

Sentinel

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



LENT IS OVER — HERE'S HOW
TO FOCUS ON EASTER

SAINT OF THE MONTH —
ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST

PARISH
UPDATES

Sentinel

News of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

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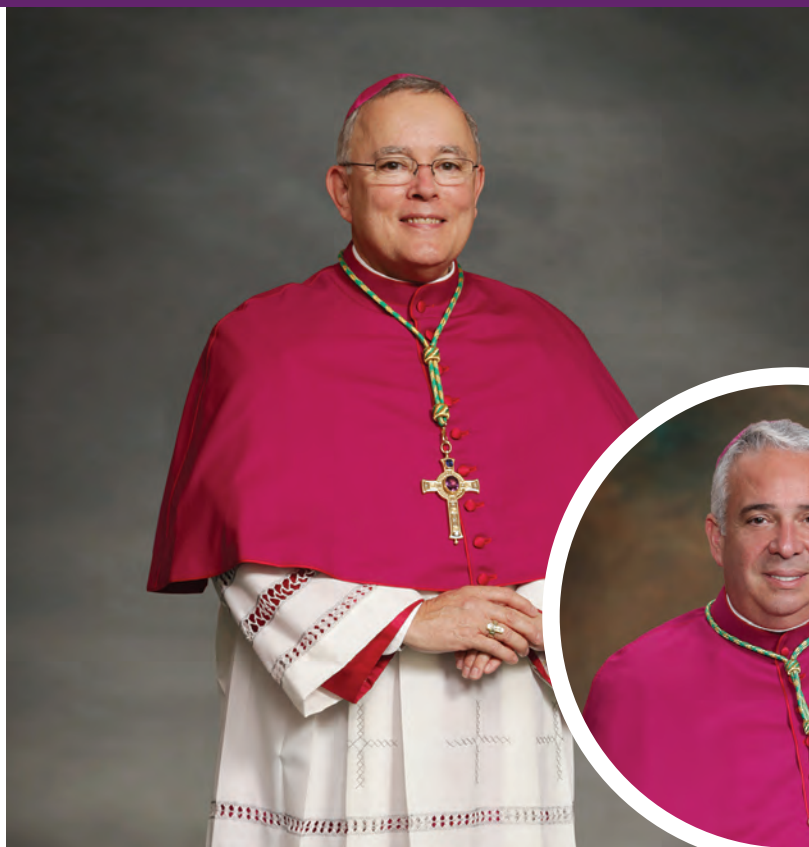
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



the experience of Christian community life in Catholic schools helps the students, teachers and staff to grow in their relationship with God and to learn how to better love their fellow community members.

In addition to celebrating Catholic schools in this issue of the *Sentinel*, we also want to offer our heartfelt thanks to Most Reverend Charles J.

Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop Emeritus of Philadelphia, for the many years of generous leadership and service that

he has offered to us as a member of the Board of Directors of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. His term of service as a member of the Board of Directors concluded with his recent retirement as the Archbishop of Philadelphia. On behalf of all of us, I offer both our thanks and our best wishes for a happy retirement to Archbishop

Chaput, who we know will continue to be a loyal friend and champion of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions.

I am also very pleased to be able to welcome Most Reverend Nelson J. Pérez, the recently installed 10th Archbishop of Philadelphia, as the newest member of the Board of Directors of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. We are grateful that you will be serving us in this important leadership role, and we look forward to the many future opportunities that we will have to be together and to get know one another.

We will soon be celebrating the holy and joyous season of Easter, and my prayer for all of you is that your participation in the liturgical celebrations that commemorate the Passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ will fill your hearts with love and much joy and gratitude. I also pray that your experience of God's grace and presence in your lives will grow through your involvement in the life of your local Christian community. ✚

Yours in Christ our Redeemer,

Father Henry Sands

Greetings in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Once again, in this Spring 2020 issue of the *Sentinel*, we celebrate the many Catholic schools that are dedicated to the education of Native American and Native Alaskan elementary and high school students throughout the United States.



