

The Beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

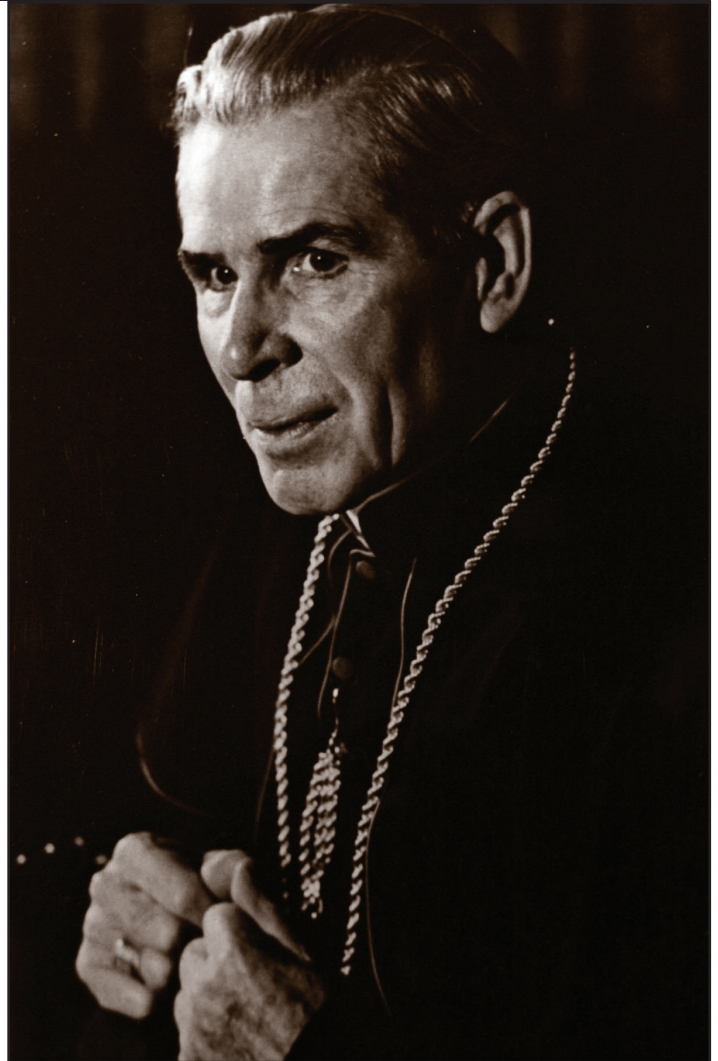
On July 6th, the Holy Father authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate a decree regarding: "the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Fulton Sheen, former bishop of Rochester; born on 8 May 1895 in El Paso, Illinois, and died on 9 December 1979 in New York City." The popular author and Emmy award-winning televangelist, whose program, Life is Worth Living, broadcast from 1951 to 1957, was declared Venerable by Benedict XVI in 2012. A description of the miracle attributed to Sheen's intercession begins below...

James Fulton Engstrom, a stillborn infant, was delivered without vital signs on September 16, 2010. As the infant lay without an apparent heartbeat, his parents, Bonnie and Travis, prayed for the intercession of the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. As doctors prepared to declare James deceased, his heart began beating, and soon rose to a normal rate. James, once presumed dead, is now "a healthy eight-year-old" who "likes chicken nuggets, 'Star Wars' and riding his bicycle," according to the Catholic News Service.

As the Vatican finally confirmed this miracle on Saturday July 6th. Sheen's remains were being transferred from New York, where he died in 1979, to his hometown of Peoria, Ill. Archbishop Sheen will now be beatified, with inevitable canonization efforts soon to follow.

Fulton Sheen was a progenitor of the modern televangelist, though he bore little in common with the genre's more lamentable figures. He was a showman with no pretense, an honest broker who expressed in vivacious tones the virtues of the Church he gave his life to.

