



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

23-25 NEWTOWN AVENUE, ASTORIA, NY 11102 | 718.278.1834 | MOUNTCARMELASTORIA.ORG

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2023

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field,
which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and
sells all that he has and buys that field.” - Mt 13:44

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

PARISH MANAGER

Celeste Stewart, Ext. 111
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church@mountcarmelastoria.org

RELIGIOUS ED COORDINATOR

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OFFICE RECEPTIONIST

Luis Sanchez Ext. 110
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PASTOR

Rev. Msgr. Cuong M. Pham

PAROCHIAL VICARS

Rev. Michael McHugh
Rev. Sy Hung Tran

PERMANENT DEACONS

Deacon Ruben Mendez
Deacon Jacob Rodriguez

RETIRED PRIESTS IN RESIDENCE

Rev. Ed Brady, Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Joseph Tan Pham
Rev. Msgr. John Harrington, K.H.S.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Lucille Mascia
music@mountcarmelastoria.org

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

SATURDAY, JULY 29 (*Saints Martha, Mary & Lazarus*)

5:00pm Adolfo Mont'Etna, Teresa Morales,
Consuelo Otero & Virgilio Peguero
Ermione Thevenin (*Living— Special Intention*)
Dominic Butrico (*Living— In Thanksgiving*)

SUNDAY, JULY 30 (*Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*)

8:00am Antonio Comunale
9:00am Bernardino Petruso & Raffaele Carullo
9:30am Elena D. Solina P. & Juan Delfin & Luz Delfin
11:00am Carmela Moretti & Josephine McManus
12:30pm Victor Vazquez, Teofilo Sinchi (*1 Mes*)
Antonio Toribio Barrera (*5 Año*)
3:00pm For the People of the Parish

MONDAY, JULY 31 (*Saint Ignatius of Loyola*)

8:00am Catherine & Patrick Roeder (*Living*)
12:00pm Joyce Cosgrove

TUESDAY, AUGUST 1 (*Saint Alphonsus Liguori*)

8:00am Rosie Mañusic (*Living—For Healing*)
12:00pm Miriam Busanic (*Living*)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2 (*Saint Eusebius of Vercelli & Saint Peter Jullian Eynard*)

8:00am Gaspare Barretta
12:00pm Kathleen Ward (*Living*)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3

8:00am Linda Smith (*Living—Special Intention*)
12:00pm Sr. Mary de Loured and Margaret &
Cecilia Gavan (*Living*)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4 (*Saint John Vianney*)

8:00am Purgatorial Society
12:00pm Richard J. Gallagher
7:30pm Emilia Reyes (*Birthday Memorial*)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5

(Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major)

8:00am Victor, Martha & Cassandra Berrocal
5:00pm Chin—Hofatt & Spadavecchia Families
Sr. Mary Gavan

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6 (*The Transfiguration of the Lord*)

8:00am Victoriano De Los Santos
9:00am Madonna Degl'Angeli
9:30am The Living & Deceased Members of
Our Parish's Rosary Society
11:00am Carol Gigante
12:30pm Fredesvinda Mena, Julio Cesar Velazquez,
Laura Sofia Arenas Perez (*Cumpleaños*),
Jason Garcia Martinez (*XVI Cumpleaños*)
3:00pm For the People of the Parish

MEMORIAL GIFTS THIS WEEK



*The Altar Candles have been offered for
Bernardino Petruso & Raffaele Carullo,
by Anthony, Rosalia, Margherita,
Charlie and Kids*

IN MEMORIAM

We are sorry to learn that Sister Mary Gavan, a member of our parish and alumna of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School has returned home to God. Let us pray for the repose of her soul and the consolation of her family.

