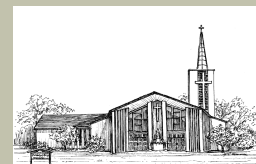


OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH NEWSLETTER



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH, 2 FREMONT AVENUE, PARK RIDGE, NJ 07656

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DAILY MASS Beyond the Obligation

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “Sunday ... is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church,” and that on “Sundays ... the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.”

But in Catholic churches where priests are available, small groups also gather to celebrate this Holy Sacrifice on the other six days of the week – beyond the obligation.

We are fortunate, of course, to live in an area with many churches and varied Mass schedules. So on those mornings that the early hours are not available to many regular attendees, there are later morning and noontime Masses for people to attend.

We have asked some of our own 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. daily Mass attendees to share what their special devotion to early morning Mass has meant for them. Why do they attend daily Mass?



Daily Mass at 6:30 a.m.

A parishioner who attends the 6:30 a.m. Mass wished to share the following thoughts.

Many years ago, I started attending daily Mass during Lent, and then during Advent. During that time, I began to realize that this was a perfect way to start the day. Thanking God for His many blessings on me and my family was quite easy. As it seemed to be the most natural thing to do, I continued going to daily Mass at the conclusion of Lent.

Daily Mass at 8:30 a.m.

To Jean Nicolich, attending daily Mass is an invitation to give glory to God, to thank Him for His blessings, to pray for special intentions as well as to gain indulgences. The added benefit is being able to start the day in the company of one's friends. The following are Jean's personal reflections:

I started going to Mass every day twenty-one years ago - after the passing of our beloved daughter, Terri. Accepting her illness was hard enough much less her death. I could not understand why my prayers and the prayers of family and friends had not been answered. Why would a sweet and loving mother be taken, leaving two babies who needed her?

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I then searched for answers while my grief journey continued. I chose to go to Mass every day because, deep down, I knew only God could help me through this sorrowful time in my life. I have always believed that God doesn't give a person more than he or she can handle.

As the years passed, I was able to smile again, to sing hymns and to accept God's plan. I came to a peaceful understanding of how my Terri's life had a purpose which was fulfilled. You see, Terri needed a bone marrow transplant from someone who matched her DNA. Unfortunately, although we held blood registry drives in three states, no match was found.

Terri was always so positive and was quick to remind us that someone else might find a perfect match, even if she didn't. Well, Terri was right. Seven other people were given a chance at life through a bone

marrow transplant that they received. Terri had a short life, yes, but her mission was accomplished.

Daily Mass has not only brought me closer to God and the saints, but I am also provided with a wonderful opportunity to interact with my 8:30 a.m. family of friends. We pray for each other's intentions, and then we socialize and enjoy a lot of laughs! Praise the Lord!

Daily Mass in Perspective

The Mass truly is "the perfect form of prayer." (Pope Paul VI). From the above witnesses, we begin to understand the transformative power of personal prayer and of prayer in community as well.

Daily Mass is offered in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart located near the front entrance of the church.

Our Lady of Mercy Academy 2011 National Blue Ribbon School



We are extremely proud to announce that Our Lady of Mercy Academy is one of 49 private schools and 255 public schools nationwide to be named a 2011 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education based on our overall academic excellence. The Secretary of Education stated, "National Blue Ribbon Schools are committed to accelerating student achievement and preparing students for success in college and careers. Their success is an example for others to follow".

One part of the selection criteria is that the school consistently achieves the highest nationally-normed performance levels in Math and English on national standardized tests. Our school was honored at a conference in Washington, DC on November 14th and 15th. Our Lady of Mercy Academy is co-sponsored by Our Lady of Mercy Parish and Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

Please visit our website at www.olmacademy.org for more information.

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Photographer: Rev. Robert T. Ulak

COME JOIN US TO WORK ON THE NEXT EDITION OF THE PARISH NEWSLETTER.

We're on the web. Visit us at www.urolm.org.

A Saint for Our Time

Trapped: St. Anthony to the Rescue

By: Celeste T. Villegas

While Vatican II has reminded Catholics that the central focus of the Church's prayer life and worship is the Eucharist, Catholic enthusiasm for devotion to the saints continues to be a popular Christian tradition.

For example, who hasn't asked St. Anthony of Padua, patron of lost items and many other causes, for help in finding something? Who has not heard of the amazing faith story and intercessory powers of this irresistible and universally loved saint? In inspiring and artistic renditions, St. Anthony is seen embracing the Christ Child, who appeared to him through a vision.

Devotion to saints may seem to be an ordinary path to holiness. However, our childlike belief in St. Anthony's intercession, as in those of other saintly men and women already enjoying the glorious presence of God, is still a prayer offered in faith and, in most cases, our hope will bring to reality God's saving action. We can bear witness to the fact that prayerful devotion to saints is a great source of calm in stressful times.

Yes, thirteen people trapped, for almost an hour, in an elevator shaft last June 4th (on a steamy Saturday afternoon) will be inclined to strongly agree.

