OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH

The Mother Church of Queens County

Pastoral Staff

Rev. Msgr. "John" Cuong M. Pham, *Pastor*

Rev. "Joseph" Hung Sy Tran, *Parochial Vicar*
Rev. Vito Jumao-as, *Parochial Vicar*

Deacon Jacob Rodriguez

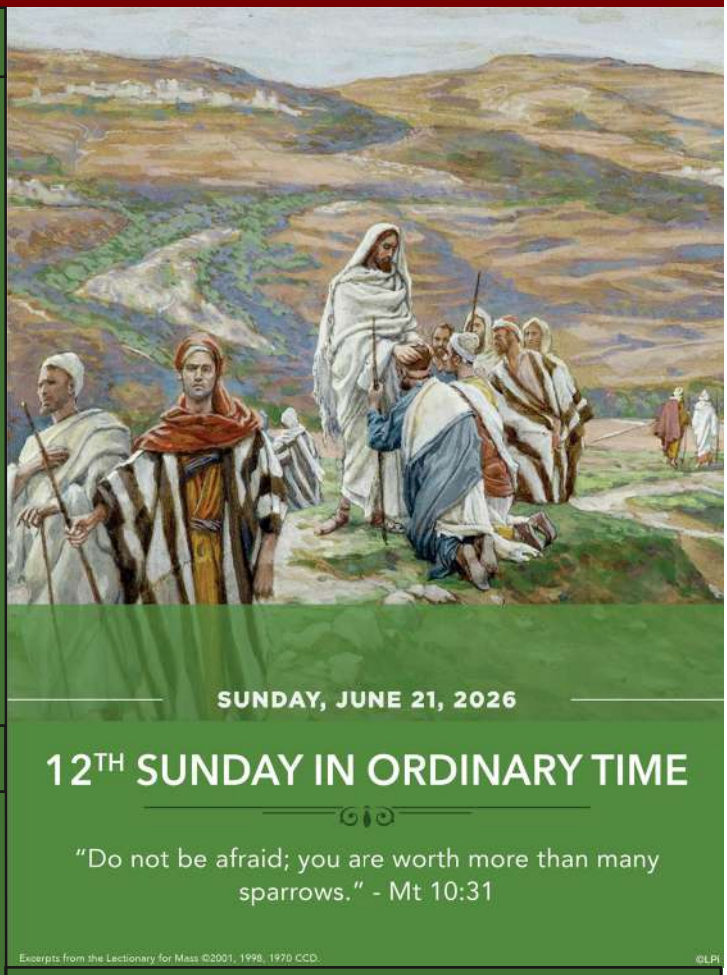
Celeste Stewart, *Parish Manager*
cstewart@diobrook.org

Nelly Gutierrez, *Religious Ed Coordinator*
ccdmountcarmel@gmail.com

Luis Sanchez, *Parish Secretary*
Lsanchez@diobrook.org

Lucille Mascia, *Music Director*

Yolanda Lazo, *Youth Minister*



Mass Times

Weekend: Saturday Vigil 5:00PM
Sunday: 8:00AM *(English)*, 9:00AM *(Italian- Every 2nd & 4th Sunday in the Chapel)*, 9:30AM *(Bilingual)*, 10:30AM *(Czech-Slovak in the Chapel)*, 11:00AM *(English)*, 12:30PM *(Spanish)*, 3:00 PM *(Vietnamese)*

Weekday: 8:00AM & 12:00PM, Saturday 8:00AM

First Fridays: 7:30 PM *(Spanish)*
Holy Days: 8:00AM & 12:00PM, 7:30PM *(Bilingual)*
Holidays: 9:00AM

Office Hours

Weekday: 9:00am—8:00pm
Saturday: 9:00am—5:00pm

Infant Baptisms & Adult Sacraments: Contact Deacon Jacob Rodriguez for registration.

Confessions: Every Saturday in the Chapel from 3:30pm-4:30pm or by appointment during the week.

Weddings: Arrangements must be made 6 months in advance with a priest.

Sweet Sixteen: Celebrated for parish members who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Anointing of the Sick: Available upon need. Hospital patients may ask to see the priest chaplain.

