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FR. CK CORNER: CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Christopher Klusman



“The Savior is born!”
(Luke 2:11) Rejoice and be glad! We have now entered into a beautiful season. I hope you had a wonderful Advent, filled with times of increased

and deepened prayer, especially in adoration. And that you **did not peek** into this section until 4 p.m. Dec. 24, 2021. If you did, you will have to go to the Sacrament of Confession! Smile!

Merry Christmas to you all!

One of the beautiful things about Christmas is the Nativity

Scene. And now, hopefully if you had your Nativity Scene set up before Christmas (with the manger empty and perhaps filling it all through Advent season with straw as mentioned in the previous section's Giving Manger), you now can place baby Jesus in the manger. As we look to adore baby Jesus in the manger, it boggles the mind how many deeper meanings of baby Jesus in the manger there are. One deep meaning that I'd like to focus on here in this article is the manger as Jesus' throne.

While the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, the

angels, shepherds, and even the Three Kings all bow, adore and worship the King of kings (Jesus) in the manger, Jesus doesn't use a fancy throne nor was He even born in a well-to-do shelter. He was born in the humblest of places: in a cave, placed into a manger. Because Jesus is the King of kings, the manger would be his throne.

One of the most beautiful lessons that I have learned is its application to our receiving

Holy Communion. In this time and age with the tragedy of many people, even Catholics, not believing in the Real Presence/ the Eucharist as the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, the bread and wine during

Mass is consecrated into his Body and Blood. I'd like us to reflect carefully on a beautiful quote from a saint, St. Joseph Marelllo:

“When we receive Holy Communion, let us consider that Jesus comes to us as a little baby, and then let us pray that St. Joseph helps us welcome him, as when he held him in his arms.”

When you receive Jesus during Holy Communion, you can picture yourself as another manger when you receive baby Jesus.



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MISSION STATEMENT - DEAF APOSTOLATE

The Deaf Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee exists to enable all Catholic Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to participate fully in the liturgical, educational, pastoral, spiritual and human concerns ministries in the Church.

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in the host, he lies inside of you in your heart and soul as in a manger. Isn't that a beautiful, powerful image? That the same Jesus about two thousand years ago who lay in a manger in Bethlehem is **the same** Jesus that lies in your heart and soul when you receive Holy Communion during Mass?!

With that discovery, what is your reaction? How would you receive Jesus in the Eucharist from now on during Mass? After receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and then going back to your pew, what do you do before the Closing Prayer begins?

Again, I say that Mass is like a Christmas every time we go because it is at the Mass that we are blessed to receive Jesus himself (as the greatest gift to us all) if in a state of grace.



Growing up in preparation for Christmas, we all learned the song, "Santa Claus is coming to town," in which one line said, "He's making a list, he's checking it twice, he's gonna find out whose naughty or nice. Santa Claus is coming to town."

So, I have to be a good boy to get Christmas presents. So, we have to do God's will and follow his teachings and commandments to still be in a state of grace to receive the greatest Christmas gift of Jesus. If I sinned, I must go to receive another beautiful gift before the gift of Jesus, which is the Sacrament of Confession, in order to be forgiven and thus restored to a state of grace.

Again, I hope you will enjoy this second half of the Newsletter with more things to keep you busy reading during the winter season. A Blessed Christmas and winter season to you!



The old man, one of the oldest citizens of the town, stepped onto the barber chair to celebrate his birthday with a haircut.



The barber was unaware of the occasion until the end of the clipping session, when the customer addressed him from the chair: "Today is my 95th birthday," the old fellow said. "Congratulations," said the barber smiling, "I hope I can give you a haircut on your 100th birthday." The aged patron speared the barber with a steady, steely gaze, "Maybe you can," he said, "you look pretty healthy."

TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



Here is a picture of the students from St. John's School for the Deaf praying at the Nativity Scene. Oh, let us come and adore Jesus, Our Lord!



