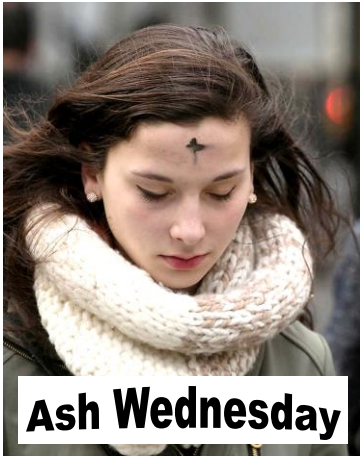




**ST. MARY'S PARISH
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HOLLISTON, MA 01746**

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Ash Wednesday

Feb. 22

Five Services with Ashes ~

6:45 AM Liturgy of the Word

9:00 AM Mass

4:00 PM Liturgy of the Word

5:30 PM Liturgy of the Word

7:00 PM Mass

ASH WEDNESDAY IS A DAY OF FASTING AND ABSTINENCE FROM MEAT.

Why do we wear ashes on this day? Ashes symbolize two main things in the Old Testament – death and repentance. Ashes are equivalent to dust, and human flesh is composed of dust or clay (Genesis 2:7). For example, Abraham told God, “I am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27), a reference to his human mortality. We use ashes on Ash Wednesday to remind ourselves of our own mortality. We are all born here, but none of us is staying here. Death may come sooner, or it may come later, but it will surely come. This is not a cause for fear, but for urgency to embrace the Gospel with new vigor. We only have so much time to accept Jesus’ offer of salvation, and follow Him on the Way of the Cross, the way of sacrificial love.

Ashes are also a symbol of repentance for past sins. When the prophet Daniel shamefacedly clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, they were a sign of his people’s contrition for their rebellion, wickedness and treachery (Daniel 9:3). When Jonah warned the Ninevites that God planned to destroy their city because of their corruption and depravity, the people covered themselves with sackcloth and ashes as a sign of their intention to turn from their evil ways (Jonah 3:6,10). Ashes are a plea to God for mercy and compassion, pardon and forgiveness. Moreover, they are a public admission of guilt, an expression of sorrow for sins that have been committed, a promise to reform and a pledge to resist temptation in the future.

In His own words, Jesus “came to call sinners.” We, too, are sinners. When we come forward to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday, we are saying that we are sorry for our sins, and that we want to use the season of Lent to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness so we will be prepared to celebrate Easter with great joy. **Our ashes say that we want to come back to Jesus.**

St. Mary's Parish Newsletter

March, 2023 ~ Volume 49, Number 2



St. Mary's Parish
8 Church Street
Holliston, MA 01746

Rectory: 429-4427

Religious Education Center: 429-6076

Music Program: 429-6076

Religious Education Email: st.marysre1870@gmail.com

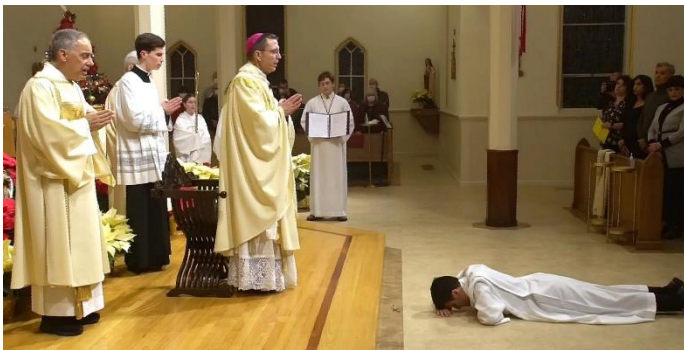
Parish Email Address: st.marys1870@gmail.com

Website: www.stmarysholliston.com

Mission: "To Know Christ and to Make Him Known!"

An Ordination at St. Mary's ~

History was made at St. Mary's with the Ordination of Pietro Rossini to the Transitional Diaconate at our 5 PM Epiphany Vigil Mass on January 7, 2023. Pietro has been in residence at the Fatima Shrine for several years, studying for ministry one day as a Xaverian Missionary Father. It is extremely rare for an ordination to take place in a parish church instead of a cathedral, in fact it had never happened at St. Mary's before. It was a beautiful and inspiring celebration, with the Sacrament of Holy Orders administered by Bishop Robert Reed. Pietro made vows of prayer, celibacy, and obedience, before being ordained by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit. May God bless Pietro with a holy and joyful ministry that brings many souls to Jesus!



