

Avila News

PRAYER, SACRIFICE, SERVICE, AND STUDY

FIFTY-FIRST YEAR VOLUME IV

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MARCH, APRIL 2023



REGULAR MEETING AND HOLY HOUR

Wednesday,
March 15, 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. Michael Denk
Administrator
St. Matthias Parish, Parma

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, March 13, 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

March marks the Church's month of St Joseph. The solemnity of St Joseph is March 19th. This day celebrates the husband of Mary and his yes to be the adopted Father of Jesus. Saint Joseph's life is a model of Christian virtue. Perhaps we honor him best when we imitate his virtues. Give your worries to him so you can get some rest. It is said that St. Joseph, who is also known as the Terror of Demons, even frightened demons away while sleeping, such is his power and strength. Ask Saint Joseph to pray for you and take your worries away.

March also marks the Feast for the Annunciation. This feast is celebrated on March 25 and commemorates when the angel appeared to Mary, asking her to say yes to becoming the mother of Jesus. She is also our Mother in Heaven.

As Avilas, we pray for this yes to be spoken in the heart of those God calls to a vocation to the priestly or religious life. As we enter the season of Lent, let us commit to more prayer, sacrifice, and fasting for vocations and for our priests

God Bless.

Marianne Repinski



*"Rejoice, O Full of Grace,
the Lord is with you!"*

January Speaker — Fr. Kevin Fox

Fr. Kevin Fox was ordained on May 18, 2019. The youngest of five children, he grew up in St. Justin Martyr Parish. He did not grow up praying the Rosary each evening with his parents, but his family was at Mass every Sunday and he was a server. He did not have any formal Catholic education until his first day at St. Mary Seminary. He went to public schools all the way through high school, then attended Case Western Reserve University where he earned an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering. He and his father would watch reruns of Fulton Sheehan's "Life is Worth Living" in the evening, not something most high school boys would do.

When Fr. Fox was about 12 years old, he grew close to a Parochial Vicar at his parish, Fr. David Ireland. Fr. Fox would be holding the missal for him at the beginning of Mass and, Fr. Ireland would whisper things to try and make him laugh. One day, Fr. Ireland before Mass he said, "Kevin, I want to pay attention to the readings today." He heard the first few sentences of the first reading, which was about a woman getting pregnant. He thought Fr. Ireland was kidding as usual, so he refused to listen any more of the readings that day. Apparently whatever was going on in the rest of the readings had to do with vocations. After Mass, Fr. Ireland said to him, "I want you to think about today's readings because I think you may be called to be a priest." He didn't know what to think, so he forgot about it.

Fr. Fox's sister gave birth to her first daughter, Cecilia, and asked him to be godfather. A few months after her Baptism, he was living with his parents and was bored and depressed, not sure what the point of his life was. He realized that there was a Mass going on in his home parish, and he got up and went; it was December 22, the feast of St. Cecilia. All throughout Mass, he felt that she herself had summoned him to be there to worship the Lord with her. He heard a challenge from her that, if he was going to be a good godfather, he owed it to his niece to be a much better Christian, a saint for a godfather, which was not the path that he was on.

This was the beginning of a conversion experience. The Lord showed him the state of his soul, which was dark and dismal. He connected with a priest, told him about his life and the priest said, "I still think you could be a priest." Par for the course, he set these words aside and started dating a wonderful Catholic girl from college. He was talking to her about his life, and she suggested they go downtown to the Cathedral for Confession; it was the first time in many years. He was starting to grow and get excited about his faith; told her he was absolutely sure he was not called to be a priest but she seemed to see something in him. She asked him again a month or so later, but this time he was not so sure. Their relationship deteriorated over the next few months, and the question of priesthood kept coming up, but was not nearly as frightening or alienating. He had a long laundry list of character defects, but he could not shake the thought. The couple broke up, and he promised the Lord and himself that he would treat this honestly, not knowing where it would go.

Father went to Rome as part of a pilgrimage, and felt it would be a good time to think things out in the Eternal City where he created a list of pros and cons. His classmates assured him he would make a great priest. He ultimately did not think he would make a great priest. He had learned a great deal about himself, felt like he had grown in his faith and was able to see his future a lot more clearly. He had a nice long plan about his life, one that was very appealing to him. While in Rome, he went to see the Holy Stairs, a set of marble stairs moved from Jerusalem that Jesus climbed to meet Pontius Pilate. Father slowly and painfully climbed the stairs on his knees, prayed and gained some fruitful insights. He knew that, when Jesus walked back down the stairs, the hard part wasn't done yet; he was about to go to Calvary and lay down His life for all of us. He knew deep down that he had to follow Jesus to Calvary, not via the comfortable life he had picked out for himself. He still did not understand why the Lord was calling him to the seminary and, when he returned home, after waiting a few months, he called the vocation director. It took another year before he entered, during which time he finished school and worked.

When he went to the seminary, Fr. Fox was still not particularly excited and he continued to be plagued with reasons not to be there over his years in formation. He realized that the place in his heart meant for a spouse was already occupied, he grew in his appreciation for the priesthood, recognized more of his talents for the priesthood and was finally able to put his doubts to rest. In looking back, he never really stopped discerning, he was always aware of those people who always prayed for him; the graces were abundant and washed over him. Please continue to pray for vocations and for priests; we may never know how the graces from our prayers are working. He ended up asking Fr. Ireland to vest him at his ordination. Fr. Fox is still delighted and overjoyed at being a priest.



Arch Tunnell



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



*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*

March 2023

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

March	5, 2023	Sisters of Divine Providence (CDP)
March	12, 2023	Sisters of the Divine Redeemer (SDR)
March	19, 2023	Sisters of St. Dominic (Adrian) (OP)
March	26, 2023	Dominican Sisters of Peace (Akron) (OP)
April	2, 2023	Religious of the Eucharist (RE)

OUR DEEP DESIRES

This is Part One of Father Eric Garris' talk at the Avila Day of Prayer from October 2022.