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday	5:00 PM (Vigil Mass)
Sunday	Main Church: 8:00 AM (English) 9:30 AM (Bi-lingual) 11:00 AM (English) 12:30 PM (Spanish) 3:00 PM (Vietnamese) Chapel: 9:00 AM (Italian) 10:30 AM (Czech-Slovak)
Weekdays	8:00 AM and 12:00 Noon
Saturday	8:00 AM
First Fridays	7:30 PM (Spanish)
Holy Days	8:00 AM, 12 PM (English) and 7:30 PM (Bi-lingual)
Holidays	Only one Mass at 9:00 AM

CONFESSIONS:

Saturday 3:30pm—4:30pm (Chapel)

CHURCH HOURS:

Weekday: 7:00am—7:00pm

Saturday: 7:00am—6:00pm

Sunday: 7:00am—4:00pm

OFFICE HOURS

Weekday:

9:00am—12:00 Noon

1:00pm—8:30pm

Saturday:

9:00am—12:00 Noon

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

28-46 44th St., Astoria, NY 11103

718.728.0724—www.stjosephsch.org

school@mountcarmelastoria.org



Annual Catholic Appeal 2023

DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

We would like to thank all those generous individuals who made a pledge to the 2023 Annual Catholic Appeal.

We are asking each family to consider making a tax-deductible gift today. It is important that our parish make its goal of \$67,815 in order to fulfill our mission and provide for all who depend on your generosity and good will. As of July 24, 2023 we have a total of 163 parishioners who have pledged a total of \$54,860 from which \$47,354 has been collected.

Give your support today on behalf of our parish online at annualcatholicappeal.org, scanning the QR code or texting "ACA" to 917-336-1255 or call 718-965-7375 ext. 1602 to have a pledge card mailed to your home.

Suggested giving amounts:

\$100 one-time gift

\$200 pledge = \$25 a month

\$350 pledge = \$10 a week

\$1,200 pledge = \$5 a day



REMEMBERING OUR BELOVED DECEASED

Remembering our deceased loved ones by having them prayed for at Mass on every first Friday of the month — the day traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is a meaningful way to express our love. Enrollment is \$10 per name. Those enrolled the Purgatorial Society will be remembered for a whole year. We have currently enrolled **Kent Finley, Margarita Dostall, Victor Mayo, Lillie Bonanno, Mary Rocuzzo, Marco Rios, William Dsouza, John Dsouza, Sushila Dsouza, Carol Gigante, Mark Anthony Javier, Louis Jurilla and Aida Viera.**

PRAYING FOR THE SICK

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have. It's a way for us to communicate with God and obtain His divine intervention. It can help sick people get well again and also gives us the strength in our own weakness and suffering. If you wish your loved ones who is sick to be prayed for at our daily Mass, kindly contact our parish office to place their names in our Prayer List. We are currently praying for **Victor Ejercito & Malou Reformina, Genesis Pavon & Richard Caridi.**

WEEKLY OFFERING REPORT

Does not Include Electronic Donations by Faith Direct, which will be reported monthly.

Last weekend's collection: \$4,055

Same weekend last year: \$4,829

Follow us on Social Media:

@OLMCAstoria





Dear parish family,

As we find ourselves amidst the height of summer, I pray you are finding respite from the relentless heat. This season often encourages a slower pace as vacations begin and the sweltering temperatures command our need for rest. Some of you might be taking advantage of the warm weather, visiting family, or exploring new places. Others may find contentment in the simplicity of staying at home, cherishing the familiar. No matter where you find yourself, I encourage you to keep our Lord central to your activities.

As we juggle our seasonal routines, filled with trips, tasks, or tending to our homes and families, especially our children and teenagers who are off school, we might inadvertently allow our spiritual commitments to slide into the background. However, let's remember that even in our busiest moments, when we might forget God, He never forgets us. In your travels, your celebrations, your challenges – God is there, encouraging us to draw closer.

Pope Francis has described summer as an opportune time to deepen our connection with the Lord. He encourages us, especially the young, to spend this break wisely, through rest, prayer, service, and helping our families. He remarked, *"it is in this way that one grows and prepares oneself to take on more demanding tasks"* (Message to Youth, June 28, 2022). The slower rhythm of summer can indeed serve as a time of renewal.

