

THE CATHOLIC FAMILY

NEW ZEALAND

A Periodical among friends

JUNE 2023

Dear friends,

With great thanks we celebrate our third issue of our little "Catholic Family Newsletter", which has been born of a desire to build up and encourage one other in the hidden mission fields of our homes.

Today we have almost eighty families across New Zealand on our mailing list, and what a joy to find ourselves sharing the laughter and challenges of our particular call to holiness!

Each of ours is different, but each the same as well: the relentless work that goes into the "behind the scenes" of running a household, the struggles to teach our children how to pray and know the Hidden God, the challenge and joy of growing in love with our spouses in the midst of a busy and distracted life, and most importantly, learning to listen to the quiet and hidden call to follow Jesus, and find in him our strength and our peace.

As we make it through another winter, let us keep our eyes fixed in Him, like Mary did.

"Come, let us seek the Lord. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear, he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth." (Hosea 6:3)

With love,

Therese Jackman, Amberley

Caroline Bishop, Dunedin



Pocket Bible Study

By David Jackman

"Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Finding rest for our souls – after an intense day working or with family, rest is certainly what we seek. The secular world offers us many paths to finding rest, some healthy and some less so – practising gratitude or enjoying nature on one side, Netflix or mindless scrolling on the other.

Jesus' offer of rest is a paradox – his rest sounds like work. Taking a yoke upon you does not sound restful. To understand it we need to have in mind the ancient practice of yoking together oxen to pull a burden or plough – an image which would have been very familiar to Jesus' hearers. A yoke was a wooden bar that linked together two oxen – Jesus is inviting us to the space beside him. He is right there with us, experiencing all that we do. In traditional practice, an inexperienced ox was paired with a more seasoned ox. The older ox knows the subtleties of the task and takes the brunt of the work. At first, the younger ox tries to set its own pace, but if it gets ahead of the other ox it gets choked by the collar of the yoke. If it gets lazy its legs start to hit the haltree – a bar at the back of the harnesses. Soon enough, the younger animal starts to take its cues from the experienced ox – looking to the side rather than in front. Only then does the work become smooth and easy.

Jesus is pointing out that discipleship is the true rest for our soul. When we have our eyes fixed on what is in front of us, it is easy to be too eager, or to become discouraged. It is only by keeping our heart fixed on Him that our burdens become light. In our fallen world, our desires and own lights don't always lead us to satisfaction. Keeping our focus on the Lord – in prayer, Scripture, and Sacraments leads to less frustration on our part; he trains our souls to wear our burdens lightly.



It is of great significance if there is a person who truly prays in a family. Prayer attracts God's Grace and all the members of the family feel it, even those whose hearts have grown cold. Pray always.

Thaddeus of Vitovnica



Dad Jokes

What kind of person was Boaz before he got married?
Ruthless.

Why did Samson try to avoid arguing with Delilah?
He just didn't want to split hairs.

Who is the Patron Saint of copying people into emails? St Francis of a CC.

A priest sits in a confessional as someone enters, and he waits patiently for the person to begin. After several minutes of silence, the priests grows concerned and he knocks on the grate. "Don't even bother," came the exasperated reply. "There's no toilet paper in this one either!"

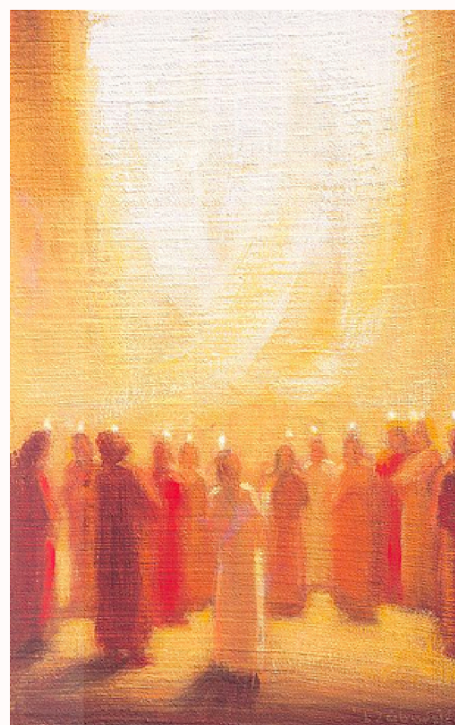
A Moment with the Magisterium

A reflection on Church teaching, with Caroline Bishop

"The Holy Spirit - sanctifying the Bride" Lumen Gentium, II Vatican Council

"When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the Spirit of Life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal. To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through Him, until, in Christ, He brings to life their mortal bodies. The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple. In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits. By the power of the Gospel He makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly He renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, "Come!" Thus, the Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

– Lumen Gentium #4.



Our faith teaches us that every single good thing we do, no matter how small, contributes to building up the entire body of Christ. We tend to think of good things as external actions perhaps, like acts of service or possibly participation in the sacraments. These are very real ways we can build up Christ's body, especially participating in the Mass as the source and summit of the Christian life. However, I have been reminded recently of the myriad of ways we can unite with Jesus in pouring graces into the Church through our interior life. Every silent thought, spoken word or act of surrender that comes from a desire to love more or better, no matter how minuscule is building up the body of Christ, drop by drop. That could look like breathing for a moment before 'reacting to a child who is misbehaving, or it could be summoning the humility to ask forgiveness from the said child, if one has not managed the former. It could be praying for a person who comes to mind or making a quiet time for personal prayer. St Maximilian Kolbe is quoted as saying, "a single act of love makes the soul return to life". It is heartening to think that even the aspiration to live this out can echo waves of grace not only into our own souls, but to the whole mystical body.

Over this period of Pentecost we can reflect on the ways that the Holy Spirit may have acted in our lives through the prayers and sacrifices of another person, or ways he may be acting through us to people we don't know in another part of the world or even in the future. We all have ebbs and flows in our awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives. A simple way we can take up the invitation to become aware of God's presence is taking 10 minutes a week to just sit in silence and ask "Where did God show up this week?" or "Where Lord, can I see your footprints in my days?"



A Living Light

A reflection on Church Tradition

"The Fullness of Blessing"

"Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of Heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a word, our being brought into a state of all 'fullness of blessing,' both in this world and in the world to come. Of all the good gifts that are in store for us, we await the full enjoyment in faith, beholding the reflection of their grace as though they were already present."

– St. Basil the Great, "On the Holy Spirit"

This heady passage from St Basil the Great reminded me of learning that the birthday of the Church is not in fact (as I initially thought) the institution of the Eucharist. Pentecost marks the official birthday of the Catholic Church, because it is the moment when the paschal mystery is completed. The Catechism tells us that "Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as a divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance." (CCC 731)

We read in St Basil's words a litany of 'birthday gifts' we are given through the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the Church at Pentecost – restoration to access Paradise that was lost to mankind after the fall, a promise of ascension into the Kingdom of Heaven at the Resurrection of the body, being made partakers of the grace of Christ – Christ living in us through baptism and participation in the sacraments...being called children of light – God's adopted sons and daughters, sharing in eternal glory with our Father who loves us. I'm not sure any of us can fathom what each of those gifts means for our present or our eternity.

I think of the two words that endear me toward my children whenever I offer them a kindness or gift – Thank you. Perhaps we can each think of our own interior way to say thank you to God as we reflect on His personal gifts to us this Pentecost, and on the "fullness of blessing" God promises each one of us.

Caroline Bishop

Did you know?

The Swiss Papal Guard is the oldest active military unit in continual existence, being founded in 1506. They are also the world's smallest army.

Wearing uniforms designed by Michelangelo and commonly armed with halberds, they are capable of using heavier weapons if needed. Each member is Catholic, male, and Swiss, and must complete military training in Switzerland. They must demonstrate good conduct and be at least five-foot-eight in height. Guards are permitted to marry after five years of service.

