



St. Rita

catholic community

A Letter From Our Pastor

A Journey of a *Lifetime*

The plane landed at Leonardo da Vinci International Airport outside of Rome almost exactly an hour early. In less than an hour, the 23 of us on the “Italy for Rookies and All Stars” pilgrimage to Italy were on a bus that holds about 50 people and “heading for the hills.” But the hills for which we were heading were the lush umbrella pine and cedar-laden hills of the Umbrian countryside north of Rome – Umbria is a lesser-known province of Italy bordering on and sharing much beauty and history with its more famous sister province of Tuscany. Our destination was the small town of Cascia prior to our evening and night to be spent in Assisi. There is a special charm about the topography and flora of Umbria – some believe there must be something else very special in the air and the water of Umbria, for it is the motherland of the great saints known as Benedict, Francis, Clare, and Rita. The beauty of the area certainly can make one readily feel God’s proximity.

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A Journey of a *Lifetime* continued from front cover

The ride was almost three hours long – a deliberate choice made to assist with the tricky reality of jetlag caused by eastward travel across seven time zones. Indeed, the plan worked, as most of us dozed multiple times as we spread out in the ample space of our oversized motor coach. But our tour director, Marisa, was careful to make sure most of us were awake as the bus rounded a bend in the highway. It was then that we could see the quaint town of Cascia perched on an Umbrian hillside.

As we pulled into the parking lot at the foot of the hill upon which Cascia is built, we could already sense that we were at a pilgrimage site – lots of religious symbols and kiosks selling religious articles. But there were also roses and pictures of roses all over the place. It made me think of the line, “You became a rose in the garden of Christ...” (Do you recognize where that line comes from?) We proceeded up several hills – aided by escalators and elevators, fortunately – and arrived at the entrance to the basilica shrine of St. Rita of Cascia. By that time, my heart was pumping and my emotions were beginning to get engaged. We entered into the basilica where a Mass was being celebrated. But we were able to proceed to the tomb of St. Rita in a large chapel on one side of the church.

The miraculously preserved body of St. Rita is encased in a glass sepulcher surrounded by thanksgiving “votive items” amid much gold and marble ornamentation. I walked up as close as I could get to the tomb, and immediately started praying, “Lord, thank you for the rich history you have bestowed on our faith community...” Then I took a seat on a pew bench in front of the tomb and lifted up the parish and its members to the intercession of St. Rita. I thought of the families

enduring the trials and anguish of death and serious illness. I called to mind married and engaged couples, all of who could benefit from Rita’s spiritual solicitude. I reflected on the past six years of the parish’s history and my involvement in the parish for that part of its history. And, then, I commended the parish’s future to her patronage – my renewed term as Pastor of the parish; the ongoing construction and adjustment to new facilities and campus improvements; praying that we might continue to be built “into a community of mercy, compassion, and forgiveness” following her example. Then I prayed our parish Litany of St. Rita, which forms a part of our monthly Ministry Leaders Prayer – pondering Rita’s witness as “mirror of Christian spouses,” “generous in forgiving,” and “patroness of desperate cases.” With the Litany I also prayed, “... obtain for me the grace to be satisfied with the lot in life to which God has called me... obtain for me health of soul and body... obtain for me the graces to suffer with resignation the troubles of this life, and protect me in all my needs.”

What a way to begin what turned out to be an incredible week on pilgrimage in Italy! In accordance with Fr. Josh’s pleading, I sent him several photos, which he proceeded to post on Twitter. And I am most grateful to Fr. Josh for bearing the load of the parish alone during the days of my absence. May we continue to faithfully fulfill our commission as a parish sent “out into the world proclaiming the Good News of Christ Crucified.”

God bless you,



Fr. Bob Coerver

A Look Back on Recent Events and Activities at St. Rita

The summer months have been a busy and exciting time for our St. Rita community! From the celebration of our new facilities – the Open House for our new parish office, and the dedication and blessing of St. Rita and the Staubach Family Wing – to Vacation Bible School, there has been much to enjoy and be thankful for this summer!



St. Rita School and Faith Formation Program

With the new school year upon us, exciting changes and many things to look forward to are on the horizon for our both our school and parish youth. School principal Dr. Elena Hines and Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation Susan Sheetz gave are excited for what's in store in 2016-17 as the new school year begins later this month.