St. Andrew Parish DEAF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINISTRY SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER: CHILD-LIKE EXCITEMENT FOR CHRISTMAS



By Jennifer Paul,
Coordinator
Deaf Religious
Education
& Deaf Ministry
St. Andrew Parish,
Delavan

Last year, Fr. Christopher Klusman tried something creative with the Advent/Christmas newsletter issue, and it was a hit! In the 2020 Advent / Christmas newsletter issue, there were two parts in the issue where there was a STOP sign on a page insert between Advent and Christmas parts.

It is a very visual way to emphasize the importance of Advent as a season by itself – and to focus on Christmas Day as a holy celebration by itself. Once again, this year's issue has the same two parts, and once again, we are reminded of the importance of Advent by itself and to focus on Christmas Day by itself as well. As children of God, we need to be reminded every year because we are living in a very heavy saturation of commercialism and other secular pressures that can very easily drown out the season of Advent and the purpose of Christmas Day.

In our Deaf Religious Education classes, as we did for Halloween, which has its origin in the very beautiful spiritual



celebration, All Hallows' Eve (which is the eve of All Saints' Day on Nov. 1), we talked about the Advent season and Christmas Day. While our students got excited about their costumes and candies for Halloween, they were reminded of the spiritual purpose of All Hallows' Eve. Likewise, the Advent season and Christmas Day are God's spiritual gifts to remember our eternal relationship with Jesus. For example, while our students naturally enjoy the delicious treats from the Chocolate Advent calendar, it is but a corollary of a spiritual season preparing for Christmas Day.

Once we arrive at Christmas Day, our students get excited about the gifts they will be opening that morning. Again, it is but a corollary of what Christmas Day is all about – God's gift of his Son for our eternal life.

This is not to say the children should not have the daily chocolate treats from the Advent Calendar nor that we should not exchange presents on Christmas morning. No one would want to stop

receiving gifts – and I do know I would not want to stop giving gifts. Nothing brings me greater joy than seeing a face brighten up with their gifts!

“Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” (Luke 18:17)

All of this – the children enjoying the daily chocolate treats and us taking delight in our presents on Christmas Day are wonderful visuals of how we should be child-like during Advent and Christmas. We must be excited about the coming of Jesus Christ like children or else we “will not enter it” (the kingdom of God).

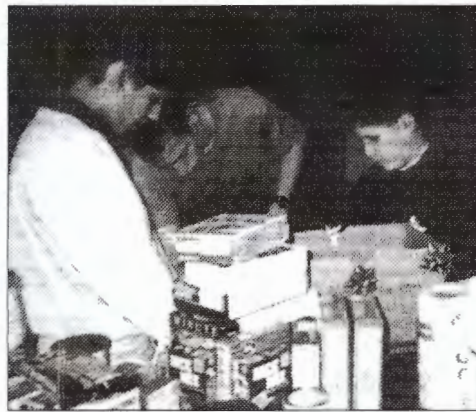
It is with great hope that we all, as children of God, take this issue – with its creative and visual two-part approach – with a deep appreciation and greater understanding of what we need to do during Advent and on Christmas Day. We need to work hard at pushing

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER -
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CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

Begun in the previous Fall 2019 Newsletter, an article/feature is chosen from an older Newsletter to revisit important people, events and places in our rich history. I hope you enjoy this selection from the March/April 1994 "Hand in Hand" Newsletter as it showed a group called the Deaf Youth Outreach Program doing a Christmas food drive.

In celebrating the holiday spirit, the Deaf Youth Outreach Program held a Christmas food drive in December. Bag after bag of non-perishables were dropped off at the Cousins Center one cold Saturday morning, amazing both children and coaches with the wonderful gifts of food. We all rolled up our sleeves and took to the task of separating food and putting it into boxes so people could enjoy several meals. The real fun began when we started to decorate the boxes and make holiday cards for the people who would receive the abundance of food. Ribbons flew through the air, scotch tape was used



by the yards, and all the creative talents glistened on the finished product – 11 boxes and 5 bags of food.

Fr. Bill Key took a few boxes for families at St. Lawrence, Deacon Michael Erwin took a few bags and boxes for families of St. Rose, and the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was also given food for those people in need.

