



## A REFLECTION ON MARY

The month of May, as we know, is the month of our Blessed Mother, Mary, and is associated with praying the rosary. You may have noticed that any statue of our Blessed Mother depicts her foot crushing the head of a serpent. This was a mission God assigned to Mary when Scripture says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and... she shall crush thy head..." (Gen 3:15).

Over the centuries, Popes and Exorcists have testified that our Blessed Mother is the "Terror of Demons" and that demons flee at the mention of her name. Fr. Sante Babolin, an Italian exorcist, said that, during his ministries of exorcism, he had noticed that the strongest reactions of the devil was when he referenced the apparitions of our Blessed Mother—Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Another exorcist, Fr. Amorth, was told by the devil, "She makes me angry because she is the humblest of all creatures, and I am the proudest; because she is the purest of all creatures, and I am not; because of all creatures, she is the most obedient to God, and I am a rebel!" No wonder, in the rite of exorcism, the priest prays, "The glorious Mother of



God, the Virgin Mary, commands you". It is clear that if we want to defeat the work of evil in our lives and in the world, we need and should fly to the patronage of our Blessed Mother; and a strong way to do that is to pray the Rosary. Padre Pio always had this to say, "Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother." Our Blessed Mother, Herself, had this to say, "The Rosary is my predilection".

Please join us for the rest of this month of May, in our nightly rosary, at 7:00 pm, and every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, of the year, held on our online platform—gotomeeting.com, ID: 574150285, except Wednesdays, when we have it, in person, in the Church, with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Let us teach our children how to pray the rosary because anyone who prays the rosary has one of the strongest weapons against evil and tribulations. Remember the words of Pope Francis, "Where the Madonna is at home the devil does not enter, disturbance does not prevail, and fear does not win." Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us!

*By Msgr. Anselm Nwaorgu*

## MEET OUR MINISTERS & MINISTRIES

### CYO

#### *Senior Interview*

Our CYO senior co-president, **Kyla Ochotorena**, interviewed a senior member of our parish, Alberta Phillips, to get some insight on how the pandemic is affecting our senior citizens.

Alberta was born and raised in Union and has been a lifelong parishioner and lector at St. Michael's parish. Her favorite pastimes include taking walks, cooking, and meeting up to talk with her friends. Like many seniors, Alberta has not seen any of her family since the pandemic started and has had to endure many hardships alone, such as having a wisdom tooth pulled, getting a head injury, and feeling lonely from isolation. Despite these obstacles, Alberta has persevered through the use of various coping mechanisms: meditation, walking, and finding joy in her cat companion, Meatball. Most importantly, she found solace in God and her Parish community. Whether it be watching mass online, receiving phone calls from Father Miles to check in on her, or meeting up with the ladies that she went to church with, her parish is there to support her. In the end, she knows that God has a plan and chooses to remain positive, as is evident in her words, "I'm still here, while so many others aren't, even if it is with a cracked skull and missing tooth, and that means something." Amen.

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### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### *Meet Our Catechist*

200+ students successfully passed through our program; and in conjunction with St. Michael's School, we prepared 60 students to receive the sacraments of 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup>



Eucharist. Our Catechists knew this year was not going to be "business as usual." Undaunted, this talented group of men and women got to work and made this program a success.

One of our standouts is 6<sup>th</sup> grade catechist Lea Sheridan. Born in the Philippines, Lea came to America when she was two. She and her husband Patrick moved to Union in 2007 and have been parishioners at St. Michael's for 14 years. Their children Abigail and Jonathan attend Burnet Middle School. In 2016, Lea volunteered to be a Lector and in 2018, she became a Catechist. Teaching CCD gives Lea a unique opportunity to tie together the readings from mass on Sundays with the lessons being taught in the class. She often tells her classes that learning the history and details of our religion makes her faith stronger. Lea is currently a Den Leader and Secretary for Cub Scout Pack 68, and the Committee Chairperson for BSA Troop 168-G at the Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church. She is a graduate of New York University, and is pursuing her MBA at St. Peter's University. She is currently the Manager of Quality Assurance & Compliance at NJ TRANSIT.

