



Adult Faith Formation

Committee Members:

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To deepen our understanding of our Faith and increase our Love for God

July 2009

July Focus



Summer busyness can take us away from our usual routines and lead us away from God. Remember to keep up your usual prayer routine or even step it up in thanksgiving for living in a free nation where we may worship God openly. Trying to add extra prayers for the safety of your loved ones during the season of outdoor activities can be a simple way to increase love for God and others. One final note — last summer Fr. Richards was on sabbatical and had the opportunity to be on a 30-day silent retreat which incorporated spiritual teachings of our saint of the month, St. Ignatius of Loyola. If your interested check out the book “The Discernment of Spirits—An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living”. This book was mentioned by Fr. Richards in a recent bulletin and is in our lending library.

*“Virgin chosen, singly blest, Ever faithful to God’s call.
Guide us in this earthly life, Guard us lest, deceived, we fall.”*

verse text — Praise to Mary, Heaven’s Gate, verse 5

Upcoming Events

- > July 18th & 19th—Parish Festival—Come join the fun and fellowship.
- > August 9th thru 13th—St. Albert’s Catholic Vacation Bible School—see bulletins for more detail.
- > Coming this Fall—Bible Study groups to begin—More info in future bulletins and newsletters.

Parenting Tip of the Month

Our saint of the month provided a model for spiritual retreats. For a busy family finding time and money for Mom, Dad, or the whole family to go on a retreat can be difficult. One simple and informal way of going on a retreat could be taking a break from all media for several hours or for one full day of a week. That means no TV, computer, video games, radio, IPODs, secular books, etc. The silence created as a result of freeing ourselves from these things can turn into a retreat of family togetherness. It may also allow us to find ways to physically and spiritually build or rebuild family relationships. Make that day special by committing a set time where everyone can engage in an activity together.

Dictionary for the Laity

Here are several terms associated with our saint of the month.

Mysticism—is the quest of unity with, identity with, or awareness of a spiritual truth or God Himself through experience, intuition, instinct, or insight. In Christian mysticism the mystic seeks those spiritual encounters that give an overpowering sense of God being with him or her in a very personal way. A

Mystic is a person who practices mysticism. It may also be a person who seeks the truth of life beyond the five senses. The Christian mystic’s goal is to reach for the highest level of Christian perfection, which is to have a heart filled with the Holy Spirit, to have a mind united with the mind of Christ, and to live free from sin and in perfect obedience to God’s will. **Mystical experience** leaves the mystic feeling completely known by God, cared about and loved by God, even to the extent of feeling as though he or she were within God, or surrounded by the Holy Spirit. Any Christian can have a mystical experience in the normal course of life, the Christian mystic on the other hand makes a conscious effort to draw near to God through deep prayer and the use of spiritual exercises aimed at opening the heart and mind to God. The mystic may feel overwhelmed by God’s love or power or wisdom and moved to tears, so mysticism is dismissed as overly emotional by some Christians.

Retreat is sort of a vacation to pursue the spiritual - a predetermined number of days (or hours) set aside by an individual or group to take a break from everyday commitments, and instead enter into prayer, meditation, study, or instruction under a director.

Summertime can be a time of fun and games. Below is a game the whole family, young and old, can play and learn from. It is a mathematical puzzle that may cause you to open the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the answers. You can also go on line to find the answers at www.newadvent.org. Several of the questions have been featured in past newsletters. Have fun with the puzzle!

How well do you know catechism numbers? Test your knowledge by answering the questions.

- To the number of gifts of the Holy Spirit, add the number of kinds of actual sin. = _____
- To the answer above, add the number of days from the Resurrection to the Ascension. = _____
- From the answer above, subtract the number of cardinal virtues. = _____
- From the answer above, subtract the number of marks of the Church times the number of theological virtues. = _____
- From the answer above, subtract the number of sacraments. = _____
- Divide the answer above by the number of natures Jesus possesses. = _____
- From the answer above, subtract the number of commandments. = _____

Your final answer is the number of persons in the Holy Trinity. _____

Here are some *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reference numbers to look up the answers.

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. 1831 & 1854 | 2. 659 | 3. 1805 & 1834 | 4. 811 & 1812-1829 |
| 5. 1210 | 6. 464 | 7. 2052-2557 | |

Final Answer: 232-267

Pope Benedict XVI July Prayer Intentions

General: That the Christians of the Middle East may live their faith in full freedom and be an instrument of peace and reconciliation.

Mission: That the Church may be the seed and nucleus of a humanity reconciled and reunited in God's one and only family, thanks to the testimony of all the faithful in every country in the world.

Friendly Defenders

Church - Authority

Question #3: The Bible alone is the ultimate authority of truth, not the Church.

