

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + JULY 2020



In July, we, the Church Militant, focus on His Precious Blood. See page 3.



Pier Giorgio Frassati, on his way to sainthood offers an example of a Christian life filled with deeds and joy. See page 4.

Some tips from Ignatius Loyola on “Who am I?”, page 5.



Words OF WISDOM

Provocative quotes on obedience and death while we have time to meditate. See Page 7.



Our Families

The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society.

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, III: 2:4: 2207

Pope Francis has selected “Our Families” as his prayer intention for the month, noting that “We pray that today’s families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance.” As we note from the quotation from the Catechism above, the significance of the family is an extraordinary one — not only for the Church but for society!

The family is often referred to by our bishops and priests as the “Domestic Church” and we often hear that parents are the first teachers of religion; their example, their conduct, their prayer lives shape the future idea of God for their children.

But as this pandemic has shown, today’s families have been dealt some unexpected and extraordinary circumstances creating a more enhanced need for support than in the past. They have been stretched thin — out of work or working from home, juggling home schooling with work, unable to see family members not living with them, and trying to keep everyone safe, sane and healthy.

Now, the Pope had no prophetic moment about the situation we are all in now, but one of the most prolific supporters of the family over the years did. St. Pope John Paul II in *(Continued on page 2)*

Our Families *Continued from page one*

1994 wrote a “Letter to Families,” that began:

“Dear Families! The celebration of the Year of the Family gives me a welcome opportunity to knock at the door of your home, eager to greet you with deep affection and to spend time with you.” The Pope reminded the people that early in his years as pope he had written that “man is the way of the Church” and that “Christ entrusted man to the Church; He entrusted man to her as the ‘way’ of her mission and her ministry. Among these many paths *the family is the first and the most important.*”

“The divine mystery of the Incarnation of the Word thus has an intimate connection with the human family. Not only with one family, that of Nazareth, but in some way with every family . . . Following Christ who ‘came’ into the world ‘to serve’ (Mt 20:28), the Church considers serving the family to be one of her essential duties. In this sense both man and the family constitute ‘the way of the Church.’ . . .

“This Letter to Families wishes in the first place to be a prayer to Christ to remain in every human family; an invitation to Him, in and through the small family of parents and children, to dwell in the great family of nations, so that together with Him all of us can truly say: *Our Father!* Prayer must become the dominant element of the . . . [f]amily in the Church: prayer by the family, prayer for the family, and prayer with the family.”

“. . . [E]xperience shows what an important role is played by a family living in accordance with the moral norm, so that the individual born and raised in it will be able to set out without

hesitation on the road of the good, which *is always written in his heart.* Unfortunately various programs backed by very powerful resources nowadays seem to aim at the breakdown of the family. At times it appears that concerted efforts are being made to present as ‘normal’ and attractive, and even to glamorize, situations which are in fact ‘irregular’. Indeed, they contradict ‘the truth and love’ which should inspire and guide relationships between men and women, thus causing tensions and divisions in families, with grave consequences particularly for children. The moral conscience becomes darkened; what is true, good and beautiful is deformed; and freedom is replaced by what is actually enslavement.”

“Families should pray for all of their members, in view of the good which the family is for each individual and which each individual is for the whole family. Prayer strengthens this good, precisely as the common good of the family. Moreover, it creates this good ever anew. In prayer, the family discovers itself as the first ‘us’, in which each member is ‘I’ and ‘thou’; each member is for the others either husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter, brother or sister, grandparent or grandchild. . .

“I speak with the power of His truth to all people of our day, so that they will come to appreciate the grandeur of the goods of marriage, family and life; so that they will come to appreciate the great danger which follows when these realities are not respected, or when the supreme values which lie at the foundation of the family and of human dignity are disregarded.” — *from GRATISSIMAM SANE*

The Pope’s July Prayer Intention

Our Families

**We pray that today’s families may be accompanied
with love, respect and guidance.**

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be to the Father.

