

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



CATHOLIC SCHOOL ROCKS!

See page 9.

WINTER 2025-2026

The MESSENGER

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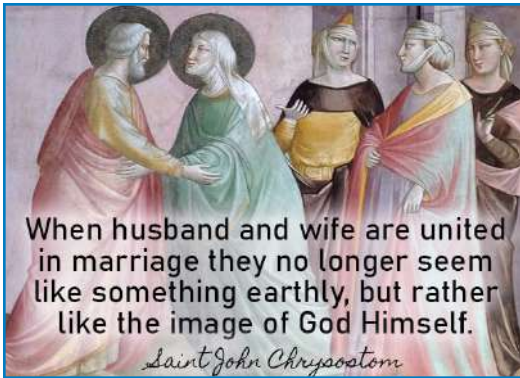
Front Cover: Claire

Back Cover: Katie and 3 of her brothers

Provincial Perspective

Dear Family,

National Marriage Ministry



According to Damon Owens at Communio, a national marriage ministry for Christian churches, "We're witnessing a collapse in marriage right now. There has been a 61% decline in marriages since 1970. Many youths are growing up without married parents in the home."

For Your Marriage, an initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), helps couples at all stages of life to understand and live God's plan for happy, holy marriages.

To learn more about the many free, marriage ministries within this USCCB initiative, here is the contact information to reach staff members in Washington, DC: defenseofmarriage@usccb.org and (202) 541-3040. Be proactive; reach out today. God bless your Family!

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

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JOURNEY TO MADAGASCAR

My Journey to Madagascar by Phyllis Butzen



Blessing of the benefactors, +William and +Margaret Butzen.

Following the death of my father, William J. Butzen, on November 1, 2021, I wanted to enroll him in Gregorian Masses. I requested the Masses through the Missionaries of the Holy Family (MSF) in Saint Louis, Missouri. My mother, Margaret B. Butzen, who was still living at the time, received a most welcoming Gregorian Mass Card for my deceased father.

My parents' Catholic faith was of utmost importance to them. God was good to them, and they were able to provide monetary assistance to various Catholic organizations.

Knowing that building churches in poor countries is much appreciated by the people and costs much less than in the U.S., I asked the MSF Advancement Director, Maurice Prater, if there were any specific needs. I was told about the mission church in Kirano, Madagascar, that was destroyed by a cyclone. This was discussed with my mother who willingly agreed to provide monetary assistance.

Rebuilding the church began in March 2022. Pictures of the construction updates were sent to me on a regular basis, and I shared these with my Mom. She was very

happy about the whole process, and it was one of the last joys of her life. She died on June 28, 2022, before the church was completed. The mission church in Kirano was named after the patron saints of my parents: Saint William & Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Church.

I made plans to travel to Madagascar from the United States to attend the blessing of the new mission church. The celebration was scheduled for Friday, June 27, which was the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 2025. This was very fitting because Saint Margaret Mary was given, in an apparition by Jesus Christ Himself, the popular devotion to His Sacred Heart. Plus, this was happening during the Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Francis, known as Pilgrims of Hope!

Father Francois, a Holy Family priest from Madagascar serving in Texas, made arrangements for me and my adopted son Joseph to stay in Madagascar for a month. I believe God allowed both of my parents to be present in spirit for this special occasion, and I know they will continue to intercede on behalf of the Malagasy people.

The day of the dedication was a beautiful, cool, sunny day in the mountainous area of Kirano. The church was packed with people inside and outside the church. The local archbishop was the main celebrant for the Mass,

along with over 20 concelebrating priests. It was also Father Francois' 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, so the day had additional significance.

It was a joyous occasion, one not to be forgotten! Following Mass, we were invited to a delicious luncheon, and the party continued the next day with more festivities, including rice crushing, dancing, and Zebu cow catching. Finally, a cow was butchered and given to the family of Father Francois as an anniversary gift. Everyone from the village and beyond were present and participated in the joyous activities.

Christine, one of Father Francois' sisters, was responsible for



Benefactress from the USA family who provided the funding to rebuild a church in Madagascar.



A church in Madagascar rebuilt after being destroyed by a cyclone.

overseeing the rebuilding of the mission church in Kirano, including a school dormitory, which was also funded by my parents' estate. Bunk beds and furnishings are still needed for the schoolchildren (contact Maurice for donations!).