Bautismos Infantiles y Sacramentos para Adultos: Hable con el Diacono Rodríguez para registraciones.

Confesiones: Cada sábado en la capilla de 3:30pm-4:30pm o por cita durante la semana.

Bodas: Arreglos deben hacerse 6 meses en avance con un sacerdote.

Quinceaños: Solamente para miembros de la parroquia que han recibido la Confirmación.

Unción de los Enfermos: Disponible por necesidad. Pacientes de hospital pueden pedir ver el capellán.

23-25 Newtown Avenue, Astoria, NY 11102 | Tel. 718.278.1834 | www.mountcarmelastoria.org

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

5:00pm Mary Holland, Mary Athridge, Mercedes Beck, Robert Russo, Jr., Lewis Charles, Yolanda Bailey, Jarvier Hinds, Daniel Enrique Munoz Vallejo, Mario R. Nacinovich *(Living—Birthday)*

SUNDAY, JUNE 21 *(12th Sunday in Ordinary Time)*

MONDAY, JUNE 22 *(Saints Paulinus of Nola, John Fisher & Thomas More)*

8:00am John Christopher Immordino
12:00pm Romana B. Guevara

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

8:00am Leonardo & Giuseppina Grippi
12:00pm Doc & Valerie Holiday and Mary Tran

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24 *(The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist)*

8:00am Marianna DiVittorio
12:00pm Salvatore Natale

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

8:00am Ophelia Gonzalez *(1st Anniversary)*
12:00pm Anna Gatt *(2nd Anniversary)*

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

8:00am In Memory of Sebastiano Mont'Etna
12:00pm Barry Amodeo

SATURDAY, JUNE 27 *(Saint Cyril of Alexandria)*

8:00am Damian Valencia
5:00pm Bernadette Denpsey, Lisa Vasquez, Marilyn Ginel, Rose Marie Dupree, Dr. Eric Valte, Sr. (For Healing), Hannah Falcones *(Living 15th Birthday)*

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 *(30th Sunday of Ordinary Time)*

8:00am Conception de los Santos
9:00am Per tutti I papa, Margherita & Bernardino Petruso
9:30am Angela Calixto, Bardomiano Lopez, Francisco Jose Marcial, Ahtziri Morales & Victoria Morales on their Baptismal Anniversary
11:00am Vito Todisco & Allen Lanner
12:30pm Pedro Hernandez Vazquez, Feliciano Verdejo, Catalina Curiel, Guadalupe Verdejo, Abel Peñafort, Cosme Juan Rivera, Teófilo Sinchi Guzñay *(3r Aniversario),* Concepción García Astudillo *(6o Aniversario),* y en celebración de cumpleaños de Petra Rojas *(80 años)*
3:00pm For the Living & Deceased Members of our Parish

CONTRIBUTIONS REPORT

Last Week: $5,154 Last Year: $4,812

Faith Direct May 2026: $5,140
ParishSoft May 2026: $5,661

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

We ask everyone to prayerfully consider making a donation to the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal. As of June 7, 2026 we have 108 donors who have pledged $48,240, from which $37,660 have been received.

CAMPAÑA CATOLICA ANUAL

Les pedimos a todos, por favor considerar hacer una promesa a la campaña Católica Anual del 2026. A partir del 7 de junio, tenemos a 108 donantes, quienes han prometido $48,240 de cuales $37,660 han sido recibidos.

MEMORIAL OFFERINGS THIS WEEK

The Altar Bread & Wine are being offered for ***Margherita Petruso,*** *by Tony & Nina Carullo and Children*

The Sanctuary Lamp is being offered for ***Vincenzo Barretta & Raffaele Carullo,*** *by Ida Barretta*

The Altar Candles are being offered for ***Bernardino Petruso & Raffaele Carullo,*** *by Tony & Nina Carullo and Children*

OFFICE CLOSING

The parish office will also be closed on Saturday, July 4th in Honor of our country's Day of Independence. The office will remain opened on Friday, July 3rd, and there will be a regular schedule for Masses throughout the weekend.

ROSARY SOCIETY MEETINGS

There will be no Rosary Society meetings for the months of July & August. Meetings will resume in September.

The Rosary Society welcomes all ladies over 15 years old. Refreshments will be served. Bring a friend!