The Precious Blood: The Price of Our Salvation

In 1860, the Rev. Frederick William Faber, C.O., a convert from Anglicanism 12 years earlier, wrote a book, *The Precious Blood: The Price of Our Salvation*.

Father Faber calls Christ's Precious Blood the price of our salvation because it is out of the Precious Blood that "men draw martyrdoms, vocations, celibacies, austerities, heroic charities and all the magnificent graces of high sanctity.

"Yet it was only His Blood which was to redeem the world; and it was only His Blood as shed which was to do so, and it was only his Blood as shed in death which could be the price of our redemption," he writes. "But it was the Blood shed upon the Cross, or at least the Blood shed in the process of dying, which was the ransom of our sins."

Pope John Paul II, on July 1, 2000, addressed members of both clergy and laity devoted to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus. Quoting Pope John XXIII, he speaks of "the Blood of Christ, the price of our redemption, the pledge of salvation and eternal life."

"Dear brothers and sisters, what a great mystery is the Blood of Christ! From the dawn of Christianity it has captivated the minds and hearts of so many Christians ... Christ's Blood is the precious source of salvation for the world precisely because it belongs to the Word who became flesh for our salvation.

"The sign of 'blood poured out', as an expression of life given in bloodshed as a witness to supreme love, is an act of divine condescension to our human condition. God chose the sign of blood because no other sign suggests a person's total involvement so eloquently," John Paul explains.

Throughout the history of the Church, reverence for the shedding of Christ's blood has inspired many saints.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote of Jesus' Precious Blood. . . *Cleanse me in Thy blood/Of which a drop for sinners spilt/ Can purge the entire world of all its guilt.*

And we know too, from the account of Jesus' death in St. John's Gospel that He shed all His blood: "But coming to Jesus, when they saw that He had already died. . . one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water."

This image is portrayed in the portrait approved by St. Faustina of the Divine Mercy. The Divine Mercy chaplet begins each decade, imploring the Eternal Father: "We offer you the body and blood..."

And previously to that, the mystic St. Gertrude the Great had great reverence for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She is credited with the prayer so many of us learned to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory and the salvation of all sinners which also reverences the "Most Precious Blood . . .

The Prayer of St. Gertrude

Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal Church, those in my own home and within my family. Amen. +

Who Are You, God?

While praying one day, a woman asked: "Who are you, God?"

*He answered: "I am."
"But, who is, I am?" the woman asked.*

*He replied: "I am Love.
I am Peace. I am Grace.
I am Joy. I am Strength.
I am Safety. I am Shelter.
I am Power. I am the Creator. I am the Comforter. I am the Beginning and the End.
I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

With tears in her eyes, she looked toward heaven and said, "Now I understand. But, who am I?"

God tenderly wiped the tears from the woman's eyes and whispered, "You are mine."

By his example he proclaims that a life lived in Christ's Spirit, the Spirit of the Beatitudes, is 'blessed', and that only the person who becomes a 'man or woman of the Beatitudes' can succeed in communicating love and peace to others.

— Pope St. John Paul II, May 20, 1990

While most Americans will celebrate the birth of our country on July 4th, the Church honors a remarkable young Italian, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. Pope John Paul II, as quoted above on the day of Pier's beatification, named him a man of the Beatitudes.

The Pope was no stranger to this young man, who died in 1925 at 24 years. He had heard of him as a student. On March 27, 1977, when he was then still Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, he opened a Frassati exhibit in his Krakow diocese.

The exhibit was created for a youth conference being held by the Polish Dominicans.

Cardinal Wojtyla was filled with joy upon seeing the photos of the young man. He urged all those in attendance to take time to visit the exhibit saying: "Go and look at these photographs. Behold the man of the eight beatitudes who bears in himself the grace of the Gospel, the Good News, the joy of salvation offered to us by Christ..."

There is no doubt that this young man on the road to sainthood inspires many, primarily for his enthusiasm and joy. Elizabeth Scalia, Word on Fire editor at large, in July 2019 wrote: I thought about Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, the Third Order Dominican who fascinates me because he was so clearly a normal, energetic young man. He skied and danced and smoked a pipe and dated and had a gregarious, joyful social life, yet he lived his faith heroically, and even managed to chase off fascists. Today we would call Pier Giorgio 'privileged,' but he had a

quietly hands-on commitment to the under-served and marginalized.

