

The MESSENGER

MISSIONARIES OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Real Boys. Real Girls. See page 6.

WINTER 2021-2022

The MESSENGER

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Missionary of the Holy Family
priest from Madagascar.

Provincial Perspective

Dear Family,

It can seem an understatement to say we live in “divided times.” Warring political philosophies, economic upheaval, shifting global climates, and Covid-19 are signs that not all is right with the world. Taken up with anxiety and fear, it is only in trusting the One who created us that we can ever hope to overcome such conflict.

We long to find a little peace to refresh and renew our wearied minds and hearts. This time of the year brings us the story of Mary, Joseph, and their child Jesus, living out their lives, submitting to God’s will. No doubt we share some of their experiences. They are our example to keep a close relationship with God Our Father by praying daily and of loving and serving one another. By living our lives centered on the words of Jesus Christ, and by a genuine desire to respect, protect, and love one another, we can make a difference in our world.

In the Year of Our Lord 2022, consider spending some time every day, perhaps at the beginning of each day, reading Sacred Scripture. Allow God’s word to dwell within you, and you will find your life filled with greater grace and true peace. Thank you for everything! Take care, stay safe, and God bless you and your family.

Sincerely in the Holy Family, I am

Fr. Phil Sosa, M.S.F.

Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F.
Provincial Superior



Very Rev. Philip Sosa, M.S.F.

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WHEN HARRY MET JUDY

Remembering Harry



Harry P. Fabick
January 29, 1945 – June 19, 2021

Fortified with the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church, Harry Fabick passed away peacefully on Saturday, June 19, 2021.

He is survived by his wife, Judy Fabick (nee Hampel); their two sons, David (Cristina) and Douglas (Mala) Fabick, and grandchildren: Nicla, Rebecca, John IV, Jack, Ben, Christian, and Hunter. Harry is preceded in death by his parents, John Fabick II and Jane Fabick (nee Folkerth), and granddaughter Helen.

Harry, a pillar of the Fabick CAT Family, played a vital role at the John Fabick Tractor Company. Better known as Fabick CAT, this Midwestern heavy

equipment dealership was founded by his grandfather, John Fabick, in 1917. After a lifetime of involvement in the family business, philanthropy, and local communities, Harry will be missed by his family, friends, and colleagues.

Harry was a man of faith, and he was always thinking about others, having votive candles lit and Masses celebrated for those he knew, right up to the time of his own death. He loved God and neighbor. He loved his wife and family. He loved Saint Wenceslaus Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri, and the Missionaries of the Holy Family, and everyone loved Harry.



Harry, Judy, and Father Phil.

A humble man who treated everyone with kindness, Harry was a true gentleman in a fallen world that desperately needed his example of virtue and character.

“Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever.” **Daniel 12:3**

Thank you, Harry, for everything. We will see you again. **+jMJ+**

Around The Province...



Flashback: Father Simon at Saint Joseph's in Donna, Texas.



JOYS OF FAMILY LIFE

When Silence is Golden

by Brother Knight Baldy Bluett

Family arguments. Perhaps I should use the term disagreements. One of the terms could apply to your family situation with one of the members in your family.

On the surface, it may seem I am picking on one of my kids, but that is not at all the case. My youngest child is a daughter. My IQ is pretty good. Her IQ has to be higher. She will argue with me about anything. Seriously, it does not matter what the subject is, she will argue a different point (even if she agrees with me). I think she just likes to take a different position from her Dad.

None of this is a problem. Neither of us is ever offended by the other. We have a great relationship and get a lot of laughs with

our correspondence. Regarding politics, we are so much different.



She is not bald, and she eats stuff her Dad wouldn't eat.

I have a few sayings: *"When it comes to kids, feed 'em, love 'em, and leave 'em alone."* It works. Another is, *"Buy 'em books and buy 'em books, and all they do is eat the covers."*

One thing I have learned is, with six kids, their spouses, and my beautiful wife -- figure out when to keep your mouth closed. I am not perfect at that talent, but I keep learning as I get older. Yes, I have 15 grandkids, and there are times to keep my mouth closed. You can have any and many thoughts, but there are times to keep silent. Keeping your mouth closed, by the way, does not hurt you.

