



St. Mary's Family News

Life is a sacred gift from God

Winter 2009

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Merry Christmas! Yes, we can wish each other a Merry Christmas, keep the tree up, and eat cookies until we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord on January 10. 'Tis the Christmas Season!

In this holy season of Christmas, we celebrate the great and central mystery of our faith, the Incarnation. Not simply a birthday party but rather the fact that God has become one of us to save us. At the same time we cannot deny that if it had not been for Mary's *yes*, if it had not been for the angelic warning to the Magi and if it had not been for Joseph's response to the dream... that he had to protect the Child, we would not be in Communion with God and one another celebrating the Father's gift of a Savior to us, for the Savior would not have been born or would not have survived.

Saying yes to God's life, not giving in to worldly powers and protecting life as a sacred gift from God is central to our faith. Yet there are many that argue to the contrary. At a time in our history when we need to stand together, we find ourselves divided and the truth distorted by misunderstandings and lies. For this reason, I'm reprinting in its entirety, Bishop Thomas Tobin's public letter to Congressman Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island in this newsletter. Please read it ; the Bishop wrote it to instruct us, the faithful.

One simple way we can stand together would be if we all took off work and school to participate in this year's Pro-Life March in Washington D.C. on January 22. Certainly we need to continue voicing our concerns to our representatives and senators.

Through it all, let us put our trust in God who loves us. With joy we continue to celebrate that God is truly with us, Emmanuel. May God bless us on this wonderful journey, this continuing mission of His.

In Christ's Peace,



**Rev. Leo M. Goodman, III,
Pastor**

Public letter from Bishop Thomas Tobin
to Congressman Patrick Kennedy

Dear Congressman Kennedy:

The fact that I disagree with the hierarchy on some issues does not make me any less of a Catholic. (Congressman Patrick Kennedy)

Since our recent correspondence has been rather public, I hope you don't mind if I share a few reflections about your practice of the faith in this public forum. I usually wouldn't do that – that is speak about someone's faith in a public setting – but in our well-documented exchange of letters about health care and abortion, it has emerged as an issue. I also share these words publicly with the thought that they might be instructive to other Catholics, including those in prominent positions of leadership.

For the moment I'd like to set aside the discussion of health care reform, as important and relevant as it is, and focus on one statement contained in your letter of October 29, 2009, in which you write, "The fact that I disagree with the hierarchy on some issues does not make me any less of a Catholic."

That sentence certainly caught my attention and deserves a public response, lest it go unchallenged and lead others to believe it's true. And it raises an important question: What does it mean to be a Catholic?

"The fact that I disagree with the hierarchy on some issues does not make me any less of a Catholic." Well, in fact, Congressman, in a way it does. Although I wouldn't choose those particular words, when someone rejects the teachings of the Church, especially on a grave matter, a life-and-death issue like abortion, it certainly does diminish their ecclesial communion, their unity with the Church. This principle is based on the Sacred Scripture and Tradition of the Church and is made more explicit in recent documents.

For example, the "Code of Canon Law" says, "Lay persons are bound by an obligation and possess the right to acquire a knowledge of Christian doctrine adapted to their capacity and condition so that they can live in accord with that doctrine." (Canon 229, #1) The "Catechism of the Catholic Church" says this: "Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles, 'He who hears you, hears me,' the faithful receive with docility the teaching

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and directives that their pastors give them in different forms.” (#87) Or consider this statement of the Church: “It would be a mistake to confuse the proper autonomy exercised by Catholics in political life with the claim of a principle that prescind from the moral and social teaching of the Church.” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2002)

There’s lots of canonical and theological verbiage there, Congressman, but what it means is that if you don’t accept the teachings of the Church your communion with the Church is flawed, or in your own words, makes you “less of a Catholic.”

But let’s get down to a more practical question; let’s approach it this way: What does it mean, really, to be a Catholic? After all, being a Catholic has to mean something, right?

