

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Retreat and Spirituality Center

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Newsletter

September 2022

Hard Can Be Better Than Soft

The months before ordination to priesthood can be turbulent. Somewhat like a wedding, there are preparations for the ceremony and the celebration afterwards, and the details of hosting family and friends. It can also be a time of temptation and confusion as the evil one makes a last-ditch effort to derail a young man's vocation.

Such was the time before my own ordination to the priesthood in the year 2000. Deeply aware of the need for my Divine Master, I began to keep a one-foot-high wooden crucifix on my bedstand. When I lay down at night, I would hold the crucifix close to my chest until I fell asleep.

One night, after an event at the church, I noticed a small stuffed animal that had been left behind. Aware that the mother of the child who had left it would probably be calling the parish office the next day, I placed the animal on my bedstand so that I would remember to give it to the parish secretary first thing in the morning.

Later that night when I lay down to sleep, I began to reach for the crucifix as was my custom. Then I saw the stuffed animal and decided to try something different.

I still remember my immediate reaction as I held the stuffed animal to my chest: *"This thing is useless to me; it is too soft."* I quickly returned it to the bedstand and took up my crucifix. Although the child may have been without some comfort that night, I had gained a renewed sense of how comforting the hardness of the Cross can be. I stayed on my course towards priestly ordination and have not looked back in the 22 years since then.

While no one should desire suffering for its own sake, there is something fitting about the hardness of life for us Catholic Christians. We are sinful people who must fight for salvation with the weapons provided for us by Christ. Foremost among them is the hard Cross.

On September 14, we celebrate the feast of the Triumph (or Exaltation) of the Holy Cross. The tone of this feast is different from that of Holy Week. On the Triumph of the Cross, there is more of an emphasis on the symbol itself and what it represents. As the Sisters of Notre Dame note in their fine work *Saints and Feast Days*, "Believers have always looked to the cross in times of suffering. People in concentration camps, in prisons, in hospitals, in any place of suffering and loneliness, have been known to draw, trace, or form crosses and focus their eyes and hearts on them."

Do you have a crucifix on display in your home or personal space? In the hardness of life, it is an indispensable sign of God's immense love, the sign of our salvation and the path to the Resurrection.

In Christ and Our Lady of Perpetual Help,

Rev. Mark S. Yavarone, OMV

Rev. Mark Yavarone, OMV

Monthly Day of Prayer Resumes This Month

[Click here to register](#)

Contact Us

(941) 486-0233

Fr. Mark Yavarone, OMV ext. 3007
Fr. Shawn Monahan, OMV ext. 3008
Denise Riley ext. 3004

Building Updates

Villa Refresh

Now that we have finished the flooring and painting projects, we started to refresh the villa linens. As of the end of August, each villa received new bed quilts, pillows, and bath mats. We are also looking to refresh some of the towels and sheets, as needed. In July, we had 22 DOV priests staying in our refreshed rooms and several commented about how nice the updates were. A special THANK YOU to those who donated to the Butterfly Ball, which funded the villa refresh, especially our Parish Gold, Silver, and Bronze Sponsors.



Roof Replacement Project

Slowly, but surely, we are making progress. The roofs on all the villas is near completion, and we have begun the addition of new insulation to help reduce electricity costs. Roof work has begun on the Conference Center. The plan is to be all wrapped up by mid-September... ready for the new season. Please pray that no major tropical storms or hurricanes come through prior to completion!



Welcome Back Fr. Shawn!

At the end of August, we bid farewell and God's blessings to Fr. Lino Estadilla as he embarked on his new adventure as Pastor of Saint Peter Chanel Church located in Hawaiian Gardens, California. In September, we welcome back a familiar face, Fr. Shawn Monahan, OMV. Fr. Shawn was previously at OLPH in 2015 and again in 2017. He then served as novice master for the Oblate seminarians during their one-year novitiate.

Fr. Shawn is a native of Boston, MA. He entered the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in 1995 after graduating from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2002. Over the past 20 years, he has enjoyed a variety of apostolic ministry in seminary formation, parish ministry, and retreat ministry and has developed a deeper understanding of the dynamics of growth and maturity in the Christian life and how to overcome and heal the wounds that hold us back from experiencing Jesus' deepest desire for each of us: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." If you are not familiar with Fr. Shawn, please stop by and welcome him. He will also be leading the Monthly Day of Prayer in September and November

Thank You for Helping Freshen Up OLPH!

A group of ten volunteers, alongside OLPH's staff, rolled up their sleeves on August 24th to perform a deep clean of OLPH's Conference Center and Office/Dining Building. This included steam cleaning over 300 chairs, organizing and cleaning the Gift Shop, and cleaning out cabinets and drawers.