I have one niece who is a very talented lawyer and a great kid. Her views and my views are so far apart. I pretty much keep my mouth shut when I am around her.

Think about Saint Joseph. How many times did he think, “*You want me to do WHAT?*” Yet, he remained silent and fulfilled God’s will.

Think about Jesus at the marriage feast in Cana. Jesus is God and human. When His Mother made a request, He had to be thinking, “*You want me to do WHAT?*”



Let's argue about which one to drink first.

but that is acceptable. God bless your family.

“Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble.”

Proverbs 21:23 +jMj+

Yet, He obeyed His Mom.

My Mom had a saying that I am pretty sure came from her Mom: *It is better to be thought of as an idiot than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.*

Be kind to your family members. They might not share your views,

Around The Province...



Marian Consecration: Saint Wenceslaus Parish, Saint Louis.



CHURCH DOCTRINE

Boys and Girls: What does the Catholic Church teach us?

by © J. P. Richardson, 2022

Do you know the proverb, *“Appearances can be deceiving?”* And the saying, *“You can’t judge a book by its cover?”* How about, *“What you see is not always what you get?”*



Gender theory and gender ideology are in the media, schools, and other places. What are they? Am I a boy or a girl? Or, am I both a boy and a girl, maybe at different times? If I’m a girl, but would rather be a boy, can I change myself into a boy? If I’m a boy, but feel more like a girl, can I become a girl?

What about grown-ups? Am I a woman or a man? If I’m a man, but don’t feel like a man, can I become a woman instead? If I’m a woman, but don’t like being a woman, can I turn myself into a man instead? What does the Catholic Church teach about gender theory and gender ideology?

One of the greatest teachers in

the history of the Church is Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor. The word "doctor" today comes from earlier words meaning teacher. Saint Thomas taught us to see in a Christian light the

difference between substance (essence) and accident – the difference between what is real and what only appears to be real.

Saint Thomas was not the first person to recognize the difference. About 16 centuries before Saint Thomas, the great Greek thinker Aristotle was thinking similar thoughts. Most of the human race has thought similar thoughts for thousands of years. But, Aristotle lived before God came into our midst in the person of Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Aristotle could not see things, as Saint Thomas 1,600 years later could see things, in the light of Christ, the Light of the World.

“Things are not always what they appear to be.”

Perhaps the most important lesson that Saint Thomas taught us about reality and appearances is the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Holy Communion). The

priest at Mass, acting with the sacramental grace and authority given to him by God, changes the substance or essence of bread into the Body of Christ. The priest – through God’s grace and authority – changes the substance or essence of wine into the Blood of Christ. The priest transubstantiates bread into the Body of Christ and wine into the Blood of Christ. He changes what is real bread and real wine into the real Body and the real Blood of Christ.

The Body of Christ still appears to be bread; the Blood of Christ still appears to be wine. This is a Mystery of Faith, but because we understand the difference between reality and appearances, it makes sense to our God-given reason. God can appear as bread and wine, but He is not bread and wine; He is God, whether or

not we recognize and acknowledge His Real Presence.

What do you think Saint Thomas



Aquinas would teach us about gender? What does Pope Francis say? The Pope has spoken often about God’s creation. Our Holy Father teaches us

that we must know, respect, and care for what God has created, including ourselves.

A few years ago, Pope Francis was quoted as saying, *“Let’s think of the nuclear arms, of the possibility to annihilate in a few instants a very high number of human beings. Let’s think also of genetic manipulation, of the manipulation of life, or of the gender theory, that does not recognize the order of creation...with this attitude, man commits a new sin, that against God the Creator.”*



Pope Francis told the bishops of Poland: *“Today, in schools they are teaching this to children – to children! – that everyone can choose [his or her] gender. This is terrible.”* There’s more here than meets the eye.

Biologists teach us that females have XX chromosomes and males have XY chromosomes. We cannot choose our

chromosomes; we get them from our biological father and biological mother. The Catholic Church teaches us that everyone, as a creature of God, has a fundamental dignity that cannot be denied (cancelled). We are more than the sum of our body parts.