We had the privilege of staying several days with Christine and her family, thereby experiencing

the day-to-day life of the Malagasy people. In the villages, Sunday Mass is offered only once a month, but we had the opportunity to attend a First Communion for 55 boys and girls dressed in their Sunday best. The day before, on Saturday, there were 56 baptisms in the church!

We brought new clothing to an orphanage managed by Father Francois' brother and sister-in-law. The orphanage has approximately 100 boys and girls of all ages. The children gave us a hearty welcome, sang for us, and gave two chickens to Father Francois.

Traveling in Madagascar is slow (terrible, to be honest) because the dirt roads are in poor condition. On one occasion, we got stuck in a mudhole, but such is the life for Malagasy people. They are prepared for the worst, and hope for the best!



In Madagascar, it's the ladies that rock the temple.

We also visited the shrine of two laypersons who have been beatified by the Church: Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo (1848 – 1894) and Blessed Lucien Botovasoa (1908 – 1947). Father Francois celebrated a Mass for us at the shrine.

Fortunately, as a bonus, we were in Madagascar for the country's 65th anniversary of independence from France, which is June 26. My son Joseph and I joined in on the celebration, which included fireworks, bands, carnival rides, and grand merriment.

The religious communities of the Missionaries of the Holy Family were most welcoming and accommodating to us. One of the MSF cultural centers for poor children entertained us with dance routines. Then, Joseph and I gave two soccer balls and two basketballs to the children. It was so rewarding to watch the children play, and even Joseph joined in the fun!

In Fianarantsoa, Father Herve taught my son Joseph how to drive a motorcycle, which was a highlight for him. The next day, Father Herve took him as a passenger on his motorcycle to the Kirano church blessing! The priests and brothers of the Madagascar Province were so warm and hospitable to us. We thank them from the depths of our hearts!

In Madagascar, small rice fields



Phyllis Butzen and son Joseph.

are plentiful, which unfortunately bring the mosquitoes. People get their water from streams and rivers. Fresh drinking water is not readily available, nor is electricity and refrigeration. Outside markets are the norm, as are “peddlers.” Sanitation is almost nonexistent; stray dogs and chickens are plentiful.

The Madagascar landscape varies widely, but the sunsets are beautiful! Houses vary according to the region; 1-room, 2-story, 3-story houses, made from whatever materials can be found. Some regions have more Catholic and other Christian denominations, while other areas tend to have more Muslims.

Even though the vast majority of Malagasy people are poor, they are friendly and happy because they have God in their life. As in the United States and everywhere else in the world, there is government

corruption. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer!

In reality, the poor are actually the richer, for they have God in their lives. They are thankful for what God has given them. The happiness they have from God, no one can take from them.

As Padre Pio famously said, *“Pray, hope, and don’t worry.”* The Malagasy people are hardworking people, filled with faith, living one day at a time. Trust me when I say that we can learn more from them, then they can learn from us.

+jmmj+



If you go to Mass in Madagascar, you better get to church early to get a seat.



The good guys in Madagascar wear black.



An Invitation

The Family Forever Society

by Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

What is the Family Forever Society? It's very simple! Members of this special society are people who have remembered the Missionaries of the Holy Family in their wills or estate plans. Their bequests are called Legacy Gifts.

While most Legacy Gifts are made with the intention of the Missionaries of the Holy Family receiving benefits in the future, some Legacy Gifts are realized in the present. Gifts of securities or stock, real estate, and other tangible property are usually transferred before December 31 of any year so the benefactor can realize tax breaks for charitable donations.

Most Legacy Gifts are used as principal for our Retirement Trust Fund. While we do have a modest trust fund to help cover the rising cost of healthcare needed by the elderly and disabled members of our religious community, it is always a struggle.

Please consider joining our Family Forever Society. To receive a free booklet on preparing your will, please send your request to me at 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118, or call me at 1-888-484-9945. If you are remembering us in your will, please remember us as: *Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Family - North American Province.*

Our Holy Family priests and brothers will always hold you and your loved ones in prayer. Isn't that what a Family is supposed to do? Thank you and God bless you... *forever.*



Forever Yours in the Holy Family,

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior, North American Province



FISHING WITH LITTLE MISS V.

by Mr. Scottie Joe

Back in June 2025, I had my third fishing trip with Little Miss V. and her grandmother. As you can see in the photograph, she picked the perfect shirt to wear because cats like to catch fish and eat them too.

