THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF PHOENIX

TOGETHER LET US GO FORTH

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APRIL/MAY 2022

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Jesus calls us to have courage in sharing our faith

Recently, I have been praying St. John Paul II's Prayer for Catholic Evangelization. It reminds us of our role as disciples of Christ. Please allow me to share this prayer with you:

"Loving God, you called each of us by name. You gave Your only Son to redeem us. In Your faithfulness, You sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us. Open our hearts to Jesus. Give us the courage to speak His Name to those who are close to us, and the generosity to share His love with those who are far away. We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. May they come to know His all-surpassing love. May that love transform every element of our society. We make this prayer through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen."

What stands out the most in this prayer are the words, "Give us the courage to speak His Name to those who are close to us."

His name, "Jesus," has much power and authority — in fact, St. Paul reminded the Philippians (2:9-11), "God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

May you and I have the courage to bring people to Jesus, by honoring His Name and acknowledging that He is the source of everything. He is God with us.

For some of us, evangelizing those whom we love and with whom we interact frequently can be intimidating — uneasiness and fear can set in. Often, we feel that we are unworthy to speak about Jesus.

But this is precisely why we must stir up our courage to speak His name, as the prayer says. Of course, we are not worthy — we are all sinners redeemed by the Lord, but through our baptism and Jesus's death and resurrection we have become His adopted children. He has made us worthy to receive Him in the Eucharist and to be His witnesses before others. Jesus is constantly drawing near to us. He is our courage and our strength.

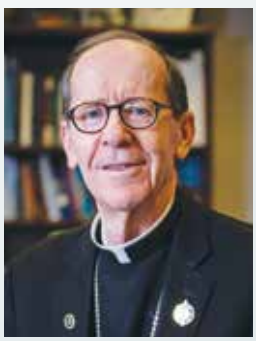
As you read this issue of the *Together Let Us Go Forth ~ Juntos Sigamos Adelante* magazine, I encourage you to find an article that you can share with someone — perhaps a friend, a family member or co-worker. Pray to Jesus, ask Him to whom you should give it. Then, share it with courage and humility. Say something like, "Jesus moved my heart to share this with you."

Keep in mind, as baptized Catholics, we are all called to evangelize and make disciples. For the past 2,000 years, generations before us have had the courage to proclaim Jesus to those near and far. Now, it is our turn! ✝

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Thomas J Olmsted

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted



BY THE MOST REV. THOMAS J. OLMSTED

The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted has led the Diocese of Phoenix since December 2003.

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Jesus *is* Lord!

When I was in my early 20s and newly married, I remember one day having a conversation with my wife, Rosemary. It went something like this:

"When I was younger I used to have these terrible dreams — between good and evil. I especially remember that there was evil trying to hurt me — like something really bad. I would even wake up in my dream and my body was paralyzed and I couldn't move. I would think I was awake but was really sleeping. I still have those dreams, but not as often."

Rosemary replied, "Well what do you do? Do you pray?"

I then went on to explain, "Well, no not really. I usually try to just fight the evil. I don't think I don't pray on purpose — I just can't remember to pray."

Now it is important to know that my wife converted to Catholicism after we were married — she was an Evangelical Southern Baptist! I can't take credit for the conversion — that was an Irish priest and a persistent nun — but that's another story.

Anyway, she told me something very remarkable that I will never forget, she said, "Cande, anytime you are in a place of darkness or fear — awake or sleeping — you need to remember to say, 'Jesus is Lord!' His name will force everyone and everything in order — you call on His name to fight the battle, and right now you are trying to fight the battle. We can do nothing apart from Jesus!"

As you can imagine, I was pretty blown away!

So, yes, I immediately wanted a bad dream! It's not every day you go to bed hoping to get into a fight with evil in your dream (I would not recommend — LOL), but I did! It took a few weeks, but then it happened — I had a really bad dream, and I was paralyzed in the dream.

Well, you guessed it, I called on His name, and said, "JESUS IS LORD!"

Immediately, I was able to move my body (in my dream), the evil went away and I woke up! I was fully energized, and I knew the power of His name. I still to this day use this prayer, and I have taught my kids and anybody I can this same prayer.

The power of His name, Jesus, reminds me of the first paragraph in the Gospel of John. It reads:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (Jn 1:1-5)

Books, sermons, retreats, dissertations, and countless commentaries have been made on this one Scripture. But, ultimately, John is pointing to Jesus as God Incarnate — He is King of all Kings!

I encourage you to share this prayer with anybody you can — it is simple and real. When we Advance the Mission of the Catholic Church, we must be prepared for a spiritual battle. Our enemy is not of flesh and blood, but the spiritual forces of evil (Eph 6:12), and it is important we are able to protect ourselves and others! ✝



BY CANDE DE LEON

Cande de Leon serves as the executive director of the Office of Mission Advancement for the Diocese of Phoenix. He leads a team committed to advancing the mission of Christ through stewardship, evangelization and discipleship formation.

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Why should I register at my parish?



If you have been attending the same parish for a time and don't see yourself moving or attending elsewhere, you should absolutely register at your parish. Here's why:

1

Connectedness.

Once you register, you feel more at home in church. You become part of your church family in a tangible way. It gives you a sense of belonging and allows your priest to get to know you as well.

2

Accountability.

We are all responsible for helping the greater Church grow in strength and numbers. As a registered parishioner, it adds weight to that role. As an "official" member of the parish who is open to the voice of the Holy Spirit, you will feel led to contribute to the needs of the church.

3

Commitment.

Becoming a member of your parish is a promise to be active in your faith.

4

Access to parish information.

This gives your parish the ability to reach out to you and let you know about events, prayer and study opportunities and ways you can give back.

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Bottom line — register at your parish. Declare your commitment to your faith proudly and officially join your church family! ✝

BY CYNTHIA KAAN



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Venerable Maria *of* Ágreda



BY FATHER JOHN NAHRGANG

Father John Nahrgang is the vicar for evangelization and education, Diocese of Phoenix.

Centuries before anyone dreamed up Zoom meetings or virtual reality, a humble Spanish nun was able to inexplicably traverse time and space to evangelize the Native Americans living in the Southwest. And, although she only spoke Spanish, they somehow understood her in their native tongue.

Venerable Maria of Ágreda, known in religious life as Sister María de Jesús, was a Conceptionist nun in Ágreda, Spain, in the early 17th century, a time when missionaries sought to bring the saving message of Jesus Christ to the Native peoples in the hostile desert of the American Southwest.

Franciscan Father Alonso de Benavides was authorized to take 26 missionaries to New Mexico with their expenses paid by the king of Spain. Sickness and death decimated the crew of would-be evangelizers, leaving only a handful to work the vast mission territory.

Over the years, members of the Jumano tribe repeatedly approached the Franciscans, asking them to send friars to their villages to instruct and baptize them, but there was never anyone to spare.

And then Sister María of Ágreda's confessor wrote to his archbishop in Spain, informing him that a religious sister claimed she was traveling in a supernatural way to the New World and spreading the Gospel message. Archbishop Manso y Zúñiga called for an investigation.

Father Alonso would later write that the Jumanos declared a young woman dressed in a nun's habit was "always preaching" among them and telling them to go in search of missionaries so that they might be baptized.

In the face of overwhelming evidence of the miraculous evangelization by Sister María of Ágreda, the Franciscans were inspired with even greater zeal. Convinced of the omnipotence of the God of the Universe, they had no trouble accepting that He could suspend the laws of physics, so Sister María of Ágreda could bring the love of Jesus Christ to the inhabitants of the American Southwest — centuries before anyone conceived of virtual meetings. ✝





Dear Father Joe:

My mother has been diagnosed with dementia



T. Gannaway

FATHER JOE KRUPP

is a former comedy writer who is now a Catholic priest.

@Joeinblack

I am struggling mightily to figure out what to do. There are days I just can't take it anymore and I struggle with guilt about how I feel.

God bless you ... I have walked this road too and the pain is at times unspeakable. I am so sorry for what you endured and I hope that my words can offer you some kind of comfort as well as consolation.

As a priest, it has been a normal part of my life to be with and comfort families who were dealing with a parent suffering from Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. When I did so, I felt their pain and believed that, at least at a base level, I understood. It wasn't until my mom was diagnosed with this disease that I realized there really is no way to describe it to people. There is no way to understand the horrors and sorrows of it until you've walked that road yourself.

As best I can as a broken sinner who loves Christ, I am with you. Please allow me to share with you a few things that helped me a lot as I dealt with her illness and then death.

In the first five years of my life, I was basically unaware. I don't have any conscious memories of my life at that point. I don't remember the exact moment when I became aware of Mom and the role she played in my life. I know it wasn't until I was much older that I actually appreciated her in a manner that was/is consistent with the level of gratitude that I should have possessed.

I don't know how many times she stayed up all night with me as a child. I don't know how often she missed meals because I had a need. I don't remember her pushing through personal sickness to care for me. I had no ability to remember those things.

And yet, she did them.

I wasn't capable of seeing and acknowledging her innumerable sacrifices; I lacked the ability to even notice it but she still did it and that, to me, is one of the most loving, pure and amazing things about parenthood.

It was an awful gift, but also a beautiful one when it struck me that her affliction was my chance to love her in the same way she loved me.

In the loss of her memory and her mind, I was given the gift of being able to love her and care for her without thanks, without memory.

I would assume it is impossible for a person to be able to look at their parent or parents and say, "They know the depth of my gratitude, they know how much I love them." I believe that is part of what makes heaven heaven. One day, our hearts will be clear to each other and until that day, we suffer a bit with the inability to accurately communicate our love.

But here's the thing. It turns out that some of us are given the ugly but salvific cross of knowing that we were able to love our parent or parents in the exact

same way they loved us: anonymously and selflessly, with no hope of thanks or acknowledgement. I hated the suffering my mom and our family endured, and I am also eternally grateful for it.

The second blessing to consider is that anytime someone we love suffers, we are offered a chance to stretch and sacrifice for them and there is no better way to show our love and commitment than to sacrifice. Nothing quite imitates Jesus like being willing and able to give of ourselves until there is nothing left.

I have no doubt that most of us would die for our family and that is beautiful. However, God will rarely ask us to die for that. What He will ask of us is that we live for our families. We bleed for them. We lay down what we want to do because of what we ought to do.