Personally, I have a special fondness for the summer season as it paints a vibrant testament to God's glory. While I've chosen not to take a vacation right now in order to be present for our parish and oversee our ongoing projects, I eagerly look forward to a time of recharging at the end of the summer, when I can refocus and spend some valuable time with my mother, my family and friends. I am especially excited about returning to Rome in early October to attend the Holy Father's Consistory, a significant event of the Universal Church where the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, my former superior at the Apostolic Nunciature, will be elevated to the College of Cardinals to be among the closest advisors to the Pope. This trip promises a joyous reunion, reestablishing connections with old friends in the Eternal City, where I served the Church for fourteen years.

Despite the typical drop in church attendance during summer, it warms my heart to see many of you maintain a regular presence. I am edified by the faithfulness and consistency that many of you have shown in your sacrificial giving every week. The summer months are always a bit challenging for our church as the bills continue to arrive and must be paid. I assure you of my dedication to manage our parish finances judiciously, reflecting the trust you have placed in me, my brother priests and our staff.

On a gentle note, I wish to remind everyone about the importance of appropriate attire during Mass. While the heat of summer might tempt us towards more casual attire, let's remember that we are in the divine presence of the Lord when we come to church. It is fitting, therefore, to dress with due reverence, respect, and decorum for the liturgy. To this end, please also remember to remove your hats or caps upon entering the sacred space as a sign of respect for the Lord and your fellow parishioners.

To those unable to take a break or vacation due to age, health, work or financial constraints, my prayers are with you. I hope that you can still find peace, joy and relaxation in these summer months, enriched by the good company of loved ones and the creation of cherished memories.

As I entrust each one of you all to the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I wish you a serene and fruitful summer. My fellow priests and I eagerly anticipate your presence in church, resplendent in your Sunday best.

Yours in Christ,

Msgr. Cuong M. Pham



Querida familia parroquial,

En pleno verano, rezo para que estén hallando alivio del intenso calor. Este tiempo nos invita a un ritmo más lento. Algunos podrían estar disfrutando del clima, visitando a la familia o conociendo nuevos lugares. Otros pueden hallar satisfacción en la comodidad del hogar. Dondequiera que estén, les animo a mantener al Señor central en sus actividades.

A medida que lidiamos con nuestras rutinas estacionales, llenas de viajes, tareas o cuidando nuestros hogares y familias, especialmente nuestros hijos y adolescentes que están fuera de la escuela, podríamos permitir inadvertidamente que nuestros compromisos espirituales se desvanezcan. Sin embargo, recordemos que, incluso en nuestros momentos más ocupados, Dios nunca nos olvida. Está siempre con nosotros.

El Papa Francisco ve el verano como un momento para profundizar nuestra conexión con el Señor. Nos invita, en especial a los jóvenes, a pasar este receso sabiamente, a través del descanso, la oración y el servicio. Comentó, “es de esta manera que uno crece y se prepara para asumir tareas más exigentes” (Mensaje a los Jóvenes, 28 de junio de 2022). El ritmo más lento del verano puede servir de hecho como un tiempo de renovación.

Personalmente, tengo un especial cariño por el verano, testimonio vibrante de la gloria de Dios. Aunque he decidido no tomar vacaciones ahora para estar presente para nuestra parroquia, espero con ansias un tiempo de recarga al final del verano, cuando pueda pasar tiempo con mi madre, mi familia y amigos. Estoy emocionado de regresar a Roma en octubre para asistir al Consistorio del Santo Padre, un evento significativo donde el Nuncio Apostólico a los Estados Unidos, mi antiguo superior en la Nunciatura Apostólica, será elevado al Colegio de Cardenales para ser un asesor cercano al Papa. Este viaje promete una reunión llena de alegría, reestableciendo conexiones con viejos amigos en la Ciudad Eterna, donde serví a la Iglesia durante catorce años.

