

Spring 2017

OUR LADY OF MERCY PARISH NEWSLETTER



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This issue highlights our catholic (universal) faith expressed through the participation of our clergy and parishioners in our nation, through our diocese and in our community."

March for Life 2017

By: Bob Miller

Celebrating the "March for Life" in Washington D.C., on Friday, January 27, was electrifying. I was delighted when my son Sean called to see if I was interested in joining the March for Life. I went many years ago and remembered the wonderful joy experienced.

The trip to Washington started by attending Mass at Saint Elizabeth Church in Wyckoff at 6 a.m. Once Mass started, with Father Carlos and three other local priests, you could feel the wonderful grace, energy and spirit among the travelers.....united together to protect the unborn. It was contagious, and it expanded when we said the Rosary.

Sean and I were going to travel by bus with over 45 other individuals, from different parishes in Bergen County. Our bus was full and so were many others. The four and half hours went so fast.

When we arrived in Washington on Constitution Avenue, where the MARCH began, we heard this tumultuous ovation coming from the Washington Monument, where the Vice President was speaking and greeting the marchers.

After the encouraging and supportive talks, the marchers headed down Constitution Avenue toward the Supreme Court, approximately 1 ½ miles away. The sight of so many diverse, nationwide and enthusiastic marchers was overwhelming. The most beautiful sight was the vast number of mothers who brought their young



Sean and Bob Miller

children to the March...some in their arms or walking hand-in-hand and others in strollers. Marchers were also in wheel chairs or using walkers or canes. Everyone helped one another. Nobody wanted to be excluded.

It appeared every state was represented and a high school band from New Orleans played lively music. My high school, Cardinal Hayes in the Bronx had a large contingency and a group from Don Bosco, the Iron Men, was there.

What was so impressive with all the marchers was their spirit, beautiful smiles, positive and loving attitudes. When many of the young people reached the Supreme Court building they started a chant I will never forget, it's still ringing in my ears:

WE ARE THE PRO LIFE GENERATION!

God's presence was here and you saw it in the marchers. May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

Called to March

By: Jennifer Kavanagh

I have been pro-life for as long as I can remember, yet never considered myself one who “pickets” for any reason. However, upon hearing that the “Women’s March” purposefully excluded pro-life groups, and seeing the disgraceful behavior exhibited by many there, I felt compelled to act by attending the “March for Life”. The idea that cherishing life at every stage is viewed by some as an archaic affront to progressive feminist thinking, motivated me to want to stand up for this beautiful virtue. I am blessed to have a sister, living in the Washington D.C. area, who happily agreed to take the day off from work on Friday, January 27th to bring my daughter and me to the March for Life.

Upon arriving, I was immediately struck by the great number of teens from as far as Alabama, Nebraska and Florida, who endured multiple-day bus rides to be there. The atmosphere was one of hope and celebration, rather than the anger and condemnation of which I was ignorantly apprehensive.

It was wonderful to have a Vice President who was excited to speak about being pro-life, a quality I have always hoped for in our nation’s leaders. In our “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” society, if our president will fight for the unseen unborn, would he not also fight for the average citizen whom he also cannot see?

I was most heartened by the tearful speech from Congresswoman Mia Love. She told a story of the unplanned pregnancy of two struggling Haitian immigrants one of whom she revealed at the conclusion to be herself. As we lined up for the actual march, I couldn’t help but snap a quick

picture of the vast field where all had gathered without a scrap of trash left behind!

As we marched, we spoke to more than one person who was also marching for the first time, and for the same reasons as we. The street was packed from side to side, and as far ahead of us and behind us as I could see, it was a sea of women, men and youth. Upon reaching the Supreme Court building, we saw and



Supreme Court

heard courageous people giving witness about their own regrets. My sister, visibly moved, thanked and blessed them as we passed. It was a truly beautiful experience.

In these politically charged times, it was so fulfilling to be part of a cause as selfless and positive as the March for Life. Standing within our great nation’s capital, was the overwhelming presence of Christ, the greatest “feminist” I know and a hope that we will not be ultimately judged by viewpoints, but rather by who has loved others most genuinely.