***"Believe what you read, teach what you believe,
and practice what you teach."***

From the Rite of Ordination of Deacons, spoken
at the Presentation of the Book of the Gospels.





Meet Him In Ashes ~ Wednesday, February 22



6:45 AM	Liturgy
9:00 AM	Mass
4:00 PM	Liturgy
5:30 PM	Liturgy
7:00 PM	Mass

Ashes distributed at all five celebrations.

"The sign of the cross we wear on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday is not there only one day a year. It is the cross that is burned on our foreheads by the fire of the Holy Spirit to mark us as God's own lambs in Baptism. We show it once a year to remind ourselves that we belong to God. We remind ourselves that we die, daily to sin. We remind ourselves that Jesus' resurrection is our future. We will return to dust, but God is not finished with us. We renew the Baptismal covenant of God in this season of repentance, renewal and rejoicing. We all will be cleansed in the Vigil's Baptismal Flood." - L. Bouman

Meet Him Around The Table.

Friday Lenten Suppers ~

Join us for a great meal, prayer and deepening your community connection to your St. Mary's family!

Fridays: February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 at 6 PM in Fr. Haley Hall.

Our Lenten Suppers will take place in Fr. Haley Hall and will include a range of food options while observing Friday's abstinence from meat - as well as child friendly food.

Families with young children are encouraged to come and not feel burdened about bringing a meal, please let your St. Mary's community lift you up. This also applies to any individual / couple / family feeling burdened where bringing a meal would prevent you from attending. We are all in different seasons of life, let your St. Mary's family be a safe landing spot for you this Lent!



If you'd like to help, please email Natalie Pomarico at st.maryslentensuppers@gmail.com. You will be added to the Lenten Supper Volunteer Group. A weekly 'Sign Up Genius' goes out in the bulletin and people sign up for food and drink as they're able (which we are aware varies week to week). Thank you!



Meet Him Passionately! Parish Mission March 5, 6 & 7

"Life of Passion, Life of Love," Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday nights from 7-8 PM in the church, Tuesday followed by a reception in Fr. Haley Hall.

In this three-night Parish Mission, Adam Storey will show how a life of passion must be rooted in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. It is in Jesus where we encounter the most passionate love conceivable. It is in Him where we find fulfillment of the heart's deepest desires. This vision might sound appealing, but what does this relationship actually look like, what things tend to hold us back, and how can a passionate life be pursued in the midst of the daily grind?

Adam will explore this vision and these questions in depth, and he'll offer practical and simple ways for everyone to grow in this most precious relationship with God.

SUNDAY, MARCH 5 - FIRST NIGHT, *PASSIONATE*

HEARTS: The heart of the Christian life is about entering into a loving relationship with God - who first seeks us. During this first evening, Adam will explore why we must open our hearts to God, helping participants see that He is what our hearts most long for - for it is in this relationship where we are most alive. Using the lives of the saints and personal stories, Adam will show that our relationship with God truly has the power to transform us.

MONDAY, MARCH 6 - SECOND NIGHT, *WHEN THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD:* It's easy to think that a vibrant relationship with Jesus is a gift only offered to a few. Not so. In this talk, Adam will show that developing and nurturing this relationship with Jesus is accessible to all of us. We'll explore in depth the lay vocation, and how each of us can grow in holiness precisely in the hustle and bustle of daily life.

In this second evening, Adam will explore common misconceptions and challenges every Catholic faces, including struggling to find time, feeling awkward, and attempts to hide ourselves from God, and what we can do about it.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7 - THIRD NIGHT, *LET'S GET REAL:* Every love story is different, and so is every relationship with the Lord. However, there are small patterns of holiness every Christian can embrace each day. Drawing from the spiritual riches of the Church, in this final evening Adam will offer five simple and concrete disciplines a disciple of the Lord Jesus can incorporate into their day, helping them grow as disciples and deepen their Faith. This final Mission evening is followed by a reception in Fr. Haley Hall.