Doing so is exhausting and painful. Doing so will cost us so much, but I suggest to you that not doing so is much more painful, much more exhausting in the end because we were not made to live for ourselves, we were made to live for God and for others.

This is not something we can do on our own. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us, strengthen us and give us all we need to do what we are commanded by God to do.

In terms of your feelings, I don't know that there is much you can do about them; you and I do not have control over what we feel. What we do have is control over what we do with what we feel. St. John Paul II suggests that when we are struggling with "dark feelings," we do not condemn ourselves for them, but instead "take what we feel to the classroom of our minds in order to discipline and educate our feelings."

When my mom finally died, I remember the relief I felt and then the guilt over that feeling of relief. I came to see that this is normal and even healthy. The moment she closed her eyes on this earth, that gray curtain was lifted and she saw God face to face. In the words of The Apostle, she could say, "I fought the fight. I ran the race. I competed well."

"It is my hope that God blesses and strengthens you and lets you know He sees your love, your sacrifice and your fatigue."

Who wouldn't feel relief?

It is my hope that God blesses and strengthens you and lets you know He sees your love, your sacrifice and your fatigue. He accepts these gifts from you and weeps for what you weep for. You are not alone.

If this is not a struggle your family has endured, please pray for all of those who are struggling with Alzheimer's or dementia in their family. If you can, offer to help them with food or by taking duties off their hands. They will appreciate your prayers and your gifts of time or small kindnesses more than you will ever know. Enjoy another day in God's presence. ✝

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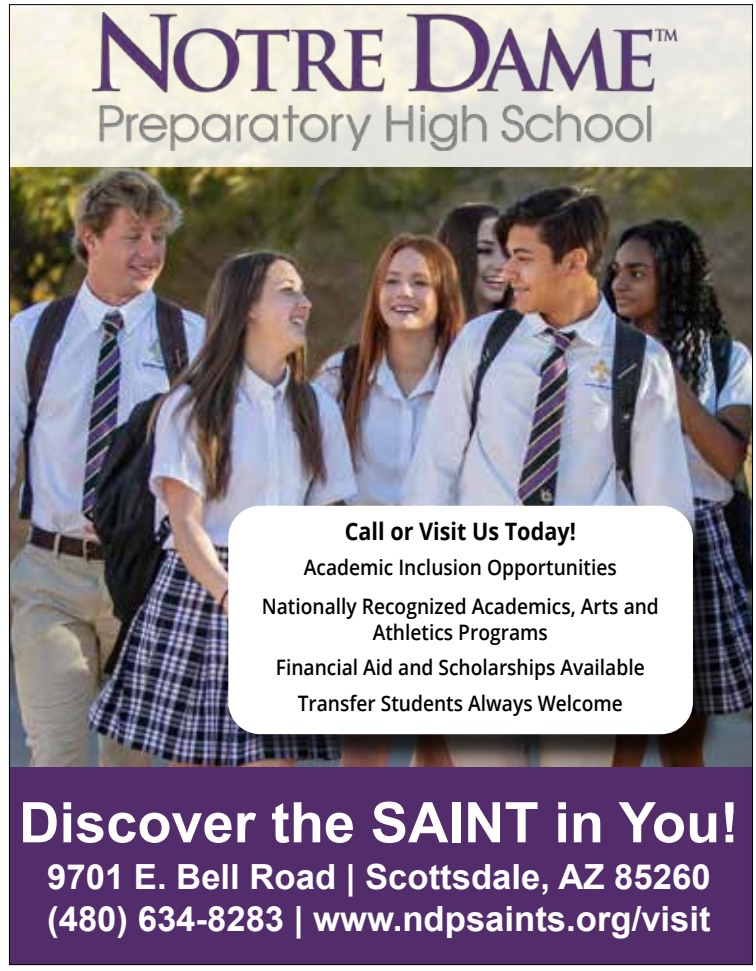



FINDING JOY ON EASTER MONDAY

Winnie-the-Pooh once realized, "although Eating Honey was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it which was better." (A.A. Milne)

The anticipation of a happy event is in itself exciting, and for Easter, we Catholics sure do a lot of preparing. During Lent, we mindfully curtail bad habits and make sacrifices. We pray the Stations of the Cross and have solemn services during Holy Week. At home, we set our tables with plentiful food: dyed eggs, home-baked bread and babkas, and, if you're Polish like me, kielbasa.

What happens, though, when the day, we so anxiously awaited finally arrives and passes? Many of us, myself included, focus so much on getting ready that after Easter Sunday, we simply return to business as usual. We don't feel that same buzz of anticipation anymore. But consider this: In the Church calendar, Easter lasts for 50 days, called "Eastertide." These days mark a period of discernment, struggle and courage for the 11 Apostles in the early Church. Eastertide is also a time of great hope: We celebrate Jesus' resurrection, ascension and gift of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost. As such, this season is when we can truly focus on cultivating joy in the Good News of eternal life.

To nourish joy, we must do so with prayerful intention. This means noticing how God dwells in the everyday moments of our lives. From a simple cup of coffee to walking your dog, helping your child with homework to holding your spouse's hand, God is there. God resides in the big moments of our lives and all the gray, unmemorable moments in between. It's like breathing. We forget that we do it, but it keeps us alive. We may forget that God is with us, but he is. During Eastertide, we can try to see how God reveals himself to us. Realizing his ongoing presence — no matter how quiet or loud — will bring us joy.

Spiritual joy does not mean feeling happy all the time. That is unsustainable, and we are biologically built to feel a wide range of emotions. Rather, spiritual joy is a joy that remains in our hearts no matter how we feel. It's the faith and peace we find when we realize that God's love is real, healing, unconditional and everlasting. It is an Easter kind of love. ✝

"God resides in the big moments of our lives and all the gray, unmemorable moments in between."



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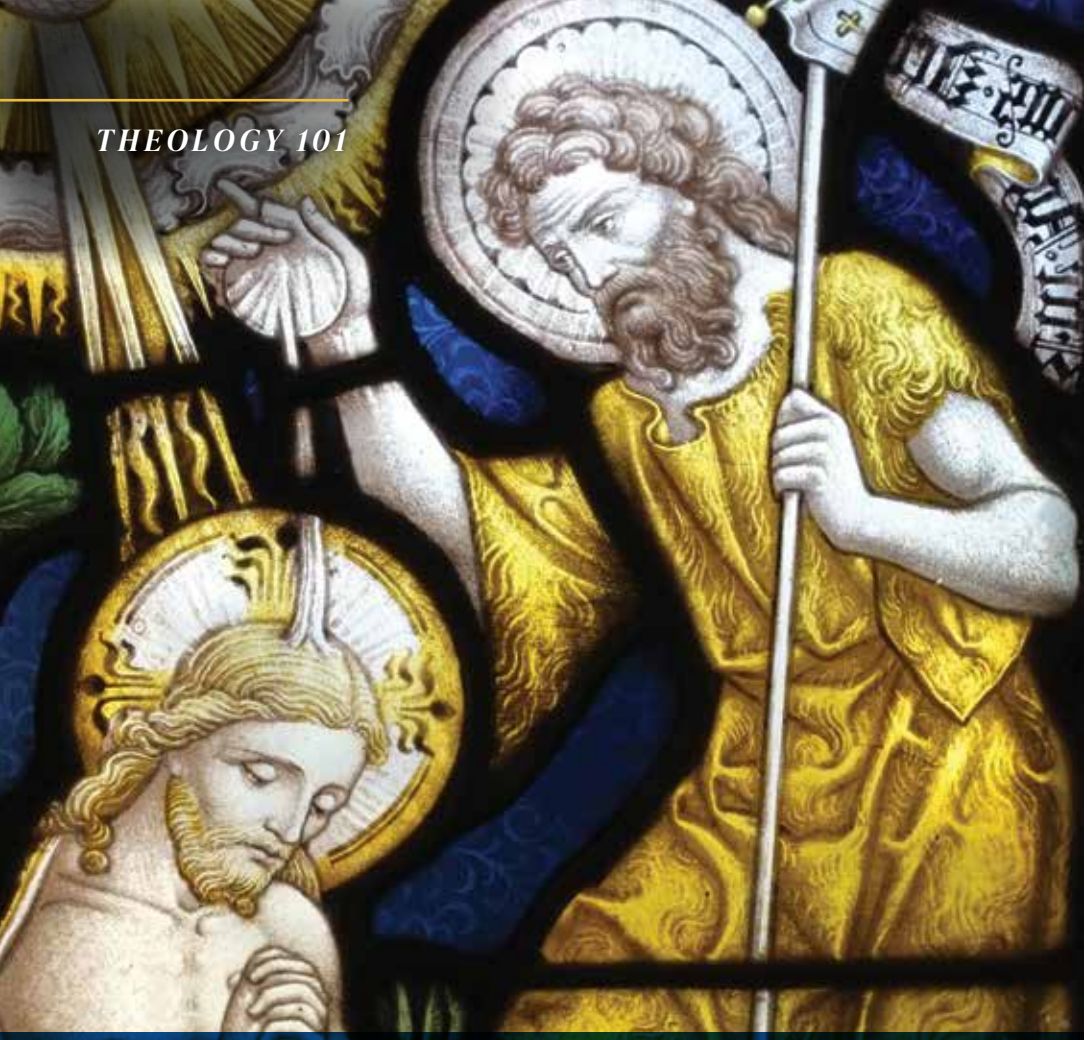

Encountering Jesus *in* Baptism



S. OLSON

DOUG CULP

is the CAO and secretary for pastoral life for the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky. He holds an MA in theology from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

An authentic encounter with Christ presupposes faith in him first. The sacraments of the Church presuppose faith, even as they also nourish it. This faith, of course, is grounded in the authority of Christ. It is a faith that is only possible with the community of believers that is the Church, as it is "only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe." (*CCC* 1253)

THE SACRAMENT OF FAITH

This reality is perhaps most apparent in the sacrament of baptism. A catechumen (a person of at least seven years of age who is asking for baptism) or a godparent (a person who actually speaks for an infant or small child asking for baptism) is asked during the celebration of the sacrament: "What do you ask of God's Church?" The proper response to this question is simply: "Faith!"