Father Henry Sands
is the executive
director for the
Black and Indian
Missions

A Catholic school education provides many benefits, and I would like to highlight one of them identified by Father Ronald Nuzzi in his 2015 article, "Ten Reasons Why Catholic Education Still Matters," in which he said, "Catholic school students learn to experience God's grace and presence in their lives through their relationships with family, friends and teachers. The loving and supportive relationships they experience are reflections of the love and life-giving dynamic of the Trinity. As a community, we celebrate our successes and achievements. We share grief and downfalls. We unite together in solidarity, and even challenge each other to become better reflections of the divine. We are made for community." As Father Nuzzi points out,

COVER
STORY

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States that begins on the last Sunday of January. The theme of the week is **Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.**

Schools typically observe the week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. This annual event enables the schools to showcase how they serve the nation by providing a diverse student population from all regions of the country, all socioeconomic backgrounds, with strong academic and moral foundations. [B](#)





ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PARISH AND SCHOOL, *Kodiak AK*

Game day during Catholic Schools Week brought mixed age groups together to enjoy various games around the school. Kaboots was a fun way to play trivia as a school. Topics included Alaska history, Disney, math and religion facts. Classroom content kept topics lively and engaging, too. 🇺🇸



CATHOLIC SCHOOL OF FAIRBANKS, *Fairbanks AK*

We started the week with an all-school prayer chain in the gym. Each day, we focused on a virtue: joy, kindness, perseverance, gratitude and hope. Activities throughout the week ranged from creating “thank you” cards for military families and donors to DEAR (drop everything and read). Wednesday, we celebrated Mass with Bishop Chad Zielinski. We finished Catholic Schools Week with laughter and camaraderie by participating in relays with our Magis Houses. The school spirit was contagious. 🇺🇸



DE LA SALLE BLACKFEET SCHOOL, *Browning MT*

De La Salle Blackfeet School (DLSBS) of Little Flower Parish kicked off Catholic Schools Week 2020 with a Sunday Mass hosted by our eighth-graders and other student leaders. Following Mass, the congregation was invited for a breakfast prepared by school staff and parents. The Catholic Schools Week door decorations, each class' students of the week and essay contest submissions were showcased while the community enjoyed the meal.

DLSBS continued the celebration by highlighting its identity as a Catholic, Lasallian and Blackfeet school by sharing the foundations of our Catholic faith with the students — the call of St. John Baptist de La Salle to take action through service informed by our faith and the communal values of the Amskapi Pukani (Southern Piegan band of the Blackfeet Confederacy).

Students enjoyed some healthy competition by completing Blackfeet and Catholic/Lasallian trivia scavenger hunts. They searched the hallways reading quotes from St. John Baptist de La Salle and American Indian leaders that revealed answers to the trivia questions on the reverse side. The seventh-grade class was awarded the highly coveted “best door decorations” for Catholic Schools Week by our parish secretaries. Our weekly Thursday Mass was a particularly special event. DLSBS highlighted the importance of Catholic education, two students received the sacrament of baptism and seven students received holy Communion for the first time.

To conclude Catholic Schools Week, the traditional faculty vs. students basketball game was replaced with a volleyball tournament against the students. Tensions were high as each class competed against the staff, but, ultimately, the staff was victorious. While this encouraged the staff, they predicted that, in a few months, they won't be so lucky competing against the students in basketball during our Founder's Week celebration.

De La Salle wishes the Catholic Indian Mission Schools and all Catholic schools a blessed school year.

Live Jesus in our hearts ... Forever. 🇺🇸

RED CLOUD INDIAN SCHOOL, *Pine Ridge SD*

The mission of Red Cloud Indian School (RCIS), a Catholic Institution administered by the Jesuits and the Lakóta people, is to develop and grow as a vibrant Church through an education of the mind and spirit that promotes Lakota and Catholic values. Since its founding in 1888, and through an enduring partnership of the Jesuits and the Lakota people, RCIS continues to foster community engagement, innovative education, spiritual formation and social justice.