Applicants who are accepted are granted a private audience with the Pope along with their families when they are admitted, and when being sworn in to the corps, each guard takes an oath to protect the life of the Pope should need arise.

The most significant hostile engagement with the Swiss Guard was on 6 May 1527, when 147 of the 189 Guards, including their commander Caspar Röist, died fighting the troops of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V during the Sack of Rome. Their battle allowed Pope Clement VII to escape through the secret passage "Passetto di Borgo," escorted by the other 42 guards. Clement VII was forced to replace the depleted Swiss Guard by a contingent of 200 German mercenaries, but ten years later, Pope Paul III ordered the Swiss Guard to be reinstated with recruits from Switzerland, a practise that has continued to this day.

Over the centuries the Swiss Guard had become more of a ceremonial role, but since the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981, a much stronger emphasis has been placed on the Guard's capacity to act in times of terrorism or conflict, and has seen enhanced training in unarmed combat and small arms. Today, the Swiss Guard in their function as bodyguards are equipped with the SIG Sauer P220 pistol and the SIG SG 550 assault rifle (or its SG 552 variant), also in use by the Swiss Army. As of May 2023, there are 135 Swiss Guards in active service.





Good friendships are good for the soul

By David Jackman

When I first held my eldest daughter, Esther, I knew my priorities were shifting. Our little household naturally became the overriding focus, even more so than when it was just Therese and I. This was good, natural and necessary – and I know that my friends understood when I could hardly make it out. Since then my time available for friends and community has fluctuated – with times of enthusiasm followed by times of retreat back into the family, as both Therese and I learned to find the right balance between the demands of family and the wider community. In the seasons where the needs of family were high, maintaining friendships seemed something distant and unobtainable. While good friendships necessarily come after the closest friendship of our spouse and love for our kids – the difficulty of keeping up friendships in family life often sees them relegated much lower – and competing with our career, exercise, rest and hobbies for bandwidth. I know friends are more important than these – but I'm as guilty as anyone of not putting time into my friendships. In writing this, I am most of all trying to remind myself that putting time into friendships enhances rather than competes with our vocation.

Why are friendships so important? They are a key component to our flourishing as human beings. Good friendships even make us healthier. In the Harvard Study of Adult development, 268 sophomores were followed throughout their lives. The study later included their offspring, as well as other groups from Boston, and is still ongoing. The researchers asked what factors predicted physical health into old age – and surprisingly found that one of the key predictors was satisfaction in friendships and relationships. Friendships were a better predictor of health than cholesterol levels.

This wouldn't be surprising to Aristotle, who saw friendship as one of the great goods of human life. For Aristotle, friendships were useful in that they helped us grow in virtue and provided us mutual assistance on the road to a thriving life. More importantly he saw friendships as good in themselves, pointing out that '...without friends no-one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.'

Friendships also ready us for relationship with God. St Aelred of Rievaulx wrote that Christ is the inspiration and goal of true friendship between Christians. The way we develop natural friendships mirrors the way our spiritual life develops: we grow friendships through meals (the Eucharist), conversation (Scripture) and spending time (prayer) with our friend.

As Therese and I have grown in our marriage, we have seen a lot of fruit helping each other foster our friendships. We are by no means perfect, but by making it possible for each other to see our friends – in as equal a measure as possible – we have seen the benefits in our own relationship. Friends don't only give a listening ear and good advice for our domestic challenges – often practising the virtues of friendship in a different setting helps us to act virtuously in the home. Sometimes it is easier to give our friends the benefit of the doubt than our spouse – friends help us build and maintain the social 'muscles' required for a good marriage.

Keeping up your friendships helps your kids too. This isn't limited to friends who have children the same age as yours – although your kids having excellent peers certainly helps. Children learn a lot from the example of your friendship – and they base their own social relationships on what they see you do and value. As children get older, the presence of faithful non-parental adults in their lives is a huge factor in whether they keep their faith. Our friendships help to set up this network of trusted adults – the community which provides the backbone for our children's flourishing.

True friendships are not easy to grow or maintain. Good friendships require that both friends are involved in each other's lives, and are actively helping each other towards goodness – ultimately Beatitude. You need to have the same ultimate goals in life, whatever your surface differences, or the friendship may lead you away from who you are called to be. This is tough, especially if they don't live five minutes down the road from someone who has these virtues. But true friendships are worth it, even, maybe especially, for busy parents. May we all be blessed with the opportunity to have good friends and be true friends.



Pilgrimage Corner

By Cathy and Patrick Stack



The Holy Sepulchre Church with its two grey domes, a gold cross atop the smaller dome.



The Risen Christ at the entrance of the tomb! (Fr. John holding Jesus in the Eucharist inside the Holy Sepulchre Church, Jerusalem) Photo taken by Harvest Pilgrimages



The pilgrimage group outside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre finishing the Stations of the Cross. Photo taken by Harvest Pilgrimages



The most likely site of Jesus' Baptism, Jordan. (The Jordan river has changed its course in the last 2000 years, hence the dry river bed)

"I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'. And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:1)

Many people have been on pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In May 2018 we were fortunate to have the opportunity to make our own pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We travelled with a group of Catholic pilgrims, mostly from the Christchurch Diocese, with about half a dozen Australians as well. Our chaplain was Fr. John Adams. After initial reluctance on Cathy's part to go, we are both very grateful we did!

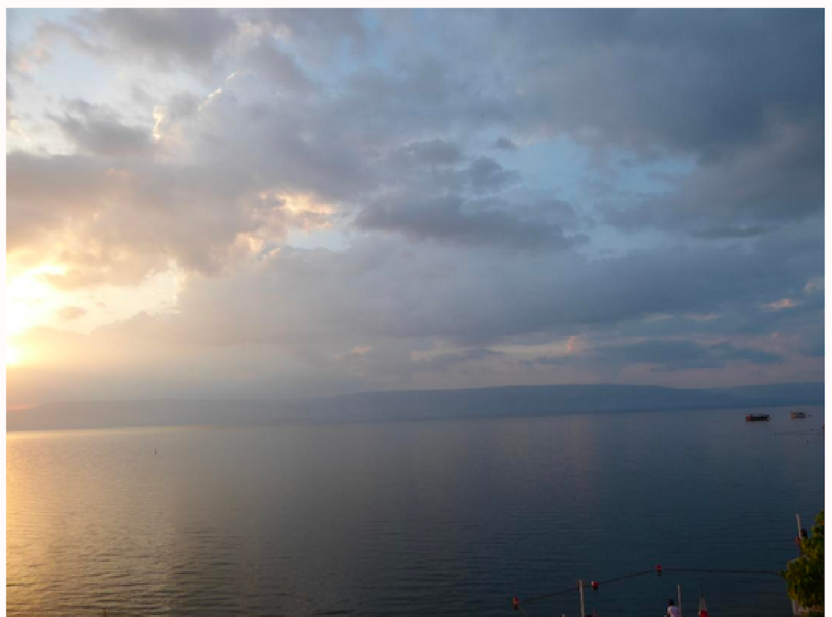
It was a blessing to leave home to grow in faith and to worship God in a beautiful land. The pilgrimage was very well organised, and it followed the sites of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, that we meditate on in the holy rosary.

It was such a gift to have daily Mass on pilgrimage! Some of our other highlights included: doing the Stations of the Cross in through the streets of Jerusalem, finishing the Stations at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Mass inside the empty tomb of Jesus, praying in Bethlehem, visiting the site of the Jesus' Baptism, and Mt. Nebo in Jordan.

We hope that you too may have the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. God bless you on the pilgrimage of life, and may we set our hearts on reaching the heavenly Jerusalem!

God bless, Cathy and Patrick

"Happy are they who find their strength in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage" Psalm 84:5.