After a much-delayed ending to a poll worker training at Hackensack Plaza One in the Board of Elections of Bergen County, for various reasons of their own, two men and eleven women (myself included) rushed into Elevator 2. That we were thirteen in number was a foreboding in itself.

When the operating panel placed us on the 3rd floor, suddenly there came a big, hard jolt. That

made the elevator go into full stop. Then the door would not open, and so we were trapped as in "a perfect storm."

I am certain that all of us passengers prayed for help each in his or her own way. But I chose to pray, with childlike simplicity and in full humility to St. Anthony who, I am told, is the intercessor for the lost. Indeed we were lost, halfway between the third floor and the second floor and we needed to be restored to safety.



If truth be told, dear St. Anthony did help us out. The 911 Dispatch eventually answered our request for assistance. Three firemen came to help, and brought a ladder so we could climb out to safety. I was calm and everyone else stayed calm, despite the suffocating heat. That no one panicked nor did anyone make any quick move to have made matters worse, was the saving grace.

Clearly, it was a mistake to break the hard and fast rule to "never go into a crowded elevator, no matter what." The lesson, nonetheless, is the calming effect of the prayer for help (in my personal belief) to St. Anthony. Many thanks to dear St. Anthony. Like lost sheep, we were found and soon herded out into the open, safe and sound.

Prayerful devotion, as to the saints in this circumstance, is a reminder that life, more than just hurrying and scurrying to multi-task, is really about seeking the Truth and the Way to God. God is always pleased to help us in the hour of our need. And we certainly give glory back to Him in our immediate thanksgiving.

As the gentle St. Anthony is wont to show us, our hope in the Christ Child, who comes to those who seek him in Scripture as St. Anthony did, should spring eternal through the stormy voyage of life.



Book Review

Through the Year with Fulton Sheen

By: Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Edited by Henry Dieterich.

Ignatius Press, c1985, Original Edition; reprinted 2003; 235 pp.

Reviewed By: Celeste T. Villegas

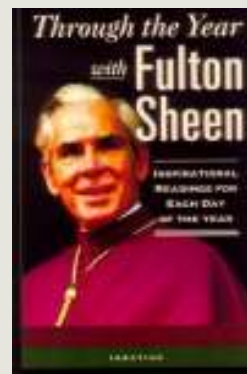
Through the Year with Fulton Sheen is a highly recommended daily spiritual companion. It contains Archbishop Fulton Sheen's insight and eloquence that "has made his name a household word to an international audience." This inspired collection of readings carries the themes of devotion to the Cross and Evangelism which echoed the vocation that shaped Archbishop Sheen's life.

Following are some of Archbishop Sheen's words of encouragement, welcoming readers to ways "to overcome 'staurophobia' (fear of the cross) and bring us closer and closer to the cross of Christ."

1. *Do not pass by this great salvation.* Think of God in a new way. "Love of man is God's hell. Our Lord had a hell, and it was because he loved us. Christ was 'an uncaught captive in the hands of love.'"
2. *What it means to be a Christian.* "Through baptism," Archbishop Sheen explains, "each man dies to the old Adam and incorporates himself to the new Adam – Christ."
3. *The Mass is a drama.* Although not a tragedy because of the Resurrection, the Mass is a continuing drama, nevertheless, of "reaching back to the cross of Calvary and lifting it out of its rocks and planting it right down here in our midst."
4. *How God forms us.* In the same way that a potter will pick up unfinished clay and mold it into some kind of vessel, so "God does not abandon us poor pots. He picks us up and makes us according to his liking, whatever it happens to be."
5. *Like the Israelites in the desert.* "Like the Israelites who journeyed 40 years to get into the Promised Land because of their disobedience," Archbishop Sheen cautions, "we cannot postpone the thought of heaven until the moment we die. What brings us to heaven is how we live and how we die (hopefully), with the help of a merciful Lord who puts up with us and forgives us seventy times seven."

According to Editor Henry Dieterich, "To consider the theme of Christ's redemptive suffering and death is to touch the heart of Archbishop Sheen." The expectation is for readers to be so immersed in the spirit of this message that it will touch their hearts as well.

About the Author



Archbishop Fulton Sheen was the author of more than seventy books, best known among them, *Life is Worth Living*. His inspired preaching extended to television and radio. He died in 1979 at the age of eighty-four.

On September 14, 2002, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints officially opened the Cause of Archbishop Sheen and granted him the title "Servant of God." An effort is underway to have the Archbishop canonized.



Bereavement Ministry

By: Emily Urbaniak

“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2)

We are born, we journey through life, we love and form relationships with family and friends, and we die. We die, but the relationships we’ve formed do not. So those left behind suffer the grief and the pain of loss. The bereaved begin their own journey to make sense of their loss and to learn to rebuild their lives and to live with a “new normal.” But while we cannot take their journey with them, we can walk with them. We can lend a shoulder and an ear, and that is the role of the bereavement support group.

The Bereavement Support Group at Our Lady of Mercy is part of the Lazarus Ministry, which was formed ten years ago. The Lazarus Ministry assists and supports families through the wake and funeral, and the Bereavement Support Group supports them on their grief journey afterwards. The group is open to anyone who has ever suffered the loss of a loved one.

