

Avila News

PRAYER, SACRIFICE, SERVICE, AND STUDY

FIFTIETH YEAR VOLUME VI

avilascleveland.weebly.com

JULY, AUGUST 2022



Have a Happy Summer!

See you in September.

Summer

Days get brighter.

Hair gets lighter.

Skin gets darker.

Water gets warmer.

Drinks get colder.

Music gets louder.

Nights get longer.

Life gets better.

-Unknown

*God Bless,
Susan Federico
Publicity and Scripture
Resource*

President's Corner

Dear Avila Members,

I am honored to be chosen to represent the Avilas of the Diocese of Cleveland as your new President. Other officers installed at our May 18, 2022 meeting were:

Vice President: Kathy Woodworth

Secretary: Margaret Zeis

Treasurer: Toni Will

I ask that you keep us all in prayer as we assume our duties and live up to the responsibilities and expectations of our organization and remain faithful to our commitment. We must remember that the call of God through the Avilas is to pray, to sacrifice, to study, and to serve. Let us do all these things asking God to call forth more men and women to serve Christ's Church.

Please keep in your prayers all the newly ordained priests in our diocese:

Reverend Joseph Menkhaus

Reverend Scott Swinerton

Reverend David Verbsky

I am happy to tell you all that we will be returning to the Seminary for our regular meetings. Dates for meetings through 2022 are September 21 and November 16. Our annual Day of Prayer will resume in October; more information will be sent to you. Please go to our Avila website for more news: www.avilascleveland.weebly.com.

***Blessings to us all,
Marianne Repinski***

MAY 18, 2022 AVILA LUNCHEON MEETING

We were pleased to host Fr. Jeremy Merzweiler, Pastor at St. Francis deSales in Akron. Prior to that, he was a Parochial Vicar at St. Ambrose Parish and St. Gabriel Parish. Father was reminded during our Holy Hour how much our prayers bless him and all priests. Prayer changes the lives of people and should renew our hope, and the priests of the diocese appreciate our prayers and commitment for priests. In an effort to give the time to the Holy Spirit, Father experimented with us about his vocation story, and responded to questions that our members proposed to him.

(continued)

Did a lot of people tell him he should be a priest? Yes, many people did. He grew up at St. Vincent in Akron and Sts. Philip and James in Canal Fulton. He was a server, and many sweet kind old church ladies always asked him, "Did you ever think about becoming a priest?" A prayer for vocations was prayed before every Mass, and the possibility of being a priest was put on his heart. Members of his own family also thought he would be a priest. He talked to priests who were his spiritual directors throughout his life, and he knows the Holy Spirit worked during those times.

Did he feel compelled to sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament to pray about the priesthood? Yes, since about the age of nine, his mother organized his parish's Holy Hour and she would often send him there when people couldn't show up. He believed in Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. One time he had to repose Jesus in the Tabernacle, and was awed to hold Him in his hands. Eventually, his Holy Hour became an important part of his life. When he was alone in the chapel during his high school and college years, he would find himself giving daily Mass homilies. Father emphasized the importance of visiting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He wanted to make the decision about priesthood with the Lord. We should all make decisions in partnership with the Lord; this changes everything.

What was his biggest doubt about becoming a priest? Although he did well, Father really didn't like school; he didn't like sitting down or writing papers and preferred to be active, having majored in construction and engineering. He was concerned about six more years of education. He originally planned on spending only one year in the Seminary, thinking it would not work out and he would leave and then go on with his life. But the professors there wanted him to work with everyone, do well and succeed. Whenever he felt doubt or despair, he gave these times to Jesus, asking Him to speak to his heart. We must always discern daily in prayer.

Did his courage to know he was in the right place doing the right thing ever falter? Father joined the Seminary in 2009, a time when priests were not glorified, and it took courage. Priests need the courage to be faithful to the Magisterium. There is joy and goodness in the priesthood; priests have the honor to be a part of someone's salvation history. He knows the Lord has done amazing things in his life.

Has his family changed in the way they see him since he became a priest? Father sees his family after Mass on Sundays and on his day off. He goes home and relaxes; his family never sees him in Church.

