

# The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + FEBRUARY 2022



*Grow Your Faith discusses the virtue of Prudence, see page 2.*



*A Primer on Critical Thinking is on page 3.*

*On page 5, read the finale to St. Francis Xavier's life.*



*See page 6 to see what's happening at Respect Life Corner.*

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**Words of WISDOM**



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## *The Holy Family as a Model for Our Families*

*The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus — the school of the Gospel.*

*First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us . . .*

*A lesson on family life. May Nazareth teach us what family life is, its communion of love, its austere and simple beauty, and its sacred and inviolable character . . .*

*A lesson of work. Nazareth, home of the Carpenter's Son, in you I would choose to understand and proclaim the severe and redeeming law of human work.*

*— Paul VI at Nazareth, January 5, 1964*

The Holy Family models for us what family life should exemplify. It is a school of virtue for both parents and children. There we find God, and learn how to connect with God and with others. The family is where love is freely given without self-interest. It is where we learn to love, to pray and to practice the gift of charity. Pope John Paul II has said, "The family, more than any other human reality, is the place in which the person is loved for himself and in which he learns to live the sincere gift of self."

We should ask ourselves if our own families model that of the Holy Family. We need to be open to God's grace to value the positive and to accept our mistakes — and to be willing to rectify them. Parenting is a very challenging responsibility and at times errors are made despite the best intentions. Recognizing this, children should trust their parents and never forget that parents want only what is best for them.

Which leads us to what may be the most important family virtue — forgiveness. Living so intimately within the family nucleus naturally gives rise to unpleasant situations where someone is apt to be offended. St. Paul *(Continued on page 2)*

## ***The Holy Family. . .***

***Continued from page one***

knew this when he told us to “bear with and forgive one another.” The health of our family may depend on how quickly we learn to forgive without harboring feelings of resentment.

No family can thrive and grow without constant work. Even the material details that take time and effort are essential to keeping the family strong. Everyone has to pull together for the good of the family — even to the point of putting ahead of our own needs and ambitions the happiness of other family members, setting aside our own selfish desires.

It is also important to pray as a family, especially the holy rosary. Prayer will help us to intensify our closeness with each other and to learn to forgive . . . [I]t is essential to discover the relationship between the Eucharist and family life. Pope John Paul II wrote, “In the eucharistic gift of charity the Christian family finds the foundation and soul of its communion and its mission. +”

*Excerpted from ‘The Holy Family’ models what family life should be, by then Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.+*



Prudence is one of the four cardinal virtues. Like the other three — justice, fortitude, temperance — it is a virtue that can be practiced by anyone; unlike the theological virtues, the cardinal virtues are not, in themselves, the gifts of God through grace but the outgrowth of habit. However, Christians can grow in the cardinal virtues through sanctifying grace, and thus prudence can take on a supernatural dimension as well as a natural one.

Counsel, the third gift of the Holy Spirit, perfects the cardinal virtue of prudence. For counsel enables us to judge how best to act prudently almost by intuition. Prudence is about smart living. It's not just about being smart in school, or being a smart parent, or being smart in business. It's about being smart in life, and just like all the other virtues, this takes practice.

Experience, too, is a great aid to prudence, not just your own, but also the experience of others. Seeking counsel of wise persons can be very valuable.

Most importantly, you want to seek out the counsel of the wisest persons: The Blessed Trinity, Our Lady, the saints and angels. Go to them in prayer, and ask for their wisdom and guidance in making the right decisions in your life.

According to St. Thomas it is its function to do three things: to take counsel, i.e. to cast about for the means suited in the particular case under consideration to reach the end of any one moral virtue; to judge soundly of the fitness of the means suggested; and, finally, to command their employment. If these are to be done well they necessarily exclude laxity and lack of concern.

A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do good. Our task is to ask for and cooperate with God's grace in developing the virtue of prudence, and allowing Him to perfect it in us.

Prudence requires us to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Thus, as Rev. John J. Hardon writes, "It is the intellectual virtue whereby a human being recognizes in any matter at hand what is good and what is evil."

