



What I have Learned From A Very Special Mass

By Steven Citarella

There is a special Mass held at St. Peter's each year where people openly let those around them know that they are seeking God's help and love because they are in need. It is not easy letting others know you are hurting. At the Mass of the Anointing of the Sick, Christ's presence in the caring and protective environment that is St. Peter's allows people to let down their guard, openly look for help, be open to Christ's healing and experience joy.

The Mass of the Anointing of the Sick is held each year in October. I attend because I have had a chronic neuromuscular illness called Fibromyalgia for over 20 years. The thing that surprises me most about the Mass is that many of the people I see in the pews around me are people who I would never have thought were in physical and or emotional need. These are people to whom I say hello after Mass or see at parish meetings and they don't look like they are hurting. Yet at this Mass they let everyone see that they have some sort of illness and are in need of God's help.

I also see faces that I have not seen in a while. There are some people who come to the Anointing Mass who rarely come to regular Mass at St Peter's because of their illnesses. These are people who are visited by Eucharistic Ministers after Mass, read the bulletin each week and are present in spirit at each Mass. They are an important part of our community and their presence at the Mass, in spite of the limitations imposed by their health problems, is an inspiration.

After the Mass people are treated to lunch in the Parish Center. I have been to a lot of events at St. Peter's and a lot of lunches and I can honestly say that the joy and laughter present in those at the lunch tops anything I have experienced here or anywhere else.

One reason is that the people have experienced a very special Mass. During the Anointing Mass people stay in their pews while they are prayed over, blessed with holy oil and receive Eucharist. Through these sacraments people receive Jesus in a sensory way; through the sounds of a priest praying over and gently laying his hands on them, through the touch of the holy oil as it is placed on their foreheads and hands and by consuming Eucharist in the form of the Bread and Wine. The Mass is really not about the hurt the people are experiencing but the hope, help and joy that Jesus brings. The lunch is a way to share that hope and joy.

Another reason for the joy, for me at least, is that it feels good to share a meal with others who have the courage to admit they are hurting and join me in coming to Christ and asking for help. I feel connected to those in the room in a special way. I feel better and stronger by being with them. In that moment we are a special Christian community.

Finally, I see in those present a resiliency. Despite whatever health issues they are facing they are not being stopped from enjoying the people they are with and the food being offered them. They find joy in the moment despite the fact that their problems still exist. The whole experience is about that joy.

As a result of the courage of those who are not afraid to admit they are in need and seeking Christ's help, I am reminded on days when I am hurting that I am not alone and that everyone has problems of some sort or another even if they don't show it. I am also reminded on those bad days that, thanks to God's love, and the caring nature of the people at St. Peter's, there is always much for which to be thankful.

Christmas is a time where people share the joy of Christ's birth with family and friends. It can also be a struggle for those alone or facing hard times. No one should feel alone, especially at Christmas.

If you are hurting it is okay to let others know. There is a ministry to the sick and homebound as well as a parish food pantry. Both exist year round including the Christmas season. Each year carolers from the parish visit people who are home bound and share the joy of Christmas with them and have a great time doing so. There are countless other acts of kindness that occur as well where people in need are helped.

Thanks to the Mass of the Anointing of the Sick and the luncheon that follows I have learned that it is okay to admit I am hurting at times and need God's help. I have learned that people who don't even look like they are troubled may actually be facing difficult times. I have learned that St. Peter's is a safe place where I can let others know I am hurting as well as a place where I can share my joy with others. Most importantly, I have learned that people are resilient and can find hope and joy despite their troubles especially when they are willing to share them with God and others.





MESSAGES FROM THE MIRACLE AT FATIMA

*(continued from the last Net Worker issue...
in 1917, the Blessed Mother appeared to three
shepherd children in Portugal...)*

Lucia spoke and told of what happened:

There was a flash of brilliant light which we called lightning, which came near to us as it had previously done. The beautiful lady dressed in a white gown that was trimmed in gold suddenly appeared in the light. She was glowing with a radiance of light that was more brilliant than the sun. She was magnificently shining!