To be a man, especially a gentleman, it's not enough to be conceived with XY chromosomes. To be a woman, especially a lady, it's not enough to be conceived with XX chromosomes. A boy must learn to be a man and a gentleman; a girl must learn to be a woman and a lady. Parents have the duty to teach their children to be what God created them to be – and intends them to become.

“Wishing doesn't make it so.”

We often proudly insist that freedom means being free to choose what we please. But can freedom of choice sometimes be a false

In Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love), Pope Francis wrote: “The young need to be helped to accept their own body as it was created... sex education should help young people to accept their own bodies.”

for our good and the good of other people – if we choose to love God and our neighbor.

Did we create ourselves or did God create us? Are we smarter and wiser than God, smarter and wiser enough to re-create ourselves as we choose? Or, would we be wise to accept reality – including people, including ourselves – as God wills reality? As Pope Francis teaches us, we ought to help each other to understand, to accept, and to love God's creation.

How do we know what a male is and what a female is? God tells us, in words that He Himself inspired, in the first book of His Bible (**Genesis 1**): *“God created mankind in His image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them... God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good.”* Thank God.



+jMj+



MAN FROM MADAGASCAR

“I am at home wherever I go.”

by **Father Ben, M.S.F.**

Editor’s Note: *Father Ben, who is from our Madagascar Province, arrived in the United States in March 2021. He is currently assisting the provincial superior, Very Reverend Philip Sosa, M.S.F., at Saint Wenceslaus Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri. Following are his answers to some questions about his fascinating life.*

Where were you born?

First of all, my full name is Reverend Benoit Fidele Ramanandraibe, M.S.F., and I go by Father Ben. I was born in a small village called Fandrandava, in the city district of Fianarantsoa II in Madagascar.

My Dad is Benoit Rabia. He was a teacher at a Catholic grade school, and he was a catechist as well. My Mom is Elisabeth Rasabotsy. She was a housewife and weaver. I have five brothers and six sisters, and I am the fourth child. My Dad passed away just a couple of weeks before my perpetual vows in 2002. My Mom passed away on February 1, 2013.

What I miss the most about my homeland are my family and friends. But as a priest, especially a missionary priest, I had to be ready to leave them. The people wherever I work become my new family and friends, especially



the members of the Missionaries of the Holy Family.

Why did you become a missionary priest?

There are many reasons. I grew up within a Christian family, and my parents were devout people. I really admired their piety, and I experienced since my childhood

how wonderful prayer is. I also was very impressed by the Bible stories my parents read to us almost every evening.

I was fascinated by the story of Job in the Old Testament, a man who was faithful in the midst of suffering and trials, but he never cursed God (See the *Book of Job*)! It was an amazing example of loyalty to me, and I often wondered how it could be.



Father Ben celebrating Mass.

My parents also liked to pray the Rosary, and this showed us how Blessed Mary is very important in our life and in our faith.

Another story impressed me and influenced my spiritual life. My parents often told us that they had to walk to attend Mass every First Friday of the month, and the church was four hours by foot from their house. Yet, they did not eat nor drink anything after midnight as a fast before receiving Holy Communion. Churches were far away because we had a lack of priests.

Being an altar server was important to me. On one occasion, the pastor had a meal in our family's house after Mass. But before having lunch, my Mom asked me to bring a jar of water and some soap to the pastor so he could

wash his hands. There are no clean water wells in and around the small country villages.

When I was in Catholic middle school, I met a religious priest teaching there. I was attracted by his lifestyle and witness. Then, from that very moment, I wanted to be a religious priest. I started to read books and, one day, I found a summary of the

history of each religious congregation working in Madagascar. I read about the Missionaries of the Holy Family, and I loved it!

Why did you choose to come to the United States?

Actually, I did not choose to come to the United States! The fact is that, after 16 years of priesthood with different responsibilities -- assistant pastor, pastor, formator (preparing seminarians for the priesthood), provincial assistant, provincial counsel, etc. -- I thought of making a fresh, new start.