Read the Scriptures, the lives of the saints, for insights on making prudent choices.+

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## **February Prayer Intention: Religious Sisters and Consecrated Women**

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times.

### **Prayer for the Holy Father**

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be to the Father. . .*

# *A Time for Critical Thinking*

*Ideas from Peter Kreeft, prolific author and Boston College professor*

Now and during the next two or three years, members of the laity, that's us, will be asked to do some *real* critical thinking.

First, there is the three-year Synodal process that was announced last October, and which includes input at the parish level and beyond in preparation for the Vatican Synod on Synodality in 2023.

Then, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has launched the Eucharistic Revival concluding at the National Eucharistic Congress to be held in Indianapolis from July 17 to July 21, 2024.

As members of the Mystical Body of Christ, we must be ready to participate with clear minds and right intentions.

Peter Kreeft defined critical thinking in *Envoy* magazine's 2009 summer edition:

"I have been asked to write about the importance of critical thinking . . . not just as an academic exercise or professional game but as a divinely designed tool for ordering our thoughts, our actions, our world, and our task of being working organs of Christ's Body. His hands and feet for building His Kingdom, His Empire — in other words for our jihad, our holy spiritual war. . .

"Critical thinking is more than just thinking critically in the sense of criticizing others' thoughts, or our own, by finding one or more of the three things that can go wrong with thoughts: ambiguities, falsehoods, or fallacies.

"Critical thinking means judgment and evaluation but it does not mean only negative evaluation.

"Another word for 'critical thinking' is 'logical thinking.' This is a high and holy thing, in fact, a very Christian thing because the ultimate foundation of logic is the Logos, the eternal Mind or Reason or Inner Word of God, which John's Gospel identifies as the pre-incarnate Christ. The human art and science of logic is the instrument that teaches us to rightly order and structure our thoughts, as a means to the end of thought, which is truth.

"One of the most useful aspects of that ordering and structuring is the realization that all the things that can ever go wrong with any thoughts come under just these three headings: ambiguous terms, false premises, or logical fallacies. And this is a wonderful simplifying and clarifying of the process of criticizing any thoughts, written or spoken by any person, yourself or another; about any topic, human or divine.

" 'Critical thinking' is simply the currently fashionable terms for what used to be called 'human reason.' It means judging thoughts, negatively or positively, by these three standards, but it also includes at least four more things:

"**First**, it includes *generating* thoughts, or *creating* thoughts. Man cannot create matter, like God, but he can create thoughts. What is usually called 'creating thinking' in schools today is unjustifiably limited to creating *new and original* thoughts, which are usually shallow and foolish

thoughts because most of us are shallow and foolish thinkers. In fact we are so shallow and foolish that we think that we are deep and wise, and we think that the new and original thoughts we have are better than the old and traditional thoughts of the past, which are the 'tried and true', 'cream of the crop' of thoughts from thousands of deeper and wiser minds than ours, thoughts that have been tested by time and by millions of other human beings, and which have survived the tsunami of forgetfulness that obliterates most of the memories of each generation, thoughts that have been judged precious and preserved by tradition. . . .

"**The Second** thing that critical thinking also includes is *continuing* thoughts rightly once they are created, *following* a thought as you would follow a deer through a forest. It takes much more moral virtue to follow a thought, virtues like courage and patience and persistence, than merely to generate a thought in the first place, because generating a thought is largely passive, easy, and delightful while pursuing a thought is active, hard and onerous. The first is inspiration, the second is perspiration. . . .

"**Third**, critical thinking also includes insisting on thinking *consistently*, which means daring to think two premises together and draw the logically necessary conclusion. This is the fundamental form of logical thinking, the syllogism. There is nothing uncreative (*Continued on page 4*)

## *A Time for . . .*

*Continued from page 3*

about a syllogism. It is so creative, in fact, that it is very much like sexual intercourse, in that it produces a product, a thought-child, if we do not artificially contracept it by erecting a barrier between the premises and their conclusion, which we usually do, especially when we fear that the conclusion, like a baby, would be inconvenient to us.