After all our hard work, workers shared holiday cookies and hot chocolate as we talked about our family holiday traditions. Grandmas and Grandpas, do you realize how important you are at this time of year? Every tradition included looking forward to going to Grandma's and Grandpa's house or having them come to ours. One family invites people who do not have a family to come to their home on Christmas eve and stay with them through Christmas day.... presents and all. Each child spoke of a tradition special to them. The storytelling offered a wonderful conclusion to our day together and prompted us to recall those traditions most dear to each of us. What are your family traditions?

In St. John's School for the Deaf's publications of the "Our Young People," there is a section that has their current news. I hope you will enjoy these various news clippings:

**News
of
St.
John's**



✦

They start in young these days — the little four and five-year-olds in Sister Henriella's room make real Christmas cookies. They help stir the batter, and cut out the cookies. Then they all watch carefully over the little electric stove in their room while it bakes the cookies — just so. After that, there's a party, and not one of the little tykes needs instructions on what to do with the cookies then.

✦

January 1953

Now that all letters to Santa Claus are duly written and mailed, the children are counting the days until the big Christmas party to be given by the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

✦

December 1954

REFLECTION QUESTION:



Try to start a conversation with your family and/or friends about this question.

If you could create a stained glass window for your church, what design or images would it contain?

WHY DO WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS?

This is borrowed from “The Catholic Company’s Get Fed: Bite-Sized Faith.” Enjoy!

“Does it really matter if you miss Mass just once?” a non-Catholic might ask.

Yes, it does matter.

Through His Church, God commands us to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. It is a **mortal sin** to miss Mass without a grave reason (such as illness, being housebound, a first responder rushing to a call, etc).

You may wonder why the Church *commands* weekly Mass attendance under pain of sin, rather than simply *suggesting* it. It’s important to know why—not only to strengthen our own faith, but also in case any curious non-Catholics ask about it.

The reason for the Sunday obligation is that **we owe God worship as His creatures**. It’s not just a nice spiritual ritual or an outward show of being Catholic. God is our Creator. He made us out of *nothing* and keeps us in existence through His own power and will. We owe everything to Him, and our regular worship of Him is how we express our innate desire—and our natural obligation—to offer our Creator homage and gratitude.

Furthermore, without His grace and presence in our lives, our souls and therefore our salvation are in danger. He doesn’t *need* our worship—but we *do* need Him.



If we ignore God’s command to worship on Sundays, we are putting other things before God, as though He were of secondary importance. And we are destroying our relationship with Him and walking away from the spiritual graces our soul needs to stay alive. As one priest said, skipping Sunday Mass

is somewhat analogous to a deep-sea diver’s putting a crimp in his air line so that no air can come through to keep him alive. By a decision to miss Sunday Mass or a holy day of obligation we suspend the operation of sanctifying grace in our lives.

—Fr. Ray Ryland, “Why Is It a Mortal Sin to Miss Mass?” at Catholic Answers

God knows that, due to our fallen nature, we struggle to do what we should, feel confused about it, and are

even tempted not to. That’s why He gives us clear commandments. The Third Commandment prescribes weekly worship of God: “**Thou shalt keep holy the Lord’s day.**” And Jesus commanded: “**Do this in memory of me**” (Luke 22:19).

If Mass on Sunday were just an option—and skipping it were not a sin—can any of us honestly say we would never, ever miss a Sunday Mass?

We—and the Church—know the answer.

Taken from: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/why-do-we-have-an-obligation-to-attend-mass/>

CATHOLIC QUIZ (CHRISTMAS)

1. What are the liturgical colors of Christmas?

- a) Gold/White b) Green/Red
c) Red d) Green

2. True or False: It was snowing when Jesus was born on the first Christmas.

- a) True b) False

3. Which saint made the Nativity Scene popular?

- a) St. Augustine of Hippo b) St. Pio of Pietrelcina
c) St. Francis of Assisi d) St. Nicholas

4. Which of the following Feast Days is not celebrated during the Christmas Season?

- a) Circumcision of the Lord b) Feast of the Holy Family
c) St. Nicholas d) Epiphany

5. How many days old was Jesus when he was circumcised and given his name?

- a) 1 day b) 8 days c) 12 days d) 40 days



(Answers on page 10.)

► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER - Continued from Page 3.

through the heavy saturation of secular pressures and “zero in” on the true purpose of the Advent season and Christmas Day. We need to be proactive and find ways to protect the time to prepare and meditate – by prayer – as we await and finally celebrate the ultimate gift, which is the coming of Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation.

Get joyful and sing like an excited child:

*I know you came to rescue me
This baby boy would grow to be
A man and one day die for me and you
My sins would drive the nails in you
That rugged cross was my cross, too
Still every breath you drew was Hallelujah
Hallelujah!*

AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Here is a beautiful story borrowed from "Our Young People: The Friend of the Deaf," December 1959 issue.

He walked sedately on tiptoe in squeaky brand new shoes. He was small enough still to have some of the wonder of the Christmas angel in his eyes; old enough to carry a look of the three wise men about him. A stranger looking upon him knew him to be just what he really was – a little boy who suddenly discovered the real meaning of Christmas.

Kneeling with reverent folded hands he studied the scene before him. It was beautiful beyond his dreams. The stable of Bethlehem, the shepherds, the Blessed Mother and dear St.

Joseph. He looked in awe-struck wonder at the patient beasts. He put his hand stealthy into the manger to feel of the straw. He sniffed the pines surrounding the cave. In such a dreary stable, on just such a cold night in the long ago, the little Christ-child, God, was born.

Well, he knew that story. As far back as his seven-year memory would carry him he had heard about that blessed night. Every Christmas with his mother and father he had come to visit the Crib. In school, Sister had taught him all about the star that led the three Kings; of the shepherds keeping watch on the hill; about the angels singing their blessed songs of welcome.

And now with his very own eyes he witnessed it and drank in the beauty of the scene. With the rest of men, he came to visit the newborn babe. This Christmas that little Christ had been his in a special way. He had come onto his heart in Holy Communion. He was a big boy now – seven years old. And his visit to the Crib was a very special visit indeed.

A little boy's heart, like a little boy's pockets, contains a strangely jumbled assortment of many things. The little boy at the Crib of Christ wears his heart for all the world to see. Lessons we might all well read are written in every move of that sturdy body. With his newly awakened sense of holy things, he stands, pondering the great drama. His eyes, lips, folded hands tells a Christmas story. It is the tribute of Childhood to the Infant Savior.



We can imagine the symphony of that small boy heart for the baby stranger. Next to the wonder of it all, the boyish interest in the unique surrounding, the cruel cold winds, the poverty of that manger bed, comes his own little boy feeling for the little boy Christ.

“No home,” he says to himself over and over again. Back in his father’s house there is a Christmas tree taller than any in that stable. When he returns from Mass, it will be all lighted and trimmed with gifts. It is every year. Gifts for himself. Presents from mother, father, his sisters and his brothers. Oh, home is a lovely place on Christmas! “No home.” The

little boy at the Crib feels a tightness in his throat and a sting in his eyes. If he were not in church surrounded by so many people, he surely might cry. “No home!” It is very sad.

There besides the Christmas Crib a child heart is trying to comfort the Infant God. “Dear Little Savior,” he says, “I will be very good to You. I have a little brother just about as big as You. I mind him and play with him and buy him toys. I know all about babies. If You will come into my heart and come home with me, I will be very good to You, God.”

Oh, little boy at the Christmas Crib, give me your faith and love and sweet and simplicity! Help me look upon that blessed sight with your wonder-struck innocent eyes!

From out the crowd a young girl takes her place beside the Crib. Womanhood is dawning in her serious eyes. She is wearing her first grown-up dress and walks up the aisle with a queenly grace and bearing. Other years she came as one of the school children to visit that crib. This year she comes alone. School gates have closed behind her, she is holding her first job. It is as a young woman of the world she comes to visit her Savior.

