



FR. CK'S CORNER



By Fr. Christopher Klusman

Welcome to the Summer 2020 *Hand in Hand* Newsletter! I pray and hope that this Newsletter finds you safe

and healthy. As I echo St. Paul's words of introduction in his letter to Philemon, "I give thanks to my God always, remembering you in my prayers, as I hear of the love and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus and for all the holy ones, so that your partnership in the faith may become effective in recognizing every good there is in us that leads to Christ" (Phm 1:4-6). Please know of my continued daily prayers for each one of you and how you are remembered every time I participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, especially during these difficult and strange times.

Before I go further, I hope you will enjoy this newsletter that is filled with many exciting things. Last June 3, 2020, Deacon David Sommers celebrated his 20th anniversary as our deacon. Many Thanks to his 20 years of service as our deacon and that I hope you will enjoy the interview and pictures. We continue to provide more articles about our rich history, especially through St. John's School for the Deaf so check out the article on Fr. Gehl. Check out the article about the "Domestic Church" by Bishop Jeffrey Haines that was borrowed from a recent Catholic Herald article, as well as Jennifer Paul's article. Throughout the newsletter are random surprises that



will hopefully cheer you up during these challenging times.

It is amazing that the COVID-19 pandemic still goes on. I know the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for many of you. So many changes have happened and are happening, which leads us to experience a "new normal." Changes like: social distancing, washing hands for at least 20 seconds, hand sanitizers, hand sanitizers, hand sanitizers (did I say hand sanitizers, oh yes, I did... I keep thinking it must, by now, be our new cologne/perfume), wearing masks, and on... The Deaf community has expressed sadness at the difficulties the masks present, as we are not able to lip-read, as well as even within the signing community in which facial expressions (which constitute grammar, etc.) are partly covered. Especially hard is the many schedule changes with so many cancelations, postponements, etc.

The one thing that we all can agree on: this is a Spring and Summer of 2020 that we will never forget. Who would've thought that sports events were canceled? Movie theatres are actually closed? Parish Festivals canceled... No Summerfest, including its

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MISSION STATEMENT - DEAF APOSTOLATE

The Deaf Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee exists to enable all Catholic Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to participate fully in the liturgical, educational, pastoral, spiritual, and human concerns ministries in the Church.



ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE

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ethnic festivals. No Wisconsin State Fair, except for the drive-thru which still isn't the same experience... Even when professional sports reopened, it was strange seeing empty arenas/stadiums and/or people spaced apart from each other... How about parties where we mostly had to be outside? Graduations (some took place outside, others in different bigger venues, etc.). Strange is going to Confirmation and seeing the Bishop wear a mask, as was everyone else, and how he would have to confirm each Confirmand with Chrism oil through the use of a cotton ball? Especially bewildering is watching sign language interpreters with masks and/or face shields? As I said earlier: Who would've thought?!

The *hardest* for all of us was when we couldn't go to Mass to receive the Most Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist back during the "Safer at Home" Order last March and April. Especially difficult is not being able to participate in the Sacraments, such as not being able to go for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc. Also difficult was not being able to gather together as a community in Church. When parishes were opening again, it was still strange seeing alternate pews closed for social distancing but wonderful at having been able to receive the Holy Eucharist again. It was also wonderful at being able to have access to the other Sacraments too, but in different ways to follow safety practices for everyone.

The one thing that changes everything is whether a person has faith or not. Having faith, most especially holding on in our relationship with God in the Catholic Church, is everything. Faith gives us an anchor, a rock, and a strong foundation that we can depend on to help us through life's ups and downs. Through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I found comfort in the beautiful words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in his beautiful encyclical letter: *Spe salvi* (which means "Saved in Hope"): *"It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love"* (Paragraph 37). I always loved that word, "Compassion" which means "suffer with" as "com" means "with," while "passion" means "suffer." Having Jesus with us



"Saint Luis Gonzaga Hugging a Crucifix" by Luis López Piquer (Painter).

is what makes us realize that we have the gift of HOPE. Light in darkness. This leads me to agree wholeheartedly with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI when he wrote in the same encyclical: *"The one [person] who has hope lives differently"* (Paragraph #2).

People would tell me, "Why do you have the Crucifix?" Jesus already rose so the Cross should be plain. Honestly, I don't think I would make it through life if all I see is an empty cross. Seeing Jesus on the Cross shows me He is there for all of us. Seeing Jesus on the Cross shows how much He understands. Seeing Jesus on the Cross shows us how much He LOVES us. I hope you find grace through 2 beautiful quotes by St. Augustine.

"God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering."

– St. Augustine

"As they were looking on, so we too gaze on his wounds as he hangs. We see his blood as he dies. We see the price offered by the redeemer, touch the scars of his resurrection. He bows his head, as if to kiss you. His heart is made bare open, as it were, in love to you. His arms are extended that he may embrace you. His whole body is displayed for your redemption. Ponder how great these things are. Let all this be rightly weighed in your mind: as he was once fixed to the cross in every part of his

body for you, so he may now be fixed in every part of your soul." -St. Augustine

May our Lord continue to stay with you and give you the strength to get through these different times.

With that said, having been reminded of FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE, we have received many "blessings in disguises." The amount of resources available online for the Catholic Deaf community nationally is amazing! To be able to see many online Masses, rosary sessions, Divine Mercy Chaplets, and other vlogs in ASL by and with Deaf people and our hearing Brothers and Sisters in Christ that comfort and encourage us towards greater communion with God, Our Blessed Mother Mary, and all the Saints.

May God bless you and keep you. Immaculate Conception, patroness of our country, pray for us! St. John the Evangelist, patron of our archdiocese, pray for us! St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of the Deaf, pray for us!

DEAF APOSTOLATE INTERVIEWS DEACON DAVID SOMMERS



Thank you so much for joining the Office of the Deaf Apostolate for this interview. Can you please tell us your name and a little bit about yourself?

Hello! My name is Deacon David Sommers. I was born here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I have 2 brothers and 2 sisters.

I am the 3rd (or the middle child) in my family. I grew up attending St. John School for the Deaf and went to St. Rita School for the Deaf in Cincinnati, Ohio for my high school education. My wife, Susan Sommers, went through the same schools as I did. After graduation, I moved back here and worked in a welding company called the Kelly Welding Corporation for 39 years. I married Susan Sommers and helped raised 4 children with her. Now I have many grandchildren. My favorite hobbies are that I love watching the Green Bay Packers, as well as golfing. Prior to becoming a deacon, I have been involved with the Deaf community in many ways: through Deaf Golf, WAD (Wisconsin Association for the Deaf), and GMAD (Greater Milwaukee Association of the Deaf).

This year, we are celebrating an amazing milestone of yours: 20 years as our deacon. Can you please share with us the important steps of how God was preparing you for the diaconate?

I am the second Deaf deacon of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The first one was Deacon Martin Keller. Sadly, he was only able to serve for a short time as deacon due to passing away from cancer. Around the year 1992, people began asking me if I had thought about serving as a deacon. At that time, I didn't feel it was my time because I was younger and I was not ready to take the vow of celibacy, in



An announcement from the May/June 2000 Hand in Hand Newsletter.



David Sommers signs the form declaring that he freely chooses to become a future ordained deacon.