My provincial superior asked me to be a missionary in the United States, and I did not deny his request. I recalled in my mind what the General Directory of the

Missionaries of the Holy Family states: *“As missionaries, we do not seek prominent places. We prefer those places where the need is the greatest, be that in our country or in foreign lands.”* (See GD. 02) This is the reason why I am in the United States now, even though it can be cold in Saint Louis in the winter!



Feeling cold in America.

What is your favorite memory as a priest?

My favorite memory as a priest is the day of my ordination, August 22, 2004. Despite the many problems and trials I experienced, my wish was ultimately fulfilled. Becoming a priest was not an easy road for me.

I have many other fond memories as a priest. I served 22 churches (chapels) as a pastor all by myself, driving on very bad roads and damaged bridges. You may find it hard to believe, but one 22-mile stretch of road on my route had 17 bridges, and most of them were damaged. My car often skidded, even on the bridges.



Rough roads and bridges in Madagascar.

Sometimes I had to drive at night to take sick people to the hospital. People rely on the priest’s car, especially poor families. Walking seven hours in the heat and rain to reach some churches was a habit for me. True, it was a hard task, but it was fun as well! Upon arriving at a village, I would see many people waiting impatiently for me, but I was given a warm welcome.

I led retreats at least twice a



Children sing and dance when a priest comes to their village.

year from 2010 to 2020, helping many different kinds of people, including priests, religious, and laypeople, young and old. This deepened my spiritual life, and it was filled with learning experiences.

Last but not least, my Mom's Funeral Mass was a precious




Father Ben's Beloved Mom,
Elisabeth Rasabotsy.

memory for me, even though it was a sad occasion. She asked me for two things before she died: (1) preside over her Funeral Mass, and (2) remember her at the Altar of the Lord wherever I am as a missionary priest. I was able to fulfill both of her requests, and I continue to do so at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen!

If God said that He would grant you one wish, what would it be?

I want to be a priest who can meet the needs of the poor. Those who hunger for food and those who have a spiritual hunger, to nourish the whole person by my pastoral care and social work. Please pray for me, and I will pray for you. 

Pieta Votive Candles



This beautiful Pieta statue is in Saint Wenceslaus Church in Saint Louis, Missouri, and in the rectory are the offices of the North American Province of the Missionaries of the Holy Family. If you would like a 6-day votive candle lit for your family and your intentions, contact us at 1-888-484-9945 or mprater@msf-america.org. Candles burn in a rack to the right of the statue. (The suggested donation is \$7.00.) Thank you and may God bless you.



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God bless your family! +JMJ+

Celebrating 125 Years

*Celebrating two
125th anniversaries: The
founding of the Missionaries
of the Holy Family AND
Saint Wenceslaus Parish in
Saint Louis, Missouri, with
Bishop Mark Rivituso, a
“Son of Saint Wenceslaus.”*



Celebrating 125 Years





HISTORY SERIES, PART 2

Holy Family Mission House & Holy Family Parish

Hillman, Minnesota: by Weldon Tieken

Looking for Land

The history of Holy Family Mission House and Holy Family Parish go hand in hand. The Missionaries of the Holy Family (MSF) in Grave, Holland, sent Father James Bongarts in 1918 to the United States to find a site to establish a mission, but found none. He then went back to Holland.

On August 22, 1921, Father Francis Schaefers, who had at one time studied with MSF in Holland, became a diocesan priest in the United States. He traveled to Crow Wing County, Minnesota, to look at some land advertised in the newspaper *Der Wanderer*. He purchased 84 acres. He sent for his brother, Bernard Schaefers, who was

in Germany, to establish a home here. Bernard's first house was a cottage near Platte Lake in the Platte Lake Township of Crow Wing County.



Holy Family Mission House,
Hillman, Minnesota, 1925.

In 1923, Father Bongarts returned to America and stayed at Father Schaefers' parish in Richmond, Iowa. He tried to find a place

for a mission house in the bigger cities, but to no avail, so he returned to Holland again.