Reverently silent she kneels, earnest, intense. What is it she

► **AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB - Continued on Page 7.**

► AT THE CHRISTMAS CRIB - Continued from Page 6.

sees there in that crib she never saw before? Why is it all so different? A woman's pity is in her heart, and a woman's tears ready to flow. Her warm coat reproaches her for the poverty in cold of that barren stable. In her little girl days she yearned to cover Him over with her tiny coat to help to keep Him warm. In her grown-up days she sees in Him all the neglected souls in all the world. She hears in her ears the cries of the little ones in distant lands who know Him not and perhaps will never know Him. Her tender child-heart once broke over the cold winds that blew about Him and made Him shiver in the night. Her Woman's heart is torn with the lack of sympathy and bitter hostility of the outside world to a God who came to save it. What is it she is asking of the Infant Christ as she kneels there by His Crib this blessed night? She is asking what youth the World over is asking this day. With all her untried Faith and Hope and Love she is marking mighty promises. She is pledging great things. She is giving to the Infant in the manger that which He so greatly craves – the tribute of youth. "I will serve You, Lord; I will help to carry Your burdens; I will make Your name known in distant places; Bare Your gospel to the far corners of the earth; I will live for You alone, little Christmas Christ, if You will but come into my poor unworthy heart."

Oh youth on this holy morn give us of your divine generosity!
Help us to dream holy dreams!

Beside the Crib kneels a mother. She is one of the vast number that come from mansion and cottage, mothers of the rich and mothers of the poor. She comes bearing greetings no other being on earth could quite supply.

Kneeling there beside Him the eyes of the mother see things the rest of men could never see. She detects the heart-breaking pathos of that blessed picture. It is the blessed Mother she visits rather than her little son and as woman to woman she yearns over her as one of her own. "Just a little girl," she says to herself. "Scarcely as old as Mary. All alone upon such a night!"

Beside that crib her mother-heart is broken with pity and love and sympathy. How she would love to have made that bed for that baby Christ. What pleasure sublime is would have brought her mother-heart to have made but one wooly blanket to cover Him over. With that intense joy she would have swept clean that stable and built a fire against the coldness of the night.

Looking upon her perhaps we see but a careworn shabby middle-aged woman. To our eyes her tired form holds little of the romance of life. She is but one of the hundreds who come in out of the night to kneel at his side. We imagine her

one who has tried all her days to make ends meet and succeed none to well. The man of her heart has been dead these years past and she struggles on alone. Her children have grown up and scattered to the four corners of the globe. Her life story is almost finished and she is not sorry to see it close. The world is not a very wonderful place to the poor and the old. But she does not complain. And Christmas night beside the Crib of Christ she is motherhood personified. She represents the humility self-sacrifice, sublime faith of the mothers of the world. Giving all and asking nothing.

Bending low before his Crib she has but one supreme desire. To hush in her two strong arms that little Babe and to comfort his poor young mother. With Mary the Mother of God she sees in His Baby eyes the shadow of the cross. She cannot listen to the Angels' hymns without hearing above the beautiful Christmas music the cries of the soldiers surrounding His Cross. And bowing her poor tired head at His manger she weeps bitter tears for that Blessed Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. They are tears for you and for me and for the world. A mother's tribute to the Infant Christ.



ST. CLARE: MODEL SAINT FOR THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

By Fr. Christopher Klusman

St. Clare is one of the most beloved saints of all time, as she is connected to St. Francis of Assisi. St. Clare has so much to teach us that would be impossible to explain in this article. I'd like to begin with a summary of her life and what she can teach us about her experience during a Christmas in her extraordinary life.

Regarding to her life, here is an excerpt written by Fr. John O'Connor, borrowed from <https://stclare-queens.org/st-clare-of-assisi>. It is shown here in italics:

Saint Clare is believed to have been born on July 16, 1194 in Assisi. While there is uncertainty to the exact date of her birth, there is no question to the fact that she was the oldest of three girls of the wealthy Offreduccio Family. There was nothing extraordinary of her early years. Clare along with her sisters enjoyed the life of a rich family of the times.



Clare spent her youthful days learning music, fine embroidery and how to entertain guests at social gatherings. A woman of Clare's status had no need of cooking skills since she would always have servants in the kitchen.

Clare's mother, Ortolana, was very religious and taught all her children about Jesus and the importance of Sunday Mass and prayer. Clare's father, Faverone, was happy about the beautiful and gentle woman she was becoming. By her seventeenth year he had found her a wealthy man to be her husband.