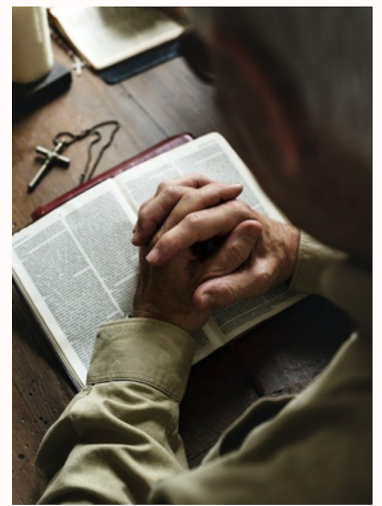


A view of Lake Galilee from Tiberias



Prayer Hacks

In an age where everything has an app or an automatic timer, it can be difficult to get our hearts to turn to the Lord, with sincerity and intentionality, to make room for him when we need him the most. Here are some tips from other busy households!



- Write a small prayer on a card for each child and blue-tack it on their door. Pause for a second to pray it each time before you enter.
- If you do "Time out" on the back step or naughty chair: while they are in time out, the parent can take that time to say a "Hail Mary" for that child. If it was a more serious offence, say two! It's amazing the transformative effect of prayer in a grumpy or tense situation.
- Write a line from your favourite psalms on post-it notes and pop them around the house. Keep them bright and uplifting, like a spiritual sunbeam.
- Have a podcast series lined up for your laundry folding time or your cleaning list. It can be so satisfying to set your house in order while also being spiritually restored.
- Leave a couple of good spiritual books in some key places around the home: a short lives of the saints by the kettle, works of Mother Theresa in the glovebox, Famous Quotes of St Francis beside your bed, etc. A couple of times a week, you may find yourself with a spare minute of quiet peace to soak in a line or two!
- Weeding the garden with headphones on can be a lovely activity: short sermons by Bishop Barron or Fulton Sheen or another favourite.
- Have a flip-along daily scripture book beside the loo: take a moment when the door is closed, to have a deep breath, read a line, and re-direct your heart to the Lord.
- Keep a white board marker beside your mirror. Every week or so, write a little spiritual pick me up, or a "declaration" to state your intentions for your day.
- Slot in a family prayer time before dessert: that way they have something to look forward to but they already have a full tummy. Make the prayer corner a special place- light the candles, turn off the other lights, play reflective music. Give them a job (changing the picture or the verse, leading a Hail Mary, lighting/ blowing candles, handing out the Rosary beads, reading a reflection etc). Playing a youtube video of other children leading prayer can help set a good example. Sometimes it takes a few months of repetition, but after a while the family prayer time can become a special place of family unity. Also, noting the intentions on your kid's hearts and minds and praying with them about it can make prayer more meaningful and real.
- Start the day on your knees asking for grace. Before doing anything else (looking at phone/ tending to jobs) centre your heart on the Lord with a quick prayer and ask for his grace to get you through.
- Have a prayer intentions board - someone's upcoming surgery, someone looking for a house, etc etc.



- Have a "prayer folder" with your favourite prayers, your spiritual "tool kit" for anger management strategies, your three main spiritual goals this year, your favourite examination of conscience etc etc. It can be great to have a daily prayer "theme" that changes on the day of the week: ie praying on Monday for redemption (who needs redemption in my life?), Tuesday for Intimacy (how can I love my family more intimately?) Wednesday: discernment (what do I need to pray to discern right now?) etc.

- Hang Rosary beads in your car. It can feel embarrassing to point out to the whole world that you're a Christian, but when you bring an instrument of prayer with you everywhere you go, it can help put your heart in the right place.

- Ask a close friend to be your prayer partner: it can make a world of difference having someone in your life that you can just drop a line by text or Facebook messenger whenever you feel the need for their prayer and encouragement.

- Cook a "Jesus meal" one night a week (a recipe they would have made in first century Israel) or a maybe Medieval Spanish recipe for the feast of St Catherine of Sienna, etc. Kids can find this kind of immersive learning experience very exciting! Costumes not compulsory but sure are fun!

Martha in the Monastery

by Sister Catherine of Christ, OCD

I've sometimes wondered about those rare women throughout history who, after the death of their husbands and independence of their children, God called to the vocation of religious life. In other words, women who lived fully, at one time, the vocation of a wife and mother, and fully, at another time, the vocation of a religious sister or nun. There are saints among them such as St Rita, St Bridget of Sweden, St Elizabeth of Hungary. I would find conversation with such a rare woman fascinating. For myself, surrendering to God's call and following a religious vocation as a virgin and spouse of Christ, I have had to surrender the knowledge and experience that so many women have as wives and mothers. This leaves me with a natural curiosity that is not filled with any regret but wonder, yes.

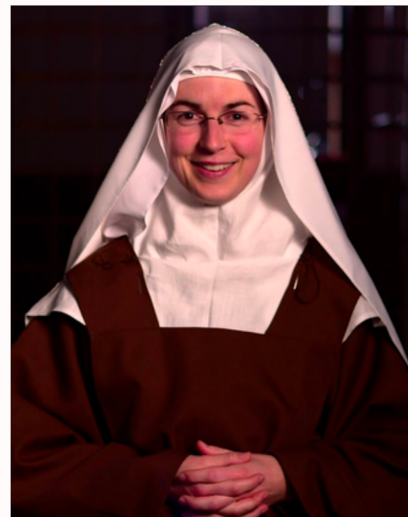
It happens from time to time that a woman, young or old, will say to me with longing, "How wonderful it must be in the monastery! How I would love the peace and quiet! What a beautiful life lived for Jesus!" In fact it happened last week: a couple of girls I got to know in my late teens at a summer missionary course in the States contacted me independently of each other (it would seem the 2016 documentary on our monastery is making the rounds). Both are now married and raising young children, and both were enamoured and delighted at where I have ended up. One of them told me she even cropped out a photo of me from somewhere and said I looked like a holy card! It's true that this is a beautiful life but, from my point of view, so is yours (wives and mothers who are reading this).

Let me tell you something: if I were to tell you that I thought that your life was perpetually like the happy ending of the chick-flick movies I watched as a teenager, where the girl rides off on the back of the guy's motorbike over the bridge and into the sunset (How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days), or when the guy runs down the steps of the full baseball stadium and kisses the girl to the applause and delight of all (Never Been Kissed), or the clipping of horses feet and laughter all around as Elizabeth and Mr Darcy set off on a honeymoon of never-ending happiness (Pride and Prejudice), you'd probably crack up laughing, if you haven't started already. You know.

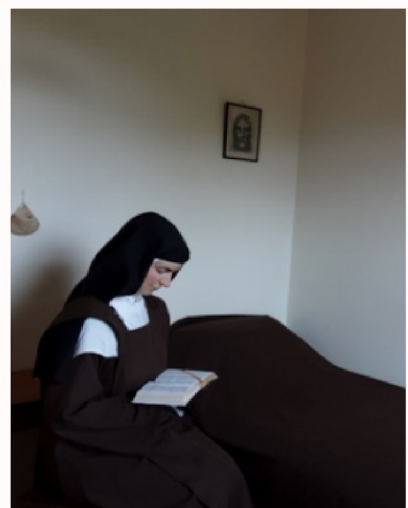
The truth is, just as your life doesn't always feel as idyllic as the movie ending, neither does mine always feel like the holy cards and saint movies and monastery documentaries. I don't want to scandalize, nor do I want to disappoint. But what I want to communicate is that, on the path of doing and loving God's will, we're in it together, as we battle with the uniquely human mix of weakness and sin and love and grace, precisely in the midst of the vocation God has called us to as women.