But let's remember that the faith required for baptism is not perfect and mature. On the contrary, it is only a beginning of a life of faith that is then called to develop. The preparation for baptism seeks only to lead us to the threshold of new life. And, yes, baptism is the source of this new life in Christ "from which the entire Christian life springs forth." However, as the *catechism* states, "for all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow after baptism." Still, in this initial act of faith, the path is cleared for us to have an encounter with Christ through the sacrament.

TWO KEYS TO ENCOUNTER

An encounter with another person is diminished by division. Whether the walls are real or constructed by presuppositions, prejudices or hurtful words and actions, those walls prevent us from "seeing" the other and, therefore, encountering them. In our relationship with Christ, sin has the same effect.

Through baptism, however, all sins and all punishment for sins are forgiven. The waters of baptism wash away all that separates us from communion with Christ and, therefore, the Holy Trinity. We are then made into an altogether "new creature," who is capable of believing in, hoping in and loving God, acting under the promptings of the Holy Spirit and growing in goodness. Baptism then breaks down the walls of separation that sin has constructed and makes an encounter with Christ possible. In fact, baptism goes so far as to make us an adopted daughter or son of God, a "partaker of the divine nature," a co-heir with Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Another key to encountering the other is to be where the other is. If we want to encounter someone, our chances are greatly enhanced if we seek out those places where the person is often to be found. The same would seem to hold true

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for the encounter with Christ. By incorporating us into the body of Christ, the sacrament of baptism greatly increases the number of our opportunities to encounter him. For Christ is present in His Church: in His word; in prayer; in the poor, the sick and the imprisoned; in the sacrifice of the Mass; in the person of the minister; and in all His sacraments.

WALK A MILE

The admonition to walk a mile in another's shoes before judging or criticizing expresses another key to encounter. Walking a mile in another's shoes allows us to get into the mind of another — to gain insight to the other's experiences, challenges, perspectives; and to see through his or her eyes. It is a type of encounter that can be powerful because it is an intimate encounter through communion with and participation in the experience, mind, love and thought of another.

In the same way, the sacrament of baptism invites us into the "shoes" of Christ, into an intimate communion and encounter with Him. Jesus began His public life with His baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. He did this not because He needed to be cleansed from sin, but to "fulfill all righteousness." (Mt 3:15) At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Him as a prelude of the new creation (just as it had hovered over the waters of the first creation), and the Father revealed Jesus as His "beloved Son." Through our baptism, we participate in the baptism of Christ. As in the case of Jesus, the Spirit descends upon us making us a new creation, and the Father reveals us to be His beloved adopted sons and daughters.

What's more, our baptism allows us to participate in the public life of Christ through our corporal and spiritual works of mercy as members of His body, the Church. Baptism also enables us to participate in the mission he gave to His Church: "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." (Mt 28:19-20) ✝

Did You Know...

"The ordinary ministers of baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. However, in case of necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required intention, can baptize, by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The intention required is the will to do what the Church does when she baptizes. The Church finds the reason for this possibility in the universal saving will of God and the necessity of baptism for salvation." (*CCC* 1256)

Why is oil used at a baptism?

After a person is baptized with water, he or she is anointed with sacred chrism, a perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop. The anointing with oil signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has now been incorporated into Christ, Who is anointed priest, prophet and king. (*CCC* 1241)

TIMELINE

TOP 10 BAPTISM EVENTS

1. JEWISH PURIFICATION

The Jews practiced various ablutions for the sake of purification and the initiation of proselytes.

2. JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist preached repentance and practiced ritual "washings" in the River Jordan.

3. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED

All four Gospels record that Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan. At Jesus' baptism, the heavens opened up, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice said, "You are My beloved Son; on You My favor rests" (Mk 1:9-11).

4. DISCIPLES BAPTIZE

Jesus baptized (Jn 3:22), and He authorized His disciples to baptize, "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." (Mt 28:19)

5. C100 THE *DIDACHE*

The *Didache* records that one should be instructed, fast and then be baptized in "cold running water," if possible.

6. 150 JUSTIN MARTYR

Justin Martyr wrote that an inquirer be "taught in prayer and fasting" before being baptized in water and led to the banquet table.

7. 100-600 INITIATION PRACTICES

Clear initiatory practices began to emerge — they included baptism, anointing and Eucharist.

8. 600 SACRAMENTAL PRACTICES SEPARATE

The sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist began to be separated due to the unavailability of the bishop, the high infant mortality rate and a new emphasis on original sin.

9. EMPHASIS ON SIN

During the Middle Ages, the understanding of baptism as entrance into a community was less emphasized than salvation from original sin and the damnation that went with it.

10. 2ND VATICAN COUNCIL

The Church rightly refocused our attention on the redemptive acts of Jesus and developed rites for child and adult baptism.

DEALING WITH MOMMY GUILT



I recently asked a new mom what the most surprising thing about motherhood was. Her response was, "The shaming." I never would have guessed that this mom felt guilt or shame about her parenting. She exudes a carefree confidence in all that she does. I dug a little and asked if the source was internal or external? She said both. Often we have greater expectations for ourselves than others do for us. Because of those expectations, it is easy to read into remarks and turn harmless questions or comments into guilt-laden thoughts that haunt us in the loneliness of motherhood.

Tips for reducing mommy guilt and living with love:

- Seek to find the Lord throughout your day.
- Re-evaluate your own expectations of motherhood.
- Increase your private prayer time.
- Turn away from sources of comparison or negativity.
- Offer your little frustrations or sufferings in prayer to the Lord.
- Do not get discouraged when your vocational duties pull you away from prayer.
- Consecrate your children to the Blessed Mother.
- Pray for your children every day.

Focus on the process, not the outcome

Motherhood calls us to simply do our best to love our children each day, with humility and hope. In many aspects of life, our successes are gauged by some external measure. If we are too outcome-oriented, and focused on producing future saints, we are more susceptible to guilt and disappointment. Being process-oriented, focusing on living our own lives as good daughters and filling our vocational call to love our children, is the antidote to this outcome-oriented attitude. Our success as a mother is not reflected in how well our children behave or how confidently they believe, rather it is related to how well we fill the call God puts before us, to love our children and embrace His will.

Recognize what is in your control

Most of us lack some confidence, especially in the first decade of parenting. Parenting is, at the same time, the most natural and the most difficult of roles. As we find our stride as mothers, the uncertainty over our parenting approaches and our effectiveness is something that becomes our new normal. We hope to grow in the times of struggles and appreciate the times of joy. We want our children to become saints, and we recognize the huge consequences spiritually if this goal is unmet. Yet their sainthood isn't dependent upon us.

Accept God's love through it all

God's love for us is not dependent on how well we mother our children. He loves us because we were created for Him to love. It is that simple. He wants to be in a relationship with us. When we are in a relationship with Him, we are able to love others more deeply because we begin to see others the way the Lord sees them. We can learn to hear His voice in the dark and begin to be the light to others, as He is the light to us. The best way to mother is to deepen our own relationship with the Lord, and live a life of intimacy with Him. ✝



BY DR. MARYRUTH HACKETT

MaryRuth Hackett, Ph.D., is a mom of four with a doctorate in educational psychology, specializing in child development. She hosts the Parenting Smarts podcast and blogs at Parenting with Peer Review.

Getty Images/fizkes

A dessert fit for a *May crowning*

If there was ever a moment I desperately wanted on camera, it was when I discovered my daughter and niece taking part in a May crowning ceremony they had put together in our backyard.

It was a pleasantly cool, sunny day in May, and I was getting dinner ready in the kitchen. Through an open window, I heard the faint and tender voices of young girls singing "Hail Holy Queen." I looked up and noticed my then 9-year-old daughter and her cousin dressed up, and processing through the backyard with a statue of Mary. I remember dropping everything to look for my phone, so I could take a photo or video, but it was nowhere in sight. So there I stood just watching.

I knew they got the idea from their school, but I was amazed at the attention to detail and work that went into putting their own together, right down to the gathered flowers and blue paper crown they carefully crafted for Mary. The setting couldn't have been more perfect that day. The flowers were in bloom, and the crystal clear blue sky provided a perfect backdrop for Our Lady. The girls were all smiles as they gazed at their Queen of Heaven and Earth. And I soaked it all in.



MICHELLE DIFRANCO

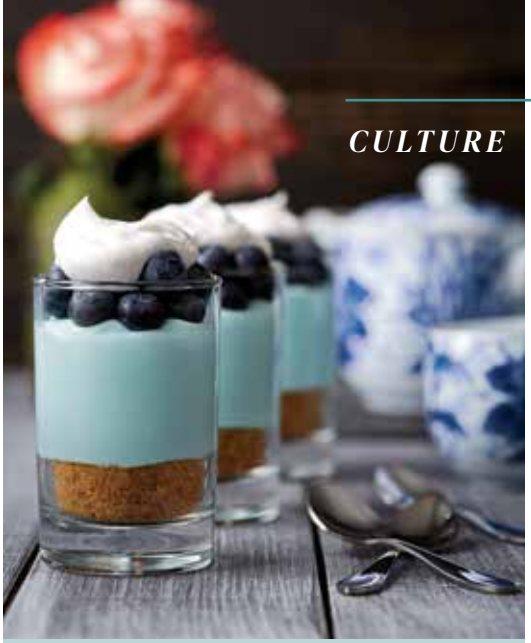
is a designer and the busy mom of three children.

It occurred to me, right then and there, that if I had spent the entire time trying to get the perfect shot, I would've totally missed out on the unfiltered beauty of the moment. And, most importantly, the opportunity to reflect on why we honor Mary in the first place.

Had I found my phone to capture the one moment that my daughter was honoring Mary without any prompting, I might have clicked a great image. I might have gotten an image that was endearing and beautiful; a picture I would have been proud to share with everyone. But that's just it. Such a moment should not be about me, or my pride. It should not be about how darling the girls were or how lovely the day was. The moment was best spent focused on Mary. And by not having my camera to distract me, I was able to do just that.

I have since shared with my now 13-year-old daughter just how much joy her May crowning ceremony brought to me as a mom. I even told her about my moment of frustration at the time with not finding my camera to capture it all. Her brilliant response? To "re-create it annually" with her cousin. And now it is a yearly event every May with tea and one of her favorite desserts to honor Our Lady, Queen of Heaven and Earth. ✝

PHOTO BY SHANE FOLKERTSMA



Blue vanilla cheesecake parfaits

6-8 shooter glasses
1 cup crushed graham crackers
2 tablespoons butter (melted)
1 teaspoon sugar
8 oz cream cheese (room temp)
½ cup granulated sugar
1 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon lemon zest
Blue or violet food coloring
Fresh blueberries
Whipped cream topping (store bought or homemade)

In a medium bowl, mix melted butter, graham cracker crumbs and sugar until combined. Distribute evenly between individual serving glasses. Press down on crumbs to form a crust.