A pesar de la disminución en la asistencia a la iglesia durante el verano, me alegra ver a muchos de ustedes mantener una presencia regular, recordándonos que nuestra fe no toma vacaciones. Estoy agradecido por la fidelidad que muchos de ustedes han demostrado en su ofrenda sacrificial cada semana. Los meses de verano siempre son un poco desafiantes para nuestra iglesia, ya que las facturas continúan llegando y deben ser pagadas. Les aseguro mi dedicación para manejar nuestras finanzas parroquiales con juicio, reflejando la confianza que han depositado en mí, mis hermanos sacerdotes y nuestro personal.

En una nota suave, deseo recordar a todos la importancia de la vestimenta adecuada durante la Misa. Mientras que el calor del verano podría tentarnos hacia una vestimenta más casual, recordemos que estamos en la presencia divina del Señor cuando venimos a la iglesia. Por lo tanto, es apropiado vestirse con la debida reverencia, respeto y decoro para la liturgia. Con este fin, también recuerden quitarse sus sombreros o gorras al entrar en el espacio sagrado como signo de respeto al Señor y a sus compañeros feligreses.

Para aquellos que no pueden tomar vacaciones por diferentes razones, mis oraciones están con ustedes. Espero que puedan hallar paz y alegría en estos meses de verano, enriquecidos por la buena compañía de seres queridos y la creación de recuerdos preciados.

Mientras encomiendo a cada uno de ustedes a la protección de Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo, les deseo un verano sereno y fructífero. Esperamos ansiosamente su presencia en la iglesia, resplandecientes con su mejor atuendo de domingo.

Suyo en Cristo,
Monseñor Cuong M. Pham

THIS WEEK AT OUR PARISH

PARISH SUPPORT THROUGH E-GIVING

Our parish ministries depend on the steady, consistent support provided by monthly givers. It is a lifeline that sustains us year-round when summer vacations, holiday travels, inclement weather, and other forces keep people away from services. Plus it eases the workload on our hardworking staff (who also want to take vacations!), since they have fewer cash and check donations to process. Getting started with eGiving is easy. Here are the ways to sign up:

- Visit faith.direct/NY370
- Call Faith Direct Customer Service at 866-507-8757
- Text "Enroll" to 929-254-3850



DONACIONES ELECTRONICAS

Nuestros ministerios parroquiales dependen del apoyo constante y constante proporcionado por los donantes mensuales. Es un salvavidas que nos sostiene durante todo el año cuando las vacaciones de verano, los viajes de vacaciones, las inclemencias del tiempo y otras fuerzas mantienen a las personas alejadas de los servicios. Además, alivia la carga de trabajo de nuestro personal trabajador (¡que también quiere tomarse vacaciones!), ya que tienen menos donaciones en efectivo y cheques para procesar. Comenzar con eGiving es fácil. Estas son las formas para registrarse:

- Visite faith.direct/NY370
- Llame al Servicio al Cliente de Faith Direct al 866-507-8757
- Envíe un mensaje de texto con la palabra "Enroll" a 929-254-3850

INFANT BAPTISM/ BAUTISMOS

Preparation Meeting

Tuesday—6:00pm—Institute

August 22, 2023
 September 19, 2023
 October 24, 2023
 November 21, 2023
 December 19, 2023

Baptism Ceremony

12:00pm— Upper Church

August 26, 2023
 September 23, 2023
 October 28, 2023
 November 25, 2023
 December 23, 2023

Reunión de Preparación

Martes—6:00pm—Instituto

8 de Agosto, 2023
 5 de Septiembre, 2023
 10 de Octubre, 2023

Ceremonia de Bautismo

12:00pm—Iglesia de Arriba

12 de Agosto, 2023
 9 de Septiembre, 2023
 14 de Octubre, 2023

NO HABRA BAUTISMOS EN NOVIEMBRE

5 de Diciembre, 2023 9 de Diciembre, 2023

Sunday, July 30

10:00am—1:00pm Czech Community *Lourdes A/B*
 10:30am—12:15pm Cursillo *Guadalupe A/B*
 1:00pm—3:30pm Com. Guad. Food Sale *Guadalupe A/B*