Sheen was something of a paradoxical figure — an apt spokesman for a faith that reveres as its God an itinerant, allegedly seditious Jewish preacher. A man of short stature with an affable wit, Sheen had an audacious on-camera per-



sona; draped in his regal ferraiolo, he would stare beady-eyed into the souls of a captive audience as his tele-sermon reached its climax, his hand trembling with a patented gravity. "God love you!" Sheen would exclaim, his hands receding to the chest of his cassock.

The audience would explode in applause at the bishop's infamous sign-off, with network cameras capturing the rhetorical crescendo of this most-odd conductor. In his half-hour lectures he decried the evils of relativism, warned of the wages of sin, and proclaimed the glory of the Lord's Passion; fodder once reserved for incense-filled cathedrals or religious bulletins became a nationwide spectacle broadcast on ABC and, before that, the Dumont Television Network. What in the world was Bishop Fulton Sheen doing on network television?

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Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

Continued from page 1

God, as it happens, works in mysterious ways.

Sheen spoke with conviction and clarity, with a sense of life's stakes and the terminal fate awaiting a culture that ran not only from God, but from the silence that might force it to confront Him. Sheen's almost obsessive distaste for psychiatry (as popularly practiced) was a recurring theme in his critiques of 20th-century Americana; as he saw it, Americans often rushed to medicalize their faults, eager to dispense with moral agency in favor of Freudian "complexes" that obscured their moral decay. The country's errors ran far deeper than an undue deference to morally circuitous psychiatrists. While it is said that America "is suffering from intolerance — it is not," Sheen famously insisted. "It is suffering from tolerance. Tolerance of right and wrong, truth and error, virtue and evil, Christ and chaos. Our country is not nearly so overrun with the bigoted as it is overrun with the broadminded."

Sheen was also a staunch opponent of Communism, which he called "the final logic of the dehumanization of man." It was the materialism of Marx that he despised, Marx's reduction of the moral law to an ad hoc edifice to preserve monied interests, with man subjugated as a fleshy pawn in a dispassionate global Sálhku match between Capital and Labor. Just as Sheen abhorred clinicalizing the moral failures of asocial delinquents, he rejected the materialism that obviated man's free will and responsibility. "It is the basic principle of Marxism," he observed, "that any attempt to reconcile capital and labor so that they both cooperate in peace and prosperity is a betrayal of Communism." Practice be damned so that theory might reign — Sheen thought that to be nonsense, a symptom of the modern temptation to insist that "there are no sick people, there is only a sick society."

He changed untold lives by trafficking in that now-passé virtue of plain speech. The modern clergy does not, in general, speak in such unequivocal language; it has been infected by that malady of the mind that is so open that the brain falls out, as Chesterton put it. Bishop Sheen's world is comparatively delightful in its clarity. In his view, there are such things as good and evil, right and wrong, and — the kicker — we can discern one from the other. Difficulty, strife, and the local burdens of circumstance do not absolve man from his moral duties. Is there a more compelling exhortation?

Sheen does not leave the flock without consolation: In a world of unfathomable misery, where children hunger and thirst, where babies are killed by their mothers, where the good die while the evil prosper, and where the cruel pillage the earth, he quotes that great refrain: "We have a God who stumbled to His throne."

Few men in the modern era are more deserving of the honorific "Blessed" than Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. May God hasten his canonization.

By John Hirschauer for the [National Review](#), [nationalreview.com](#). Hirschauer is a William F. Buckley, Jr. Fellow in Political Journalism at the National Review Institute.

First Friday

Join us for a holy hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament this coming Friday following the 8:30 a.m. mass. It will conclude at 10:00 a.m. This is an extension of the First Friday Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. What are the "promises" connected to this devotion? Read about them in detail on page 7.

While on Vacation

St. Ambrose Parish is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website! Christian Financial Credit Union brings parishioners and friends the ability to make an electronic contribution to St. Ambrose on a regular or on a one-time basis.

Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. We hope that this additional financial service allows you another way of managing your stewardship to St. Ambrose. Go to [stambrose-church.net](#) for more information on electronic giving.

Benefit Concert

On Saturday, Aug. 3rd at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church in Sterling Heights, there will be a benefit concert for the African Missions featuring Stephanie Weil, mezzo-soprano & Aaron Marshall, guitarist. Both performers will feature solo baroque, classical, & romantic works. Ss. Cyril & Methodius is located just north of Eighteen Mile Rd. at 41233 Ryan Rd. Suggested minimum admission is \$5 per individual, \$10 per family. Visit [livemusicperformances.com](#) and/or call 248-250-6005.

CYO Football

The 65th season of St. Joan of Arc CYO football begins practices on Monday, August 5th. There is still room for new players at all levels: Flag (1st/2nd grade), Freshmen (3rd/4th), JV (5th/6th), and Varsity (7th/8th). The strength of the CYO football program is the focus on safety, fundamentals, and teamwork in a positive environment that reinforces the Gospel. No experience necessary! There will also be a football mini-camp this Tuesday, July 30th through Thursday, August 1st from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Contact Don Pomaville at (586) 775-7490 (dpomaville@stjoan.net) or visit [sja-football.weebly.com](#).

Marriage Encounter

Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a weekend for married Christian couples who value their relationship and desire a richer, fuller life together. The emphasis of the weekend is on communication between husband and wife, who spend a weekend together away from the distractions and the tensions of everyday life, to concentrate on each other. It's a unique approach aimed at revitalizing Christian Marriage. Reserve your weekend get-away today! 2019 Weekend Dates are August 16-18 in Petoskey; August 23-25 in Farmington and September 27-29 in Troy. Call 888-322-9963 or visit [encounterdetroit.org](#) to register.

All Things Considered

The tents have been ordered. The contract for the use of the Beaumont lot has been signed. The request for a liquor licence has been sent to Lansing. The advertising pieces are being updated. We're getting ready for the 29th Annual Oysterfest on the last Monday of September.



The next push will be to order the oysters and lock in the restaurants. After doing more than three dozen of these festivals some things got easier, but the food portion still remains the toughest task. Asking a restaurateur to donate a thousand servings of an entree is a big deal, especially for small enterprises. That's why we turn to our parishioners to help us with the "ask". Certainly some of you have friends in the restaurant or catering business. Or perhaps you have a restaurant that you frequent a lot. Who better to ask than you?

There have been restaurants and caterers who have never said no to us and return year after year. There are some who come once and don't return because the cost is too high for them. It's those tables that we need to fill fresh each year. A couple of undeveloped ideas are chefs who would be

on site cooking and serving a special entree. Another would be to somehow get some of those trendy food trucks worked into our plan.

Can you give us an assist? While things are still relatively slow during Summer, I need you to talk about Oysterfest with people in the food industry. If you don't know anybody, we have a list of potential contacts. Coordinate all this with our office manager, **Peggy O'Connor**.

Even though she has been coordinating Oysterfest only since 2018, Peggy has done a diligent job in reducing costs and finding the best pricing on the "hardware" needed for the

event. Since the profit margin on the Oysterfest is so thin, every dollar we don't have to spend comes into our general budget.

Next week, we're going to announce Oysterfest sponsorship opportunities. There will be some big items to under-

write and there will be the smaller, personal "Beer Belly" and "Wino" patrons as well. Honestly, the only way Oysterfest makes any profit is because of support like this – the ticket price does *in no way* cover the amount of product that is consumed or the cost of the production.

I know there are smarter ways to plug the hole in our budget than through this time-consuming, weather-dependent event. But honestly there are not many better ways to bring the community together. This is particularly true for a whole category of folks who would not be caught dead coming to a "church festival" but have no problem at all standing under a tent in a parking lot in a commercial district to eat an oyster. It's often been said that "Catholicism is a big tent." There is evidence in that at Oysterfest. In a secular sense that's something that you can see un-

folding under the big-top at Kercheval and Lakepointe.