Jacinta, Francisco and I had just finished praying the Rosary when she came. A few people had also showed up to pray with us.

The lady was on the Holm Oak tree as before, so we looked up to see her. I asked her,
"Please, madam, tell me what you want of me."

"Come here again on the 13th of the next month. Continue to pray the Rosary and after each of the Mysteries, my children, I want you to pray this way:

○ my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven especially those most in need of Thy mercy.

I want you to learn to read and write and later I will tell you what else I want from you."

I asked, "Will you take us to heaven?"

"Yes, Francisco and Jacinta soon, but you will remain for a while longer since Jesus wants you to make me known and loved on earth. He wishes for you to establish devotion in the world to my Immaculate Heart."

When I asked her if I would be lonely, she replied, "I will be with you always and my Immaculate Heart will be your comfort and it will be the way which will lead you to God."

The moment she said the last word, she opened her hands and transmitted to us, for the second time, that intense light. In it we felt we were absolutely submerged in God. No words can describe the wonder of it.

In front of Our Lady's right hand was a heart encircled with thorns which appeared to pierce it. We understood that it was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, offended by the sins of mankind, craving reparation. (Jesus and Mary's hearts are inseparable.)

Then she left us, the light slightly preceding her while she remained in it, going towards the east into the immensity of heaven.

Thank you, Lucia.

That concluded the second Apparition of Our Lady at the Cova da Iria. There were a total of 6 during that year of 1917 and one more in 1920.

The essence of the coming of Our Lady was to request PRAYER AND SACRIFICES. She repeatedly told the children, "Pray, pray very much. Make sacrifices for sinners. Many souls go to hell because no one is willing to help them with sacrifices."

What does that mean?

God gives all human beings the grace to be saved, but when we don't live by what he requires of us, (obedience to the Ten Commandments) we lose His special Presence in our souls and so, are vulnerable to falling into even more vices and sinful acts. And the scriptures tell us that no sinful soul can see God.

When someone turns away from God for so long, what is to turn them back if not the prayers and sacrifices of someone like you? It is someone who realizes that it is incumbent upon each one of us who are trying to love God, to care about ALL of His creation. Our Blessed Mother has told us that these souls will be lost unless someone prays and makes sacrifices for them beseeching the Lord to offer them the Grace of conversion.

And what is the best, surest way to help them?

After the Holy Mass, what is the greatest prayer? The Holy Rosary! Think about making a promise to pray the Rosary daily and offer it for the conversion of sinners. Remember, Our Blessed Mother said at Fatima that the Rosary can also stop or prevent wars! It is a powerful prayer and many miracles have occurred because people have prayed it. Try Googling "Miracles of the Rosary" and see how many you can read about.

Of lesser importance but of more sensational value is the so-called 3rd secret of Fatima.

We will tell about that in an upcoming issue of Net Worker. We will also tell you how you can become more devoted to Mary's Immaculate Heart as Jesus has requested.

If you want to know more details of the Fatima Apparitions, go on the Web to www.EWTN.com/Fatima/apparitions. A detailed month-by-month telling of them and an explanation of what they mean are nicely presented there.

Using Discernment in Daily Life

By Pam Lobley

I told my husband I was going to write an article about discernment and he said "Shouldn't it just come to you?"

Discernment is a word we've heard in the parish with regard to the Pastoral Council. You may remember that every year there is an invitation in the bulletin to those involved in ministry here at St. Peter's to come to a meeting at the Parish Center. During the meeting they enter into prayer to discern whether they are being called to put their names up for membership on the Council.

Discernment is a way of allowing God to be involved in the decision making process. This year there is an exciting change in the way St. Peter's discernment process will be done. A service will be held in church and parishioners will be given much more time to discern if they want to put their names up for the Council. Those that put their names forward will be prayed for during Mass for several weeks. Then the names will be drawn at a Sunday Mass. This is similar to the way the first Apostles drew lots naming Matthias as the 12th Apostle, allowing God's guidance to be felt in a special way.