Well, in simple terms – and here I refer only to those more visible, structural elements of Church membership – being a Catholic means that you’re part of a faith community that possesses a clearly defined authority and doctrine, obligations and expectations. It means that you believe and accept the teachings of the Church, especially on essential matters of faith and morals; that you belong to a local Catholic community, a parish; that you attend Mass on Sundays and receive the sacraments regularly; that you support the Church, personally, publicly, spiritually and financially.

Congressman, I’m not sure whether or not you fulfill the basic requirements of being a Catholic, so let me ask: Do you accept the teachings of the Church on essential matters of faith and morals, including our stance on abortion? Do you belong to a local Catholic community, a parish? Do you attend Mass on Sundays and receive the sacraments regularly? Do you support the Church, personally, publicly, spiritually and financially?

In your letter you say that you “embrace your faith.”

But if you don’t fulfill the basic requirements of membership, what is it exactly that makes you a Catholic? Your baptism as an infant? Your family ties? Your cultural heritage?

Your letter also says that your faith “acknowledges the existence of an imperfect humanity.” Absolutely true. But in confronting your rejection of the Church’s teaching, we’re not dealing just with “an imperfect humanity” – as we do when we wrestle with sins such as anger, pride, greed, impurity or dishonesty. We all struggle with those things, and often fail.

Your rejection of the Church’s teaching on abortion falls into a different category – it’s a deliberate and obstinate act of the will; a conscious decision that you’ve re-affirmed on many occasions. Sorry, you can’t chalk it up to an “imperfect humanity.” Your position is unacceptable to the Church and scandalous to many of our members. It absolutely diminishes your communion with the Church.

Congressman Kennedy, I write these words not to embarrass you or to judge the state of your conscience or soul. That’s ultimately between you and God. But your description of your relationship with the Church is now a matter of public record, and it needs to be challenged. I invite you, as your bishop and brother in Christ, to enter into a sincere process of discernment, conversion and repentance. It’s not too late for you to repair your relationship with the Church, redeem your public image, and emerge as an authentic “profile in courage,” especially by defending the sanctity of human life for all people, including unborn children. And if I can ever be of assistance as you travel the road of faith, I would be honored and happy to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas J. Tobin

Bishop of Providence

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Parish Pastoral Council works on several projects

By Bob Thompson

Our Parish Pastoral Council continues to work on several projects including accessibility and the broadcasting of our Sunday Mass. Another effort has been to make our parish website more interactive. You can see the results when you visit our new website.

Tina Skubon and Darin Wagner have worked hard on this project. We are so grateful for their efforts. The web site is important for all parishioners and we hope that our younger "cyber wizard" members will visit the site often. More is planned as the site is continually refined.

Council is also working on efforts to make our wonderful parish even more hospitable. We want everyone to feel at home when they come to St. Mary's and an exciting new effort that will allow more social interaction among parishioners is under way.

Council is also working on efforts to make adult education about our faith more exciting and challenging. Many of us think our knowledge of our catechism is finished after confirmation, but there is so much more to know and study. Our evangelization efforts would be greatly improved if we all knew how to answer questions that non-Catholics ask us about our faith. We are impelled by God to go forth and evangelize. We say this every Sunday before Mass and we must be better informed to do this successfully. More information will be presented regarding this effort in the coming months.

Meanwhile, we pray that you all will have a blessed Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our Savior and that the New Year will bring joy and peace to your lives.



Banner for www.stmaryslancaster.org

St. Mary's has a new website!

What information can you get on the new website?

- Current bulletin
- Latest news
- Parish calendar
- Pilgrim site info
- Marian Year info
- Youth Ministry
- Religious Education
- Wedding info
- And much, much more!

Many thanks to Darin Wagner for his design and functionality of the new website!

www.stmaryslancaster.org

Little saints attend All-Saints Mass



All little saints were invited to attend Mass the weekend of All Saints Day as their favorite saint and process into Mass with Father Leo. These saintly figures posed for us before the 8:30 a.m. Mass.