GROUP AND SOCIETY MEETINGS IN OUR PARISH INSTITUTE

Sunday, June 21		
9:30am—11:00am	Grupo de Amistad #5	*Assumption*
10:00am—11:00am	Grupo de Amistad #9	*Ascension*
10:00am—12:30pm	Cursillo	*Guadalupe A/B*
10:00am—1:00pm	Czech Mass	*Lourdes A/B*
2:00pm—3:00pm	Grupo de Amistad #14	*Fatima*
6:00pm—8:00pm	Sagrado Corzon Meeting	Guadalupe A/B
Monday, June 22		
7:00am—5:00pm	TYWLS	*Gym*
5:00pm—9:00pm	CYO	*Gym*
7:00pm—9:00pm	Coro Guadalupano	*Lourdes A/B*
Tuesday, June 23		
7:00am—4:00pm	TYWLS	*Gym*
5:30pm—7:00pm	Mariachi Practice	*Balcony*
6:00pm—7:00pm	PreBaptism Instruction	*Lourdes A/B*
6:00pm—9:00pm	Marriage Encounter	*Guadalupe A/B+ Fatima*
7:00pm—9:00pm	Coro #1	*Nazareth*
Wednesday, June 24		
7:00am—4:00pm	TYWLS	*Gym*
7:00pm—9:00pm	Consagracion OLMC Meeting	*Guadalupe A*
Thursday, June 25		
7:00am—5:00pm	TYWLS	Gym
10:00am—11:30am	Legion of Mary	*Guadalupe A/B*
7:30pm—9:30pm	OLMC Jornada Group	*Guadalupe A/B*
Friday, June 26		
7:00am—4:00pm	TYWLS	*Gym*
6:30pm—9:00pm	Practica Coro de Niños	*Lourdes A/B*
7:00pm—9:00pm	Votacion de Ultreya	*Guadalupe A/B*
Saturday, June 27		
9:00am—5:00pm	Diocesan Spanish Pre-Cana	*Guadalupe A/B*
9:00am—11:00am	Reunion de Amistad #15	*Fatima*
9:00am—1:00pm	AA Meeting	*Lourdes A/B*
10:00am—12:00pm	Coro de Niños	*Assumption*
10:00am—1:00pm	Lessons in Faith	*Nazareth*
5:00pm—12:00am	Dia Del Padre	*Guadalupe A/B*
5:00pm—7:00pm	Ministerio de Consolacion	*Fatima*
5:00pm—7:00pm	Bilingual Choir Practice	*Nazareth*
6:00pm—8:00pm	Grupo de Amistad #6	*Lourdes A/B*

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. To add names to our Prayer List, please contact the parish office. There is no cost for enrolling people onto this list. We are currently praying for **Joan Gravalese.**

PURGATORIAL SOCIETY

We remember 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) as a meaningful way to express our love. Enrollment is $20 per name. Those enrolled the Purgatorial Society will be remembered for a whole year. We have currently enrolled: **Marianna DiVittorio, & John Christopher Immordino.**

FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Spiritual writers speak of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as "the Mass held in contemplation." Devotion to the Eucharist will take place on **Friday, July 3, 2026**. 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.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The Knights of Columbus have established a council in our parish. They are looking for men to join the Order. You must be a man, at least eighteen years old and be in union with the Catholic Church. If you are interested go to KofC.org/JoinUs or contact Peter Perroni at **peterperroni040@gmail.com.** The Knights meet in the parish institute at 8:00pm every second Wednesday of the month.

INFANT BAPTISM/ BAUTISMOS

Preparation Meeting: Tuesdays 6:00pm-Institute
Baptism Ceremony: Saturdays 12:00pm-Main Church

Reunion de Preparacion: Martes-6:00pm-Instituto
Ceremonia de Bautismo: Sabados 12:00pm-Iglesia

June 23, 2026	June 27, 2026	7 de julio 2026	11 de julio 2026
July 21, 2026	July 25, 2026	4 de agosto 2026	8 de agosto 2026
August 18, 2026	August 22, 2026	8 de septiembre	12 de septiembre
September 22, 2026	September 26, 2026	6 de octubre	10 de octubre
October 20	October 24	10 de noviembre	14 de noviembre
November 24	November 28	8 de diciembre	12 de diciembre

FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART

June 21, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings from Saigon!

