

## SAINT ANN PARISH NEWSLETTER

### FROM THE PASTOR



### **3-D Movies**

Here's how it works: Two cameras photograph each scene from slightly different points in space. When we sit in the movie theater the images on the screen appear blurred and unintelligible until we put on the special "3-D glasses" which unite the two differing perspectives into a new, a third perspective which not only is intelligible but also *immersive*. We find ourselves saying such things as, "It feels as though I am in the action, a part of the story".



### **3-D Vision**

Close one eye. Extend your arms in front of you, point your index fingers toward each other, and try to touch them together. When I do

this, my fingers miss each other because, by employing only one perspective, my capacity to perceive depth is impaired. When I use both eyes, my brain (like the 3-D lens in a movie theater) correlates the two slightly different points of view from each eye enabling me to have a deeper and more accurate view of what's going on. We call such vision stereo-scopic, from the Greek word meaning "solid-sight" or "seeing solids" because visually we have moved from a two dimensional plane **into** a three dimensional cube.

### 3-D Religion

Many religions make use of images such as icons, paintings, and stained glass. In addition to such two dimensional images (depicting height and width), Catholics in the Western Tradition also employ **statues** and so add a new, a **third** dimension of **depth**. At its best, our Western Catholic Way enables us to have a deeper and more solid feel for grace as we touch statues the Holy Ones; as we put St. Christopher on our car's dashboard; as we begin and end the Rosary by kissing the tiny statue of the Crucified Jesus.

### 3-D Saint

Each of the four Western Catholic Churches in Phoenixville have statues of Jesus, Mary, and St. Joseph. What many of us miss, however, is that there is one additional saint who has a statue in each parish church: **St. Therese**.<sup>1</sup> I have come to see that it is most fitting that she be depicted in a 3-D manner because she had a 3-D spirituality as expressed in her complete name: Sister **Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face**.

### Therese's First - D: The Child Jesus

One experience of life is that God is good, gracious, caring, tender, provident, protective, with us, for us. We might associate this perspective more with Christmas when we turn our attention to God

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<sup>1</sup> See "St. Therese in Phoenixville's Churches" at the Pastor's Portion of our Parish Website.

who cares for us so much that He becomes one of us and comes among us as a beautiful child---so lovable and so easy to love. Emmanuel.

### **Therese's Second - D: The Holy Face**

Another experience of life might be called the "Where are you God?" perspective. Are you there? Do you care? Are you all-powerful and if so why aren't you intervening to cure my loved one's disease, to get me a job, to help my marriage, to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, protect the vulnerable, end war? We might associate this perspective more with Good Friday when we hear Isaiah proclaim:

He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye,  
no beauty to draw us to him.  
He was spurned and avoided by men,  
a man of suffering, knowing pain,  
Like one from whom you turn your face,  
spurned, and we held him in no esteem.<sup>2</sup>

### **Therese's Third - D: The Spirit**



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<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 53:2-3

In this photograph of Therese taken shortly before her death, she is holding an image of Jesus as a child so easy to love and accept (left side) and an image of the rejected and scorned Jesus' beaten face (right side).<sup>3</sup> Within each Mass, more than once we approach the Father "through Christ our Lord *in the Unity of the Holy Spirit.*" I am coming to see that wherever, whenever and however there is true unity it is a sign of the presence and action of the Third Person, the Third Dimension of the Most Holy Trinity. It is the spirit with which we hold differing perspectives that enables us (or not) to be drawn more deeply into life, to become more fully immersed in the action of grace afoot in our world. This is not to fall into utter and uncritical relativism ("everything is the same"; "there are no differences that matter"; "all perspectives are equally true"; "nothing is wrong"). It is, though, to admit that in this life where there is light there is shadow and to catch the message embodied in our very anatomy that when I point a finger at you I am pointing three fingers at myself.

### Time, The 4<sup>th</sup> - D

So, you see what you see and I see what I see. Our differences remain and our differences matter. We do not always or easily or automatically experience a unified, integrated, deeper experience of a third perspective. Is God then absent? Do we flip a coin? Determine a winner and a loser? Go to litigation? Leave the Table?