Oysterfest promotes not only our faith community but our neighborhood as well. Think about all the different street events that are scheduled on Kercheval in the Park in recent years. The grand-daddy of them all is our Oysterfest. I can recall 20 years ago having endless meetings with merchants on the strip trying to convince them that such a party was to their advantage as well as ours. Now that Kercheval fills up on many a weekend evening for special events, you'd wonder why it was so difficult to sell that concept in the first place? It's in all our best interests to have a vibrant commercial strip that runs down the heart of our city and parish. An additional cause to celebrate is the re-opening of the throughfare between both sides of our parish.

We're going to put out our volunteer sign sheets starting this weekend – asking mostly for those who can make a little more of a commitment than just working the single day of the event. So if you have ideas, or sources that you want us to know about, sign the volunteer sheets and/or email Peggy at stambrose@comcast.net.

We're in the process of preparing our end of the year report for the Archdiocese. It spans the time from June '18 to June '19. Some preliminary observations are that Ambrosians excel at Christmas giving and special collections. Ambrosians are not so keen on the week-to-week burdens of the envelope minimum. We fell \$86,593 below budget in envelope revenue. A bit of that was recovered in the loose collection which came in \$11,816 ahead of budget. But that still left us holding the bag for \$74,777.

As a result, we are carrying over some debts into the new fiscal year. That is not necessarily unique to how our budget flows. But our largest creditor, the Archdiocese, is more and more assertive in paying them promptly. As of July 1st, we owe them \$18,677 on our assessment and payments to the Priest's Retirement Fund.

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All Things Considered

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And believe it or not, we still have an outstanding balance of \$7,000 for snow and ice removal from last winter.

If we didn't continually keep on getting hit with crazy-expensive repairs, we might be able to make this budget shortfall work. Actually, it's amazing that we plugged as many financial holes as we did.

Those who study Church giving have a saying that "money follows mission"—meaning that parishioners will support works of faith. Our issue here at St. Ambrose seems to be that we have hit a wall with funding. We can't expand mission on the limited/shrinking resources we have. People are more important than a place. I know that and am painfully aware of this dilemma. It's taking everything we have just to maintain the operation we have, let alone grow program/personnel.

Last year's **Kayaking the Canals of St. Ambrose** outing was a sell-out. Last week bookings for this year picked up as the date grew closer. As of this publishing, there are 12 spots still open for August 3rd and 15 spots for the August 10th excursion date.

In a few days we will begin releasing unsold slots back to Detroit River Sports who themselves have a waiting list for those prime dates.

This year the lunch which follows will be catered by **Chef Reva Constantine**, who made such a hit at this year's Lenten Dinners. Participants are free to stay for lunch – or you can just come for the lunch if you're not the kayaking type. Think of it as two parish events – kayaking and a parish picnic. The excursion and the lunch are priced separately.

This is a **Super Saturday** event, which means that it is planned with Mass in mind. Part of our objective is to demonstrate that you can have fun on a Saturday and still work celebrating the Eucharist into the day's schedule.

TRP

The Buzz

As we enter the final few days of July, today's Scripture passages from the Liturgy remind us to make a mid-summer re(e)valuation of our prayer life and active faith in the Lord. The first reading from Genesis is an absolute favorite about a very human experience of prayer as bargaining with God. The bottom line: if you are in a close relationship with the Lord, God is the biggest loving pushover around. It may sound irreverent, but I don't think there is anything more true. Notice, however, that Abraham is not haggling for himself. There's the difference from most of our prayers. So how about a deal for this coming week – I'll pray for you and you pray for me. I think we can count on the Big Pushover to forgive, spare, and take good care of us all.