June is traditionally one of the busiest months in the life of the Church. It is a season filled with ordinations, first Masses of thanksgiving, anniversaries of priestly ordination and religious profession, weddings, and funerals. My schedule has certainly reflected that reality. In fact, several people have joked that my visit to Vietnam this time has not been much of a vacation at all, but more of a mission trip. The more I think about it, the more I realize they may be right.

Over the past week, I have been traveling throughout my home city, celebrating Mass in churches that helped shape my vocation and reconnecting with many people who have been part of my faith journey. Along the way, I have experienced the Church in a way that has brought this Sunday's readings to life.

One of the highlights was attending a Mass of Thanksgiving marking the fifteenth anniversary of religious profession for a close friend, a Carmelite priest who served for many years in New York and later became the first Provincial of his community in Vietnam. Seeing a church filled with faithful Catholics gathered in gratitude for a life dedicated to God reminded me that Christ continues to call men and women to generous service, even in a world that often values very different things.

A couple of days later, I visited the Shrine of St. Martin de Porres outside Saigon, where the Brothers of St. John of God care for more than one hundred terminally ill patients. There I witnessed something that has stayed with me ever since.

I watched a young religious sister caring for a man suffering from cancer who has been bedridden for more than ten years. She gently adjusted his pillow, wiped his face, and spoke to him with a tenderness that was impossible to miss. What struck me most was the joy with which she served him. There was no sign of obligation or burden—only love.

At that moment, I thought to myself: this is what Christian love looks like. No cameras. No applause. No recognition. Just one disciple of Jesus quietly caring for someone whom the world might easily overlook.

In that simple but powerful encounter, I was reminded of the words from today's Gospel: "Do not be afraid" (Mt 10:31). Jesus assures us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge (cf. Mt 10:29). If God cares for the sparrows, how much more does He care for those who are suffering, forgotten, or alone? Through the loving hands of that sister, God's compassion became visible.

I was also blessed to celebrate the Feast of St. Dominic Savio with the Altar Servers Society of my home parish. Seeing so many young people enthusiastically serving the Church, not unlike the Altar Servers of our own parish, gave me great hope for the future and reminded me that each generation is called to bear witness to Christ in its own way.

The experiences of this past week have reminded me that the Gospel is still alive wherever Christ's love is made visible—in the generosity of those who serve, in the compassion shown to the suffering, and in the quiet acts of charity that often go unnoticed. May each of us find opportunities this week to be witnesses of that love in our homes, our parish, and our community.

Although I am thousands of miles away, please know that you remain close to my heart and in my prayers. Each day, I remember you at the Altar and entrust you to the loving care of Our Lady.

Yours in Christ,

Msgr. "John" Cuong M. Pham

DEL CORAZON DEL PASTOR

21 de junio, 2026

Queridos hermanos y hermanas,

¡Saludos desde Saigón!

Aunque estoy al otro lado del mundo, los llevo muy presentes en mis pensamientos y en mis oraciones. Quiero compartir con ustedes algunas experiencias de estos últimos días que han tocado profundamente mi corazón y que me han ayudado a comprender de una manera muy concreta el mensaje del Evangelio de este domingo.

Junio suele ser uno de los meses más ocupados en la vida de la Iglesia. Es tiempo de ordenaciones, primeras Misas de acción de gracias, aniversarios sacerdotales y religiosos, bodas y funerales. Mi visita a Vietnam no ha sido la excepción. De hecho, algunos amigos me han dicho bromeando que este viaje se parece más a una misión pastoral que a unas vacaciones. Y, pensándolo bien, creo que tienen razón.

Durante la última semana he celebrado la Santa Misa en varias iglesias que formaron parte de mi historia vocacional y he tenido la alegría de reencontrarme con muchas personas que, de una u otra manera, ayudaron a moldear mi camino de fe.