Among other catches during the day, she reeled in a healthy catfish. As you can see, it must have weighed almost 100 pounds! Of course, fish always look smaller when photographed, right?

We never keep the fish; we always put them back in the water. But first, Little Miss V. will place the fish in a big bucket of water, massage their backs, give them a name, and add a kiss for good luck. I guess it's a combination of her maternal instinct and bonding with God's creation. The fish seem to enjoy it, and everyone goes home happy.



Little Miss V and Scottie Joe.

+jnj+

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Mona Prisca & Holy Family

cross-stitches by Emil Poprawski



Claire's First Year in Kindergarten

"Bless us, Oh Lord, for these thy gifts..." is the prayer Claire says before snack and lunch at her Catholic School. She also gets to attend Mass on Friday when she gets to sit next to her friends. Fr. Pat makes Mass interesting by asking questions during his sermons and having the students raise their hands. Claire says one example of Fr. Pat's questioning is *"What are some kind words you can say to your friends or family?"*

Claire was excited about her first day of kindergarten and made a lot of new friends. It helped that she has two big sisters who also attend the same school.



Claire enjoyed performing in the Nativity play in December and decorating her classroom for Christmas.



THE ANSWER TO HATE IS NOT HATE

Lived by: Charlie & Erika Kirk by J. P. Richardson

Remember Charlie Kirk? Could any American now forget him? He stood tall for values and virtues – freedom, religion, family, patriotism – that Americans once considered common sense. Many people have under-appreciated those values and under-valued those virtues. Common sense sometimes seems invisible, even vanished.

As a teenager, Charlie boldly began to exhort young Americans to revive traditional American ideals. He wanted to save traditional civilization – in a civilized way. Charlie Kirk was an Apostle of Civil Discourse.

Ironically, Charlie was savagely slain – as were Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Robert F. Kennedy, Sr., and his brother John F. Kennedy; Mahatma Gandhi; and countless others who promoted peace. The Prince of Peace, Our Lord Jesus Christ, was crucified.

Like others, Charlie pictured a current cultural cold war that could flame red-hot if we fail to keep our cool. Charlie encouraged civilized debate. God wills that we love Him foremost and love each other as ourselves. Obeying God's two Great Commandments would keep us civilized.

Do you know that Kirk means “church” in Scottish? The theme-music of Charlie's show was “Scotland the Brave” on bagpipes. Charles James Kirk valued tradition. Many people, old and young, found it refreshing. It seems providential that a young man who made it his mission to revive Christianity and preserve traditional civilization should be named “Church.” Charlie Church went to church.

Charlie knew that God, with God-fearing Americans, can preserve America. He envisioned a “turning point” back to common sense for the



Charlie Kirk Family (c) azcentral.com.



Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK Jr. National Historic Site permission).

common good. Charlie reminded me of Catholic President John F. Kennedy's rousing challenge as he closed his Inaugural Address in 1961: "...let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth, God's work must truly be our own."

Like Jack Kennedy, Charlie Kirk encouraged Americans to practice what we preach, the motto on our money is: "In God We Trust." Trusting God includes obeying His laws.

Charlie saw that truth is timeless. He was looking both back and ahead. He was showing younger people – and reminding older people – what being a man, a husband, and a father could be. Charlie's widow, Mrs. Erika Kirk, said that Charlie's priority was to: *REVIVE THE AMERICAN FAMILY*. Charlie Kirk talked the talk and walked the walk; he did not balk.

At Charlie's memorial service, Erika revived a standard set by Jesus two millennia ago: *"My husband, Charlie. He wanted to save young men, just like the one who took his life. That young man. That young man. On the*

*cross, Our Savior said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' That man. That young man. I forgive him. I forgive him because it was what Christ did, and it's what Charlie would do. **The answer to hate is not hate.** The answer we know from the Gospel is love and always love. Love for our enemies and love for those who persecute us."*

Our Lord taught us to pray: *"Our Father, who art in Heaven ... Give us this day our daily bread, and **forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us....**"* Divine, immortal words. Let us pray The Lord's Prayer daily.

The Catholic poet Alexander Pope wrote about forgiveness in his own immortal words: *"To err is human; to forgive, divine"* (An Essay on Criticism, Part II, 1711). In Confession, God graciously grants us His forgiveness of our sins.