“For instance, it is almost universally admitted that these two premises are true but the conclusion is usually resisted: first, that there is a psycho-somatic unity to the human essence and, secondly, that our bodies, which are half of our essence, are masculine or feminine innately, not just by social convention. But rarely is the conclusion drawn that the other half of our essence, our souls, are therefore also innately, and not just conventionally, masculine or feminine. But it is logical. If body and soul are related as matter and form, it is not more possible to change one without changing the other than it is to change the words of a book without changing the meaning, or to change meaning without changing the words. For they are also related as matter and form. . . .

“But to do this involves following the path of logical thinking to its end, not just **beginning** to follow it. It means letting the river of logic take the raft of your thoughts wherever *it* will take them rather than where you will take them (which is usually only where the Zeitgeist will take them, the social fashions

and ideologies that unconsciously formed your thoughts.)

“The aspect of critical thinking, drawing conclusions logically from your thoughts, involves not only **seeing** those logical consequences with the intellect but also **acknowledging** them with the will. And that requires moral as well as intellectual virtue, for it requires slaying the attractively disguised dragons of sloth which lurk next to each hard and unexpected turn taken by the path of thought. Sloth means not just any kind of laziness but the refusal to exert oneself when in the presence of a spiritual good; and it is a spiritual good to seek and find the truth, to follow the path of thinking, even when it is dark, to the light at the end of the tunnel; to think through thoroughly; to do as good a job and build as sound a building with thoughts as we do with bricks or steel.

“A fourth element of critical thinking is **applying** conclusions rightly in the practical order, letting our thoughts make a difference to our life, translating principles into practice. The single most crucial instance of this is one that is embarrassing to all of us, and worse than embarrassing. If we are Christians we all admit that the only way to true happiness is sanctity, not sin. We know this truth not only by faith but also by reason and by repeated experience. Everyone seeks deep, true, lasting happiness, and only the saints find it. Yet we are not saints. Every time we sin, we suffer, yet we keep sinning. Every time we overcome sin, we have deep joy, yet we keep refusing joy. God keeps offering us joy in His

right hand and misery in His left, and we keep saying, ‘Duh, I think I’ll try the left hand.’ We are, in other words, quite simply, insane. That’s one of the meanings of Original Sin. If we only lived logically, we would all be saints. Instead, we think illogically and uncritically. We keep uncritically falling for the Devil’s advertisements, eat the worms on his fish hooks. We desperately hope that there is some other way to happiness than God’s way, even though no one has ever found it. That is not critical thinking!

. . . .”So for a Christian, critical thinking means not only thinking that has been purged of illogic but also of sin; not only thinking that has been subjected to the honest judgment of the theoretical reason, but also to the honest judgment of the practical reason, or reason about practice, i.e. moral reason.

“The judgment of the theoretical reason consists in these three logical questions: (1) what does it mean? (2) is it true? and (3) what is the evidence of proof. . . . are there any ambiguous terms, are there any false premises, and are there any logical fallacies? If not, the conclusion is true.

“The judgment of the practical, moral reason consists in a single question: is this good or evil? A crucial difference between the judgment of theoretical reason and the judgment of the practical reason is that the judgment of the practical reason is almost always clear, and immediate, and certain.

“Our conscience is louder than logic. Most problems of discerning God’s will are moral not intellectual. +

# St. Francis Xavier: Our Parish Patron

*The conclusion of the life story of our parish patron, St. Francis Xavier.*

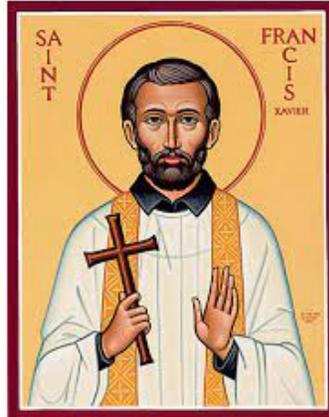
*Last month we left off here. . .*

At Malacca they found that a contagious fever was raging, and Xavier with his companions helped carry the sick people to hospitals. When the plague slackened, he took up the matter of the embassy to China with the new governor, Don Alvaro d'Ataide, who had succeeded his brother, Don Pedro de Silva, Xavier's friend, and who had received instructions from the Viceroy in India to forward the project. But Don Alvaro had a personal grudge against Pereira, [James Pereira, newly appointed Portuguese envoy to China] and refused to allow him to sail.