Red Cloud serves approximately 600 Lakóta students in grades K-12 at at Red Cloud High School, Red Cloud Elementary School and Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School, which has been part of the Red Cloud school system since 1931. All three schools participate in National Catholic Schools Week each year.

RCIS held special morning prayer reflections, art projects and special daily Masses to observe Catholic Schools Week 2020. Each day of the week was marked with symbols representing both Catholic and Lakota values: Monday — Rosary/Sage; Tuesday — Prayer/Songs; Wednesday — Community/Church-Tipi; Thursday — Our



dress; Dress; and Friday — Prayer/Lakóta prayer. Father Peter Klink, vice president for mission and identity, sent this message to everyone at Red Cloud summarizing the activities of this blessed week,

“We just finished celebrating our Lakóta Catholic Schools Week. It was a chance to celebrate our depth: our openness to new possibilities and growth, our use of both head and heart, our compassion, our faith and our desires for a better world. We also celebrated the ways in which we try to model for students the generous service of our brothers and sisters in this world: modeling “Being Men and Women for Others — Wačhájtnognaka.” ☩



ST. ANTHONY'S INDIAN MISSION SCHOOL, *Zuni NM*

There are several “special weeks” in St. Anthony’s school year, none more than Catholic Schools Week. “Crazy Hair Day” or “Pajama Day” or other fun activities catch the attention of students with the faculty vs. students basketball game being the highlight (never to be missed). This year was a little

different. Central to every week is our School Mass, and this week the students reflected on their hopes and aspirations. They then presented these to the Lord at Mass. Very proud parents, together with their children, brought posters to be placed in front of the altar as Mass began. After a brief homily, each grade spoke of what they had illustrated in their banner and a panel of three eighth-graders considered each and decided which “Fruit of the Holy Spirit” they felt would grow from pursuing each aspiration, giving an explanation of what that “Fruit” would bring to the lives of the students. The posters were later hung in the school cafeteria as a daily reminder.

This was a simple exercise that affirmed the Catholic identity of our school family. We celebrated being with each other, letting laughter abound. At the same time, we learned what it means to be Catholics open to the Spirit within ourselves and letting the Holy Spirit through us make a difference for our neighbors and our communities. ☩

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL, Shawano WI

Sacred Heart Catholic School kicked off National Catholic Schools Week on Jan. 26 with an open house themed “Sacred Heart Rocks — We are God’s Rock Stars!” As the only Catholic school in Shawano County, Sacred Heart Catholic School is excited to honor Catholic education in Shawano and the special role it has played in the community for 138 years. We have experienced great growth in the last five years, with the highest enrollment in over a decade this year — a great reason to rock out and celebrate!

The event started with family Mass at Sacred Heart Parish, followed by an afternoon of free activities for the whole community featuring a lip sync battle and karaoke contest led by DJ Beantown Entertainment. Students competed in teams of multi-age groups on Tuesday in an awesome Field Day that focused on sportsmanship, teamwork, cooperation, kindness and strength. On Wednesday, students competed in the Sacred Heart Geography Bee and crowned Bryton Van Gheem the champion. On Thursday, students participated in Bright Futures-CAREER DAY to showcase their bright futures using their God-given gifts.

The Holy Spirit then filled the Sacred Heart Catholic School gymnasium Thursday evening to host Christian recording artist Jennie Williamson of Nashville, Tennessee, and 300 guests from the community. What a blessing to see members of Catholic, Lutheran and nondenominational churches and community groups gather at our rural Catholic school to celebrate just how Great God is during National Catholic Schools Week!

