

In the first place, I would like to thank Deacon Roger and Holy Family Parish for their continued support in hosting the First Saturday Masses for the World Apostolate of Fatima. Please spread the word about this monthly Mass.

We have added an additional thirty minutes for confessions. I was here at 11:00 ... and hopefully we can continue that to provide sufficient opportunities for the exercise of that wonderful Sacrament. I would also like to thank my brother priest(s) ...

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Today is the Memorial of St. Maria Goretti.

In 1902, she was 11 years old, and was attacked by a young man who threatened her with a knife if she wouldn't submit to his carnal desires. Despite her youth, she resisted his assault, and he stabbed her 14 times. When she arrived at the hospital, the doctors were surprised that she was still alive; and 20 hours later, she succumbed to her wounds. Prior to her death, she forgave her attacker and expressed her desire for him to join her in heaven.

Later, Maria appeared to her attacker in prison in a dream where she gave him lilies - which burned up in his hands. He eventually repented of his crimes, and returned to the practice of his faith. On his release from prison after 30 years - sought out Maria's mother and asked for her forgiveness.

He was present in 1950 for the canonization of Maria, and later became a lay brother in the Capuchins where he was a gardener and door keeper.

St. Maria Goretti is one of the youngest canonized saints; and is the patron of young girls in particular, and all young people in general.

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In ten days, we will celebrate the Memorial of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. So, if you want to make a novena to her, tomorrow is the day to start that novena.

In the year 1251, Our Lady appeared to the St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite friar - handing him the brown scapular with the promise that anyone dying while wearing it would not suffer eternal fire. Over the centuries the Church extended the privilege of wearing the brown scapular to not only Carmelites, but anyone who is properly enrolled in the Confraternity. And in recent times, any priest can enroll people into the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular.

I have with me roughly 50 scapulars; and so after the liturgy, I can give these out and do a brief enrollment.

There has been criticism that the promise of the brown scapular sounds like a license to do evil - sort of a "Get Out of Jail Free" card. But this is not so. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, regarding sacramentals:

*[They] do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the Sacraments do, but [rather] by the Church's prayer, [sacramentals] prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it.*

So, rather than a "free ride," think of the brown scapular - and other sacramentals - as a shoe horn, made out of prayers, that can help to pry open our closed souls in order to allow God's grace to come in. Or another way to see it is as a "spiritual two-by-four" to prepare us to better receive the graces God desires to bestow on us.

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In regards to the brown scapular and Fatima, on the October 13, 1917 apparition at Fatima - which is known for the "Miracle of the Sun" ... while the crowd was seeing the "Miracle of the Sun," the three children of Fatima were seeing first: Our Lady with the Rosary; then Our Lord; next St. Joseph holding the Child Jesus; then Our Lady wearing blue garments; and finally, Our Lady of Mount Carmel holding the Brown Scapular.

In describing this vision later on, Sister Lucia stated: "*Our Lady never looked so beautiful as when She appeared in Her Carmelite Habit.*"

Sister Lucia went so far as to say that the brown scapular is the sign of our consecration to Our Lady's Immaculate Heart.

And, indeed, isn't that what we are about with First Saturdays? Not only honoring Our Blessed Mother, but also demonstrating and confirming our own consecration to her and our devotion to her Immaculate Heart?

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A few additional housekeeping items.

I hope I'm "preaching to the choir," but this Mass is not a substitute for Sunday Mass. If you want a Sunday Mass on Saturday, we have one here at 4:00 pm. Only an evening Mass covers the obligation for Sunday.

During the offertory, we will be taking up a collection in order to offset the lights and to compensate Holy Family parish for the use of the building. The World Apostolate of Fatima splits the collection with Holy Family, so please be generous to not only support our host parish, but also the apostolate of the Blue Army.

Finally, as many of you may already know, I have been assigned - as of this month - to serve as the priest at this parish, Holy Family, in the capacity of sacramental minister and in support of Deacon Roger who continues as Holy Family's parish administrator.

In addition to the regularly scheduled weekend Masses which will continue as in the past, the parish will now be having two daily Masses every week.

Wednesdays at 4:00 pm.

Fridays at 9:00 am

The daily Masses began this past Wednesday; and things are looking very good as far as that goes. Please spread the word about this monthly First Saturday Mass, as well as the new daily Mass opportunities here at Holy Family.

Through Our Lady's Intercession, and the graces of the Most Holy Trinity may we realize the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.