

Avila News

PRAYER, SACRIFICE, SERVICE, AND STUDY

FIFTY-FIRST YEAR VOLUME III

avilascleveland.weebly.com

JANUARY, FEBRUARY 2023



REGULAR MEETING AND HOLY HOUR

Wednesday,
January 18, 2023

PLEASE GATHER IN
THE AULA ROOM
AT 10:00AM

HOLY HOUR WILL BEGIN
AT 10:30AM

Followed by Community
Mass with Seminarians,
Luncheon, and Speaker.

SPEAKER:

Rev. Kevin Fox
St. Charles Borromeo Parish

As always, friends/guests are most welcome! Please contact **Chris Ryan at 440-983-0805 or chrisryan78@yahoo.com**, no later than noon on Monday, January 16, if you cannot attend or to make additional reservations. Guest donation is \$13.00. Please remember to bring your Holy Hour Prayer Book. **Members:** Please leave your full name and phone number when calling to cancel reservation. Also, please note that **ALL Avila Members** have a standing reservation and need to call in cancellations when necessary. **Members who are unable to regularly attend meetings and cannot call to cancel luncheon reservations might consider becoming a sustaining member.** Thank you.

President's Corner

January 3rd marks the Church's Feast of the Holy Name of *Jesus*. It is a perfect day on which to strengthen our connection to the beautiful name of the Lord. All names are to be treated with respect. And a name is an emblem of one's dignity, but the name of Jesus in particular should be held in the highest regard – spoken and heard only in a sacred way. More specifically, the beautiful name “Jesus” means “God saves.” So the name of Jesus is not only the name of the Savior, but also, by its meaning, it states the purpose of His existence – reminding us of the incredible blessing of our salvation. Let us, therefore, give that name great honor!



When you pray “the Lord's Prayer” today, pay special attention to these words: “hallowed be thy Name” (or “holy is your Name”). Make a proposition to live according to that teaching: helping to *keep holy* the name of God always and everywhere.

We wish Father McCandless a fond farewell and many blessings at his new assignment. And we are happy to welcome Father Eric Garris as the new Vocation Director and Spiritual Director for the Avilas. Be sure to keep both of them in your prayers, along with all of our seminarians and priests.

*Blessing to all this New Year,
Marianne Repinski*



**INSTALLATION OF NEW AVILA MEMBERS
NOVEMBER 16, 2022**

**Angela Hart
Barbara Kozak
Michelle Meade
Jennifer Robinson
Dolores Schmaizried
Donald Trask
Ann Marie Zemo**

FAITH

"Increase our faith," the apostles implored the Lord. They already received the gift of faith and asked Him for the grace to respond more generously to His invitation to believe. They realized that without God's help they could do nothing.

***What is faith?
Where does it come from?
How does it grow within us?***

Faith is a gift from God. We cannot acquire it on our own, through our own efforts or through any human power. "Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him" (CCC 153). Faith is a human act which requires a response from us. "In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace" (CCC 155).

Faith is a virtue, a habit of the soul, which disposes the person to surrender their mind and heart to God. St. Paul calls this free submission of intellect and will "the obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5; see CCC 143). Self-surrender may go against our instincts, but it is the path to true freedom and the source of liberation for our mind and will.

There will be times when our faith seems weak. We may experience a loss in confidence in God due to suffering or difficult circumstances. The moral and social decline that surrounds us can cause dismay and incomprehension. We may sometimes ask, "Where is God?" when confronted with tragedy, injustice or interior dryness.

To experience these things does not mean that we lack faith. It may mean that we have come to the limits of our faith in our hearts. We can't see beyond the present horizon because our faith doesn't extend too far beyond the present moment. At these times we should imitate the apostles, saying to the Lord, "increase our faith." We echo their request, "Lord, increase our faith. Strengthen us to believe and to live the faith we have received." Have confidence that He will, even if we don't feel it right away, recalling the faith of Mary. "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45).

"Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."
(Matthew 21:22).

Please correct the following phone number on the Executive Board sheet that you received in the mail in August:

Sylvia Profenna
216-795-5005

Thank you!



Edward Eppick

Greg and Joan Evans

Arch Tunnell



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



**Anna O'Connor
on the death of her husband,
Frank O'Connor
and to
Marie Sach on the death of
her father.**



**God Bless,
Susan Federico
Publicity and Scripture Resource**



"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*

January 2023

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

January	1, 2023	Bishops of the Diocese of Cleveland
January	8, 2023	Christ the Bridegroom Monastery
January	15, 2023	Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (SSS)
January	22, 2023	Byzantine Poor Clare Nuns (BNSC)
January	29, 2023	Carmel of the Holy Family (OCD)
February	5, 2023	Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine (CSA)

*The Geography, Place and Soul of the Mystic Journey
Avila Day of Prayer—Most Reverend Michael G. Woost*

We were honored to host newly ordained Auxiliary Bishop Michael Woost for our Avila Day of Prayer, who shared on the life of St. Teresa of Avila, our Patron Saint. He and his brothers were privileged to go on a pilgrimage to Avila in the summer of 2019. They flew to Madrid, then drove a car into Avila.

