

VOCATIONS COMMITTEE

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VOCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Mary Sovie
 - Rod Roca
 - Sr. Bernadette
 - Clare Murdock
 - Jesse Sovie
 - Lil Dailey
 - Rita Crowley
- Deacons:
- Jim Crowley
 - Dave Demers
 - Bill O'Brien

SD: Fr. Justin Thomas

Resurrection Living

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL & NOTRE DAME CHURCH



The Power of Prayer: Part I

Part I: The Power of Prayer
Larry was working his small dairy farm, a fifth generation, hard-working, Presbyterian farmer. Mid-morning, while milking cows, he banged his head. It bled profusely. He kept working and trying to stop the persistent blood. After 90 minutes, he decided to head back to the house for help. Theresa took one look at her husband and bustled him off to the emergency room for stitches. It took some time to find the third cut and patch Larry's scalp together. Four hours after the wound, Theresa and Larry found themselves alone in the ER room surrounded by gauze and pads covered in Larry's blood. Larry felt ill, ready to pass out. Theresa went for help and found the returning nurse in the hallway. They stepped back into the room and found Larry dying. Doctors, nurses and technicians appeared from nowhere, Theresa was taken to the waiting room and to get some food. She is a diabetic, missed lunch and needed nourishment.

The three children live out of town, and Adam was gone. He died unexpectedly from an infection. A young deacon, Adam was in his final months of study before ordination to the priesthood. The Crowes know loss. No one could find Steve, Theresa's nephew. The search found her pastor, Fr. Kevin O'Brien, working away in his Chancery office on Veteran's Day. He came to the hospital and found Theresa, together they returned to Larry's room. Larry explains he was floating away surrounded by bright light as if flying in a cloud. It was "the best feeling you've ever had in your life." Larry returned, opened his eyes to Fr. Kevin. Everyone standing back against the wall. As Theresa explains, they were charging the defibrillator to restart his heart. Standing with the nurses, Larry saw two spirits, dressed in rough sackcloth or burlap. The next day, the doctor came in with a stack of paper, \$7000 worth of tests. Larry was fine, they had no explanation for his experience. Something was new, different. Sometime later Theresa asked Larry, "If you were given the choice, would you have returned?" With regret,

Larry explains he would have stayed. Sometime later, Bishop LaValley asked Larry to pray for a young man tragically injured in an accident. After several months, the young man returned home, he had a long road but was healing well. Larry questioned whether he was supposed to continue praying for him when a Christmas card came. The young man's mother thanked Larry for his prayers and asked him to continue praying. Then a couple at church stopped attending. Eventually his wife returned and explained he had an abdominal aneurism. Larry prayed for him. He returned to church a few weeks later, going out of his way several times to thank Larry for his prayers. This happened over and over. Whether Bishop LaValley or Fr. O'Brien asked for prayers or Larry decided to pray for someone himself, the healed always thanked Larry for his prayers. "Thank you for praying for me." Larry, a private man, does not understand how they knew Larry was praying for them. But today, be assured in this season of our salvation, Larry and Theresa speak with awe and wonder when they tell their story of the power of prayer.

- by Deacon Jim Crowley

From Our Spiritual Director: Fr. Justin Thomas

"Lord I've wandered far from home ... Lord I'm coming home."

Lent comes to us in the springtime, (at least towards winter's end), a time when we all get into what we call "spring cleaning." We open up the windows and let the warm spring breezes blow through our house to clean away all of the stale winter air. We plant flowers, we paint the walls, and we fix and clean up so that our houses can be healthy places in which to live, and inviting places for others to enter. Shouldn't we at the very least do the same for God? We are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we need to keep ourselves pure from all that stains our souls. The **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is such that,



where we experience the divine mercy of God and above all his love for us. This sacrament is definitely like coming home to Christ and making Home in Christ.

"The Sacrament of Reconciliation flows directly from the Paschal Mystery. In fact, on the evening of Easter, the Lord appeared to the disciples addressing them with the greeting, 'Peace be with you!' then he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven'. This passage reveals to us the most profound dynamic contained in this Sacrament. It is not enough to simply ask the Lord for forgiveness in one's own mind and heart because Jesus himself entrusted to the Church the ministry

of the forgiveness of sins. "It is necessary, humbly and trustingly to confess one's sins to a priest of the Church. In the celebration of this Sacrament, the priest represents not only God but also the whole community," points out Pope Francis. The shame we feel speaking our sins to another, makes us more humble, as we unburden ourselves before God. When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, and happy. This is the beauty of Confession!" Understanding the struggle that some experience when it comes to accepting, understanding and participating in this sacrament, I with Pope Francis exhort you all: "Be courageous and go to Confession! The priest will be good". Wishing you all the Blessings of Easter!

- by Father Justin Thomas

Next Issue : Part II:
Power in Sharing Prayer

MY STATIONS OF THE CROSS WITH JESUS

“Do not fear, I am with you, Do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.”
- Isaiah 41:10



The first station: **“Jesus is condemned to death”**. 17 years ago, it was during the Lenten Season that I was given a diagnosis of Stage 3 Head and Neck Cancer. I felt this was my death sentence.