After a month of fruitless persuasion, Xavier produced the briefs of Pope Paul, which contained his appointment as papal nuncio. He had kept these documents secret up to this time, except from the Bishop of Goa. Don Alvaro ignored them; the most he would concede was that Xavier himself might go to China in Pereira's ship, but without its owner, a proposition to which Pereira agreed. As for missionary work in Malacca, it seems that Xavier labored harder for its regeneration than for any other place, with the poorest results. On leaving this time, he took off his shoes and beat out the dust of the place on a rock. "Are you leaving us forever?" the episcopal vicar asked him. "I hope that our Lord will soon send you back to us in peace." "That is as God wills," Xavier replied sadly, climbing into the boat.

Since the project for an embassy failed, Xavier sent three of the Jesuits he had with him on to Japan, and kept only one brother and a young Chinese. With these two he hoped to find a way to land secretly in China. Before leaving Malacca, he wrote to thank Pereira, and suggested that he write the King of Portugal an account of the attempt and of the chances of future trade with China. He also wrote to Father Baertz, bidding him go to the Bishop of Goa and

arrange for the publication in Malacca of the excommunication which Don Alvaro and his abettors had incurred by impeding a papal envoy. Late in August, 1552, he reached the port of Shang-chuen, on an island near the mouth of the Su-kiang River, not far from Canton.



From here he wrote more letters. He had found an interpreter, for the Chinese he had brought from Goa knew nothing of the language spoken at court. Then, with difficulty, he had hired a Chinese merchant to land him at night in some part of Canton, and had bound himself by oath never to reveal this man's name. There were some Portuguese traders on the island, and they were out to thwart him, fearing the Chinese would take vengeance on them for Xavier's daring. At this critical juncture Xavier fell ill of a fever. The Portuguese ships in harbor, all but one, departed, and he was reduced to extreme want. The Chinese merchant failed to come for him and the interpreter disappeared.

On November 20, fever seized him a second time, and he felt a presentiment of death. He took refuge on the one remaining Portuguese ship, but the rocking of the ship made him feel worse; the next day he asked to be set on land again. The sailors were afraid to show any kindness to Xavier for fear of offending Don Alvaro. They left him lying on the sands exposed to a piercing wind, until someone carried him into the shelter of a native hut.

For two weeks he lay there, lonely and deserted, praying ceaselessly between periods of delirium. His strength ebbed rapidly and on December 3, 1552, with eyes fixed on his crucifix, he murmured: "*In te, Domine, speravi. Non confundar in aeternam*" (In Thee, O Lord, have I put my hope. Let me never be confounded), and died. Although he was only forty-six years old, the severity of his exertions during the ten years of his mission had so aged him that his hair was almost white. The next evening his body was buried in a shallow grave. Only Antony, the Chinese youth, Francis d'Aghiar, the pilot, and two half-caste bearers were at the burial. *(Continued on page 6)*

## St. Francis . . .

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The following February, his body was removed to Malacca, thence on to Goa, and there it still lies magnificently enshrined in the Church of the Good Jesus. Within a few weeks of Xavier's death Loyola [unaware of his death] wrote to recall him to Europe for the purpose of making him his successor, in recognition of his heroic work in the Orient.

In 1622, Xavier was canonized, along with the founder of the Society of Jesus. Of the Apostle of the Indies Sir Walter Scott wrote: "One cannot deny him the courage and patience of a martyr, with the good sense, resolution, ready wit, and address of the best negotiator that ever went on a temporal embassy." This great mystic and ascetic, to whom the spiritual life was an ever-present reality, had those vital qualities of mind and personality which enabled him to speak to men's hearts and organize their efforts in the spreading of God's word. +

### ***Our Parish Patron was an extraordinary Missionary.***

One of our parishioners sent an interesting article on St. Francis Xavier's missionary efforts. It was an answer to the question of how many countries did he visit on his mission. Here's the answer:

"It's difficult to give an exact answer to the question of how many countries were visited by one of the greatest missionaries of all time. Let's keep track as we dive into his story (and only count those relevant to his missionary work). . .