Uno de los momentos más hermosos fue participar en una Misa de Acción de Gracias por el decimoquinto aniversario de profesión religiosa de un gran amigo mío, sacerdote carmelita, quien sirvió durante años en Nueva York antes de convertirse en el primer Provincial de su comunidad en Vietnam. Ver una iglesia llena de fieles dando gracias por una vida entregada al Señor fue un hermoso recordatorio de que Cristo sigue llamando a hombres y mujeres a seguirlo con generosidad.

Sin embargo, la experiencia que más me impactó ocurrió unos días después, cuando visité el Santuario de San Martín de Porres, donde los Hermanos de San Juan de Dios atienden a más de cien enfermos terminales. Allí observé a una joven religiosa cuidando a un hombre enfermo de cáncer que lleva más de diez años postrado en una cama. Con gran delicadeza le acomodaba la almohada, le limpiaba el rostro y le hablaba con una ternura extraordinaria. Lo que más me impresionó fue que todo lo hacía con una sonrisa serena y llena de alegría.

En ese momento pensé: así se ve el amor de Cristo. No había cámaras. No había reconocimiento. No había aplausos. Sólo una discípula del Señor entregándose silenciosamente al cuidado de una persona que muchos podrían olvidar. Aquella escena me hizo recordar las palabras de Jesús en el Evangelio de este domingo: “No tengan miedo” (Mt 10:31). Nuestro Señor nos recuerda que ni siquiera un gorrión cae a tierra sin que el Padre lo sepa (cfr. Mt 10:29). Si Dios cuida de las aves del cielo, cuánto más cuida de quienes sufren, de quienes están solos o de quienes se sienten olvidados. A través de las manos de aquella religiosa pude contemplar la ternura misma de Dios.

También tuve la alegría de celebrar la fiesta de Santo Domingo Savio junto a los monaguillos de mi parroquia de origen. Ver a tantos jóvenes sirviendo con entusiasmo a la Iglesia me llenó de esperanza y me hizo pensar en nuestros propios monaguillos de Mount Carmel. La Iglesia tiene futuro cuando los jóvenes descubren la alegría de servir al Señor.

Al reflexionar sobre todas estas experiencias, me doy cuenta de que el Evangelio sigue vivo cada vez que el amor de Cristo se hace visible. Lo vemos en quienes sirven generosamente, en quienes acompañan a los enfermos, en quienes consuelan al que sufre y en tantas obras de caridad que nadie ve, excepto Dios. Que esta semana cada uno de nosotros pueda ser un reflejo de ese amor en nuestro hogar, en nuestra parroquia y en nuestra comunidad.

Aunque me encuentro a miles de millas de distancia, sepan que permanecen muy cerca de mi corazón. Cada día los recuerdo en el altar y los encomiendo a la protección amorosa de nuestra Santísima Virgen María.

Suyo en Cristo,

Mons. “Juan” Cuong M. Pham

OLMC WELCOMES YOU TO

REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

LAST DAY FOR REGISTRATION IS SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

1 child - $75

2 children (same parents)- $120

3 more children (same Parents) - $160

If registering your child for the first time, we will need a copy of the child's birth certificate and prior sacramental certificates.

No Registrations will be taken without full payment!

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:_____ **Código Postal**_____

Teléfono: _____

E-mail: _____

POR FAVOR MARCAR:

[ ] Nueva Registración [ ] Cambio de dirección

POR FAVOR MARCAR:

[ ] Prefiero Sobres [ ] Donaciones en línea

PARISH REGISTRATION

We encourage all who worship with us to consider registering to our parish. Please return this form in the collection or drop it off at the parish office. Your participation will strengthen your sense of belonging in God's family.

Name(s): _____

Address:_____ **Apt**_____

City _____ **ZIP** _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

PLEASE MARK ONE:

[ ] New Registration [ ] Change of Address

PLEASE MARK ONE:

[ ] I prefer envelopes [ ] I prefer E-giving

ARTIST & FLEA MARKET

Spend the day exploring our Flea Market! Get to know our vendors' items, taste delicious foods, and participate in our raffles!

Vendors are welcome to register at the parish office.

$45 TABLE RENTAL FOR 1 DAY OR $80 FOR BOTH DAYS!

