

Sharing the Catholic Journey

Discovering faith, joy, and community

June/July 2015

St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington, IN

Sharing the Catholic Journey is a monthly newsletter for the parishioners of St. John the Apostle Parish. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please write to: sawyerdenise@yahoo.com

Meet....



Father Emmanuel Udoh

Fr Emmanuel Udoh is a priest of the diocese of Ikot Ekpene in Nigeria. He is the first male and second child in a family of six children, born in Afaha Obong,

Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Born into a Catholic family, Emmanuel started out early as an altar server, a junior lector, and a member of the children's choir and the children's cell of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima. Through the personal holiness and spiritual guidance of an Irish missionary priest, Emmanuel felt right from elementary school a call to the sacred priesthood.

Fr Emmanuel attended both Catholic and public elementary schools, a Minor and a Major Seminary (where he studied philosophy and theology). He was ordained a priest in 1998, an event he remembers with eternal gratitude to God and especially his parents – Helen and Sebastian – who fully supported his journey to the priesthood, in spite of the cultural expectations that the first son should rather continue the lineage of the family. Since his ordination, Fr Emmanuel has served in a number of capacities: As Pastor of a parish, a Hospital Secretary and Administrator, a Chaplain to a hospital, a correctional facility, and a high school. He has also taught in a high school and served as a Visiting Lecturer and Confessor in a pre-Major seminary.

Fr Emmanuel has an eternal fascination for how things – especially information systems and technologies – work. Aware of this, his Bishop and diocese sent Fr Emmanuel for studies in the USA, to develop his IT skills for greater service to the church and humanity. So far, his studies have yielded graduate degrees in Computer Science and Information Science, and he is into doctoral study in the

Fr. Daniel Mahan, Pastor

School of Informatics and Computing, Indiana University, Bloomington.

As a person, Fr Emmanuel is a firm believer in the love and providence of God, and sees the story of his own life as a testament to the goodness and mercy of God. He has a passion for helping diverse and troubled populations, young people, couples and families who struggle in any way. In his leisure, he enjoys many things, including music, sports (especially soccer and tennis), writing and observing nature.

Fr Emmanuel is very grateful for the opportunity to study in the USA, the cultural enrichment through diversity, the beautiful liturgy in St John the Apostle Church, Bloomington and New York where he was a Parochial Vicar while studying there, as well as the many wonderful people he has met in the course of his stay in the US.

Sunday, May 24, 2015

Visit by Archbishop Valerian M. Okeke
Of Onitsha, Nigeria



Archbishop Okeke traveled from Nigeria to preside over a Mass of Thanksgiving held at St. Charles for Father Jude Orakwe, who recently received his Doctorate from Indiana University. He also presided over the 9:15 a.m. Mass at St. John the Apostle church. Archbishop Okeke was ordained a priest in 1981, was consecrated Co-adjutor Archbishop of the Onitsha Archdiocese in 2002, and took over the metropolitan see of Onitsha on September 1, 2003.

Catholicism 101....

by Scott Benningfield, DRE



Martyrs

We hear the word “martyr” (*μάρτυς* or *martus* [transliteration]) and we know what it means: someone who died for the faith. It’s a Greek word that means “witness”. Furthermore, the witness is someone who testifies to a fact of which he/she has knowledge.

The Apostles were witnesses to Christ. All of them died a martyr’s death except for St. John the Apostle. However, it must be noted that people indeed tried to kill St. John but unsuccessfully! The faith of the Apostles and disciples of Christ spread. Believers who would rather face death than deny the faith were martyrs. They witnessed to the truth of Christ. We see in the Acts of the Apostles the first martyr for the faith: St. Stephen. In the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 6 & 7), we see his witness:

8 Now Stephen, filled with grace and power, was working great wonders and signs among the people. 9...(Some) came forward and debated with Stephen, 10 but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke...(Chap. 7) 54... they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, filled with the holy Spirit, looked up intently to heaven...56 and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”...59 As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”...

There have been martyrs – witnesses – throughout Christianity. For this witnessing even to the point of death, we give thanks! Christianity spread due to its authenticity. When people are willing to die for the faith, it gives – and even shouts – of a lived-out authentic, deep faith to the bystanders. As Tertullian (2nd and 3rd century Church Father) noted: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

In the ancient world, citizens were forced to worship Caesar. The Jews were unique in having an exemption. At first, since the early Christians were mostly Jewish–

Christians and the state could not tell Jews and Christians apart, the Christians had this exemption too. However, things quickly changed. According to catholic.org, laws proscribing Christianity – that is to say, ending the protection of Christians – were put into place before the end of the first century. When Christians denied burning incense (worshiping Caesar), their lives were at stake. Ironically, these Christians were considered atheists due to their rejection of the state religion!