Is there any subject in his studies that really inspired him? Father never thought when he went into the seminary that he would love Jesuit theology as much as he did. He fell in love with the Ignatian spirituality while on retreats - the discernment, the Examen, spiritual imagination. God takes us all on different paths and we are blessed in those ways.

Was there anything he was disillusioned by when he was ordained? When he was ordained, there was a certain idealism in his heart and life, that everything was going to be wonderful and perfect, but, of course, that is not the way things go. When he was newly ordained, he was ready to say yes to anything, but he eventually learned that he could not say yes to everything. Every parish is run differently, and a priest needs a spirit of flexibility. We are all human beings responding to our vocation. A newly ordained priest is going to be assigned to St. Francis de Sales, and father hopes he can help him learn how to serve and love.

Tell us about your family. Father has two sisters, ages 41 and 28; Father is 38. His older sister, Valerie, has two children ages four and six; his younger sister, Emily, has a two year old and a five month old. Both are nurses. Both of his sisters are holy women, and they help Father spiritually.

What part did the Blessed Mother play in his vocation? The Blessed Mother played a big part in Father's vocation story. The first prayer he learned from his mother was the Rosary. Mary and the Rosary gave him a lot of peace and helped him with his discernment. He had a dream in which Mary told him, "You will always be my son." He started a Rosary group while he was in the seminary, and they prayed a Rosary every evening at 9 pm. Mary is with us all the time. We can all pray to Mary and listen to her speak to us; she wants to change all of our lives.

Sorry we were not able to give Father any fireworks or sparklers, but we truly enjoyed the time he spent with us!



**Anthony Czup
Greg Evans
Lucy Hrdicka
Marianne Repinski
Rose Saraniti
Arch Tunnell
David Tunnell**



**For prayer requests contact Joan Evans at
joanevans1130ad@gmail.com or
440-331-2383.**



**The family and friends of
long-time Avila member,
Eileen Corrigan
and of
Maryann Thomas,
daughter of Minnie Thomas
and
sister of Virginia Kovacina.**



“There is but one road which reaches God and that is *PRAYER*;
if anyone shows you another, you are being deceived.” *Saint Teresa of Avila*

July 2022

Please include the special intentions of the members of the following groups

July	3, 2022	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (North Carolina) (RSM)
July	10, 2022	Social Mission Sisters (SM)
July	17, 2022	For all Missionaries Serving throughout the World
July	24, 2022	Sisters of the Most Holy Trinity (OSST)
July	31, 2022	Sisters of Notre Dame (SND)
August	7, 2022	Order of Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy (O de M)

TRUE FREEDOM

What we choose determines who we become. For our society, freedom often means being able to do pretty much whatever we want, so long as it's not hurting anyone else. As Catholic Americans, we ought to have a radically different view of "freedom." The Catholic tradition has long recognized and defended the concept of free will. But our Catholic tradition would not necessarily recognize our society's notion of freedom as true freedom.

Choosing what is good changes us, empowering us to proceed along the pathways of virtue and develop the habits which promote Christian character. For Catholics, true freedom is when someone has chosen the good so often and so repeatedly, that it has become a habit, a routine, a way of life — so much so that choosing evil would not even occur to him or her as a legitimate option.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church #1733 addresses human choice, action and freedom: The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to "the slavery of sin" (see Romans 6).

As long as we are still tempted to choose sin and evil, we are not completely and totally "free." Of course, we won't ever be completely free during this lifetime, but that's our aim and our goal because at the end of the long struggle for true freedom lies our only true happiness — union with God our creator. For us as Catholics, the greatest freedom lies in the inability to sin — not because we are perfect or have no choice in the matter, but because choosing the good is so ingrained in us that choosing evil isn't even on our radar.

The Church has always valiantly defended human liberty. In St. John Paul's Encyclical letter entitled *The Gospel of Life*, he responded to the many threats against the dignity of human life caused by the redefinition of the word freedom with a prophetic urgency. He warned of what he called a "counterfeit notion of freedom." He stated this counterfeit is the root cause of what he labeled the "culture of death." He discussed current social evils from abortion (which is always and everywhere intrinsically evil), to modern slaveries, (including pornography and drug addiction); to disdain for the poor and a cheapening of all life as well as the misguided use of new medical technologies, to active and passive euthanasia and the arrangement of reproduction.