Tuesday, August 1

3:30pm—6:00pm Porque Ser Catolico? *Fatima*
 5:30pm—7:00pm Mariachi School *Balcony*
 6:00pm—9:00pm Marriage Encounter *Guadalupe+ Fatima*
 7:00pm—9:00pm Coro #1 *Nazareth*

Thursday, August 3

7:30pm—8:30pm Grupo de Amistad *Lourdes A/B*

Friday, August 4

8:00am—3:00pm CCBQ Kids Fun Day *Parking Lot*
 5:00pm—7:00pm Bilingual Choir *Nazareth*
 7:00pm—9:00pm Youth Night *Guadalupe A/B*

Saturday, August 5

9:00am—1:00pm AA Meeting *Guadalupe A/B*
 9:30am—11:30am Legion of Mary *Lourdes A/B*
 10:00am—12:00pm Spanish Children's Choir *Fatima*
 4:00pm—9:00pm Adult Sewing Group *Lourdes A/B*
 5:00pm—6:30pm Ministerio de Consolacion *Nazareth*
 6:30pm—8:00pm Porque Ser Catolico? *Fatima*

CONFRATERNITY OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

All members meet every fourth Sunday of the month for the recitation of the Rosary before by the 9:00am Italian Mass. If you are interested in becoming a member please call the parish office and leave your name and number.

FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Spiritual writers speak of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as "the Mass held in contemplation." As a way of encouraging devotion to the Eucharist, we invite all parishioners to come and spend some time before the Real Presence of the Lord on **Friday, August 4, 2023**. Exposition and Adoration will take place right after the 8:00am Mass and will conclude with Solemn Benediction before the start of the 12 Noon Mass.





KIDS FUN DAY!

A family fun back-to-school event
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parking Lot
23-40 Astoria Blvd.
Astoria, Queens
Friday, August 4, 10:30 AM — 1:30 PM

- School supplies and backpacks for ages 5-17 (must be present to receive: while supplies last)
- Fresh produce boxes (while supplies last)
- Activities, information, resources and much more!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REGISTRATIONS

Registrations for our Religious Education Program will be open during the months of **July & August ONLY**.

For new registrations, please pick up an application at the parish office, fill it out with clear letters, & please provide the certificates of all the sacraments your child has already made along with the birth certificate and pay the required fee.

If your child was in our religious education program this year, please ask for the re-registration form, update the form as needed and pay the required fee.

Registration Fee for **July & August: 1 Child \$75.00, 2 Children \$120.00, 3 or more \$160.00**

DIGGING DEEPER INTO SUNDAY'S READINGS

First Reading

The young King Solomon asked the Lord in prayer for a wise and discerning heart, and it was granted to him. What gift would you ask from the Lord?

Second Reading

Paul teaches the believers in Rome that God calls us "according to his purpose." Do you have a sense your purpose in life? If so, what is it?

Gospel Reading

Jesus offers several kingdom of heaven parables to the disciples: buried treasure and fine pearls (a priceless discovery) and the large catch of fish (an invitation to all). With these parables, what do you think Jesus is teaching us about the kingdom of heaven?

RITE OF INITIATION FOR ADULTS



If you are an adult, 18 years or older, who has not received the Sacraments of Baptism, Communion and/or Confirmation, we invite you to consider preparing yourself to receive these very important spiritual gifts. Please call the parish office and leave a message with your contact information to learn how you can participate in this program.

Si usted es un adulto, mayo de 18 años, quien no ha recibido los sacramentos de Bautismo, Comunion y/o la Confirmación, se le invita a considerar prepararse para recibir estos regalos espirituales muy importantes. Por favor llame a la oficina parroquial y deje su información de contacto para aprender como puede participar en este programa.

Sweet reward for saving lives!

Receive a box of Girl Scout cookies when you present to give. While supplies last.



BLOOD DRIVE

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Sunday August 06, 2023

9:00am – 3:00pm

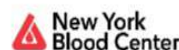
23-20 Newtown Ave., Astoria 11102

(Guadalupe Room)



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to make your appointment.