The first martyrs of Rome were brought to death because they were blamed by Nero and the state for the Great Fire of Rome in 64 A.D. Some claim that Nero had wanted to expand an area of Rome and was not getting his way and set fire to the area he wanted removed. Whether it was by accident or arson, the people had started blaming Nero and, according to Tacitus (Roman historian), Nero deflected the blame from himself by blaming the Christians.

According to catholic.org, between 64 A.D. (when persecutions began under Nero) and 313 (when Christianity was made a “legal religion” due to Constantine’s Edict of Milan), about 129 years were years of official persecution and 120 years were years of some form of tolerance. (Persecution went in waves.) It must be noted that there many, many Catholics who may not have been directly murdered for their Catholic faith but would have died in prison with horrible conditions (deprivations [of adequate food, water, & light], infections, overcrowding, and poor sanitary conditions).

Before the end of the first century, there was a motto of “Let there be no Christians” (*Christiani non sint*). Christians were not welcomed. Many brave and courageous men and women (and even some children) witnessed to the reality and necessity of Christ! As we are seeing in our world, Christianity is less and less welcomed. There is a fear that it encroaches and even plagues societal interaction and harmony. What lies behind this fear of being offensive with faith is really a personal fear to change and embrace a path leading to God. However, we must be strong in witnessing (by word & deed) to people we encounter in life. So many souls need authentic witnesses of the goodness of God and the need for God!





Catholic Christianity and Islam... a look at our similarities and our differences



The Catechism of the Catholic Church only devotes one small paragraph to the Muslim faith, the Church's relationship with the Muslims. It says, "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are Muslims, who profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day." (CCC 841)

In that brief paragraph from the Catechism, the Church carefully reaches out in an ecumenical spirit to help us to find some common ground between our faith and theirs. The Jewish people, Christians, and Muslims all claim to trace their roots to Abraham. We believe in one God, not a multiplicity of gods. Christians and Muslims both honor Jesus, as well as Mary. However, it's not quite that simple for there are significant differences between Christianity and Islam that can't simply be glossed over.

God/Allah

Muslims claim that when they call upon Allah, they are calling on the same God that Christians and Jews worship. They may believe that, but from a Catholic perspective, there are differences, the first being that we believe in the Trinity. We believe that God is, in essence, three persons in one – God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This leads to very different ways in which we relate to God. For us, God is a loving father, and we are His children. However for Muslims, calling God our father is a blasphemous statement. They claim that men cannot have a relationship with the Allah because he is beyond human understanding. Allah is not a father – he is their master and they are his slaves. Allah doesn't want love; he wants obedience.

Heaven

This difference in our understanding of God naturally leads us to have different ideas of what heaven will be like. For Christians, heaven is the state of being in perfect union with God. As St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are restless unless they rest in Thee." However, in Islam, Allah remains unknowable even in heaven. They believe that humans will never be able to see him, to approach him. For that reason, their Paradise is essentially an eternal pleasure-filled extension of life on earth – endless wine and good food, and all of the sensual pleasures of life. It sounds like the fantasies of young adolescent males, it is, in fact,

considered to be the "reward" of the all of those young Islamic radicals who die on suicide missions killing the infidels.

Jesus/Isa

As for Jesus, Muslims consider Him to be one of the twenty-five prophets named in the Koran, which includes Mohammad. However, Jesus, called "Isa," is not even considered to be one of the leading prophets; Moses is "ranked" higher. And, whereas Mohammad is mentioned on nearly every page of the Koran, references to Jesus are few and are at odds with what Christians believe about Jesus. One of the primary titles they give to Jesus is "slave of Allah." They do believe in His virgin birth, but they don't consider that fact to be a sign of his divinity but simply the power of Allah. He had only one nature, that of a human being. To call Jesus divine would be a blasphemy. "In blasphemy indeed are those who say Allah is Christ the son of Mary." (Sura 5:17 in the Koran).

Other details of Jesus' life so familiar to Christians are missing in the Koran. There is no mention of miracles. There is no crucifixion. Muslims believe that Jesus did not die. He was taken up to heaven alive because Allah would never let one of his prophets suffer. Apparently, the Jews thought they were killing Jesus, but it was an imposter instead. Without the Crucifixion, there is, of course, no Resurrection.