The front row is Zach Johnson as Zechariah, Saylor Troop as St. Francis, Camille Weaver as Angel Gabriel, and Luke Weaver as St. Luke.

Back row is Michael Setlock as Michael the Archangel, Mason Sweigart as St. Peter, Gabrielle Streb as Mary and Elizabeth Brennehan as the Angel Gabriel

Youth Ministry News

God, sex & the meaning of life

Theology of the Body for Teens presents the two hottest topics on the planet — God and sex — and *marries* them through Pope John Paul II's compelling vision for love and life.

Using a great mix of stories, real-life examples, activities, prayers, and references to the culture that teens understand, *Theology of the Body for Teens* answers the questions teens have about their own bodies, issues on sexual morality, and how they were uniquely created for greatness.

Theology of the Body for Teens is an exciting and dynamic program, being offered to High School teens through Saint Mary's Youth Ministry beginning January 31, 2010. This program will give teens the answers and the tools they need to successfully and safely navigate through life.

Parents are encouraged to attend an informational meeting on either Thursday, January 14, 2010 or Wednesday, January 20, 2010, 7:30 -9:30 p.m. in the library. Contact Silvia Doe, 872-8985 or Brian and Sharon Eltz, 394-5238, for more information.

Learn about peer pressure

On Sunday, January 24, 2010, teens in grades 7-12 are invited to learn about peer pressure and how it affects how we act. There will be live music, a teen speaker and keynote speaker, games, skits, fun and food. There will be teens from other area youth groups, and everyone is welcome to bring a friend. Please come, 6-8:30 p.m. in the gym!

Washington, DC march

On Friday, January 22, the 37th anniversary of Roe vs Wade and the legalizing of abortion, thousands of people will meet in our nation's capitol to speak up for those who can't speak for themselves. It is a time of prayer and peacefully letting our legislators and the nation know that the murder of any life, unborn or not, is wrong. We will travel by coach bus with area churches. Please mark your calendars now. Students should do the necessary paperwork for excused church/educational time off from school, and sign up in early January. Together we can make a difference!

Students to help homeless

Students in seventh and eighth grades will go to the Water Street Rescue Mission on January 9, where they will help the homeless and also learn from them. They will hear stories of how residents became homeless and how the mission helped them. It will be a morning of service and learning.



Also, on Saturday, January 16, middle-school students are invited to a bowling party at Rocky Springs, 6-8 p.m., and on Friday evening, Feb.5, seventh and eighth graders will hit the slopes and go snow tubing at AvalancheXpress in York.

Engineered to be the fastest slope in the east, with many lanes of varying pitch and speed, AvalancheXpress is winter recreation for all ages and levels of courage. Come out to the thrill on the hill!

Please sign up in advance to participate. Contact Silvia Doe, 872-8985 or stmarysouth@hotmail.com.

Weekend Retreat for Students

Mount Saint Mary's University will once again host the ever-popular *Mount 2000 and Beyond* retreat. This year it will be held February 12-14, 2010. The mission of the Mount 2000 Eucharistic Retreat is to inspire high school youth with a deeper understanding of and love for Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith.

This mission is accomplished through powerful talks, praise and worship, Eucharistic adoration, the sacrament of Reconciliation, and through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. So, join 800 teens from around the east coast, have a giant slumber party on gym floors, and have fun learning, praising and praying!

Sign up today, if you're interested. Registration fills up quickly, so please complete a registration form, which can be found at <http://www.mount2000.com> and send it and \$40 (payable to St. Mary's Youth Ministry) to Silvia Doe, 213 Tomahawk Drive, Conestoga, PA 17516. Please do so by January 2, 2010. Contact Silvia Doe, 872-8985 or stmarysouth@hotmail.com if you have any questions.