The second station: **“Jesus carries His cross”**. After understanding and coming to grips with my diagnosis and after a lot of prayer and thought I knew this diagnosis was a cross that I was to carry.

The third station: **“Jesus falls the first time”**. Even with the support of my family, friends and medical staff I felt this cross was too much to bear. My support team once again picked me up-giving me hope and telling me with surgery, chemo and radiation that I could beat this sentence.

The fourth station: **“Jesus meets his mother”**. I went to my mother-in-law, Betty for advice. I trusted that her prayerful life and faith could help guide me with the cross I was bearing. Even as she expressed her sadness for my situation, her trust in, love for, and faith in God impressed me. She advised me to turn to the Lord and to love and trust in Him.

The fifth station: **“Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross”**. I felt helpless; I could not carry this burden on my own. I knew with my surgery behind me I would start the chemo and radiation process. I

was weak and tired, unable to feed myself. I knew I needed help. The doctors put a feeding tube in my stomach. I now knew I had to depend on other (Simons) to help me.

The sixth station: **“Veronica wipes the face of Jesus”**. Now into my third week of radiation and chemotherapy I felt whipped and beaten. My wife, Laurie, becomes my Veronica. She helps with everything; she feeds me and bathes me. I am weak and don't want to go on. I see the pain on my wife's face, but she assures me of her love and prayers along with her loving care.

The seventh station: **“Jesus falls the second time”**. Even with all my support and help, I feel I cannot carry the weight of this cross anymore. I was unable to travel and would have to remain in Burlington, VT for the four weeks of my remaining treatment.

The eighth station: **“Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem”**. With the decision made to stay in Burlington's Hope Lodge for the next four weeks of my treatment, away from my wife, kids and family, I meet the staff and other patients who became my “women of Jerusalem” offering me love, prayer, support and comfort, even though they too were suffering.

The ninth station: **“Jesus falls a third time”**. Away from home, the chemo, radiation treatments and feeding only from a tube in my stomach are now into the fifth week. I am weak, sick and feeling worse than ever! I cannot go on. The doctors and staff treating me see my weak, sick body failing but they rally together offering me hope that I will make it through this treatment.

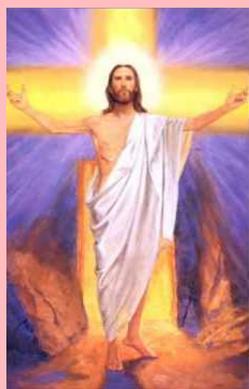
The tenth station: **“Jesus clothes are taken away”**. Yes, I have wounds from surgeries, Radical Neck Dissection, Intervenus Port and a G-Tube for feeding and a weak immune system from the treatments I had received. I feel stripped of all my security making me vulnerable and defenseless. I no longer feel the strength of a young man but that of one twice my age. I have lost much weight, my once strong physically fit body is now gone. My heart, soul and eyes turn toward God in prayer.

After completing my treatments I returned home to my family to slowly recover physically, emotionally mentally, and spiritually. God had spared me the pain and agony of the next four stations. It was the grace of God that brought me through this time of terrible suffering. Jesus walked with me! He saved me! And now I rejoice as I already feel “risen from the depths of despair and suffering”.

The prayers and support and care from many people both known and unknown helped me with the cross I had to bear and I thank them. But most of all I thank you, Lord Jesus for giving the great gift of faith and trust in you. I could have not done it without You!

May we all see the Risen Lord in the personal crosses we bear!

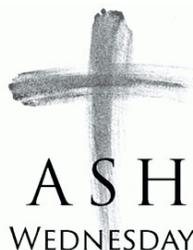
- by Deacon Dave Demers



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Easter Memories & Traditions

I have many wonderful memories of the Easter Season growing up and passed many of the traditions on with my own family. Christmas was always special with its own traditions passed down, but Easter was also equally special.



While attending the Catholic school, we received ashes on our forehead at school and in later years we attended Mass with the family to receive ashes. "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

During Lent, our family prayed the rosary often, went to confession, usually gave something up (like candy or TV shows) and did small sacrifices for others without letting them know ... because God would know! We gave part of our allowance to special Lenten collections at school and church, thus learning tithing & charity.

When I was growing up we had more family time to "just be" together because stores were closed on Sunday, TV wasn't 24 hrs a day, and there was less distractions to pull families apart. We often watched a movie like "Jesus of Nazareth" during Lent.

During the last couple weeks of Lent, the statues were covered with purple cloths to help us focus on the penitential rite, through the work of Jesus suffering and death on the cross for us. As a child, this was a reminder of this special time in our Catholic faith. At Mass I tried to remember what the statues looked like under those purple cloths and I looked forward to seeing them unveiled when we went to the Easter morning Mass.