There are details in the Koran about both Mary and Jesus that are not found in the Gospels, including Jesus being born under a palm tree and being able to speak perfectly as a newborn infant. It's all an interesting mixture of legends and some of the apocrypha books.

Based upon what the Koran reveals about Jesus, Mohammad apparently failed to understand many of the basic beliefs of Christianity. This was most likely because he had never actually heard about them. In the Arabia of Mohammad's time, during the 7th century A.D., most people were either pagan or polytheistic. The Apostles and their successors had made few inroads into the Arabian peninsula at that time in history. There were some large communities of Christians in Arabia and Yemen, but these would have been formed primarily by those who had learned enough about the Christian faith to want to share it but who were not themselves fully catechized.

Few of these Christians would have been considered orthodox, and many advocated various heresies of the time, including Arianism (that Jesus is a created being and not divine), Monophysitism (Christ has only one nature,

human and divine combined) and Nestorianism (Christ has two natures, man and divine, but they are separate persons). All of these heresies held false or incomplete views of the nature of Christ. Mohammad's basic lack of understanding about the true teachings of Christianity also led him to misunderstand the Trinity. He believed that the Trinity was composed of God, Mary, and Jesus.

Evangelization by Word and/or by Sword

Both Christianity and Islam are missionary faiths; they both desire to convert the whole world. However, the two faiths have followed radically different paths to achieving this goal of evangelization. Christianity was spread through the teaching of the Apostles and those who followed, as well as through the example of the how the early Christians were living their lives. From the beginning, Islam has been spread by word and by the sword.

Jesus taught his followers that the most important part of evangelization is love, not just of their neighbor but also their enemy. "I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44) Even before Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection, he sent seventy of his followers out in pairs to visit the towns where Jesus was planning to go. "Go your way, behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves." (Luke 10:3) If the people in the town did not welcome them and offer them hospitality, then they were to shake the dust off of their feet and move onto another town or village.

Jesus deplored violence, even when Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant to protect Jesus from being arrested by the soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) Throughout the New Testament, we read of violence done against the Apostles (all but John would eventually be martyred), and yet they did not fight back or retaliate. "Christians did kill Muslims during the Crusades; however, the primary purpose of the Crusades had been to regain the Holy Land, which had fallen to Islam.

Mohammad was a soldier, a man of war, when at age 40 he began to receive his revelations from Allah. He was from Mecca, and he first went to his Quraysh brethren there to tell them about the messages he had received. When they refused to give up the worship of their many gods, Mohammad went to Medina where he found a small band of tribal warriors who accepted him as a prophet and pledged their loyalty to them. The first thing they did was to begin raiding the caravans of the Quraysh, in retaliation for their rejection of Mohammad. This set a pattern, and raids and forced conversions soon became Islam's primary method of "evangelization."

Christian Martyrs and Islamic Martyrs

Throughout history, there have been both Christians and Muslims who have been willing to die for their faith. However, we have distinctly different ways in which we view martyrdom. For Christians, martyrs are those who refuse to deny Christ even when they are threatened with death. It does not involve the killing of those of the opposing faith. Many Christian martyrs have been canonized, and so we turn to them to intercede for us with God. Their example of courage gives us hope that we too might be able to find that courage if necessary.

On the other hand, for Islamic radicals who die as they are killing infidels, the Koran doesn't promise them that they will behold the face of God (Allah) That would be a blasphemy. They will not be praying for those still on earth. No, they will be enjoying a paradise of unending bodily pleasures, as promised in the Koran.

Allah, Mohammad, and the Koran

When Mohammad was forty years old, in the year 610 A.D., he claimed that the angel Gabriel began to visit him with revelations from God. These revelations continued for the next twenty-two years. He shared them with his companions who wrote them down on whatever they could or committed them to memory. It wasn't until after Mohammad's death that the revelations were collected into a single volume. It is about four-fifths the length of the New Testament, and it is divided into 114 suras (chapters), which are then divided into verses. The word "Koran" means "recitation" in Arabic. In Islam, the Koran is considered to be a word-for-word dictation from God which was given to Mohammad to recite to his followers.

One interesting aspect to it is that it is not arranged in any kind of a chronological order or by subject. It is organized by the length of each sura, from the longest to the shortest. Also, although it is "free from any flaw" (Sura 39:28), there are significant contradictions as well as historical errors. To Muslims, this simply means that Allah changed his mind or he might cancel a verse that was inspired by Satan. Allah can do whatever he wants to do.