Middle School Youths “tear” it up!



Middle School teens enjoyed a morning of community service at Mennonite Central Committee in Ephrata.

Twenty two middle school students and their chaperons had fun tearing up books – and they did it as a service project on Saturday, November 7.

The group arrived at the Mennonite Central Committee warehouse in Ephrata early on a Saturday morning to report for their volunteer assignments. To their surprise, their job was to tear up hundreds of books – these were books that no one wanted and would otherwise fill up our landfills. Instead, the workers would tear off the covers, and rip up the books for recycling.

Mennonite Central Committee helps the environment by doing this. They also sell the paper to a recycling company and use the thousands of dollars of annual income to ship clothes, canned meat and emergency relief kits to needy countries around the world.

After an hour and a half of ripping books, the group received a tour of the facility. There were several looms for turning jeans and corduroys into rugs, hail bay machines for compacting clothes, a quilting room for making quilts to be auctioned off to raise funds, warehouses filled with barrels of aides kits, school kits, first aid kits, disaster relief kits, and newborn kits.

There was another room filled with canned meat that was collected and processed around the country by MCC. Everyone was amazed at the huge contribution that the Mennonite Central Committee makes to the poor of the world, and they were happy to be able to help. The morning ended with a pizza lunch at a local restaurant, and everyone celebrated the fact that they helped to make a difference in the world.

Teens attend *Vianney* show by Brian Eltz

On Saturday, December 5, a small group of teens from St. Mary’s Youth Group, along with some theater-loving adults, made the journey through the snow to Trinity High School in Camp Hill, to attend the performance of Leonardo Defilippis’ one-man show, *Vianney*. Based on the life of St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars and patron saint of priests, Defilippis’ performance made the passion and piety of the saint come to life.

Growing up amid the turmoil of the French Revolution, young John Vianney dreamed of one day becoming a priest. After failing as a farmer and a soldier, he entered the seminary. Though not as talented, or intelligent, as the other seminarians (having to take Latin classes with the twelve year-olds), Vianney persevered, and was ordained a priest. Sent to the small community of Ars, where the secular philosophy of the Revolution and the grip of Satan had enslaved his parishioners, Vianney overcame the gossip and indifference of the people, and the temptations and attacks of the devil.

Leonardo Defilippis, a veteran Shakespearean actor and founder of St. Luke Productions, expressed the joy and suffering, the prayer and pain of Vianney through meditative soliloquies, multi-media dialogues, and emotional homilies from the pulpit. In this Year of the Priest, the drama of St. John Vianney’s life serves as a reminder to cherish the gift of the priesthood in our parishes, to pray for our seminarians, and foster an openness to religious vocations in our families.

For more information on Leonardo Defilippis’ *Vianney*, you can visit www.vianneydrama.com, or www.stlukeproductions.com.



Olivia Asso, Grace English, Elizabeth Morgan, and Clare English join the Life Chain.

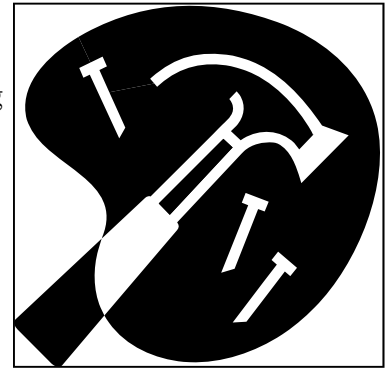
Hundreds support life

Several hundred people, in support of life, joined the Pro-Life Chain on Rohrerstown Road on a beautiful afternoon on the first Sunday of the month in October, Respect Life Month. Some in the chain prayed for Life as they stood silently. Others waved and nodded to the passersby. Most people showed their support by blowing their horns or giving a *thumbs up*. In the hour that the group stood there, approximately 3000 cars passed by. Only a very few of that number were not supportive.