In June 1924, Father Schaefers invited Father Anthony Trampe, the MSF Superior General, to see some land that he had purchased in Crow Wing County. The land was near Bulldog Lake, and it was 80 acres. When Father Trampe came to see it, he purchased the land along with another 100 acres.

Father Trampe then went to Duluth, Minnesota, to see Bishop John T. McNicholas. Permission was given to build a mission house with the condition to eventually establish a parish church. He promised the bishop to send a priest as soon as possible.

Father Joseph Grundhoff arrived in Roosevelt Township in Crow Wing County on October 23, 1924.

He was appointed administrator of the territory by Bishop McNicholas on October 28, 1924. Father Joseph Buechelmeir arrived in June 1925 as an assistant.

Celebration of Masses

Mass was first celebrated for five families in a log cabin near Platte Lake until December 1924. After this, a cabin was used near another lake, Long Lake (also in Crow Wing County), which accommodated 18 people until October 1925. During the winter months, Father Grundhoff stayed with the Bernard Schaefers Family. On April 26, 1925, four area children made their First Holy Communion.

On April 27, 1925, work began

on the construction of the mission house in the area of Hillman, Minnesota. Father Grundhoff and



Father Grundhoff with four First Communion children on Long Lake, Minnesota, April 26, 1925.

Bernard Schaefers began cutting lumber from the trees on the property. People from the area came to help with the construction and others donated money. The cost was approximately \$5,000 to build the mission house.

The mission house was a two-story

building with a basement. It was 40 feet by 80 feet, and the chapel itself was 16 feet by 40 feet. The new chapel could hold up to 30 people. Mass was celebrated in the chapel for first time on October 11, 1925, and the house was blessed on November 11, 1925, by Monsignor Michael Boland of the Diocese of Duluth. Mass was celebrated for the parishioners in the chapel on Sundays and feast days.

The first brother to arrive to help was Brother Coelestinus Averbeck on December 30, 1925. In May 1926, Father James Wichterich arrived at the mission house, also as an assistant.

As time passed, the chapel could

not hold all the faithful. The mission treasury was low in funds, and the parishioners were barely able to make it themselves. So Father Wichterich said he would place his confidence entirely on the providence of God. The priest proceeded to draw up plans for a church since an architect was not in the budget.

On May 12, 1932, Bishop Welch, now the bishop of the Diocese of Duluth, approved the construction of the church. Parishioners and other farmers came to help. A hill was picked out, leveled, and graded. A basement was dug out to allow for some rooms. The basement walls were erected, and construction of the church progressed very quickly. On December 8, 1932, the first Mass was celebrated in the church. It was dedicated on July 25, 1933, by Bishop Welch.

This church in Hillman near Bulldog Lake in Crow Wing County was

named Holy Family Church. It was a 40 foot by 100 foot framed building with stucco and brick. The altar and Communion rail were made to have a marble-like feel. The church was in close proximity to the mission house.

Teaching Faculty

In 1934, Father Wichterich went to Saint Paul, Minnesota, to help at the Church of the Assumption. In 1935, he was sent to Seguin, Texas. In 1936, two students, Fraters Joseph Mathey and Ernest Braun, came to the mission house. However, because teaching faculty were not available, they returned to Saint Louis, Missouri. Father Joseph Grundhoff was pastor from 1924 until March 1, 1935. He was succeeded by Father Peter Berger who was pastor until November 9, 1939, and then Father Clement Grzenia became pastor.

The first class of instruction was opened in Hillman in 1939. Father



Holy Family Church (from the back), Hillman, Minnesota, 1932.



Holy Family Church and Holy Family Mission House, Hillman, Minnesota, 1932.

Peter Roebrocks was principal and teacher with the assistance of Father Cyril Peterson. It was to serve as a preparatory seminary. The first students were Eugene Clark from Minneapolis, Arthur Renk from Chicago, John Stepan from Saint Paul, Lawrence Martin of Connecticut, Herbert Ruff of Saint Louis, Herman Defler of LaPorte, Colorado, and William Rochford of Saint Louis. At this time, Brother Giles came to help with the farming chores on the MSF property.