St. Teresa of Avila is one of his favorite saints and one of his closest patrons; she was vital in developing his vocation. Avila is a medieval city, built like a castle. She was very aware that God uses where we are at in order to reveal His self to us. The very place where she lived had a big influence on her spiritual life. There is also a geography of our souls; she is always inviting us to explore deeper into our encounter to the presence of God in our lives. This is what leads to the mystic journey. There is an analogy between what we experience in our lives and what is taking place in the much larger global plane around us. The geography of the individual quest appears to give good evidence of the geography of the invisible. It is within that journey that the presence of God is revealed to us, the invisible is made visible.

How we experience the presence of God in our lives is going to be influenced by our temperament. If we are always anxious all the time, have difficulty to sit in the quiet, if we find ourselves too busy all the time, it would be very difficult to become a contemplative. Yet, we are called to that. Remember that God is with us all the time. Do we recognize His presence in the events and experiences of our every day lives, in the world around us? St. Teresa of Avila described her soul as a castle; she was living in an actual castle. She was not educated in a theological school or university; her entire education came from her experience with God, which is why she often asked others, especially priests and theologians to check what she was teaching to make sure it was correct and reflective of the Church's teachings.

There is a massive wall around the city. It is very ancient and in a dry landscape. In her writings, she talks about an interior castle and also the dryness that sometimes comes with prayer. She wrote that we should consider our souls to be like a castle made entirely out of diamonds in which there are many rooms just as in Heaven there are many dwelling places. She speaks of seven dwelling places; the castle of our souls is extensive and infinite, and God dwells at the center in the royal throne room. Part of our geography is coming to experience the multiple rooms, the many dwelling places within us. We are the castle in which God dwells, but there are many souls who are in the outer courtyard and do not care at all about entering the castle, nor do they know what lies within the most precious place, nor who is within or how many rooms it has. When it comes to the way we live our lives, are we living on the outside of ourselves or within, seeking the presence of God within ourselves. The door of entry into the castle that is the presence of God is prayer and reflection on the mystery of His life, entering into the mystery ourselves. We must be attentive to Whom you are talking. Know that we have the ability to be in relationship with God, to be in conversation with Him and to be recognized as His friend. Our life in God begins in the Sacrament of Baptism in which God joins our lives with Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The only way we can get to know ourselves is to get to know God; the only way we can become better people is to grow in our relationship with Him.

St. Teresa wanted to make sure that Christ had good friends. She wanted to live in a community of prayer in poverty, chastity and obedience. We must always keep dying to ourselves. Every time we put God's will ahead of ourselves, it is a kind of martyrdom. We must be willing to embrace martyrdom daily and accept what God has planned for our lives. St. Teresa in her writings constantly calls us to friendship with God, knowing that He is already our friend. He takes care of all our expenses in our journey of life. We must simply trust in God's great goodness and great love for us. He is near to us wherever we are, in our hearts, our homes, our neighborhoods. He will bring us into deeper friendship, a greater awareness of that friendship He desires to have with us, to reveal the intimate relationship that we can have.



"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*

February 2023

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

February	5, 2023	Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine (CSA)
February	12, 2023	Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati (SC)
February	19, 2023	Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill (SC)
February	26, 2023	Daughters of Divine Charity (FDC)
March	5, 2023	Sisters of Divine Providence (CDP)

TALK BY FR. MICHAEL McCANDLESS AT NOVEMBER 16, 2022 AVILA LUNCHEON

I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. -- Philipians 1:2-11

Father McCandless has had a fascination with the opening prayers of Paul's letters since he was in the seminary. They all can be prayed with, and this particular one has been a favorite for a long time. The partnership with the gospel is very real to him. There is a partnership with the gospel that he has with the Avilas that he feels should be acknowledged. We have been partnered by God's plan to come together and to be a team of people who intercede. We are bound by a desire and need to pray for those who are discerning. There are a lot of priorities in the Church today. One of the highest priorities is to help people into the sainthood that they were meant to live. In your journey into your vocation, there are many people who want to pull you into a direction that promises something: honor, power, pleasure, notoriety. Everyone seems to want something. All of the men who have talked to us at the luncheons all have a common theme, at least one major ingredient when they moved beyond what they could imagine for themselves and then God moved them into something new.

