



# THE RAY

*The newsletter of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center*

July 2020

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## *Special Tenth Anniversary Edition*

### **Mission Statement**

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center celebrates the Universal Call to Holiness by providing spiritual direction in the Roman Catholic tradition to men and women with a special emphasis on vocational discernment for young adults.

Foundational to the work of the Center is the unsurpassed Ignatian scholarship of the late Reverend Jules J. Toner, S.J. We are the first Catholic Spirituality Center in the world dedicated to promoting his writings and life of holiness.

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### *From the Desk of Mary...*

Warm greetings from Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center where we joyfully anticipate our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Incorporation on July 6, 2020, the Feast of Saint Maria Goretti, patron saint of youth.

You will be happy to hear that we celebrated our “Grand Re-opening” on May 18<sup>th</sup> following a two-month statewide lockdown in response to concerns over the possible spread of Covid-19. While the work of the Center continued uninterrupted by phone appointment throughout the Safer at Home Order, it is wonderful to greet you today from my desk at the Center where so many graces have been received over the years.

Ten years ago, we never could have imagined that this wonderful milestone would be commemorated in the midst of a global pandemic and a summer of social unrest throughout the country. In these difficult times, Pope Francis encourages us to turn to Our Lady for protection as people have done throughout history, and especially in times of great trial. In his Coronavirus Prayer he implores, “...We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father’s will and to do what Jesus tells us...We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas—we who are put to the test—and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.”

To remind us and encourage us to imitate Our Lady’s example of faith, included in this issue is a beautiful article by Monsignor Charles M. Mangan entitled, “Mary, Model of Faith, Pray for Us”.

We give gifts for anniversaries, and God has given us an

incredible gift for our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I am very happy to announce that a former spiritual directee, Mr. Josh Gentine, is our new volunteer Fundraising Coordinator. With the support of our prayers, I am confident that he will do great work in securing a sound financial future for the Center. You will be able to read about Josh and his work for Our Lady of Grace in this issue.

Another wonderful blessing involves a young adult who spent time discerning her religious vocation at the Center. Miss Samantha Vosters made a lifelong private vow of chastity late last year, just as our previous issue was going to print. You’ll see a photo from this joyful occasion and (with her permission) an article about her special calling from God as you continue reading.

And finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center, from our hearts to yours, for all the many ways in which you have supported the Center over these first ten years, we thank you so very much. May God reward your generosity and kindness as only He can do, and He will! Together in mission with you, we look forward with joy to the next ten years of graces.



Current Board of Directors with Father Luke Strand



Our "Grand Re-opening Day,"  
May 18, 2020

## *Mary, Model of Faith, Pray for Us* *Monsignor Charles M. Mangan*

Our Blessed Mother possessed a "living faith," meaning that she believed actively all the truths revealed by God on the basis of His authority. If He revealed them, then that was enough for Our Lady.

Mary's was a dynamic faith. The profundity and fervor of that faith intensified with each passing day.

In his very helpful treatise entitled *La Madonna* (Padova: Gregoriana, 1966), Passionist Father Giacomo Pesce hailed the Ever-Virgin Mother of God as a "model of faith." Mary possessed a faith that was heroic, prudent and fruitful. But that is not all. Mary's faith was proven. Just as silver is tried in the fire and gold in the furnace, and the Lord tests hearts (see Proverbs 17:3), so the faith of Our Lady was tried and shown to be splendid!

Mary believed within her pure Immaculate Heart that her Son, Jesus Christ, was the Creator of the world even when He was suffering in Bethlehem's rustic cave. She knew Him to be the King of Kings while she and her chaste husband Saint Joseph fled with the Child to Egypt in order to escape the treacherous grasp of the evil King Herod. She was convinced that He was the Omnipotent One despite His neediness and subjection to others. She acknowledged Him to be the "Joy of Paradise" notwithstanding His infant tears. She admitted that He was the wisdom and the strength of God although He grew in age, wisdom and grace before God and men. She confessed that He had descended from Heaven in order to conquer Satan and redeem humanity, never mind His exhausting work as a carpenter at the side of His Foster-father.

Why did Jesus, who miraculously multiplied the bread and fish, not provide the Holy Family of Nazareth with a plethora of money? Why did Jesus, the true Messiah, permit to be stirred up hatred and aversion against Himself? Why was Jesus the target of more spying than any murderer or thief? Why did the Father allow His Divine Son to be so mistreated? Why did the Father not permit the Sacred Divinity of His Son to be fully

recognized? Why did the Father allow His Divine Son to take on the likeness of sinners even to His ignoble death on the Cross?

Father Pesce marveled at the incredible faith of Mary. "All these questions Our Lady heroically overcame. In all these terrible trials, the Virgin Mary repeated: 'Behold the handmaiden of the Lord!'" (page 303)

In capturing his own wonderment, Father Pesce names ours, too. "We admire the Madonna who did not vacillate during the most difficult hours; on the contrary, she became a very brilliant beacon for all Christians." (*ibid.*)

What would Our Lady have done during this pestilence known as COVID-19? As always, she would have prayed, trusted, served and continued to believe in God and accept all that He does and permits.