Instead, I took classes for Lay Ministry at Sacred Heart School of Theology for 3 years. I also was able to help serve in many ways, such as teaching at St. Lawrence and St. Andrew Parishes. Then I had an important experience in Minneapolis that confirmed my answer to God about becoming a deacon.

Tell us about that “important experience” in Minneapolis, that breakthrough you experienced in your journey that led you to finally say “Yes” to begin studies towards becoming a deacon.

The breakthrough happened at the ICDA-US Region Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I remembered



Susan Sommers, his wife, also signs a form agreeing to support her husband's calling as deacon.

case if my wife passed away earlier. If one is a deacon and his wife passes away, he is not allowed to marry again. Also, interesting is the fact that my wife, Susan, have been asking me and praying for me to become a deacon.

when Tim Owens gave a presentation about the 5 Models of the Church. When Tim explained about one model which is on Service, such as volunteering and serving with the Deaf community, it was at that moment, I finally realized that was what I have been doing... such as being President for the Greater Milwaukee Association for the Deaf (GMAD) for 7 years, President for the

Wisconsin Association for the Deaf (WAD) for 4 years, and President for ICDA #7. Even through all my time volunteering and serving with the Deaf community, I can do that, as well as to do more in a different way, as a future deacon. So, with my wife's support, I applied and got accepted to begin

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► **INTERVIEW - Continued from Page 3.**

studies at St. Francis de Sales Seminary to see if God is calling me to the diaconate.

Tell me about your journey preparing for your diaconate?

Susan and I attended classes together. Our classes took place all day on Saturdays (we met for class on every other Saturday). It was a 4-year journey from 1996 to 2000. I was grateful to have had sign language interpreters. Our day included praying together, attending Mass, and classes. There were 9 deacons



David receives his degree at the Cousins Center prior to his diaconate ordination.

(including me) in my class. I also had to do internships so I can learn more about my future role as a deacon, such as teaching at St. Lawrence Church with Sr. Martha Ann.

What was your favorite topic at the Seminary classes and why?

My favorite subject of study at the Seminary was homiletics. I enjoyed learning about the process of writing and giving homilies. It is a challenging process.

Now that you passed (Thankfully!) and are about to be ordained! Tell us that very special day of your ordination?



Mr. and Mrs. David Sommers processes down the middle aisle of the Cathedral for the Ordination!

June 3, 2000 was the day of my ordination. At the beginning of the Mass, I will never forget walking down the middle aisle with my wife at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in downtown Milwaukee. To be able to be with Susan and my classmates, as well as to see many family and friends

Susan Sommers proclaims a reading during the Ordination Mass in American Sign Language.



who traveled to be here with us on that special day was very special. By looking at the pictures, you can see it was before they remodeled the interior design of the Cathedral. After the readings, Gospel, and homily, I and 8 of my other classmates had to lay on the floor of the Cathedral (which is called “prostration”)

while singing for the intercession of saints. Archbishop Weakland was the presiding archbishop that did the “laying on of hands” on me. The part that I will never forget to this day is the part when Susan came up to me to put on me (or in other words, “to vest me”) the deacon stole for the first time. This was allowed back then but now only other clergy members are allowed to vest. During that moment, I shed many tears as Susan and I hugged. Also Archbishop Weakland hugged me and my classmates too. After the Mass, many photos were being taken. We also had a nice banquet in which we happily ate and chatted with each other which was a really



Here all are laying prostrate during the Litany of Saints. Can you find out which one is David?



The newly ordained were recently vested by their wives. Can you see Susan Sommers ready to walk down the stairs?

at 76 years of age, it is amazing how time really flew by.

So wonderful!! Please tell us, briefly, the difference between a Transitional and a Permanent Deacon? And which are you?

I am a Permanent Deacon which means I stay as a deacon, as was Deacon Martin Keller before me. Many of us (permanent deacons) have already been married and/or have children. Unmarried men can become permanent deacons.



David and his classmates stand ready for Ordination.

nice experience. The next day on Sunday, we had a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Matthias Parish where I gave my first homily. Afterwards, we had another celebration in Steiger Hall too. As I fondly reflect this now

► INTERVIEW - Continued from Page 4.

Transitional deacons are usually seminarians who are studying to become priests and will shortly become ordained priests as their next step. Fr. Christopher Klusman was a transitional deacon for about 13 months before being ordained a priest.

Tell us about what it was like serving as our 2nd Deaf Deacon?

I truly am happy being able to assist at Mass, especially in proclaiming the Gospel and giving homilies. I have done several baptisms, weddings, and funeral services. One of the important duties of diaconate ministry is visiting the homebound. I remembered when I started, I was visiting about 25 people... Sadly, over the years, many have passed away that now I currently visit about 5 people. I helped teach in Delavan for St. Andrew Parish for Bible Study and their Religious Education Program, in which Susan was also one of their teachers. I also teach Bible Study sessions at St. Matthias Parish and was their deacon for many years from the years 2000 to



Newly ordained Deacon David celebrates with Susan and the Church this wonderful milestone!

about 2014 until I was reassigned to work for the Deaf Apostolate. I also provide Communion Services and religious formation sessions at the Deaf Senior Citizen Apartments (Water Tower View (WTV) Apartments) in Greenfield. I enjoy showing "Saint Movie Nights," in which we watch Catholic movies and I answer many of their questions. I continue to attend NCOD and ICDA-US Conferences whenever I can over the years. In the beginning, I would go alone as Susan would stay home with our 4 children. When our children grew up, I was glad that Susan was able to join me for many years until her last NCOD at San Antonio due to health reasons. For Susan's declining health, I stayed in Milwaukee with Susan to care for her. One time in 2017 when the ICDA-US Conference was happening in St. Louis and Susan was able to attend, so we were able to go. I also help whenever I can for our retreats. It is wonderful to serve with Fr. Christopher. I have given



Newly ordained Deacon David kneels in front of Archbishop Weakland during the Ordination Mass.

various presentations at Conferences and retreats, which I enjoy doing.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, I know we were not able to celebrate my 20th anniversary. That is okay as humility is important. Hopefully, we can be able to celebrate my 25th anniversary as deacon. Even at the age of 76 years, I'm grateful that I still have good health even though I still have aches that normally comes with age. Overall, I love serving God over these many years.

What do you hope for in your future?

I hope that I can continue to serve as your deacon for many more years. You never know, I hope I can still serve until my health declines. Hopefully

I can still be serving at the age of 85... or even into my 90s, similar to Deacon Ralph Hinch of the Archdiocese of Chicago when he served until the very end when he passed away at the age of 94. I will be happy to serve until God calls me home to heaven where I hope to see God, Mary, and especially Susan. I really want to see her.

It is sad that during the Covid-19 that visitors are not allowed to enter nursing homes, which is understandable for safety reasons. It was interesting experience to do the online Masses and it is exciting to see how technology can help us today and in the future. I can never forget the joy of finally going back to Mass a few weeks ago and receiving Holy Communion. With the challenges of having our public Masses again with the risks involved for people over 65 years of age, as well as those with health issues. I look forward to the day when things would go back to the way it was such as being able to go to Mass with the Deaf community on Sundays. We have to keep praying.

