

Welcome to “Everyday Living With God.” This newsletter is somewhat based on the Jesuit spirituality, because they, too, seek to “find God in all things.” It is so true that God is with us at all times. Watch how He works in your life this week, this month, this year! If you think a nonparishioner may be interested in a copy of this newsletter, please notify Mary at Good Shepherd Parish by phone (715-427-5259) or email the person’s name/address (or email address) to goodshepherd@newnorth.net.

We all do it: Complain. Often there is something that throws a wrench into our lives. But today I received the Logger’s Shopper which I will focus on today, and count my blessings:

I Am Thankful For...

...the mess to clean up after a party. It means I have been surrounded by friends (and/or family).

...the taxes I pay. It means that I’m employed.

...the clothes that fit a little too snug. It means I have enough to eat.

...my shadow who watches me work. It means there is sunshine.

...the spot I find at the far end of the parking lot. It means I am capable of walking.

...all the complaining I hear about our government. It means we have freedom of speech.

...the lady behind me in church who sings off key. It means I can hear.

...the lawn that needs mowing, windows that need washing and gutters that need fixing. It means I have a home.

...my huge heating bill. It means I am warm.

...weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day. It means I have been productive.

...the alarm that goes off in the early morning. It means that I am alive.

It’s a Miracle

We’ve all heard stories of miracles and wondered if we would ever experience one in our lifetime. We hear of many miracles in Scripture, i.e., Jesus healing the lepers, the feeding of the 5,000, turning water into wine and many more. But what about here and now? Yes, miracles do still exist! There are people with incurable diseases being miraculously cured. Or what about the serious car accident with no explanation for why anyone survived the crash? But, do WE or have WE experienced miracles in OUR lives?

What about the birth of a child? The seasons of nature? And even greater than these: What about the miracle of Jesus present upon the altar at every Mass and who enters into our lives in every Holy Communion? Oh, yes, WE do experience miracles!

In our book study on The Eucharist, we read how Jesus took all our sins upon his own flesh and through the endurance of his Passion, conquered sin once and for all. He showed his power over Satan by descending into hell, and then rising again. And through his rising from the dead, it is his resurrected and glorified body, his life-giving flesh that we consume in Holy Communion. We remember the Passion at Mass, but when we receive Holy Communion, it is the “living” God—the Body of Christ that we consume, and that brings life to us.

A large number of us probably bought a lottery ticket this month for the big billion dollar jackpot. And yet, if we had to choose between that and Jesus Christ, I would hope it would be an easy choice for all of us. We will soon be entering Advent. We will soon celebrate the virgin birth of Jesus. This Life-Giving miracle is meant for us all. Let “Eat, drink and be merry” be our motto at each Eucharistic celebration.



Hi Daddy

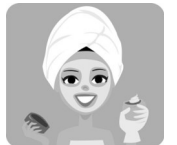
As a parent of five, I remember how sometimes Mass was challenging, trying to keep our kids quiet in church, so that we would not disturb Mass for those around us. It’s nice to have our children with us in the pews, but we understand that sometimes the cry room is a necessity. I would try to high tail it to the cry room before people began to turn their heads to see who was making a big fuss.

Now that I am Grandma and Great-Grandma, when I hear the little baby sounds, some cries and restlessness of tots, it is a reminder of my kids at that age. Recently at Mass I heard the soft words of a young boy repeatedly saying, “Hi Daddy.” It was such a sweet dialogue between father and son. It made me dialogue with God, uttering in my mind, “Hi Daddy” to him, and feeling his warm embrace in return.

Yes, sometimes with our children the patience of a parent is challenged. But think about how patient God is with us. And sometimes with children, we are surprised and welcome the sweetness of a hug, their precious smile, or the words, “Hi Daddy” and “Hi Mommy” that can melt our hearts. God wants us to experience such a relationship with Him.

Wearing A Mask And It Ain’t Halloween

I received some face mask creams as part of a Christmas gift. So one night I smeared it on my face. No sooner had I done that, when there came a knock at the door. Dang. Let me peek and see who it is. Oh, it’s the neighbor, who knows I am home. Oh well, he has already seen me at my worst. So I open the door, not turning on too many lights for fear I’d scare him. A rather embarrassing moment for me!



We saw some pretty good masks for Halloween recently too. When we hear the word “masks” today, we revert back to the Covid era, and we hope and pray there will not be another wave of that this winter.

But how many of us hide behind masks in life all the time? We pretend to be someone we are not. People are abused, neglected, angry, jealous, depressed or hurting in some way, yet appear happy and content when we see them.

Being a member of the Body of Christ, none of us should need to wear a mask that hides our true identity. We are all God’s children and are here to help one another, pray for one another, and boost each other up and onto the next rung that leads us closer to heaven.

Masks are never comfortable to wear. I know I was sure glad to do away with mine that night! Let us all ask ourselves: “Am I going through life wearing a mask?” If so, ask yourself why and what you need to do to be true to yourself.