There are days when I would rather not have to run the gamut of duties with dwindling time left for a hobby I enjoy, but run the gamut I must. There are days when I'm not in the mood for an hour of recreation, but an hour of recreation I must attend, not only once but twice a day. There are days when I would love to have an early night, but the horarium never changes. There are days when I would love just 5 more minutes to finish what I am doing, but the bell for prayer is ringing. There are days when I'm so thoroughly enjoying being out in my veggie patch in perfect weather and chirping of birds that it is with great reluctance I must take off my gloves and boots and return indoors. Conversely, there are days when I finally have a chance to get out in the garden, only to find I can't be bothered. It is such moments, interwoven into a life of learning how to love and letting selfishness be purified, where believing in God's deeply personal love and experiencing His unrelenting pursuit of me adds to my growth in love and freedom and self-acceptance.

As my life goes on, I become more and more convinced of what used to be head knowledge only; that love is at the heart of everything, and it is God's love at the heart of our lives that is everything, from which everything good flows. That gives me the willingness to keep going when I find myself in a daily slog of duties so different from the always-happy-ending I imagined as a girl. Love grows and matures and I can still say to my Spouse, I love you. Finally, getting to the title of this article: even in the monastery there are Martha's who are challenged to be more like Mary. [Stunned silence]. I came to the Monastery thinking, naturally, I was more like Mary, but have discovered I have quite a lot of Martha in me. Truth be told, I used to find Martha a bit annoying, what with her whiny emotional outburst in front of guests (the Guest mind you!) But nowadays it's different. When I read the conversation that takes place between Jesus and Martha in Luke's Gospel (Luke 10), and then read the later conversation between them in John's Gospel (John 11), I delight in Martha's growth in love. In that latter exchange you see a most beautiful expression of faith on her part, and the mutual love and respect between them. (Meanwhile, Mary can't seem to get off the floor ☺) This progress in love that Martha made in the relatively short time of Jesus' public ministry gives me great hope. I love Him and want to love Him so much, and I need His love. Yes sisters, we're in it together.



Sr Catherine before her final profession, when she received the black veil



The Cappadocian Catacombs

In the book of Acts we read how, after the dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter took to the balcony outside the Upper Room and started proclaiming the story of Jesus to the multitudes outside. The scripture lists all the places the people had come from – every corner of the Ancient world connected by Roman roads, and how each of them could hear the Galilean speaking in their own dialect. (Acts 2:9-11) One of the areas listed was Cappadocia: a rugged, mountainous land once inhabited by the ancient Hittites, now part of Turkey. The first converts from that day would turn Cappadocia (sometimes called "Asia Minor") into a thriving Christian community, and the archeological remains of this community, over the millennia, remain one of the most intriguing historical treasures to this day – much of which is still being discovered!

For example, in 1963, while renovating behind a wall in his house in the Nevşehir Province, a man discovered a mysterious room, which was found to be connected to a network of ancient tunnels.

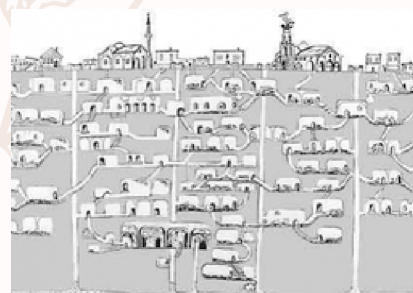
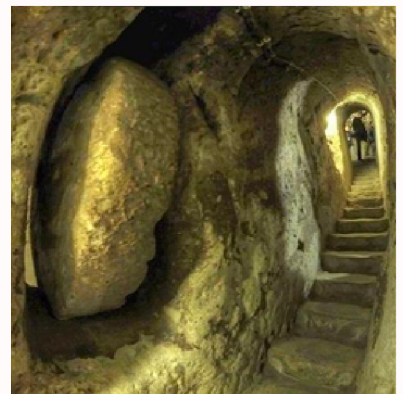
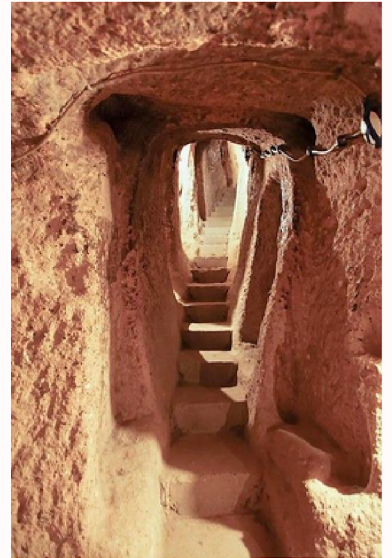
The tunnels turned out to be the underground city of Derinkuyu, which although it had more ancient origins, it was repurposed by the early Christians in the early Centuries AD, and was expanded to become one of the prominent hiding places of the Christian refugees during persecution. Similar to the Christian catacombs of Rome, it served as a place of refuge and worship, and it was large enough to have sheltered as many as 20,000 people, together with their livestock and food stores. The city had school rooms, churches, wine presses, olive presses, stables and grain stores, and is the largest excavated underground city in Turkey. Further underground cities and outposts have since been discovered throughout the neighbouring landscapes, many of which are connected by miles of underground tunnels.

The underground city at Derinkuyu could be closed from the inside with large rolling stone doors, and each floor could be closed off separately. Starting between the third and fourth levels are a series of vertical staircases, which lead to a cruciform church on the lowest (fifth) level. The large 55-metre (180 ft) ventilation shaft appears to have been used as a well, providing water to both the villagers above and, if the outside world was not accessible, to those in hiding. The well is one of the deepest of 15,000 ventilation shafts in Derinkuyu. Although we know these underground settlements were used by the early Christians, there are also artefacts discovered that belong to the Middle Byzantine Period, between the 5th and the 10th centuries. Evidence indicates these cities continued to be used by the Christian natives as protection from the Mongolian incursions of Timur in the 14th century.

After the region fell to the Ottomans, the cities were also used as refuges by the local Christians from the Turkish Muslim rulers up until modern times. As late as the 20th century, the local population of Christians were still using the underground cities to escape periodic persecutions. For example, Richard MacGillivray Dawkins, a Cambridge linguist who conducted research from 1909 to 1911 on the Cappadocian Greek speaking natives in the area, recorded such an event as having occurred in 1909: "When the news came of the recent massacres at Adana, a great part of the population at Axo took refuge in these underground chambers, and for some nights did not venture to sleep above ground."

In the 1920s, the population of Christians in Turkey was almost wiped out entirely, despite millennia of survival, in what is now known as the Armenian Genocide. Decades of persecution from the radical Muslim government culminated in the expelling the remnants of the Christian community to Greece, in a population exchange between Greece and Turkey, whereupon the secret tunnels were abandoned and largely forgotten.

Archeologists today who are uncovering these cities, are struck by the tenacity of these Christians, who literally "dug deep" to keep their faith in Jesus Christ, century after century, and endured so much to call themselves Christians.



Parenting Corner

Resources for Faith, with Sandra Rayen

As a Catholic parent, my major aim in life is to give my children a solid foundation in faith. But sometimes it feels like an impossible task to have those conversations that help our children to grow in knowledge of the faith and be able to talk about it.

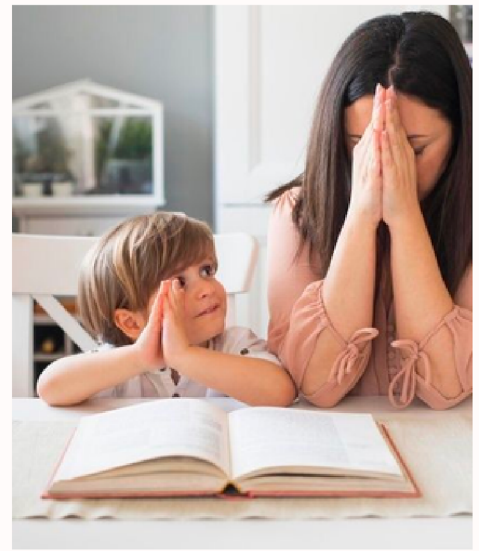
Recently I found a helpful resource; something with very little prep that we could all participate in, that didn't involve the TV, and was interactive between parents and kids.