But, I hope that the Catholic Deaf community continues to grow. I know that 1% of the Deaf community attends church (Catholic, etc.). I hope that more Deaf people come back and that the percentage increases. I also hope that we continue to have access to our faith in our language: American Sign Language. I also hope that more Young Adults will be a part of our Catholic Deaf community too. Please pray for me as I will keep you in my prayers. God bless!



Susan and David Sommers Certificate of Achievement Sacred Heart School of Theology

Borrowed from July/August 1996 Hand in Hand Newsletter.



St. Andrew Parish

DEAF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINISTRY

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER: EXPOSING THE VULNERABILITIES AND REMEMBERING THE GRACE DURING COVID-19



**By Jennifer Paul, Coordinator
Deaf Religious Education & Deaf Ministry
St. Andrew Parish, Delavan**

We are in the middle of a global pandemic and we are seeing the effects of it everywhere from the mundane to the

critical. Never again will we take the mundane for granted. In fact, there is holiness in the everyday “mundane” of life and we need to make every living moment full of grace.

“Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus. Let us, then, who are ‘perfectly mature’ adopt this attitude. And if you have a different attitude, this too God will reveal to you” (Philippians 3:13-14).

The global pandemic is a good reminder for us to be – or at least strive to be – “perfectly mature” and work towards to be the most holy person God intends for us to be, day in and day out, in all things great and small. We need to be “perfectly mature” and keep ourselves and everyone in our circles safe and healthy. We practice social distancing, wear masks, and remain vigilant in our personal hygiene habits such as handwashing, etc.

In critical matters, the global pandemic is shaking us to the core of our morality. It exposes the vulnerabilities in our society, especially our economic system with devastating impacts on employment, housing, and health. How we react to the vulnerabilities shows

whether or not we are “perfectly mature” and act on “the goal, the prize of God’s upward calling, in Christ Jesus” to remember our blessings – great or small – and to serve others “worst off” than us.

The more difficult question is how we were to act when and if we were the “worst off” ones? We need to look at the social injustice that those advocating for the rights of black people are working towards namely

the dismantling of systematic racism and to remedy its’ socioeconomic effects. The global pandemic is glaring a harsh light on the injustice and as painful as it is everyone, we need to take a hard look at it and examine deeply how we as individuals help to offset the effects of systematic racism. We are to be “perfectly mature” and “adopt this attitude” of striving for social justice for the “worst off”

members of our society, whose oppression took root centuries ago and whose oppression came in different forms over the centuries.

We are also seeing the vulnerabilities exposed in the health care



BE OPENED!

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND DEAF CULTURE



By **Lana Portolano**
The Catholic University of America Press

Be Opened! The Catholic Church and Deaf Culture offers readers a people's history of deafness and sign language in the Catholic Church. Paying ample attention to the vocation stories of

deaf priests and pastoral workers, Portolano traces the transformation of the Deaf Catholic community from passive recipients of mercy to an active language minority making contributions in today's globally diverse church.

Background chapters familiarize readers with early misunderstandings about deaf people in the church and in broader society, along with social and religious issues facing deaf people throughout history. A series of connected narratives demonstrate the strong Catholic foundations of deaf education in sign language, including sixteenth-century monastic schools for deaf children and nineteenth-century French education in sign language as a missionary endeavor. The author explains how nineteenth-century schools for deaf children, especially those founded by orders of religious sisters, established small communities of Deaf Catholics around the globe. A series of portraits illustrates the work of pioneering missionaries in several different countries—"apostles to the Deaf"—who helped to establish and develop deaf culture in these communities through adult religious education and the sacraments in sign language. In several chapters focused on the twentieth century, the author describes key events that sparked a modern transformation in Deaf Catholic culture. As linguists began to recognize sign languages as true human languages, deaf people borrowed the practices of Civil Rights activists to gain equality both as citizens and as members of the church. At the same time, deaf people drew inspiration and cultural validation from key documents of Vatican II, and leadership of the Deaf Catholic community began to come from the deaf community rather than to it through missionaries. Many challenges remain, but this book clearly presents Deaf Catholic culture as an important and highly visible embodiment of Catholic heritage.

About the Authors

Lana Portolano is professor of English at Towson University, Maryland.

Reviews

"Portolano has done an incredible job of compiling and organizing historical information spread across countries and time..."

Be Opened! will be an invaluable resource to Catholic Studies and Deaf Studies scholars."

—Tracy Ann Morse, East Carolina University

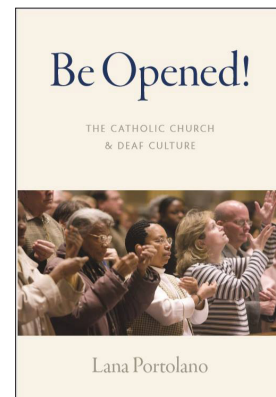
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Pages: 336



CATHOLIC QUIZ

1. In honor of Father's Day last June, which father came to Jesus to ask for a cure for his daughter?

- (a) Roman Centurion
- (b) Jairus (c) Zacchaeus
- (d) Cornelius



2. In the Parable of the Sower, on what soil does the seed grow but wither right away?

- (a) Rocky (b) Next to the Path (c) Thorns
- (d) Good Ground

3. Which story IS NOT in the book of Genesis?

- (a) Creation (b) Tower of Babel (c) Flood (d) Passover

4. How many Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated by Catholics in the United States?

- (a) 2 (b) 4 (c) 6 (d) 8

5. One Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence, one Catholic signed the Articles of Confederation. How many signed at the Constitutional Convention?