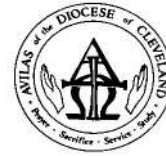
We are called to be people of prayer. The line at the end of Mass calls us to do something: Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life. God is asking, "Will you give Me glory by your life?" Our identity as Christians is summed up by the things we do. The Church calls us to recognize that relationship forms an identity and that identity leads us to salvation. The Liturgy is a participation in and a reception of the glory of God. The entirety of God's life is given to us. Mass doesn't end up by saying "stay here," but rather "go." The way in which we approach the Liturgy and Eucharist is often, "I come to receive Jesus, then go on my merry way." We need to recognize that what is being given in the Mass is amazing, but there is also a charge behind what God is saying: "I've given you My life so that you may, in turn, give your life." No matter what our calling is in life, Jesus is saying, "This is My Body given for you."

Any time God does something amazing, we must respond. In the beginning of Mass, we acknowledge our sins and acknowledge our necessity to be in that place. God extends His forgiveness, and we respond in glory. What does it look like to give glory to God? Our lives should be a living sacrifice given for others. Father has been told, "You need to get more priests." But we also need more disciples of Jesus Christ. We need people to respond to the invitation to give glory by our lives. Young people believe that the life of a Christian is boring, and they look at the lives of the saints and think, "I don't want to do that!" Jesus said in John 10:10, "I came that you might have life and have life to the fullest." Jesus desires all of us to live a full life and give Him glory.

Father Garris likes to be moving, on the go, jumping around. While growing up, faith was not all that important, but there was something about the Mass that was incredibly attractive to him, a place of rest, something altogether different from what he was doing in his life. There is an invitation at Mass for us: Will you find yourself at rest in this place? God never imposes; he invites, He asks, "Will you spend time with Me?" If you want to be seen, Adoration Chapel is the place you want to be seen. The Chapel is like a magnet where God is saying, "Come here." There we find a quiet amidst our busyness, and He says, "I am here and I am with you, I see you and I know you, I acknowledge you and I love you." We must want to know Him, know ourselves and know what we are called to be in community, how we are called to give witness by our lives.

In high school, Father's goals were looking cool, having fun and looking cool while having fun! He wanted his identity to be known by the sports he played and the things he did at school. It wasn't until he was a senior that he knew he wanted to do something amazing, something adventurous. He thought that glory and the glorious life was the kind of life that he wanted. As a senior, there was a lot going on in his life and he didn't want anything to do with what Jesus was calling him to be. He then became confused and intrigued by a new young priest to his parish. This new priest was young and happy. He began to ask himself, "Why is he happy?" This young priest was giving God glory by his life, and there was something incredibly attractive about that. Father finally asked himself, "What do I want to do with my life? How is God calling me to live my life?"

We all need to wrestle with these questions. We need to live with a sense of awe and wonder that God is calling us, the God of the universe is calling us to do something as individuals. Do not take this for granted. We have courtside seats to God in action and seeing how He is working in people's lives. The deep desires that we have in our hearts are the things that God wants for us, a desire for greatness, for adventure, to give up ourselves in a self-sacrificing way. The desires that we all have are holy and we want our hearts and our desires to be ordered to God. God places these deep desires in our hearts so He can say, "I have placed these things on your hearts so I can fulfill them." In prayer, bring these desires before the Lord.



"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*

April 2023

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

April	2, 2023	Religious of the Eucharist (RE)
April	9, 2023	Evangelizing Sisters of Mercy
April	16, 2023	Felician Sisters (CSSF)
April	23, 2023	Religious Teachers Filippini (MPF)
April	30, 2023	Order of Friars Minor (Sacred Heart Province) (OFM)
May	7, 2023	Franciscans (Pulaski, Wisconsin) (OFM)

FAITH

"Increase our faith," the apostles implored the Lord. They 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? The virtue of faith enables a 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.

We cannot acquire faith on our own. "Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by him" (CCC 153). "In faith, the human intellect and will cooperate with divine grace" (CCC 155). We accept God's existence as true and acknowledge the Word even though we might not fully understand everything that is revealed.

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 confusion. It's quite evident that the violence taking place today is happening because those who are doing this do not have an eternal perspective. There is no humanity, no joy, no generosity in their actions, but only destruction. We may sometimes ask, "Where is God?" when confronted with tragedy, injustice or even interior dryness. To feel these things does not mean that we lack faith. 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." And then have confidence that He will, even if we don't feel it right away. "Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22).

Faith is also a creative force in the world. Those who offer their gifts back to God in service of others often have a positive impact on the world that far outweighs even their own natural gifts. Faith does not require a *full* understanding of everything that God has revealed, but simply the *acknowledgement* of God and His Word as true. This is also why Faith demands regular study. We need to acknowledge the sovereignty of God over everything we do – and then offer it all back to Him.

Finally, faith must be shared. The Catechism says that "the disciple of Christ not only keep the Faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it" (CCC, 1816). Does your Faith impact the world around you? Do you hand on the truths of Faith to others, especially your children? If someone entered your home, your workplace, even your car (!), would they know that they are in the presence of a believing and fervent Christian? Faith must be shared if it is to change the world.

In conclusion, here is a story which is an astounding reminder of how important the theological virtue of Faith is for our lives. When the famed coach of Notre Dame football, Knute Rockne, perished in an airplane accident in 1930, his body was burned beyond recognition, except for one part: his right hand.

Clutched in that hand, as his last testament of Faith, was a Rosary.

**"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you;
it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).**