"Faith in Five" is a Catholic ministry of A Catholic Mom's blog. There are PDFs for each week of the liturgical year, split into two age groups (3-8 and 8 & up).

Each week has 5 questions with answers for you to talk about with your kids. Depending on the day we cover none, one or several questions.

I have been amazed that even my child who is less open to talking about the faith actually participates and asks questions that result in whole new topics being discussed. For our family it has become a really meaningful way to both teach the faith and build our ability to talk about it as a family.

It can be found at <https://acatholicmomslife.com/faith-in-5/>



Parenting Tip: Soliciting good intentions

by Caroline Bishop

I was listening to a podcast some months ago, and the host was describing a scene in which she had just put her 3 year old son in his room for timeout. He was going through a stage of being very unruly and behaving incredibly badly. His mother, meanwhile, was sharing with a wise older friend that she felt she had hit rock bottom and didn't know what else to do. She was pregnant, sick and felt she just didn't know how to love this little boy. At that very moment he walked out of his room and smacked his little 18 month old sister across the head! At this point the mother just looked at her friend, as if to say "Do you see what I mean???!!!" Without missing a beat, her friend said to the daughter "Oh, I'm so sorry, come here sweet girl. Your brother loves you so much, he's such a good big brother. I'm sure next time he walks by I bet he'll just walk by and give you a great big kiss on the head". At that moment, the boy walked back, kissed his sister and continued playing. I'm not sure who was more surprised, his mother the moment it happened, or me listening to her podcast many years later.



Surely that couldn't work?! I later came to learn the wise friend's words had a name – soliciting good intentions. This is the art of drawing out what is good, true and beautiful in your children, even and ESPECIALLY when you are not seeing it. It is believing in who they are when they are not behaving as such.

Very doubtful, and a bit awkward at first. I gave it a try. Oh boy, what do you know, speaking about what is best inside a person and what they are capable of without shaming or blaming actually brings out the best in them (and every human...are you catching my drift)? I am by no means perfect at this but it is good for everyone when I try – for me, because I remember that my kids are not their behaviour and my kids when they realise I am (trying) to see them for who they are and can be, not what they do.

Usually there is one main culprit and although everything within me wants to say something like "Why did you do that?!" or "That's it, no more..." But if I can console the hurt child and speak kindly about the one who has done wrong, and give them a little freedom, space and grace, very often a sorry comes of their own accord.

No sheep too lost

The life of Jacques Fesch

Jacques Fesch is another "Good Thief", whose life tells the story of God's power and mercy. His conversion illustrates the fact that nothing is impossible for God.

Born in 1930 in northern France, Jacques was the son of a wealthy atheist banker and his wife. The busy and successful father paid little attention to his son, and despite the love of his Catholic mother, Jacques grew up with an apathetic attitude to life. He abandoned all religion at the age of 17 when his parents divorced, and after he got expelled from school, he tried several jobs, but he was self-absorbed, wilful and restless.

At the age of 21, he got his girlfriend pregnant, a young Catholic girl, and they married in a civil ceremony. But he continued to see other women and fathered another child by another woman, whom he abandoned to state care. He later left his wife and child and began planning an escape to the Pacific to start a new life. Deciding he needed a boat to get there, he asked his father for the money, and on being refused, Jacques planned a robbery to acquire the money himself. The robbery was a failure however and it ended up with Jacques losing his glasses, firing wildly, and shooting a policeman and injuring three others. Quickly caught and landed in prison, the French public were appalled at the devastating life choices of the young man, and calls for his immediate execution were made as his lengthy trial began. Jacques was cold and defiant in court, and said he was only sorry he didn't carry a machine gun. He told the chaplain at the prison, "I have no faith, no need to trouble yourself about me!"

But his Catholic mother in law refused to give up on him, and she treated him like her own son. Paul Beudet, his defence attorney, was also a deeply spiritual Catholic, and he resolved to fight not only for his client's life but also for his soul. At first, Jacques viewed the lawyer's efforts with amused disdain, and used to call him "Pope Paul" and "the Panther of God."

But a year into his prison stay, on the night of February 28th, 1955, he experienced a sudden and dramatic conversion. He wrote an account of it two months before his death: "I was lying in bed with my eyes open, really suffering for the first time in my life. It was then that a cry burst from my breast, an appeal for help, "My God!", and instantly, like a violent wind passing over without anyone knowing where it comes from, the Spirit of the Lord seized me by the throat, and I had an impression of infinite power and kindness. From that moment onwards, I believed with an unshakable conviction, and that has never left me."

Jacques was to spend another 2 and a half years in prison, and during that time he converted his prison cell into a monastic cell, and lived the life of an austere penitent, bitterly regretting his crime and past sins.

His journal and letters movingly reveal a sensitive heart struggling to break free from sin and despair, and to open his heart for the first time to God's grace and fatherly love for him. Despite his now model behaviour, Jacques was sentenced to death by guillotine, a fate which he accepted with serene repentance. "May each drop of my blood wipe out a mortal sin," he wrote. Focusing all his attention now on preparing for a good death, he wrote the night before his execution, "This time tomorrow, I shall be in Heaven. May I die as the Lord wishes me to die. Night falls and I feel so sad, but I will meditate on the agony of our Lord in the Garden of Olives. Good Jesus, help me. In five hours, I will see Jesus!"

His two children were also on his mind, and he pleaded in his final letters that they be loved and cared for.

He died on October 1, 1957, by guillotine at La Santé Prison, Paris. Publication of his journal after his death created widespread interest, and his life and memory became one that was honoured as an example of redemption. He served as an inspiration to many, and his witness led to the conversion of other inmates and jailers. Young people especially were touched by his self-conquest and victorious battle against the demons of bitterness and despair.



On September 21, 1987 the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, opened a diocesan inquiry into his life, and the cause for his beatification was formally opened in 1993. His abandoned son Gerard, (still alive) who discovered who his father was later in life, has spent the rest of his life collecting material on his father, whom he "thinks about every day." He often receives letters from people who have been touched by his writings. Gerard recounts, "There was this very well-known French singer who passed away recently of cancer, and several months before he died he sent me a note saying my father had helped him a lot, and that he was truly a saint."

Jacques joins the ranks of many robbers, murderers and wayward souls over the centuries, who in the nick of time, and by the power of God's grace, were brought into the fold, and managed to triumph in virtue despite all the odds. Like St Mary Magdalene, they remind us that the Church is not a "gym for the elite, but a hospital of wounded, limping towards Paradise." (St Augustine).

"Truly, there is more rejoicing in heaven over the rescue of one lost sinner who repents, comes back home, and returns to the fold— more so than for all the righteous people who never strayed away."

(Luke 15:7)

Focus on the Sacraments

A reflection on Confession, by Therese Jackman

Have you ever found yourself in a spiritual "rut", where you seem to be pouring a lot of effort into your endeavours but your relationships are all strained, everything seems hard, and life just doesn't seem to be "working"? Well, perhaps it might be time to reconnect to the Vine: the source of grace and peace.

Examining your life before Confession, in the quiet spotlight of Truth, and renouncing all the ways where your feet have travelled away from God's way can be the beginning of a new direction. And there in the Confessional, we find our Lord again. His Spirit quietly brings peace and healing, and the breath of God can begin moving with us and beside us again, like the wind in our sails. There certainly isn't anything like that "Just Been To Confession" feeling.

It reminds me of the line by Corrie Ten Boom, "Trying to do the Lord's work on your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you."