I believe in religion, not in magic. Whereas magic is "*Shazzaam!*" and "*Abra-cadabra!*", the Christ sent by the Father became incarnate, flesh and blood, in space (3-Ds) and in time (the 4<sup>th</sup> D). We hear proclaimed that Jesus "grew in wisdom, age and grace"<sup>4</sup> **over time**<sup>5</sup>. If Jesus needed time to become fully human and grow into his awareness of his mission, then so will we. By coming to The Table each Lord's Day we are staying at The Table---honoring grace

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<sup>3</sup> See hymn #525 *You Lord Are Both Lamb and Shepherd* at the Pastor's Portion of our Parish Website

<sup>4</sup> Luke 2:52

<sup>5</sup> See "Tell All the Truth" at the Pastor's Portion of our Parish Website

incarnate in one another and allowing grace to shape our souls over time.<sup>6</sup>

### A 4-D Community

Recently several of our members went on retreat to the Abbey of the Genesee in New York State. In a book about the founding abbot of Genesee, and I found these words written **about him** apropos both to my life and to our life as the Body of Christ in the new St. Ann Parish:

The Trappist life is not something; it is **Someone**.... what you are actually doing is watching God as He goes about a task much more mysterious---and of far greater magnificence---than the one He accomplished when He call to Nothingness and evoked the Universe. For what He effected in the soul of this young monk was something infinitely more enduring than what He achieved when first He created the sun, stars, and moon. It was a task infinitely more delicate---and difficult; for Nothingness **had to** answer His summons, whereas the John Bernard McGinley who was to become first Frater Gerard, then Father Gerard, and finally Dom Gerard McGinley, **could have said “no” to God at any time.**<sup>7</sup>

### Some Upcoming Parish Events

On Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup> within our 11:30 AM Mass, Bishop John McIntyre will be here for my **formal installation as pastor** of the new St. Ann Parish. Following this Mass, we will have a **Parish Picnic** on our Rectory Lawn. I hope you can join us for one or both of these events.

On Monday October 1---the **Memorial of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face**---we will have the first meeting of our

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the dignity of human beings and the human process of being grown by grace into a fuller likeness of God, St. Peter Chrysologus preached: “Why then, man, are you so worthless in your own eyes and yet so precious to God? Why render yourself such dishonor when you are honored by him?”

<sup>7</sup> *A Trappist Writes Home: Letters of Abbot Gerard McGinley to his Family (1960). P. 3*

**Interim Joint Council** in Griffin Hall at 7:00 PM. All members of our parish are welcome to participate in this initial orientation session for our new parish. Here we go. St. Therese, pray for us!

Fr. John News

**APPENDIX – A**  
**(For Digital Version of Newsletter on our Website)**  
**(Please improve the legibility of these images and words)**

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Holy Trinity Church



Sacred Heart Church



St. Mary of the Assumption Church



“St. Therese of the Child Jesus  
and the Holy Face”



St. Ann Church

**APPENDIX – B**  
**(For Digital Version of Newsletter on our Website)**

**You, Lord, Are Both Lamb And Shepherd**<sup>8</sup>

You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.  
 You, Lord, are both prince and slave.  
 You peacemaker and sword-bringer  
 Of the way you took and gave.  
***You, the Everlasting Instant;***  
 You, whom we both scorn and crave.

Clothed in light upon the mountain,  
 Stripped of might upon the cross,  
 Shining in eternal glory,  
 Beggar'd by a soldier's toss.  
***You, the Everlasting Instant;***  
 You, whom are our gift and cost.

You, who walk each day beside us,  
 Sit in power at God's side.  
 You, who preach a way that's narrow,  
 Have a love that reaches wide.  
***You, the Everlasting Instant;***  
 You, who are our pilgrim guide.

Worthy is our earthly Jesus!  
 Worthy is our cosmic Christ!  
 Worthy you defeat and vict'ry;  
 Worthy still your peace and strife.  
***You, the Everlasting Instant;***  
 You, who are our death and life

**APPENDIX – C**  
**(For Digital Version of Newsletter on our Website)**

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<sup>8</sup> Hymn #525 in *Gather Comprehensive*

**Tell All The Truth**

Tell all the truth but tell it slant----  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth's superb surprise  
As Lightning to the children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind----

Emily Dickinson