Penance is truly a great blessing. Our Lord specifically empowered His priests to dispense God's forgiveness and absolution. Confessing personal sins is the surest way of coming to grips with them. Avoidance and repression are easy where a man is his own judge and jury. It is very difficult to be objectively truthful with one's own failings. We know we are confessing to God through the priest, and we receive in return a valid assurance of God's pardon. Only the Sacrament of Reconciliation can grant such real remission of guilt, for which man has a deep craving. When the requirements of contrition and confession have been met, and the penance or prayers have been assigned in satisfaction of the demands of divine justice, then come the words which give us true freedom: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

“Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, ‘If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John 8:31-32).



"There is but one road which reaches God and that is *PRAYER*;
if anyone shows you another, you are being deceived." *Saint Teresa of Avila*

August 2022

Please include the special intentions of the members of the following groups
in your Holy Hour this month:

August	7, 2022	Order of Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy (O de M)
August	14, 2022	Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Cleveland
August	21, 2022	Poor Clare Collettine Nuns (PCC)
August	28, 2022	Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration (PCPA)
September	4, 2022	Little Sisters of the Poor (LSP)

PATRON SAINT OF PRIESTS

St. John Vianney was born on May 8, 1786, and baptized the same day. He was a child during the anti-Catholic French Revolution. He made his First Communion at age 17. He left home at age 20 to attend school and struggled with his studies.

He was drafted into Napoleon's army in 1809, but eventually deserted and hid. When he was able to come out of hiding, he decided to become a priest. He was a very poor student, and most of his superiors thought that he would never be smart enough to become a priest. However, he endured, was ordained a deacon in 1812 and was ordained a priest in 1815, after which he was assigned to a very poor parish in Ars, France. Fr. Vianney soon realized many were either ignorant or indifferent to religion as a result of the French Revolution; many danced and drank in the cabarets and bars on Sundays or worked in their fields. Thanks to his fasting and preaching and countless hours in the confessional, often as much as 10 to 12 hours per day, they changed their ways. He became so popular that people from all over France traveled to him for Confession. Within thirty years, it is said he received up to 20,000 pilgrims each year.

The devil took note of all of this and told him, "If there were three such priests as you, my kingdom would be finished." St. Vianney understood that "*A priest goes to Heaven or a priest goes to Hell with a thousand people behind.*" The devil also attacked him physically, kept him awake at night with loud animal voices and once even set his bed on fire, knowing that if he did not get his rest, he could not spend so much time in the confessional. He often heard loud voices, commotion and beating on his door. St. John knew that when this happened a lot, a huge sinner (a "big fish") was going to come to his confessional the next day, and this was the devil's way of trying to prevent St. John from hearing his confession.

St. John Vianney died on August 4, 1859, at age 73. The bishop presided over his funeral with 300 priests and more than 6000 people in attendance. He was proclaimed "venerable" in 1873, was beatified in 1905 and canonized in 1925. His feast day is August 4. St. John XXIII referred to him as a "rare example of a pastor acutely aware of his responsibilities ... and a sign of courage for those who today experience the grace of being called to the priesthood." In honor of the 150th anniversary of Vianney's death, Pope Benedict XVI declared a Year of the Priest in 2009-2010 to encourage priests to strive for spiritual perfection. He called the saint "a true example of a pastor at the service of Christ's flock."

Prayer to St. John Vianney for Priests

Lord, Jesus Christ, through the intercession of St. John Vianney, grant that your priests will be inspired to strive for holiness by the power of his example. As men of prayer, may they ponder Your word, follow Your will and faithfully lead the flocks You have entrusted to their care. St. John Vianney, obtain for the Church an abundance of vocations to the holy priesthood. Through your intercession, may many faithful men hear Christ's call and respond with courage and generosity. Amen.

Prayer of St. John Vianney

***I love You, O my God, and my only desire is to love You until the last breath of my life.
I love You, O my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving You, than live without loving You.
I love You, Lord and the only grace I ask is to love You eternally.
My God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love You,
I want my heart to repeat it to You as often as I draw breath.***