A wise bishop once said, "Sin is the shipwreck of the soul. If the sin is serious, it is a fatal shipwreck. Confession is the plank to which we can safely cling, if we want to be brought back to the harbour of God's grace. If, on the other hand, we receive the Sacrament of Penance with the proper dispositions, not only will it give us grace but confidence and peace of mind as well. This sacrament has very appropriately been called 'the masterpiece of God's mercy.' We should be very grateful to God for this great gift!

In the Old Testament, it is moving to read of the ceremony that foreshadowed Christ's death on the cross. In the feast of Yom Kippur (Lev .16), the High Priest confessed the sins of the people over the head of a goat (called the "scape goat"), which was then sent out of the city into the wilderness to die, carrying the sins of the people. The animal took the place of the people, so they could continue to live out their covenant with God. Jesus, centuries later and on the night before his death, passed around the cup saying the words, "This is the cup of my blood, of the new and everlasting Covenant, which shall be poured out for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sins." The next day, Jesus, the Lamb of God, bore his cross to a hill outside the city, to die in place of our sins.

Let us not be downhearted that we have a tendency of going back with the same sins all the time to Confession. It helps us to humbly understand our need for God, who is outside of our situation and can reach down and pull us up as our Redeemer. We cannot save ourselves.

At the heart of confession is the conversation with Christ. We can easily imagine the conversations that would have taken place with His disciples and apostles as he formed their hearts to be more like his own. We see this same conversation and forgiveness in the heart of so many of his parables, especially that of the prodigal son. In this parable, the Father gives his returned son a robe, signifying that the wayward boy is restored as his child. In confession we are clothed with Christ Jesus and restored as God's children. The Father says, 'All that I have is yours!' and so it is for those united with Christ. The prodigal son was brought inside to feast, just as we are united to the heart of the Father through the feast of the Eucharist.

In these long but precious days of "ordinary time", may we take advantage of the real, daily chances we have to find God's path again. May we enter into Confession in sorrow knowing our weakness and unworthiness, but rejoicing ever in hope at the promise that we are restored in God's image by the forgiveness of God the Father.

"Be still and know that I am God"

Psalm 46: 10



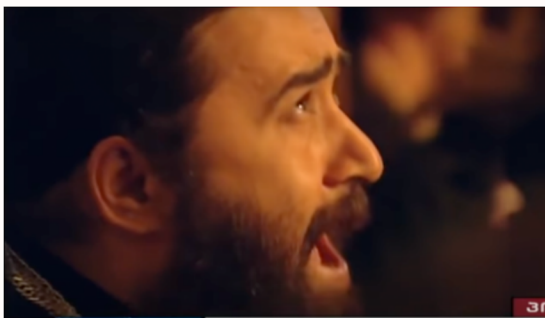
Music Corner

If you are looking for a beautiful version of the "Our Father" to give new meaning to this ancient prayer, then head along to Youtube and search for the "Aramaic rendition of the Our Father." Sung for the Pope in 2016 on his visit to Georgia, the choir is made up of people from Syrian and Iraqi families, and led by their Friar Seraphim.

While there, the Pope offered a plea for peace for the persecuted and the victims of war.

The song echoes around the candle-lit Orthodox Cathedral, and the voices of the children mingle with those of the older monks to create an ethereal, other-worldly sound which captures some of the heartfelt struggle of persecuted Christians around the world. What is particularly beautiful is that it is sung in the language Christ used, reminding us that after the Ascension, it is up to us Christians to be the voice of Christ in the world.

The Pope was moved to tears, and it is easy to see how the courage and faith of these humble believers touch the heart.





The Recipe Tin

with Kerry Brunton

Pumpkin Mac and Cheese

This is a great way to get that second night's meal out of a roast chicken – we usually roast an extra large amount of pumpkin with the chicken, and also put a breast aside, lest it all get eaten by the resident carnivores!

Ingredients:

- pasta – one bag
- left over pieces of roast chicken
- 1-2 cups roasted pumpkin
- milk, 1-3 cups
- cheese – up to 2 1/2 cups (the week's budget depending)
- veggies: such as silver beet, frozen mixed, dwarf beans, onions, broccoli, cauliflower etc

Directions:

1. Cook pasta to preference.
2. Reheat pumpkin and blend the milk in gradually until a thick and silky consistency is achieved, then add in the cheese and blend again until combined (a roasted onion can add a little sweetness here too.)
3. Fry fresh onion and other veggies to get hot. Break the chicken into pieces and mix it into veggies.
4. Mix the veggies, sauce and cooked pasta together in an oven dish.
5. Sprinkle a second serve of cheese over the top and any strips of chicken skin.
6. Bake until there are bits of crunchy pasta on top between the cheese. Enjoy!

Note: If we have bacon already opened, there is no way it doesn't get added!

The Podcast Corner

by Caroline Bishop

"Interior Integration for Catholics," with Dr Peter Malinoski

This is a podcast about shoring up the natural, human foundation of our lives, in order to build upon this with spiritual formation as Catholics. St Thomas Aquinas asserts that without this inner unity, without this interior integration, without ordered self-love, you cannot enter into loving union with God or your neighbour.



There are many reasons I have found this podcast an excellent resource. I remember accompanying other women in my mission work overseas. I wasn't able to articulate it as clearly back then, but I began to get a sense that especially among committed Catholics, there was often a desire and a spiritual 'striving' that seemed to get 'stuck' somehow. It was almost like despite all the prayers and service there was a 'hole' in the interior bucket and there were many unresolved emotional and relational issues. I remember thinking that many of our problems seem to be 'human' problems that we needed to address before focusing on the spiritual ones.

Dr Peter Malinoski specifically addresses this idea. He brings the best of psychology and unites it with the truths of the faith in order to guide people into self-knowledge, that ultimately helps them find the interior freedom needed to love ourselves, God and others.

As someone who enjoys this type of content, I am pretty familiar with the offerings in the world of catholic psychology and I believe the content offered in this podcast is some of the best formation available to Catholics who want to grow in this area. The podcast addresses the ins and outs of many human experiences around shame, anger, sexuality, God images, grief etc.

The only caveat I would mention is that the episodes are very thorough and quite dense. Although each episode can stand alone, it is almost like an ongoing course. Dr Peter also focuses his reflections through the lens of a psychotherapy model called 'Internal Family Systems' or IFS. While IFS is a secular model, Dr Peter, and others are helping catholics use its concepts to deepen their self-knowledge. You can find out more on the podcast or the umbrella website explaining the broader outreach of the podcast at : www.soulsandhearts.com

So if you are drawn to knowledge of how we tick and the intersection between faith and psychology, especially examining your own life, then this is the podcast for you.

Faith in New Zealand

A moment in history, by Joel McGreen



"E kore koe e ngaro, i ruia mai i Rangiatea –
For I shall not perish, but as a seed sent forth from Rangiatea I shall flourish"
Ancient Maori proverb

When Bishop Pompallier arrived in New Zealand he had not realised the significance that the local Maori saw in both his landing place, the Hokianga Harbour, and the name of his ship, "Ra'iatea."

In Maori mythology the legendary explorer Kupe is believed to be the first to discover New Zealand. Upon seeing the clouds over the North Island Kupe's wife exclaimed "He ao! He ao! – The clouds! The clouds!" giving rise to the name Aotearoa. Kupe's mother is said to be from the Tahitian island Ra'iatea (also known as Rangiatea in Te Reo Maori) and his link to his homeland is commemorated in the Maori proverb "E kore koe e ngaro, i ruia mai i Rangiatea – *For I shall not perish, but as a seed sent forth from Rangiatea I shall flourish*". After travelling throughout this new land Kupe left for his homeland from the Hokianga Harbor. It is the return to his Homeland which is commemorated in the harbour's full name "Te Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe – the great returning place of Kupe".

