

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

Dear Parishioners,

Below are summary notes based on the book *The Power In Praise* by the late Merlin Carothers. Although Carothers wasn't a Catholic, his book was recommended by Father Michael Scanlan, the past president of Franciscan University in Steubenville and the one who made that school a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy.

The actual book is available through Amazon. With Father Scanlan, I recommend it highly.

Carothers offers sound instruction on why and how we can rejoice in the Lord always. If you follow his Scripturally-based instructions you can learn how to allow the Spirit to help you rise above negativity and complaining. I keep a copy of this summary on my phone so I can keep renewing my commitment to praise Him in all things.

Once we discover the power that comes in praising the Lord in all circumstances, we will experience more fully the joy that Jesus wants all of us to have.

With my prayers,  
Father Conley

**The Power in Praise: How the Spiritual Dynamic of Praise Revolutionizes Lives** by Merlin Carothers

To praise God is to express our acceptance of something that God is permitting to happen. So to praise God for difficult situations, as sickness or disaster, means literally that we accept them as part of God's plan to reveal His perfect love for us. Praising, then, involves both gratitude and joy that God is keeping His Word to work good through everything if we love Him.

(Romans 8:28)

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (1 Thess 5:16-18) Many people are able to praise God for their circumstances, simply because they accept the word of the Bible that they are supposed to praise God in everything. Praising Him, they soon experience the results of an attitude of consistent thanksgiving and joy; and in turn, their faith is strengthened, and they can continue to live this way.

We're not supposed to push our understanding out of the way, grit our teeth, and say, "It doesn't make sense to me, but I'll praise the Lord if it kills me, if that's the only way I can get out of this mess!" That's not praising, that's manipulating. ....We are to praise God *with* our understanding, not in spite of it. We can never understand why and how God does something, but He wants us to accept with our understanding that He does it. This is the basis of our praise. God wants us to understand that He loves us and that He has a plan for us. And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.

Praising God is not a magic formula for success. It is a way of life that is solidly backed up in God's Word. We praise God not for the expected results, but for the situation just as it is. Praise is based on an acceptance of the present as part of God's loving, perfect will for us. Praise is not based on what we think or hope will happen in the future. We praise God for who He is and where and how we are *right* now.

When we honestly praise God, His power flows into the situation, and we will soon notice a change in us or around us. The change may be that we come to experience a real joy and happiness in the midst of what once appeared to be a miserable situation, or the situation may change. But this is a result of praise, and must not be the motivation for praise.

To praise God is to delight in Him. "***Be delighted with the Lord. Then he will give you all your heart's desires.***" (Ps. 37:4). Notice the order of importance here. We don't list our heart's desires and then delight ourselves in the Lord in order to get them. We're first to be delighted, and once we've experienced being really delighted with God, we'll discover that everything else becomes secondary.

We may look at the difficult circumstances surrounding us and think we've been standing still in one painful spot. The turning point will come when we begin to praise God for our situation instead of crying for Him to take it all away. God has a perfect plan for our lives, but He cannot move us to the next step until we joyfully accept our present situation as part of that plan. What happens next is God's move, not ours.

Our prayer should be: "God, I thank you that my life is just as it is. Every problem has been your gift to bring me to the place where I am right now. You wouldn't have permitted any of these things to happen if you hadn't known that it was best for me."

***Here I stand, with hands and eyes both lifted, to await the adorable will.***

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

**COMING THIS THURSDAY- "THE JOY OF HOPE: HOW TO LIVE JOYFULLY IN THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE** This four-part will be the topic of our next **Following Jesus series** which meets on the **second** and **fourth** Thursday evenings of the month, from 6:30 PM until 8:30 PM. The Joy of Hope will meet on January 10 and 24th and February 14 and 28th. The cost of the series is \$10 and includes dinner. Everyone is encouraged to come. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at [frconley@comcast.net](mailto:frconley@comcast.net) or 301-870-2220 ext. 13.

**WE WANT YOUR BLOOD** Next Saturday, January 12, 2019 from 10 AM to 2 PM, Catholic Daughters will sponsor a Red Cross Blood Drive in the school hall. You can email Carol at [caherskovitz@comcast.net](mailto:caherskovitz@comcast.net).

#### **ST. MARY'S HEALING PRAYER MINISTRY**

The mission of our healing prayer ministry is to help people to have a personal encounter with the Lord and experience his healing love. We do this by praying with people who are seeking physical, emotional and spiritual healing. Our healing prayer ministry is founded on our confidence in God the Father, who has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavens; Jesus Christ the Son who has redeemed us by his blood; and the Holy Spirit who fills us with the fire of his love. Persons seeking prayer from the healing prayer ministry will be given the opportunity to make an appointment with a prayer team for one or two confidential prayer sessions. To make an appointment to meet with one of our healing prayer teams, please contact Kaye Oliver at 240-682-0646 or Sam Oliver at 301-848-3206. Email can be sent to Samuel\_Oliver @[comcast.net](mailto:comcast.net).

#### **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL**

**CELEBRATION** All are invited to the annual archdiocesan Celebration of the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Saturday, January 19, at 4:30pm at St. Luke Catholic Church in Washington, DC (4925 East Capitol St.). This celebration of Dr. King's life provides a special occasion of renewed inspiration for courageous conversations that help us build respect and solidarity within our communities, bearing witness to God's boundless love for all the human family. For more information, contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at 301-853 -5335 or [culturaldiversity@adw.org](mailto:culturaldiversity@adw.org).

**MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO GAVE TO OUR CHRISTMAS COLLECTION.** This is a very important annual collection as every penny of it stays in the parish. It is also part of our budget. **To date we have received \$39,442.76.** We are grateful to everyone who has contributed. If you haven't yet given to the Christmas collection we ask you to please do so. If you no longer have a Christmas envelope just write "Christmas collection" on your check. Thank you for your support of our parish!

#### **HELP FOR YOUR MARRIAGE**

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille (pronounced "retro-vi" with a long "i") helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on February 1-3, please visit [www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com), call 443-400-7017, or email [3015@retrouvaille.org](mailto:3015@retrouvaille.org).

#### **ST. MARY'S SCHOOL RAFFLE OVER \$40,000 IN PRIZES STILL TO BE WON**

There is still time to get in on this year's annual raffle. Prizes of \$1000, \$4500 and the Grand Prize of \$20,000 are still to be won. You can purchase tickets at the shopping card table after Mass or at the school. Tickets are \$100 each. Don't forget your ticket is good for all remaining drawings. Purchase your tickets before January 31st and take a chance on the next \$1,000 and \$4,500 drawing.

#### **MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:**

**SUN:** 8am Mittie Forbes Simmons & Parishioners, 10am Melchora Bugtong, 12N: Clarissa Williams, **MON:** 8am Mary Nelson, **TUES:** 8am Joyce Irvin, **WED:** 8am Santiago Alfonso, **THURS:** 8am John A. Wade, **FRI:** 9:30am Rudolph Toye, **SAT:** 9am Hugh & Hilda Gardiner, 4pm Mary Jane Frere .

#### **PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY**

**PRAYERS:** Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Quint Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Kevin Gardiner, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Irma Johnson, Angie Kalnasy, Regina Kijesky, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Jean Turner, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Brice Zimmer.

**OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:** \$8,587.50. The unidentified donations totaled \$437.00. We received \$37.00 for our School Support.