"I like Pier Giorgio a lot. I like his spunk and his laughter, and the way he managed to live a serious life of faith without becoming freakish or over-scrupulous about it. I like that we have actual pictures of a faithful young man enjoying wine and a pipe and wearing a silly hat at a birthday party among friends.

"It's fun to imagine that, were he a young person today, he'd be standing on a table belting

out a tune on karaoke during a festive time. Joy is a product of faith we too often do not recognize or celebrate in the holy." she added.

Born to a wealthy family in Turin, his family owned the daily publication *La Stampa*. His father was influential in Italian politics and served as an Italian

Senator and Ambassador to Germany during his life.

Pier was an average student but was known by his friends for his devotion and piety. He developed a deep spiritual life which he never hesitated to share with his friends. At an early age, Pier joined the Marian Sodality and obtained permission to receive daily Communion, which was not common at the time.

His father did not give his children large allowances, but Pier donated what little he had to people he saw as in more need of it. He was dedicated to social action, reflecting the principles Pope Leo XIII advocated in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

He was involved with Catholic youth and student groups, the Apostolate of Prayer and was a third order Dominican. He joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society at the age of 12 and throughout his life spent hours on activities that helped the poor and sick, caring for orphans, and assisting the servicemen *(Continued on page 5)*



"As long as faith gives me strength, I will always be joyful."

Blessed Pier
Giorgio Frassati

#ItalianoftheWeek
Sons of Italy®

To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be 'working through charity,' abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, #162

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola explain that we were created “to praise, reverence and serve the Lord our God and by this means to arrive at eternal salvation.” And the first step to God’s increasing my faith is to learn to know who I am.

If I don’t believe who I am, nothing’s going to get to grow. So I should learn where the truth about growth begins. St. Ignatius lists three truths about me: I come from God, I belong to God, and I am destined to be with God in eternity.

At the time of the creation, God knew me and at a certain time in history, out of nothingness, God breathed life into me. “Thy hands, O Lord, have made me and formed me.” (Ps. 118:73). Therefore St. Ignatius notes: “God created me, and He has continued His creation during every moment of my existence. As many as are the



hours and moments of my life, so often does He make me a fresh present of life.”

So if I come from God, then I belong to Him. All I am and all I have is from Him. What is there in me that does not belong to Him. Therefore I owe Him all. Ignatius says: “He would cease to be God if, being my creator, He ceased to be my sovereign and my master.”

But the third truth is perhaps the most beautiful. “God is not only my creator and my master; He is also my last end. A God infinitely wise must have proposed to Himself an end in creating me; a God infinitely perfect could only have created me for His glory; that is to say, to

know Him, to love Him and to serve Him.” As St. Augustine wrote so long ago: “We were made, O Lord, for Thee, and our heart is restless until it finds peace in Thee.”

I am the creation, the child of God, who has put me into history at this moment because He wants to make me a saint! He wants to use my sanctity “to smite the head of the serpent in this our day and time,” says EWTN host Johnnette Benkovic, adding: “He desires for [me] to be a conduit of redemptive grace in the world today.” +

Blessed Pier... continued from page 4

returning from World War I.

He decided to become a mining engineer, studying at Turin’s Royal Polytechnic University so he could “serve Christ better among the miners,” who worked in harsh conditions and at low wages, he told a friend.

Pier died in 1925 of poliomyelitis, just before obtaining his university degree. One of his last actions was to have a friend take medicine he had procured to a poor man he had been visiting, scribbling the request with a paralyzed hand.

While his family expected political and influential figures to attend the funeral, as well as his many friends, they were surprised to find the streets of Turin lined with a multitude of mourners, unknown to his parents, as the funeral procession passed by. These were the

poor and the needy who had been helped by this remarkable young man for over seven years.