As well as the physical and historical meaning Ra'iatea/Rangiatea, there is also has a spiritual meaning – referring to a source of divine knowledge and translatable to English as "heaven". In Maori mythology the god Tane is described as receiving the baskets of divine knowledge from the supreme being "Io" suspended within a where wananga (house of higher learning) called Rangiatea.

Steeped in this mythology it is understandable that the local Maori saw deep meaning in Pompallier's landing. Here was a successor of the Apostles, a representative of Christ's Church (the ultimate house of higher learning) – arriving at "the great returning place of Kupe" on his ship Ra'iatea bearing the seed of the divine message of salvation.

Learning about these parallels between this Maori myth and the arrival of Christianity to New Zealand reminded me of G.K. Chesterton's response to atheist author Robert Blatchford. Blatchford argued that the fact that the story of Christ shares many similarities to many pagan myths suggests that Christianity itself is also a myth. Chesterton agreed with his premise but in typical Chestertonian fashion tipped the argument on its head and came to the exact opposite conclusion:

"The Blatchfordian position really amounts to this—that because a certain thing has impressed millions of different people as likely or necessary, therefore it cannot be true [Blatchford] points to humanity crying out for a thing, and pointing to it from immemorial ages, as proof that it cannot be there... The story of a Christ is very common in legend and literature. So is the story of two lovers parted by Fate. So is the story of two friends killing each other for a woman. But will it seriously be maintained that, because these two stories are common as legends, therefore no two friends were ever separated by love or no two lovers by circumstances? It is tolerably plain, surely, that these two stories are common because the situation is an intensely probable and human one, because our nature is so built as to make them almost inevitable."

Pompallier, a life on Mission

Jean Baptiste François Pompallier was born in Lyons, France on 11 December 1801. At that time in France, the Church was suffering from religious persecution following the French Revolution, which sought to eradicate the Church from society. Despite these efforts, many people were finding their faith with renewed meaning and fervour, and the Society of Mary, or the Marists, were born during this time. At the age of 35, the fervent and charismatic young priest Fr. Pompallier was appointed by the Pope as Bishop of Western Oceania, and he set sail from France to New Zealand in December 1836. On the way, he dropped off St Peter Chanel to his mission station in Fortuna, (Polynesia) where he was martyred some 5 years later.

The first Mass in New Zealand was celebrated at Tōtara Point on 13 January 1838.

Bishop Pompallier was tireless in his efforts and travelled extensively by schooner and by foot around both North and South Islands, setting up mission stations, sixteen in all, by 1844. This was made possible by the arrival of more missionaries – priests, sisters and seminarians – from Europe and by considerable financial aid from France.

At Waitangi in 1840 when the Treaty was being debated, he made an important contribution, obtaining from the future Governor Hobson a guarantee of religious freedom for all beliefs in New Zealand; there was to be no established church, as there was in England, and religious belief and Maori custom was to be respected.



Pompallier's beloved 80 footl schooner "Sancta Maria" which sailed 1,000 leagues (5,556 km), around New Zealand

Bishop Pompallier was particularly revered by the Māori people of Hokianga and elsewhere. The following dialogue with a kaumatua (elder) illustrates the bishop's attitude: The elder – "If you have love (aroha) for us you will send us a priest". Bishop Pompallier: "I don't know about your love for me, but I know about my love for you, because I left my country, my land and my family for you."

After 30 years of hard work, challenging negotiations with other Church leaders, and harsh conditions, Bishop Pompallier's mission in New Zealand was well established, but his health was deteriorating, and he was struggling to manage the administrative side of his role. He presented his resignation to the Pope in March 1869, and quietly retired to France, where he died a few years later. His later successor, Bishop of Auckland, James Michael Liston, visited in his grave in Puteaux, France in 1935 and finding the grave neglected, arranged to have repairs carried out. He visited again in 1954 and often reminded Aucklanders of their first bishop. During the 1990s many voices began to call for the return of the founding Bishop to our shores. The Taitokerau Regional Pastoral Council led the way, and in 2001 the New Zealand Catholic Bishops announced that the dream would be fulfilled, thanks to the consent and cooperation of the Pompallier family and the Bishops of France. A delegation of 37 pilgrims left New Zealand in December 2001 to accompany the remains back to this country. On April 20, 2002 a large gathering of bishops, clergy, religious and laity saw the reinterment of the Bishop's coffin beneath the altar in St Mary's Church, Motuti, the scene of his first missionary endeavours.

A Home of Faith

By Bernadette Joyce

The Amberley Church in North Canterbury is one of the oldest churches in New Zealand, and has now been restored to its full beauty, by Fr. John O'Connor, Damien Walker and others, meriting a Resene award. But going back in time, let's take a look at the Weld family, from England, who brought it here.

Frederick Weld was born in 1823 near Dorset, England, and was from one of the prominent Catholic gentry families, which had held onto their faith despite 400 years of English persecution. His wife was also from the same background, and to them, the Catholic Faith was the rock of family life. As an adult, Weld spent 23 years in New Zealand, the latter part of which was on the estate of Brackenfield, North Canterbury. He brought the small wooden church out from England as a flatpack on a ship, and had it assembled on his estate as a private family chapel.

It was relocated to its present site in Amberley in the mid 1950s, and has since been extended, so that if you go inside today you'll see the different floor timbers at the back where the extension was made.

You will also see a beautiful stained glass window near the altar of St Philomena, who was the patron saint of Frederick's wife (although she spelt it Filumena, or simply Mena).

It seems that God had a hand in their marriage from the start. In his 30s, Frederick was feeling it that he hadn't found a wife, so he went to Mugnano in Italy where St Philomena's remains are in the Parish Church. There he asked for her intercession in finding a good wife, if it be his vocation. The "wonder worker" didn't take long. After this he returned to England where he met Filumena, and within two months, they were married. Frederick and Mena Weld had 13 children, of whom 3 girls became religious and 2 sons became priests.

Mena had only 7 years in New Zealand, but she loved it dearly. Frederick, aside from being a sheep farmer, was also a prominent politician, (serving briefly as Prime Minister) and he worked hard to ward against any potential discrimination against Catholics in New Zealand, (unlike the political situation in England); a campaign he was successful in. His other achievements included being an experienced yachtsman and watercolour artist, and many of his paintings can still be seen online.

The family had their share of crosses though. One of their daughters died at 6 months of age, and Frederick was dogged by ill health all his life, reducing his term as the 6th Prime Minister of New Zealand to almost one year. In 1869 he was appointed governor of Western Australia, a role which he held for many years. There is an incredible story showing that Mena had learned watercraft as well. She was in Perth with a sick newborn, waiting to sail to Hobart, but soon after it set sail the crew became incapacitated due to alcohol. The ever practical Mena took over the helm, despite her condition, and brought the ship safely to dock in Hobart.

Frederick, 13 years Mena's senior, died at the age of 68 after a time of convalescence in England. Nine years later, seeing all her children independent, Mena entered a Benedictine monastery at Fort Augustus in Scotland, where her daughter was the Prioress, and there she ended her days as a Benedictine Nun.

What inspires me about this family, more than all their achievements, is their total commitment to the Catholic Faith. Certainly we Catholics living in Amberley benefit from their love of God and beauty, and their generosity.



In an Artist's Eyes

In this section, we use art to help us unpack the deeper truths of our Faith



A beautiful artist to discover and pray with is named James Tissot; a colourful figure in his early life, but whose artworks on the life of Christ and the Old Testament continue to provide depth and insight for contemplation.

Born in France in 1836, he was one of the most decorated artists of his time, granted the "Legion of Honour" (France's most prestigious medal) for his contributions to art. Tissot's early career focused primarily on high-society life in Paris and London; painting mainly fashionable ladies in salons and sumptuous events, and he enjoyed the lavish, superficial lifestyle which his connections and talent brought him.

