



THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING: Isaiah 8:23-9:3 (67A)
GOSPEL: Matthew 4:12-23

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

The Power of Stories

As you may know, I was recently away to Green River, Wyoming for my niece's funeral. Due to weather and the Christmas season, my family chose to brave the icy roads and carpool there from various locations. As funerals tend to do, this sad event actually brought my entire family together for the first time in about five years. No one was missing. The funeral itself was more painful than I thought it would be with the time that had passed since her death but there was much joy too among my siblings in seeing each other again. Stories played a central role in the mourning and healing process...stories from her mom and dad...stories from her younger siblings...stories from her best friend and roommate in college, all of which shed light on just who my niece was. In some cases, I was reminded of her qualities and through other stories I felt I was being introduced to her for the first time. These stories brought tears, of course, but much more often laughter and joy blossomed. I stayed up late into the night for two nights with my brothers and sisters and we shared stories about one another from our childhood. Invariably they were of the embarrassing and humorous kind (the types of stories you usually do not tell on yourself and, at least in some cases, you thought you had happily forgotten). We were all left with new reminders of who we had been and how far we had come and how important we were to one another. It got to the heart of personal identity and a family's place in it all...things that we sometimes forget as we drift apart in life both geographically and sometimes emotionally as well. That is the power of stories and what comes back to us when we take the time to remember our own.

It occurred to me last night that stories hold power within our family of faith as well and often we do not make full use of them. In the context of faith, we usually refer to these stories as testimonials. We note how we used to be, how God impacted our lives at particular moments and how our lives were transformed from that point on. For instance, in my class we are recently discussing the testimonials of St. Patrick and St. Augustine who wrote two of the very first autobiographies in literature trying to give God the glory for saving them and for changing the very trajectory of their lives. In reading the lives of the saints we can sometimes end up very surprised with just how similar their lives are to our

own even though they are separated from us by death and by centuries of time past. In this year, you might consider reading the life of a saint. Learn about a member of our spiritual family...an older sibling long since departed but still with us in spirit. St. Ignatius of Loyola did (on his sick bed) for no other reason originally than that he was bored and there was nothing else available to read. What resulted? The Jesuit Order and a whole new chain of saints. St. Edith Stein also tried this task. Though she was an atheistic Jew at the time she read the life of St. Teresa of Avila, who was also an ethnic Jew, and remarked at the end, "This is truth". As a result, she found faith, became Catholic and joined her hero in the ranks of the saints.

We do not need to be canonized saints to join them in this work. If God has done something wonderful for us in our lives I would even say that we owe a debt to tell others about it. This is often the most powerful evangelization that we can engage in. It is authentic and raw and from the heart and these stories also remind us of who we are and just what family we are a part of. Conversion stories are particularly powerful. Invariably there is someone listening who is in the same boat or who is in need of just that type of encouragement or wisdom that our stories highlight. Suddenly the courage to change is once again rediscovered and the flow of grace occurs again. Consider sharing the story of your faith journey in 2017 with someone you care about. Even if there are some present who have heard it before, stories of their nature, if they are good ones, are meant to be retold.

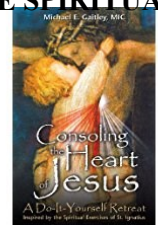
Finally, consider a thorough rereading of the Bible in 2017. This is our family story. And as I have shared with you all recently in learning more of my own family tree and heritage this practice has a way of instilling family pride and raising useful questions to further explore. The Bible, and especially the Gospels, forms the greatest story ever told! Each time we gather for Mass we explore portions of our common story to help us more deeply enter into the life of Christ. Further sharing in these stories through group Bible studies or on your own is also fruitful. When we read the Bible prayerfully, it always changes us. So let these stories shape you and remind you of who you are in this new year. Happy exploring the stories of our family!

CONSOLING THE HEART OF JESUS: A DO-IT-YOURSELF RETREAT- INSPIRED BY THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS

by Michael E. Gaitley

Join us for a 10 week small-group retreat in the nursery: Saturday mornings from 9:30-11 am.
Beginning Feb. 18th - April 29th (except Holy Week).