It was at the insistence of the people he helped during his short life who petitioned the Archbishop of Turin to open the cause for his canonization in 1932.

On visiting Pier’s original tomb in the family plot, Pope John Paul II said: “I wanted to pay homage to a young man who was able to witness to Christ with singular effectiveness in this century of ours. When I was a young man, I, too, felt the beneficial influence of his example, and, as a student, I was impressed by the force of his testimony,” the Pope explained.

Pier’s mortal remains, found completely intact and incorrupt upon their exhumation on March 31, 1981, were transferred from the family plot to the Turin cathedral, where they have become a destination for pilgrims. +

The Bulletin Board

USCCB President on George Floyd and The Protests in American Cities

Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) president, issued this statement on May 31, 2020:

The killing of George Floyd was senseless and brutal, a sin that cries out to heaven for justice. How is it possible that in America, a black man's life can be taken from him while calls for help are not answered, and his killing is recorded as it happens?

I am praying for George Floyd and his loved ones, and on behalf of my brother bishops, I share the outrage of the black community and those who stand with them in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and across the country. The cruelty and violence he suffered does not reflect on the majority of good men and women in law enforcement, who carry out their duties with honor. We know that. And we trust that civil authorities will investigate his killing carefully and make sure those responsible are held accountable.

We should all understand that the protests we are seeing in our cities reflect the justified frustration and anger of millions of our brothers and sisters who even today experience humiliation, indignity, and unequal opportunity only because of their race or the color of their skin. It should not be this way in America. Racism has been tolerated for far too long in our way of life.

It is true what Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that riots are the language of the unheard. We should be doing a lot of listening right now. This time, we should not fail to hear what people are saying through their pain. We need to finally root out the racial injustice that still infects too many areas of American society.

But the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained

by violence and so much is lost. Let us keep our eyes on the prize of true and lasting change.

Legitimate protests should not be exploited by persons who have different values and agendas. Burning and looting communities, ruining the livelihoods of our neighbors, does not advance the cause of racial equality and human dignity.

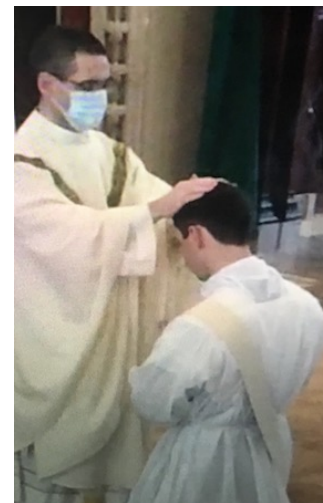
We should not let it be said that George Floyd died for no reason. We should honor the sacrifice of his life by removing racism and hate from our hearts and renewing our commitment to fulfill our nation's sacred promise — to be a beloved community of life, liberty, and equality for all. +

Bishop da Cunha Ordains Steven Booth To the Priesthood on June 13

Father Steven Booth, 27, was ordained to the priesthood Saturday, June 13, by Bishop Edgar Moreira da Cunha, S.D.V., at Saint Mary's Cathedral through the laying of hands and the prayer of consecration invoking the Holy Spirit. At the same Mass, the Rev. Mr. Peter R. Scheffer, Jr., a 59-year-old retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and alumnus of West Point, was ordained a transitional deacon in preparation for priestly ordination. He will minister at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Seekonk.

Father Booth will spend the next three years as a diocesan priest, providing pastoral care to the faithful of Fall River before seeking active-duty as a Navy chaplain with the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

He will serve as a parochial vicar at Good Shepherd Parish, Vineyard Haven, until the end of August, and then become a parochial vicar at St. Julie Billiart in North Dartmouth. +



Father Michael laying hands on Father Steven Booth during the Ordination Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral. As a seminarian, Father Steven served a summer at St. Francis.