"In 1541, Ignatius sent Francis and another missionary, at the request of the King of Portugal, to minister to the Christians living in Portuguese India (that's 1 country visited so far). During three years



## The Respect Life Corner

January was a very important month for Pro-Life with the yearly March for Life in DC on January 21 with a very large turnout. People are aware and praying for the Supreme Court as they debate a case on Mississippi law banning abortions after 15 weeks vs the pro-choice Jackson Women's Health Center. Please keep this case and the Justices in your prayers at 8 p.m. nightly.

Our Parish held a Cape Cod Rosary for Life Rally on January 22 at noon on Main St. Hyannis. We had 28 "prayers" represented by 6 other Catholic Parishes and despite the cold, it was a joyful and heartfelt time of prayer and song. We were in step with the prayers of others across the country.

Our Parish Respect Life Team has been hard at work to plan programs and events for this year to empower all of us with knowledge to respect all life and to know how to help Moms in need. Two Diocesan speakers will be at our meeting, open to all on February 12, Saturday at 9:45 am in the Lower Church Hall. Their topics are: *Walking with Moms in Need*, a program which we plan to implement during the year, the *Pro-Life Boot Camp* for young people in Stonehill and *Project Rachel*, a support and healing program for women considering or after an abortion. Refreshments will be served. Please come!

Our next event is to Pray at the Abortion clinic in Attleboro with the support of the 40 Days for Life Coordinator. We will travel to Attleboro on Saturday, March 12, details to follow in the bulletin. Prayers often influence an abortion-minded person to choose Life. Please consider coming.

The "almost final" report from the Baby Bottle Drive with cash, check and coins included: \$5774.85. We were thanked and told this was the largest in the Diocese! I have since received more change to be added to the total. And, if you have any outstanding bottles, please turn them in to the Parish Office.

Our Team currently consists of a small steering committee and a list of volunteers. Interested in participating in any capacity, please Deacon Steve Minninger at 507-237-1154 or Becky Minninger, 508-737-2181. +

in India and Sri Lanka (that's 2), Francis then traveled to Malacca, in modern-day Malaysia (3), and to the Maluku islands of Indonesia (4)—the "Spice Islands.

"In Malaysia he made the acquaintance of a Japanese man named Anjiro who was interested in Christianity and told Francis all about his home country. Anjiro was baptized Pablo of Sante Fe, assisting Francis as a guide and inter-

preter when the Jesuits landed in Japan (5) in 1549.

"St. Francis set off for China (6) in April of 1552 but only made it as far as a Chinese island off the mainland. There he fell ill and, after his long missionary labors, departed on his final voyage to his heavenly home on December 3.

"So, all told, St. Francis Xavier visited at least six countries in only 10+ years." +

# Follow St. Francis de Sales' Example

*Daily, Father John Bartunek, writing as Uncle Eddy, an imprisoned missionary somewhere, produces a reflection on the saint of the day for various relatives. In addition Father is known for his retreat guides available at [rcspirituality.org](http://rcspirituality.org). You will find this website an invaluable aid in growing your faith.*

Dear Francisco,

Please, explain this mystery to me. Why in the world do we modern Christians, who have all the great spiritual books of the Church's two thousand year history at our finger tips, **Not use any of them?** Can you explain that to me? Is there a shortage of spiritual nourishment in the western world? Certainly not, it's all there on the bookshelves of thousands of libraries, in the warehouses of thousands of bookstores, even in the memory banks of thousands of servers, and yet, **Look at how many of today's Christians are starving!** I just don't get it.

I often picture how different the saints were. Take today's saint, for instance. [Francis de Sales, whose feast day was January 24]. He was always on the go, but wherever he went, he always took with him his two favorite spiritual books, *The Spiritual Combat* and *The Imitation of Christ*. He had no illusions about being able to survive spiritually on vapid fare, even though his extraordinary natural talents would have enabled him to do so, if anyone could.