Sacred Heart concluded Catholic Schools Week 2020 with a pajama and movie day on Friday, highlighted by a special visit from Chad Kary, founder of Georgia’s House, and Katelynn Rose Bicek, from the Catholic Order of Foresters. Georgia’s House is a home for families who have infants at St. Vincent’s NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) in Green Bay, purchased by the Kary family in 2019 in loving memory of their daughter, Georgia, who sadly passed away after arriving 14 weeks early. For our Catholic Schools Week service project, each student was asked to donate a gently used toy or book for Georgia’s House. Nearly 100 items were collected in this true act of giving. Chad Kary is a Sacred Heart alumnus and we were honored to support his family in remembering baby Georgia in this special way. The school would like to thank all school families for their donations and the Catholic Order of Foresters for their support.

Sacred Heart truly ROCKS! 



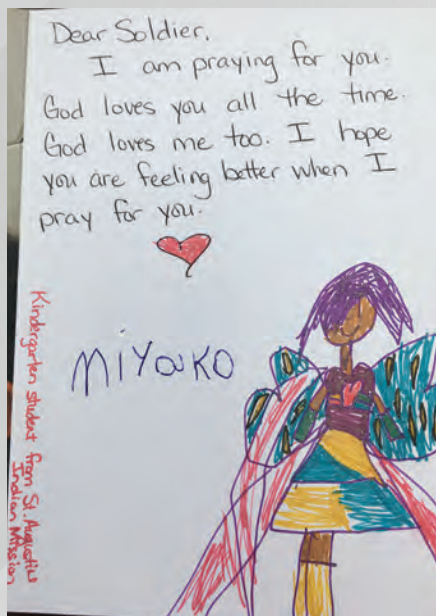
ST. AUGUSTINE INDIAN MISSION, *Winnebago NE*

St. Augustine Indian Mission serves children of the Winnebago and Omaha Nation Tribes in northeast Nebraska. Students, teachers and staff enthusiastically celebrated Catholic Schools Week with daily themes, special activities and service projects.

The week began with a food drive for the local food pantry. Kindergarten students made get-well cards for hospitalized members of the military. Eighth-graders gathered personal care items to create blessing bags for the homeless shelters in the area.

Families, staff and faculty received a toy soldier with instructions to display the soldier in a prominent place in the home as a reminder to pray for our troops. Classroom doors were decorated with Bible verses or Bible themes.

“Dress Your Best for Jesus Day” included Mass and eucharistic adoration. “Pajama Day” found the students creating thank you cards for donors to the new school capital campaign.



On “Classroom Color Day” students dressed in designated class colors and participated in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities. Student athletic games were the highlight of “Team Jersey Day.” For “Favorite Character Day,” students dressed in clothing featuring their favorite book or movie character while enjoying snacks and reading their favorite books to each other.

It was a great celebration of our Catholic faith — mind, body and spirit! ✚



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI SCHOOL, *Lumberton, NM*

Catholic Schools Week was a busy, joyful and spiritual time at St. Francis of Assisi School. On Monday, we had a school-wide retreat with a focus on the Family Life Program. Our retreat day started with Mass celebrated by our traveling pastor, Father Cornelius Onyigbuo. On Wednesday evening, we held our first annual “Miracle Fair.” The Miracle Fair is a display of posters researched and made by the students on a

saint of their choice. Some students worked individually; some worked in a group. All in all, the presentations were impressive! Parents/guardians, family members and the community were invited to attend and to enjoy light refreshments. One parent commented, “I didn’t know there were so many saints!” Thursday was a fun afternoon. Students in grades 7-8 led field day games with teams comprised of students of all grade levels. Our older students are always so kind and helpful to our younger students. Teachers enthusiastically prepared students for all events and oversaw their successful completion. On Friday, our athletic director hosted a sledding party with hot dogs and hot chocolate! Many students and families attended this event. Finally, the Scholastic Book Fair operated during the entire week to encourage our students to read, read, read! Students also submitted their names for a drawing for scholastic posters and books. ✚