Because Mohammad received his revelations in Arabic, all Muslims, both Arabs and non-Arabs, are required to pray in Arabic. In addition, if a Muslim wants to read the Koran, he must read it in Arabic in order to receive graces from Allah, even if he doesn't understand a word he is reading or saying.

Sources: *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics*, by Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer. *Christianity, Islam and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West* by William Kilpatrick

“The War on Women” by Abi Wallace



“The War on Women”....That phrase is tossed about so frequently, in our society, that it’s becoming increasingly difficult to go through an entire day without hearing or reading that ominous sounding battle cry. Each time I encounter those words, I stop and pause – and shake my head in well-earned disbelief...these people have no idea what a war on women is, and for that they should be very, very thankful.

It was the summer of 1989. I had graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering the year prior and, against the better judgment of my dad, I had gone to work as a pilot for a major cargo airline. To help pay my college tuition, I had spent four years flying canceled checks for the Federal Reserve System in an old radial engine, tail-dragger airplane. At that point in my life, I may have very well had more time flying that old airplane than I did driving a car. That time penned into my logbook was the reason for a desperate call from an old friend. He needed someone with a lot of time in a particular type of airplane to fly one from Indiana to Brazil (the country, not the town near Terra Haute) and from there on to Kenya.

Always a planner, I never do anything without putting a lot of thought into it. Often too much thought. So it was so out of character for me, but I didn’t even hesitate before I told my friend that I would be more than happy to help him out. Not only was I more than happy to help him get this airplane to Kenya, I agreed to stay there with it for two years. It was there that the airplane would be used on a contract with the Red Cross, to provide relief flights of food and medical care into, and out of, the Sudan. Never mind that I could barely think of where the Sudan was, I was off to (in my heart) “save the world”. Little did I know, not all of the world welcomed my help.

In November of that same year, we loaded up a 40-something year-old Douglas DC-3, retrofitted with turboprop engines, with four young pilots, a mechanic, and 55 gallon drums of jet fuel. We had a wobble pump to transfer fuel into a “ferry tank” to get us across the ocean from Brazil to Cameroon, we had a box of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), jugs of water, and sleeping bags. I remember clearly watching over my shoulder, with my nose pressed as hard against the window as I could, just to see Christ the Redeemer slipping out of view. It was as if

his out stretched arms were not calling us to himself, but instead setting us out on our journey. Little did I know that not all of the world welcomed those who are sent to help by the Love of Jesus.

Days later, after stops in Cameroon and Nairobi, I took my crew to a small airfield in northwest Kenya, in the town of Lokichoggio...Loki for short. It was from Loki that I was to spend the next two years flying food, medicine, doctors and nurses into southern Sudan, to a people whose lives were so impacted by the war between the Sudan People's Liberation Army and the National Islamic Front.

We landed in Loki and coordinators from the Red Cross met us as we parked on a makeshift tarmac. My crew was warmly greeted with hugs, until I was the last to step out of the airplane. I still remember the faces of these men, one from Kenya, two from Norway, and one from the United States. The look was that of unmistakable panic. I can still hear them ask, in unison, “What are YOU doing here?”

This is how I came to know what this war on women really is.....

For two weeks our airplane didn’t fly. We had to sit at the camp in Loki while the Red Cross, the company from Nairobi, and the folks back home figured out just what to do with me. I had been informed that although female nurses regularly flew into the Sudan, I would not be welcome as I was there to do “a man’s job.” When I was first told this, I laughed. I honestly thought it was a joke about boys being better pilots than girls.

No, this was no joke, and it had nothing to do with my skills as a pilot. This had everything to do with the fear that my presence, a woman pilot...a woman airplane captain – in charge of a crew of men – would be so offensive to the Muslims who often met the airplane to take the supplies, that I could be put to death for simply doing my job. This was the new reality I had to face while flying into an area at war with the National Islamic Front (NIF).

All I knew was that I had not come that far just to be sent home. I insisted that they find a way to let me stay and do what I had come from the other side of the world to do. Three weeks after arriving at Lokichoggio they decided to let me stay. But, there were conditions...I had to shave my head. It was hot in Loki. Sometimes the area where we parked the airplane felt like the surface of the sun. All the men shaved their heads, just because they thought it kept them cooler. I had to become one of the guys.

Once in the Sudan, I could not get out of the airplane. Ever. I had to sit in the airplane for what seemed like forever...and it too was sweltering hot I could not speak to anyone, nor could I talk on the radio as we made our way to and from southern Sudan. I didn't sound like a man, and my voice would give me away.