On September 3, 1940, Father William Hoffman replaced Father Grzenia as pastor. During his time, an annex was added to the mission house. On January 28, 1942, Father Hoffman passed away. His funeral was on February 2, 1942, and he was buried in Holy Family Cemetery next to the church. Father George Bolte served as pastor for a short time until August 1942.

During the summer of 1942, it was decided by the provincial government to establish the novitiate (housing for the novices; those yet to make vows) in the mission house. The first novitiate opened on August 14, 1942. Father George Schroer was appointed novice master. Father Roebrocks gave a retreat to the novices and new students. The first novices were Fraters Renk, Defler, Clark, and Engelhaupt.

Father August Otto was named the new pastor on September 19, 1942. Fraters Renk, Defler, and Clark took first vows for one year on August 15, 1943. On August 16, they left for Saint Louis to continue their studies. After this, the school was closed and the novitiate was moved to Saint Louis.

In November 1946, it was decided that the MSF farm should close. All the stock and machinery was sold. Father Roebrocks and Brother Giles returned to Saint Louis on January 24, 1947.

Youth Center

On July 5, 1949, Father Otto drew up some plans to construct a youth center on the property south of Holy Family Church in Hillman. Two carpenters were hired and parishioners and other people of the area showed up to help. The grand opening was held on November 30, 1949. Roller skating and basketball games were held in the center!

On May 22, 1950, Father Otto was transferred to Lamar, Texas. In his place, Father John Verhoeven was named pastor, and Brother Giles came back from Saint Louis to help with the youth center and the care of the grounds.

On June 18, 1951, Brother Berthold was assigned to Hillman, and Brother Giles left on vacation in October to visit his family in Europe. In January

1952, farming was started up again. Sheep were the first animals, but later, cattle were bought. Sheep were eventually sold and then pigs were purchased.

Brother Giles handled the farm and Brother Berthold was in charge of the house and garden duties.

On March 27, 1957, the provincial council in Saint Louis decided to move the novitiate back to Hillman. Father Joseph Groben was named novice master. Eight men entered the novitiate that year. The novitiate remained in Hillman until January 18, 1967, when it was moved to Farmington, Missouri.

Between 1967 and 1968, Father Verhoeven went to Emily, Minnesota to be pastor. Father Groben took his place at Holy Family Church. Father Verhoeven returned and remained pastor until 1977 when he retired. He passed away March 24, 1987, and he was buried in Holy Family Cemetery next to the church.

Because of a lack of priestly vocations, the Missionaries of the Holy Family turned the parish over to the Diocese of Duluth in 1993. For 69 years, Holy Family Church in Hillman, Minnesota, was staffed by the Holy Family Fathers. **+jMj+**

Men of God: Priests Forever



Fr. Dan Hawkins, M.S.F.
45 years



Fr. Eka Yuantoro, M.S.F.
20 years

In this Year of Our Lord 2022, two priests of the Missionaries of the Holy Family are celebrating anniversaries of their ordination.

We thank God for our priests and brothers, and we beseech Him to send us many more.

If you would like to send a Tribute Gift in honor of one or more of these Men of God, please send it to 3014 Oregon Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63118.

Thank you and God bless your family!



BELOVED BERTHA

“Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant!”

- Matthew 25:20-23

Eulogy by Father Francois Rakotovoavy, M.S.F.



Bertha G. Renteria
April 8, 1935 – June 11, 2021

First, a word of sympathy and love on behalf of myself, Father Sosa, Father Feddy, Father Peter, Father Benoit, and the parish family to you Tony, daughters Melissa and Rose, Bertha’s sister Juanita, and all of Bertha’s Family, we offer our sympathy, love, and prayers.

Bertha was a longstanding member of our Holy Family Parish in New Braunfels, Texas. It was here that she and her husband

Tony nurtured their faith, the faith in which they formed their family. I think of the many close friendships Tony and Bertha had, friendships for 30 years or more. True friends. The kind of friends that you could just speak their last names and everyone knew who they were.

Also the special friendships they developed with all the parish priests who have been here. She is now united with them in God’s

eternity. I'm sure she was greeted by Father Wasser, Father O'Hara, Father Murray, and other priests who have gone to their eternal rest.