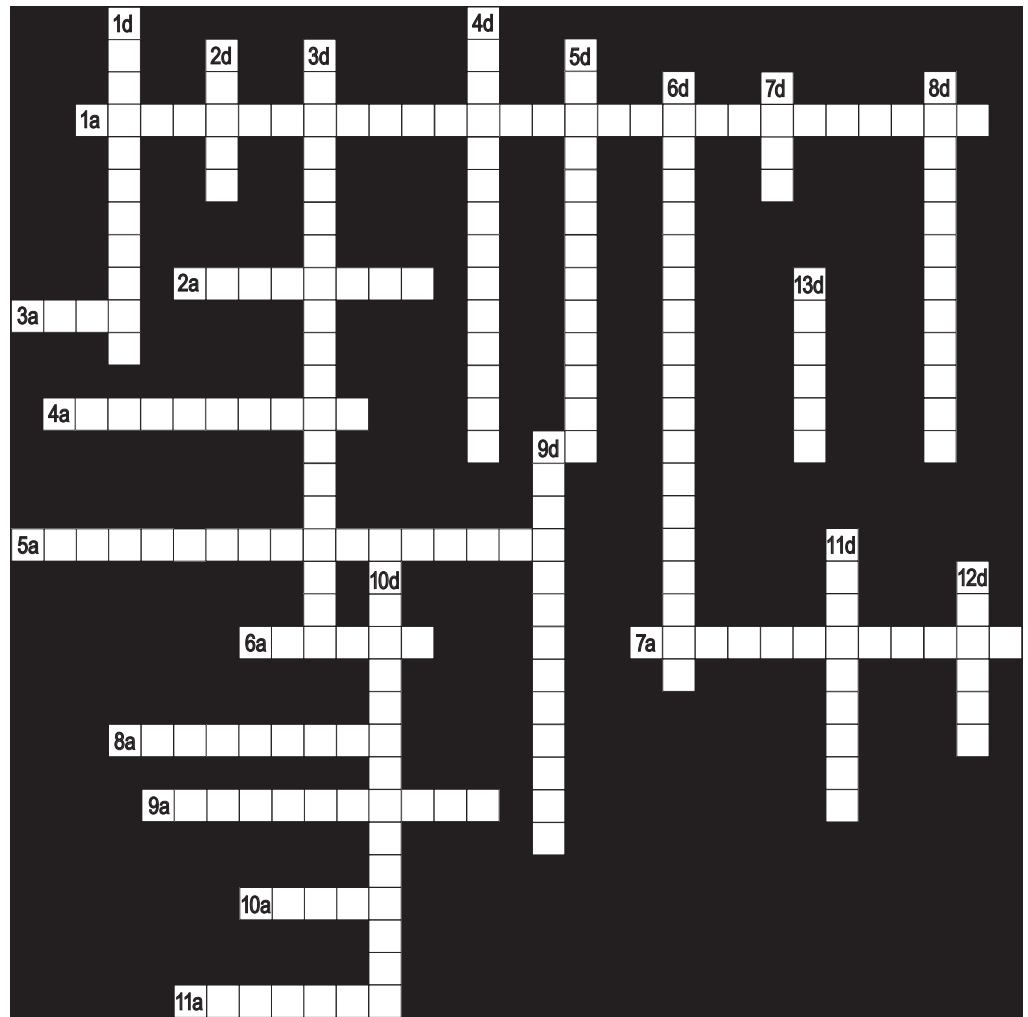
- (a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 3

(Answers on page 16.)

KATEY'S CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

Begun in the previous Fall 2019 Newsletter, an article/feature is chosen from an older Hand in Hand Newsletter to revisit important people, events, and places of our rich history. We hope you will enjoy this unique selection from the January/February 2000 Newsletter made by Katey Nielsen. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Crossword Challenge should be a nice distraction.

While you are filling out this Crossword, pretend you are going back in time during January/February 2000 on who the current Superintendent, etc. Enjoy!



DOWN

- _____ (10 letters, first and last name) wrote the book, *When the Mind Hears*.
- _____ (4 letters) Tesar worked at St. Johns School for the Deaf and now her ministry is in the bishops office at the Cousins Center (she is the secretary to the bishop).
- American Sign Language is used by most Deaf people in what two countries? _____ and _____ (18 letters total).
- The name of the first Superintendent at Wisconsin School for the Deaf [in] 1852 was _____ (13 letters).
- He worked at St. Johns School for the Deaf and now continues his ministry at the Cousins Center: _____ (12 letters).
- Historically, American Sign Language is related to which other countries' language? _____ (18 letters).
- An estimated _____ (3 letters) percent of Americans have a hearing loss of some kind.
- The current Superintendent of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf is _____ (11 letters).
- St. Johns School for the Deaf was located on _____ (12 letters) Avenue.

- The American with Disabilities Act provides many Deaf and hard of hearing people with _____ (13 letters) rights.
- The current Archbishop of Milwaukee is Archbishop Rembert _____ (8 letters).
- The National Institution for the Deaf, in the late 1800s, was located in what city? _____ (5 letters).
- Ioanes Martinvs _____ (5 letters, last name) was the 1st Archbishop/bishop of Milwaukee.

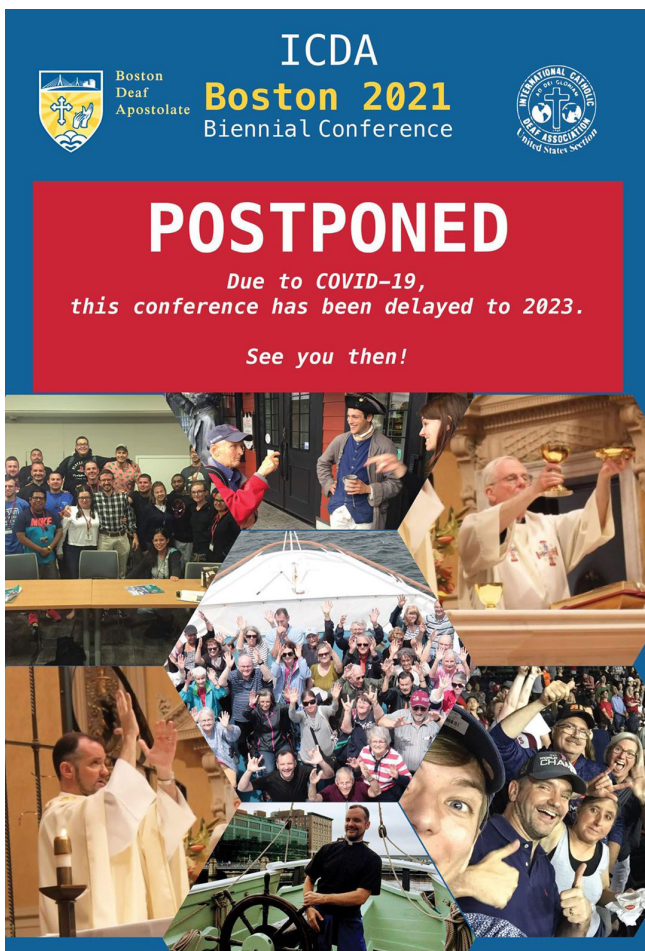
ACROSS

- American Sign Language and Deaf Culture are transmitted to Deaf people from generation to generation through _____ (27 letters).
- The first Deaf teacher ever, at the Institute for Deaf Mutes in 1805 was Jean _____ (7 letters).
- What percent of Deaf people have Deaf parents? _____ (3 letters) per cent.

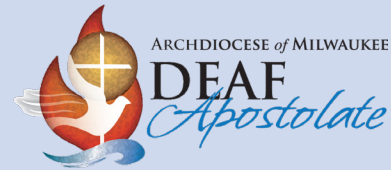
► **CROSSWORD - Continued from Page 8.**

4. The college for the Deaf in Washington DC, _____ (9 letters) was established in 1864.
5. _____ (16 letters) is the first Deaf President at Gallaudet University.
6. The Deaf President Now rally was in the month of _____ (5 letters) [in] 1988.
7. The role of facial expressions, head movements, and eye gaze in American Sign Language is primarily: _____ (choose one) – grammatical, stylistic, emotive, attention getting.
8. Saint _____ (8 letters) is the patron saint of children.
9. The first principal of St. Johns School for the Deaf was Sr. _____ (10 letters).
10. Alexander Graham _____ (4 letters) invented the first telephone.
11. The _____ (6 letters) case regarding interpreters being provided in school went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1982.

(Answers on page 16.)



The poster features a blue header with the ICDA logo and the text "Boston Deaf Apostolate Boston 2021 Biennial Conference". A large red banner in the center reads "POSTPONED" in white, with the text "Due to COVID-19, this conference has been delayed to 2023. See you then!" below it. The bottom half of the poster is a collage of photos showing people at a conference, including a priest performing a ritual, a group of people cheering, and a man at a steering wheel.