On Thursday, the celebration continued with special recognition of the religious who serve the school. In addition, the student altar servers were recognized by their peers. Principal Tazbah Yazzie and President Dot Teso presented in middle school classrooms on the topic of “How My Faith Guides My Work” throughout the afternoon. On Friday, celebrations for faculty and staff began during school hours with fun treats from administration. That evening at the home basketball game, the volunteers were recognized for accumulating more than 30 hours of parent service volunteered time since August 2019. Each volunteer was given a goodie bag and ice scraper. Most of the volunteers recognized are coaches of our athletic squads. That night, student baskets were raffled off at the game with one student, junior Morgan Begay, winning two baskets. The baskets were donated by staff for the raffle. The week ended on Saturday morning with the first annual Hand in Hand Family Walk on the school track. Despite the snow and freezing temperatures, many families attended then warmed up after with an art session hosted by art teacher Cody Begay. 🇺🇸

ST. MICHAEL INDIAN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL, *Saint Michael AZ*

St. Michael Indian School celebrated Catholic Schools Week starting with a drive for the Little Sisters of the Poor Drive of paper goods and personal hygiene Items. On Monday, the students in elementary grades made cards and banners for local police, hospital, fire stations and senior centers. The Junior and Senior cleanup was cancelled due to snow. On Tuesday, the school celebrated students by announcing the monthly Students of the Month and all the students received an ice cream treat and enjoyed special classroom activities. Celebrating our nation on Wednesday included a flag ceremony and military recognition of alumni, employees and parent/grandparents after Mass. Students celebrated Mass in their “Traditional Dress Day.” Open House for prospective students for fall 2020 was hosted that afternoon with student ambassadors and teachers.



PARISH UPDATES



ST. MARY AND ST. ANTHONY PARISHES AT ROCKY BOY RESERVATION, *Box Elder MT*

The grant helped us tremendously throughout the year for our curriculum materials and various events for the children. On Dec. 14, 2019, our parish unfortunately experienced a devastating fire. While no one was injured, the fire did result in the loss of our entire church building. All of the religious education materials and supplies were in the church at the time and were lost. We were not able to have our Christmas Pageant with the children. Currently, we continue to hold religious education classes at Sister Margaret Mary's house. We are using curriculum materials that St. Anthony in Box Elder was able to provide for us. The parish is working on rebuilding the new church, and we ask for your continued prayers and financial support as we move forward. +





ST. FRANCIS MISSION AMONG THE LAKOTA, *St. Francis, SD*

At St. Francis Mission, we have welcomed and celebrated 12 baptisms into our two local parishes. We also have seven candidates signed up for our upcoming confirmation. Our confirmation candidates attended a

retreat in Martin, South Dakota, with our sister parish. Sapa Un Catholic Academy has certainly been busy the past few months. Our students enjoy weekly religious education with Jennifer Black Bear and her staff. Our students helped decorate the St. Charles Borromeo Church for

Christmas! They were such great help and did an amazing job! Lastly, our school welcomed a visitor to talk with our boys about the love and pride of being a Native American and encouraged them to grow their hair out and wear in a braid. It was a day of empowerment for our boys! 🙏





ST. AUGUSTINE PARISH, *Isleta Pueblo NM*

Here at St. Augustine Parish, we have been active in different activities in our community. We have an enrollment of 100 students who attend religious education in grades 1-11.

Our first activity was sponsored by our confirmation students. We hosted a movie night. It was a very successful event and had a very good turnout. Some of our families requested to have more movie nights.

In November, we had two functions. On Nov. 1, All Saints' Day, we visited and prayed with 12 families. Our students gathered and walked to the homes. We had about 34 students, plus some parents. We

prayed and presented each family with a rosary. We returned back to the classroom and had refreshments.

On Nov. 10, Sunday our confirmation students, with the help of teachers and parents, prepared breakfast for our veterans. Our veterans and family enjoyed their breakfast.

Our annual Christmas Program was on Dec. 22. All of our students took part in the program. Parents and family members were anxiously waiting for the doors to open to see the festivities.