The school will welcome younger students than ever this year with its new Pre-Kindergarten 4 program. Four-year old children will enjoy a full-day program led by teachers Sherri Lenzen and Lynette Jackson with the help of two full-time aides that will prepare the students for life in the Kindergarten classroom.

Dr. Hines says the program has been well received so far.

"I'm looking forward to all the different possibilities that we're offering people," Dr. Hines says. "It's always fun to watch the little ones. If you're having a bad day, you go and see the little ones and it's like a ray of sunshine. Now we have more little ones to go visit."

Fifth through eighth grades will see an addition to the previously established advanced academics



St. Rita School students interact with iPads during class time. With a new building, new teachers, and the addition of advanced learning classes, principal Dr. Elena Hines says she is looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

program. New teachers have been hired to facilitate the math program in fifth through eighth and to add advanced English for the seventh and eighth grade classes.

Other new teachers and new hires include a new music teacher, middle school social studies teachers, and a part-time Director of School Liturgy and Spiritual Life.

"I think we've really got some good people coming in," Dr. Hines says. "Our new Director of School Liturgy and Spiritual Life will work with our school liturgy committee for the middle school retreats. They will also oversee programs to focus on the spirituality of students as well as parents."

Additionally, Dr. Hines says she and her staff are enjoying the new

"It's always fun to watch the little ones. If you're having a bad day, you go and see the little ones and it's like a ray of sunshine. Now we have more little ones to go visit." — Dr. Elena Hines, St. Rita School Principal

Program Ready for Exciting Year Ahead



Children work together to build a block tower at St. Rita School. Young children will be welcomed this school year with the addition of a new a full-day preschool program.

building and looking forward to the completion of some remodeling that has been done to the old administrative offices.

Over at the parish, Susan says Children's Faith Formation will continue to build upon classes for Spanish-speaking families that were established last year. These classes help enable families to

speak at home with their children about topics taught in English during sacramental preparation.

"We're blessed that we have wonderful people from the Hispanic community that love teaching. We want to be able to reach our parents so that they can be on the journey with their children," Susan explains. "They are the first educators so we

want them to be able to talk about our wonderful faith with their children at home. We feel like that helps the children feel more prepared."

Faith Formation is currently looking for more volunteers to help with all aspects of the program. Parents in particular are encouraged to lend their time as the new year begins.

"We are always looking for catechists who want to share their faith with the children. It's wonderful for people in the parish, whether you're a school parent or a Faith Formation parent who wants to step up and share this faith with their children. It's wonderful for the children to see other families that practice the faith and it's really exciting to see the dynamics between everyone. The journey is for all of us, not just me teaching you, and we're all in this together. It's wonderful to see that and see that our faith journey is what makes us Catholic," Susan says.

Also planned for the coming year is a musical presentation that will bring both school students and children in Faith Formation together to celebrate Catholic Schools Week in January. Susan says it's a chance to engage all of the parish children as one big St. Rita family.

For more information about volunteering with Faith Formation, contact Susan at ssheetz@stritaparish.net or call 972-934-8388. For more on the school, visit their website at <http://strita.edlioschool.com/>.

The Assumption of Mary: *A Time to Celebrate!*

Can a pile of bones really be that exciting?

Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, eager to glimpse the spot in which the alleged bones of St. Peter, our first pope, remain to this day.

The relics of saints have been venerated throughout the ages in every corner of the world – yet, the bones of the very first Christian, the Mystical Rose, are nowhere to be found.

When it comes to the day, manner or year of the Blessed Virgin Mary's death, nothing is certain. No account is given in Scripture. The Church turns instead to Tradition for an answer.

Since the birth of the Church, no Marian relics have ever been venerated – nor can they ever be – because her body was *assumed*, or taken up, into heaven. There exist, therefore, no remains of the Blessed Virgin's body on this earth. She lives, right now, body and soul, in heavenly glory.

Although the particular dogma of the Assumption cannot be found in the writings of Scripture, if we look at many other writings by the early Christians, it is clear that the Church has always held this dogma to be true. Even more, though there is no statement of fact in the Bible itself that Mary was assumed body and soul, the truths that we do know about Mary from Scripture simply serve to back up the reality that she was assumed into heaven. She gave herself wholly to the Lord and followed His will for her life, perfectly, to the end.



