parochial vicar (associate pastor) at a large parish. Then

Article By: Bill and Isaac Doucette

the first pastor assignment is usually a smaller parish. After that, assignments will vary and the needs of the people are considered, especially with the retirements of the priests that year. The bishop ultimately decides where I will go, but gets consultation from some of the priests in the diocese who discuss possibilities of assignments.

4. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ANY MEN FEELING A CALL TO BECOME ORDAINED A PRIEST OR DEACON? WHERE/HOW CAN THEY FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THOSE CALLINGS? WHO COULD THEY CONTACT FOR HELP IN THEIR DISCERNMENT? ANY OTHER FEEDBACK?

Sometimes asking a smaller question such as, "Am I being called to the seminary or diaconate formation?" is an easier starting point to answer bigger vocational questions. The big questions can be intimidating and do not need to be fully answered at the beginning of discernment. Throughout seminary there is a mutual discernment from the man and the Church. Getting advice and guidance from others is important. Many others have gone through a similar process. Keeping it to yourself can be the temptation, but it does not resolve the inner angst.

Practically, praying to make your own will God's will is necessary. Conforming your will to God's will is not always easy, but through that surrendering of our own will to God's we receive what God wants to give us. We have a richer, fuller, more joyful, and more peaceful life. Doing God's will in your life is the greatest adventure you can go on.

Lastly, if you are wrestling with vocation questions, pray and talk to a priest about your discernment. <http://davenportvocations.org/> is a great resource especially for those considering seminary. <https://davenportdiocese.org/diaconate> is a great resource for those considering the diaconate. Ultimately, everyone is called to a life of holiness. How that holiness is lived out will vary from person to person based on what God is calling them to. Having the courage and openness to God's working in your life does not take away the challenges of life, but it will bring unmatched peace and joy.

BAPTISMS

ANDREW JAMES GREEN

CALVIN VINCENT GIBBS

NILE JOSEPH KEMPER

LIONELLA META TSHIBASU

SOPHIE MASSAN AKAKPO

STACEY DANIELLE ALFARO

JOLENE RAE GRIFFITH

MEGHAN SARAH SALMON

LEXIS MAHEZA DJAFALO

PROSPERA M. AGASSI

SIDNEY NICOLE BORGWARDT

AUBREY ABIDE DJAFALO

CAMRYN ROSE GRIFFITH

SKYLAR NOELLE GRIFFITH

PAULA TOSSAH

JAMESON ALEXANDER MULHERON

MARRIAGES

JULIA PARRA AND KYLE DUCHMAN

Pastor's Letter

Optimism and Continued Vigilance of Fight Against COVID-19

Article By: Fr. Steve Witt

Wow, Easter is here. Lent has ended. Spring is in the air and my mood has increased 20 fold. A little change in weather and suddenly I feel like a new human being. I wonder if that can be said of all human endeavors. I have witnessed a change, not only in this country, but the whole world as well, which indicates to me a more positive approach to life. There is no doubt about it; the COVID-19 virus has impacted the world in dire ways and changed many lives and the hopeful perspective that many had toward life in general. Just in the United States over the last year we have lost over 550,000 people to it. Yet, as vaccines become more and more available, I sense that there is a rise in positivity that has been missing for quite a while. I think anything that improves our long-term perspective is a good thing.



That said; it also appears to me that there is a newfound laxity that goes with that modest improvement. Having just returned from a trip to Arizona to visit family, it appears to me that this is a time when we need to not assume anything, but to be more diligent and vigilant in our ongoing efforts to avoid spreading this disease. Although many wear face protection, I noticed that in Arizona as well as here there are people taking a great deal more latitude in general. It is my hope that with the relaxing of some of the rules, particularly, in the reduction of space between people (as seen in our modification of every other pew spacing) that we will continue to make sure to do the things that keep ourselves and everyone else safe. We need to be as diligent as possible in our wellness practices from regularly washing our hands, to wearing our masks, to avoiding crowds and avoiding over socialization. I am hopeful that if we continue to do these things and maintain a positive attitude we will, in the end, conquer this hideous disease.

Bless you my friends,
May God be good to you.