For the filling, beat cream cheese, sugar and heavy cream in a large bowl until smooth (using an electric mixer). Using a rubber spatula, scrape down sides of the bowl. Add lemon zest, vanilla and 1-2 drops of food coloring. Continue to beat until light and creamy. Evenly spoon (or pipe using a piping bag) about ¼ to ½ cup of filling into each serving cup. Cover and place in the fridge for at least one hour. Top with fresh blueberries and whipped cream topping before serving.







Grace-packed Miraculous Medal necklaces flood Phoenix Diocese with faith, hope

Surrounded by stacks of cardboard boxes packed with thousands of Miraculous Medal necklaces, Father John Nahrgang thinks back to when he was a seminarian and received an inspiration to give the medals to schoolchildren.

BY JOYCE CORONEL

Joyce Coronel is a writer for Together Let Us Go Forth.

"It was very powerful when that inspiration came because it came on the heels of a personal experience my dad had with the Miraculous Medal," Father Nahrgang said. His parents, who were not Catholic, had come to visit him in Washington, D.C., and he took them on a tour of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, sharing with them the story of how the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Catherine Labouré and gave her a vision of the medal.

After touring the basilica, Father Nahrgang showed his mother the gift shop and pointed out the Miraculous Medal to her.

"You should get one of those for your dad," Cindy Nahrgang told her son. He had to borrow her money to do so. "I was a poor novice at the time," Father Nahrgang chuckled. "I didn't have any money on me."

Jim Nahrgang began wearing the Miraculous Medal that Christmas. "And he's worn it ever since," Father Nahrgang added. "I'm convinced that led to his conversion to the Catholic Church." He had no idea until a few weeks later while looking at a liturgical calendar that this impulse to share the vision with his parents took place on the feast of the Miraculous Medal, Nov. 27.





A few weeks later, in early 2011, Father Nahrgang received the inspiration to share the medal with schoolchildren in the Diocese of Arlington. Thus began a grace-filled journey that is still unfolding before him.

Five days after he was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Phoenix — he felt the Lord calling him to diocesan rather than religious order priesthood — Father Nahrgang's dad said he was ready to become a Catholic.

Last summer, Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted named Father Nahrgang the vicar for evangelization and education for the Phoenix Diocese. It is in that role that the sharing of the story of Our Lady and the Miraculous Medal has burst on the scene with visits to all 41 Catholic elementary and high schools in the Diocese of Phoenix during the 2021-2022 school year — reaching some 14,000 students.

INSPIRING HOPE

Father Nahrgang preaches on the Marian apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré and then distributes the Miraculous Medal to students near the end of Mass, praying, "I entrust you to Jesus through the loving hands of Mary" as he places the necklace over each student's head.

Jamie Bescak, principal at St. John Bosco Catholic School where 300 students attend, described the event as a wonderful way for the children to grow in their faith.

"It gave them a sense of hope," Bescak said. "Our students and our world have been through so much over the last couple of years. They've had death, they've had worries — more worries than a little kid should have — and I think especially for our junior high students as they're getting ready to move on to high school, to have the story and to know that no matter how young you are, you don't have to be older to have Jesus with you. You don't have to be older to have a miracle happen.

"It can happen to any of us."

Father Nahrgang has assembled a team of volunteers to measure out and cut the black, waxed-cotton cording into 27-inch lengths so that the medals, made from a nickel alloy, can be placed on them to create the necklaces.

"These medals aren't about 'bling,'" Father Nahrgang noted. "They're all about grace. And they derive their power from Jesus' life, death, and resurrection."

In the apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré, which took place in France in 1830, the Virgin Mary emphasized that those who wear the blessed medal on their neck will receive many graces. The graces are primarily of conversion, and Father Nahrgang always tells his listeners that originally the medal was known as the Medal of the ▸



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The state of Arizona provides an incredible incentive for taxpayers who donate to certain qualifying charities like St. Vincent de Paul. Thanks to the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit, you can donate up to $800 and get it right back on your Arizona tax return.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Step 1

Donate to St. Vincent de Paul to support needy families in Arizona.

Step 2

File your taxes and claim the credit by using AZDOR Form 321

Step 3

Receive your tax credit! (up to $800)

How is a credit different from a deduction?

A deduction reduces the amount of your income upon which the tax is determined. A credit reduces your tax liability as if you had already paid the tax. Read the following examples to see the difference!

Tax Deduction Example

Mary and John earned $50,000 this year. They made an $800 gift to ABC Charity. Although ABC Charity is a nonprofit 501(c)3, it is not a Qualifying Charitable Organization for the tax credit. Mary and John can take a deduction for their gift which, after itemizing deductions, reduces their taxable income by $800. Their tax liability is now based on $49,200.

Tax Credit Example

Betty and Ralph earned $50,000 this year. They made an $800 gift to SVdP which is a Qualifying Charitable Organization for the tax credit. Their Arizona tax liability based on $50,000 in earnings is $1,680. They can take an $800 credit against their tax liability reducing it to $880.

$1680	Betty and Ralph's original AZ tax liability
– $800	AZ Charitable Tax Credit
$880	Betty and Ralph's final AZ tax liability

This information is for illustration purposes and is not intended to be legal or tax advice. Please consult your tax advisor or visit the Arizona Department of Revenue's website regarding your individual situation.

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Immaculate Conception. So many miracles took place, however, that it was quickly dubbed the Miraculous Medal.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

The vision to distribute the medal goes further still. Father Nahrgang has also begun distributing the Miraculous Medal at parishes during Sunday Mass. Another group, the Salt and Light Team from Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral, has been handing out medals to passing motorists, pedestrians, and street people for months, with Father Nahrgang's blessing. Barb Small is one of the volunteers in that endeavor.

"It's been really a beautiful experience to be able to give out the Miraculous Medal to the people on the street," Small said. "We ask, 'Is it OK if we put this on you?' So many are receptive and say yes. They walk away and they're just kind of joyful."

Small shows them that she's wearing the identical medal on a black cord. "I say, 'Listen. You don't need to take this off. It doesn't tarnish. It's been blessed by a priest. You can shower with it. You can just keep it on, and Mary will be with you. Just ask her to help you along your journey.'

"We had a lady in December, and she was so emotional when I did it. I put it on her, and she started to cry. She embraced me," Small said.

"It's important to keep in mind that the primary grace with this medal is conversionary grace, the grace that turns hearts to God," Father Nahrgang said. "It's the grace that moves man away from sin and toward God."

At a time when so many, particularly the young, are caught up in a wave of despair and deception, the Miraculous Medal offers a powerful remedy. The pandemic forced many students and employees into virtual mode and the consequences of that are still unclear. The Miraculous Medal is a tangible, real gift that reaches souls with a message of faith and hope.

"I think more and more, we in America, and especially our youth, we're getting overly immersed in these virtual worlds that are skewing our perspective and ultimately are not good for our spiritual health," Father Nahrgang said.

The medals are a "tangible way of connecting with the things of God and the kingdom of God and the life of grace that I think helps shift our perspective back to where it needs to be, where it's discerning and following God's plan for us in this physical world, and to be anchored in Him."

While many lament the exodus of myriad young people from the Church, the Miraculous Medal project has offered a ray of hope.

"I think sometimes we can fall into a distorted way of thinking that the younger generations are lost generations and we can't get them back," Father Nahrgang said. "But God is ever-ready to reach out and touch people's lives through His grace and through these time-tested sacramentals."

What makes the Miraculous Medal so special is that its design came straight from heaven, much like the Divine Mercy image, he said.

"This medal is a reproduction of a manifestation from heaven of our Blessed Mother — that's what makes this medal so extra special. This was not masterminded by a human being.

"It was masterminded by God." ✝

LEARN MORE: To hear Father Nahrgang's talks, learn more about the Miraculous Medal initiative, or donate to help it continue, visit dphx.org/Mary.





YEARS OF SEARCHING CULMINATE IN CONVERSION AND THE

birth of a future bishop

BY JOYCE CORONEL

Joyce Coronel is a writer for Together Let Us Go Forth.

SITTING IN HER QUIET FRONT ROOM INSIDE A MODEST HOME ON A TREE-LINED STREET IN CHANDLER, JOAN WALL, MOTHER OF BISHOP JAMES S. WALL OF THE DIOCESE OF GALLUP, DESCRIBES AN EARLY GLIMPSE INSIDE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. SHE WAS 11 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME. ▸





Raised as a Methodist in La Grande, Oregon, she recalls there was just one Catholic church in town.

"I was always kind of fascinated by Catholics because, well, what were they doing?" Joan says. "I remember one time walking home and the door was kind of open. I peeked in, and it looked really different than my Methodist church did."

An elder cousin Joan idolized was married in the Catholic Church. "I thought it was so interesting that she had the courage to become Catholic," she says with a laugh. "But she seemed very happy with it." The couple went on to have nine children.

And then came Joan's college years at Western New Mexico University. "There were maybe only one or two Catholics," Joan says, but she found someone else who was fascinated by the Catholic religion.

"So, we went down to the Catholic church and met the priest and talked to him a little bit about becoming Catholic. We never went back, but I do remember him explaining the Trinity with a shamrock. It was the first time I'd ever heard it explained that way."

A few months later, Jim Wall, the man who would one day become her husband, asked her out on a date. James Wall, Sr., would go on to become a high school teacher, plus a track and football coach. He died in 1999.

"It turned out that he really liked the Catholic Church, and he went every Sunday evening with his friends and had the whole time he'd been in college and while he was in the Marine Corps," Joan says. The couple married later that year in a ceremony at Joan's home, with a Methodist minister presiding.

For a while, after the wedding, the couple attended a Catholic church. "And then I was ready to go one Sunday, and my husband said, 'Oh, I think I'll sleep in,' and that was the end of it." By the time they had two children, Joan says she told her husband the children needed to learn about God. For a short stint, Joan took them to an Episcopal church.