The Assumption of Mary reveals that the promises of the Lord – including the resurrection of the body – were fulfilled in Mary. She shared most intimately in the life, death and resurrection of her Son, and was free from original sin and its effects – including corruption of the body at death.

Therefore, it was no surprise when, in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic faith with these words: "The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory" (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44).

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is observed on the liturgical calendar as a solemnity – of higher importance than a feast. On Aug. 15, this wonderful celebra-

tion is accompanied by great hope in the resurrection of the body and everlasting union with God in heaven.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI during his homily Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in 2006: "Mary is 'blessed' because – totally, in body and soul and forever – she became the Lord's dwelling place. If this is true, Mary does not merely invite our admiration and veneration, but she guides us, shows us the way of life, shows us how we can become blessed, how to find the path of happiness."

Alongside Catholics throughout the country, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption on Aug. 15. In many dioceses, this is a Holy Day of Obligation and a great liturgical feast. Mark your calendars!

Our Lady's Rosary Makers Share Faith and Fellowship

When Our Lady's Rosary Makers get together each week, they're busy making rosaries – but wait, there's more!

"We're making rosaries, but we also pray the Rosary, and we do a lot of visiting, and fellowship, and sharing of stories, giving free advice," says Lyn Yanez, ministry leader. "There are actually a lot of cool things, from a faith perspective."

The group meets at 7 p.m. each Monday in the Bride's Room in the church, and is finished no later than 9 p.m. The group currently is on summer hiatus, but will resume the week after Labor Day.

"We always either make a rosary or teach a new person to make one," Lyn says. "The object is to create a rosary and bring people into the fold for it. They are for mission work, and once we have them made, they are put in storage and we place them in the chapel for people to take one, who need one. We can go through 10 to 12 a week."

The group also supplies rosaries for summer camps.

Sometimes as many as 20 people gather on Mondays, but the core group is usually five or six parishioners, Lyn says.

"One of my marketing tactics, when I started, is that the only commitment is 'come when you can,'" Lyn says. "No substitutes are needed, it's a great service, and we take the summer off. It's a great way to have a chance for fellowship with fellow Catholics, and pray the Rosary."

"At the end of the session, we say the Rosary together, and pray for special intentions of the prayer chain, or a personal intention," she continues. "We always pray for other Rosary makers,

those passed on. It's a great little fellowship group."

Lyn has been attending for about 12 years. She learned about making rosaries from the group that her friend, Donna Hunter, was leading at St. Monica Parish.

"I found out about the group here, and I love crafts," Lyn says. "It's a bead-string-and-learning-to-tie-a-knot. It's easy to do when you're talking. It is my three favorite things – talking, crafts and praying. I probably learned about it through the weekly bulletin,

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12521 Inwood Road
Dallas, TX 75244

Weekday Masses

Monday-Friday, 5:30 p.m.
*(Effective Aug. 15: Wed., Thurs.,
Fri., 8:00 a.m.)*
Saturday, 8:00 a.m.

Weekend Masses

Saturday, 5:30 p.m.
*Sunday, 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m.,
12:30 p.m. (Bilingual), 5:30 p.m.*

Our Lady's Rosary Makers Share Faith and Fellowship

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but I came only occasionally when I had my kids."

Last year Lyn acquired the title of "Head Bead" – the affectionate name for the group leader.

"The Head Bead retired, and they needed someone to take over," Lyn says. "I have to make sure we have beads, and I collect money from the members and get contributions."

A teacher at Jesuit Dallas contacted Lyn with a request to buy rosaries.

"We don't sell rosaries, but we got together to make sure the kids had rosaries," Lyn says. "We make sure that those who want rosaries, have them."

As the group meets each week, "we solve all the world's problems," Lyn says. "It's a wonderful fellowship of men and women. We have the Blessed Mother in common, we venerate the Rosary, topics range – we talk a lot."

The group said intense prayers for the community, the

police, and those in sorrow during the tragic events in July.

There are serene moments, however, like the times Lyn brought in a recording of a saying of the Rosary by an order of English nuns.

"They had a choir singing between the decades," she says. "We've also talked about watching a video about the development of the Rosary, the history behind it. We've been saying it for years, but we don't know a lot about the Rosary."

Interested in learning more about the Our Lady's Rosary Makers group?

Contact Lyn Yanez at 972-492-7074.