Today's Gospel has Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer. Now, the two of you who read this column know that I regularly recommend reading "around" the passages we hear at mass. For example, we all think we know the story about Sodom and Gomorrah from today's first reading from Genesis 18. But go on to chapter 19 [Alert: this is for adults only!]. Find the subtle subtext of hospitality that under-rides the obvious sins that were crying out to God for catastrophic punishment.

And as for the "Our Father" – read again the rest of the instruction from Jesus after the words of the prayer. Do you feel the implications of saying the words depending on the closeness of your relationship with Our Abba? Pay attention to how today's passage ends: if you ask for anything or everything in prayer, what will "the Father in heaven" give?!

Finally on this prayer . . . compare the version in Luke's Gospel we heard today with the version in Matthew 6, and then to the one we use at Mass and in our daily life. What do you think; have you ever paid attention to all the words? I just read online that Pope Francis last month said he would support a better English translation of some of the words at the end of the prayer we normally use. I'd be most interested in your take on this!

Getting older and living on deadlines just seems to make calendar pages turn faster and faster before my very eyes. And although still a couple of months away, it's not too early to start thinking about and spreading the news about a new year of RCIA information sessions for adults and teens older than 9th grade. The RCIA is a process – not a "class" – for mature persons to explore the Catholic Faith and Community. It also includes the preparation of those who would like to respond to God's call to join us through Sacraments of Initiation . . . quite possibly at the Great Easter Vigil Liturgy, Holy Saturday evening, next April 12th. Anyone interested in more information about this should call me now at 313-332-5631. No need to delay! Know that there is no cost nor obligation involved in this step.

With two Super Saturdays coming up with kayaking, lunch and mass – it reminded me that a lovely young lady approached me in church and said she was forming a bowling opportunity for seniors from local churches. I believe this would be a daytime, league-type program from September through next April. It would take place at the Harbor Lanes, on E. Jefferson in St. Clair Shores. Fun and exercise are the goals; beginners are most welcome. If you are interested or have questions, give Antoinette a call at 313-655-9100. She'd like to hear from you by this Thursday, August 1st.

Chuck Dropiewski



KAYAK THE CANALS!

of St. Ambrose Parish
A Summer Super Saturday event!

Not many parishes enjoy waterways like St. Ambrose. Join us for a guided 2-hour Kayak Canal tour this August!

Paddle out to the Detroit River, around Grayhaven Island, past the Fisher Mansion and by the waterfront residences of Jefferson Chalmers.

This tour is gret for beginners and experienced kayakers alike.

The Saturday August 3rd or the 10th
Launch is @ 12:00 pm
\$45 per kayaker -
\$20.00 post excursion meal catered by
award-winning Chef Reva Constantine
of the Great Lakes Culinary Center.

4 p.m. Mass back at the parish

This private tour is professionally
conducted by Detroit River Sports.
Kayak and safety equipment provided.

stambrose@comcast.net
or 313-822-2814

2	0	CSA
1	9	Box Scores

Number of Families	900
Returns in 2018	262
Returns to date	207
Average Gift ('18).....	\$463
Quota for the Archdiocese	\$85,267
Property/Liability Insurance ...	\$52,000
Parish '19 Target.....	\$137,267
Received as of 7/9/2019.....	\$120,130

- The 38th Annual Catholic Services Appeal is now wrapping up. Remember that now our quota for the Archdiocese is met, all gifts to the CSA are returned to the parish and are exempt from the regular 7% Archdiocesan tax.
- It's a great time to help your parish. All overages go to paying our property and liability insurances.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the
St. Ambrose Catholic Community
Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc

Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski

Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums

Minister of Music: Dr. Norah Duncan IV

Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day -

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

Email address: stambrose@comcast.net

Religious Education: (313) 332-5633

Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631

Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814

Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, July 29

St. Martha

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Tuesday, July 30

St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop & doctor

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Rev. Ronald Cyprus

Wednesday, July 31

St. Ignatius of Loyola, priest

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Thursday, August 1

St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop & doctor

8:30 a.m. - Mass - John Cardinal Dearden;