Allowing God to be present in all of our decisions would be ideal. Our lives present endless choices, and many of them loom large. Even the smaller choices, of what to volunteer for perhaps, or where to spend the holidays, involve your precious resources of time and energy. How should we best be spending these resources and how can we know our choices will lead us to lives of deeper meaning?

Just how do we exercise discernment in our daily lives?

Webster's dictionary says that discernment is the quality of being able to comprehend what is obscure, or it is the act of perceiving something. In other words, you don't think up something new – you recognize what is already there. In terms of biblical discernment, it is a matter of seeing God's presence and plan in your life.

No one said it was easy. If I could perceive God's plan for my life, it would make all the ups and downs a lot easier to take.

When making decisions and praying about it, it is sometimes hard to know if the answer we are leaning toward is truly of

God, or just the thing we really want. Furthermore, discernment demands patience, thought, and quietude. I'm more of a "well, I thought about it and it sounds good" kind of gal.

After reading "Living Well Small Group Guide" (a download from LifeLong Faith Associates 2009), I can offer a few suggestions. First, reflect on two decisions you have made in the past, one that was a good decision, and one that didn't turn out so well. Where was God in those decisions?

Then, approach the decision in mind. Name the issue, and pray for understanding. Turn to resources such as: trusted advisors, Christian writing, or Scripture. Sort your thoughts in relation to yourself, to God, and to evil. When a choice emerges, try to live that decision in your imagination. Live in this way for a few weeks, if possible. Does a confirming sign come forward? Do you feel peace and joy, or restlessness and anxiety?

Make the decision.

This process requires quiet time and patience – things that are in short supply in most of our lives. But making room for God to guide us will ultimately lead to better decisions, and perhaps peace with even the difficult choices we discern we must make.

I would like to credit www.lifelongfaith.com, with these ideas and suggestions. Discernment can be an immensely helpful tool in all of our lives, and certainly in our parish. In the February issue of the Net Worker we will discuss how discernment will be used for the enrichment of St. Peter's.





Gingerbread House Building Event Helps Those Affected By Hurricane Sandy

By Steven Citarella

The spirit of Christmas came early to Saint Peter's on December 2 as 85 families came together in the Parish Center and Gathering Space both to build gingerbread houses and to support Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County's efforts to build real houses for those in need. There was also plenty of Christmas music, happy families and even a visit for Santa Claus.

The fun family event planned, organized and run by Woman's Cornerstone Team 11 raised over \$1,000 for Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County's Sandy Rehabilitation efforts. After a special blessing by Fr. Mike, a representative of Habitat for Humanity and the Social Concerns Core Committee spoke about the efforts that the parish had made to support Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County's mission of building homes for those in need. Parishioners have been helping Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County for over 10 years and will be helping to construct a home in Oradell on April 27. **For information about this event contact Steve Sahagian of the Social Concerns Core Committee at 201 265 9657.**

The day was also an opportunity for families to spend time together, make gingerbread houses, listen to Christmas music and just have fun. That alone made the event a huge success.



Saying goodbye...

Father Michael German will be retiring this year, and he will be sorely missed at St. Peter's. The Net Worker will be putting out a special issue in his honor. Please send me stories, memories or notes of appreciation that I could include in the issue.

You can email them:
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or mail them to:

112 Adams Avenue, River Edge, NJ 07661.

Please try to get them in by January 6th!

Thank you!

THE NET WORKER

The Newsletter of St. Peter the Apostle Parish,
River Edge, New Jersey

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The Net Worker is always interested in adding staff. If you would like to try it (no experience necessary) or have an idea for an article, please e-mail Pam Lobley: pambill22@verizon.net

Merry Christmas from the staff of The Net Worker!