In 1981, Pope Saint John Paul II forgave the man who had tried to slay him with gunfire in Saint Peter's Square. Forty-four (44) years later, Mrs. Erika Kirk publicly forgave her husband's killer.



Pope John Paul II and Mehmet Ali Agca.

Mrs. Kirk, like Charlie, encourages us to be disciples of Jesus. In her public statements following Charlie's assassination, she reflected the holy light of Holy Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Amidst the raging sea of toxic feminism engulfing us – angry, selfish, unjust, and poisonous to the common good – Erika floated like a life-preserver, a model of true Christian feminism: God-fearing, life-nurturing, always pointing to Our Savior. She was a lighthouse signaling safe harbor beyond dark, stormy waves. Her challenge to men who would be husbands: *"Be a leader worth following!"* Her challenge to women: *"Be virtuous!"* Like Mary, Erika tells us: Do whatever He tells you.

Charlie, a Protestant, surprised many people by offering Mary as the ideal of womanhood. In a podcast, he said that Protestants have under-appreciated Mary: *"I believe one of the ways that we fix toxic feminism in America is – Mary is the solution."* Charlie might

have been influenced by Erika, a Catholic at Baptism.

Charlie Kirk's memorial tribute reached from Arizona around the globe. People spanning the spectrum of opinion have called Charlie a hero or a villain, a martyr or a political propagandist, unifying or dividing, realistic or quixotic. "Charlie Church" may be remembered mythically, along with other legendary All-American heroes and heroines: Christopher Columbus, Squanto, Yankee Doodle, Pocahontas, Uncle Sam, Paul Revere, Betsy Ross, Molly Pitcher, Johnny Appleseed, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Casey Jones, Jack Armstrong, and the original Superman – whose motto was "Truth, Justice, and the American Way" – among others.

Have you seen the movie *Meet John Doe*? It's an American classic. John Doe re-sparks American greatness



Blessed Virgin Mary.


when people need hope. Millions come to admire John, and they start “John Doe” clubs across the land to re-kindle religious and civic virtues that had made America “our home, sweet home.”

Sound familiar? Inspired young people today are joining or starting chapters of the organization that Charlie Kirk founded and Erika now carries on: Turning Point USA.

Charlie told an interviewer: *“I want to be remembered for courage for my faith. The most important thing is my faith.”* Love of God, love of family, love of neighbor, and love of country – All-American virtues that made America “bright with freedom’s holy light, protect[ed] by Thy might, great God our King,” as Baptist minister Samuel Francis Smith wrote to close



Prince of Peace.

his anthem America (*My Country ‘Tis of Thee*). Thank you, Charlie and Erika Kirk, for reminding us, and God bless your Family. 

FORGIVENESS

Pieta Votive Candles



This beautiful Pieta statue is in Saint Wenceslaus Church in Saint Louis, Missouri, and in the rectory are the offices of the North American Province of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. If you would like a 6-day votive candle lit for your family and your intentions, contact us at mprater@msf-america.org or 1-888-484-9945. Candles burn in a rack to the right of the statue. (The suggested donation is \$7.00.) Thank you and may God bless you.



JOYS OF FAMILY LIFE

I am a Dinosaur with Grandkids.

by Brother Knight Baldy

Baldy and Patty, his pretty bride of over 50 years, have 18 grandchildren. The closest one is about 300 miles away. All the rest are well over 1,000 miles away.

With children, their spouses, and the grandchildren, Baldy's group is 28 and counting. All of us get together, face to face, a couple times a year. Those are great times and always crazy.

Day after day, we keep in touch. I admit that I am a dinosaur. I don't text, but Patty and the kids do. They had me in their text group for a while. I told them to dump me from the group because I can't keep up with a dozen banter texts in less than two minutes several times a day!

Patty and I play cards almost every day. While we are playing, I'll ask Patty, *"Anything new with the kids?"* She will read the important stuff to me.


For our 50th wedding anniversary, the kids got us an Aura Video Station. I'm not trying to sell you one of those, but the kids load pictures and video clips into the thing. I have no idea how they do

it, or where the data is stored.

I like the Aura, though. For example, I enjoyed seeing pictures of our granddaughter Izzy winning the "Bigun's Trophy" when she was fishing in the U.S. and Canadian boundary waters.