National tragedy sparks conversion

Then came the move to Chinle, Arizona, the center of the Navajo Nation. It was the early 1960s, and Jim was hired as a teacher and coach at the public high school. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963 deeply affected Joan.

"I remember watching his funeral on TV, and I thought, 'I need to be a Catholic. That's just the only thing there is.' It just called to me, and I said to my husband, 'When we get back home, do you care if I go to the Catholic church and ask a priest to come talk to us?' And he said, 'That would be fine.'" The couple had three children at the time.

> **"I NEED TO BE A CATHOLIC. THAT'S JUST THE ONLY THING THERE IS. IT JUST CALLED TO ME."**

She didn't even know where the Catholic church was in Chinle, but she looked it up and got directions to Our Lady of Fatima Church from a friend.

"There's a road leading up to it, and you just didn't really see it from the road if you weren't looking for it, so I went up there."

Finding the door of what seemed to be the rectory, Joan knocked and then stood, waiting.

"This priest answered. And I said, 'You know, I wondered, would it be a problem if you came and talked to my husband and me about the Catholic Church?' 'Oh,' he said. 'Yes, I'd be glad to.' And later I realized, that's what they live for, those things."

Once a week, Father Ivo Zircabach came and sat at the dining room table with Joan and Jim, explaining the faith. He kicked off the catechesis by delving into the mystery of the Eucharist. Joan says the young priest's explanation finally addressed a nagging question she'd posed to her Methodist Sunday School teacher years earlier.

"We were reading John where Jesus says, 'You have to eat My flesh and drink My blood or you do not have Me in you,' and the people all just left. And I said to my Sunday School teacher, 'Why didn't He go after them and say, 'No, no, I just mean that as a symbol.'" The teacher replied that she didn't really know, and Joan had always wondered about it.

"Well, Father Ivo, on our first night, he started with the Gospel of John, and he explained that, in the Catholic Church, that really is the body and blood of Christ. And it's like, 'Oh. This is the pinnacle of everything and

Getty Images/NooMUboN





so all the rest of it must be true. I don't know what it is, but I think I'm ready to do this.' The question I had for 10 or 12 years was finally answered."

Future shepherd

It was during these months of instruction that Joan became pregnant with the baby who would one day become Bishop James S. Wall. Because they weren't sure that Joan had been validly baptized earlier in life, she and her husband received the sacrament of Baptism on Holy Thursday in 1964. They were confirmed three weeks later when Bishop Bernard Espelage of the Diocese of Gallup visited Our Lady of Fatima Church.

A few months later, the couple welcomed their youngest son.

Born a few weeks early in October 1964, the future bishop of Gallup, James S. Wall, nearly died within the first hour of life. He was baptized in the hospital where he was born.

Joan told her son after he became a priest: "You know, you didn't stand a chance. You had so much grace poured out on you!"

Joan and her husband eventually had six children in all, three sons and three daughters.

When her son, then-Father Jim, received the news he had been appointed bishop of the Diocese of Gallup, he called Joan to tell her he needed to see her. The pair had lunch at Liberty Market in downtown Gilbert, the same spot Joan and her husband stopped for groceries when they first arrived in the East Valley decades previously.

> **"YOU KNOW, YOU DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE. YOU HAD SO MUCH GRACE POURED OUT ON YOU!"**

The news of her son's elevation to bishop was stunning, Joan notes.

"He told me, and I thought my heart was going to stop. And he said he thought for a minute he'd killed his mother," Joan chuckles.

So what kind of child was Bishop Wall growing up?

"He was just a run-of-the-mill kid growing up," Joan says with a laugh. She pauses, thinking back.

"He did do one thing that nobody else did. He used to get my old Bible that I'd gotten in the fifth grade from the Methodist church, and he would go out in the backyard. He would have church, and he'd be the priest. He's the only one of all of them who ever did anything like that."

And just how did she manage to raise a young man who would eventually bear the miter and crozier?

"We always gathered for dinner every night," Joan says. "I just think that is one of the biggest things you can do for your family is all gather together at least once." They prayed grace before meals, and Joan says she and her husband made sure the children attended religious instruction classes, then known as CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine).

In the end, though, Joan cautions, "It's up to God. But I think the biggest thing is, you honor priests, and you honor the Church. Maybe you're unhappy about something and you talk about it, but you don't let your kids hear you running the Church down.

"I think if eventually they're called, the ground will be fertile there so they can do it and feel comfortable about doing it." ✝



Risen from the ashes: St. Joseph's new church Is a symbol of hope after devastating fire

BY TONY GUTIÉRREZ, *THE CATHOLIC SUN*

St. Joseph Parish in North Phoenix has much in common with the mythical bird that is the namesake of the city where it is located. Where a devastating fire burned its former church to the ground May 1, 2019 — the feast of St. Joseph the Worker — a beautiful new structure now stands in its place.

"Doesn't a sacred building as beautiful as this inspire us to love Christ with fresh enthusiasm?" asked Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted during his homily when he dedicated the new church Jan. 8. "What happened in the less than three years since the fire is a testament to the power of Christ at work in a community of people alive in faith."

Macbeth Torno, a member of the parish's Filipino community who has been attending St. Joseph since the late 1980s, remembered seeing the aftermath of the fire as firefighters were putting it out, tearfully telling the *Sun* at the time that it was "true devastation." Being able to worship in the new church was emotional for her, she said, to see the fruits of the community working together.

From the beginning, the rebuild was entrusted to St. Joseph, said Parochial Administrator Father Reggie Carreon. That most of the construction happened during the Year of St. Joseph is fitting, he said, noting that the parish did a consecration to St. Joseph during the year, and he also did one independently.

In his homily, Bishop Olmsted commended parishioners for not fixating on their loss and for trusting in Jesus.

"With God's grace, you have conquered discouragement. You built something beautiful for God and for generations to come," he added. "What happens in this building will attune hearts to the needs of our brothers and sisters. For the Lamb of God Whom we encounter here in sacred mysteries will be our strength. He will fill our hearts with love, so that we may give it away with joy."

Read the full story at catholicsun.org.

Married man becomes first Melkite Catholic priest ordained in Arizona

BY TONY GUTIÉRREZ

Father Zyad Abyad recently became the first Melkite Catholic priest to be ordained in Arizona during a Divine Liturgy at St. John of the Desert Melkite Catholic Parish Jan. 9, the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Being an Eastern rite Catholic, he is also now among only a handful of married Catholic priests serving in the Valley.

The Melkite Catholic Church is one of 23 Eastern Catholic Churches that are in full communion with Rome. As such, all sacraments are valid, and attending a Sunday Divine Liturgy and receiving the Eucharist counts for a Sunday obligation.

Traditionally, Melkite priests could be married, though bishops are appointed from among celibate priests. Until 2014, however, married Eastern Catholic men were restricted from being ordained in the U.S., when the Congregation for Eastern Churches formally lifted the ban.

"In 2014, I wasn't thinking about myself. If it was going to happen, God was going to make it happen," recalled Father Zyad. However, "it was a joyous occasion for the whole Church, because we're more free to be who we are."

The Melkite Catholic Church has one eparchy — or diocese — in the United States, the Eparchy of Newton, based in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. The Melkite Church traces its origins to the Church of Antioch.

Father Zyad was born in Indianapolis in 1978 to Palestinian immigrant parents. Because there were no Melkite parishes where he was raised, he was baptized in a Roman Catholic parish and was unfamiliar with his Melkite roots. It wasn't until he moved to Arizona and met Father Bob Skagen, a bi-ritual priest of the Eparchy of Newton and the Diocese of Phoenix, that he learned more about his heritage and began attending St. John.

"When I first started coming to church here, I fell in love with it almost immediately," he said.

While discerning his vocation, he met his wife Jocelyn, and the couple married in 2010. They have six children — including Jocelyn's two older daughters from a previous marriage that was annulled — with a seventh on the way. Shortly after their marriage, Father Zyad entered diaconal formation, and his 2014 ordination was also a first of its kind in Arizona.

In his homily, Bishop Nicholas J. Samra of the Eparchy of Newton noted that while some parishes in the country have never produced a vocation although they are more than 100 years old, the community at St. John was able to nurture a vocation in fewer than 40 years of existence.

"A healthy, holy church produces vocations," he said. "[Father Zyad] heard God calling at some point in his life, and he accepted that call and, little by little, did all the studies necessary, served in the Church, became a minister among you, as one of you. It's because of your holy community that we see this happening today."



St. Bernadette Church's beautified interior meant to draw faithful closer to Christ

BY TONY GUTIÉRREZ, *THE CATHOLIC SUN*

SCOTTSDALE – Not paying attention to the Scripture readings or homily might be forgiven at St. Bernadette Parish in North Scottsdale. It's easy to be captivated by the beauty of the newly installed art inside the church, which in itself serves a homiletic purpose.

"Before the formal written *catechism*, the way that [the Church] would catechize would be through art," said the Very Rev. Don Kline, pastor of St. Bernadette and *vicar forane* of the diocese's Northeast Deanery.

St. Bernadette was established as a parish in 1995, but it did not have a permanent worship space until 2016 and wasn't dedicated until May 25, 2017. The late Father Pete Rossa, who was pastor at the time, wanted to build a beautiful church.

"If I were to die tomorrow, it would be my sincerest hope not that I be remembered for this church, but that I would be remembered for bringing you closer to Jesus Christ because that is our mission, that is our hope, that is our longing at the core of our faith," Father Rossa said at the time the church was opened. He died just over a year later, on Sept. 13, 2017. While much of the interior remained bare, it had been Father Rossa's vision to continue to beautify the church.

"It's so, so beautiful, and it's such a great tribute to Father Pete, who first had the idea that we really needed to have beauty in order to evangelize today. He was so convinced of that," Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted told the *Sun* in an interview. "He built the church, but this was all waiting to be done. So, I'm so grateful that Father Kline has carried through with such fidelity to the original vision, but we didn't imagine it would be even more beautiful than we thought."

Deacon Peter Auriemma said the new art's impact on people is at the "heart of evangelization" and serves as a catechetical tool for Catholics.

"Above all, it's the sense of returning to true beauty as being the portal to the divine — the gateway to encountering God," he said. "The beauty here in this church speaks for itself."

Read the full story at catholicsun.org. ✝

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Items for the calendar of events are due eight weeks prior to publication: catholicsun.org/events/community/add. All calendar items must include the name, date, time, address of the event and a phone number or website for additional information.