Clare seemed to be the luckiest girl in the world. She had it all – but she did not feel as happy and peaceful as she thought she should. There were many poor people in Assisi and the surrounding towns and this at times disturbed her.

While growing up, Clare was very popular at the parties held for the wealthy young people of Assisi. No doubt she first met St. Francis at such events before he left all worldly goods behind.

When she was about 17 Clare again met Francis. This time he and his brothers were enthusiastically preaching about Jesus and caring for the poor. This message and the tremendous joy that Francis and his followers demonstrated challenged Clare to think about her own life. She found Francis and his brothers to be filled with more peace than her father and uncles who were some of the most successful men in Assisi. But they were always worried

about someone or something.

Clare went to the Lenten Sermons Francis preached in 1211 and then met privately with him. They spoke of the beauty of poverty, caring for the poor and sick and living like Jesus. She then knew what she wanted to do with her life.

On Palm Sunday of 1212, Clare decided to elope – not with the man to whom her family promised her – but to Jesus. Wearing her best dress and jewelry, she went to the Portiuncula where Francis and his followers held lighted candles and sang the psalms. There, Clare Offreduccio promised her life to Jesus. She removed her wealthy clothes and jewels and embracing poverty put on a rough gray robe and wooden sandals. Then St. Francis himself cut off Clare's long and beautiful hair as she renounced the world.

Because she was the first woman to follow Francis and there was no place for her to stay, Francis directed her to live with a group of Benedictine Sisters where she would learn about convent life and living in community.

Clare's father was furious that his oldest daughter joined Francis and his followers. He tried to remove her by force from the monastery where Clare was. She ran into the chapel and literally held on to the Altar as her relatives tried to take her home. Because she was so steadfast and resolute, her family let her stay.

Others began to join Francis and Clare in their work and prayer including Clare's own sister Agnes. They soon founded a convent for the sisters at the church of San Damiano. After her father died, Clare's own mother would join the community as well as other wealthy women from the town and from as far away as the great city of Florence.

Francis appointed Clare as the women's superior in 1215. They would soon be known as Poor Clares. Wearing no shoes, fasting often, perpetually abstaining from meat and sleeping on the hard wood floors the sisters radically embraced a life of poverty and penance. Their embrace of poverty was only equaled by their embrace of prayer. Taking a vow of silence they rarely spoke except to sing God's praises in the psalms and in prayer.

Francis, Clare and their followers vowed not to have any possessions. It was an extremely tough vow and no other group of religious at that time made such a promise. It was a way of life that made some in the Church uneasy. When St. Francis died in 1226, Clare was to insure that this embrace of "Sister Poverty" was to be incorporated into the Sisters' Rule.

As tough and extreme as their lives were, it did not stop the

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► **ST. CLARE** - Continued from Page 8.

community from growing in numbers. Many from all over Europe came to Assisi and were moved by the prayer and joyful spirit of Clare and her sisters. Some in turn returned home and founded convents of Poor Clares in their own towns and cities.

One story of the power of St. Clare's prayer regards the invasion of the Saracens in 1240. As the invading forces surrounded and attacked Assisi, they made their way to the city they first encountered San Damiano – the convent where Clare and her sisters lived – because it was outside the city walls. As the warriors approached, Clare's sisters panicked and roused Clare from her sick bed. She in turn lead them in prayer and as the invaders began to show themselves over the convent walls, she took the monstrance from the chapel with the consecrated Host and showed it to the Saracens. Upon seeing Clare holding the Blessed Sacrament the enemy first froze in their tracks and then gripped with a feeling of terror began to retreat. While they never returned to the convent again, Clare's sisters knew that illness had Clare firmly in its grasp...

Now, I will go off a little bit here. There is an amazing experience of St. Clare on Christmas in the year 1252, which would be her last Christmas on earth. St. Clare was so ill that she was not well enough to rise from her bed to attend group prayer and Midnight Mass at the Church of St. Francis with her sisters and friars. The Church was more than a mile away.