*By Clare Andriola*

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

### *The Importance of a Church Wedding*

Marriage, as we know, is a sacrament, and as sacrament, it is a sign not only of the love of the couple for each other, but of the love of God for the couple and the love of God for his people. It seems that this understanding is getting lost to us, as Catholics. In my preparation of parents for the Children's Baptism, I have noticed that many of them are not sacramentally married. When I ask why, the common response I get is: "We really only wanted a small wedding, so we went to the justice of the peace." These couples, unfortunately, have a big misconception about Sacramental Marriage; that you have to have a big wedding to get married in the Catholic Church. The truth of the matter is, there is no size requirement for a church wedding! All that is required is the couple, the priest, and two witnesses. Marrying in the Catholic Church is much more than an obligation. It is a recognition that marriage takes its origin from God not man; an opportunity to call Christ, the author of life into the marital union; an opportunity to hold a joyful celebration that can have a positive impact on the couple's life and happiness for rest of their lives. A Catholic wedding is an invitation to a couple to give meaning to their life by embracing marriage as a vocation for life geared toward forming a family that is dedicated to cultivating and sharing God's love. The graces that God bestows on a couple during a church wedding help support and guide the couple throughout their married life.



*By Deacon Michael Cavallo*

### *Authenticity in the Catholic Christian Life— Relationship With God*

The final words in Kurt Vonnegut's letter to a School Board Head were "I am very real"; a concluding quote, about this famous author, which corresponds with an ongoing challenge in our Catholic Christian life authenticity. The steps to living an authentic Christian life in our relationship with Christ are **Evangelization, Expansion in Prayer, Talent Application, and Transformation.**

A first step in a real relationship with God is **Evangelization**, which involves receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior in our hearts (Romans 10:9-10, John 1:12).

Second, we live a genuine Christian life when we **Expand Our Prayers** to include offering our difficulties to the Lord in thanksgiving, during Mass and during personal encounters with the Lord (Romans 12:12). I have found this particular step very meaningful and helpful as I have learnt to present my unresolved issues at work to Christ.

A third aspect of authenticity is **Talent Application**. We love God with our whole selves and work to become the best version of us by availing ourselves to the stewardship of time and talent (Matthew 25:14-30).

Last, we restore our authenticity through **Transformation** by receiving our Lord's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). This same process also works in developing authentic relationships with others.

*By Chuck Cababe*



Baptism of Lord	Liturgical Season
Calendar	Loaves Bread
Christ the King	Ministry
Corpus Christi	Miracles
Fish	Mount Sermon
Green	Numbered
Growth	Ordinary Time
Jesus Teaches	Parables
Life and Hope	Trinity Sunday
Life of Jesus	Two Parts



## SAINTS & US TODAY

*St. Therese of Lisieux*  
*The Little Flower*

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, also called the *Little Flower*, was a Carmelite Nun whose simple approach to a spiritual life led to her being canonized on May 17, 1925.

If you have admired the beautiful stained-glass windows that adorn the walls of our church, you might have noticed the one that depicts St. Thérèse. St. Thérèse was known as the "little flower of Jesus," who gave glory to God by just being her beautiful, little self among all the other flowers in God's garden.

St. Thérèse had a simple and practical approach to living a spiritual life. She lived her life in loving pursuit of holiness in ordinary every-day life and in simple ways. "She lived each day with an unshakable confidence in God's love; "What matters in life," she wrote, "is not great deeds, but great love."

We should follow St. Thérèse's example and look for opportunities to do simple, ordinary things for others with attentive care and love.

*By Deacon Michael Alfano*

## CALL FOR EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have a reflection or questions you want clarified about our faith, Catholic traditions and practices or you have a witness write up about what God has done in your life, and will like to share this in our newsletter, please send it to the editorial board at [dziedzicc@comcast.net](mailto:dziedzicc@comcast.net). We would love to publish your story.