And then there is something called Marco Polo? The videos are great, actually. Now I know what caterpillars are doing at two of my kids' places. I also know what is growing (potted plants) in a backyard toilet that had no other purpose.

Video calls. I like them too. There are some real hams on video calls, especially the grandkids Amelia and the Twins.

Keep in touch with your family. There are lots of reasons and many ways to do so. God bless your Family! 

Thankful
FOR
every
MOMENT



50 years later in 2023 (and that's not all of them)!

Anna and Chunk.



Baldy (before he was Baldy) and his beautiful bride in 1973.



Izzy wins the Big Fish trophy.



Around the Province

.....

Stephen Lukaszek, a lay apostolate board member of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, married a beautiful woman in September 2025, Janina "Jina" Torres.



Left to right
- Walter, Tina,
Stephen, Jina, and
Rose (Jina's Mom).

Beautiful Family.



Blessing of the Animals at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Seguin, Texas.

.....





OFFICE MASCOT

"Collie"

A stray wandered into our lives a few weeks ago and quickly became the MSF office mascot. Collier "Collie" is an Australian Shepherd and Border Collie mix weighing in at 70 pounds. You can often find him at Katie's feet, getting called "Carlos" by Maurice, or begging Fr. Andre for peanut butter toast.

Collie was recently blessed by Fr. Andre in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, who is the patron saint of animals and the environment, and celebrates the bond between humans and animals. **+jmmj+**



Begging Fr. Andre for toast.



Getting blessed by Fr. Andre.

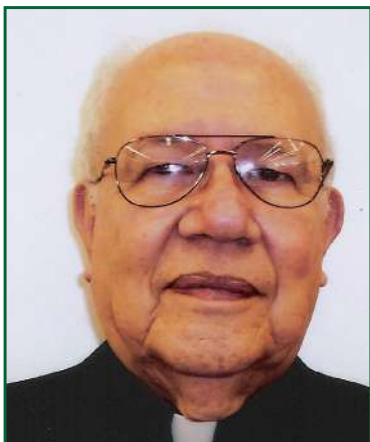


At Katie's feet.

Men of God: Priests Forever

In the Year of Our Lord 2026, we thank God for all of our priests and brothers, and we beseech Him to send us many more.

If you would like to send a Tribute Gift in honor of our priests, please send it to 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118-1412.



Fr. Ernesto Perez, M.S.F.
55 years



Fr. David Tonary, M.S.F.
45 years

Do You Want More Holy Priests?

Please join the *Holy Family Circle* and help foster vocations to the priesthood! Find your level of joyful giving below, complete the form, and mail it or a copy to 3014 Oregon Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118.

Giving Level	Associate..... up to \$49 per month	Patriarch/Matriarch
Examples:	Samaritan \$50 per month	\$10,000 annual gift
	Companion \$100 per month	
	Disciple..... \$300 per month	
	Apostle..... \$600 per month	

My Contact Information:

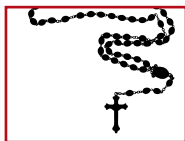
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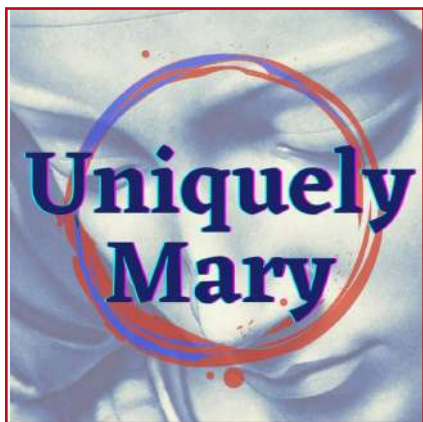
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

My Level of Joyful Giving per month: _____



PURGATORY ROSARY

© *Uniquely Mary YouTube Channel*
www.youtube.com/@UniquelyMary



Mr. Alvaro Interiano is a fascinating and popular YouTube personality, and he is the creator of the Uniquely Mary YouTube Channel. He is a licensed professional counselor with a Master of Divinity degree. His videos about our Roman Catholic

Faith are diverse, but the primary emphasis is about praying for the +Souls in Purgatory.

Following is his example of how to pray for the +Souls in Purgatory using the traditional Rosary Mysteries, but with purgatorial meditations on the purification needed for common sins. You are encouraged to use his meditations, or to create your own, but the point to remember is to never forget the people in Purgatory who are undergoing their final purification.