*Jennifer is the Youth Minister at
Our Lady of Mercy Parish.*



My March for Life Experience

By: Nora Kavanagh

As a 13 year-old, I don't get much of a say about what goes on in government. After I saw some of the things going on at the "Women's March," I was embarrassed by those things which didn't represent me or who I want to be as a woman. So, when my mom decided to attend the "March for Life" for the first time, I begged to go with her. She said "no" at first because it was a school day, but I said I would finish all my school work before we left.

At first, I was surprised at how nice the people on the subway were, because we were all going to the same place. When we got there, it was cold and windy and there were lots of other teenagers. On the way there, we learned that the Vice President was going to speak. It was an honor to hear him and Mrs. Pence. I also loved that we prayed for Madonna! I enjoyed all the

clever posters that people had made, and I even received a compliment on mine from one of the many priests there.

After the rally, we lined up to march and fell in with a lot of different people, some praying the Rosary. We prayed along with them until everyone around us was praying together in English and Spanish. Everyone was so friendly and positive. I felt very proud to be able to march for a cause in which I believe. Since the march, I have told many friends about being pro-life and what that means. I even changed some minds with the facts I have learned. I hope to march again next year and that it can be a new family tradition.

*Nora is an eighth grade student at
Our Lady of Mercy Academy.*

New Hope

Helping First-Time Single Mothers

Established in 1985, New Hope, Inc. is an outreach organization that provides help for single first-time mothers and their babies.

New Hope provides subsidies for housing, day care, education, and counseling. New Hope was founded on the premise that all human life is precious. The volunteers at New Hope understand the upset, indeed the often tragic aspects, of an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy.

To volunteer or receive assistance contact the local pro-life center, New Hope, at 149 Third Avenue, Westwood, NJ, 201-722-7405 or www.newhopeprc.org.

Archdiocesan “Jubilee Year of Mercy” Pilgrimage

By: Christine Venusti

The practice of pilgrimage has a special place in the [Extraordinary] Holy Year [of Mercy], because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life.

Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, 14.

The Archdiocese of Newark sponsored a one-day pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, October 22, 2016. A record of 4,000 pilgrims from parishes in Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union counties attended.

Bob Miller, on behalf of our parish, traveled with pilgrims from St. Joseph Parish in Oradell and Annunciation Parish in Paramus.



Bob Miller standing proudly with OLM banner.

He was our banner bearer, along with six others representing the designated Archdiocesan Pilgrim Churches that had had Holy Doors in their parishes: Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Newark; St. Francis Xavier, Newark; St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Linden; St. Mary (Divine Mercy Parish), Rahway; Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Wallington and Our Lady of Mercy, Jersey City.

Pilgrims arrived early giving participants the opportunity for nourishment at the cafeteria, visiting the gift shop, participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and enjoying the outdoor Carillon Concert.

In preparation for the beginning of the celebration, an Organ Concert was given in the Upper Church of the Basilica with the procession of the parish banners at 1:30 p.m. The ceremony continued with reciting the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, followed by a concelebrated Mass officiated by Archbishop John Meyers in honor of Mary, Queen and Mother of Mercy.

“The experience was fabulous,” said Bob. “The decades of the Rosary (prayed) in different languages, the energy of the spirit of the people. It was wonderful.”

Bob, along with his fellow pilgrims, boarded their bus for the ride back home. They were tired but full of the grace and spirit that the day held.



The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception



The New Archbishop of the Diocese of Newark

By: Ann Marie Dong

“Sometimes I think Pope Francis sees a lot more in me than I see in myself.” Cardinal Tobin

“Jesus Christ lives today in His body, the Church. And if we lose Christ, how will anyone find... the joyful life that God intends for us, how will anyone find eternal life? Jesus Christ lives today in His body, the Church, which is neither an elite club nor a static container of truth.”

These are some words of the new Archbishop of Newark, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin during his homily on the feast of Epiphany in the presence of six U.S. Cardinals, including Newark’s fourth archbishop, Theodore McCarrick. Also present was Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the U.S. papal nuncio who read the Vatican’s appointment document. The cardinal lifted it up for all the priests to see and then proceeded down the center aisle of the Cathedral to show it to all the faithful who responded with loud applause.