I remember all the many times we went out and shared breakfast and good conversations together after the Morning Mass, and all the migas she ordered. She loved migas. Everywhere she went, she ordered migas. Ask the Holy Family breakfast crew. They know what I am talking about!

How many of you know she was a big fan of the San Antonio Spurs? A season ticket holder. Wow! She also enjoyed going to the casinos to play the slots. Yes, she even took my Mom when she was here visiting from Saint Louis. But, Bertha would say to me, *"Never during Lent, Father."* She and Tony would tell me before they would go, *"Father, say a prayer for us because we*

are going to the casinos." And when they would return, I would say, *"How did it go? Did you win? Bertha, let me carry your purse. I need to check if it is heavy."*



Bertha and Tony.

Bertha would joke a lot. She would say a lot of funny things. She had a good sense of humor.

Bertha also lived a life of service for many, many years. She was a catechist

when the church was located on the corner of Live Oak and Mill. She helped sew several things I needed for the altar and banners we have here at the church.

During her lifetime of service, she has been a lector, a Eucharistic minister, served in the bereavement ministry, volunteered for the church festivals, and she was also a money counter for the Mass collections. She and Tony have been lifetime friends of the Missionaries of Holy Family.

Bertha's life was built around faith and family. Bertha taught her family and all of us to take care of ourselves and to make good decisions, and to have a solid foundation of faith so that we could face life courageously by seeing with the eyes of faith. In her love for her family and for all of us, she was not afraid to speak her mind and to tell the truth. Just as Bertha would be at her home to welcome you with a smile, I know she will do the same at her eternal home. She will one day with her friendly face greet us when we too enter the doorway of eternity.

For now, she is praying for us and for our own safe passage as we journey toward our heavenly home.

Today's Gospel tells us first that peace is promised. Second, it tells us that God has prepared a place for us. And third, it tells us God has prepared a way for us. Jesus tells us, "*I am the way, I am*

the truth, and I am the life; no one comes to the Father except by me."

All we need to do is follow Jesus. He will show us the way. He is the way, and we all know Bertha knew the way. **John 12:26 reads:** "*Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, here also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.*"

Bertha, well done good and faithful servant! Let us pray to the Father of Mercies, who welcomes Bertha into the everlasting life of Heaven:

Merciful Lord, you heal the broken hearts, and bind up the wounds of the afflicted. Strengthen us in our weakness. Calm our troubled spirits. In Christ's rising from the dead, you renew our trust in you that by the power of your love, we shall one day be brought together again with our beloved Bertha. Grant this we pray through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen. [+JM+](#)

Thank You & God Bless You to everyone who made a financial gift in the Year of Our Lord 2021. We, the priests and brothers of the Missionaries of the Holy Family, extend our deep gratitude to all our benefactors. You are remembered in our prayers.



EUTHANASIA: FALSE THEOLOGY

Euthanasia

Theology of the Body Perspective

by Father F.A. Eka Yuantoro, M.S.F.

When Pope Saint John Paul II talked about the Culture of Death, this included euthanasia. Euthanasia has become a big problem during the Covid-19 pandemic, because some people do not have health insurance, and they think euthanasia is an option. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the approval of Pope Francis, wrote a letter, *Samaritanus Bonus* (Good Samaritan), on the care of persons in critical and terminal phases of life.

We are Children of God who believe that Jesus Our Savior will save us and bring us to eternal life. We should not give up on life because pain and death are

not the end, but the way to be redeemed to new life. John Paul II taught us that by pain and suffering we participate in the suffering and cross of Jesus Christ who told us that we must carry our cross and follow Him if we want to be His disciples. Jesus gave us an example of how to suffer that leads to resurrection and glory of the Father. In his

document *Salvifici Doloris*, John Paul II explained how we can receive the reward of salvation through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Euthanasia is a problem of the Digital Generation.

Michael Coren wrote the book *The Future of Catholicism*. He explained that euthanasia is an



easy death without suffering. The Digital Generation tries to avoid suffering and pain and weakness, but reality tells us a different story. We have to face pain and suffering. We have to suffer and carry the cross. Euthanasia is more than just a moral problem.