Saturday, July 18 9:00am-5:00pm
Sunday, July 19 8:00am-3:00pm

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
On the Street of Newtown Avenue

- Household Items & Clean Clothing
- Handmade Crafts & Art

Proceeds for our Sacred Heart Committee & Jornada Group

mountcarmelastoria.org
23-25 Newtown Avenue
Astoria, NY 11102
718.278.1834

MARTES

30 DE

JUNIO, 2026

NOCHE DE ALABANZA Y ADORACION

Concierto Eucaristico con

La Hna. Gela, Martha Paguay y el Diacono Elkin Tamayo

$20 Adulto	$10 Niños edades 5-10

23-25 Newtown Avenue
Astoria, NY 11102

5:00pm a 9:00pm

Organizado por el grupo de Oración Carismático. Terminaremos con una Hora Santa.
Estacionamiento disponible.

Para Mas Informacion Llame:
Sergio Huerta: 347.484.7976

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

23-25 Newtown Avenue, Astoria, NY 11102

Parish Feast Day Schedule

Wednesday, July 8-
7:00pm Prayer Service

Thursday, July 9-
7:00pm Multilingual Rosary

Friday, July 10-
7:00pm Holy Hour

Saturday, July 11- Feast Day

4:00pm Procession around the block

5:00pm Multilingual Patronal Feast Day Mass

After the Mass, there will be a celebration on Newtown Avenue

All are invited to attend

Horario de la Fiesta Patronal

Miércoles, 8 de julio-
7:00pm Servicio de Oración

Jueves, 9 de julio-
7:00pm Rosario Multilingüe

Viernes, 10 de julio-
7:00pm Hora Santa

Sábado, 11 de julio- Fiesta Patronal

4:00pm Procesión alrededor de la cuadra

5:00pm Misa Multilingüe de la Fiesta Patronal

Después de la Misa, habrá una celebración en Newtown Avenue

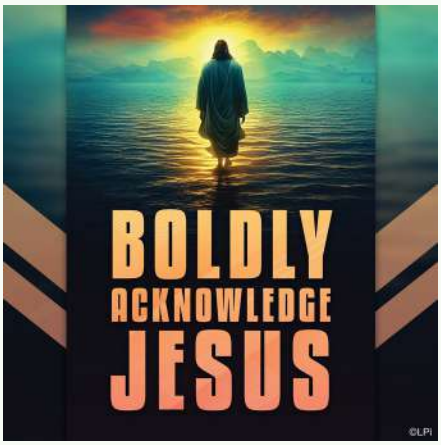
Todos están invitados a asistir

GOSPEL MEDITATION

Jean Améry, a Holocaust survivor tortured by the Nazis, later wrote about the abyss of human evil. He described his reaction as an "indignant despair." Haven't we all, to some degree, felt that abyss opened beneath us? A sudden loss, a violent headline, a moment of loneliness or panic, when the world feels fragile and meaning seems to collapse?

It is to this fear that Jesus speaks in today's Gospel: "Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body." (Matthew 10:28) He does not deny evil or pretend we will never suffer. Instead, He reframes the abyss: do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Your life is seen, known, and counted by the Father. Even the hairs of your head, even the sparrow's fall.

This is no superficial comfort. Jesus himself has entered the abyss: suffering, death, even our sense of forsakenness, and he has come through it. That is why his words, "Do not be afraid," hold such weight. They do not erase the abyss but build a bridge across it.



Faith is not pretending everything is fine. It is staring into the abyss and still choosing trust. And in that trust, we discover we are never alone. Christ stands with us, and the Father's care surrounds us. That is the only comfort deep enough for our (often fearful) hearts.

- Father John Muir

FEAR NO ONE

In the 1883 painting "Mass in a Connemara Cabin," a small congregation of shabbily dressed faithful is huddled together in a sparsely appointed room. A priest extends his hand over them in blessing. One woman presses her forehead to the ground in prayer.

This painting, created in 1883 by Aloysius O'Kelley, depicts a "station Mass," offered for the community in a private home. Though this practice originated in the period of the Penal Laws, when Catholic worship was illegal in Ireland, it persisted even after the "emancipation" of Catholics in the 19th century.

I have used quotation marks around the word "emancipation" because we must never forget that just because something is made legal does not mean it is made popular. And it certainly is not made safe.

