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The Witness

Mount Saint Francis Cursillo Center
Mount Saint Francis, Indiana 47146



You are my witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen [Isaiah 43:10]

I am a Happy Catholic

By: Matt Nelson

Back in August, I graduated from IU Southeast, a small IU satellite campus in New Albany, Indiana. During my time there, I was heavily involved in the school, living and working on campus in addition to my studies. Needless to say, there was a lot of people interaction, and most of the time it wasn't with other Catholics. Many were with our evangelical brothers and sisters that attended the dozens of independent churches that were scattered around the city. Often they would try to invite me to their churches. I would politely decline, telling them I was Catholic, and thus already had a church. This typically got a response of, "Why don't you come to my church this weekend?" When I again politely declined, they would start arguing with me, not expecting someone who actually knew what they were talking about. To avoid this, I came up with a different response to the initial inquiry: "I'm a happy Catholic." I would like to discuss a little bit about what that means to me personally.

I am a revert to Catholicism. I was raised Catholic with a strong faith in the home in a small parish. When I was 16, I went through a rebellious phase and left the Church. I never lost my faith in God, but it was very misguided. When I was 19, I had been going to several different churches, but nothing felt quite right. It was around this time that God started prodding my heart back toward Catholicism. I slowly started to move back toward the Church in October 2010 and finally rejoined permanently in February 2011, 4 months shy of my 20th birthday, joining Our Lady of Perpetual Help in New Albany, Indiana, where I still attend today.

Leaving the Catholic Church was the biggest mistake I ever made, but it led to rejoining, which was the best decision of my life. To read the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32) is one thing, but to experience God's mercy like that firsthand is indescribable. He welcomed me home with open arms to the Catholic Church, and I have been rejoicing ever since.

I love God, and I love being Catholic. I love the traditions and witness of the Church, the beauty of the Sacraments, symbols, and songs, and the powerful witness of priests and religious who have dedicated their lives to Christ. No other church has all these elements. I love being able to go anywhere in the world and knowing what's going to happen when I walk into a Catholic Church. Whether in Vatican City, New Albany, Dallas, London, Tokyo, or Capetown, the Mass is essentially the

same. I love receiving Jesus in Word and Sacrament, not just on Sunday, but every day. I feel like I've missed something if I don't get to go to Daily Mass. Seriously, at what other church can I receive Jesus in such a way every day? In what other church can I receive absolution from my sins in Confession? Where else can I kneel before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Adoration? I love the consistency of the Church's teachings. At other churches I attended, the pastor often set doctrine and changed it on a whim. With the Catholic Church, the core teachings have stayed consistent from the beginning. Yes, they can be difficult to understand, but if studied, they make a lot of sense. With the Catholic Church, there are no secrets. Crack open the *Catechism and start reading, it's all there.*

In closing, I would like highlight a common comment evangelicals make about Catholics and our Mainline Protestant brothers and sisters. I see it all over social media, and I have heard it countless times in arguments with a degrading tone, "I don't have a *religion*, I have a *relationship*." Well, usually, if someone has a *relationship*, that means they love the other person. I love Jesus, and I love His Church. In short, my religion is not just a relationship, it is a very intimate relationship, one that has changed my life and is a core part of who I am as a Roman Catholic Christian.

The Witness Online

For pictures, archived articles, and the latest Cursillo news, check out what Steve Volpert is doing to our website—www.cursillo.org/mstf Francis. Send your email address to svolpert@twc.com to get meeting reminders and real time updates.

In This Issue:

I am a Happy Catholic	1
From Zombies to Dr. Seuss	2
With Fall Comes Change	3
Prayer	3

Reconnect Reflect..... Renew....
4th day Retreat...
From Zombies to Dr. Seuss
By: Sister Karen Byerley

What a great day the team provided for us on this past Sept. 20th. I know many of you could not attend so I thought I would attempt to write a quick summary of the day's spiritual messages. I will not use the speaker's names but I will tell you they did a magnificent job, reminding us of the message of Cursillo and our role as Evangelizers. This summary may not be exactly the words or way it was presented but rather the way I interpreted or heard the information. (Forgive me team if I take a different slant or misinterpret your message). We began with liturgy and an inspiring homily about Zombies. Yes, zombies. With the idea thrown at us about Zombie spirituality we were reminded about how easily we can slip back into this mode when celebrating liturgy. We are sometimes just like the living dead, sitting there, taking up space but not really present to the Lord present before us. One person said that instead of being the Living Dead we are invited to be the Living Saints. The Holy Saints are always ready to carry our prayers to Jesus. We too can carry our prayers, thoughts and others to Jesus.