Palm Sunday

Celebrate Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem by waving palms and singing Hosanna. These blessed palms may adorn your home and will become next year's ashes. **April 10. Find a parish near you at dphx.org/parishes.**

Chrism Mass

During the annual chrism Mass, all of the clergy from the diocese gather to celebrate the liturgy and renew the promises made during their ordinations. The bishop will bless and consecrate the oil of the sick, oil of catechumens, and holy chrism. **April 11 at 6 p.m., Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral.**





Holy Thursday

Holy Thursday commemorates Jesus' institution of the Eucharist, the priesthood, and the Mass. During this representation of the Last Supper, you will see the washing of the feet of 12 members of the congregation, along with a eucharistic procession as Jesus is exposed for adoration late into the night. Catholics are invited to pray with the Lord as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. **April 14. Find a parish near you at dphx.org/parishes.**

Good Friday Rosary for Life

Join us Good Friday for our Rosary for Life with Bishop Olmsted! We pray on this holy day that the love and mercy of Christ will pour out on those men and women considering abortion and encourage them to choose life for their pre-born children. **April 15 at 11 a.m., Glendale Planned Parenthood.**





Good Friday

Good Friday is the one day in the year that no Masses are celebrated. In remembrance of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, Catholics gather for a Communion service and to venerate the Holy Cross. Join us live from Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral on AZTV Channel 7, YouTube, or Facebook, or attend in person at your local parish. **April 15. Find a parish near you at dphx.org/parishes.**



Easter Vigil

Holy Saturday commemorates Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death. The vigil is divided into four parts: the Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At this Mass, those who have been preparing to become Catholic fully enter the Church. **April 16. Find a parish near you at dphx.org/parishes.**

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is the greatest of all Sundays, and Easter Time is the most important of all liturgical times. Easter is the celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, culminating in His Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. Join us live from Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral on AZTV Channel 7, YouTube, or Facebook, or attend in person at your local parish. **April 16. Find a parish near you at dphx.org/parishes.**

Mothers' Day

Let us pray for all mothers: For our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love, For mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them, And for mothers who have died, that God may bring them into the joy of his kingdom.

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you watch over Your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. **May 8.**



Graduations

Congratulations to the class of 2022! Bourgade Catholic, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 19 at 6 p.m. Commencement: May 19 at 7:30 p.m., St. Gregory Catholic Church.** Brophy College Preparatory, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 20 at 7 p.m., St. Francis Xavier. Commencement: May 21 at 9 a.m., Robson Gymnasium.** John Paul II Catholic, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 12 at 6 p.m. Commencement: May 13 at 10 a.m., John Paul II Catholic High School.** Notre Dame College Preparatory, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 19 at 6 p.m., St. Patrick's Catholic Community. Commencement: May 20 at 7 p.m., Bemis Field.** Seton Catholic Prep, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 16. Commencement: May 17.** St. Mary's Catholic, **Baccalaureate and Graduation: May 17 at 5 p.m., St. Thomas Aquinas.** Xavier College Prep, **Baccalaureate Mass: May 9 at 7 p.m., St. Francis Xavier Church. Commencement: May 14 at 7:45 a.m., Andersen Hall, St. Francis Xavier Church.**

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Parenting Smarts: Local Catholic mom and childhood development specialist Dr. MaryRuth Hackett, Ph.D. shares the faith and science that go into raising happy, healthy kids of all ages.



Ordination to the transitional diaconate

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted and Bishop Eduardo A. Nevares are pleased to announce the ordination of Gabriel Sabado and Miguel Solis to the transitional diaconate. All are invited to watch the broadcast live on AZTV Channel 7, Facebook, or YouTube, and please pray for vocations! **May 29 at 9 a.m., Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral.**

Ordination to the priesthood

Bishop Olmsted and Bishop Nevares are pleased to announce the ordination of Deacon Anthony Dang, Deacon Harold Escarcega, Deacon Marvin Soto and Brother John of the Cross Costantino, FHS, to the sacred order of the priesthood. Celebrate with us, and please pray for vocations! Get more info at dphx.org/ordination. Watch the Mass of ordination online on Facebook or YouTube live. **June 4 at 10 a.m., Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral.**

Fathers' Day

Today, we pray for all fathers: For our fathers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them respect and love, For fathers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them. And for fathers who have died, that God may bring them into the joy of his kingdom.

God our Father, in Your wisdom and love You made all things. Bless these men, that they may be strengthened as Christian fathers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honor them always with a spirit of profound respect. **June 19.** ✝



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Iglesia católica sí es verdaderamente el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. Y fue así como entendí, "Oh", esto es la cumbre de todo, entonces el resto debe ser verdadero. No sé qué sea, pero creo que estoy lista para hacer esto.' La pregunta que tenía por diez u doce años finalmente fue respondida."

Futuro pastor

Fue durante estos meses de enseñanza que Joan se embarazó del bebé que algún día se convertiría en el Obispo James S. Wall. Porque no estaban seguros de que el bautizo de Joan, años atrás, haya sido válido, ella y su esposo, recibieron el sacramento de Bautismo el día de Jueves Santo del año 1964. Fueron confirmados tres semanas después cuando el Obispo Bernard Espelage de la Diócesis de Gallup visitó la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Fátima.

Algunos meses después la pareja recibió a su hijo menor.

Nacido prematuramente en octubre de 1964, el futuro Obispo de Gallup, James S. Wall, por poco muere durante su primera hora de vida. Fue bautizado en el hospital donde nació.

Joan le dijo a su hijo después de que se volviera sacerdote: "Sabes, casi no resistías. ¡Se derramó mucha gracia sobre ti!

Finalmente, Joan y su esposo tuvieron seis hijos: tres varones y tres hijas.

Cuando su hijo, el Padre Jim, en ese tiempo, recibió la llamada de que sería asignado como obispo de la Diócesis de Gallup, el llamó a Joan para decirle que la necesitaba ver. Ellos dos almorzaron en Liberty Market en el centro de Gilbert, el mismo lugar donde Joan y su esposo pararon a comprar comestibles cuando acababan de llegar al Este del valle décadas antes.

Joan mencionó que la noticia de que su hijo sería nombrado obispo la impresionó.

"Él me contó y pensé que mi corazón iba a detenerse. Él dijo que por un momento pensó que había matado a su madre," Joan dijo riéndose.

¿Qué tipo de hijo fue el obispo Wall al crecer?

"Fue un niño típico al crecer," Joan dijo riéndose. Tomó una pausa, pensando en el pasado.

"Si hacía algo que nadie más hacía. Solía agarrar mi vieja biblia que había obtenido en el quinto grado, de la iglesia metodista, y salía al patio de atrás. Él celebraba misa, y él era el sacerdote. Fue el único de todos que hizo algo así."

¿Cómo fue que ella pudo educar a un jovencito que después obtendría la mitra y el báculo?

"Cada noche nos reuníamos para cenar" dijo Joan. "Creo que reunirse en familia tan solo una vez es una de las cosas más grandiosas que puedes hacer." Oraban antes de cada comida y Joan dice que ella y su esposo se aseguraban de que sus hijos asistieran a clases de educación religiosa, antes conocida como CDC, las iniciales de la Cofradía de la Doctrina Católica.

Aunque finalmente, dice Joan, "Es decisión de Dios. Pero creo que la cosa más importante es honrar a los sacerdotes y honrar a la iglesia. Quizás algo te moleste y lo platiques, pero no dejes que tus hijos te escuchen menospreciando a la iglesia.

Eventualmente, creo que si son llamados, la tierra será fértil allí, de esta manera lo podrán hacer y se sentirán bien haciéndolo." ✝

"SABES, CASI NO RESISTÍAS. ¡SE DERRAMO MUCHA GRACIA SOBRE TI!"

Luego llegaron los años universitarios de Joan en la universidad de Western New Mexico. “Solo había quizás uno u dos católicos”, dijo Joan, pero había encontrado a alguien más fascinado con la religión católica.

“Fuimos a la iglesia católica y nos reunimos con el sacerdote, le hablamos un poco acerca de convertirnos en católicos. Nunca regresamos, pero sí recuerdo que nos enseñó acerca de la Trinidad con un trébol; fue la primera vez que lo escuché explicado de esa manera.”

Pocos meses después, Jim Wall, el hombre que después se convertiría en su esposo, la invitó a salir a una cita. El señor, James Wall, se convirtió en un maestro de preparatoria, más aparte entreno equipos de carreras y fútbol americano. Se murió en el año 1999.

“Resultó que le encantó la Iglesia católica e iba cada domingo por la tarde con sus amigos durante su tiempo en la universidad y durante su tiempo en el Cuerpo de la Marina de Estados Unidos,” dice Joan. La pareja se casó más tarde ese año en una ceremonia en casa de Joan, presidida por un pastor metodista.

Algún tiempo después de la boda, la pareja asistió a la iglesia católica. “Estaba lista para ir un domingo y mi esposo dijo, ‘Creo que me quedaré a dormir’, y eso fue el fin.” Cuando ya tenían dos hijos, Joan dice que le dijo a su esposo que ya era tiempo de que los niños aprendieran sobre Dios. Por un periodo pequeño Joan los llevó a una iglesia episcopal.

Tragedia nacional provoca conversión

Después se mudaron a Chinle, Arizona, el centro de la Nación Navajo. Eran los años 1960s y Jim fue contratado para enseñar y entrenar en la preparatoria pública. El asesinato del presidente John F. Kennedy en noviembre de 1936 afectó a Joan bastante.

“Recuerdo ver su funeral en la TV y pensé, ‘Necesito ser católica. Eso es todo lo que hay.’ Me sentí llamada y le dije a mi esposo, ‘Cuando regresemos a casa, ¿Te importaría si voy a la iglesia católica y le pido al sacerdote que venga a hablar con nosotros?’. Él dijo, “No hay problema.’” La pareja tenía tres hijos en ese tiempo.

Ella ni siquiera sabía la dirección de la iglesia católica en Chinle, pero la busco y una amiga le proporcionó la dirección de la Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de Fátima.

“Hay una carretera que lleva hasta allá, pero no es muy visible desde la carretera si no la estás buscando.”

Encontró la puerta de lo que parecía ser la rectoría, Joan tocó y se quedó esperando.