Words ^{OF}
WISDOM

The Secret of Obedience

"I'd like you to learn how to make honey as the bees do. Do you know how they go about it? First, they do not act independently, each on its own, but as a team under the direction of a queen bee, whom they obey in every detail. Secondly, they go from flower to flower to extract nectar, and only nectar. . . Honey is an image of all good things which stem from piety, diligence, and cheerfulness. These three things will bring you immeasurable joy, sweet as honey. But you must imitate the bees. First, obey the queen, which in your case means the house rules and your superiors. Without obedience there is chaos and discontent and nothing will be right. [Secondly,] you must also imitate the bees in choosing only what is good and discarding the rest. Each of you must find what is best in his companions and then try to imitate them in that. What must be done is to say determinedly: I want to make that virtue my own." — **Don Bosco**

"The power of obedience! The lake of Gennesareth had denied its fishes to Peter's nets. A whole night in vain. Then, obedient, he lowered his net again to the water and they caught 'a huge number of fish.' Believe me: the miracle is repeated each day."

— **St. Josemaria Escriva**

"It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey. — **St. Ignatius Loyola**

"The Devil doesn't fear austerity but holy obedience." — **St. Francis de Sales**

Without a doubt, obedience is more meritorious than any other penance. And what greater penance can there be than keeping one's will continually submissive and obedient? — **St. Catherine of Bologna**

"Obedience unites us so closely to God that in a way transforms us into Him, so that we have no other will but His. If obedience is lacking, even prayer cannot be pleasing to God." — **St. Thomas Aquinas**

"A Christian faithful to obedience, knows not delays, but prepares his ears for hearing, and his hands and his feet for labor." — **St. Bernard of Clairvaux**

"The most deadly poison of our time is indifference. And this happens although the praise of God should know no limits. Let us strive, therefore, to praise Him to the greatest extent of our powers." — **St. Maximilian Kolbe**

"When you awake in the night, transport yourself quickly in spirit before the Tabernacle, saying: 'Behold, my God, I come to adore You, to praise, thank, and love You, and to keep You company with all the Angels.' " — **St. John Vianney**

"At the end of our life we shall be judged by charity." — **St. John of the Cross**

Words OF WISDOM

"O my God, You and You alone are all wise and all knowing! You know, You have determined everything that will happen to us from first to last. You have ordered things in the wisest way, and You know what will be my lot year by year until I die. You know how long I have to live. You know how I shall die. You have precisely ordained everything, sin excepted. Every event of my life is the best for me that it could be, for it comes from You. You bring me on year by year, by Your wonderful Providence, from youth to age, with the most perfect wisdom, and with the most perfect love."

— St. John Henry Cardinal Newman

"Let me hear of Your steadfast love in the morning, for in You I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul. Save me, O Lord, from my enemies; I have fled to You for refuge. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. Let Your good spirit lead me on a level path. For Your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life. In Your righteousness bring me out of trouble. In Your steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries, for I am Your servant." — Psalm 143: 8-12

"Joy is a net of love by which we catch souls."

— St. Theresa of Calcutta

"How great is the sweetness which a soul experiences, when, in the time of prayer, God, by a ray of His own light, shows to her His goodness and His mercies towards her, and particularly the love which Jesus Christ has borne to her in His passion! She feels her heart melting, and, as it were, dissolved through love. But in this life we do not see God as He really is: we see Him, as it were, in the dark. 'We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face' (1 Cor. 13:12). Here below God is hidden from our view; we can see Him only with the eyes of faith: how great shall be our happiness when the veil shall be raised, and we shall be permitted to behold God face to face! We shall then see His beauty, His greatness, His perfection, His amiableness, and His immense love for our souls."

— St. Alphonsus Liguori

"While St. Teresa was well acquainted with methods of meditation and wished her young nuns to be instructed in them, she emphatically insisted that the primary need for beginners is not to find the ideal method but to do God's will from moment to moment throughout the day — which is probably the last thing the beginner thinks is primary. Her thought is strong and unambiguous: 'The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer — and don't forget this, because it is very important — should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every effort to bring his will in conformity with God's will'. She then adds that 'it is the person who lives in more perfect conformity who will receive more from the Lord and be more advanced on this road of prayer.'"

— Fr. Thomas Dubay,
from "Fire Within"