Renewal Prayer for Deaf Catholic Church

Father, we ask you to look with mercy at us,
your Deaf Catholic Church.

We ask you to bless us, inspire us to always love you
above all things and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We pray to you for our bishops, our spiritual leaders.

Please bless them and give them the strength
and wisdom to guide us, their people.

Help them to recognize, understand, and respond
to our unique needs.

Please bless the priests, deacons, religious, and lay people
who serve our community.

Inspire them so that they may
then inspire all hearts of deaf people
to know, love, and serve you and your Catholic Church.

Father, we pray to you for our baptized
Deaf Catholic brothers and sisters.

Please send your Holy Spirit to enkindle and
renew their hearts

so that they may continue to grow spiritually
through making time for prayers, receiving sacraments,
and serving other people.

Our young baptized Deaf Catholics are growing up
in a challenging and confused world.

Almighty God, please help them understand
that the way of the world does not give life;
your way alone gives true life.

Please touch their hearts and guide them to find your love.

Bring them back to the Church.

Put in them the desire to pray, to receive the
sacraments and to serve other people.

Holy Spirit, come and transform each of us
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Holy Mary, our Mother, pray for us. Amen.

FATHER GEHL, PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR OF ST. JOHN'S DIES; HE GAVE ALL HIS WORKING YEARS TO EDUCATING DEAF

Since our Summer 2019 Special 175th Anniversary Commemorative Newsletter, we are proud to continue the tradition of including here articles related to the history of St. John's School for the Deaf, as we have done with Mark Hansen's articles. We hope you will enjoy reading **two** articles about this important figure in our history at St. John's School for the Deaf. This was taken from St. John's Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 3, June, 1963. Please pray for the repose of the priestly soul of Fr. Gehl.

"May 10, 1963. – Arrived in eternity tonight at 6:00 P.M. tired after a journey of 80 years but happy that at last I am home with God. Today is the anniversary of the founding of St. John's School for the Deaf – May 10, 1876 – how kind, that my Eternal beginning coincided with it."

This might well have been the last entry in life of Reverend Eugene J. Gehl which began January 27, 1883 in Racine. Most of the other entries have to do with St. John's School for the Deaf, to which he was devoted for more than 50 years.

Other entries will note that the Gehl family moved to Kenosha where he attended St. George parochial school until



Father with his first love, a group of deaf children.

graduation in 1896. Two years later he began his seminary studies at St. Francis and was ordained June 20, 1909.

With the encouragement and approval of Archbishop Messmer he began his career as a missionary of the deaf.

The Young People, July 1909, says "He has chosen as his field the mission to look for the Catholic deaf children of

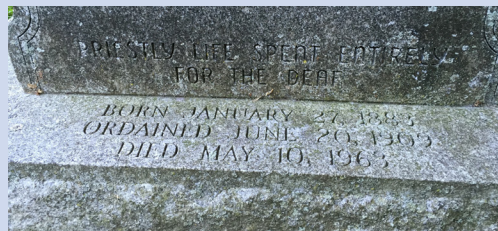
► **FATHER GEHL - Continued on Page 11.**

HUNDREDS PAY LAST RESPECTS; FRIENDS FROM FIVE STATES ATTEND FUNERAL

A reverend hush fell over St. John's School playground at 1:00 P.M. Tuesday, May 14, 1963 as the limousine carrying the body of Father Gehl drove into the yard. Children formed an honor guard and six privileged boys carefully bore the remains to the parlor. All afternoon former pupils, parents, friends, relatives and benefactors paid their respects to a priest who had served the deaf for 54 years.

At 7:30 the Ephpheta Sodality of St. John the Baptist prayed the Rosary in signs and speech. Then at 8:30 the Knights of Columbus Cardinal Stritch Council 4614 recited the Rosary. A continuous line of mourners walked through the corridors of St. John's into the parlor.

Wednesday morning, a procession of school children, Knights of Columbus Honor Guard, relatives, friends, Sisters and Priests marched from St. John's to Sacred Heart Church. The



Fr. Gehl's tombstone: "Priestly Life spent entirely for the Deaf."

Office of the Dead was recited by priests of the archdiocese. The solemn pontifical requiem mass was offered by Archbishop William E. Cousins. Assisting the archbishop were: Fr. Joseph Huepper, presbyter assistant; Fr. Walter Gehl, a second cousin, deacon; Fr. Martin Jautz, suddeacon; Frs. Bernard Felsecker and Alfred J. Weber,

deacons of honor; and Frs. Lawrence C. Murphy and Robert Sampon, masters of ceremonies. Msgr. Frank Schneider delivered the eulogy, which Father Murphy interpreted to the deaf.

Many friends, deaf and hearing came from Kansas, Indiana, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Ohio to pay their last respects.

He was buried in the cemetery of the St. Francis seminary known as the Chapel in the Woods.

► **FATHER GEHL - Continued from Page 10.**

the province of Milwaukee and to secure for them a Catholic training and education, and at the same time to minister to the wants of the ... deaf of the state." By October he was already touring through Iowa on behalf of the deaf. This was the beginning of many such trips with one night stops in small towns.

He gave an illustrated lecture "Our Home for the Deaf" with stereopticon views of the Institute and its surroundings. Or he preached on the deaf cause in churches and received collections for the upkeep of St. John's.

During the Christmas holidays of his first year the De L'Epee Reading Circle was organized to foster a taste for good reading. Father Gehl was the director ex-officio and thirty-five pupils joined.

One wonders if it was the reading or the peanut socials which Father gave the members that attracted so many members.

In his travels he was always aware of his own mission – looking for deaf children. In January of 1911 he made a trip to Iowa and brought back a 14 year old deaf girl who had never been to school. She was the first of many.

To encourage the adult deaf in the performance of their religious duties Father Gehl organized the Ephpheta Sodality of St. John's the Baptist in February 1911.

Father gave the deaf catechetical instructions in the sign language. He was assisted by Rev. Stephen Klopfer then also stationed at St. John's. This Sodality is still very active in Milwaukee and in 1961 celebrated its Golden Jubilee.

Father became a well-known speaker, in demand for Forty Hours devotions, parish retreats and missions. At

the time of his Silver Jubilee he had totalled 307 lectures on St. John's and its work for the deaf; 173 missions; 134 parish retreats; 85 nurses' retreats; 61 closed retreats and 129 Forty Hours. This prompted a notation in **Our Young People**: "Rev. Eugene J. Gehl is seldom at home. He has been very busy this year giving missions, retreats, and helping the priests in different parishes. He is in St. Paul at present [June 1915]."

His love for the deaf urged him on toward the goal of more greater understanding of the handicap of deafness. As he became better known at St. John's School was also gaining a reputation – one which he loved to say – "was second to none." He became permanent secretary of the Catholic Deaf Conference in 1915.

Upon the death of Monsignor Gerend, in 1938 Father Gehl was appointed president and director by Archbishop Stritch. He continued to carry on the proud tradition of the school and worked for even higher educational standards.

He attended or sent the teaching sisters to conventions where latest educational methods might be discussed. He furthered the education of the faculty and provided the latest in electronic hearing aids for the classrooms. He continued to make new friends for St. John's with the power of his words and his charming personality.