“El sacerdote respondió y le dije, “Sabe, ¿He estado pensando si no fuera un problema que usted viniera a hablar conmigo y mi esposo acerca de la Iglesia Católica?” ‘Oh’, replicó. ‘Sí, me encantaría.’ Después me di cuenta de que ellos viven para estas cosas.”

Semanalmente, el Padre Ivo Zirabach iba y se sentaba en el comedor de Joan y Jim, explicándoles la fe. Empezó a catequizar profundizando sobre el misterio de la Eucaristía. Joan dijo que la explicación del sacerdote joven finalmente había tratado una pregunta persistente que le había hecho a su maestro metodista que le daba clases religiosas años atrás.

“Estábamos leyendo el evangelio de Juan donde dice Jesús, ‘Deben de comer de mi carne y tomar de mi sangre o no me tendrán en ustedes,’ y noté que toda la gente se fue. Le pregunté a mi maestro que me daba clases religiosas, ‘Porqué no fuiste detrás de ellos y les dijiste, ‘No, no, solo es un símbolo.’” El maestro respondió que no sabía y Joan se quedó con la duda.

“Bueno, el padre Ivo, en nuestra primera noche, empezó con el evangelio de Juan y explicó que en la

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AÑOS DE BÚSQUEDA SE CULMINAN EN UNA CONVERSIÓN Y EN EL NACIMIENTO DE UN *futuro obispo*

POR JOYCE CORONEL, JUNTOS SIGAMOS ADELANTE

SENTADA EN SU CALLADO CUARTO QUE DABA AL FRENTE DE SU HUMILDE CASA SITUADA EN UNA CALLE CON LÍNEAS DE ÁRBOLES EN CHANDLER, JOAN WALL, MADRE DEL OBISPO JAMES S. WALL DE LA DIÓCESIS DE GALLUP, DESCRIBE UNA TEMPRANA OBSERVACIÓN DENTRO DE LA IGLESIA CATÓLICA. ELLA TENÍA DOCE AÑOS EN ESE TIEMPO.

Educada como metodista en La Grande, Oregon, solo recuerda una iglesia católica en el pueblo.

"Siempre me fascinaron los católicos, porque bueno, ¿Qué hacían?", dice Joan. "Recuerdo una vez cuando iba caminando hacia mi casa y la puerta estaba media abierta. Me asomé y se miraba muy diferente a como mi iglesia metodista se veía."

Joan admiraba a una prima mayor que se había casado por la iglesia católica. "Pensé que era muy interesante como ella tuvo el valor de convertirse en católica," dice riendo. "Pero parecía muy feliz con ello." La pareja después tuvo nueve hijos. ▸





marchan con un poco de gozo."

Small les muestra que ella también luce la medalla idéntica con el cordón negro. "No se mancha. Ha sido bendecida por un padre. Puedes bañarte con ella. Te la puedes dejar puesta, y María estará contigo. Solo suplica su ayuda en tu jornada."

"Tuvimos a una mujer en diciembre, y se puso muy sensible cuando lo hicimos. Se la coloqué, y empezó a llorar. Me abrazó,", dijo Small.

"Es importante tomar en cuenta que la gracia primaria de la medalla es gracia de conversión, la gracia que gira los corazones hacia Dios," dijo el Padre Nahrgang. "Es gracia que quita al hombre del pecado y lo mueve hacia Dios."

En un tiempo donde muchos, particularmente los jóvenes, están atrapados en desesperación y decepción, la Medalla Milagrosa ofrece un remedio poderoso. La pandemia ha forzado a muchos estudiantes y a trabajadores a un modo virtual y las consecuencias todavía no son tan claras. La Medalla Milagrosa es tangible, un verdadero regalo que alcanza a las almas con mensaje de fe y esperanza.

"Creo que más y más, en América, y especialmente en nuestra juventud, nos hemos sumergido en estos mundos virtuales que desvían nuestra perspectiva y finalmente no son buenos para nuestra salud espiritual," dijo el Padre Nahrgang.

Las medallas son "una manera tangible de conectar las cosas de Dios y el Reino de Dios y la vida de gracia que yo creo ayuda a cambiar nuestra perspectiva a donde necesita estar, donde se está discerniendo y siguiendo el plan de Dios para nosotros en este mundo físico, y anclarnos en Él."

Mientras lamentamos el innumerable éxodo de gente joven en la iglesia, el proyecto de Medalla Milagrosa es una luz de esperanza.

"Creo que a veces podemos caer en una manera distorsionada de pensar que las generaciones jóvenes son generaciones perdidas y que no pueden ser recuperadas," dijo el Padre Nahrgang. "Pero Dios está listo para alcanzar y tocar las vidas de personas por medio de su gracia y por medio de estos sacramentales que han superado el paso del tiempo.

Lo que hace a la Medalla Milagrosa tan especial es que el diseño viene directamente del cielo, parecido a la imagen de la Divina Misericordia, dijo él.

"La medalla es una reproducción de una manifestación del Cielo de nuestra Santa Madre – eso es lo que hace a esta medalla súper especial. Esto no fue planeado por un ser humano.

Fue planeado por Dios." ✝

APRENDE MÁS

Para escuchar las pláticas del padre Nahrgang, aprender más acerca de la iniciativa de la Medalla Milagrosa, o donar para ayudar a que continúe, visite dphx.org/Mary.





INSPIRANDO LA ESPERANZA

El Padre Nahrgang predica sobre las apariciones Marianas a Santa Catalina Labouré y luego distribuye la Medalla Milagrosa a los estudiantes cerca del final de Misa, orando, "Te encomiendo a Jesús por medio de las amables manos de María", mientras coloca la medalla sobre la cabeza de los estudiantes.

Jaime Bescak, la directora de la escuela católica St. John Bosco, donde asisten 300 estudiantes, describió el evento como una manera maravillosa de que los niños crecieran en su fe.

"Les dio un sentido de esperanza," dijo Bescak. "Nuestros estudiantes y nuestro mundo han pasado por tanto estos últimos años. Han pasado muertes, han tenido preocupaciones – más preocupaciones de las que debería tener un niño – y creo especialmente de nuestros estudiantes de la secundaria, que se están preparando para ir a la preparatoria, saber esta historia los ayuda a entender que no importa que tan joven seas, no tienes que ser mayor para tener a Jesús. No tienes que ser mayor para que te suceda un milagro.

"Nos puede pasar a cualquiera de nosotros."

El Padre Nahrgang ha juntado a equipos de voluntarios para medir el cordón negro hecho de cera y cortarlo en una medida de 27 pulgadas para que las medallas hechas de níquel puedan ser puestas para crear cadenas.

"Estas medallas no son 'ostentosas'," dijo el Padre Nahrgang. "Se trata de gracia. Y derivan su poder de la vida, muerte y resurrección de Jesús."

En las apariciones a Santa Catalina Labouré que tomaron lugar en Francia en el 1830, la Virgen María recalcó que los que usarán la medalla bendita en sus cuellos recibirán muchas gracias. Las gracias principalmente son de conversión, y el Padre Nahrgang siempre les dice a sus oyentes que originalmente la medalla era reconocida como la Medalla de la Inmaculada Concepción. Ocurrieron tantos milagros que rápidamente la apodaron como la Medalla Milagrosa.

LLEVÁNDOLA A LAS CALLES

La visión de distribuir las medallas va más allá todavía. El Padre Nahrgang ha comenzado a distribuir la Medalla Milagrosa en las parroquias después de la Misa Dominical. Otro grupo, el grupo de Sal y Luz de la Catedral San Simón y San Judas, han empezado a dar las medallas a motociclistas pasajeros, peatones y a gente de la calle desde hace meses, con la bendición del Padre Nahrgang. Barb Small es una de los voluntarios de ese esfuerzo.

"Ha sido una linda experiencia tener la posibilidad de regalar la Medalla Milagrosa a la gente en la calle," dijo Small. "Les preguntamos, '¿Está bien si le ponemos esto?' Muchos están dispuestos y dicen que sí. Se





"Fue una inspiración muy poderosa porque pasó casi después de que tuviera una experiencia personal con mi papá, con la Medalla Milagrosa," dijo el Padre Nahrgang. Sus padres, no siendo católicos, fueron a visitarlo a Washington, D.C., y los llevo a recorrer la Basílica de la Inmaculada Concepción, compartiéndoles la historia de como la bienaventurada Virgen María le apareció a Santa Catalina Labouré y le dio la visión de la medalla.

Después de recorrer la basílica, el Padre Nahrgang le enseñó la tienda de regalos a su madre y señaló a la Medalla Milagrosa.

"Deberías comprar una para tu papá," Cindy Nahrgang le dijo a su hijo. Tuvo que tomar dinero prestado de ella para hacerlo. "Era un pobre novicio en ese tiempo," dijo el Padre Nahrgang, riéndose entre dientes. "No llevaba dinero conmigo."

Jim Nahrgang comenzó a usar la Medalla Milagrosa esa Navidad. "Y la ha usado desde ese día," añadió el padre Nahrgang. "Estoy convencido de que esto lo llevó a entrar a la fe católica." Él no sabía hasta algunas semanas después, mientras miraba su calendario, que el día que tuvo el impulso de compartir la visión con sus padres se celebraba el Día de la Medalla Milagrosa, el 27 de noviembre.

Algunas semanas después, a principios del año 2011, recibió la inspiración de compartir la medalla con los niños de la Diócesis de Arlington. De este modo, empezó la jornada, llena de gracia, que todavía se desarrolla frente a él.

Cinco días después de ser ordenado al sacerdocio para la Diócesis de Phoenix, sintió que el Señor le llamaba a una orden de sacerdocio diocesana y no religiosa. El papá del Padre Nahrgang dijo que estaba listo para convertirse en católico.

El verano pasado, el Obispo Thomas J. Olmsted, nombró al Padre Nahrgang como Vicario de Evangelización y Educación de la Diócesis de Phoenix. Es por este rol que ha estallado y se ha podido compartir la historia de Nuestra Señora y de la Medalla Milagrosa con visitas a 41 escuelas primarias y preparatorias católicas en la Diócesis de Phoenix durante el año escolar del 2020-2021 – con algunos 14,000 estudiantes. ▸







Collares de la Medalla Milagrosa, llenos de gracia, inunden a la Diócesis de Phoenix con fe y esperanza

Rodeado de pilas de cajas de cartón con miles de cadenas de Medallas Milagrosas, el padre John Nahrgang recuerda cuando era seminarista y recibió la inspiración de darles medallas a los niños de la escuela primaria.