Francis de Sales was a nobleman from northeastern France. He graduated with honors from Europe's best universities (Paris for undergrad work and Padua for law). His father had great plans for him – he arranged the perfect marriage, obtained positions of prestige and influence, and made sure that the most powerful men around were familiar with Francis' handsome and elegant appearance, intellectual prowess, personal charm, and cultivated habits.

But Francis refused to court the chosen young lady, declined the governmental appointments, and only modestly participated in high society's obligations. Why? Of course, ever since he was a boy, Francis had felt called to give his life to serve God and the Church; he wanted to be a priest.

Only the entreaties of relatives, and a cousin's procurement of a prestigious ecclesiastical appointment, could overcome his father's initial opposition, but overcome it they did, and much to the Church's advantage. The future saint began an exemplary and incredible service of spiritual direction, religious instruction, and missionary activity. It culminated in his being named bishop of Geneva, Switzerland, where he had volunteered to take on the risky task of reclaiming Catholics who had been swept away by Calvinism (an early branch of Protestantism). Years of struggle and hardship (including frequent assaults by would-be assassins, beatings by angry mobs, attacks by wolves, sickness and exhaustion) yielded a steady flow of conversions and returns to the true faith, religious foundation, and a torrent of brilliant spiritual writings.

One of these latter was the uncannily eloquent *Introduction to the Devout Life*. If you had only read one spiritual book, and it was this one, you would be well along the path of heaven. It's especially apt for college students. And yet **does anyone read it?** Does anyone even **recommend** it anymore?!? Here is a sample. See how much common sense is here! How much good, simple advice! Then explain to me why today's Christians prefer to starve (keep in mind that "devotion" and "perfection" refer to an active spiritual life, and "true" devotion means doing so in docility to God and the Church):

"...Tell me, please, my Philothea, whether it is proper for a bishop to want to lead a solitary life like a Carthusian; or for married people to be no more concerned than a Capuchin about increasing their income; or for a working man to spend his whole day in a church like a religious; or on the other hand for a religious to be constantly exposed like a bishop to all the events and circumstances that bear on the needs of our neighbor. Is not his sort of devotion ridiculous, unorganized and intolerable? Yet this absurd error occurs very frequently, but in no way does true devotion, my Philothea, destroy anything at all. On the contrary, it **(Continued on page 8)**

## Follow . . .

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perfects and fulfills all things. In fact if it ever works against, or is inimical to, anyone's legitimate station and calling, then it is very definitely false devotion.

"The bee collects honey from flowers in such a way as to do the least damage or destruction to them, and he leaves them whole, undamaged and fresh, just as he found them. True devotion does still better. Not only does it not injure any sort of calling or occupation, it even embellishes and enhances it. Moreover, just as every sort of gem, cast in honey, becomes brighter and more sparkling, each according to its color, so each person becomes more acceptable and fitting in his own vocation when he sets his vocation in the context of devotion. Through devotion your family cares become more peaceful, mutual love between husband and wife becomes more sincere, the service we owe to the prince becomes more faithful, and our work, no matter what it is, becomes more pleasant and agreeable.

"Therefore, in whatever situations we happen to be, we can and we must aspire to the life of perfection."

Wouldn't you like to have such a fellow on campus to give you advice as you try to do your best as a Catholic at college? Well, **you can!** Just read his books!

Your exasperated uncle,  
*Eddy*



### ***We Mark the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple on February 2***

Pope Francis noted the presence of two elderly persons at Christ's presentation in the temple.

"Simeon and Anna: persons docile to the Holy Spirit, led by him, inspired by him. The Lord granted them wisdom as the fruit of a long journey along the path of obedience to his law, an obedience which likewise humbles and abases, but which also lifts up and protects hope, makes them creative, for they are filled with the Holy Spirit."