LIFE OF PASSION

LIFE OF LOVE

A Parish Mission

ADAM STOREY

"Adam's unique and passionate gift for sharing his Catholic faith will leave you changed."

- Jon Leonetti
Catholic Speaker and Author





Meet Him In Adoration And A Good Confession ~

In addition to the usual Saturday Noon to 12:45 PM Confession time, during Lent St. Mary's Thursday night Eucharistic Holy Hours will also have the opportunity for Confession, 7-8 PM in the church. Each Lenten Holy Hour includes an intention for which we ask you kindly to pray during your time before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament:



February 23: Pray for the people of our Sister Parish in Beit Sahour, Palestine.
 March 2: Pray for peace in Ukraine.
 March 9: Pray for those experiencing addiction, and their loves ones.
 March 16: Pray for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.
 March: 23 Pray for married couples in difficulty.
 March 30: Pray for those fighting cancer.

Meet Him For Forty Hours ~ Sunday, March 26- Tuesday, March 28

40 HOURS DEVOTION: In celebrating this devotion, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on the altar at St. Mary's for forty continuous hours. The church will be open throughout and people may stop in at any time to visit with the Lord in prayer. The Forty Hours Devotion nurtures the love of the faithful for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Additionally, three special dimensions surround this devotion:

- the protection from evil and temptation;
- reparation for our own sins and for the Poor Souls in Purgatory;
- and deliverance from political, material, or spiritual calamities.



Sunday, March 26

11:30 AM Opening Mass
 6:00 PM Evening Prayer
 8:00 PM Scripture Reflection

Monday, March 27

9:00 AM Morning Mass (Hall)
 Noon Holy Rosary
 6:00 PM Evening Prayer
 8:00 PM Scripture Reflection

Tuesday, March 28

9:00 AM Closing Mass with Benediction

Anyone and everyone is welcome at any time without signing up. But we need a minimum of two people committed to each specific hour the Blessed Sacrament is Exposed for Adoration. Please sign up at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805094DA5AB29A3FC1-40hours2>.



Meet Him In Our Sister Parish In Beit Sahour ~



SCHOLARSHIP AID: On the weekend of January 28 and 29, the good people of St. Mary's donated \$3,171.25 for the Holliston – Holy Land Friendship Scholarship. Well done! This annual Scholarship fully funds the education of one boy and one girl for a year at the Patriarchate School of our Sister Parish, Our Lady's in Beit Sahour - the Shepherd's Fields outside Bethlehem. The Scholarship recipients are Andrea Elias Salim Jaraisseh, (Andy), 13 years old, Grade 7; and Malak Majdi Hanna Odeh, 17 years old.

PILGRIMAGE PRAYERS: At all Masses the weekend of February 18 and 19, we are collecting prayer intentions that will be carried by our thirty-five St. Mary's Pilgrims to the Holy Land. Your intentions will be prayed faithfully every day in the various holy places and shrines as we walk in the very footsteps of Jesus, March 10-19. We will say Mass in Beit Sahour!

BECOME A SISTER PARISH PEN PAL FAMILY: In order to deepen connections between St. Mary's and our Sister Parish in Palestine, families in both parishes will be participating in a digital pen pal relationship. They will learn about each other's families and what life is like in their respective homelands. They will also pray for one another. Would you like to represent St. Mary's Parish in this beautiful way? Contact Paula O'Brien for more information at stmarysre1870@gmail.com, or apply to be connected to a family in Beit Sahour through <https://forms.gle/s12FgtesxdK35yVM9>.

RAFFLE FOR PATRIARCHATE SCHOOL: To advance the education in our Sister Parish's school, St. Mary's members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem have committed to raising funds to purchase an Interactive Projector and Smartboard Epson 695 WI for classroom use.

To help fund this exciting and much needed item for our Sister Parish, we will be raffling a Bose Smart Soundbar 600 with Dolby Atmos (Retail price of \$449.00). Donated by our Order Members, this system offers full immersion sound for movies, TV, and music! Use Wi-Fi® to access integrated music services in the Bose Music app, or stream songs with Bluetooth®, Apple AirPlay 2, Spotify® Connect, or Chromecast built-in. For more information open this link: https://www.bose.com/en_us/products/speakers/home_theater/bose-smart-soundbar-600.html#v=bose_smart_soundbar_600_black.