Praying for the Dead is a Spiritual Work of Mercy! For reference, see 2 Maccabees 12:38-46, Hebrews 12, and 2 Timothy 1:16-18.

Joyful Mysteries for the +Souls in Purgatory

1. Annunciation: those who often refused to do God's will in their lives.
2. Visitation: those who resisted charity for neighbors, including strangers.
3. Nativity: those who had or encouraged abortions.
4. Presentation: those who failed to raise their children in the Faith.
5. Finding in the Temple: those who put family first and God second.

Luminous Mysteries for the +Souls in Purgatory

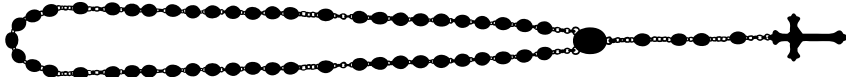
1. Baptism: those who failed to baptize their children.
2. Wedding Feast: those who sinned against marriage vows by acts of infidelity.
3. Proclamation & Conversion: clergy who failed to properly teach the Faith.
4. Transfiguration: those who willfully rejected Christ's divinity.
5. Institution of Eucharist: those who received the Eucharist in a state of mortal sin (for reference, see 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

Sorrowful Mysteries for the +Souls in Purgatory

1. Agony: those who were called to greater holiness but refused.
2. Scourging: those who sinned through fornication, adultery, and lust.
3. Crowning: those who sinned by their immoral thoughts.
4. Carrying the Cross: those who willfully ran from the crosses God sent them.
5. Crucifixion: Clergy who refused to lay down their lives for their sheep.

Glorious Mysteries for the +Souls in Purgatory

1. Resurrection: those who reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
2. Ascension: those who had little desire for Heaven.
3. Descent of Holy Spirit: those who denied the inspirations of the Holy Spirit to do good.
4. Assumption: those who had little love for Our Blessed Mother (especially Catholics!).
5. Crowning: those who denied Our Lady's role as Queen Mother in salvation history.



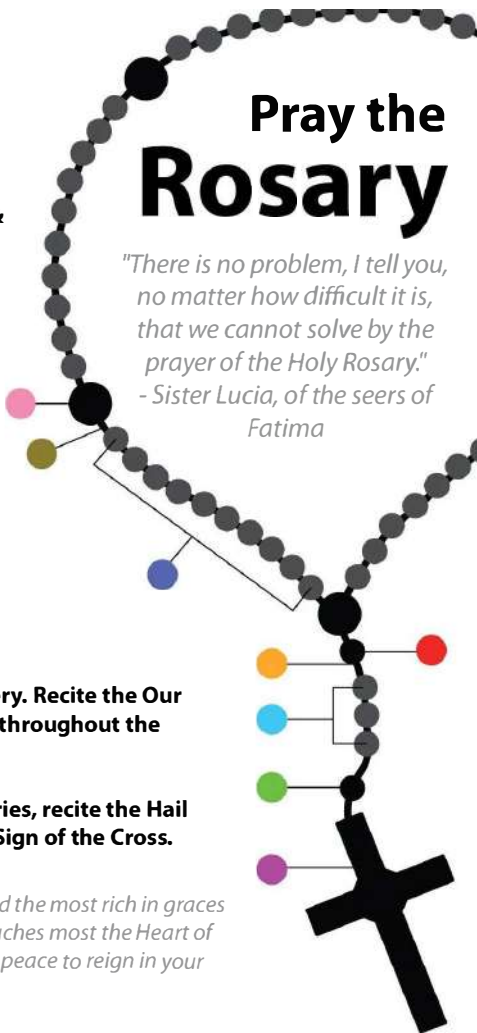
"No prayer is more meritorious for the soul and more glorious for Jesus and Mary than a well recited Rosary."
- Saint Louis de Montfort

- 1 **Make the Sign of the Cross & recite the Apostles' Creed.**
- 2 **Recite the Our Father.**
- 3 **Recite three Hail Marys.**
- 4 **Recite the Glory Be.**
- 5 **Announce the first mystery and recite the Our Father.**
- 6 **Recite ten Hail Marys.**
- 7 **Recite the Glory Be and the Fatima Prayer.**
- 8 **Announce the second mystery. Recite the Our Father and repeat the steps throughout the Rosary.**
- 9 **After completing the mysteries, recite the Hail Holy Queen & end with the Sign of the Cross.**