Fr. Steve

Your Input Requested

If you have any comments, concerns, suggestions, ideas, or if you would like to write for the St. Mary's quarterly newsletter, please contact Jeanette Roush-Krafka at jeanette.roush@gmail.com

CONFIRMANDS

SOPHIE MASSAN AKAKPO

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MEGHAN SARAH SALMON

PROSPERA M. AGASSI

SIDNEY NICOLE BORGWARDT

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CAMRYN ROSE GRIFFITH

SKYLAR NOELLE GRIFFITH

PAULA TOSSAH

CORROR BECKER

HOLDEN DONOVAN BERG

SARA ELIZABETH COMER

RACHEL ANN ECKHOFF

CLAIRE ELIZABETH FORNER

AVA G. GARCIA

AVERY CHRISTIAN GARDNER

ANGELICA MARY HAMILTON

MARY ELIZABETH HAMILTON

SAWYER STEPHEN-TRAN HAMILTON

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EVAN MATTHIAS LOENING

MICHAEL DAVID MARTIN

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THOMAS JAMES SHEY

RIORDAN STUART SMITH

GABRIELLA ANN SUEPPEL

MATTHEW ALOYSIUS TEETS

IAN CHRISTIAN UDELL

MILES JAMES WOOD

AMIE ROSE ZERWIC

Interview With Rachel Santos



Article By: Ward Thompson

A key staff position at every Catholic parish is the Parish Secretary. The secretary is the epitome of multi-tasking – the “glue” that keeps all of parish life in focus – the “right arm” of the pastor – the coordinator of assigned tasks, and the “all other” as assigned by the pastor. At St. Mary's that person is Rachel Santos. She has been the devoted Parish Secretary here since 2005.

Rachel has been blessed with a wonderful family. Her husband, Cesar, hails from Guerrero State in Mexico and is employed in construction. She describes her five children as: Maddy 17, her “mother hen”, Zach 13, her “little athlete”, Josie 10, the “creative one”, Bennett 9, “the builder”, and Max 7, is the “other creative one”. Both Bennett and Max love to go fishing in the creek near their home in Hills.

We asked Rachel some questions about her job and her life:

HOW DID YOU & YOUR HUSBAND MEET?

While I was going to college I was a waitress at Perkins and he was a cook in the kitchen. (She smiles and says “and the rest is history”).

HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK FOR ST MARY'S?

My sister Sarah used to work in the Parish Office for Fr. Ken (Kuntz). She wanted to do missionary work in Kentucky so she recommended me to take her place. I had been working in the parish office at St. Patrick's Church. So this was a perfect fit! My sister Sarah ended up becoming a Clinton Franciscan sister and now resides with her sisters in the Chicago area.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE FOR YOU WORKING IN THE PARISH OFFICE?

The usual weekly items are: record keeping of Sacraments, keeping up with changes to the database of all the parishioners, putting together the hospital list of parishioners that are hospitalized and providing Fr. Steve with that list. Other items are listening to the needs of parishioners and returning voicemail messages and emails. And I put out fires with Fr. Steve as they present themselves. Nowadays, being back in the office my day consists of answering phone calls and assisting walk-ins needing help. It's pretty limited because of Covid.

HOW HAS COVID CHALLENGED YOU IN YOUR JOB?

“When the office was closed, all of the personal interactions were basically gone. I really miss that aspect of my job.”

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO DEAL WITH YOUR CHILDREN NOT BEING ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL?

“That was a real balancing act. I thank Fr. Steve for being so kind and proactive. He told me that children come first, and said to take care of them and all of the other things in your life, we'll figure it out as we go.” So Rachel set-up a home office and would come in on Friday afternoons and the weekend to do the record keeping and other tasks that needed to be done.

WE UNDERSTAND YOU TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID, HOW WERE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AFFECTED?

The whole family got Covid around December 6th except Zach. My husband and I had severe body aches, headaches and a slight fever which lasted for about 7-8 days. My children Josie, Bennett and Max had it for 24-hrs and their symptoms were fatigue and they were hot to the touch, Bennett and Max also had a slight fever and Josie had a little bit of a cough.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

I really enjoy the people. I see all of the wonderful role models that we have here in our own parish. People who have great marriages, people who are devoted Christians by their prayer life, people who give of themselves

and give to those in need. I have to tell you about my Zach story and it will shed light on all of the wonderful people in this parish. My husband had gone to Mexico to get his waiver so that he could become an American citizen. He was told the process could take anywhere from 3-6 months. Well it actually took 16 months and I was pregnant with our second child at the time. I ended up having Zach without my husband present and through the generosity of people in our parish “I did not buy one diaper for a whole year”. We truly have amazing people here at St. Mary's!

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I really love the people. Who knew that when I was in college getting a degree in equestrian studies that I would end up serving in a parish office?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT ST MARY'S?

The people are so supportive and there is always someone you can see as a role model.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARETIME?

My children are very involved with their activities. I tell people that I drive a Charitable Uber for youth in sports activities. My Charitable Uber goes to soccer games to 4H meetings, and to horse riding activities, to back home to cooking in the backyard and fishing. As my husband always says “I don't like to cook but I like to eat really well”.

HOW DOES YOUR FAITH INFLUENCE YOUR WORK?

