



Dear Parish Family,

As summer fades and a new school year begins, September invites us to embrace both the rhythms of daily life and the richness of our Catholic faith. This month overflows with feast days and traditions that remind us of God's nearness in every season. From honoring Our Lady of Sorrows and celebrating the Exaltation of the Holy Cross to walking with beloved saints, September offers many opportunities for prayer, reflection, and renewal.

We pray this newsletter inspires you to cherish the beauty of our Catholic heritage while enjoying the gifts of autumn—the crisp air, turning leaves, and the approaching close of the liturgical year. May this season be for all of us a time of grace and gratitude. And don't forget to wish Our Blessed Mother a happy birthday! 🎂 🎉 ❤️ 🥹

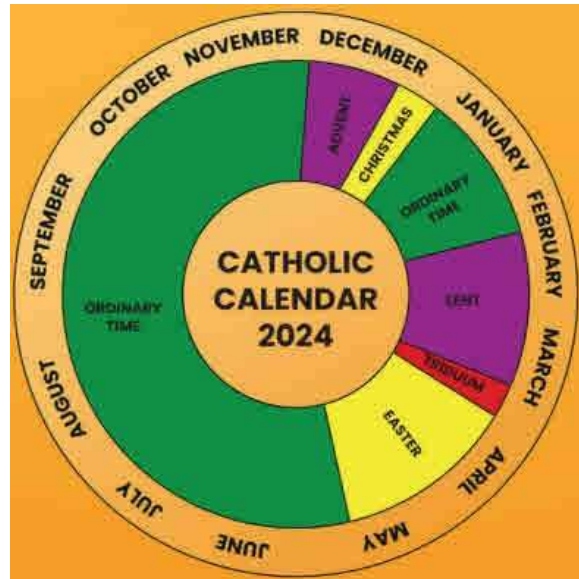
In this Issue ...
Liturgical Calendar
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano
St. Peter Claver
Exaltation of the Cross
Did You Know?
St. Padre Pio
Our Lady of Good Help
Jubilee
List of Feast days
Learn More: FORMED.org & HALLOW

The Liturgical Year in September

The Church dedicates the month of September to **Our Lady of Sorrows**, whose feast we celebrate on September 15. This devotion recalls the prophecy of Simeon—"and you yourself a sword will pierce" (Luke 2:35)—and invites us to walk with Mary as she shared in the suffering of her Son. The Seven Sorrows devotion reflects on the moments of deepest pain in Mary's life: the prophecy of Simeon, the flight into Egypt, the loss of the Child Jesus in the temple, meeting Jesus on the road to Calvary, His crucifixion, His body being taken down from the cross, and His burial.

Praying the Seven Sorrows Rosary or meditating on these moments is a powerful way to grow closer to both Mary and her Son. Many Catholics have found comfort in the promises associated with this devotion, including peace in families and consolation in times of trial. Even during more recent private revelations, such as Our Lady's reported apparitions in Kibeho, Rwanda, Mary has urged the faithful to turn to this prayer.

Pray the [Seven Sorrow Rosary](#) [here](#). (FORMED.org)



The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary –

Sept 8

The Church celebrates the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on September 8, marking an event that St. Augustine described as one of *cosmic and historic significance*. He wrote, “She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley,” affirming that through Mary’s birth, the human nature inherited from our first parents began to be renewed.

Only three birthdays appear on the Church’s liturgical calendar: those of Jesus (December 25), John the Baptist (June 24), and Mary (September 8). These three are honored because of their unique roles in the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption. Mary’s birth stands at the meeting point of the Old and New Testaments—fulfilling the long expectation of Israel and inaugurating the era of grace through her Son, Jesus Christ.

According to ancient tradition, Sts. Joachim and Anne, long thought to be childless, conceived Mary in their old age, much like Sarah and Elizabeth in the Scriptures. From her very beginning, Mary’s life was ordered toward her mission as the Mother of the Savior. Her nativity reminds us that God’s plan of salvation is both mysterious and purposeful—preparing, from the very start, the one who would bear Christ, the Light of the world. We also remember that, in the same way, God is preparing each of us to bring Christ to a world in need.

The Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano (Sept 8)

In 8th-century Italy, a priest struggling with doubt witnessed the consecrated

host turn into **flesh** and the wine into **blood** during Mass. Preserved to this day in Lanciano, scientific studies confirm the tissue is **human heart muscle** and the blood is type **AB**—the same type found in other Eucharistic miracles.

Celebrated on **September 8**, the feast of Mary's Nativity, this miracle points us to her Son's Real Presence in the Eucharist. Every Mass is a true encounter with Christ—body, blood, soul, and divinity.

St. Peter Claver & His St. Louis Miracle (Sept. 9)

September 9 marks the Memorial of **St. Peter Claver**, a Spanish Jesuit missionary who dedicated over four decades to serving African slaves in Cartagena, baptizing an estimated 300,000 and earning the title “**Slave of the Africans**”. Canonized in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII, he remains a powerful model of compassion, social justice, and evangelization.

A miraculous healing at the Shrine of St. Joseph, here in **St. Louis**, played a pivotal role in his canonization.

The Miracle of Ignatius Strecker

In **March 1864**, Ignatius Strecker—a German immigrant and father of 9—suffered an injury at a soap factory. The wound turned deadly, complicated by tuberculosis, and doctors gave him just 2 weeks to live. In a last act of hope, Strecker's wife urged him to visit St. Joseph Parish during a Jesuit mission preached by Father Francis Xavier Weninger.



With his strength nearly gone, Strecker arrived just in time to kiss a **relic of Blessed Peter Claver**. Immediately, he felt renewed strength; within days he returned to work, and within weeks, his wounds and illness had completely healed—an outcome deemed medically inexplicable.

After rigorous investigation, this cure was authenticated by the Vatican in **1887** and counted among the two miracles required for Claver's canonization in **1888**.

A Living Legacy in the Shrine

The Shrine of St. Joseph proudly holds **first-class relics of St. Peter Claver**, including a reliquary embedded in a statue and another in a cross near the front. These relics are available for veneration after Mass, and parishioners continue to attest to healings and graces received through his intercession.

Learn more about St. Peter Claver and the miracles of St. Joseph's Shrine or plan a visit at [St. Joseph Shrine STL](#).



The Exaltation of the Holy Cross: A Celebration of Victory and Love (Sept 14)

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross is a powerful feast in the Catholic Church, celebrated every year on **September 14**. It invites us to reflect on the profound meaning of the Cross—not just as a symbol of suffering, but as a sign of hope, victory, and God's immense love for humanity.

This feast commemorates two key events:

1. The **discovery of the True Cross** by Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, in Jerusalem around 326 AD. According to tradition, Saint Helena found the actual wooden cross upon which Jesus was crucified.
2. The **dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem in 335 AD, built over the sites of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

The feast also remembers the **restoration of the Cross's veneration** after it was recovered from the Persians in 628 AD by Emperor Heraclius, who triumphantly returned it to Jerusalem.

What the Cross Means for Us Today

Far from being just a reminder of suffering and death, the Cross is the ultimate symbol of **God's self-giving love**. It is a sign of:

- **Salvation:** Through Jesus' sacrifice, death was conquered, and the door to eternal life opened.
- **Hope:** The Cross shows that even in our darkest moments, God's light shines through.
- **Victory over Evil:** Jesus' resurrection transforms the Cross from an instrument of shame into a symbol of triumph.
- **Call to Discipleship:** Christians are invited to "take up their cross" daily—embracing challenges and sacrifices with faith and trust in God.

How We Celebrate

Many parishes mark the feast with special Masses, processions, and

veneration of the Cross. It is a day to meditate on the depth of God's love and the call to live lives shaped by sacrifice, service, and hope.

Did You Know?