Often times our landing areas, in the Sudan, were made on hastily prepared dirt roads, sometime just hours before we flew in. This was done in an effort to try to keep the food and medical supplies we carried out of the hands of those who would sell them to turn a profit. One morning, after I had been flying into the Sudan for six or seven months, I landed on one of these "runways". The aircraft ended up on it's nose, and my co-pilot and I had to climb out of the airplane, along with three Norwegian doctors and nurses. The area had been one of intense fighting just days before, and we were not sure that the NIF had left the area.

Out of great concern for my safety, one of the doctors handed me his Red Cross jacket, and counted me as one of the nurses as people gathered to see what had happened to our airplane. This doctor was genuinely distressed at what might happen to me, should any of the armed Muslim men who had arrived, find that I was the captain of the airplane.

I left Kenya and the Sudan after two years, and I worked for FedEx at a time when I was one of only three female captains on the Boeing 727. Certainly there was that good natured joking about who makes a better pilot...boys or girls, but I certainly never had to worry that someone might harm me for offending men, by simply being a female pilot.

No. There is no war on women here in the United States. That is, unless you count the untold number of female babies who fall victim to abortion. But, as I found as a 23 year-old kid...this world isn't as big as it may seem. The same ideologues I encountered half a world away who would rather harm a woman than to "allow" her to offend a man by not covering her face, or by chance flying an airplane...that war on women exists, and if we are not keen to recognize that, then it is just a matter of time that this real war on women hits our shores.

WANTED! STORIES OF FAITH

Whether you are a cradle Catholic or a convert, young or old, everyone has a story to tell about their faith. Sometimes it's a conversion or coming home story; other times it's a special spiritual experience that has enhanced your faith. Please share your faith with us.

sawyerdenise@yahoo.com

First Communion Class May 3, 2015



Father Mahan with the First Communicants
Back row, left to right: **Ava Schneidt, Jade Pope, Jacob Branham, Elliana Emmons**
Front row, left to right: **Gabrielle Buckley, Kimberly Franklin, Katie Franklin, Julia Tabor**

Confirmation Class May 3, 2015



Archbishop Tobin with the Confirmation Class
Back row, left to right: **Matthew Hopkins, Jason Ehrmann, Brianne Blandford, Kiah Pope**
Front row, left to right: **Logan Wallace, Felicity Zapfe, Maude Cloutier, Kathleen Branham, Zachary Branham**

What's happening in June....

As Scott wrote in this issue's **Catholicism 101**, there have been martyrs throughout the entire 2000 year history of Christianity. In every month of the Church calendar, we honor saints who were martyred. These months of June and July are no exception.

We honor the Apostles, Saint Peter, Saint Paul and Saint Thomas. We honor all of the First Martyrs of the Holy Roman Church about whom Scott wrote. We honor Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions from Uganda, Saints John Fisher and Thomas More of England during the early Reformation, and Saint Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions of China. The Church is truly universal, and the lives and deaths of our saints reflect that universality.

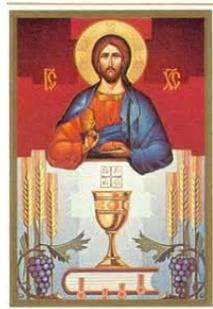
Wednesday, June 3: Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions

Between 1885 to 1887 twenty-three men, servants of the tribal lord Mwanga, were executed in Uganda because of their conversion to Christianity. He resented the influence the "White Fathers" had on his servants. One of the young men predicted, "A well which has many sources never runs dry. When we are gone, others will come after us." By 1890, just a few years later, there were ten thousand Christian converts in Uganda. Today that number of Catholics in Uganda has grown to over thirty million.



ANTIPHON: As gold in the furnace, the Lord put his chosen to the test; as sacrificial offerings, he took them to himself; and in due time they will be honored, and grace and peace will be with the elect of God.

Sunday, June 7: Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)



This feast day began in Belgium 1246 to celebrate the institution of the Eucharist, given to us by Jesus on the eve of his crucifixion. Traditionally, Catholics celebrated the day with Eucharistic processions through their towns and villages, singing hymns and litanies. Although this is done less frequently today, there is an effort to

renew this beautiful tradition.