In difficult moments you rely on it. I get a lot of phone calls and walk-ins for people in need. I am so thankful that we have St. Anthony's Bread Ministry to help provide for them. Also, I can provide resources for them to contact. Doing the right thing for people is all important. We're just here to help. That's the most challenging and also, in a way, the easiest aspect of my job.

In closing, keeping accurate sacramental records is the most important administrative duty in any Catholic parish. We are very fortunate to have Rachel Santos serving as our Parish Secretary!

Why Support the NAMI Walk?

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SKYLAR NOELLE
GRIFFITH

PAULA TOSSAH



In early February a friend asked me "What are you giving up for Lent?" I mumbled an indistinct reply, but I really wanted to say, "The NAMI Walk." I had tried my best to promote the NAMI Walk beginning in 2015 by setting up a team, The St. Mary's Walkers, through our Peace and Justice Commission. That year our team collected \$700. It was good. In 2016 we were fortunate to collect \$1,000. It was better. And from 2016 on, our contributions from the Parish continued to rise each year until in 2019 we were soaring along and raised \$5,589.

Then COVID hit in 2020, when suddenly I realized everything depended on promoting the NAMI Walk through the computer. My computer skills are very basic, and I often rely on my gracious husband, Chuck, to bail me out on operations I had never really learned. I wanted to do everything on my own, but I just couldn't do it without help. Our 2020 collection fell to \$2,355 including a big Peace and Justice boost.

Here we are in 2021! It was time to begin thinking about The NAMI Walk again. I called Katie McCullough the new coordinator to tell her I just didn't have the skills to continue. She promised her help. I was still reluctant.

On a rainy, chilly morning in mid March an old friend called me asking for a ride to take her and her dog to the vet. Many years ago I was a support staff person who helped her with transportation, finances, grocery shopping, medical appointments, and other services. I told her, "Sure."

At the appointed time, my friend came bustling down the ramp from her home pushing her walker and gripping the mechanical dog leash with her dog far ahead. The rain was steadily falling as I opened the car door. Her terrier leapt into our little Honda, jumping all about. I quickly ran to help my friend get into the car, but she missed the seat and was falling sideways out of the car toward the wet street. I did all I could to keep her from falling further, and told her where the handgrip inside the car was. I said, "Pull yourself up." which

Article By: Margaret Felling

fortunately she was able to do. She then arranged a blanket on her lap, secured her dog, but dropped her water bottle on the floor. She then realized she had forgotten her purse. I offered to get it for her. When I returned to the car she was struggling to fasten her seat belt. My head was spinning as I locked her belt into place!

As we drove away from her home, I recognized why I had wanted to help with the NAMI Walk in the past. It had been a long while since I spent time with a person who was so disorganized in planning ahead, managing her body in space, sequencing her movements, and coordinating various objects. I realized the NAMI Walk is not about me, but trying to help others who are coping with the difficulties of mental illness. I put my reluctance aside, and once again decided to do what I could to help raise funds for NAMI.

Here are ways NAMI of Johnson County is helping through a wide variety of free programs to support individuals and families living with mental illness. Among the designated support groups are: NAMI Basics, Family-to-Family, Peer-to-Peer, Family Peer, and the Recovery Connection. NAMI Compeer helps to carefully match a community member with a person diagnosed with mental illness for a weekly contact to help relieve loneliness, improve life style through exploring leisure or meaningful activities together, and by providing a stable friendship over time. The monthly NAMI on-line newsletter features notices of Zoom educational presentations on topics related to mental health. After the COVID 19 Pandemic has passed, NAMI's R Place will re-open offering a variety of socialization experiences including classes, games, interest groups, arts & crafts experiences, and outings.

For immediate help in a crisis situation call the Crisis Center of Johnson County 24-Hour Crisis Line at 319-351-0140, or for an extreme emergency 911. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8225. For more detailed information about NAMI programs search at www.namijc.org, or phone the local NAMI office at 319-337-5400.

To support our team, St. Mary's Walkers, donate on-line for the May 22, 2021 Virtual NAMI Walk at namiwalks.org/johnsoncountyia. or send a check made out to NAMI Walk NAMI Johnson County 702 S. Gilbert St., Suite 111 Iowa City, IA 52240 **THANK YOU!** (And thank you, Chuck!)

The Holy Trinity

OK, I've learned my lesson! Don't miss an Evangelization and Stewardship Commission meeting (for any reason) and at the same time volunteer to write an article for the parish newsletter on any topic you are assigned. When I learned that the topic I was assigned was "The Holy Trinity" I immediately recalled a statement that a former pastor, Fr. John Spiegel, once said, "If you want to get called before the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, simply write your Ph.D. thesis on The Holy Trinity!" and then he shared that wonderful contagious laugh.

First and foremost, The Holy Trinity is a great mystery (something that is difficult or impossible to understand or explain), three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and one being (God). How can this be? And who doesn't like a great mystery?

