



St. Pius Calling...

September 2016

It's a Mystery

Growing in Faith Together- GIFT Program

In mystery novels, the purpose of the story is to find out who did it and how. Then the book ends with a certain satisfaction of learning something and things making sense. In my elementary school education, "It's a mystery," was the answer to many questions I had about God. It seemed to me a way to say, "We don't know and we won't know." Today "it's a mystery," means to me that there is always more to know about God. I can have the satisfaction of something about God making sense, but the story never ends and there is always more to learn and a new understanding ready to be revealed.

There is another way to think of this. If I look at a photo of a snowy scene, I have learned something about snow. If I look through a window at a beautiful snowfall I experience a different connection with snow. If I go out the door and feel the difference in the air and hear the sounds while I see the snow, I learn more about snow and its presence. And if I go out and make snow angels or slide down the hill, I learn even more. Each lesson about snow: photo, window view, being near it, or being in it, give me a different level of understanding.

It's the same thing with religious education. There are many ways to experience God and the more we get involved in active learning, the more we understand. And there is always more to learn. Our adult education program is offering several ways to approach the mystery of God. The Bible studies help us to make time to read this love letter from God. The book discussion on *Mercy* is a way to see how God's mercy is in our lives and how we share this with God and through other people. The Intentional Disciple groups are a way to put many pieces of head knowledge and heart knowledge into action.

Come explore the mystery of God and see what new thing you can come to understand about God in this new season for learning. Contact Paul Parowski 570-539-4283 or paulparowski1@verizon.com for more information.

Meals for Seals

by Janet Bucher

I had been wanting to get involved in a meaningful volunteer opportunity when I saw the notice in the weekly bulletin for the call of someone to take over the Meals for Seals program at St. Pius due to the relocation of the coordinator. I took this as a sign from God to get involved in this ministry.

The Meals for Seals program was started in 2014 by two women who recognized that over 40 percent of elementary students in the Selinsgrove area qualified for free or

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Pious Thoughts

from our Pastor, Fr. Pius



September is here!

It reminds me that summer is gone and beautiful Fall is here.

It is the Month of the Sorrowful

Heart of Mary. This Month we

demystify "Mystery." I will strongly encourage you to pay close attention to the articles in this newsletter. I think we can do more for the meals for seals program. Together, let us give it the biggest support we can. In Kruskie's story, I see a reflection of many of us.

May we be re-energized in our faith by his testimony.

Just Smile! Happy reading.

reduced lunches. A pilot program was run during the summer to provide weekend food bags. The program's success and strong support from the community has allowed it to expand into the intermediate school and the program is now serving over 121 children and their families. The Snyder County Coalition for Kids, Weis Markets and a number of local churches are just some of the many individuals and businesses that have partnered with the school and the Meals for Seals program.

The "food kit" bags are provided to students on a weekly basis. St. Pius has committed to 20 bags/week. Each bag contains supplemental, nutritional, kid-friendly food for a breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack.

Our true God moment was when the Selinsgrove Elementary School chose Meals for Seals at St. Pius as their Christmas charity. The students and teachers donated boxes and boxes of food to be used for our food kits.

We are always looking for volunteers or donations of food and grocery gift cards. If you would like to help or donate, please contact Janet Bucher at jb95plus3@yahoo.com or 570-274-2210.

Food donations should consist of single-serve cans of soup, ravioli/spaghetti, fruit cups, and breakfast/cereal bars.



THE SWASTIKA by Joyce Seno

While on vacation, we visited a church in Pittsburgh. Scouring the church to take in all the beautiful imagery, my eyes fell upon an unusual symbol at the center of an arch. A Swastika?? Here in the Catholic Church??? Had I not seen it with my own eyes I would not have believed it.



Like many of the symbols all around us, the swastika has evolved in different cultures with different meanings. Before Hitler adopted the symbol, it was mainly a Christian symbol with a very long history. A symbol of the Cross, the Swastika is sometimes called the crux gammata, made up of four Greek gammas joined at their bases. It is of Sanskrit origin and means "good omen", "well-being", "good luck". It has sometimes been referred to as the crooked cross. Catholic Cathedrals that include swastika tiles among their decorations include: Saint Joseph Cathedral, Wheeling, West Virginia; St. Colman's Cathedral, in the city of Cobh Ireland; Christ Church Cathedral, New Zealand; and the Cathedral of Tampico, Mexico.