Tickets can be purchased for \$5 each or 3 for \$10 after all Masses the weekend of Palm Sunday, April 1 and 2, including during Donuts, Juice and Coffee after the 9:30 AM Mass that Sunday. Tickets are also available anytime in the Religious Ed Office during the week. The Raffle will continue until enough funds are collected to support this outreach mission.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This February, the new crucifix lights finally arrived and were installed in our church. Unexpectedly, they cast two powerful shadows on the sanctuary wall.



Some parishioners say it makes them think of the three crosses on calvary. Others have mentioned that it reminds them of the old hymn, "In the Shadow of the Cross," by Clara Brooks. Here are the first two verses and refrain:

*v1. In the shadow of the Cross let me hide,
There the Savior for my sins bled and died;
There the precious, cleansing fount
Flows so free from Calv'ry's mount,
In the shadow of the Cross let me hide.*

Refrain:

*In the shadow of the Cross I will rest,
For with everlasting peace I am blest;
Here I dwell in love unknown,
Streaming down from heaven's throne,
In the shadow of the Cross I will rest.*

*v2. In the shadow of the Cross, blessed place!
Living only for the Lord, by His grace;
What He says I'll gladly do,
Ever standing firm and true,
In the shadow of the Cross, blessed place!*

It is timely that these shadows, which draw our attention to the Cross in a new way, have appeared right before Lent. Lent is very much a movement through the shadow of the Cross to the light of Easter. For forty days we make sacrifices through fasting and almsgiving. Like Jesus as He contemplated His coming Passion, we cry out to God in prayer. We offer Him our fears, our sorrows, our trials, and our hopes. Above all we ask for stronger faith, that we might not only know His will for us, but submit to it with childlike trust.

There are many opportunities at St. Mary's to deepen our faith this Lent. I draw your attention in a special way to our three night Parish Mission, "Life of Passion, Life of Love," March 5, 6, and 7.

Our Mission leader is Mr. Adam Storey, a collaborator of Jon Leonetti, who recommended Adam highly to us. (You will remember that Jon led our amazing "Surge of the Heart," Mission in February of 2022).

Adam is the Director of the Marriage and Family Life Office for the Diocese of Des Moines, IA. An inspiring national speaker, he will help unpack God's incredible plan for our lives, an invitation to live a life of passion! Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to this special event.

God bless you.



Anniversary Book Talk

Sunday, February 26, at 2 PM at the Holliston Historical Society. St. Mary's Anniversary Book author Betty Febo will speak about the research and writing process that was involved in the book's creation. Betty will present a slide show of highlights from the first fifty years of St. Mary's Parish and offer two mysteries that are yet to be fully solved. Light refreshments will be served.



women in
WINGS
God's spirit

WINGS Winter 2023

"Relating to Others as Jesus Would"
book by Kevin Perrotta.

Through Zoom. Email
stmaryswingssecretary@gmail.com **to register.**



February 22, Chapter 4: Jesus Relating to People He Met along the Way - Mr. Joe Javorski. Joe is an experienced bible study leader and led our 2022 winter program. He and his wife live in Medway and he is a member of the Vision of Peace prayer group. This chapter focuses on Luke 12:13-21, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 19:1-10 and Luke 23:27-31. These readings may be found [online](#).

March 1, Chapter 5: Jesus Relating to Those who Rejected Him - Mr. Joe Javorski. This chapter focuses on Luke 9:51-56, Luke 11:37-44, Mark 11:27-33, John 18:33-19:12, and Luke 23:32-34. These readings may be found [online](#).

March 8, Chapter 6: Jesus Relating to His Friends - This chapter focuses on Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-45, and John 12:1-8. These readings may be found [online](#).

St Mary's Parish invites you to participate
in Vacation Bible School 2023!

Children will discover how they can shine
Jesus' Love and Hope in everyday life.

July 24-28, 2023, 9 AM - 12 PM

Get ready to blast off for a week of
Faith, Friendship and Fun!