Bernice Phillips; Clara Marie Green;

Kay and Hurley Michels

Friday, August 2 - First Friday

St. Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Rosemarie Samarjian;

Kerry Wilhite; Sr. Irene Kerich

Saturday, August 3

4:00 p.m. - Mass - For All People

Sunday, August 4

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. - Mass For All People

11:15 a.m. - Mass For All People



Join us on Facebook
facebook.com/stambroseparish

Scriptures for the 17th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, July 29

- Ex 32: 15-24, 30-34
- Ps 106: 19-23
- Jn 11: 19-27 or 1: 38-42

Tuesday, July 30

- Ex 33: 7-11; 34: 5b-9, 28
- Ps 103: 6-13
- Mt 13: 36-43

Wednesday, July 31

- Ex 34: 29-35
- Ps 99: 5-7, 9
- Mt 13: 44-46

Thursday, August 1

- Ex 40: 16-21, 34-38
- Ps 84: 3-6a, 8a, 11
- Mt 11: 13: 47-63

Friday, August 2

- Lv 23: 1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37
- Ps 8a: 3-6, 10-11b
- Mt 13: 54-58

Saturday, August 3

- Lv 25: 1, 8-17
- Ps 6: 2-3, 5, 7-8
- Mt 14: 1-12

Sunday, August 4

- Eccl 1: 2; 2: 21-23
- Col 3: 1-5, 9-11
- Lk 12: 13-21

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time August 3rd and August 4th

4:00 p.m. - Celebrant: Fr. Bede **Lector:** Mary Urbanski

Eucharistic Ministers: Maria Cox-Borkowski, Karen McShane, Elizabeth Puleo-Tague

Altar Servers: Julianna & Lucan Tague

8:30 a.m. - Sunday - Celebrant: Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Jaime Goodrich

Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Drummond, Colleen Gatzke, Christopher Harrison,
Bob Jogan, Steve Linne, Joellyn Valgoi

Altar Servers: Nicholas, Margaret, & Meredith Kramer

11:15 a.m. - Celebrant: Bp Gumbleton **Lector:** Roger Playwin

Eucharistic Ministers: Thomas Bennert, Anne Billiu, Michele Hodges,
Joe Hugh, Sue Playwin, Janis Ramsey, Cristina Swiatkowski

Altar Server: Jack Hern, April Caballero

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish
requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, July 21, 2019

in envelopes we received \$5,574.00

in the loose collection \$846.00

in other donations..... \$1,390.00

for a total of..... **\$7,818.00**

Under budget for the week. **\$2,282.00**

Number of envelopes mailed 900

Number of envelopes used..... 128

*"Ask and you will receive; seek and you
will find; knock and the door will be opened
to you." (Luke 11:9)*

Jesus assures us that if we ask,
God will take care of what we need. The
problem is that our culture often confuses
what we really need with what we simply
want. People need very little. However,
we usually want so much more. A good
steward only asks God for what he needs.

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are
seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat
Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay,
Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne
Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias,
George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby
O'Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers,
Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha
Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna
Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen,
Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex
Billiu, Gladys Bogos, Wayne Wallrich,
Fr. Phil Naessens, Jerry Hansen, Vic
Ptasznik, Lou Rondini and Jackie
Walkowski.

Our Dead

The funeral liturgy for **Beverly
Kilimas** was celebrated by Fr. Pelc on
Monday, July 22nd.

Beverly (Weir) was born in
Pittsburgh and moved to Detroit with
her family in 1955 where they lived
on Maryland Street, within eyeshot of
the church. She attended and gradu-
ated from St. Ambrose High School
in 1970. Beverly obtained a degree in
nursing and was employed at St. John
Hospital for 35 years until she retired.