The support group meets on the second Wednesday of the month in the Parish Center/former convent, from 7:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., except during July, August and September. The group is led by John Rokoszak, Pastoral Associate and Licensed Family Counselor, who has worked with the bereaved for many years, both in group and individual counseling. John helps members understand their grief process, encouraging them with his well-chosen words and humor. John is assisted by Emily Urbaniak, who has worked with Hospice families after their loss, and by Donna Paganelli, who inspires members with courage and hope, having coped with her personal loss.

The group is an “open” group. Members may attend as many or as few sessions as they find helpful in working through the various stages of grief. The group provides emotional support, education and the opportunity for socializing in a safe, non-judgmental setting. All information shared by the group is

confidential. Also, since the group is affiliated with the church ministry, prayer and sharing of faith are an integral part of the sessions, affirming that we are not alone in this journey.

Grief is not a simple emotion. It is expressed, not only in sadness, but may also be expressed as anger, guilt, loneliness, and a host of other emotions and physical reactions, as well as unresolved issues. There are common stages of grief such as denial, confrontation, and acceptance, but each person’s grief is unique. How we grieve depends on the nature and intensity of the relationship and the roles that person played in our lives, as well as a multitude of other factors.

While the grief journey is different for everyone, there are common experiences. Members of the support group help each other by sharing their personal experiences and the ways in which they coped. They learn that all feelings are a natural and normal expression of their grief, and each is to be respected. Most of all, they listen with their hearts. After their loss, loved ones struggle to make sense of the loss, thus the need to tell their story and then to tell it again. Each time we retell our stories, we heal a little more.

Although members discuss many different issues and feelings, they also share practical solutions to problems: getting through the holidays and other special occasions, dealing with household repairs and paying bills, or facing the many “whens,” such as when to empty the closets or when to sell the family home.

Finally, death steals our identity, and the struggle follows to accept ourselves in a strange new role. Although life is changed, it is not over. Getting to that realization is the work of the grief journey.



Our Faith on the Web

By: Carolyn McNamara

Do you ever have a question about your faith and want to find a quick site to find your answer? Maybe the following websites can help to narrow down a search and provide both information and inspiration.



You can start with the Vatican's, www.vatican.va. This contains church documents, (including those from Vatican II), addresses by the Pope, and beautiful pictures of the Roman basilicas and the Vatican museum.



Some sites offer to “explain, equip and assist” (www.catholic.com) or “inform, ignite and inspire” (www.catholic.org.) our Catholic life and mission.



The OLM parish site lists our ministries, calendar, newsletter, and bulletins at www.urolm.com.



Our American bishops' site, www.usccb.org keeps us in touch with what is going on in the American church. For instance, you can find the 2011 re-issue of “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizens” here.



If you are looking for a study of the Sunday Scriptures and meditative readings from several writers, go to the Jesuits' St. Louis University site, www.liturgy.slu.edu.



The Archdiocese of Newark site, www.rcan.org, provides information such as ministries and offices, education and a listing of the parishes in the Diocese.



You can receive a weekly e-mail from Fr. Jude Siciliano, O.P. by going to First Impressions at www.judeop.org. These e-mails contain thoughts on the Sunday reading.



Also, it may be helpful to browse through:

www.americancatholic.org

www.newadvent.org

www.pastoralplanning.com

www.catholicnews.com

www.catholicculture.org

www.catholicscomehome.org and

www.chnetwork.org (Coming Home Network)

are especially focused on the needs of returning Catholics, and non-Catholic laity and ordained ministers interested in learning about the faith.

On several of the above sites, you can also find one or more of these items: daily prayers, Catholic greeting e-cards, movie reviews, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Bible, religious news, aids for catechists, and the Catholic Encyclopedia.

If you would like to contribute one of your own favorite sites, please drop off a note at the rectory marked “Newsletter,” and it will be published in the weekly bulletin.

2011 Parish Picnic

The OLM Parish Picnic was held on Sunday, September 18th following an outdoor 12:30 p.m. Mass on the parish campus. Once again, the Knights of Columbus of Our Lady of Fatima Council took on the task of organizing this wonderful event. Pictured below, second picture on the right, are Tim Lane, the new Grand Knight of the Council and Charles Ryan, the immediate past Grand Knight. Parishioners continued the tradition of bringing dessert to share.



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In 2001, as the parish made plans for our Centennial celebration in 2002, a group gathered to restart a newsletter. The first issue of the “OLM Parish Newsletter” was mailed in the fall of 2001. The first page article entitled “Looking back, as OLM Moves Forward,” began “As parishioners of OLM eagerly await their return to their renovated church, complete with a new interior design, it is filling to reflect on other significant moments in the parish’s history.” Several parishioners contributed

their memories of OLM, beginning when it was a small church called St. Mary’s at the end of Hawthorne Avenue.

Thanks to all who volunteered their time and talent by writing, taking pictures and folding for the mailing over these ten years. A special thanks to the three pioneers who are still on the staff: Cosmo Ferrara, Rosemarie Myers and Carolyn McNamara.