We will use the popular book, *Consoling the Heart of Jesus* by Fr. Michael Gaitley. Learn the keys to the great sanctity of St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Faustina and St. Mother Teresa. It is recommended that those participating first complete the Marian retreat "33 Days to Morning Glory" but this is not a requirement. All are welcome to join this program which runs through Lent. A limited number of books are available at the kiosk. For more information please call Mary Jo Baich 541-840-8136



THE LATEST FROM SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Everyone at Sacred Heart School is happy to be back with friends after an extended week of snow days.

Our **Kentucky Derby themed auction** is coming up fast... **March 11, 2017**. Any parishioner planning to attend and would like to create your own Derby hat, Sacred Heart is holding a **HAT MAKING PARTY**. Friday, Feb. 10th 7-9PM at the school (431 S. Ivy St) Finger food and drinks will be served. All flowers/feathers/ribbon and instructions will be supplied to create a Kentucky Derby hat to wear to the auction. Tickets (\$35) on sale now at the school office. Limited space! Call for more information at 541 772- 4105.

Middle School Sports

Girls basketball has kicked off with 20 girls in fifth through 8th grade. We will have two teams representing the Knights. Our first game is Monday, January 23 against St. Mary's. They will be playing 10 games this season.



4th Grade studied the works of Van Gogh and Renoir in art class during the first term. Each class did a **group poster project of a famous painting**. Each student did at least **one panel in the group project**: everyone contributed. They worked in oil pastel / watercolor to create these beautiful interpretations.



BEAUTY AND THE BEAST!

This year's Middle School musical will be **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**. The play has been cast and the students couldn't be more excited. They have received the script and are hard at work memorizing lines. The play will be held in the gym on March 17, 18 and 19. There is no cost to attend and all are welcome!

FATHER KEN'S CLASS

Father Ken's class, "Spiritual Masters", takes place on the **1st & 3rd Thursday** each month- 12:30 to 2 and 6:30 to 8PM in the Parish Hall. Join in February 2nd.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS:

Next weekend, January 29:

EDGE: 9:45-11am! Sacraments of Initiation.

UNLEASHED: 1-2:45p Prayer, bring a journal

YOUTH MASS: 5:00p. Come worship with us!

LIFE NIGHT: 6:15-7:30p. Jesus' Presence in the Sacraments

7:00 a.m. DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

M. Jan. 23: Scott Wright
T. Jan. 24: +Carilyn Kopico
W. Jan. 25: Rita Steinbrink
Th. Jan. 26: +Carilyn Kopico
Fri. Jan. 27: +Janice Gnos

8:30 a.m. DAILY MASS INTENTIONS

M. Jan. 23: +Nick Lombardo
T. Jan. 24: +Jack & +Lucille Joynt
W. Jan. 25: +Mary Gulrich
Th. Jan. 26: +John Meenaghan
Fri. Jan. 27: +John Meenaghan
Sat. Jan. 28: +Bill Schueller

Please pray for the deceased: +Father Joseph Shirey and +Monica Welcome.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL

of Jackson County was started in 1982 with volunteers lead by Lil and Bill Howe at Sacred Heart Church. Soon Our Lady of the Mountain and Shepherd of the Valley volunteers joined forces to form the Rogue Valley District Council. Nothing is done without the inspiration of Jesus Christ working in the volunteers who serve each day. We need you. Please answer the call to be an accountant/bookkeeper, kitchen helper, store worker or cashier, shower/laundry assistant, office helper or a counselor. We and more importantly, the needy need you. Please call 541-772-3828 Ext 7 to volunteer.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

This year's Sacrament class made First Reconciliation reverently and with attention to prayers. The children learned we celebrate God's forgiveness of our sins and we express sorrow for our sins by confessing them to a priest. Through penance, the priest asks them to do to show that they are truly sorry and want to turn away from sin and live, as God wants them to live.

For information on Religious Education call Mary Stallard 541-779-4661 ext: 107

Media Library Focus of the Week

Swear to God: The Promise and Power of the Sacraments

The most solemn, majestic, and beautiful gifts that Jesus Christ gave to the world are His sacraments. He endowed them with unprecedented and unparalleled power...power to change lives, save souls, and share God's very life. The sacraments are the ordinary means by which God directs the course of each human life and all of world history.

Lighthouse Media Kiosk at Oakdale doors. Place your payment in the envelope provided and in collection plate.