Beverly married Paul in 1993
and they moved to Grand Haven to be
closer to their family. Beverly was a
hard-working, kind and selfless per-
son. She was the happiest when she
was surrounded by her family.

Beverly is survived by her
husband, Paul, daughter, Adriane,
grandchildren, Madelyn and Evan.
Also surviving are her sisters, Linda
and Nancy and brother Richard. She
will be missed by her many nieces and
nephews as well as the rest of her fam-
ily and friends. Please remember Bev-
erly in your prayers.

Vincentian Reflection

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches
us that God is our "Father" and just as
a parent's love for their children is un-
limited, so is God's love and care for us
unlimited. In the month of July, through
your gifts, the Society of St. Vincent de
Paul was able to assist families, provide
food and assistance for utilities, rent and
medical bills.

5 Things Catholics Should Know About First Fridays

Our grandparents and parents grew up going to mass every First Friday of the month and taking part in Sacred Heart devotions, but in recent decades this pious practice has fallen out of practice, and is dismissed by some as an anachronism. A main reason for the decline in interest in this devotion is probably rooted in simple ignorance – people don't know what First Fridays are all about – families and parishes may not have adequately passed down their importance to the next generation. Here are five things to know.

1. How did the First Friday Devotion begin?

While some saints referenced the Heart of Jesus in their writings even centuries earlier, in 1673, a French Visitation nun named Margaret Mary Alacoque had visions of Jesus, wherein he asked the Church to honor his Most Sacred Heart. In particular, Jesus asked the faithful to “receive Communion on the First Fridays, for nine consecutive months.”

The request was connected to a specific promise made to all who venerated and promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart. After Margaret Mary's death, the First Friday practice steadily spread in the Church — endorsed by popes and promoted by saints — but it greatly increased in popularity when Margaret Mary was canonized a saint in 1920.

2. Why nine consecutive months?

The number nine is traditionally associated with a novena and finds its origin in the nine days that the apostles spent in prayer before Pentecost. A novena provides an extended amount of time for preparation and interior renewal.

3. What am I supposed to do on First Fridays?

Go to mass and receive Holy Communion with the intention of honoring Christ's Sacred Heart. If you are not in a state of grace, you will also need to go to confession.

4. What are the “promises” ?

Jesus said to St. Margaret Mary, ***“In the excess of the mercy of my heart, I promise you that my all powerful love will grant to all those who will receive communion on the First Fridays, for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance: they will not die in my displeasure, nor without receiving the sacraments; and my heart will be their secure refuge in that last hour.”*** This means that if a person faithfully receives communion for nine consecutive months on First Fridays, Jesus will grant that person extra graces at the time of their death, making it possible to repent

of their sins and receive the last rites (if needed). These promises are attached to an Enthronement of the Sacred Heart image in one's home:

- a. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.***
- b. I will establish peace in their homes.***
- c. I will comfort them in all their afflictions.***
- d. I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.***
- e. I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.***
- f. Sinners will find in my heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.***
- g. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.***
- h. Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.***
- i. I will bless every place in which an image of my heart is exposed and honored.***
- j. I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.***
- k. Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.***
- l. I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.***

5. Are the First Fridays a “ticket” to heaven?

It is not as simple as going to Mass for nine months and then clocking out, never going to Mass again and leading a sinful life! The entire purpose of this devotion is to draw a person closer to the heart of Christ. If a person fulfills these obligations with sincere faith, it is natural for him or her to be closer to God and better prepared for death. The moment that this devotion is observed in a superstitious manner, neglecting the need to live a virtuous life, all bets are off and Jesus' promise is null and void.

Jesus wants us to rest on his heart, like St. John did at the Last Supper. The First Friday devotion is an opportunity for us to encounter him more than just on Sundays and to deepen our love of him. Coming to know, love and trust that we may take rest in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and place our anxieties within, is what the First Fridays are all about.

From ALETEIA, a Catholic inspirational website with daily postings.

Access this excellent resource at aleteia.org