At the age of 48 however, Tissot has a dramatic and profound conversion to the Catholic faith. He walked into Mass in the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris, and had a mystical vision during the celebration, of Jesus, dressed in the robes of his passion, comforting the poor. Tissot described it as his 'Road to Damascus,' and after this experience, his work changed markedly, now focusing his artistic career on understanding the person of Christ, with as much realism and meaning as possible. To help him on this mission, he moved for several years to Syria, Egypt and Palestine, where he filled sketchbooks with images of the people and places he observed.

Aware of the changing times, Tissot sought to find as much connection to the ancient landscapes, plant life, buildings and ways of life as he could before modernity could erase it, and this accounts for the incredible detail of his work: the patterns of rugs, tiles, lattices, textiles, capitals and costumes; and the precise rituals and pageantry, including the segregated society of men and women. Drawing upon his photos, sketches and nearly 100 finished drawings, Tissot created a suite of 350 watercolours, entitled "The Life of Christ," a chronology from Jesus' birth to the Ascension. It took the artist 10 years to make these vivid, detailed and emotive images. Some are miniature masterpieces; and remarkably only the major episodes in Jesus' life are larger in size than a standard sheet of paper. The narrative work includes portraits and landscapes, aerial views and close-ups, intimate moments and vast crowd scenes.

His devout faith and rich insights into the text of the Gospel provide a visual experience to touch the heart and inform the faith of the viewer, as if one were travelling back in time to personally witness the events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. At one of his exhibitions, a critic wrote, "Rarely has any artistic exhibit created so profound an impression on the public. Women were seen to sink down on their knees as though impelled by a superior force, and literally crawl round the rooms in this position, as though in adoration."

His work above, "What Our Lord Saw from the Cross" (1890) is unusual for its portrayal of the Crucifixion of Jesus from the perspective of Jesus on the cross; of Jesus' own body only the feet can be seen at the bottom of the picture. Tissot manages to cover the diversity and range of possible reactions by the spectators to this terrifying event; the grief and shock of his followers, the calm, clinical observation of the executioners, the curiosity of passersby, and the shrewd disbelief of the High Priests. In this work, Tissot remained true to his artistic vision for the series: the image is an exercise in empathy. Its point is to give viewers, accustomed to looking at the event from the outside, a rare opportunity to imagine themselves in Christ's place and consider his final thoughts and feelings as he gazed on the enemies and friends who were witnessing, or participating in, his death.

To believers, Tissot's images reveal something more than commentary on the life of a historical figure: they show us signs of a vibrant Christian imagination. He did more than represent the land where Jesus walked. Tissot saw himself as a spiritual pilgrim. He reflected on each image and seems to have placed himself in the scenes as the various characters, much as St. Ignatius Loyola recommends in the Spiritual Exercises: as a prodigal son, a child of Jerusalem, a Roman soldier, a mother with a sick child, a condemned thief, a woman at the empty tomb and a convinced follower. Tissot's visionary images can also help viewers to do the same.

Vincent van Gogh wrote of James Tissot "There is something of the human soul in his work, and that is why he is great, immense, and infinite." The entire collection of Tissot's work "Life of Christ" was purchased by the Brooklyn Museum in 1900, and hundreds of the works can be seen online in various artistic spaces, including a tribute montage on youtube entitled "James Tissot: A collection of 349 paintings."



A Page from the Library

Bite-sized snippets from the Catholic Classics



Discovering His Presence

"There is not a moment in which God does not present Himself under the cover of some pain to be endured, of some consolation to be enjoyed, or of some duty to be performed. All that takes place within us, around us, or through us, contains and conceals His divine action."

"To escape the distress caused by regret for the past or fear about the future, this is the rule to follow: leave the past to the infinite mercy of God, the future to His good Providence, give the present wholly to His love by being faithful to His grace."

-Jean-Pierre de Caussade,
Abandonment to Divine Providence

Practising Virtue

Humility and charity are the master chords that all other virtues depend upon. The one is the lowest, the other the highest. The preservation of the entire edifice depends on the foundation and the roof. If the heart keeps itself directed in the exercise of these, no difficulty will be encountered in the others. These are the mothers of virtue, the others follow them as the chicks do their mother.

-St Padre Pio,
Spiritual Counsels of Padre Pio

Focus on Heaven

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

-C. S. Lewis,
Mere Christianity

Connecting to God in a busy life

"This is how I'm praying today. As I walk down the stairs, baby in one arm, the toddler's hand in the other, I whisper "Jesus, thank you." When I sit down to write after another night without sleep, I quickly beg, "Jesus I'm so tired, help me." When I snap at Chris as he walks out the door in the morning, I close my eyes and say, "God, forgive me." When I make the mistake of checking Twitter or watching the evening news, I stare at the picture in my living room of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, and I pray, "Lord, have mercy, we know not what we do." And when something breaks, when a baby makes us late for Mass yet again, when I miss a deadline, when I'm tempted to cry or shout or throw something across the room, I take a deep breath and say, "Jesus I love you. Praise you Lord, Bless you." These prayers aren't going to have me bilocating anytime soon. But they are doing something more important. They are keeping me in conversation with God."

-Emily Chapman
Letters to Myself From the End of the World

A final note

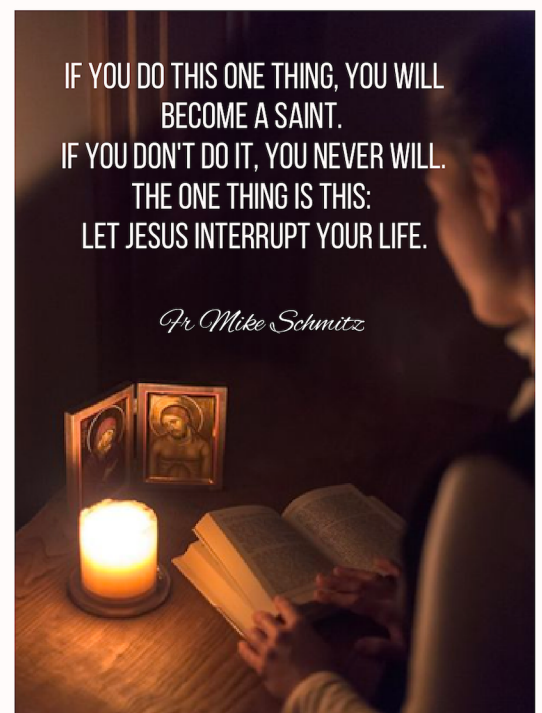
Thank you for joining us on the pilgrimage of everyday life as we celebrate the feast of Pentecost this year. We pray that the Holy Spirit has lifted your heart or inspired something for you amidst these pages.

May we recognise the Lord calling us to 'let Jesus interrupt our lives' in the coming days – that through life's interruptions, we can see His hand or come to know Him more deeply through whatever forms those 'blessed' interruptions take...be they young children, a visitor, a phone call, a change in plans, a change in career... May we be reminded through all the ups and downs and interruptions of all kinds that *"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose"* – Romans 8:28

Thank you to all the wonderful people whose contributions have made this issue possible! If you would like to join us next time with a story, prayer, reflection, recipe or article, we would love to hear from you! Our hope is that as real, everyday Catholic households, we can together find that beautiful place where the light of Christ intersects our "ordinary", everyday world; and to share that light with each other.

God bless you!

With love, Caroline and Therese



IF YOU DO THIS ONE THING, YOU WILL
BECOME A SAINT.
IF YOU DON'T DO IT, YOU NEVER WILL.
THE ONE THING IS THIS:
LET JESUS INTERRUPT YOUR LIFE.

Fr Mike Schmitz

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