Registration opens April 1, 2023
stmarysvbsholliston@gmail.com

STELLAR
SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

Knights of Columbus



St. Mary's Council #14224 March, 2023

"In Service to One, In Service to All."

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE: The Council sponsored its annual Blood Drive in Father Haley Hall on Saturday January 21. Over 50 pints of blood were donated! The Council thanks all donors for participating. The Blood Drive was coordinated by Knight Rod Burgett.

ANNUAL CHARITY RAFFLE: The Council will begin its quest to reach over \$300,000 in charitable donations this year when it starts the fifteenth annual charity raffle in March. All net proceeds will be donated to disabled veteran's charities, local food pantries, the Holliston Senior Center, Autism research, and other very worthy non-profit organizations. Thanks for your past support and we pray you will participate this year.

MONTHLY ROSARY: The next Rosary will be Wednesday, March 15 in the church at 7:00 PM. This praying of the Glorious Mysteries is open to all parishioners.

"By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are unfolded."

- Pope Paul VI

SAVE THE DATE, MARCH 25: The Worcester Catholic Men's Conference will again be held at Assumption University on Saturday, March 25. More details to follow. The Council has in the past organized carpooling for attendees. All parish men are invited. For information and registration, go to <https://catholicmenworc.com/>.

GOLFERS SAVE THE DATE, JUNE 9: The Council will hold its Second Charity Golf Tournament at Pinecrest Golf Course. All local golfers are invited. Details to follow.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE FOR 2023: Our Council welcomes **William Dolan** who joined our Council this month. All good St. Mary's men eighteen and older are invited to join our Council. The Knights of Columbus is the largest Catholic men's lay organization in the world. **Our Council respects members limited time but needs new members to share our faith journey as Catholic men.** For membership information contact Grand Knight Albert Scaramella at 508-561-0584 OR ajscaramella@comcast.net On-line membership allows you to obtain all K of C benefits including outstanding insurance plans and optional membership in our St. Mary's Council. Join ON-LINE at <https://www.kofc.org/en//index.html>.





MARCH IS MISSION MONTH



Our 2023 Mission Trip will take place on July 16 - July 23
and we will be serving in FLORIDA helping those affected by the devastating hurricanes.

Forms will be available via mail AND email.

Please contact Theresa Virzi with any questions at StmarysYM1870@gmail.com.

Grades 9-12 are welcome! Parents invited to chaperone as well.

Summer Mission Trip Forms are due this March!

T.G.I.F TEENS GATHER IN FAITH HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

Are you a Holliston teen looking for another way to spend your time on the weekends? Are you looking for opportunities to get to know other teens in the area? Are you looking for a place for fun, service, and faith? LOOK NO FURTHER! Teens Gather In Faith is our high school youth group that offers nights of games, food, adventure, while learning about our faith at the same time. If you have not given us a try yet, come join us for our next meeting - **MINUTE TO WIN IT** game competition. Never heard of Minute to win it? It is a series of games intended to challenge you, and encourage teamwork, and of course, a little time-management as each task is timed (only one minute allowed!) All are welcome to participate, and encouraged to attend even if it is your first time! Come check it out, **March 19, from 7:15-8:45 PM**. Cost: \$5, and snacks will be provided!

All high school teens welcome! Below are some pictures from previous events from this year! If you are looking to attend Mission Trip this summer, please be advised that attendance at T.G.I.F is encouraged.





St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Open to all 6th, 7th, & 8th Graders for Faith, Friendship, Service & Fun.



COOKIES FOR A CAUSE!

Our Middle School Youth Group came through again – baking over 2,000 delicious cookies for their annual ‘Cookie Walk.’ Held after all Masses December 10 & 11, the Walk raised \$2,182 for the poor of Haiti. The funds will go to Mother Theresa’s Sisters in Haiti, working among the suffering people there. Thank you to all who bought a bag!





St. Mary's Parish Middle School Youth Group

Next Meeting – Sunday, March 5, from 6:30 – 8 PM in Fr. Haley Hall



JOY TO THE WORLD!

The Good News of Jesus' birth was proclaimed in song by our Middle School Youth teens on Friday, December 16. They caroled with residents of St. Patrick Manor, Timothy Daniel's House, and Mission Springs. Then they all came together for pizza at the Fatima Shrine, where they also enjoyed the magnificent Christmas light displays.