Then the years of work began to take their toll and Father suffered from arteriosclerosis. In May of 1962 he fell and broke his arm.

In January there was an 80th birthday celebration for Father Gehl when priests, relatives, friends and benefactors joined in honoring him. Death came at St. Joseph's Hospital



Father Eugene Gehl (above) as he looked in younger days and (below) as he was in his last years — a familiar figure at his desk.



where Father Gehl had undergone surgery, May 8. He received the last sacraments and with sisters, priests and nurses praying at his bed he quietly died thus fulfilling the wish of one of his friends who wrote at the time of Father's Golden Jubilee: "I dare say you still have the gracious personality you had at the time I met you. Keep it for God and enter into eternity, with that smile of holiness that has been yours."

REALIZING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

By Fr. Christopher Klusman



Bishop Haines

Bishop Haines made several interesting points in his Herald of Hope article in the August 13, 2020 edition of the Catholic Herald. One of those points deserved some special attention here. Bishop Haines spoke about this point during a Zoom meeting on the “discussion of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on ministry in the Church.” He had five topics, in which I’d like us to read and reflect on his third topic.


3) *The Domestic Church* – In a society used to transportation to various specialized sites for business, education, recreation, etc., the shutdown of such free movement by executive orders relegated much of life to the common household. Suddenly, the home became an office, a classroom, a movie theater and a gymnasium. It also became a place of Catholic formation and worship. In recent times, much of the responsibility for formation and worship was assumed by the local parish, often with ample facilities and professional ministerial staff. New challenges arose with the restricted physical access to those resources. The Catholic Church long has lauded the importance of the family home as the primary place of faith formation and prayer in its theology of the Sacraments of Marriage and Baptism. The newfound situation precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic offered the opportunity to test the mettle of this teaching. A number of successful ventures were launched in response to this challenge. New computer technology and social media outlets offered the advent of virtual forms of retreats, engaged enrichment sessions, Stations of the Cross, spiritual book discussions, etc. Still,



THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

350. WHY IS THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY CALLED A DOMESTIC CHURCH?

The Christian family is called the domestic church because the family manifests and lives out the communal and familial nature of the Church as the family of God. Each family member, in accord with their own role, exercises the baptismal priesthood and contributes toward making the family a community of grace and of prayer, a school of human and Christian virtue and the place where the faith is first proclaimed to children.



From *The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. © Copyright 2005.

© <http://www.facebook.com/SaintJosephStudios> <http://www.youtube.com/saintjosephstudios>

much of the content and delivery came from parish and archdiocesan sources. It would seem that further exploration will need to take place to train parents in the skills and create a culture in which the actual passing on of the faith takes place around the family dinner table. It would be wise for the Church to invest more heavily in the development of the Intergenerational Family Formation Programs, which some of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee have adopted.

Who taught us our Catholic faith? It tends to be our parents. Where did we first learn about our faith? At home. Where did we learn how to first pray? At home. Perhaps the first crucifix we saw is at home. Where did we (should) first experience love? At home. Where did we first learn forgiveness? At home. Where did we first learn to share? At home. Where did we first learn to help another person? At home.

Home, also called the “Domestic Church,” is a place where we feel safe to grow and learn about our Catholic faith (God, Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, prayer, and the list goes on). Home is where we learn and grow which brings us to the Mass at a Catholic Church. At the Catholic Church, we are transformed through our participation in the Sacraments, especially through the Holy Eucharist, as well as the blessing we receive at the end of the Mass that helps us back home. The cycle repeats again and again. The “Domestic Church” and the “Catholic Church” have a very special bond and connection.

Sadly, how often do you hear when people say, “Mass is going to start in few minutes. Let’s start prayer.” “Mass is

► **DOMESTIC CHURCH - Continued on Page 13.**

► **DOMESTIC CHURCH - Continued from Page 12.**

over. The time for our faith is finished until the next Mass.” And, “Thinking about our God, prayer, and things like that are only spent when we are at that Catholic Church.” This is a dangerous way of thinking. Mass is the place where we learn more about the Word through the readings and homily, as well as the place where we actually eat and drink Jesus’ Most Precious Body and Blood, that helps us at home (and in the other places we go to). Home is also the place where we *still* cultivate our relationship with the Lord,



Making A Home Altar

interiorly (with yourself) and exteriorly (with others).

It is often during challenging times, as Bishop Haines pointed

out, such as the COVID-19, that allows us to rethink, reprioritize, and realize what is most important in our lives. This brief hiatus hopefully has been grace-filled for you all that allows you to keep God (or bring back God) as the first place in our lives. It is not too late for you to do this.

I thought I can share with you two things that I hope will be helpful for you: (1) Establish a holy place in your house. You can establish a place that is a place of prayer, where you read the Bible, pray the rosary together, and/or pray. It can

be a place where you can keep a statue of Jesus, Mary, or another saint. Various sacramental can be placed there, such as the rosary, etc. This is a great grace that helps remind us of our most important priority: God and daily time with Him. (2) Our goal is to go to heaven. But that is not the only goal. Another goal is to HELP others get to heaven. And wouldn't you want people in your own HOMES to get to heaven? We all have a tremendous responsibility to help others, even when it is difficult to do so. In the long run, we pray that they will thank us, if not, then God will.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic ends, we should never go back to the way things were. We should build on from the great graces we established through our prior experiences. Please know of my prayers with you that you continue to



keep your “Domestic Church” growing that it is truly a “house of prayer” in union with the Catholic Churches throughout the world. God bless you!



JENNIFER PAUL'S UPCOMING VLOGS

In the previous Winter/Spring 2020 *Hand in Hand* Newsletter, there was an article about Jennifer Paul's amazing vlogs on the 14 Holy Helpers and how we learned so much about them, as well as feeling a greater sense of peace at having powerful intercessors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are excited to announce that Jennifer Paul will begin again a new series of vlogs on who? The 12 Apostles, and two more people (their names will be kept as a surprise)! Her plan will be that (due to the long hours of research, filming, and editing for each vlog) about two vlogs on the 2 Apostles will be released per month during the upcoming Fall 2020, Winter 2021, and Spring 2021 seasons. We will keep you posted on when these videos will be released and never be afraid to pray



with them during these times. We can't wait for the vlogs. Please keep Jennifer Paul in your prayers that the Holy Spirit and the Apostles will help her during this process.

The 12 Apostles, pray for us!

THERE IS A ST. CORONA?!

By Fr. Christopher Klusman

Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic caused many changes in our lives since March 2020, we have learned about the ASL sign for “COVID-19” and “Coronavirus,” as well as to learn more about the virus itself, which has a crown-like structure. The Latin word, “corona,” means “crown.” The word “coronae” means “crowns.” This was how the name “Coronavirus” came about.

I still won't forget learning about something else too from one of my priest “housemates” who told me that there is a St. Corona!

What is interesting is that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a new sudden growth of high and renewed interest in this saint named Corona,

who was nearly forgotten for many centuries! How many of us knew there is a St. Corona?

We know that she is a female martyr. But what about her name? She was named “Corona” because of the “crown” she received at her martyrdom and for her faith, which tells us



that her name has been replaced or lost. This reminded me of St. Roman, whose parish that I had served several years ago in Milwaukee, WI. St. Roman is not his real name but may have been part of his name. St. [Unknown Name] the

Roman Soldier overtime became St. Roman. One thing we know about St. Corona is that she wasn't named because of a pandemic.