On Good Friday, we usually

did the Stations of the Cross and spent quiet time in church praying. It was one of my favorite times to be in church as we were free to walk around from Station to Station, looking at the pictures and remembering Jesus sacrifice for all of us. We never ate meat on Friday and usually had fish, or grilled cheese sandwiches & tomato soup.

The one memory that stands out the most is shopping for new Easter outfits. For women & girls, it was dresses, new shoes, hats, purse & gloves. For men & boys, new suits, shirts & shoes. I remember shopping with my grandmother to find the "right" hat for her and it was usually decorated with some kind of flowers. The women & girls usually curled their hair, which meant going to bed sleeping on hair rollers.....so uncomfortable!! Our shoes were polished the night before for the Easter morning Mass. Everyone looked pretty fancy Easter morning as we



went to church. The one thing I can take from that ritual, was looking our best, as we were going to Mass to celebrate the JOY of Easter and our Lord's Resurrection!

A special ham dinner with all the trimmings was our usual Easter dinner.



We each had our own Easter basket that was brought back out each year and filled with all kinds of sweet delicious goodies that always included jelly beans, marshmallow chicks and a large chocolate bunny. We usually received a stuffed animal too when we were younger.

One thing we added when I had my own family was the "Easter bunny" putting change in plastic Easter eggs and hiding them throughout the living room. The three boys all started searching together as soon as they came down stairs Easter morning. The night before, we put 24 empty plastic Easter eggs in a basket on the coffee table, in the hopes that the Easter bunny would put change in and hide them. We knew there was 24 eggs to look for. Genius! My boys were 4 years apart in age, but it was Nic my middle son who seemed to always find the majority. When they gathered their eggs to open and count how much money they got, it was Nic who also suggested they pool their money & split it evenly among the 3 of them. He said his little brother Jesse couldn't get as many eggs as they found and he wanted to divide it equally. It is a good thing that the Easter bunny put change that could be divided equally! It remained like that throughout the years while we continued this tradition.



Times have changed from when I was growing up through the years of raising my own family, but there are always opportunities to share the Easter story, to pass on our faith and our traditions. It is possible to celebrate the secular and the sacred aspects of Easter with your family. Use every opportunity to celebrate the sacredness of Lent & Easter to build the foundation that will allow your children and grandchildren to have a base to stand on and grow in their faith.

-By Mary Sovie

Vocations Committee



**Our Family of Faith in Ogdensburg:
St. Mary's Cathedral & Notre Dame Church**

c/o Notre Dame Rectory.
125 Ford Street
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Phone: 315-393-5050

Other: 315-393-3930

Fax: 315-393-6680

E-mail: secretary@smcogd.org

**Spiritual Director:
Father Justin Thomas**

Vocations Committee: Our Mission

We are faithful Catholics of Our Lady's Parishes of Ogdensburg who wish to promote Vocations in our Faith Community. We work and pray for the promotion of Vocations to the Priesthood, the Diaconate, Religious life, and Marriage and Family life.

As Catholics by virtue of our Baptism into the Body of Christ we are all called to a Vocation and everyone of us is called to holiness bringing Christ to the World in which we live. What is your Vocation? Are you preparing your Children for their Vocation? How do we do that? ~ We just have to be an example to them—And a light among the nations.

"The Feast of Divine Mercy"

On the Octave of Easter, that is, the 8th day after Easter we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. St. John Paul the Great instituted this Feast day on April 30, 2000 when at the same time he canonized Sr. Faustina Kowalska as a saint.

St. Faustina recorded in her diary the visions she had of Jesus where he asked for an image of His Divine Mercy to be painted and also asked for Devotion to Divine Mercy be promulgated.

In her vision, as recorded in the diary of St. Faustina, Jesus promises the biggest promises of grace related to the Devotion of Divine Mercy. Specifically, anyone who goes to confession (the confession may take place some days before),

receives Holy Communion on that day, prays for the Pope's intentions and finally, takes part in the prayers and devotions held at their Church, in honor of Divine Mercy (the Divine Mercy Chapel) they shall obtain the total forgiveness of all sins and punishment. That means a person would go immediately after death to heaven without suffering in purgatory or hell. Jesus went on to say... "On that day (Divine Mercy Sunday) all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened.

Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet."

Jesus asked for this Feast because he loves us so much! He wants us to "... have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10) that is,

throughout eternity with Him.

This Year Divine Mercy Sunday falls on April 8th. Here at St. Mary's Cathedral following the 8:00 AM Mass we will be having Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the main Cathedral until 2:00 PM. (Confession will be available around 1PM.) Please come and spend some time in front of Our Lord In the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Pray for your family, friends, the Clergy, the religious, or a special intention. At 2:00 PM we will conclude with praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and then Benediction.

My brothers and sisters, taking part in the Divine Mercy Sunday while fulfilling the conditions is just like being Baptized all over again. You get a fresh start! That is Jesus intention for YOU on the Feast of His Divine Mercy. Please come and join us.

- by Deacon Bill O'Brien