ANTIPHON: He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

Friday, June 12: Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

"Jesus knew and loved each and all during his life, his agony, and his Passion and gave himself up for each one of us...He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, is rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that love..." (CCC 478)



ANTIPHON: The designs of his Heart are from age to age, to rescue their souls from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Monday, June 22: Saints John Fisher and Thomas More

Saint John Fisher was King Henry VIII's former tutor, as well as an important bishop and scholar. When the king rejected the papal decision against an annulment (the king would eventually have married six wives), Fisher spoke out publicly. To avoid confrontation with the king, he retired from public life, but the King would not forgive him. He was beheaded on June 22, 1536.



Saint Thomas More was born into a noble family in London in 1478. Having studied law, he was knighted by King Henry VIII in 1521 and was given a high position. However, a strong Catholic, he refused to support the king as the head of the newly created English Church against the Roman Catholic Church. He was accused of treason, was imprisoned and eventually beheaded, thirteen days after Saint John Fisher.

ANTIPHON: The souls of the Saints are rejoicing in heaven, the Saints who followed the footsteps of Christ, and since for love of him, they shed their blood, they now exult with Christ for ever.

Tuesday, June 30: The First Martyrs of the Holy Roman Church

To learn more about these early Christian martyrs, go to page 2, **Catholicism 101**.



ANTIPHON: The souls of the Saints are rejoicing in heaven, the Saints who followed the footsteps of Christ, and since for love of him they shed their blood, they now exult with Christ.

What's happening in July....

Wednesday, July 1: Memorial of Blessed Junipero Serra

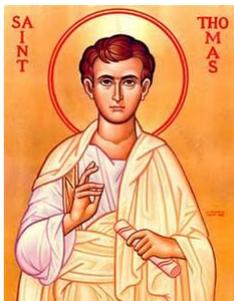


Blessed Junipero Serra was a Franciscan priest from Spain who was sent to the New World as a missionary for Christ in 1748. He requested to be assigned to the Pacific Coast where, during the next 15 years, he traveled up and down the coast on foot, establishing mission churches and converting the native Indians to Christianity. He died in 1784.

He will be canonized by Pope Francis in September of this year.

ANTIPHON: O chosen people, proclaim the mighty works of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Friday, July 3: Feast of Saint Thomas



Saint Thomas was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. He is also known to us as "Doubting Thomas" because he found it impossible to believe that Jesus had actually risen from the dead until he was able to actually see and touch the risen Christ. Despite his doubts, he went on to become one of the great missionaries of

the early Church, traveling as far east as India where he was martyred, killed by a spear.

ANTIPHON: You are my God, and I confess you; you are my God, and I exalt you; I will thank you, for you became my savior.

Thursday, July 9: Memorial of Saint Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions



This memorial is unique in that it honors the martyrdom of 33 European missionaries and 87 Chinese Christians over the course of three centuries, from about 1600 to 1900. Anna Wang, age 14, was the last of a group of women and children killed during the Boxer Rebellion on July 22, 1900. She faced the rebels saying, 'The door of heaven is open to all! Jesus..Jesus...Jesus!'

ANTIPHON: The souls of the Saints are rejoicing in heaven, the Saints who followed the footsteps of Christ, and since for love of him they shed their blood, they now exult with Christ for ever.

Saturday, July 18: Memorial of Saint Camillus de Lellis

Born in Italy, Saint Camillus had a difficult childhood, which helped to form his later life. His mother died when he was very young, and his father, a soldier, neglected him. After becoming a soldier himself, he suffered a leg injury and during his recovery underwent a conversion. He began to study for the priesthood while working at a hospital in Rome. There he formed a group of consecrated men to care for the sick. It was approved in 1614 as the Order of the Servants of the Sick. He was quoted as saying, "With God's grace we want to serve the sick with the affection that a loving mother is wont to show her sick only child."



ANTIPHON: Come, you blessed of my Father, says the Lord: I was sick, and you visited me. Amen, I say to you: Whatever you did for the least of my brethren you did it for me.

Wednesday, July 29: Memorial of Saint Martha

Sisters Martha and Mary, along with their brother Lazarus, were blessed to be able to count Jesus as one of their friends. Living in Bethany, less than a day's walk from Jerusalem, Jesus frequently stopped to see them and to enjoy their hospitality. Mary tended to ignore any chores that needed to be done so that she could sit at Jesus' feet and listen to him. Martha, probably the older, felt responsible for her guests, and she was upset that her sister wasn't helping her. Jesus saw her distress, and he said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing." (Luke 10:41-42)



That's good advice for all of us. We get so caught up in the business of our lives that we forget to tend to the needs of our soul. We tend to forget that "one thing." Jesus.

ANTIPHON: Jesus entered a village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.