In the moments that pass immediately after this scene concludes, the altar candles will be extinguished and the faithful will disperse, carrying the Body and Blood of Christ into a world suspicious of him, suspicious of them.

And yet here they are, kneeling. Foreheads pressed to the floor.

This painting sits on my family's prayer table as a call to reflection. I make my living writing Catholic things for Catholic publications. The people who read what I write are bound to agree with me they're usually reading my words in a church. I must confess that in my personal life, I am far less bold. I fear controversy. I dread giving offense. I buckle beneath the weight of discipleship.

It doesn't matter that most Americans identify as "Christians" - the world we face when we leave Mass is every bit as resentful of true Catholic teaching as the world that lies beyond O'Kelley's Connemara cottage. And while I do not fear those who can kill my body, I do fear those who can kill my reputation.

"Mass in a Connemara Cabin" illustrates how my ancestors worshiped: in secret, in shadow. I worship in the daylight.

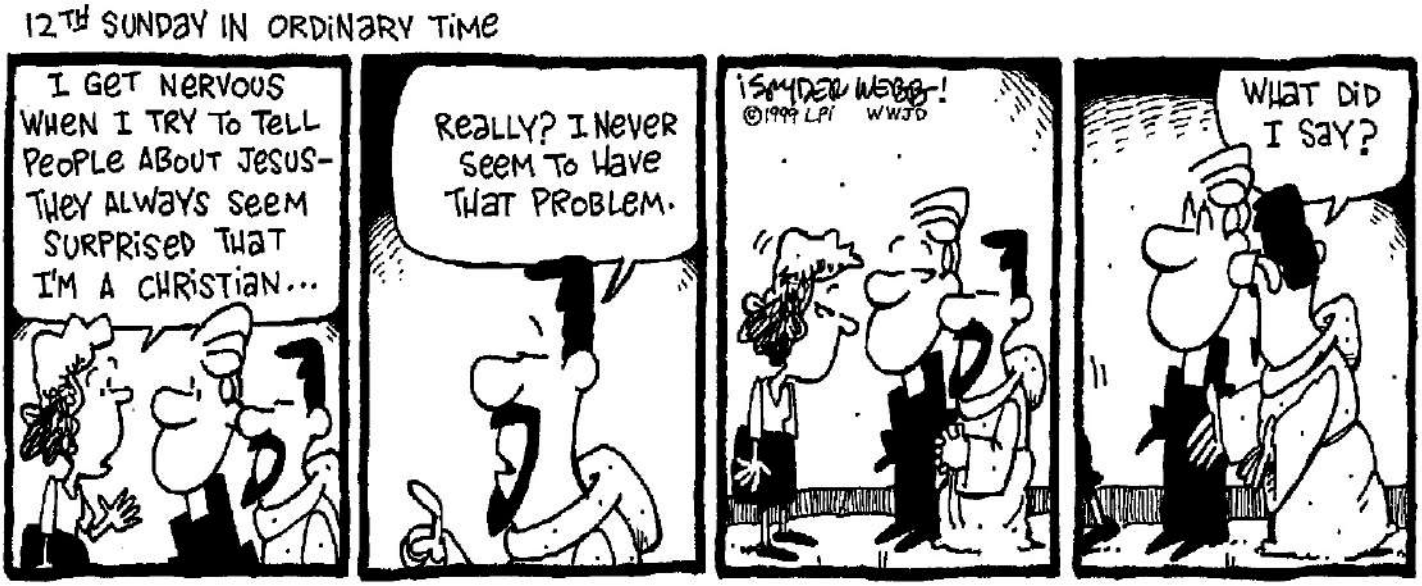
Which of us acknowledges Christ more fully? More courageously?

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

UPCOMING DIOCESAN VOCATION EVENT

JEREMIAH PROJECT: A discernment retreat for High School and college level young men. Come and experience Christ through fraternity and prayer! Those interested can go to the parish office and ask Luis Sanchez or Neida Martinez for a registration form or email cdost@diobrook.org or call 718-827-2454 for more information. This retreat will take place at Huntington Seminary July 24 - 26. Participants must arrive at 5:00pm.