Chef Brian prepared lunch for the hard-working crew. A very big **Thank You** to the volunteers that surrendered a day to help up get ready for the new season! We are scheduled to steam clean the pews/kneelers in the Chapel on September 1st.





HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
To You

Happy Birthday Volunteers!

Happy Birthday to Irene Bauer and all volunteers celebrating a birthday in September!

Did we miss your September birthday?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Please contact [Simona Handley](#) so we can add it to the OLPH Volunteer database!



New Group Retreat Offered Saturday, October 22, 2022

Meditation in the Catholic Tradition

“Meditation.” For some, the word stirs up images of yoga, mantras, trance-like states, or non-religious methods for relaxation and stress reduction; but for Catholics, meditation is a tried-and-true way of using the Bible as a means of worship and communication with God. In this interactive group retreat, Fr. Mark Yavarone, OMV, will present two methods of meditation in our tradition: *Lecto Divina* and Ignatian. This retreat begins at 8:30 with registration and a hot breakfast. The remainder of the day includes two conferences on methods of meditation, break-out sessions, lunch, and Vigil Mass for Sunday. The day concludes at 4:30. The cost is \$50.00.

[Click Here to Register](#)

Monthly Day of Prayer Topics and Leaders

We are always looking to improve upon our retreats. As you know, we have offered the Monthly Day of Prayer (previously entitled “Come to the Water”) for several years. We recently received suggestions that we identify the topic and the retreat leader. Please see below the topic and leader for the September and October sessions. We hope to see you there!

You may register online by [clicking here](#)

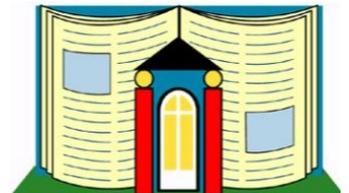
September: Fr. Shawn Monahan, OMV will present conferences on
“An Introduction to Healing the Broken Hearted”

October: Fr. Mark Yavarone, OMV will present conferences on
“Grandparents, the Elderly, and Aging”

Welcoming our Retreatants!

In years past, OLPH would generally close for the month of August; however, not the case this year! We hosted a group of 38 youths from the Donahue Academy of Ave Maria Catholic School on a multi-day retreat and the Epiphany School Teachers luncheon, as well as 17 private retreatants. Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped us during the dog days of summer!

New Spiritual Books



Several new books have arrived in our Gift Shop. This includes the following two books:

Parenting for Faith: Why Love for the Sacraments Matters Most

Hope for Your Grandchildren: Talking to the Third Generation About What Matters

Stop by and take a peek. The Gift Shop is opened during office hours (9:00—5:00) on Monday through Friday, as well as on the 2nd Sunday of each month.



Upcoming Events

Monthly Day of Prayer Resumes in September

The Monthly Day of Prayer sessions resume in September. Below are the dates for the remainder of 2022. You may register online by [clicking here](#).

- September 11th and 14th
- October 9th and 12th
- November 9th and 13th
- December 11th and 14th

The day begins at 9:30 am with continental breakfast and includes two conferences, lunch, Eucharistic Adoration, and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, private meditation, and prayer. The day concludes with Mass, ending at 3:15 pm. The cost is \$40pp. Note: the conference topics are the same for each session in a respective month, so please choose the day that is compatible with your schedule.

Matt Talbot Men's Retreat

Oct 14-16, 2022

Venerable Matt Talbot is considered the patron of men and women struggling with alcoholism. A Matt Talbot retreat is for people of all faiths and is an opportunity for recovering alcoholics to enhance their spirituality and sober way of life. Those who participate in these retreats are recovering alcoholics that attend the 12-step program through AA. Our next Matt Talbot Men's retreat will be offered October 14-16. Check-in is between 2:00—4:00, followed by dinner and the first conference. Throughout the weekend there are a series of conferences, as well as meditation and prayer time. The Matt Talbot retreat is private and everything is confidential. The cost is \$125pp for Commuters.

Ignatian Preached Retreat

Nov 18-21, 2022

This biannual silent retreat will introduce you to the great themes of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in a group setting. The retreat begins with dinner on Friday November 18th and concludes after lunch on Monday November 21st. This retreat has limited availability. The schedule includes conferences each day, daily Mass, and an opportunity to meet at least once with the retreat director for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and/or spiritual direction. Conference topics center on Ignatian spirituality, prayer, and discernment. The cost is \$450pp, which includes private room, meals, cleaning, and FL tax. If you have a spouse, family member or friend that you would like to share a room, the cost is \$285pp. Each room is equipped with a double bed and twin bed.

To register for a Group Retreat or view our schedule, please go to:
www.olph-retreat.org/schedule-of-events