It is ironic, and unfortunate, that a symbol of life and eternity that was considered sacred for thousands of years has become a symbol of hatred. Historians disagree on where the birthplace of the Swastika is located. Commonly the origin is thought to be in Mesopotamia, and from this country it spread to many other cultures. For the Maya culture, the Swastika stood for creation and for the Incas and Aztecs it represented the four seasons due to its four arms.



Swastika is the name of a city in Ontario, Canada. During the second world war, the government renamed the city Winston, but the people of the city wanted to keep the name and protested using the slogan, "To hell with Hitler, we came up with our name first". To this day the city is still called Swastika.



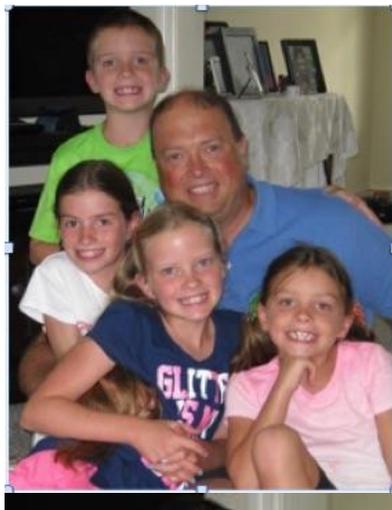
Why Catholic? by Robert J. Kruskie, Jr

I have been Catholic for my entire life. From infant Baptism through all the sacraments and attending Holy Spirit School in Mt. Carmel and Saint Mary's School in Kulpmont, I was off to a great start!

Catholicism in the Coal Region was very important. I played CYO Basketball and at that time, the CYO league ruled the hardwood courts. We even had our own football team at Holy Spirit School. Being involved with my Catholic school and the activities enabled me to be filled with God's spirit and enhanced the weekly Mass. While at Saint Mary's, the nuns encouraged us to go to daily Mass. We would go to Mass and then walk across the street to start our school day. Even in high school, my football team at Mt. Carmel Area would go to Mass on Friday morning during the season.

Catholicism was a big part of my life through the early part of my college years. Before graduating from the University of Tampa (Go Spartans!), I would try to attend Mass on Sundays, but I drifted away because I was "too busy" to get there. After studying all week and then hanging out at Clearwater Beach all weekend, how could I possibly have the strength to go to Mass on Sunday?

While in college, I started to question some things as it relates to Catholicism and the Bible. I was speaking to the wrong people who were usually anti-Catholic or at least, thought I shouldn't be Catholic. Even one of my best friends, since kindergarten, also became a "born again Christian." A few of our other Catholic childhood friends followed, and I began to feel like I might be missing out on something. I decided to speak with a Catholic priest in Tampa. We had a very good conversation and I asked him about the "born again Christian" direction that my friends were taking and that, according to them, if I wasn't "born again" I would be missing the boat. I cannot remember the priest's name, but I do remember that he stated Catholicism is the



Christianity of the world. This was something I already knew, but I just needed to hear it from another Catholic. As I started speaking to some of my other college Catholic friends they also felt challenged for wanting to be good Catholics.

As a single working father raising four beautiful young children, I enjoy attending Mass every Sunday. My children are Shaela, Fifth Grade; Bobby, Third Grade; Kiana, Third Grade; and Lissa, First Grade. Mass is a part of our lives and we don't even think about not attending. My children also love coming to Sunday school and have perfect attendance for the past four years. I'm excited that they are thirsting for the knowledge St. Pius Church is providing, and I'm thankful for all the wonderful Sunday school teachers and helpers. As parents, I believe we need to lead by example for our children. How can I stress to my four awesome children how important the Mass is, if I can't get there myself?

During his homily, Father Pius spoke about "born again Christianity," as he spoke, I thought that I wish I had this homily with me when I was in college! As Catholics, we are born again when we receive the Sacrament of Baptism. We are born again when we receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. We are born again when we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. As Catholics, I believe we have the born again aspect covered.

I am a Catholic for many reasons, I was blessed to be born into Catholicism, I was blessed to attend eight years of Catholic School. I was blessed to overcome outside challenges against Catholicism. Currently I am blessed with the desire to lead my children by example on what it means to be Catholic. As we go through our lives, it is very comforting to know that God's spirit fills us!