Troop 14 Holliston

Boy Scouts of America
St. Mary's Parish * March, 2023

Meetings: Monday Nights 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Contact: Chris Baribeau, Scoutmaster
508.579.4357

Email: Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com

If interested in joining Troop 14, contact the Scoutmaster. It is an ideal organization for Boys in sixth grade or above.

2022-2023: The Troop meets weekly during the school-year, Mondays from 7 - 8:30 PM.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: To celebrate the Christmas season, the Troop continued its newest tradition (2nd year), by having a Christmas party during our last meeting of the year. The meeting started off with a prayer, like it always does, followed by a Yankee Swap gift exchange, and then a party with ice cream and desserts. It was a nice way for the Scouts to spend some time together, have fun, and get into the Christmas spirit.

WINTER FREEZE OUT CAMPOUT: Lastly, Troop 14 went on its annual Winter Freeze Out overnight campout. Nine Scouts and four adults hiked to Lonesome Lake and spent the night. Lonesome lake is halfway up Cannon Mountain in NH. There is an AMC hut at the lake in which the troop stayed. The hut has a heated common room where the Scouts can congregate, cook, and eat. At night, the Scouts slept in unheated bunk cabins where temperatures were as low as 10 degrees. The Scouts got to test their winter gear and challenge themselves to a new level, braving the cold weather. The Scouts did great because they were "Prepared". Several of the Scouts and leaders hiked all of the way to the top of Cannon, which is a 4,000-footer. Temperatures were approximately minus 25 with the wind chill at the top, but the challenge and experience was well worth it for everyone. In the morning, the Scouts conducted a Prayer Service overlooking the lake and Mount Lafayette.

Troop 14 has had an exciting winter so far, with all of our outdoor activities and events.

WEEKEND

ADVENTURE: Twelve Scouts and three leaders spent the weekend at our Summer home at Camp Squanto. They braved a rainstorm in the afternoon and tested their cold weather gear. The Scouts went on a hike, played games, and got to spend some quality time bonding together in their cabins. By late evening the rain stopped and they were able to get a big fire started and had a very enjoyable evening. The Scouts also got an opportunity to work on some of their requirements, including cooking some delicious meals. All in all, it was a great weekend and the Scouts are proud that they were able to survive and thrive in cold, rainy weather.



A Cross Walk

with Vera Haberski

By Cathy Stenquist

"Well, you got me!" Vera chuckled, as I walked in the living room, "you asked me a while ago to do this and I said NO!" I could immediately tell Vera had a sweet feistiness about her that reminded me of my dear mother-in-law, June. "Well," I said, "I'm delighted you said yes this time."



Vera Haberski will be turning 100 years old. On Jan 19th and has lived in the same home in Holliston for 62 years.

Vera and I

Glancing out the window, she recalled how the Pinecrest Golf Course was once a dairy farm where she could enjoy watching the cows graze. I can only imagine the changes in Holliston she's seen through the years.

Vera was the oldest of three children, born one year after her sister died of SIDS- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (then known as crib death). "I was the only girl with three brothers. Back then, I was treated as help," she said, "I was responsible for washing windows, ironing my brother's pants and keeping the house clean." "You were a lot like Cinderella." I commented. "You're right!" Vera laughed.

Her father bought a 4-decker home in the South End near a small Italian church. "My mother worked very hard and sometimes found it hard to get to Mass, but she always made sure we went," Vera shared. "She took in boarders into our home and had to clean their rooms and sometimes feed them. She also did amazing cutwork embroidery for a place on Boylston St. which entailed hand stitching a button stitch around pulled linen threads."

"The nuns from the cathedral would come on Sundays to teach catechism," she said, "so my mother would send us kids out the door to walk to church to attend Mass and classes. I went to Mass all the time, sometimes joining the 7:30 PM evening vespers. At 8 years old, my friend and I were in charge of cleaning the

black soot off the vigil lights with kerosene and filling them with new candles. Later I joined The Altar Society, which washed the altar cloths, decorated the church with flowers and made sure the church was always clean."