"The Rosary is the most beautiful and the most rich in graces of all prayers; it is the prayer that touches most the Heart of the Mother of God... and if you wish peace to reign in your homes, recite the family Rosary."
- Pope Saint Pius X

Pray the Rosary

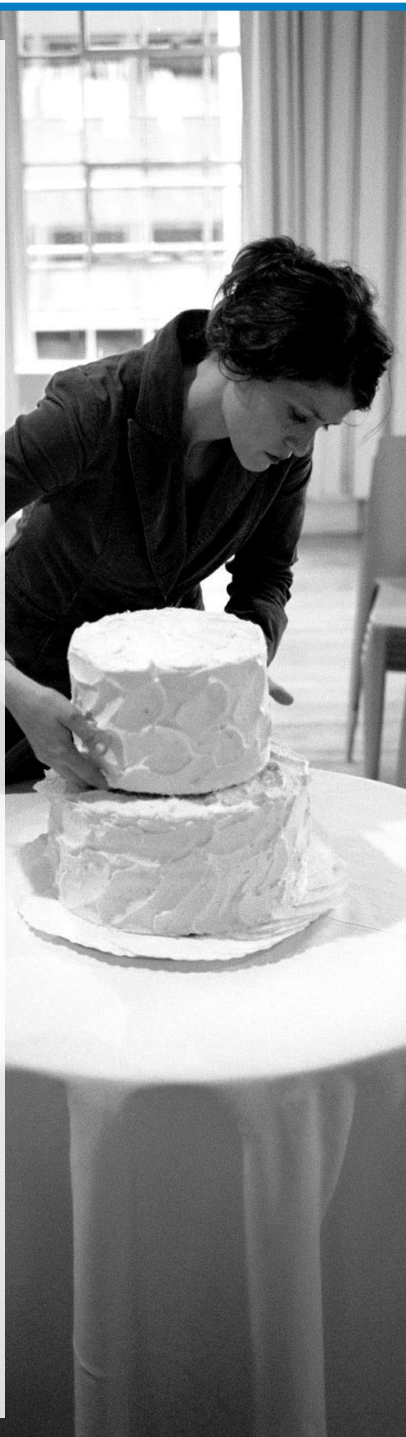
"There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot solve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary."
- Sister Lucia, of the seers of Fatima



But
first,
PRAY.

Made by Molly

Do you know what though? Even with all of the A.I. and transhumanism and neuro chips and anything else they bring to this battle, I don't think they can ever quench the hearts that love. Because beauty animates love. And technology can never know what it's like to want to make bread, and then make it, and cut it, and eat it. It can never know the feeling of skin on skin. It can never feel the difference when the sky is overcast, or when it is blue. It can never feel the wonder of saltwater in the air, or woodsmoke, or the scent of clean laundry drying. It can never feel hope rising, the suddenness of that in your chest. It can never feel the stab of knowing. I think that we are the impossible. We are the tenacious ones. We have the capacity to never let go. And people like you are unbreakable. There is nothing more ready to rise than the human spirit; there is always a path. There is always another beautiful feeling to follow.





130TH ANNIVERSARY

Twice as Nice by Weldon Tieken

One hundred thirty (130!) years ago, on Saturday, September 28, 1895, two events happened simultaneously on the same day. In Saint Louis, Missouri, on the feast day of Saint Wenceslaus (which is September 28), Saint Wenceslaus Parish was founded. On the same day, in the same year, in Grave, Holland, the Missionaries of the Holy Family were founded by Venerable Father John Baptist Berthier.

Saint Wenceslaus Parish and the Missionaries of the Holy Family would eventually celebrate their anniversaries together because Archbishop Joseph Ritter of Saint

Louis gave the parish to the care of the Holy Family Fathers on December 28, 1960.

The 100th anniversary started with a yearlong, centennial celebration on September 28, 1994. Different events were held throughout the year. The yearlong festivities concluded with Archbishop Justin Rigali celebrating Mass on October 1, 1995.

The next milestone anniversary would be the 125th in 2020, but Coronavirus changed everything! For a time, public religious services were placed on hold by Archbishop Robert Carlson.



Priests and Knights.