We have an ongoing rosary-making class. Some of our teachers and parents/students have made rosaries to give.

Our hopes are to take rosaries to our elderly homes. On Jan. 15, a small group visited an elderly lady who is turning 101. The children presented her with a rosary, small St. Kateri Tekakwitha statue and a praying card. The children loved it, and the grandmother was overjoyed. We prayed with her. We plan to visit more homes, especially during Lent. Some of our older children make cards to take to our Elderly Center.

We have scheduled retreats for students for confirmation and first Communion.

Without the support of the Indian Mission Bureau, we couldn't accomplish what we have done. ✚



KATERI NORTHWEST MINISTRY INSTITUTE, Spokane WA

We are at the foot of the mountain.

Under the guidance of Scripture teacher Maureen Foley-Bensen, participants of the Kateri Program from Spokane, Great Falls and St. Ignatius journeyed together through the Book of Exodus. The groups explored the meaning of kinship and reflected on the oppression and displacement of the Hebrew people and its parallels to the oppression and displacement of their own Native people. Looking deeply into the tribal kinship of the Hebrews, participants opened up to tell stories about their own families, ancestors and tribes, revealing the similarities and deep bonds of culture and tradition that hold together a people with whom they identify and call their own.

The groups also studied texts of various Native American authors from their respective regions. Evident in the writings of these authors is how the Great Spirit led them in the old ways of traditional cultural practices. Some of the more current authors discuss the challenge of maintaining Native traditions in modern society to ensure that stories and traditions stay alive throughout the generations. As I spoke with one of the Spokane participants about the Kateri classes, she reminded me of Father Mike's words regarding God's revelation to the Hebrews and the Creator's revelation to the Native peoples: "The in-depth study that Maureen provides is challenging but so illuminating about how these ancient and foundational books of the Bible originated in the tribal stories of the peoples that eventually came together as the 12 tribes of Israel. For me, it makes it all the more clear how the Creator revealed himself to the Native peoples in their histories, remembered also in the stories handed on by the ancestors. What a different history we would have experienced in the meeting of European Christianity and Native revelation if the effort had been made to understand and respect that revelation."

So, here we are, at the foot of the mountain, about to climb up to the top. In the Book of Exodus that is the foot of Mount Sinai, where Moses climbs to the top to embrace the Holy Covenant revealed by God to the Hebrews. As we proceed with our study of the sacred Scriptures, we will continue to draw parallels and find similarities between the experiences of the Hebrew people and our own Native people. On the journey, we will discover how the Creator blesses us and what we will embrace when we get to the top of the mountain. ☒



LENT IS OVER, HERE'S HOW TO FOCUS ON EASTER

Before you read any further, go and get your Bible. First, read John 20: 1-29. If you don't have a Bible, go out and buy one. It can be a small and inexpensive one. You need God's word at hand all the time. You need access to it to learn to understand God's mind and God's perspective in all our daily personal relationships and activities. It is especially important during the time of major feasts because God wants us to be able to see how each feast we celebrate has a very particular message for us.

The greatest feast we celebrate is Easter. This is the celebration of God's love for us. He was treated as the worst of human criminals and died a horrible death on a cross in order that the debt of our sin be paid and that we, because of his sacrificial act of love, become genuinely and truly sons and daughters of God. We have royal status.

By his death on the cross, he proved his love for us and gave us the gift of eternal life. Do you believe: 1) Who he is and 2) Who you are? You are known to him, loved by him, raised to a dignity you could never attain by yourself and given a future full of hope – because he rose triumphant from the grave. You will also if you put your faith in him and follow him. Do you believe that?

BY
SISTER ANN
SHIELDS

It is a decision of the will. By his grace, I decide to believe his word and what he did for me on the cross. It is not a fairy tale – not some symbolic story. It is the most real action ever done on this earth – by God – for you and me.