Archbishop Pierre escorted Cardinal Tobin to the cathedra, (Latin for chair) which now displays the coat of arms of our first Bishop, James Roosevelt Bayley, the nephew of St. Elizabeth Seton. Cardinal Tobin sat on the Episcopal throne for the first time, holding a silver shepherd’s staff or crosier, the chief priest’s symbol of authority.

Later Cardinal Tobin gave thanks to his family for teaching him how to pray.

Adapted from the *Catholic Advocate*, January 25, 2017.

Installation of Our New Archbishop

By: Carolyn McNamara



At the installation of our new archbishop, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, on January 6, 2017, the first in the procession to welcome him were two priests, walking together.

One was Monsignor James Turro, who studied at Darlington Seminary in Mahwah, and continued his education at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and the Biblical Institute of the Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained in 1948, and is well known to Our Lady of Mercy parish, and the archdiocese. For 45 years he was a professor of New Testament Studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary, South Orange.

The other was at the other end of the age and experience spectrum. Father Jesus Ramos, 29, was ordained in 2016. He received his undergraduate degree at Eastern Catholic University in his native country, Colombia. He completed his graduate studies at Immaculate Conception, Seton Hall University. He is currently serving at St. John the Evangelist parish in Bergenfield.

The *Newsletter* staff received the following reflections from Father Ramos about his experience on this important day:

“To have the opportunity to greet our Archbishop Cardinal Joseph Tobin was a blessing. As the installation was getting closer I started to prepare the words I would say. I was nervous, first because English is not my first language, but then I realized that he knows 5 or 6 languages so I felt better. I was with Monsignor Turro and I thought, what great company! I said to the Cardinal that day, “Congratulations and you are in our prayers.”

And for our Spanish speaking parishioners Father said, “Agradezco a Dios por haberme brindado la oportunidad de saludar a nuestro Arzobispo Cardenal Jose Tobin. Fue para mi algo muy espiritual porque pude ofrecerle mis oraciones y todas las oraciones de los sacerdotes jovenes.”



Who Knew There Would Be an Abundance of Revelations?

By: A Grateful Fellow Parishioner

When I hear my friends talk about downsizing, there is a tone of sheer dread. “I have so much stuff..” “I am going to let my kids take care of that.” “It’s too overwhelming.” These comments speak to the amount of energy that is required for this huge undertaking.

In retrospect, I believe I had worked on some spiritual issues that made this energy accessible to me. I had come to sense that my life could be simpler, lighter. I came to yearn for less financial stress, and more time to connect with myself and my loved ones about things that mattered, like my relationships, nature, causes that are bigger than me and my four walls. I felt the energy of the Holy Spirit moving me forward, even though I had no blue print, just a desire to have a more humble life.

Letting Go

I had already let go, not by choice, but by the real life transitions of my loved ones. Our four parents had passed away. I had let go of my adult children now independent of their dad and me. It was just the two of us in a large house. The time of purging was full of questions, conscience-clearing. What about the poor people who have next to nothing? Did I really have to have all those placemats, ceramics, decorations? Had I really thought before I bought those articles? Did they make me feel upper middle class and a woman who belonged? Did they make my life any better? Finally, in the act of letting go I made room for the serenity of just being.

I shared my resolve to move with close friends when I said, “We’ll be selling in the spring and we’ve started house hunting.” They let me know they would be there to give me hours of their time. Instead of being the one to give, I knew if I could open up to their generosity and willingness to be with me in this process, I would get back the simple joy of their genuine friendship. What a great gift it was! And it gets better. We had a month’s gap between houses, and all of our possessions were in storage. Friends who would be away and/or were looking for company in their large residences, extended open-hearted invitations to us to stay at their homes. How lucky was I to have these options! We could receive and enjoy the love and intimacy in the experience of eating together, cooking together, and helping out my hosts. I thought of Jesus and the apostles traveling to homes and spending time there as he preached in his years of ministry, the moments of sharing in someone’s daily life freely receiving and giving.

In the end we put in only one bid on a house, the house we live in now. When our journey of downsizing began, my husband and I did not know exactly what we wanted in a home. It was a process of continually talking, thinking and feeling. Ultimately we found what felt right on an intuitive level, and then came the reality check: “Could we afford it?” My husband and I became a closer couple through that process. I also found myself not being afraid, but being willing to wait and believe that something that was right for us would come along, and it did. I am so glad I did not get distressed or worried. That would have been wasted energy.