Please remember to eat, drink, and bring your ID with your name and photo. Appointments are preferred however walk-ins will be welcomed if space permits. Visit: nybc.org/hasanavirus for complete COVID-19 safety protocols.



800.933.BLOOD · nybc.org #nybloodcenter



Not attending World Youth Day in Lisbon?
Join us for Diocesan World Youth Day!

World Youth Day is a call to all Catholic young teens and adults to renew their faith in Christ and prepare themselves for the work of the new evangelization and we are celebrating World Youth Day here in the Diocese of Brooklyn

When: Saturday, August 5th

**Where: Our Lady of Mount Carmel
2325 Newtown Ave, Queens, NY 11102**

Time: 7:00-10:00 PM



Let us come together for an evening with
Holy Hour, Praise and Worship, Testimonials, & Fellowship

INSCRIPCIONES PARA LA CARRERA GUADALUPANA 2023 ESTAN ABIERTAS

CARRERA ANTORCHA GUADALUPANA



COSTO DE UNIFORMES: \$50.00

**FAVOR DE RELLENAR LA APLICACIÓN LO ANTES POSIBLE CON LA TALLA CORRECTA PARA
ASÍ OBTENER SU UNIFORME A TIEMPO.**

LA PRIMERA ORDEN SE HARA EL 5 DE AGOSTO

PARA PREGUNTÁS FAVOR DE LLAMAR A

RODRIGO: (347)424-3926 CELIA: (929)268-7692 FERNANDO: (646)246-0943

RETIRO CARISMATICO

GRAN RETIRO ESPIRITUAL
SEP. 9/2023 EN N.SRA DE MONTE CARMELO
23-25 NEWTON AVE ASTORIA, NY 11102
9:00 AM 5:00PM

GPO.DE ORACION
MANANTIALES DE GRACIA
INVITA

SANACION Y LIBERACION INTERIOR DESDE EL VIENTRE MATERNO

PREDICA
DIACONO ELKIN TAMAYO
OSVALDO FERNANDEZ
MARIA ACEVES
ANA GUZMAN

EXPOSICION DE
JESUS
SACRAMENTADO AL FINAL

REGISTRACION PARROQUIAL

Registrarse permite que nuestra parroquia les pueda servir sus necesidades espirituales. Por favor devuelva este formulario en la colecta o déjelo en la oficina parroquial. Su participación fortalecerá su fe y su sentido de pertenencia en la familia de Dios.

Nombre(s): _____
Dirección: _____ Apt _____
Ciudad _____ Estado _____ C. Postal _____
Teléfono: _____
E-mail: _____

POR FAVOR MARCAR:

- [] Nueva Registración [] Cambio de dirección
[] Prefiero Sobres [] Donaciones en línea



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Brooklyn &
Queens
ESTABLISHED 1899

¡DÍA DIVERTIDO! PARA NIÑOS

Un divertido evento familiar de regreso a clases
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Estacionamiento
23-40 Astoria Blvd.
Astoria, Queens
Viernes, 4 de Agosto, 10:30 AM — 1:30 PM

- Útiles escolares y mochilas para edades 5-17
- Cajas de productos frescos (mientras dure las reserva)
- Actividades, información, recursos y mucho más!
(debe estar presente para recibir: mientras dure las reserva)

REGISTRACIONES PARA CATECISMO

Las inscripciones para el programa de catecismo están abiertas desde ahora hasta fin de Agosto SOLAMENTE.

Para una nueva registración, por favor recoja una aplicación en la oficina parroquial, llene el cuestionario con letra clara y debe de traer los certificados de los sacramentos ya recibidos y haga el pago requerido.

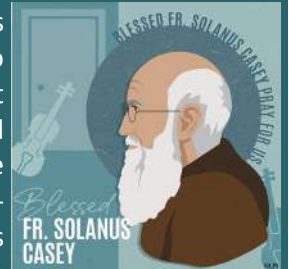
Si su niño/a ya estuvo en nuestro programa este año, por favor vaya a la oficina y pida el formulario de re-inscripción y haga el pago requerido.