From there we were invited to think about salt and its properties. Salt is an agent. Jesus was an agent. Are you an Agent for Jesus? Salt has always been known for its healing powers. We are all in need of healing in so many areas of our lives. Whether our needs are spiritual, emotional, physical or relational we are always able to take them in prayer to God. We are communal people. We heard that on our week-end...no one is an island unto themselves. Because of the communal aspect of our lives resentments and misunderstandings can block us from being the holy people God calls us to be. This quote is so apropos "You can't carry the cross with a chip on your shoulder."

Back to that salt... remember it is a preservative. Through prayer we preserve our faith for future generations. The "Mass" is a preserved prayer. Salt is a flavor enhancer. How do we enhance the flavor of family? Family meals are such an important part of how we bring Eucharist into our home. Through family meals we connect with the meal set at the table of the altar. Salt also needs to be dissolved in order for it to have any use. We put the salt into warm water so we can soak our pains and be effective. Our salt dissolves in soups, foods and gargling water.

Be salt... an agent of Jesus... the healer, the preserver of Goodness, the Enhancer!

Our next speaker asked that question heard so much by other Christian faiths. .. Have you been saved? When

we are asked that so many do not know how to answer it. We much know our faith in order to explain it or carry it on to others. That is true Evangelization.

In light of the Ideals and Formation talk of the 3 day week-end, we were asked again to answer, how do I spend discretionary time? Do I spend part of it to learn more about my God? Do I take personal formation seriously? The speaker has discovered that the more he knows the more he wants to know. It is a hunger that cannot be fully fed. He quoted Matthew Kelly's words "What we read walks and talks with us." What is the last good Catholic book that you have read? If each of us worked as hard to discover more about our faith, who we are in relationship with our God as we do to bash it or trash it or leave it all together to find something we hope will be better, what in the name of Heaven would happen? Imagine that!

Changing the world means changing our attitudes. Take the time and have the desire to form yourself into who you choose to become. (You are doing that is what you are already doing... but is it the right direction).

I was reminded of Macrina Weiderkehr. In her book Abide she talks about Romancing the Word. Isn't that a marvelous phrasing.... Romancing... like a lover...

Our next speaker used music and the words of scripture to help us reconnect, reflect and renew. In Matt. 9 we heard to words "What am I giving up to follow Jesus?" and on to verse 11 we connect again with the meal... the dining room. Jesus came to dine with us. Jesus wants to meet us at the table where we pray, sing and are connected as communal family. Vs. 13 says to Go and learn the meaning...(I am not doing the whole verse so you will want to look it up). Jesus does not desire our sacrifice. The call is all about Gift, expressing mercy and love and to have a clean heart.

My favorite statement of the talk was about desire. You have only to desire it. Fr. Ron used to always say that if you truly desire to gain Heaven you will...you have only to desire it. Amazing.

The speaker also reminded us that the more we surrender to God the closer we walk to Jesus Christ. What is enough for you?

Disciples are made... not born. It takes effort, word, sacrament and service. Reflect on our call to treat others as though we are doing it for Christ, to Christ and with Christ by our side.

Our last speaker was the one that took us to Dr. Seuss's Green Eggs and Ham. How did we get there you ask? We were told to think of a lens through which we view reality. It is not always what he seems to be. The way and how we see the world is always through our own lens. We are asked in Col. 3 to put on love... Be thankful ... in everything we do. If I can learn to be grateful... for and with the end result then I am willing to go through the process of learning and becoming. (I love this next statement... and I do paraphrase) If you wake

Continued on Back Cover.....

**The Following
Cursillistas Need Your
Prayers**

The lost I will seek out,
the strayed I will bring
back, the injured I will
bind up, the sick I will
heal

Ezekiel 34:16

The Franciscan Friars
Brother Ambrose
Ray & Janie Boggs
Keith Byerley
Ron Byerley & Family
Joe Camarata
Joann Day
Fr. John Geis
Angela Hayes & Family
Fr. Mike Hilderbrand
Kay Hobbs
Suzie Kochert
Bernedette Kok
Carol Lenfert & Family
Patty Luckett
Tom McDonough
The Mount Saint
Phyllis Naville Family
Francis Cursillo
Community
Cathy Reising
Dave & Phyllis Schickel
& Family
Laura Toler & Family
Alice Volpert
Jack West
World Peace

*Please help keep our
prayer list updated.
Contact Sr. Karen at
812-949-3189 or send
an email to:
karenbyerley@att.net*