If you are discerning your vocation and have questions or need to talk through your discernment, contact Fr. Chris Bethge, Vocation Director at 718-827-2454 or email at cbethge@cathedralprep.org

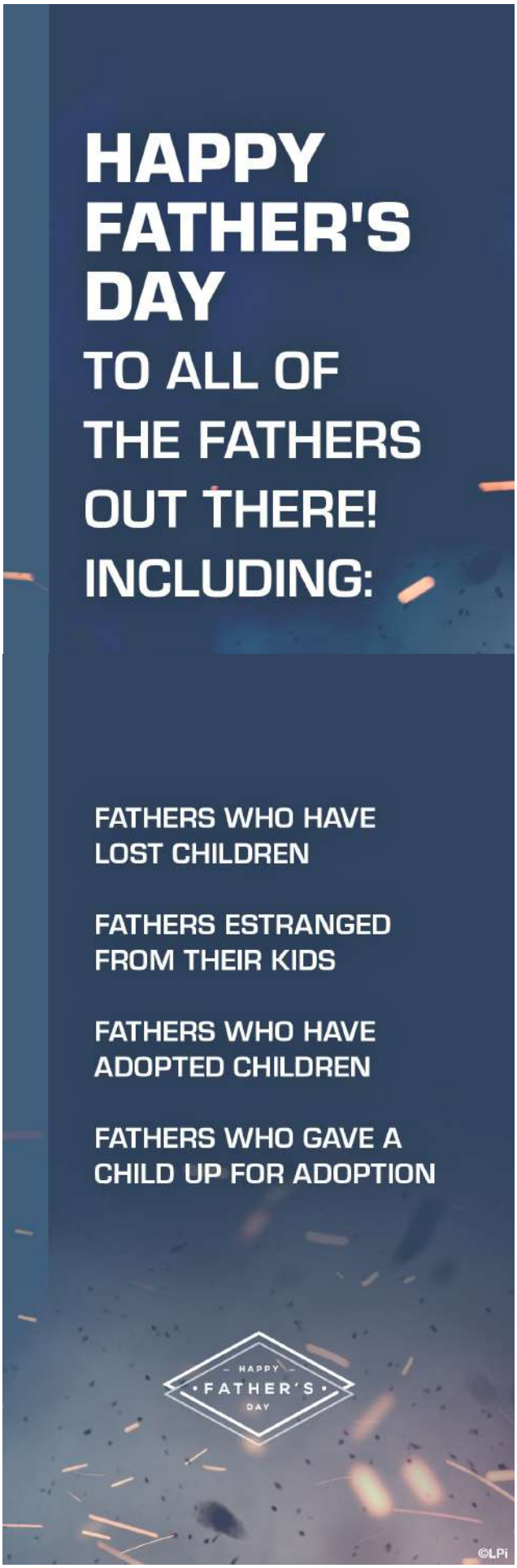


WHY ARE ONLY MEN ALLOWED TO BE PRIESTS AND DEACONS IN THE CHURCH?

One of the most debated and in some circles contentious teachings of the Church is that only men can be ordained as priests and deacons. Critics see it as a way of strengthening a patriarchal system in which women have little or no voice. Those who support this teaching look to New Testament teaching (where we read of Jesus choosing only men to be apostles) and the long-standing practice of the Church. This was certainly the perspective of St. John Paul II who, in his 1994 apostolic letter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis,* closed the discussion on the possibility of ordaining women as priests.

In the letter, he reflected on the dignity of women and their call to share in the life and mission of the Church, but he concluded by solemnly declaring that "the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgement is to be definitely held by all the Church's faithful" (no. 4).

This position has been upheld by Pope Francis in interviews, most notably as he returned from his 2016 visit to Sweden.

The ordination of women to the diaconate is another question and one which is being studied. In 2016, Pope Francis created a 12-member commission to study the question from several perspectives (theological, liturgical, historical, etc.). The commission issued an initial report for Pope Francis who later said that the commission had not yet produced a "definite response" to the question because of a lack of agreement on the role of female deacons in the Early Church.

For now, however, regardless of what changes might come from ongoing study and debate, the Church continues to reserve ordination to the diaconate to men only, recognizing a vital link between the diaconate and the priesthood and the lack of certainty about the presence and function of female deacons throughout history.