While Mary, the Christ child, and Joseph are usually at center stage at this event, it behooves us to contemplate the wisdom that the elderly — especially grandparents — can provide for both parents and grandkids as we focus on the Holy and our own families this month. +

### ***The Blessing of Throats Is on February 3***

The annual blessing of throats is a traditional sign of the struggle against illness in the Christian life. This blessing of the throat with candles will be given to those attending during the 8:30 a.m. Mass on February 3, the feast of Saint Blaise. +

### ***Healing Mass, February 11 on World Day of the Sick***

Introduced by Pope John Paul II as a way for believers to offer prayers for those suffering from

illnesses, this feast day, which coincides with the apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes, will be celebrated at the 8:30 a.m. Mass with anointing/blessings and the Sacrament of the Sick. Prayer shawls for the ill and homebound will be available. +

### ***Women of Faith Meetings Wednesdays at 9:45 a.m.***

Following the conclusion of a video series on *The Reformation*, we are continuing to meet at the Father Duffy Pastoral Center for fellowship following Mass and the rosary. All are invited.

### ***Why at Mass We Still Pray St. Joseph's Prayer***

The Year of St. Joseph went from December 8, 2021 to December 8, 2022. But since we started the year in January, Father Michael has decided we should honor the patron and advocate for our Church through his feast day which is March 19. The Pope has been focusing on St. Joseph as well during his Wednesday general audiences. Protect us St. Joseph and our beloved church and save us from all deceit and adversity, Amen. +

### ***St. Francis Xavier Parish's Diversity Is Focus of Diocesan Synodal Plans***

The unique makeup of our parish — English, Spanish and Portuguese-speaking parishioners — provides the diocese an interesting mix of peoples and ideas. By spring, diocesan representatives will be on hand with a synodal process that offers a broad spectrum for the diocese to study and include. +



# Words<sup>OF</sup> WISDOM

**From Saints whose feasts are celebrated during this month . . .**

"Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted — and you yourself a sword will pierce — so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"

**— Simeon at the Presentation in the Temple**

"Father of mercy and God of all consolation, graciously look upon me and impart to me the blessing which flows from this holy Sacrament. Overshadow me with Your loving kindness, and let this divine Mystery bear fruit in me.

**— St. Blaise**

"If I were worthy of such a favor from my God, I would ask that He grant me this one miracle — that by His grace, He would make of me a good man."

**— St. Ansgar**

"God wishes to test you, like gold in the furnace. The dross is consumed by the fire but the pure gold remains and its value increases. It is in this manner, that God acts with His good servant, who puts his hope in Him and remains unshaken in times of distress. God raises him up and, in return for the things he has left out of love for God, He repays him

a hundredfold in this life and with eternal life hereafter. If then you remain constant in faith, in the face of trial, the Lord will give you peace and rest for a time in this world and forever in the next."

**— St. Jerome Emiliani**

"If I was to meet those slave raiders that abducted me and those who tortured me, I'd kneel down to them to kiss their hands, because, if it had not have been for them, I would not have become a Christian and religious woman."

**—St. Josephine Bakhati**

"The best penance is to have patience with the sorrows God permits. A very good penance is to dedicate oneself to fulfill the duties of everyday with exactitude and to study and work with all our strength."

**— St. Peter Damian**

"Eighty and six years have I served Christ, nor has He ever done me any harm. How, then, could I blaspheme my King who saved Me? . . . I bless Thee for deigning me worthy of this day and this hour that I may be among Thy martyrs and drink the cup of my Lord Jesus Christ.

**— St. Polycarp**

"I do not promise you happiness in this world, but in the next."

**— Our Lady of Lourdes**

"Jesus Christ, Lord of all things!  
You see my heart, You know my desires.  
Possess all that I am — You alone.  
I am Your sheep. Make me worthy to overcome the devil.

**— St. Agatha**

# The Month of February 2022

## Monthly Focus:

### The Holy Family



Traditionally, February has become a time to recall the Holy Family; within the Holy Family is where Jesus spent the time between his birth and embarking on his public journey. The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus — the school of the Gospel. First, then, a lesson of silence; second, a lesson on family life, and finally, a lesson of work devoted to the will of God.

### Prayer Intention: For Religious Sisters and Consecrated Women

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women; thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they continue to find new responses to the challenges of our times.

### The Virtue: Prudence

Counsel, the third gift of the Holy Spirit, perfects the cardinal virtue of prudence, which can be practiced by anyone. But counsel enables us to judge how best to act prudently almost by intuition.