Surviving Entirely on the Holy Eucharist

(from the internet) On Holy Saturday of 1918, Blessed Alexandrina Maria da Costa, a fourteen-year-old native of Balasar, Portugal, was sewing when three men broke into her home, threatening to violate her chastity. Resolute to preserve her purity, she fled by jumping out a window. The thirteen-foot plunge to the ground crippled her for life. At the age of twenty-one, she became totally paralyzed and permanently bedridden.

Alexandrina accepted this affliction as God's will for her and an opportunity to offer herself totally as a "victim soul" for the conversion of sinners. For a period of three and a half years, she received the mystical gift of experiencing each Friday the pains of Christ on the cross. Out of zeal to convert sinners, Alexandrina requested for her tombstone these words: "Sinners, how much I want to tell you...Do not risk losing Jesus for all eternity, for he is so good. Enough with sin. Love Jesus, love him!" On October 13, 1955, before breathing her last, Alexandrina declared, "I am happy, because I am going to heaven."

In focusing on the Holy Eucharist, it is amazing to know that for thirteen years, Alexandrina was imbued with the mystical phenomenon of being nourished solely by the Eucharist. With this in mind, the power of God, which comes to us through the Blessed Sacrament holds so many blessings for each of us. Her strong faith allowed her to survive only for Christ. He gave her the power to do this.

So with each time we receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, ask Him to increase our faith, and to look how He wants us to live for him.



How many times have we heard that the washer eats socks?

When a sock is missing for me, I tuck it in a drawer, hoping it's match will show up in the next load or two. Finally

after about six months, I may decide it's time to "chuck" the single sock—only to find its match folded in a set of sheets or elsewhere.

Instead of lost socks, think of people that may be lost. Our parish strives that none of us should be lost or go astray. When someone is missing in our pews for a while, we hope that we can reconnect with them once again. We often pray to St. Anthony to help us find missing things. Perhaps, when we don't see someone in the pews for a while, we should pray that they be found, and that we could hopefully work to make that happen. So do we see someone missing? Can we find a way to have them return?

Do You Believe?

Do you believe that every person you meet, every person you cross paths with, is put there for a purpose? I do believe this. I believe that sometimes they are put there so we can help them in some way, or lead them to another source of help. Other times I believe they are put there to help us. A number of years ago I dreamed about someone that I waited on a few times as a teller. I wasn't well acquainted with him. One night I dreamed about this person. The next day I heard about a local accident where someone was killed. Without being told, I knew it was this person. Several connections were made between the dream and what happened with this person before he died. I was told by Deacon Cullen that I should pray for this person.

Then this year, one of our Confirmation students mentioned they began praying while they run. That made me think about all the walks I've taken in my life while thinking about what I was going to make for supper, what I had to do before Christmas, how to answer that phone call about our auto insurance, etc. But, how often did I spend time praying while I walked?

It was an eye opener. One thing I thought I could consciously do when someone comes into my life, is utter a short prayer for them, i.e., "God bless them." "God, watch over them and send your love upon them." But when I have a busy day and a lot on my mind, it is difficult to remember to do this in the moment! So I try to do it before I go to bed. You might want to give it a try: Think about every person you saw that day, spoke to, texted, sent an envelope to, who you read about in the paper, or whose picture you came across. Did you get groceries? Then pray for the check-out gal, those who stocked the shelves, the person who delivered the produce, and even the ones who harvested it, washed it and packaged it for shipment. Indirectly, they have also touched our lives.

If each of us does this, think about the great impact we could have on the lives of so many people in this world!

Lucky Winner...or Not

This year I attended the fall festivals at Good Shepherd, but not a lucky basket winner this year. So I tried my good fortune at OLPH and Holy Rosary's festivals, and it paid off. One thing I won was a whole box of what was marked as "banana peppers," big yellow ones. Because we did not grow those in our garden, I was excited to de-seed them and chop them up for the freezer to add to hot dishes, soups, etc. this winter. As I got half way into the box, I noted the peppers were smaller. But I finished chopping them up anyway. About an hour later I thought I had put my hands on the open flames. There was nothing I could do to stop the burning. My daughter had given me a balm to put on burns, so I rubbed that on my hands. Didn't work. Then I went to the internet to search hot pepper burns. Tried all remedies, to no avail. My guess is the balm penetrated my skin, deepening the pepper oil more. Touching anything was excruciating. So, I resorted to doing a constant soak in milk, and retired to bed that night with a towel and bag of frozen peas on my tummy.

But while I was in pain, I looked at the cross of Jesus and uttered, "Surely this pain is nothing in comparison to what you endured when the spikes were driven into your hands, and your flesh torn as your cross was raised into the air. So, quit being such a wimp, Mary Ellen." I also thought of St. Lawrence who was tied on top of an iron grill over a slow fire that roasted his flesh little by little. His love for God alleviated his suffering. He was recorded as saying, "Turn me over. I'm done on this side." It only made me realize I needed to grow in faith and love of God even more. I found no humor in St. Lawrence's remark at that time.

Pain in life will happen to us all at one time or another. Whatever pain we endure, let us look upon the crucifix and join our sufferings to those of Christ. He's the master of sacrifice, and as Christians, we must embrace our cross and accept the need to sacrifice at times too. So what good came from these hot pepper hands? Many a good hot dishes and chilis, I hope!