Sadly, as is common with the early martyrs, not much is known about her. She was a young woman who was killed for her Catholic faith in the second century A.D. “The German Catholic news agency KNA reports the church's martyr records put the year of her death at 177 A.D. It is not certain where she lived.”

Crux, “Pandemic casts spotlight on a nearly forgotten martyr: St. Corona.” March 28, 2020.

According to the Rhode Island Catholic article (from April 24, 2020):



The earliest reliable English source about [St.] Corona that I could locate was 1916 edition of “The Roman Martyrology,” [Elizabeth] Harper explains. The



Martyrology is the official catalogue of saints recognized by the global Church; the 1916 printing identifies May 14 as the Feast Day of Saints Victor and Corona.

The entry is remarkably brief: it states that Victor was a Roman soldier in Syria who was martyred for his Christian faith during the persecutions organized by Emperor Antoninus Pius. Corona was in the crowd at the public execution, where she experienced a vision of two crowns descending from heaven — one for Victor, and another for some other individual who was about to die for Christ. When she described the revelation to those around her, she was accused of also being a Christian and was martyred by being “torn to pieces between two trees” (apparently meaning that she was tied to the ends of two palm trees which had been bent down, and was then torn apart when the trees were released)... She is not the only saint whose name derives from their receiving the “crown of martyrdom.” The name of St. Stephen, the Church's first martyr, comes from the Greek word stephanos, meaning crown – which explains why the exact same St. Corona is venerated by the Greek Orthodox under the slightly less exotic name of “St. Stephanie.”

She was killed for comforting St. Victor, the new martyr. This is why they share the same day of May 14 and that they can be pictured together.



Sadly, there are a lot of misconceptions and misunderstandings about St. Corona. One misconception was that she was labeled as

the patron saint of pandemics, which is not true. What made sense was that she is a patron saint of lumberjacks, since she was torn apart between two palm trees.

Over time, people also came to believe that St. Corona could be a patron saint for treasure hunters, as the word “coronae”

► **ST. CORONA- Continued on Page 15.**

► ST. CORONA - Continued from Page 14.

(crowns) was also the name associated with coins. Because the COVID-19 pandemic had caused problems with the economy, people thought about calling for her intercession for help.

Which leads us to another question: Do we have her relics? The answer is yes. It is at the Aachen Cathedral. The Aachen Cathedral is a mighty 9th-century cathedral in western Germany. It has many fascinating facts. It is the burial place of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, who died in 814 A.D. This place is where many German kings and queens were crowned. It is still one of the most-visited churches today.

There is a fascinating story about her relics in the Aachen Cathedral and her presence in the nearby areas. I found it best to quote the passage from the CRUX article from March 28, 2020:

[St. Corona] is above all revered in Germany's southern state of Bavaria and in Austria, KNA reports. A chapel is dedicated to her in Sauerlach, near Munich. In the



Bavarian Diocese of Passau, two churches recall her name, while in the province of Lower Austria and outside of Vienna there are two towns named "Sankt Corona." In the

cathedral of Munster in northwestern Germany, there is a St. Corona statue, currently decorated with flowers placed at its base. Some relics of the martyr were taken to the Prague cathedral in the 14th century.

One interesting note says that "King Otto III brought Corona's relics to Aachen in 997. They were initially kept in a tomb underneath a slab on the cathedral floor for hundreds of years before they were moved to the shrine in the early 20th century."

<https://www.dw.com/en/was-st-corona-the-patron-saint-of-epidemics/a-53424801>

Again from the CRUX article: "In 1910, during excavation work at the cathedral there, archaeologists came across the relics, which



Saint Corona Tied Atop and Between Two Palm Trees



were removed from a crypt and placed in a shrine. This three-foot-tall, 220-pound relic has, until recently, been kept in storage in the Aachen cathedral treasure vault. With the coronavirus pandemic, experts have taken it out to dust it off and conserve it."



Now, they had just cleaned the gold, bronze, and ivory reliquary believed to hold some of St. Corona's bones (relics). It is currently on display in its treasure vault. So ironic was that long before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the Cathedral had planned for an exhibition this summer of 2020 to display

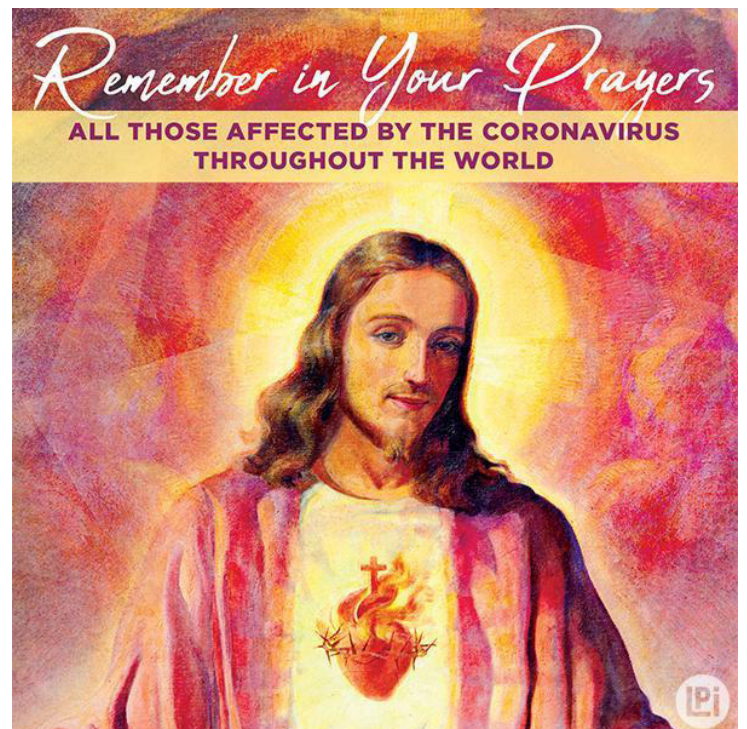


their beautiful reliquary. This reliquary had been hidden from the public for 25 years. Because of the pandemic, the reliquary was brought out

earlier than planned. It is now ready for public veneration.

Truth be told, I always love it when saints who appear to be forgotten are brought back into recognition. I hope you enjoyed learning more about St. Corona and that you keep her as one of the saints that you can pray within times of need.

St. Corona, pray for us!