Men's Group revamps rooms

The recently-formed Men's Group, coordinated by John Skubon, gave the visiting priests' bedrooms a new look! The walls were painted, new ceiling tiles were installed, and new bedspreads were added. Thanks to the following parishioners:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Joe Clupp | Frank Stumpf |
| Chuck Yoder | Roy Belli |
| Ron Dusablon | Rich Stratchko |
| Tom Willig | Rob Visniski |
| Chris Morrisette | Steve Deibert |
| Scott Hagan | |



The decorating was coordinated by Betty Windstein. The next project will be after the New Year, and all men of the parish are invited to participate. Watch the bulletin for details

New parishioners feted at luncheon

On October 18, our new parishioners were treated to a luncheon, were introduced to the staff, and given a tour of the church and rectory by Father Leo. Hosts and hostesses were the *old* new parishioners from the April luncheon.

Pictured are those who attended.

Andrew, Nicholas and Julian Stauffer, Madison, Isabella, Olivia and Grant Beiler, Olga Stratchko, Gigi Rogers, Sandra Filippelli.

Gloria Gallagher, Christina Gallagher, Andrea Stauffer, Dana Natale, Maureen Beiler, Zachary Veilleux, Clement Filippelli, Dale Martin Axe



Charles Gallagher, Michael Neathawk, Keith Stauffer, Michael Natale, Wayne Beiler, Tonna Carbaugh, Fred Rogers and Father Leo

Justice and Mercy helps inmates reintegrate into society By Annie Ginder

Justice and mercy are two powerful words. One means to act fairly towards; the other is to show compassion towards an offender or enemy.

Jean Bickmire, a member of St. Mary's, works for a nonprofit volunteer organization called Justice and Mercy. It is dedicated to decreasing the effects of crime in our communities, increasing public safety and ministering and restoring both crime victims and offenders.

Much of our work focuses on the right people being convicted and offenders being treated and trained when sentenced and on successful reintegration. We also meet and talk with victims of crimes to ascertain how they are impacted and how we can help address their needs in our work in preventing repeat crimes with offenders. We advocate restorative justice which addresses the wrong done, talks on how the victim can be restored as much as possible and have the offender give restitution, not only monetarily as the state requires but in any other way possible to help the victim. This process may include mediation between the victim and offender, if both are willing and ready, says Bickmire.



Parishioner Jean Bickmire

There are obstacles though, in getting people to reach out to someone who has been incarcerated. Bickmire says, *The challenge is, of course, helping Church members to realize that most people coming out of prison are not out to hurt them but need direction that the Church can provide.* If she could convey one thing about Justice and Mercy to the people of St. Mary's, it would be the importance and blessings that you receive by helping all people in need, and those impacted by the justice system need positive spiritual guidance and support so they can believe that they have a purpose under God and are loved. *We are all God's children and are called to love and serve each other.*

Bickmire, who was born in Canada, moved to the United States when she was two. She has lived in Emporium and Warren, PA, and graduated from Penn State with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Advertising and Marketing. In 1998, she moved to Lancaster; she became involved with Justice and Mercy in 2002. *We visit prisons to be sure prisoners are given proper, humane treatment.,* she tells us.

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Children make cards for prisoners



One of the more difficult corporal works of mercy for us to carry out is *Visit the imprisoned.* Justice & Mercy, a volunteer organization that is committed to promoting safer communities through justice reform, asked St. Mary's Youth Ministry if our youth would be interested in helping to provide homemade Christmas cards for prisoners.