The largest Christian cross in the world is located in Spain, within the **Valley of the Fallen**, near Madrid. It measures 500 feet in height.

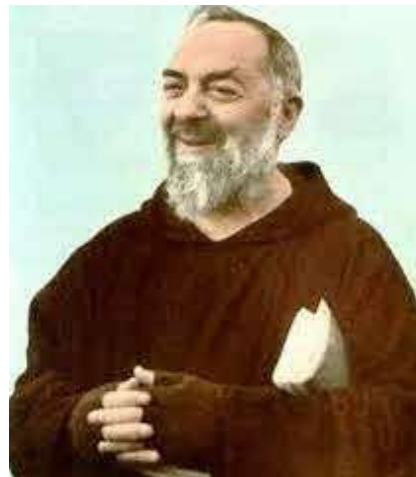
The largest cross in the U.S. is the **Branson Cross**, located in Walnut Shade, Missouri. It stands at 218 feet tall and is among the ten largest such structures in the world.

The 2nd largest in the U.S. is the **Cross at the Crossroads** in Effingham, Illinois visible from both interstate highways 57 and 70.

St Padre Pio: A Modern Master of Prayer, Suffering & Compassion (Sept 23)

Born Francesco Forgione in 1887, Padre Pio entered the Capuchin Franciscans at 15. Known for his deep prayer life, he bore the stigmata for 50 years and was gifted with prophecy, discernment in confession, and profound compassion.

In 1956, he founded *Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza* ("Home for the Relief of Suffering"), a hospital that continues to serve as a center of healing. Canonized in 2002, his influence lives on through thousands of prayer groups and worldwide devotion.



Padre Pio's legacy offers simple yet profound guidance:

- **Prayer:** daily conversation with God.
- **Suffering:** embraced as union with Christ.
- **Reconciliation:** a sacrament of transformation.
- **Hope:** unwavering trust in God's promises and providence.

His life reminds us that holiness is found in prayer, sacrifice, and trust in God. Enjoy these quotes from Padre Pio:

- *“Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.”*
- *“God will always give us more than we deserve.”*
- *“God will never permit anything to happen to us that is not for our greater good.”*
- *“In books we seek God, in prayer we find him.”*
- *“The heart of our Heavenly Father never refuses the prayer of His children.”*

Our Lady of Good Help: America’s Marian Apparition

In September 1859, the Virgin Mary appeared to Adele Brise in Champion, Wisconsin—the only Church-approved Marian apparition in the United States. Mary urged prayer, repentance, and teaching the faith to children.

A powerful miracle occurred in 1871 when a raging fire swept through the region but stopped at the very edge of



Adele's chapel and school, sparing all who had gathered in prayer.

Today, the **Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help** remains a place of pilgrimage and grace. If you haven't heard this story before, look it up—you'll be inspired by Mary's loving protection and call to faith.

The Jubilee Year: A Time of Grace

We hope that you are taking advantage of the great graces offered this Jubilee Year and continue to encourage you to visit any of the 9 pilgrimage sites around St. Louis.

[2025 Jubilee Year of Hope Brochure](#)
[2025 Jubilee Pilgrimage Sites](#)

👉 **Check out** the **Hallow** app or website for all things Jubilee Year under the section: **Jubilee of Hope**



September Feast Days

Major September Feast Days

- **September 3** — *St. Gregory the Great*, Pope and Doctor of the Church
- **September 5** — *St. Teresa of Calcutta* (Mother Teresa), Virgin
- **September 7** — *Canonization of Blessed Carlo Acutis* (Rescheduled)
- **September 8** — *Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Mary's Birthday)
- **September 9** — *St. Peter Claver*, Priest and Missionary
- **September 14** — *Exaltation of the Holy Cross* (Feast)
- **September 15** — *Our Lady of Sorrows* (Memorial)

- **September 23** — *St. Padre Pio* (Feast)
- **September 26** — *St. John the Apostle and Evangelist* (Feast)
- **September 29** — Michael, Gabriel & Raphael, Archangels

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