Cuota de Inscripción:

Por el mes de **Julio y Agosto**
1 niño (a) \$75.00
2 niños (as) \$120.00
3 niños (as) o más \$160.00

SAINT OF THE WEEK

Blessed Fr. Solanus Casey would have up to 200 people a day visit him for prayer and counseling while he worked as a door-keeper at his various postings. He also co-founded the Capuchin Soup Kitchen during the Great Depression. It still serves people in Detroit to this day.



Prayer

"Let us, therefore, not weaken. Let us hope when darkness seems to surround us. Let us thank Him at all times and under whatever circumstances. Thank Him for our creation and our existence. Thank Him for everything - for His plans in the past, that by our sins and our want of appreciation, have so often frustrated - and that He so often found necessary to change. Let us thank Him for all His plans for the future- for trials and humiliations as well as great joy and consolations; for sickness and whatever death He may deign to plan; and with the inspired Psalmist let us call all the creatures of the universe to help us praise and adore Him Who is the Divine Beginning and the everlasting Good - the Alpha and the Omega."

WHY DO PRIESTS KISS THE ALTAR AT THE START OF MASS?

Our churches and chapels are filled with symbols. We might think of the more common symbols (like the crucifix, statues, stained-glass windows, vestment color and altar cloths) as well as major symbols (such as the paschal candle and the baptismal font). But there are some things that we can take for granted in our sacred spaces, because unfortunately, they seem to just be part of the building, including three of the main symbols of our liturgy: the ambo (lectern), the chair for the priest celebrant, and the altar.

These three objects are placed in a specially designated area called the sanctuary. They are the places where the Word of God is proclaimed, where the priest prays and presides at the celebration, and where the bread and wine are offered by the priest during the Eucharistic Prayer. Although each of these objects is sacred because of the role they play in our worship, the altar holds a special place. In a document containing the rules and instructions for the Mass the "General Instruction of the Roman Missal" - we read: "The altar on which the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present under sacramental signs is also the table of the Lord to which the People of God is called together to participate in the Mass, as well as the center of the thanksgiving that is accomplished throughout the Eucharist" (no. 296).

One of the ways that we recognize the importance of the altar is when the priest and deacon kiss the altar at the beginning of Mass. Kissing is an ancient act of devotion. Remember, we also kiss the cross on Good Friday, and the deacon or priest kisses the "Book of the Gospels" after the Gospel is proclaimed. This act of devotion reminds us that the altar is a symbol of Jesus, the "living stone" (see 1 Peter 2:4), the foundation stone of our faith. It is a symbol gesture, but it is a powerful reminder of the One on whom our faith is built and in whose name we gather as the "household of faith" (see Galatians 6:10). To learn more, see the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" (no. 1382-1383).



THE FALLING ACTION AND THE FIELD

In my freshman year of high school, I was fairly miserable at identifying the five essential elements of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution).

To this day, the only reason I remember anything about them at all is because my English teacher used episodes of Scooby Doo to illustrate the different elements. Falling action vs. climax is where I got tripped up, the two are similar, and only discernible if you examine them relative to each other.

Every Scooby Doo episode has a big dramatic sequence (the climax) where the ghost/monster/ zombie chases The Gang through the haunted mansion. The falling action is what comes immediately after: searching for her glasses that she lost during the chase, Velma bumps into a pulley wheel disguised behind a tapestry and realizes the ghost/monster/zombie is actually the janitor in a costume, hooked up to an elaborate cable system jerry-rigged throughout the mansion. Meddling kids.

I confused the two because, to me, they are both equally dramatic: the chase and the fallout.

It occurs to me that, if you look at the course of salvation history, we are living in the falling action, not the climax. Take the parable of the treasure in the field: we have

found the treasure. But we haven't yet bought the field. I often make the mistake of thinking I am still lost in the climax, searching for the truth. But I know exactly where the truth is.

What I need to be concerned with is this: am I doing what I need to do to buy the field?

"Wonderful are your decrees; therefore I observe them. The revelation of your words sheds light, giving understanding to the simple." - Psalm 119

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