Students in grades four and seven from our Religious Ed classes, as well as those involved in the middle and high school youth ministries, had fun writing messages of hope and joy, and decorating cards with their Christmas artwork. Many of the children never even thought about those who would spend time away from their families during Christmas, and they showed care and compassion for them. Let us all offer prayers to prisoners and their families during this holy time of Christmas

Parish Census

Baptisms

Chiara Rita Amato
 Rachel Heather Visniski
 Reed Thomas Wagner
 Samuel Jova Odell
 Tyler Austin Blayman
 Leo Wilson Sweeney
 Layla Barbara Chervil
 Finlee Cecile Parrish
 Charles Michael Lorenz

Marriages

M/M Thomas Martin (Lisa Baumgardner)
 M/M Filip Trojanowski (Joanna Czaicki)
 M/M John Swann (Stephanie Shirker)
 M/M Martin Smith (Christina Hartman)
 M/M Eric Hatten (Anna Parise)
 M/M Justin Silverthorn (Regiane Maki Oishi)
 M/M Kurt Loudenslager (Amy Kranch)
 M/M Donald Heany (Keely Childers)
 M/M George Vargas (Nereida Crespo)
 M/M Ryan McDonnell (Katrina Nawrocki)
 M/M Andrew Detzel (Kathryn Dewees)
 M/M Derek Nowak (Courtney Byers)

New Parishioners

M/M Brent Wolfe and family
 M/M Wayne Beiler and family
 Ms. Maria Bertoncini and family
 Ms. Paula Brewer and family
 M/M Joseph Wesolowski and family
 M/M Charles Gallagher and family
 M/M Sean Parrish and family
 Ms. Evelyn Sullivan
 Ms. Darlene Radosavich and family
 Mr. Robert Warner
 M/M Justin Silverthorn
 Mrs. Olga Stratchko
 Mr. Thomas Rice
 M/M George Vargas and family
 M/M Larry Bressler and family
 Mrs. Anita Kirkpatrick

Deaths

Brenda S. Sharpe
 Louis Kovacs
 Catherine Lesinski
 Dorothy Sable
 Zachary D. Lefever
 Ursula M. Bleich
 John L. Conroy, Jr.

Our parish's newest citizen

On November 19, Ramon Estevez took the Oath of U.S. Citizenship in Gettysburg at the Dedication Day Ceremony for the 146th anniversary of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. His family, as well as some of his parish family, were there to witness the ceremony. Ramon said,

"Today was a very special day for me. All that we experienced totally surpassed my expectations. What an awesome moment, when I saw my family from Saint Mary's being there with us. It meant a lot to me that all of you took the time out of your busy agendas to join us in that great moment.

I am pretty sure that you all would agree with me that today's special ceremony was worthwhile attending and being part of. One of the many things that make this country great is that its people take big pride in their history and want to remember and honor those who helped build this nation.

If a naturalization ceremony is exciting in itself, you can imagine how meaningful it was for me knowing that this is the first time they made the naturalization ceremony part of a such a great event as the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address and that surrounded this magnificent event, but what really made an already great occasion memorable was the presence of all of you right there with us.

My fellow country men and women, thanks for such a wonderful surprise. You made my day."



Melissa & Ramon Estevez

St. Mary's holds staff retreat By Don Peris

St. Theresa, be the living expression of God's kindness, kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile and kindness in your warm greeting.

Loving God, thank you for this opportunity to gather this morning as brothers and sisters united in our desire to serve You and to serve the family of St. Mary's.

With those words of prayer, on a damp September morning, St. Mary's annual Staff Retreat began. It was my great privilege to lead this retreat, where the staff of St. Mary's, *your staff*, focused on the theme, *Seeing Christ in One Another*.

Through prayer, conversation, activities, reflection and song, we shared our thoughts on seeing Christ in those we serve, those we serve with, and in ourselves. One of the activities was centered on the Beatitudes. After this scripture was read, each participant was asked to contribute a personal beatitude.

Beatitudes written by the staff:

Blessed are the forgotten ones, for they shall be remembered.

Happy are those who are open to God's call, they will become gifts to all.

Blessed are those who see the joy of Christ, for they will see His face.

Blessed are they who help others when they fall, God will lift them up.

Blessed are those who see Christ in the least likely faces, for they will see the joy in His face for eternity.