Some see euthanasia as a more humane way to die. The question is what is humane in the complexity of pain and suffering? Life should be happy and fun, right? Another idea centers on being productive or unproductive. People who are sick or disabled are unproductive, and they become a burden for those who are productive.

Would you be happier if you were richer? Many people believe they would be. In reality, industrialized countries have more wealth than poor countries, but they are not happier. Michael Coren notes quality of life and happiness are not dependent on wealth and money. Surveys have found that people liv-

ing with disabilities show a level of satisfaction with their lives that is not very different from that of people who are healthy.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, MD wrote a book *On Death and Dying*. The five stages of death according to Kubler-Ross are: Denial (shock), Anger (emotional), Bargaining (negotiation), Depression (loss of dignity, health, etc.), and Acceptance (awareness of impending death). We

can help people reach the final stage and accept it with love. Jesus gave us the example: *“Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)*



Theology of the Body

John Paul II gave the world the concept of Theology of the Body through 129 general audiences delivered during the first five years of his pontificate. He taught about the creation and redemption of God who loves us so much that He sent His only Son to redeem the world.

Before he was elected Pope, he wrote a reflection based on **Genesis 1:27**, *Male or Female, He Created Them*. After that came the book, *Man and Woman, He Created Them*. He digs deeper into the meaning of being a human person based on Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. God created us in His own image and likeness, so we are the splendor of God's love. We have to love one another as He has commanded us.

He redeemed us by the blood of Jesus Christ. Even though we are sinners and far from His love, He reconciled us by the mystery of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He gives us the gift of redemption. This is our hope that when we suffer with the Redeemer, God will redeem us and give us a new life as Children of God.

In his apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris*, he explained that if we want to be redeemed by Jesus Christ, we have to realize that our pain and suffering must bear witness to the truth that we are united with His pain and suffer-

ing. As Zachary Swantek underlined in his book abstract on this subject, through participation in Christ's suffering, not only is man able to experience his own redemption, but he can also offer his body with Christ for the redemption of the world.



John Paul II reflected on struggles of Job (*Book of Job*). An extremely important aspect of suffering and its purpose is to strengthen goodness both in man himself and in his relationships with others, and especially with God.

Our body is holy because God created us in His own image. We have a new hope of salvation, although we are sinners and weak, and Jesus gives us the power to walk together and carry the cross to the altar of sacrifice. The resurrection of the body is a reality of the future world, a hope that we can live in the world to come with all the angels and saints of God. As mysterious as it is, suffering is particularly essential to the nature of man.

The Good Samaritan

John Paul II taught us that suffering is a source of joy because with its salvific meaning uncovered, it is no longer an experience of uselessness and burden to others. It is a grace that God gives to people to be redeemed by His love.

The biblical story of the Good Samaritan gives us an inspiration to help people who suffer. The human desire to love one another can help people to heal and experience the love of God. John Paul II tells us that suffering creates an opportunity for others to show love. The *Gospel of Matthew* (25:31-46), according to John Paul II and Pope Francis, helps us to be a model of holiness by performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our daily lives.

We must take care of those who are in critical condition or at the point on dying. The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith condemns euthanasia and assisted suicide because they are evils against the love of God. A dying

person needs prayer and guidance to find peace and comfort.

In the *Gospel of John*, the mother of Jesus was standing there with other women and John the beloved disciple. In the same way, we should be near those

struggling with pain and suffering. If we do this, we become a Good Samaritan in the battlefield of life, help-

ing those to realize the way to redemption.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a gift and rich symbol of salvation. In this sacrament, people receive an anointing along with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This can heal the soul and the body, so that the person can be with Jesus Christ always, especially in times of trial. The priest helps the dying to reach stage five (Acceptance). Suffering is the process of redemption through Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead for the glory of God and our salvation.

"Rejoice and be glad that your reward is great in heaven."

Matthew 5:12. +jMj+



*Blessing of the animals at Holy Family Parish
in New Braunfels, Texas.*





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*Who is this guy?
See page 9.*



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