*Vera's 1st
Communion Day*

asked. "Not really," She replied, "I would sneak out to the Metropolitan Theater (now the Wang) to meet friends there. One time, I met this band of friends at Carson Beach. We went on a sail that ended at midnight. On our way home, I knew I was in trouble, for standing on each of the four corners, were my three brothers and my father waiting for me!"



Homemade cards

school, I went to a higher school to study typing and shorthand. My mother's friends worked at a clothing factory where they made nylon stockings. I loved sewing but didn't like doing the same task over and over again. I left after a week and got a job at *Rust Craft Greeting Card Company*, the second largest card company after Hallmark. They invented the 'French Fold,' which turned a single piece of paper into a card by folding it into quarters. My girlfriend got me a job in their factory folding cards (tabulating). I worked there 10 years, eventually becoming the head bookkeeper for the company also buying the ribbons, satin and other 'doo dads' used for the cards."

"There were 45 students in my Cathedral High School class, and no cafeteria, so we all went home for lunch. I was a good girl who did what I was told. I was very active in church and sang in the choir. But still, my parents kept a firm hand on me, not letting me date any boys. One day, the Priest called on my mother and told her, "You need to let Vera go once in a while. She doesn't smoke or drink and she's a good girl." "That was very nice of the priest to advocate for you, Vera. Did that change things?" I

asked. "Not really," She replied, "I would sneak out to the

"I had a classical education and always wanted to be a bookkeeper. After high



Stanley and Vera -1950

"I was married to my husband, Stanley for 38 years till his death at age 62. Together we were blessed with 6 children. Stanley was a good husband and provider, but never babysat, helped with diapers or any of that." Vera shared. "One day I found I wasn't feeling good, so I went to the

doctor and was told I was pregnant again at 45. I was concerned about having another at my age and with six other children. The kindly doctor reassured me, "You are going to enjoy this baby the most of all. Your other children will help watch over the baby."

I replied to her, "My youngest brother, Steve, was an unexpected blessing too, Vera. We called him 'baby precious,' born one year after #4. And similarly, my mom was a bit overwhelmed at the news, but trusted God. Now, we could not imagine life without him. I'm sure you feel the same way." "My Joan was a jewel," Vera simply said, smiling, "I took her everywhere."

Vera's 19-year-old son, Paul, was a talented baseball player, who came home with a nosebleed one day and was taken to the ER. He was diagnosed with Leukemia and tragically passed away in 1972. Though Vera is very private about her faith, hearing about her devotion to the Eucharist, Mass and Rosary, I sensed that though unspoken, her faith surely must have helped her through this very difficult time.

Vera took her children to Mass at St. Mary's each Sunday, but in her own words, 'They were terrible!' "We usually sat up in the loft, where the choir is now," Vera continued, "One day I caught the kids flying paper



Vera with 5 of her children

"Back then, there was no Fr. Haley Hall or classrooms.

airplanes down at the people in the Nave! I sometimes felt like I didn't get anything out of church trying to keep 6 kids in order, but I knew it was important and made sure we all went."

Five children would come to my home once a week and I would teach them CCD there. I belonged to the women's club at St. Mary's. It was a big club with many members. I loved being on their bowling team."

For over 30 years, Vera volunteered at nursing homes; most recently 3 times per week at Timothy Daniels. "When we moved to Florida, I didn't know anyone. I started walking 3 miles a day and met a woman who said she was looking for volunteers to help out at the local nursing home. My first reaction was, 'Oh No!' I was always afraid of visiting nursing homes. But I tried it anyway, helping transport residents to the activity room and back. Soon, I began to really enjoy my conversations with the residents. I got much more in return than I gave. They would say to me, 'Vera, you are wonderful!' I am not wonderful!" she looked me straight in the eye and said, "I did it because I enjoyed it."



L-R: Mitch Liro, Jeanne Morrissey, Sandy Liro, Sandy Quintanal, and Vera

On the wall to her left, hangs a collage of pictures of her 7 children, 15 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren. Her life has been richly blessed.

Her daughter Joan offered, "Our house has always been a revolving door with everyone welcome."