Response: That's not what St. Paul says in his letter to Timothy...

Bible Verse: "But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth." *1 Timothy 3:15*

Description: Jesus established a living authority, the Church. The Church gave us the Bible and is the final authority on matters of faith.

Related Verses: *2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6; Luke 10:16; Matthew 18:17-18; 2 Peter 1:15-16*

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"If God causes you to suffer much, it is a sign that He has great designs for you, and that He certainly intends to make you a saint. And if you wish to become a great saint, entreat Him yourself to give you much opportunity for suffering; for there is no wood better to kindle the fire of holy love than the wood of the cross, which Christ used for His own great sacrifice of boundless charity."

St. Ignatius Loyola

Ignatius' three key steps in discernment of spirits.

BE AWARE
UNDERSTAND
TAKE ACTION (ACCEPT/REJECT)

BE AWARE: This is the effort to notice what is happening in our inner spiritual experiences, what is spiritually stirring in our hearts and thoughts.

UNDERSTAND: The reflection on the stirrings we have now noticed that allows us to recognize what in them is of God and what is not.

TAKE ACTION: To accept and live according to what we have recognized as of God, and reject and remove from our lives what we have recognized as not of God.

Source—The Discernment of Spirits
by T.M. Gallagher, OMF

St. Ignatius of Loyola—July 31st

Ignatius was born in 1491 at Loyola in Cantabria, Spain. He spent his early years at court and as a soldier.

Ignatius was on his way to military fame and fortune at the age of thirty when a cannonball shattered his leg. Because there were no romantic books about knights on hand during his convalescence, he whiled away the time reading a life of Christ and lives of the saints. To his own surprise he found himself getting interested. He decided to try to do what the saints had done.

The doctor finally told him that he needed no further care. Ignatius left the castle in which he had been convalescing, looked for a priest, and went to confession. A few days later he gave away his fine clothes and dressed himself in the oldest things he could find. For almost a year he lived in a cave on the banks of the river at Manresa. He had punished himself for his sins—fasting for days, whipping himself, and taking care of the poor and sick. He then decided to go to Jerusalem to help the poor Christians there who were persecuted by the Turks, but the Turks would not allow him to stay and so he returned to Spain.

In Barcelona he entered school—a man of 35 years old, in the lowest class and among the youngest students. After some years there he was ready for the University, and he went to Paris. All this time he was doing what he could in his spare time in hospitals and among the poor. He got other students interested in this work, but after some time he fell away.

The Society of Jesus

In the year 1534, though, he had five faithful followers and with these he formed a little society. They offered themselves to the Pope for any work he wanted them to do. Ignatius saw the world as a bit battlefield. Just now there was a battle raging: Luther and the other Reformers had drawn their swords against the old Church, and whole countries were falling away from the faith. As soon as Ignatius saw the work ahead of him, he formed with the first five followers the Society of Jesus. It was the beginning of the Jesuit Order. Arguing, pleading, preaching, praying, teaching, he saw his men do great work for the Church all over the world. It was his Order that finally turned the tide against the Protestant Reformers and started Europe back toward the Church. His men were in mission fields everywhere. Even in the forests of America his men were teaching the faith to savage Indians. Our own American saints, Isaac Jogues, John Brebeuf and the others martyred with them, were Jesuits. They were among the first to carry the faith to North America. Our first bishop, John Carroll, was a Jesuit.

The Patron of Retreats

Ignatius was a true mystic. He centered his spiritual life on the essential foundations of Christianity—the Trinity, Christ, and the Eucharist. His motto was, "All for the greater glory of God." He is the patron of retreats. Ignatius recommended this prayer to his penitents: "Lord Jesus Christ, take all my freedom, my memory, my understanding, and my will. All that I have and cherish You have given me. I surrender it all to be guided by Your will. Your grace and Your love are wealth enough for me. Give me these, Lord Jesus, and I ask for nothing more."

He exercised a most fruitful apostolate both through his written works and through his training of followers who won great praise for their renewal of the Church. He wrote: "Great care must be taken to show forth orthodox truth in such a way that if any heretics happen to be present they may have an example of charity and Christian moderation. No hard words should be used or any sort of contempt for their errors be shown."

For fifteen years Ignatius directed the battles of his Society. His men wanted him for their general. Almost blind, worn out by his hard life and prayer, he died at the age of sixty-five on July 31, 1556.

On his feast day, July 31st, the Church prays: "O God, You raised up Saint Ignatius in Your Church to inspire men to work for Your greater glory. Grant that we may labor on earth with his help and after his example may merit to be crowned with him in heaven."



Source—Best-Loved Saints by Fr. Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D.