St. Clare began to cry ... She then realized that her lonely cell was better lodging than the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph had, so she began to meditate on the Christmas Mystery (event). Suddenly, her cell burst into light and her room was filled with the sound of a great organ player. St. Clare was able to see the Church of St. Francis ablaze with candles and she watched the celebrant go to the altar. She was able to participate at the Mass and listen to the beautiful chants. She also was able to receive the Precious Holy Communion, too.

The vision St. Clare received was so clear that she could name the friars who were present at the Christmas Mass. It was because of this that she was named patroness of television.

According to this fascinating excerpt from a text, "Francis of Assisi the Prophet Early Documents," Vol. III, p. 626: "When the office in San Damiano was finished and the nuns returned to Saint Clare, they said to her: 'O Sister Clare, our Mother, what great consolation we've had on this Holy Nativity! If only it pleased God that you could have been with us!' And Saint Clare replied: 'My sisters and dearest daughters, I give thanks and praise to Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, because I have been present at all the solemnities of this holy night, and at greater ones than you have

been, with much consolation to my soul, for by the intercession of my father Saint Francis and by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with the ears of my body and spirit I heard the whole Office and the music of the organ there and in that very place I received Holy Communion. Therefore, rejoice and thank God for such grace shown to me."



St. Clare gave Jesus a Christmas gift through her great desire to attend the Christmas Midnight Mass and her grief in missing it due to her illness. At the same time, Jesus Christ gave her a Christmas gift of allowing her to participate in the Christmas Mass in an amazing way!

...Clare and her sisters became popular without leaving their lives of prayer, work and silence. Word of their radical life spread through the land. Many women wanted to join in their ranks. Clare was so renown for her holiness that the pope and countless others came to her deathbed. In the midst of her sisters and three friars she died on August 11, 1253.

Because of her renowned sanctity of life, the Church opened her process to becoming a canonized saint just over two months after her death on October 18, 1253. During that process, much more about the "Humble Lady of Assisi" was discovered by exploring her writings and listening to the many accounts of those who knew her. Pope Alexander IV finally proclaimed her a saint on August 15, 1255. On February 17, 1958, Pope Pius XII declared her the Patroness of those involved in Television and the Media.

Today there are hundreds of Poor Clare convents all over the world.

May her desire not to miss the Christmas Mass increase in you a desire to not miss any (required) Masses, especially for Christmas.



'COME TO ME' INVITES A RETURN TO MASS

By Larry Hanson

Here is an important article from the "Catholic Herald," published November 16:

To help encourage those who have been away from Sunday Mass, especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee has launched a simple effort called "Come to Me," with the hopes of drawing people to Mass.

"The last two years of the pandemic have obviously been incredibly challenging," said Pete Burds, the director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis for the archdiocese. "The wholehearted prayer of people right now is 'Lord, give us rest!'"

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

"This invitation from Jesus to 'Come to me,' is an incredible, potentially life-changing invitation," Burds said. "Our hope is to help people come back to Mass, but it's ultimately to have to friendship with Jesus Christ lived deeply within the Church. For those whose faith may have been hanging on by a thread, this may be an opportunity to return and grow as Christ's disciple."

"Come to Me" is an initiative in the spirit of Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI's pastoral letter, "The Gift of Sunday," which was released in January. But even further back than "The Gift of Sunday," this effort has its roots in the 2014 Archdiocesan Synod, which identified Evangelization and Sunday Mass as one of the top priorities. COVID-19 certainly had a major impact on Mass attendance when the dispensation was lifted in September 2020.

"We're seeing that Mass attendance in our parishes hasn't gone back to 100 percent of what it was before the pandemic," Burds said. "In light of that, and declining Mass attendance even prior, we've been deeply wrestling with how do we effectively invite people back to Mass?"

As part of the "Come to Me" effort, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee will provide parishes with communication assets, evangelization



training and catechetical resources to both call and welcome people to Mass. Burds describes this as a two-pronged evangelization effort: through communication efforts (social media, website, videos, etc.) and training in how to evangelize, personally inviting people to Mass.

"The two things you don't talk about at a cocktail party are religion and politics," Burds said. "People tend to avoid taking about faith. However, part of the very fabric of what it means to be Catholic is to evangelize. Talking about Christ to others is what he has called us to do. This needs to be at forefront of what we're doing. In the Catholic view of evangelization, it's simply proclaiming Christ, either by our words or by the witness of life. To

live an attractive life of invitational joy that others are drawn to."