Sandy and Mitch Liro who have known Vera for 12 years shared some insight. "Vera is someone who is close to God." Mitch said, "You want to hang onto her." His wife Sandy added, "Vera has always been quite a cook! When you stopped by, she would give you a cup of coffee and bring out the fresh thing she had just baked. Anyone who is in contact with her is blessed. Very humble, she doesn't want to draw attention to herself and deflects the accolades. She is a loving example to follow. She sees the light of Christ in you, and we see it in her."

Vera received a Christmas gift bag from the Senior Center with notes from area children. It really touched her heart. As we wound down, I asked her if she had a favorite quote to share. She smiled and said, "If you keep doing good, you will get it back 100X more later in your life." Wise words. Happy Birthday, Vera!

Many thanks to Marilyn Lourandos, for joining me for this delightful chat. Till next month. Walking in His Name- Cathy Stenquist

ADULT FAITH RESOURCES

LENT 2023

got faith?



“FAITH SPEAKING” VOLUMES: Are you looking for some inspiration and encouragement this Lent? Pope Francis’ 2022 book, *A Gift of Joy and Hope*, is the book for you! Consisting of excerpts from his writings and speeches over the years, *A Gift of Joy and Hope* offers many examples of Pope Francis’ belief that joy and hope are gracious gifts from our God, gifts that are there for all of us to experience. One selection is titled “Joy is Not in Things but in the Encounter” (pp. 91-92) and it tells us that it is in our relationships with God and each other that we find true joy. Another of the writings in this collection is titled “Whoever You Are, You May be a Saint” (pp. 148-49); it focuses on how each of us can be a saint by “living with love and bearing witness as a Christian in everyday matters” (p. 148). Finally, in *A Gift of Joy and Hope*, Pope Francis reminds us to be kind and gentle with each other, and with the earth itself. There are writings titled “Less is More” and “Walking Together We Go Far” (pp. 135-136) that offer us hope that we can indeed be joyful in life if we focus our lives on living simply, and living for others. This book can be purchased from online booksellers and is available through the Minuteman Library network.

SUNDAY READINGS: There is often a sense of the familiar as we listen to the readings of the Lenten season. For instance, every year, we hear a version of Jesus’ temptation in the desert on the First Sunday of Lent and then a version of the Transfiguration the next week. This year, we hear additional stories from the gospels which may also jog our “in-church” memory—the Samaritan woman at the well, the man born blind, and Jesus’ raising of his friend, Lazarus, to life. Let’s not let ourselves be lulled into complacency because we have heard it all before, but allow the words we hear to touch us in new ways and lead us to a true change of heart. You can prepare for the Sunday readings at <https://liturgy.slu.edu/>.

SAINTS: Here are the names of some of the saints we remember this Lenten season: Polycarp (February 23), Katharine Drexel (March 3), Perpetua and Felicity (March 7), and Patrick (March 17). During the month of March, we also celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph (this year on Monday, March 20 as his actual feast day, March 19, is the Fourth Sunday of Lent) and the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (March 25). You can read about these saints, and many others, at <https://bit.ly/FMSaints>.

THE ENVIRONMENT: *The Letter: A Message for our Earth* is a powerful YouTube original documentary film which focuses our attention on Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’* and four voices that are often unheard in the debate about climate change: the poor, indigenous peoples, youth, and nature itself. The film gives leaders of these important groups the opportunity to tell their stories, often presented with graphic visual detail, about how climate change has affected their lives and the lives of those they represent. Throughout the film, we also hear from Pope Francis and Dr. Lorna Gold, the Chair of the *Laudato Si’* Movement, both of whom further expand upon the problems we face with climate change and offer hope for the future. You can watch the film at <https://www.theletterfilm.org/>. Once you have seen the film, you can return to the website for ideas about what you can do to take the next step in the work to care for our common home.

PRAYER: The final letter in the prayer acronym ACTS, stands for supplication. On the Hallow website, <https://bit.ly/HallowACTS>, supplication is described as bringing one’s cares and concerns to God. Pope Francis, in *A Gift of Joy and Hope*, goes a bit further and writes that “[a] supplication is an expression of a heart that trusts in God by a person who knows that they cannot manage on their own” (p. 151). The Hallow website shows you how to pray with ACTS, as well as offers information about other types of prayer such as the Examen and Lectio Divina.

---Leo Racine