Please see *Downsizing* on page 7.

Continued from page 6.

Praying to the Trinity and regular meditation helped. We were open to the support of our deceased loved ones, who, within the communion of saints were rooting for us. Of course, Mary was involved too. Talking to her and feeling her motherly love was nurturing. "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you..." (Isaiah 41:10)



Planting Myself in Something New

The reality of planting myself in someplace new made me think about what I really needed on a personal level is access to the main resources that sustain me: my most significant relationships, a library, a place to maintain good health and fitness, and a church community. Being a Catholic feels good for many reasons. One of them is being able to feel at home at Mass anywhere. In my month as a nomad, I enjoyed going to Mass in the local churches. Reading each church's mission

statement made me appreciate the importance of being in community as a necessary ingredient of my spiritual life and growth. In my intimate moments of prayer, I knew I would be guided to the place that was right for us. The house we chose was within a reasonable distance from Our Lady of Mercy. There was no need to plant roots in a new church community. I was able to keep the one I loved, the one that had nurtured me over the last thirty plus years. I had yet another reason for joy and gratitude.

In my reflection about this new chapter of my life, I return to a Scripture reading that has comforted me many times since my teen years when I was feeling uncertain, empty or restless. "Behold I am making all things new." (Revelations 21:5) I am a living testament to that. I remember one of the first lessons of the *Baltimore Catechism*, "Where is God? God is everywhere". All I have to do is trust and be open to his Presence in order to feel His guidance and love leading me to new places where I will be refreshed.



In Memoriam

Cosmo F. Ferrara



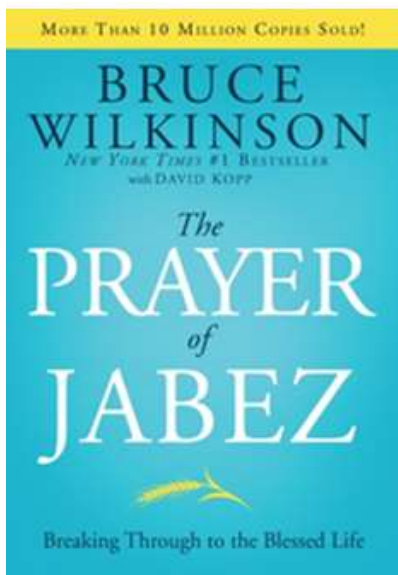
In 2001 the call went out to restart the *Parish Newsletter* as a way to help celebrate the parish's upcoming centennial. It took a while to discover that the quiet man who offered to join the group, and who would always have an answer to any questions about writing, actually held a doctorate and was an author of textbooks in the subject, as well as other topics!

Humble, kind, helpful - that is how we will remember Cosmo. In his memory, we have reprinted his Book Review, *The Prayer of Jabez*, on page 8. It was originally published in the Spring 2013 *Parish Newsletter*.

We sadly add his name to our staff box for one more edition.



Book Review
Reviewed by Frances
and Cosmos Ferrara



When asked what sentence in the Bible revolutionized his life and ministry the most, Dr. Bruce Wilkinson says it is the prayer of Jabez. Unlike many Biblical figures, Jabez is remembered not for what he did but for what he prayed.

In his short, very readable book, *The Prayer of Jabez*, Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, founder of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, focuses attention on a figure who occupies merely a few lines in the *Bible* (1 *Chronicles*, 4:9-10) but whose prayer offers a workable path to God and to an understanding of oneself. Jabez's prayer makes four requests of God:

Oh, that You will bless me indeed
And enlarge my borders,
That Your hand will be with me,
And that you would keep me from evil.

Is it too much to ask God to bless us? No. In fact, God wants us to ask. What counts, Wilkinson says, is "knowing who you want to be and asking for it."

Jabez's second request—enlarge my borders—leads to expanding our opportunities to touch others for His glory. Regardless of one's vocation there are plenty of opportunities in the home, workplace, or wherever one might be to spread the word of God.