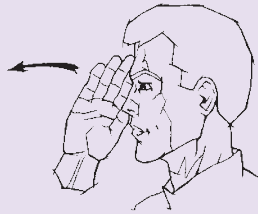


LENTEN RETREAT

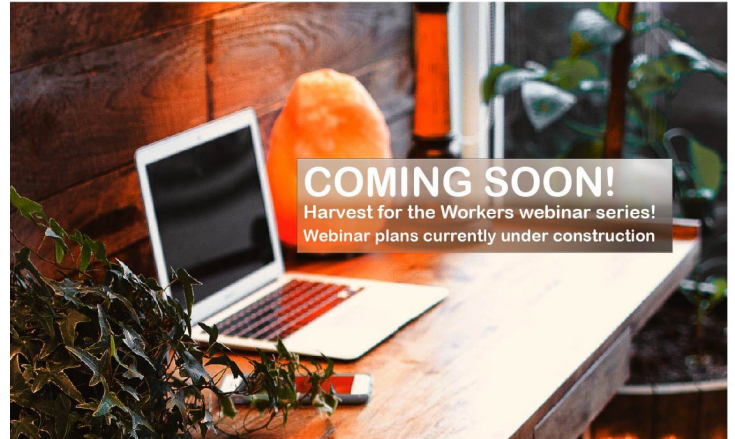
EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT: LENT 2021 VIRTUAL RETREAT

By Office of the Deaf Apostolate

One of the nice traditions of the Deaf Apostolate is the annual Lenten Retreat. Our retreat last March 2020 with Fr. Seán Loomis was an incredible spiritual experience.

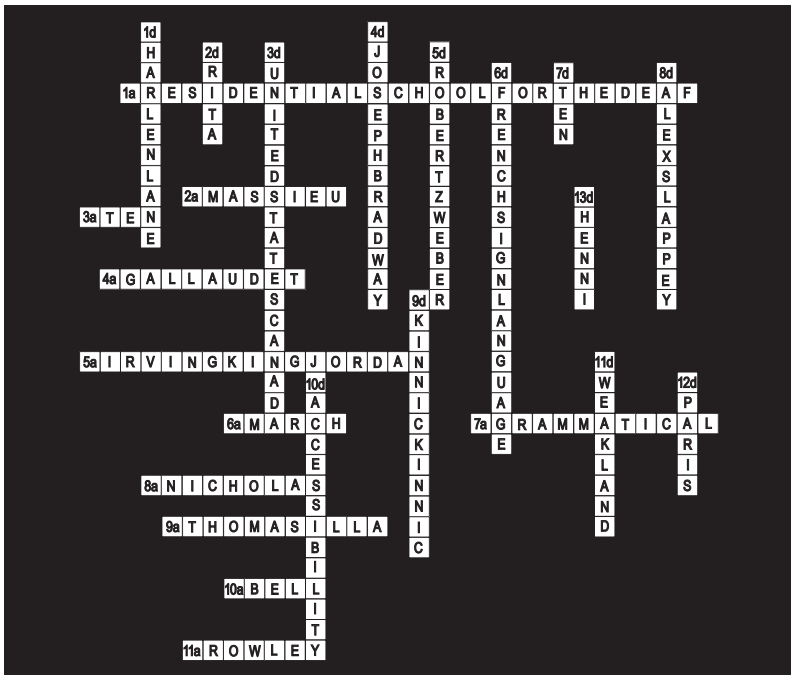


Sadly, due to the COVID-19 uncertainties, we will not have an in-person Lenten weekend retreat. But, the good news is that we will have a virtual online Lenten Retreat. Stay tuned in the next several newsletters for more information about this unique retreat experience. We hope that you can join us!



COMING SOON!
Harvest for the Workers webinar series!
Webinar plans currently under construction

Since the NCOD in-person Conference on January 7-11, 2021 is canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in its place will be a webinar series this Autumn of 2020 and a Pastoral Week 2021 “Harvest For The Workers” webinar in January. Note: To register for the webinar series, you will need to be a current NCOD member. You can sign-up or renew your NCOD membership on www.ncod.org.



► FROM THE DELAVAN CORNER Continued from Page 6.

system where several States had to issue “crisis standards of care” during COVID-19 in healthcare services. There are serious ethical considerations for all frontline workers as the hospitals shift from the usual standard care to a more “utilitarian” approach with triage factors, focusing on the “greatest good for the greatest number of individuals” in the face of scarce ICU beds and finite number of ventilators. For people with underlying medical conditions and whose life is deemed by society not worthy of the scarce resources, it is a frightening time.

In this frightening time, we must remember the effects of the pandemic if not on us personally but on the lesser fortunate members of the society. Even then, if we got to the point the healthcare system were overwhelmed, we pray that the frontline workers have God’s grace and possess the right “attitude” towards all people regardless of their life station and disability. We pray that they serve so that the crisis standards of care do not disproportionately affect those who suffer social and socioeconomic injustice.

It is a frightening and confusing time, but we need to remember one of the most powerful verses:

“Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:11).

Quiz Answers: 1b; 2a; 3d; 4c (Jan 1, Mary, Mother of God; Ascension Thursday; Aug 15, Assumption of Mary; Nov 1, All Saints Day; Dec 8, Immaculate Conception; Dec 25, Christmas); 5c (Signers were Daniel Carroll (Maryland) and Thomas Fitzsimons (Pennsylvania)).

INTERPRETED & ASL *Masses* THROUGHOUT THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE

- ASL SUNDAY MASS -

St. Matthias Parish

9306 W. Beloit Rd, Milwaukee, WI 53227

Time: 9:00 a.m.

E-Mail: info@stmatthias-milw.org

Website: stmatthias-milw.org

Note: If no ASL Mass, then will have an interpreted Mass in the main church.

- INTERPRETED SUNDAY MASS -

St. Andrew Parish

714 E. Walworth Ave, Delavan, WI 53115

Time: 9:00 a.m.

E-Mail: deafministry@saspcatholics.org

Website: standrews-delavan.org

St. Joseph Parish

1619 Washington St, Grafton, WI 53024

1st & 4th Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. / and 3rd Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

E-Mail: parish@stjosephgrafton.org

Website: stjosephgrafton.org

St. Mary's Immaculate Conception

1610 Monroe St, West Bend, WI 53090

2nd Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Email: rprim@wbparishes.org

Website: stmaryparishwb.org

St. Paul the Apostle Parish

6400 Spring St, Racine, WI 53406

Time: 10:00 a.m.

E-Mail: svrana@stpaulracine.org

Website: stpaulracine.org

St. Peter Parish

2224 30th Ave, Kenosha, WI 53144

Time: 10:30 a.m.

E-Mail: stpeterskenosha@gmail.com

Website: stpeterskenosha.com

Shepherd of the Hills Parish

W1562 County Road B, Eden, WI 53019

1st & 3rd Sundays at 8:15 a.m.

E-Mail: sgitter@sothparish.org

Website: sothparish.org

- CLOSED CAPTIONED MASS -

St. Clare Parish

7616 Fritz St, Wind Lake, WI 53185

2nd Saturdays at 4:00 p.m.

E-Mail: bulletins@tds.net

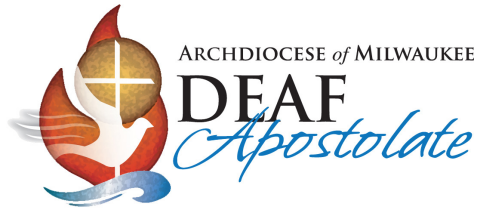
Website: stclarewindlake.org

Times Listed Are Subject to Change

As of March 1, 2019



▲ St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of the Deaf, signs "Church" with Martin, a deaf person.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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- (2) **By Mail:** Fill out registration form below & send form and check to information provided below:

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Cost: \$8.00 for 4 Newsletters from Jan. to Dec. 2020.

Make checks payable to: The Deaf Apostolate.

Mail to: **Deaf Apostolate, Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

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