



THE RAY

The newsletter of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center

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Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center
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From the desk of Mary...



Warm Advent greetings from Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center where we celebrate with the Capuchin Franciscan Friars worldwide, the people of Detroit and the whole Church the recent beatification of a native Wisconsinite, Father Francis Solanus Casey, OFM, Cap.

One of sixteen children born to Irish immigrants in 1876, and known and loved for his compassion and healing gifts throughout his decades of ministry in the City of Detroit, Father Solanus was beatified at Ford Field on November 18, 2017 at a Mass second in attendance in the history of the Archdiocese only to the Papal Mass celebrated by Saint John Paul II at the Pontiac Silverdome in 1987.

We will feature an article on Blessed Solanus Casey in our next issue of The Ray. In the meantime, let us not fail to avail ourselves of his powerful intercession. Blessed Solanus Casey, pray for us.

In this issue we are once again blessed with an article written by Marian scholar Monsignor Charles M. Mangan of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, SD. In a beautiful piece entitled, "Our Second Chance with Mary," we have the opportunity to ponder her role in our attempts to become holy through a reflection on her Immaculate Conception. This is a powerful article, and one you won't want to miss.

Finally, we include a little Christmas treasure that is sure to touch your heart. It is the first three stanzas of a tender Christmas poem, "Sleep, Holy Babe", by 19th century English poet and Catholic priest, Father Edward Caswall.

With profound gratitude to Our Lord and Our Lady of Grace for so many blessings received at the Center in 2017 in the work of spiritual direction and vocational discernment, we add our sincere thanks to each of you for your prayers and generous support of this sacred ministry which we jointly share. Truly, we couldn't do it without you.

A joyful Christmas to you and those you love from Our Lady of Grace Catholic Spirituality Center!

Our Friends in Heaven

How many of the following quotes do you recognize?

1. "You cannot be half a saint." a. St. Cyprian of Carthage
2. "Let us imitate what we shall one day be." b. St. Teresa of Avila
3. "Let your words be few when in the midst of many." c. St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Answers: 1.c. 2.a. 3.b.

Serra Club of Milwaukee, Thank You!

Serra Clubs worldwide are known for their efforts to foster and support vocations to the priesthood and vowed religious life. In support of our work at Our Lady of Grace in providing spiritual direction and vocational discernment for young adults, we are honored to report that the Serra Club of Milwaukee will be covering the rent for our office space over the next year. We remember all Serra Club members living and deceased in our grateful prayers.



Visiting priest Fr. John Gibbons from the Diocese of Altoona Johnstown, PA enjoying a tour of the Center.

Masses for Your Intentions in 2018

In gratitude for your support, Holy Mass will be offered in 2018 in the Jesuit Chapel at Saint Camillus (Wauwatosa) for all of our benefactors, directees and volunteers on the following Marian feasts:

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|-------------------|--|
| February 11, 2018 | Our Lady of Lourdes |
| May 31, 2018 | The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| September 8, 2018 | The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| December 8, 2018 | The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary |



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

Our Second Chance with Mary

Monsignor Charles M. Mangan

The Universal Church exults constantly, but especially every December 8th, in the truth of Our Blessed Mother's Immaculate Conception.

God shielded Mary from Original Sin. She did not inherit, as we did, the transgression of our parents Adam and Eve.

Pope Blessed Pius IX (1846-1878), in his December 8, 1854 Apostolic Constitution entitled, *Ineffabilis Deus* solemnly defined: "The most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, was by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of Original Sin. This doctrine is revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful."

Like Jesus, Our Lady is sinless. She did not contract Original Sin nor did she commit actual sin, that is, the category of moral offenses with which we struggle. Mary lived virtuously by adoring her Creator, obeying His commands and serving her neighbors.

Each of us may rightly ask: If the Ever-Virgin is so excellent, how can I, sinful as I am, have anything in common with her?

First, we share Mary's human nature. She was and remains totally human. Hence, we have this real connection with her that opens up the possibility of a genuine relationship with her.

Second, the Mother of God freely and generously cooperated with the incredible grace that was granted to her and persevered in it. This is what the Lord demands of us.

True, we were conceived with Original Sin, while Mary was not. But we have been redeemed through the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism. We have been given that long-awaited second chance. Consequently, there is no reason why we should not imitate Mary, cultivate—with the Lord's help—a deep rapport with her and strive for the degree of holiness that God wants for us.

In 1830, Our Lady instructed Sister (now Saint) Catherine Laboure (1806-1876) to have a medal struck, which we know as the Miraculous Medal, on which is stamped the affirmation and imperative: "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

In 1858, only a little more than three years after the Bull of 1854, Mary asserted to little (now Saint) Marie Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879), "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Yes, O Lady, you were immaculately conceived. And because you surrendered to the Holy Spirit, now you reign in Heaven with Jesus the Messiah. We delight with the great Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274), Bishop and Doctor of the Church, in offering you fitting veneration: "Mary the Virgin is the advocate of sinners and the glory and the crown of the just. She is the spouse of God, the abode of the Trinity and the most special resting place of the Son."

May we always pattern our existence after yours, saying fiat—"yes"—to the Risen Christ and "no" to sin!

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.



Three of our dedicated volunteers preparing the Summer newsletter for mailing.

Sleep, Holy Babe¹

Edward Caswall

Sleep, Holy Babe,
Upon Thy mother's breast;
Great Lord of earth and sea and sky,
How sweet it is to see Thee lie
In such a place of rest!

Sleep, Holy Babe,
Thine angels watch around,
All bending low, with folded wings,
Before the Incarnate King of Kings,
In reverent awe profound.

Sleep, Holy Babe,
While I with Mary gaze
In joy upon that face awhile,
Upon the loving Infant smile,
Which there divinely plays.

¹Caswall, E. Sleep, Holy Babe. In P. Schaff & A. Gillman (Eds.), *A Library of Religious Poetry: A Collection of the Best Poems of All Ages and Tongues, with Biographical and Literary Notes* (p.731). New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company (1885).



The view from a window of the Center onto Swan Blvd. one fine Monday morning.

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.**