



## CHURCH OF SAINT MARY

510 N. Prospect Ave. • Alma, MI 48801  
Office (989)463-5370 • Fax (989)463-1369

## MOUNT SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

605 S. Franklin St. • St. Louis, MI 48880  
Office (989)681-5080 • Fax (989)681-2887



Dear Parish Family,

February 13, 2011

So many people to thank! So many things to be grateful for! Thank you to the Fatima World Apostolate for bringing the movie *The 13th Day*, to St. Mary on Friday. And a great big THANK YOU to everyone who worked so hard on making our School Auction a success. I'm amazed at the generosity of time and talent, as well as the financial support offered by so many people.

Lot's of sporting events in the near future that are tailored to family and youth. Sunday, February 20 is Faith Night in Saginaw. Our own Bishop Cistone will be part of the event featuring music and talks - followed by a Saginaw Spirit Hockey game. Details are in the bulletin and at [www.saginaw.org](http://www.saginaw.org)

On Saturday, February 26, our parishes have been invited to a Central Michigan University basketball game. The discounted ticket price is \$6.00; and as an extra discount, any parish or school volunteers or staff will get 1/2 off that price as a show of appreciation for their work in the parish. Altar servers can attend for FREE. The only catch is that you **must** pre-register to receive the extra discount. Please contact the parish office to pre-register.

The video series *Boundaries* continues on Wednesdays at 6:45 pm in St. Mary Parish Center through March 2. Due to the snow days, we have had to combine a couple of classes. Come and join the discussion on applying Scripture to real life.

Coming up next month on Thursday, March 24 at St. Mary Church, Jim and Mary Cowan will be returning for another evening of prayer and praise. This will be their third visit to our parishes in the past twelve months.

As we move deeper into the new year, and closer to Lent - let us intensify our prayers for one another, for our parishes, and for our community. God bless you!

Fr. David

# *The Faith Explained*

## **WHAT IS ADORATION**

Adoration is a consequence of our Eucharistic faith. If we believe that the Mass is a sacramental re-presentation of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and that Jesus is really, truly and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament, then adoration is going to follow from this.

The Mass is the supreme act of adoration, praise and thanksgiving which humanity can offer to God. We owe everything to God: life, family, talents, work, country. Moreover God has sent us his only-begotten Son for our salvation. At Mass we offer God this supreme acknowledgment of his transcendent majesty and thanksgiving for his magnificent goodness towards us. Moreover, at Mass we associate ourselves with all creation in acknowledging the greatness of God. God is not our equal. He is not our colleague. He is our Creator. Without him we would not exist at all. He is the only necessary being. It is normal that we acknowledge this fact. Those who refuse to adore God must not decorate themselves with the apparently nice title of liberal intellectuals.

If we are to call a spade a spade, we shall inform such people that they are unreasonable, ignorant and blind to most obvious facts. A child who refuses to recognize his parents is not a liberal. He is a brat. Would it be wrong to call him stupid, and unaware of common sense, and even of his own best interest? And God is to us much more than parents are to their children. On the other hand, God is not a rival to us human beings. He is not a threat. He is not a killjoy.

God is our loving Father. He is Providence. He takes care of every detail regarding our life. When we adore him, praise him and thank him, we not only do not demean ourselves. Rather we begin to realize our greatness. Our acknowledgment of God's transcendent reality elevates us. Christians must not allow themselves to live their lives as if God did not exist. Humanity is not the centre of reality. God is. By adoring God through the Holy Eucharist, we pay this due tribute to God's transcendence.

— Cardinal Francis Arinze.



# God Always Goes in Search of Us

In his Letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul quotes, not without surprise, a prophecy from the Book of Isaiah (cf. 65:1), in which God says through the mouth of the prophet: “I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me” (Rom 10:20). Well then, as we reflect on the glory of the Trinity manifested in the cosmos and in history, let us begin an inward journey, exploring the mysterious ways in which God comes to meet humanity in order to share his life and glory with us. For God loves the creature formed in his image and likeness and, like the caring shepherd in the parable of the lost sheep (cf. Lk 15:4-7), God never tires of searching for the lost, even when they appear indifferent or even hostile to the divine life, like the sheep which wanders from the flock and is lost in inaccessible and dangerous places.

Pursued by God, we already sense his presence, already bask in the light on his shoulders and already hearken to his voice calling us from afar. And so we begin our search for the God who is searching for us: sought out, we begin to seek; loved, we begin to love. We can start to trace this stirring interaction between God’s initiative and our response, discovering it as a fundamental element of religious experience. In fact, an echo of this experience is also heard in some voices far removed from Christianity, a sign of the universal human desire to know God and to receive his kindness. Even an enemy of the biblical Israel, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who had destroyed the holy city, Jerusalem, in 587-586 B.C., addressed the Godhead in these words: “Without you, Lord, what would be the king whom you love and have called by name? How could he be good in your eyes? You guide his name, you lead him by the right path! ... By your grace, O Lord, which you richly share with everyone, your sublime majesty becomes mercy and you make the fear of your divinity dwell in my heart. Give me what is good for you, since you have formed my life!”

Our Muslim brethren also express a similar belief by often repeating throughout their day the prayer that opens the Koran and precisely celebrates the way in which God, “the Lord of Creation, the Compassionate, the Merciful,” guides those upon whom he pours out his grace.

The great biblical tradition especially prompts the faithful to call often upon God to receive the necessary light and strength from him to do good. Thus the Psalmist prays in Psalm 119: “Instruct me, O Lord, in the way of your statutes, that I may exactly observe them. Give me discernment, that I may observe your law and keep it with

all my heart. Lead me in the path of your commands, for in it I delight.... Turn away my eyes from seeing what is vain; by your way give me life.”

In universal religious experience, especially in what is transmitted by the Bible, we thus find an awareness of God’s primacy as he searches for us in order to lead us into the realm of his light and mystery. In the beginning there is the Word, which breaks through the silence of the void, the “favor” of God (Lk 2:14), who never abandons those he has created to themselves.

Certainly, this absolute beginning does not eliminate the need for human action or the human obligation to respond; we are called to let ourselves be touched by God and to open our life’s door to him, but we also have the ability to turn down these invitations. In this regard, the Book of Revelation puts amazing words on Christ’s lips: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rv 3:20). If Christ were not to travel the world’s roads, we would be left alone within our narrow horizons. Still, we must open the door to him, so that we can have him at our table in a communion of life and love.

The journey of God’s encounter with us unfolds under the banner of love. On the one hand, divine Trinitarian love goes before us, surrounds us and constantly opens the way for us to the Father’s house. There the Father is waiting to embrace us, as in the Gospel parable of the “prodigal son”, or better of the “merciful Father” (cf. Lk 15:11-32). On the other hand, fraternal love is asked of us as a response to God’s love: “Beloved”, John admonishes us in his First Letter, “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ... God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:11,16). Salvation, life and eternal joy blossom from the embrace of divine love and human love.

*Pope John Paul II in L’Osservatore Romano, 2000*