Blessed are those who dry the tears of their children, they shall grow old full of grace and peace.

Happy are they who listen, for they shall be heard.

Happy are those who obey the Lord without question, they shall have peace.

Happy are those called to His supper for theirs is the joy of His company.

Happy are they who labor with me, quick are the days.

Happy are those who work in the Church, satisfying are the days.

It was such a blessing to spend the day at the St. Gerard House in Ephrata, with a group of people who genuinely care for and enjoy each other's company and who take seriously their service to Jesus Christ and the diverse community of St. Mary's.

Father Leo concluded this peaceful day with Mass and a special blessing for this staff, to continue to do the work of Jesus with love, kindness, and humility.



Marriage letter approved

In November the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) elected Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades as chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. He will assume the position of chairman elect for one year prior to taking over as chairman of this committee.

During the same meeting of the Bishops, they approved a new pastoral letter on marriage entitled, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, which provides essential teachings of the Catholic Church on the sacrament of marriage. The letter talks about the sacrament of marriage, the challenges that face those who embrace marriage, and marriage as being Eucharistic and a sacrament of love. Check out the summary of the letter or the complete pastoral letter at www.foryourmarriage.org. You can also find tips on caring for your marriage and ways others have handled the changes they experienced as newlyweds, as empty nesters and all the places in between.



Following the footsteps of St. Joseph

By Joe Clupp



Nestled between wonder-filled Christmas-tide with its season of expectation, Advent, and the joyous season of Easter with its penitential season of Lent, the Church celebrates what is known as Ordinary Time.

While the term Ordinary Time is not meant to mean routine, it can remind us that it is often in the ordinary, the routine, day-to-day activities that we meet Christ. It can be in the things that are done in silence where we can bring Christ to our families, our work, and to the world.

Perhaps no one reminds us of this more than St. Joseph. We know little about him other than he was a righteous man, a carpenter and from the line of David. There are no words of his recorded in the Bible. It is in his silence that he shows us how to be saints.

St. Joseph listened and trusted God's message from an angel to take Mary into his home. He trusted God and left family and familiar surroundings to protect his family by fleeing to Egypt when warned by an

angel. He took Jesus as his own and provided a home and spiritual leadership for the Holy Family as they celebrated Passover in Jerusalem.

As a righteous man, he understood his role to be provider for his family, protector of his family and spiritual leader of his family. His life was to be the ordinary life of a man with a family, not really any different than it would have been had he not been asked to be the foster father of the Lord. He simply led the ordinary life in extraordinary circumstances in which God had called him to live.

We can sometimes miss the point that we, too, are called to be saints. Some may be called in extraordinary ways like St. Augustine, St. Theresa, or many of the other holy men and women we hear about, but most of us are called, like St. Joseph, to be saints in silence in the ordinary of our lives. We are called to be holy men and women, in the care of our families and friends around us, in listening and trusting in the Lord and in our spiritual leadership of those entrusted to us.

Like St. Joseph, we must listen to the Word of God, have a relationship with the Lord and become what we are called to be in the routine of our lives, stewards of our families, protecting, providing and nurturing in faith those who are placed in our care.