As sons and daughters of God the Father, brothers and sisters of God the Son and temples of God the Holy Spirit, we have inherited the magnificent faith of Mary, our Spiritual Mother. With the abundant grace provided by the Lord, Our Blessed Lady went forward in faith. We treasure her example and seek to imitate it.

We rightly conclude with a prayer offered by Father Pesce: "Virgin Mary, we believe all that God commands us to believe. Reinvigorate our faith. Increase it in such a way that we believe with all our hearts." (page 304)

Mary, Virgin most faithful, pray for us!



Our Lady of Grace Rosary Workshop 2014 and 2015





First Board of Directors Meeting 2010



The Charlottesville Gentine family: Josh and Meredith with their children, Henry (3 1/2) and Juliette (23 months)

## A Warm Welcome

We are very blessed to announce that God has gifted us with a wonderful new volunteer. Mr. Josh Gentine, a former spiritual directee, graciously accepted our invitation to be the Fundraising Coordinator for Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center by simply responding, "I'm honored to do this for Our Lady."

In July 2010, immediately following our Incorporation, we received Josh as the first referral for vocational discernment from our then new Archbishop of Milwaukee, The Most Rev. Jerome E. Listeki. From the start, Josh took a special interest in Our Lady's new little Center, and over the years he has enthusiastically supported our sacred mission.

A Wisconsin native, Josh, his lovely wife, Meredith, and their two small children currently reside in Charlottesville, VA where he recently launched a new business endeavor. He is the Founder and Principal of *Bench*, a boutique strategy firm focused on the potential of people. We wish him every success.

Josh has a Bachelor's Degree in Finance from the University of Notre Dame and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He spent one year at Moreau Seminary on the Notre Dame campus exploring a vocation to the priesthood with the Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Josh brings many wonderful gifts and life experiences to his work for the Center. May his generous spirit and fundraising efforts on behalf of Our Lady of Grace ensure a strong future for the Center for the greater glory of God.



Wine and Cheese Reception 2011



Young volunteers at the 2015 Ice Cream Social



Holy Hour 2015 greeter, Ms. Eileen Wingenter



Guests from Saint Monica's Parish 2015 Ice Cream Social



Retirement Luncheon for Father George Gajdos 2012



Sam's Mission (photo courtesy of the Riverwest Food Pantry)

## Vocation News

Some...have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it. (Mt. 19:12)

Inspired by these words of Jesus from the Gospel of Saint Matthew, and in the joyful company of family and friends, Miss Samantha Vosters professed a private vow of chastity to remain single for the Lord in the world forever during Holy Mass on November 24, 2019, the Feast of Christ the King, at Saint Casimir Catholic Church in Milwaukee.

Included in her "Litany of Thank Yous" on the back of the Order of Worship were the following kind words of appreciation for the Center: "Thank you Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center for years of solid direction, prayers, formation and deep love."

Called by God to live her life in a spousal union with Christ as a laywoman in the world, Sam has been further inspired by the life and reflections of Venerable<sup>1</sup> Madeleine Delbr  l who wrote, "We, the ordinary people of the streets, believe with all our might that this street, this world, where God has placed us, is our place of holiness. We believe that we lack nothing here that we need. If we needed something else, God would already have given it to us."<sup>2</sup> Madeleine was a 20<sup>th</sup> century (1904-1964) lay social worker who lived for many years in Ivry-sur-Seine outside of Paris and promised chastity for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Sam loves to form new friendships with her neighbors, "the ordinary people of the streets"-- listening, loving and consoling--sharing in life and prayer, and bringing people together to grow, prepare and enjoy healthy meals. She lives in the Riverwest neighborhood of Milwaukee where she works full-time as the Director of Volunteers and Mission Interns (Team Form Director) at the Riverwest Food Pantry.

Congratulations, Sam, and God bless you! We're privileged to be a part of your wonderful adventure with the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> The declaration of Venerability by Pope Francis in 2018 attests to her life of heroic virtue.

<sup>2</sup> *We, the Ordinary People of the Streets* by Madeleine Delbr  l. Trans. from the French by David L. Schindler and Charles F. Mann (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000) p. 54.



Sam's Profession (photo courtesy of Christine Plamann Photography)

## As Always...

This newsletter is made possible through the generosity and skills of Miss Nicolette Bardele.



Harvard Doctoral Candidate and Our Lady of Grace volunteer Nicolette Bardele enjoying a lovely spring day at the Boston Public Garden.

We are so grateful for any donation to the Center. All donations are tax-deductible and may be made payable to ***Our Lady of Grace*** and mailed to:

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c/o Josh Gentine  
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