The Church offers us a wonderful celebration just after the Easter Season ends on Pentecost Sunday (May 23rd). The following week is the Solemnity of Trinity Sunday (May 30th). To prepare to celebrate this special day let us find out what we can about the Holy Trinity.



The Holy Trinity by Francisco Caro

THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE BIBLE – The word "trinity" does not actually appear in the Bible, but we have many passages that give evidence for The Holy Trinity. In Genesis 1:1-2 we read, "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters." God the Father is the Creator, and the mighty wind is the Holy Spirit. But what about Jesus? In the Gospel of John 1:1-3 we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be."

We read about Jesus' baptism in Luke 3:21-22, "After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." This shows the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all in one place.

Later, at the Transfiguration, in Mark 9:2-7 we read, "Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Then Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here! Let us make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He hardly knew what to say, they were so terrified. Then a cloud came, casting a shadow over them; then from the cloud came a voice, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." The cloud is the Holy Spirit and the voice is God the Father.

Finally, we have the Great Commission (where Jesus teaches the disciples how to baptize using the Trinitarian formula, and promises to always be with them) at the end of Matthew 28:18-20, "Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE CREED - Our Nicene Creed (our Profession of Faith) has sections on each of the persons of the Holy Trinity.

God the Father (Creator) "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible."

God the Son (Redeemer) "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy

Article By: Dan Teets

Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end."

God the Holy Spirit (Sanctifier) "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets."

THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH – There are many paragraphs about the Holy Trinity in Part One of the Catechism on our Profession of Faith. Paragraph 234 reads, "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the 'hierarchy of the truths of faith'. The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin."

THE HOLY TRINITY IN OUR PRAYERS – What words do we say when we make the sign of the cross (please do it slowly and reverently and think about it)? "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This is a prayer in itself we use to begin and end our prayers.

A popular prayer during this Year of St. Joseph is the Litany of St. Joseph. In the 'Lord have mercy' section at the beginning of the prayer it has 3 petitions, one to each person of the Holy Trinity: "God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy on us. God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us. God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us." followed by a petition to the Holy Trinity, "Holy Trinity, One God, have mercy on us."

To prepare ourselves for the Solemnity of Trinity Sunday (May 30, 2021), let us spend some time reflecting on this great mystery of our faith, The Holy Trinity!

St. Mary of the Visitation Catholic Church

302 E. Jefferson St. Iowa City, IA 52245



ST. MARY'S NEWSLETTER VOL. 15

Saint Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi (1566-1607) Feast day: May 25

Article By: Julia Blake



Catherine de' Pazzi was born into a noble family in Florence in 1566. The normal course would have been for her to have married into wealth and enjoyed comfort, but Catherine chose to follow her own path. At age 9, she learned to meditate from the family confessor. She made her first Communion at the then-early age of 10 and made a vow of virginity one month later. At age 16, Catherine entered the Carmelite convent in Florence because she could receive Communion daily there.

Catherine had taken the name Mary Magdalene and had been a novice for a year when she became critically ill. Death seemed near, so her superiors let her make her profession of vows in a private ceremony from a cot in the chapel. Immediately after, Mary Magdalene fell into an ecstasy that lasted about two hours. This was repeated after Communion on the following 40 mornings. These ecstasies were rich experiences of union with God and contained marvelous insights into divine truths.

As a safeguard against deception and to preserve the revelations, her confessor asked Mary Magdalene to dictate her experiences to sister secretaries. Over the next six years, five large volumes were filled. The first three books record ecstasies from May of 1584 through Pentecost week the following year. This week was a preparation for a severe five-

year trial. The fourth book records that trial and the fifth is a collection of letters concerning reform and renewal. Another book, Admonitions, is a collection of her sayings arising from her experiences in the formation of women religious.

The extraordinary was ordinary for this saint. She read the thoughts of others and predicted future events. During her lifetime, Mary Magdalene appeared to several persons in distant places and cured several sick people.

Mystical ecstasy is the elevation of the spirit to God in such a way that the person is aware of this union with God while both internal and external senses are detached from the sensible world. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi was so generously given this special gift of God that she is called the "ecstatic saint."

The cause of mystical ecstasy in this life is the Holy Spirit, working through spiritual gifts. The ecstasy occurs because of the weakness of the body and its powers to withstand the divine illumination, but as the body is purified and strengthened, ecstasy no longer occurs.

It seems that God permitted her this special closeness to prepare her for the five years of desolation that followed when she experienced spiritual dryness. She was plunged into a state of darkness in which she saw nothing but what was horrible in herself and all around her. She had violent temptations and endured great physical suffering. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi died in 1607 at age 41 and was canonized in 1669.

<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-mary-magdalene-de-pazzi>