The Blessing.

Eventually, at the weekend Masses on November 25 and 26, 2021, the delayed and much smaller celebration took place. Auxiliary Bishop Mark Rivotuso, who is a “son” of Saint Wenceslaus Church & School, celebrated the 10:00 a.m. Sunday Mass.

Not giving up, it was decided to have a big celebration for the 130th anniversary, September 28, 2025, and the feast day of Saint Wenceslaus fell perfectly on a Sunday! The main celebrant for the bilingual Mass at 12:00 noon was Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski, with Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F. concelebrating. A luncheon was served in the school gym afterwards.

Saint Wenceslaus Parish

The Bohemian congregation at Saint John Nepomuk Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the

late 1880s and early 1890s, was growing. The pastor, Father John Hessoun, was looking for a location to build a second Czech church. He purchased a lot at McNair and Pestalozzi Streets but later sold it. He then bought the land between Crittenden and Arsenal and sold plots of land on Texas, Ohio, Iowa, California, and Oregon Streets. The profit from the sale of plots was used to build the first Saint Wenceslaus Church.

The first church was constructed of brick. Work began in October 1894, and the cornerstone was put in place on December 9, 1894. The church was completed in May 1895 and blessed and dedicated on July 21, 1895. The basement was used for meetings and church functions, the first floor was a school, and the second floor was the church.



Bust of Venerable Berthier and Relic of Saint Wenceslaus.

The parish school opened on September 3, 1895, with 76 students and two Notre Dame nuns as teachers. On May 27, 1895, a tornado struck but only did minor damage to the church. The steeple was damaged, and some fences needed to be repaired.

On August 21, 1898, the church rectory was dedicated. It was constructed from brick and is still in use today. On June 11, 1915, a former Saint Wenceslaus school student, William Hamtil, was ordained a priest and celebrated his first Mass in the church on June 13, 1915. He would later become pastor of the parish on June 11, 1922.

On August 7, 1925, ground was broken for the construction of a new church. It was built on the corner of Oregon and Crittenden next to the rectory. The cornerstone was laid on October 11, 1925, and the new church was dedicated on May 31, 1926,

by Most Reverend Archbishop John Glennon of Saint Louis. The church was a gothic structure designed by architects O'Meara & Hills of Saint Louis at a cost of \$125,000.00.

School enrollment continued to grow and on January 5, 1936, Father William Hamtil announced the construction of a new school. Construction began on May 13, 1936. On October 18, 1936, the school was completed and dedicated by Archbishop John Glennon. The architects again were O'Meara & Hills.

On May 4, 1939, a new sacristy was planned for the church, and it was completed on June 4, 1939. Eventually, the sacristy in the church was turned into a chapel.

Missionaries of the Holy Family (M.S.F.)

In 1945, Father Joseph Pelley, M.S.F. began helping the pastor, Father Hamtil, with the celebration of weekend Masses, hearing Confessions, and visiting the sick. Father Pelley assisted Father Hamtil at Saint Wenceslaus Church until 1957. Father Pelley then became the provincial superior of his religious community.

Father William Hamtil passed away on December 10, 1960, and Father Joseph Pelley was named administrator of the parish.


Archbishop Ritter then officially assigned the Missionaries of the Holy Family to take the care of the parish on December 28, 1960, with Father Herman Berg, M.S.F. as the pastor.

On March 9, 1999, the archdiocese gave permission to add a parish center between the church and the rectory, and it was completed on January 31, 2001.

Saint Wenceslaus School experienced many changes over time! In 2003, the school was renamed Saint Frances Cabrini Academy, and it became a consolidated school for six parishes for children from kindergarten to eighth grade.

To increase attendance at the weekend Masses, and to accommodate a growing Hispanic pop-

ulation, Father Philip Sosa (who is also the provincial superior of his religious community) initiated a 12:00 noon Spanish Mass on Sunday, April 7, 2019. The Mass was a huge success, and the number of people attending the Spanish Mass is now three times the size of the two English Masses combined!

Saint Wenceslaus Parish and the Missionaries of the Holy Family will continue to celebrate together. The religious congregation has offices on the second floor of the rectory, which also serves as a residence for missionary priests who come from other countries to stay during their transition to other parishes served by the Holy Family Fathers. God willing, we hope to have this united mission for many years to come! God bless your Family. 



The Procession.



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