"Evangelization is a lot simpler than people think it is," Burds continued. "You don't need to know everything about the Catholic faith to be able to do share the love of Christ with others."

An aspect of "Come to Me" is to train a Mass-going Catholic who is alive in their faith and help equip them to welcome and invite people they are already in relationship with to come closer to Christ. To say, "Who are some people in your life that have some sense of trust with you that you can invite to Mass?"

"That has to do with people who are already attending Mass regularly, going out and inviting friends and family and co-workers, whether it's the first time or (they are coming) back to Mass since the pandemic," Burds said.

Now is the perfect time to invite people to reconnect to their local Catholic community, rediscover Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist, and renew their "normal" with Jesus at the center of their life.



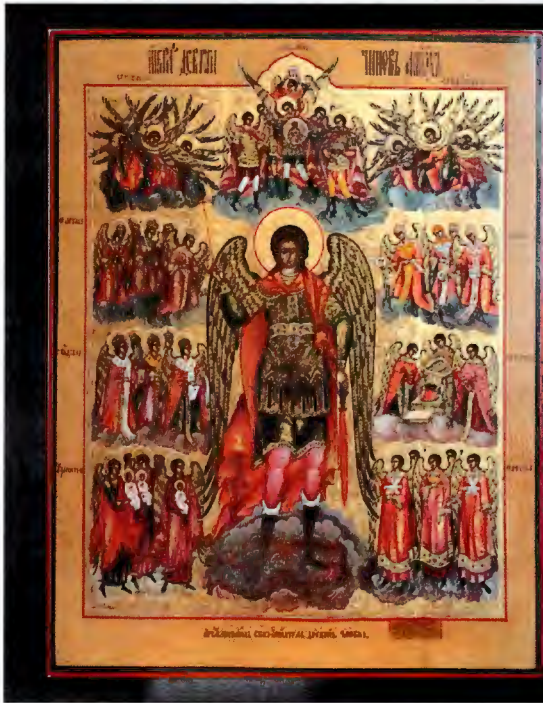
Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns. I am thankful that thorns have roses. —Allophones Karr

"That's a strange pair of stockings you have on, Pat – one red and the other green."

"Yes, and I've got another pair like it at home."



Quiz Answers: 1a; 2b False; 3c; 4c; 5b



THE NINE CHOIRS OF *Angels*

DEAF APOSTOLATE LENTEN WEEKEND RETREAT 2022

Friday, April 1 - Sunday, April 3, 2022

*Arrival: 4 p.m. on Friday with Dinner.
Departure after Lunch on Sunday*

Schoenstatt Retreat Center

W284n698 Cherry Lane, Waukesha, WI 53188

RETREAT INCLUDES: Masses, workshops, Confession, Adoration and devotions.
Cost is \$100. Includes room, food and supplies.

Limited spaces. First come, first served.
If financial assistance is needed, please let the Office of the Deaf Apostolate know.

Once registration is sent with payment, a packet of information will be sent to you.

QUESTIONS: Fr. Christopher Klusman, klusmanc@archmil.org or 414-501-2022 (VP)

Make check payable to Deaf Apostolate, and mail to: Deaf Apostolate
Attn: Fr. Christopher Klusman
3501 S. Lake Drive, PO Box 070912, Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912



PRESENTED BY:
Rev. Christopher Klusman,
Director, Deaf Apostolate



Name _____

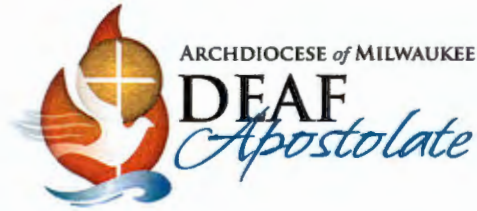
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Parish _____

Special dietary or allergy needs: _____

Yes, I am willing to share a room. I'd like to share a room with: _____



CONTACT INFORMATION

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(Fr. Christopher is off Sunday early evenings & Mondays)*

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