**With Fall Comes Change
By: Barbara Morris**

The leaves turn beautiful hues of yellows, reds, and orange. The air turns cooler and time falls back an hour. I can honestly say that I love some of the changes that fall brings but not all. The bright colors of the leaves are beautiful. I love the smell in the air and the cooler temperatures. What I dread the most about fall is the time change. I get home from work and in less than an hour it is dark outside. The early darkness can be depressing for me. It puts a damper on my evening walks and outside activities. I must choose to accept this dreaded change and make the best of this new time. This is a small change, but what about the big changes that happen in our everyday lives. These changes can be difficult to accept. Having Christ in my life to guide and direct me makes these heavy changes easier to bear. I can't help but stop and reflect on the changes in my life this past year and a half. In particular the loss of my job of 32

years. I will never forget the day I was called into the store manager's office and she began reading me my termination letter. I was in shock. The only thing that made any sense was that God must have better plans for me. I just kept repeating that over and over through my tears. JCPenney was not only my place of employment, but more importantly my co-workers were family to me. From that day on the Serenity prayer became my daily meditation.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.

The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

That same week I received a phone call from Cathy Reising asking me to serve on the Women's Cursillo team at the Flaget center. My immediate response was, I just loss my job, there is no way I can do this. But after prayerful consideration, I agreed to serve on the team. What a blessing!

God used that time to get the focus off my problems and on Him through team formation. *Continued to Back Page.....*

**Prayer
By: Bill Schwender**

Lord, in your mercy, teach me how to pray.

The Lord taught me how to pray in grade school by memorizing and reciting prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary and other prayers we were taught in school. But alas little changed from those days until I attended my first ever church retreat in 1979 when my parish had a Renew Weekend Retreat. I remember going home that Friday evening and picking up our family bible and start reading it for the first time. I started in Matthew and continued to read until I came to Chapter 5, verse 6—***Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.***

This is what I was looking for but alas the retreat could not satisfy me since it had no follow up.

In 1980, the Lord led me to Cursillo #13 and, of course, the Cursillo has a follow up by weekly grouping. I have grouped regularly for 33 years. My prayer life, until Cursillo, consisted of attending Mass weekly on Sundays and Holy Days—even in college and military. My prayers were mostly reciting prayers which I had learned while in grade school. There is nothing wrong with these prayers, but I was not *praying* them. After Cursillo weekend and grouping, my prayer life took off. The Lord taught me how to have a conversation with Him—*Heart Prayer* was born.

I never knew what a *Heart Prayer* was in grade school. Jesus even taught me how to create my own prayers which I would pray every morning and evening while walking the dog. I started to pray the Mystery's of the Rosary by turning off the radio and saying the rosary while driving to work. I have had the privilege to offer palanca for Cursillo Weekends. The Lord has encouraged me to continue reading and praying the bible. I have had many different bible studies and sharing. I now pray the words to the music in our church hymnals. The Lord has me back to *The Our Father* and the *Hail Mary* again, but now I am internalizing what the prayer says.

Yes, Lord, in your mercy— you are teaching me how to pray.

Continued from Page 2

up tomorrow only with what you thanked God for yesterday, what would you have? Gratitude helps us turn away from self. Every sin is a product of me coming first. Turning toward the Source of all goodness automatically turns us away from who we are to God and all that God is. Then we know we have enough.

In Green Eggs and Ham Sam is willing to share-even obsessed with sharing. He knew something that was good, great, wonderful, and awesome and he could do nothing but persuade his friend to be a part of it. Because of his own gratitude and desire for what he discovered he know he has more than enough. Sam was full, fulfilled. Can I be the same... ? Can I say... Sam, I AM?

In conclusion this quote, "The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay." The same Son who melts our hearts can harden our resolve if we but desire it.

Continued from Page 3

Even though the unknown of not knowing where my next place of employment would be was a little scary, I knew in my heart that God would take care of me. Three weeks ago I celebrated my one year anniversary at the YMCA. God has placed me with a Christian organization whose mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, body and mind for all; with their main focus on children, family and community. I was pleasantly surprised the first time I attended a staff meeting and it began with prayer. I was recently asked by the CEO to listen to his invocation that he was preparing to present to a large audience for my thoughts. I am so proud to be working in a Christian environment where lives are being touched through programs such as Diamonds and Y-Caps. These programs teach teenagers life and leadership skills, drug prevention and character enhancement. God has truly blessed me with this change of season in my life. I put my trust in Him daily to use me in my job to be a positive influence on others and to let His light shine through me.

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