So you receive God's blessings and expand your territory, but then your "ministry" begins to crumble. What do you do then? You call out Jabez's third request "that Your hand be with me." Recognizing the need to continue depending on God is essential.

The Prayer of Jabez

By Dr. Bruce Wilkinson

Jabez's fourth request is "Lord, keep me from evil." He asks God to keep him from making the mistakes humans are so prone to making when temptation comes.

Once you have reached your goal, you start the cycle over again.

Wilkinson writes in a conversational tone, illustrating his points with examples and anecdotes—often humorous ones. He writes from a perspective that shows a true understanding of life in today's world and how prayer can be the key to a more meaningful life. *The Prayer of Jabez* teaches us how to pray a simple yet daring prayer that God answers.

This book is available in the OLM Gathering Space.



Dr. Bruce H. Wilkinson is the founder and president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, an international organization dedicated to providing the finest Biblical teaching, tools, and training. He is the author of *Experiencing Spiritual Breakthroughs*, *30 Days to Experiencing Spiritual Breakthroughs*, and numerous other books. Bruce and his wife, Darlene, live in Atlanta, Georgia, and have three children.

Remembering in Pictures

Highlights over the months



December 17, 2016

A gathering of family, friends and parishioners met after the Celebration of the Mass to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Fr. Charles Granstrand's ordination on December 17, 1966.



January 22, 2017

Monsignor Turro congratulates long-time OLM parishioner Eleanor Bowen on the occasion of her 108th birthday! Happy Birthday Eleanor! May God bless you and continue to watch over you.

Reflection

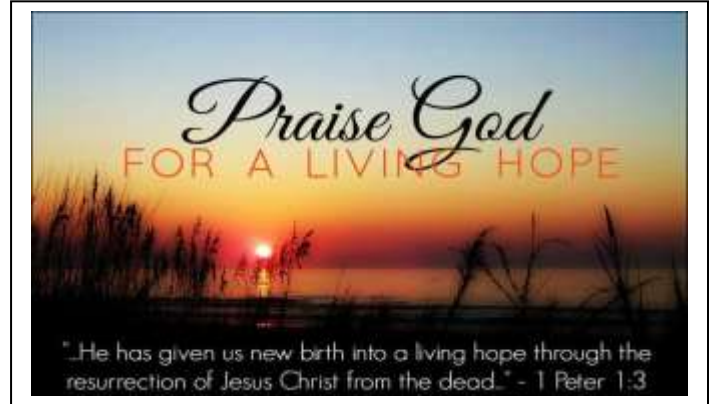
A Living Hope

By: Celeste T. Villegas

Scripture says (Peter 1:3-4) that in God's great mercy, "He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The virtue of hope, therefore, becomes the "traveler's" virtue while we move forward from earthly life into eternal life. Can we celebrate this living hope that Easter brings from wherever we are in the journey – whether it be in faraway lands, in families, in the neighborhoods or in a business environment?

- Yes, we can – when we resist making our children and others over into "our image of the perfect human being" and loving them as God loves us (Ephesians 3:20), since He "can accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine."
- Yes, we can – when like the Biblical Job (Job 42: 2, 5-6), we remain steadfast in our relationship with God regardless of illness or misfortune.
- Yes, we can – when despite our inability to see tomorrow, we trust God with our day as well as our unseen tomorrows.



In hope, i.e., in living with expectation, we become "shining lights for Jesus Christ" in a world filled with spiritual darkness.

With hope, we are able to do what our Blessed Mother did at Calvary (John 19:25-27): Stand at the foot of the cross, where Jesus conquered death to give us hope and life.

Let us also remember Moses in Scripture (Hebrews 11:25) who had the opportunity "to choose either a reward that stops here or one that lies ahead in a place that cannot be seen." Let us choose to cultivate a continuous habit of believing and hoping. Sooner or later, all of our doubts will vanish "in the glory of the absolute faithfulness of God."

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THANK YOU TO ALL THE PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE NEWSLETTER OVER THE YEARS.

TO FATHER CHARLES: OUR GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED!

"One GOOD READ Deserves Another!
Please send YOUR Ideas. YOUR Articles."

CONTACT A STAFF MEMBER.

We're on the web. Visit us at www.urolm.org.