In September 2021, Father had a regular meeting with Bishop Malesic, checking in about different things, to give him the full picture of what was going on with vocations in the diocese. During the last five minutes of their meeting, the Bishop said, "Mike, you've been at this for about 11 years. Have you ever thought about having a more varied ministry, having a parish?" Father told him that he was in love with the ministry of vocation director and believed he had a call and that he wanted to serve this well. He told the Bishop, "When the Lord wants me to move on, I will." About one week later, while in prayer, he felt the Lord was telling him, "I am doing something new." He went on retreat in January 2022 and saw his spiritual director who told him, "Well, it really has been coming for a little while now. I have been able to see it within you. So let's take the next three days and pray about what the Lord is doing new and we will see if it has anything to do with your assignment." From the very first holy hour, he knew he was moving on, probably leaving this ministry, but did not know when.

Father talked to a fellow priest who said, "Let's have you think about taking a parish," and Father McCandless said he had been thinking about that too. He had an image of walking with families. Although he had an idea of what would be a good fit, this priest said that this was probably not where he would go, but that a parish a lot like that is Holy Family in Stow.

(continued on the back)

This is Father's home parish, where he grew up and went to grade school, where his parents and grandmother are still parishioners, along with a few other family members. Father struggled with the opportunity of going back home. He hadn't been there since 1999. Father pulled up a chair in the darkness of the Church and sat down in front of the Tabernacle for over an hour. At the end of his prayer time, he realized that this was home all over again.

A good friend advised him, "let yourself be sent. When you let yourself be sent, you know you are called to love. That way, you don't have any involvement in it. You haven't leveraged it or influenced it, and you will find you have great freedom." He knew that this was going to be home once again. He spoke to the pastor of Holy Family who expressed happiness at his being there because there are generations of people that he has not seen or met in 20 years, and it will be like it is brand new to you.

Whenever we have anxieties or worries, the Lord is already knowledgeable of them. It is not a coincidence, not good luck or any kind of earthly arrangement when someone says to you, "This will be brand new." Allow yourself to be unattached, and He will put you where He wants you to be and you will be free. God knows all of those things. It could be our words, our silent prayer. It may never get noticed, but there is some way that God helps to mend, heal, and comfort through our partnership, our accompaniment. There are tragedies that have been avoided and moments of suffering that were probably passed through because we have been there. As time has gone on, Father realized that one of the biggest areas priests need to focus on is being free in their decisions, letting ourselves to be guided by the Bishop along the way. Pray that those who are living their lives may live it in unattached ways, that they are able to be sent, that they wait to see the surprise that God is preparing for them. This whole process has been a powerful surprise for him.

A few years ago, Father went on a 30 day retreat in North Dakota, a typical exercise in the Ignatian school of prayer. He found patterns emerging during his holy hours. Around day five, he found himself on the back patio of a house in first century Palestine. He realized that Christ and Mary were with him. Those images continued over the course of the retreat. Without any effort, he realized that he was praying at the home of the Holy Family in Nazareth. After he realized that this was the plan of the Bishop. He had been praying about the home of the Holy Family two years before, and he is now being called to Holy Family Parish!

We hit moments when we're not sure and we don't know and we don't have control and we can't predict. Father knows of only one priest in the United States who was sent back to his home parish as a first pastor in Texas, and he is also a vocation director. There are so many things we don't know, but there is the partnership and accompaniment of people like the Avilas, people who are friends, who are faithful and believe in the Gospel, who believe that God knows about all of the loose ends that need to be tied up. He ties them up. He knows what needs to be heard, and he helps us say it. He knows what needs to be prayed for, and He helps is to be prayed for. We should be grateful for the people that we get to be with and to pray with and to share community with. Father thinks our diocese in Cleveland, Ohio is the heartbeat of that, that we are so blessed.

Father really desires that our Avila community grow. We need spiritual mothers and fathers in the Church. Many of the men are in need of human love and attention, an extra installment to make good decisions, to be faithful. Oftentimes it is the men and women who could help them know and help secure that, to know that they are loved, cared for and watched. We can do that, we can offer that! Everyone always asks what is so good about Cleveland? There are a lot of good men, fantastic priests, joyful, happy and inviting priests who love their vocation. And we have wonderful families who are attentive to their parents. We have vocational support groups who are the power plant of our diocese who intercede and volunteer. It is not a magic formula. We have been the consistent spiritual soil where everything good has been received and watered. Our payers keep everything good together. We have a wonderful group of apostolates who feed all of that. If we pray and fast and support and accompany, we will continue to have a great vocational culture in Cleveland.

Father is very grateful for the Avilas, and feels we have the accompaniment that Paul talked about, and it is very real.