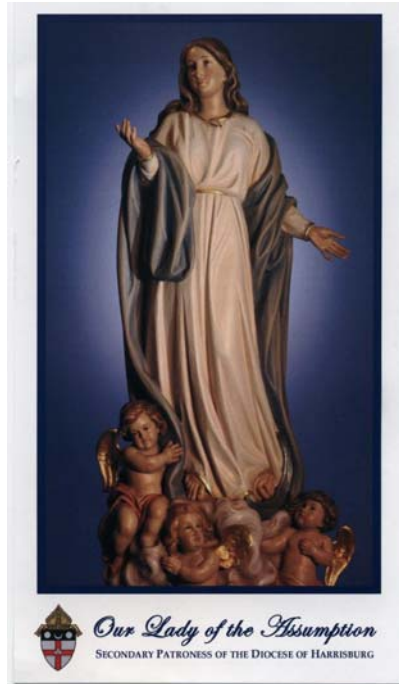
Reflections of a blind pilgrim

By Karen Morrisette

I like seeing things I've never seen before. The largest Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. and fourth largest in the world sounded like a must see, so I boarded the St. Mary's pilgrimage bus to the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC on Oct. 24. On the bus ride down, I anticipated the wondrous images and experiences that would most certainly unlock for me the very mysteries of our faith. Isn't that what going on a pilgrimage is all about? Boy, was I blind!

A key paradox of our faith is that *seeing is not believing*. Jesus says to Thomas, *Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed* (John 20:29). My eyes weren't graced by any miraculous visions that day. Many of the sights weren't particularly reverent or spiritual at all—long bathroom lines, crowded gift shop and cafeteria, people chit-chatting and eating during Adoration, even the towering mosaic of Jesus in the sanctuary was the angriest image of Christ I'd ever laid eyes on. I missed the intimacy of St. Mary's amid what I felt was a cold, vast space. I spent hours wandering from chapel to chapel, looking at everything yet seeing nothing. Four thousand faces from all over the diocese passed before my eyes, yet I, like a blind beggar on the side of the road, could only cry out in isolation,

Jesus, have pity on me!" What was I doing here? Why wasn't I seeing what I was supposed to see?



Often times we organize our own pity parties before we allow Jesus a chance to help us. I just wanted to get out of that place, sit outside in the rain, and wait for the bus ride home. The evil one would have liked nothing more. There I was with one foot in and one foot out of a massive door, that would have locked behind me if I exited. It must have been an angel of God who said to me, "Take courage, get up, Jesus is calling you." So I went back in, sobbing at this point, and found a priest whose comforting words and sense of humor helped turn my tears into laughter. I rejoined the congregation for a most beautiful and solemn crowning of Our Lady by Bishop Rhoades to start the Marian year in our diocese.

Jesus restored my sight that day. He heard my cry and didn't rebuke me. The pilgrimage He invites us on is not one of sight but of love, the very path of our Blessed Mother. Let Mary's pilgrimage, from her trusting, selfless, "Yes," to God's will to her unfaltering courage and devotion to Jesus at the foot of the Cross, be our map this Marian Year. That's what this journey to the shrine was all about. Now I see!

(Continued from page 7)

Bickmire's role at Justice and Mercy has changed over the seven years that she has been there. It has included administrative work, working on public policy issues, helping people navigate through the criminal justice system and making sentence recommendations. She has written about these issues, done public speaking and helped facilitate state judiciary committee meetings to discuss correctional and judicial issues. She has also testified in state hearings.

With God all things are possible, she believes. We must be sure to welcome and reach out to prisoners as our brothers and sisters in Christ, assisting in their reintegration into society and helping them walk in the way of the Lord, says Jean.

When Bickmire isn't doing that, she is taking care of her 12-year-old Appaloosa horse. *I've had horses all my life in some capacity. I've raised my horse since he was a year old. His name is Rida Rainbow, but I call him Willy.*

Assumption of the BVM Church
Historic St. Mary's
119 S. Prince St.
Lancaster, PA 17603



We, the family of St. Mary's, are a community nourished and sustained by the Body and Blood of Christ and impelled by the Word of God to go forth and evangelize.

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Regular Mass Schedule



Wise men
still seek Him.

Monday through Friday
12:05 PM

Saturday
8:00 AM
Vigil 5:30 PM

Sunday
8:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Holy Days
Vigil 5:30 PM
9:00 AM, 12:05 PM, and 7:00 PM

Confessions
Saturday 4:00 to 5:00 PM

Free parking is available in the Lancaster Newspaper garage for all Masses.
Nursery available Sundays in the school during 8:30 and 11:00 Mass.