POR JOYCE CORONEL,

Juntos Sigamos Adelante





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VENERABLE MARÍA DE ÁGREDA

Siglos antes de que alguien podría inventar reuniones de Zoom o una realidad virtual, una humilde monja española de alguna manera inexplicable logro regresar el tiempo y espacio para evangelizar a los nativos americanos en el Suroeste. Y aunque solo hablaba español, de alguna manera la entendían en su lengua nativa.



POR EL PADRE JOHN NAHRGANG,

Vicario para la evangelización y la educación, Diócesis de Phoenix.

La Venerable María de Ágreda, conocida en la vida religiosa como la hermana María de Jesús, era una monja concepcionista en Ágreda, España en la primer parte del siglo XVII, un tiempo donde los misioneros buscaban traer el mensaje salvífico de Jesucristo a la gente nativa del hostil desierto del Suroeste americano.

El padre franciscano Alonso de Benavides fue autorizado para llevar a 26 misioneros a Nuevo México con los gastos pagados por el rey de España. La enfermedad y la muerte destruyó al grupo que tenían que ser evangelizadores, dejando a solo algunos pocos para servir en el vasto territorio de la misión.

A lo largo de los años, miembros de la tribu Jumano, repetidamente se acercaban a los franciscanos, preguntándoles si mandarían a frailes a sus pueblos para instruir y bautizarlos, pero nunca había alguien más a quien enviar.

Después el confesor de la hermana María de Ágreda le escribió al arzobispo a España, informándole que la hermana religiosa decía que ella viajaba de una manera sobrenatural al nuevo mundo y compartía el mensaje evangélico. El arzobispo Manso y Zúñiga empezaron una investigación.



El padre Alonso después escribió que los Jumanos anunciaron que miraban a una mujer joven vestida con el habito de monja "siempre predicando" entre ellos, pidiéndoles que fueran en busca de misioneros para que pudieran ser bautizados.

Enfrentando tan abrumadora evidencia de los milagros de evangelización por parte de la hermana María de Ágreda, los franciscanos se inspiraron con su gran fervor. Convencidos de la omnipotencia del Dios del universo, no dudaron en aceptar que Él pudiera suspender las leyes de la física, para que la hermana María de Ágreda pudiera traer el amor de Jesucristo a las habitantes del Suroeste americano – siglos antes de que se crearan las reuniones virtuales. ✝

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¡Jesús *es el* Señor!

Cuando tenía 20 años y estaba recién casado, recuerdo que un día tuve una conversación con mi esposa, Rosemary. La conversación fue más o menos así:

"Cuando era pequeño, solía tener unos sueños terribles entre el bien y el mal – recuerdo en particular que había algo maligno tratando de lastimarme – algo realmente malo. Incluso despertaba de mi sueño y mi cuerpo estaba paralizado y no podía moverme. Pensaba que estaba despierto, pero en realidad continuaba durmiendo. Todavía tengo esos sueños, pero no tan a menudo."

Rosemary respondió: "Bueno, ¿y qué es lo que haces al respecto? ¿Rezas?"

Le respondí: "Bueno, en realidad no. Por lo general, intento simplemente luchar contra el mal. No creo que no rece a propósito – simplemente no me acuerdo de rezar."

Ahora, es importante saber que mi esposa se convirtió al Catolicismo después de casarnos – ¡era Evangélica Bautista Sureña! No puedo tomar el crédito por su conversión – fueron un sacerdote Irlandés y una monja muy persistentes – ¡pero esa es otra historia! ¡Ja!

En todo caso, me dijo algo muy notable que nunca olvidaré, me respondió, "Cande siempre que estés en un lugar de oscuridad o miedo – ya sea despierto o dormido, debes de recordar decir: ¡Jesús es el Señor! Su nombre obligará a todos y a todo a ponerse en orden – invocas su nombre para librar la batalla, y ahora mismo estás tratando de librar una batalla. ¡No podemos hacer nada sin Jesús!"

Como puede usted imaginar ¡me quedé muy sorprendido!

Así que, efectivamente ¡deseaba tener una pesadilla inmediatamente! No todos los días te vas a la cama con la esperanza de tener una pelea con el mal en tu sueño (no lo recomiendo – ¡Jajaja!), ¡pero lo hice! Pasaron unas cuantas semanas, pero ocurrió – tuve un sueño realmente malo, y me quedé paralizado en el sueño.

Usted lo adivinó, invoqué Su nombre y dije, "¡JESÚS ES EL SEÑOR!"

Inmediatamente pude mover el cuerpo (en mi sueño), el mal se retiró, ¡y pude despertarme! Estaba completamente energizado, y conocí el poder de Su nombre. Hasta el día de hoy utilizo esta oración, y se la he enseñado a mis hijas y a cualquiera otra persona a la que puedo.

El poder de su nombre, Jesús, me recuerda el primer párrafo del Evangelio de San Juan, el cual dice así:

"Al principio existía la Palabra, y la Palabra estaba junto a Dios, y la Palabra era Dios. Al principio estaba junto a Dios. Todas las cosas fueron hechas por medio de la Palabra y sin ella no se hizo nada de todo lo que existe. En ella estaba la vida, y la vida era la luz de los hombres. La luz brilla en las tinieblas, y las tinieblas no la percibieron." Juan 1:1-5

Se han escrito libros, sermones, retiros, disertaciones e innumerables comentarios sobre esta escritura, sin embargo, en última instancia, Juan está señalando a Jesús como Dios encarnado – ¡Es el Rey de todos los Reyes!

Lo invito a que comparta esta oración con quien le sea posible – es simple y real. Cuando avanzamos en la Misión de la Iglesia Católica, debemos estar preparados para una batalla espiritual. Porque nuestra lucha no es contra enemigos de carne y sangre, sino contra los espíritus del mal (Efesios 6:12) ¡y es importante que seamos capaces de protegernos a nosotros mismos y a los demás! ✝



ESCRITO POR CANDE DE LEÓN

Cande de León es el Director Ejecutivo de la Oficina de Mission Advancement de la Diócesis de Phoenix. Dirige a un equipo comprometido con el avance de la Misión de Cristo a través de la corresponsabilidad, la evangelización y la formación de discípulos.

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Jesús nos llama a tener valor al compartir nuestra fe

En fechas recientes he estado rezando la Oración de San Juan Pablo II para la Evangelización Católica. Esta oración nos recuerda nuestro papel como discípulos de Cristo. Permítanme compartir con ustedes dicha oración:

"Dios amoroso, Tu nos llamaste a cada uno de nosotros por nuestro nombre, y nos diste a tu único Hijo para salvarnos. En tu fidelidad, enviaste el Santo Espíritu para completar la misión de Jesús en medio de nosotros. Abre nuestros corazones a Jesús. Danos la valentía para hablar en su Nombre a todos los que están cerca de nosotros, y la generosidad de compartir Su amor con aquellos que están muy lejos. Rezamos para que cada persona en todo el mundo sea invitada a conocer Su amor insuperable. Que este amor transforme cada elemento de nuestra sociedad. Te lo pedimos por nuestro Señor Jesucristo, tu Hijo, que vive y reina contigo en la unidad del Espíritu Santo, Dios, por los siglos de los siglos. Amén"

Lo más destacado de esta oración son las palabras: "Danos la valentía para hablar en su Nombre a todos los que están cerca de nosotros."

Su nombre, "Jesús", tiene poder y autoridad inmenso – de hecho, San Pablo nos recuerda en su carta a los Filipenses (2:9-11), "Por eso, Dios lo exaltó y le dio el Nombre que está sobre todo nombre, para que, al nombre de Jesús, se doble toda rodilla en el cielo, en la tierra y en los abismos, y toda lengua proclame para gloria de Dios Padre: «Jesucristo es el Señor»."

Mi oración es que tanto usted como yo tengamos la valentía de conducir a nuestro prójimo a Jesús, honrando su Nombre y reconociendo que Él es la fuente de todo. Él es Dios con nosotros.

Para algunos de nosotros, el evangelizar a las personas que amamos y con las que nos relacionamos frecuentemente puede ser una tarea intimidante – puede que la inquietud y el miedo se hagan presente. Con frecuencia nos sentimos indignos de hablar en nombre de Jesús.

¡Pero es precisamente debido a eso que debemos armarnos de valor para pronunciar su Nombre, tal como lo dice la oración! Por supuesto, no somos dignos – todos somos pecadores redimidos por el Señor – pero por nuestro Bautismo y la muerte y Resurrección de Jesús, nos hemos convertido en Sus hijos adoptivos. Nuestro Señor nos ha hecho dignos de recibirlo en la Eucaristía y de ser Sus testigos ante los demás. Jesús se acerca constantemente a nosotros. Él es nuestro valor y nuestra fortaleza.

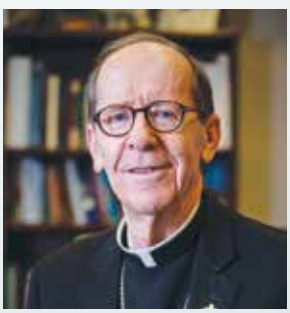
Al leer este ejemplar de la revista Together Let Us Go Forth ~ Juntos Sigamos Adelante, le invito a que encuentre algún artículo el cual pueda compartir con alguien, tal vez sea con un amigo, un familiar o un compañero de trabajo. Ore a Jesús y pregúntele con quién es que debiera de compartirlo. En seguida, entréguelo a esa persona con valor y humildad. Diga algo tal como: "¡Jesús movió mi corazón para compartir este articulo contigo!".

Tenga presente que, como Católicos bautizados, todos estamos llamados a evangelizar y formar discípulos. Durante los últimos dos mil años, las generaciones anteriores a nosotros han tenido la valentía de anunciar a Jesús a los que estaban cerca y a los que estaban lejos. Ahora nos toca a nosotros. ✝

Atentamente suyo en Cristo,

Thomas J Olmsted

El Reverendísimo Thomas J. Olmsted, Obispo de Phoenix



ESCRITO POR REVERENDÍSIMO THOMAS J. OLMSTED

El Reverendísimo Thomas J. Olmsted dirige la Diócesis de Phoenix desde diciembre del 2003.

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