Look at the first 10 verses of Chapter 20 in the Gospel of John. The most logical conclusion Peter and John could have gotten from the evidence would have been that someone stole Jesus' body, but verse eight tells us John looked and believed. He made a decision to believe God's promises and not to believe a possible conclusion from the physical evidence. He didn't operate on the level of information from his senses, but chose to believe what Jesus had promised them. Peter saw the evidence of the missing body and all Scripture says is that he and John went back to their homes.

Don't you wish you could have heard their conversation as they returned home: John believing Jesus had risen and Peter, uncertain, still sifting the evidence in his mind? These two disciples represent most of us. Put yourself for a moment in their place. Which of the two represents most the way you would have reacted? What would you have done if you had gone to the tomb that day?

In verses 11-18, we see the beauty of a woman's love for her Lord. She just wanted to care for his body – to render the last act of service she could



Getty Images/Romolo Tavan

do for the one who had forgiven her so much; the one she loved so much. When a man asks her why she is weeping, she responds, “They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.” Then wonder of wonders, the stranger says her name. She suddenly recognizes that voice of love and mercy and kindness. Jesus right then makes her the first evangelist: “Go to my brethren and say to them ...” Mary does and tells the disciples, “I have seen the Lord ...” Faith leads to evangelization (announcing the good news).

Verses 19-24 tell the disciples’ experience as the Lord appeared to them and later the remarkable and compassionate revelation to the doubting Thomas. No matter how far we have strayed or how little we believe, if we come to him asking for faith, he will restore and heal and make well for the glory of his Father.

To my regular readers, may the Easter grace be one of deepening faith in Jesus, our Lord, our Savior and our brother. May your faith increase day-by-day. To those who perhaps have picked up this magazine for the first time, or for those with little or no faith, may the abundant life-giving grace of Easter penetrate your heart and give you a new hope in the Lord. It is a hope that will not disappoint. Happy, blessed Easter – all 50 days until Pentecost. ✚



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SAINT OF THE
MONTH

ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST

The New Testament and early Christian traditions tell us the story of St. Mark the Evangelist. We first meet Mark, also called John or John Mark, in the Acts of the Apostles (12:12) when Peter arrives at the home of Mary, Mark’s mother, after miraculously being freed from prison in Jerusalem by angels.

Mark next appears as he joins St. Paul and St. Barnabas on their first journey to Antioch in 44 A.D. Christian tradition reports that Mark returns to Jerusalem when the group reaches Cyprus, perhaps because he was homesick. (Acts 13:13) This eventually causes tension among the missionaries. Paul and Barnabas continue as companions and establish churches throughout Asia Minor before returning to Antioch and then to Jerusalem. When they prepare for a return visit to the new Christian communities, Barnabas wants to take Mark and Paul refuses. The two separate over this disagreement; Paul takes Silas with him to Syria and Barnabas departs for Cyprus with Mark.

From St. Paul’s letters, we learn that Mark and Paul are eventually reconciled. Mark visits Paul when he is first imprisoned and Paul describes him as a trusted companion. (Col 4:10) Paul later writes to Timothy during his second captivity and asks him to bring Mark with him to Rome, “for he is profitable to me for the ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11). Tradition holds that Mark was probably in Rome when Paul was martyred.

The letters of St. Peter indicate that he and St. Mark maintained a close connection and that Mark was in Rome with him. St. Peter refers to Mark as “his son” in his letter addressed to churches in Asia Minor (1 Peter 5:13) and early Church fathers indicate that Mark was an interpreter for Peter. It is believed that the Gospel of Mark was the first Gospel written and that it is based on the teachings of St. Peter.

According to tradition, St. Mark went to Alexandria, Egypt in A.D. 49 and founded the Church that became one of the most important centers of Christianity in the early Church. He is considered its first bishop and honored as the first to establish Christianity in Africa. The Coptic Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and the Coptic Orthodox Church claim to be successors of this original community. Tradition teaches that he was martyred in Alexandria while being dragged through the streets. ✚

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