Knights of Columbus Newsletter Council 13391
May 18, 2023 Thursday

This weekend coffee and doughnuts will be served after the Saturday Mass in the Parish Center. After the 9:00 a.m. Mass, in the celebration for our graduating seniors, coffee and doughnuts will be served in the courtyard – weather permitting! After the 11:00 a.m. Mass we will serve coffee and doughnuts in the Parish Center. Come join us!

We are seeking helpers for the fall picnic on September 10th. Please contact us and let us know how you can help. Please contact **our Grand Knight, Bill Allen** at ProKitchenBill@outlook.com or Doug Graves at d.graves@mikofc.org or contact, Clem Schwartz at clem.schwartz@sbcglobal.net

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Episode #9 - The Life of His Love: Prayer and the Life of the Spirit

On pilgrimage to the places where the great saints and spiritual masters lived, Bishop Barron explores the different types of prayer: contemplation; adoration; petition; and intercession. In telling the stories of Catholics like Thomas Merton, St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, Bishop Barron demonstrates how the human person can be transformed through prayer that manifests a deep, spiritual commitment centered in Christ.

Use this link: https://catholicismseries.com/prayerepisode9

If you would like a copy of Bishop's Barron's book go to this link: https://www.amazon.com/Catholicism-Journey-Heart-Robert-Barron/dp/0307720527
You can get a used copy for only $6.29 which includes shipping.

Use this link for the Sunday gospel readings https://young-catholics.com/6219/the-ascension-of-the-lord-year-a/

Mass Readings for the Ascension of the Lord Year A

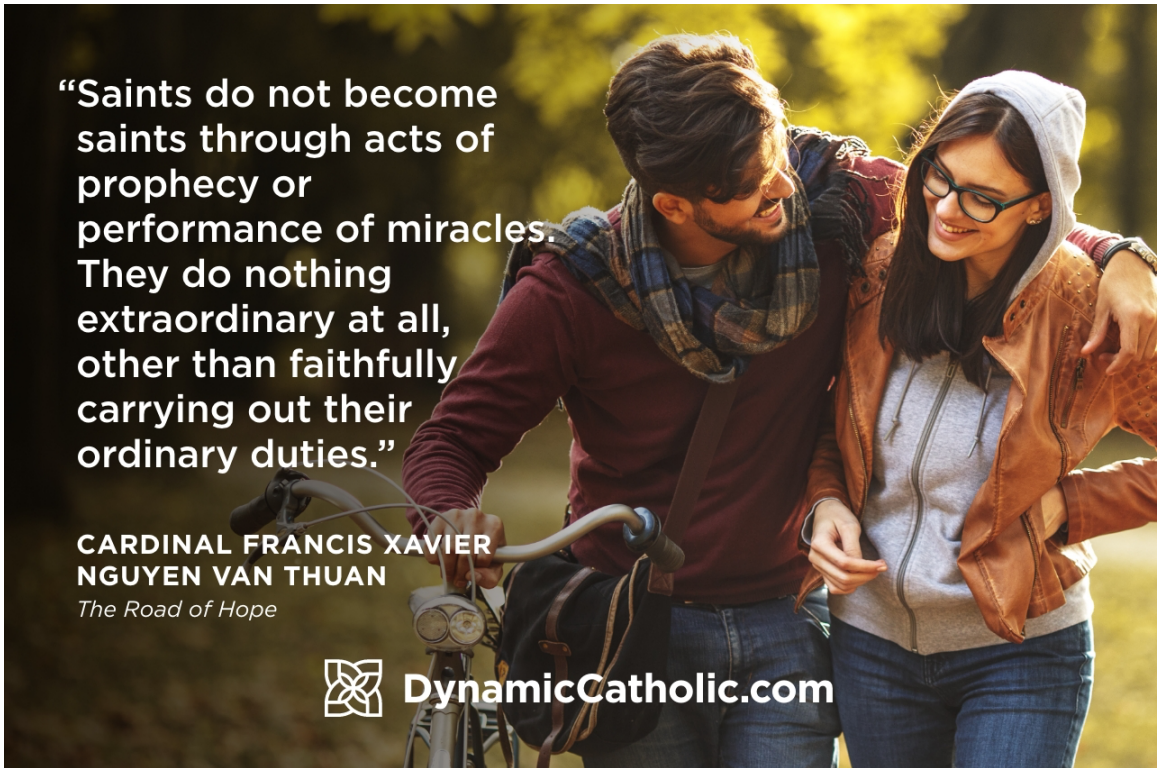
First Reading: Acts 1:1-11 – Luke recounts the events that occurred between Jesus' resurrection and his ascension. Jesus appeared to his disciples, gave them instructions and promises, and was taken up into heaven while they watched.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 47 – A psalm of praise and exaltation to God as the king over all the earth. It describes God ascending to his throne amidst shouts of joy and trumpet blasts, and calls on all peoples to clap their hands and sing praises to him. The psalm also highlights God's reign over the nations and his holy throne.

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23 – A prayer from Paul for the Ephesian believers, asking God to give them spiritual wisdom and knowledge so that they may understand the hope and inheritance they have in Christ. Paul also

emphasizes the power of God that was revealed when Christ was raised from the dead and exalted to the highest place, above all earthly powers and authorities.

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20 – The resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples on a mountain in Galilee. Jesus commissions his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything he has commanded.



The feast of the Ascension of the Lord Year A commemorates the day that Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. He also gave the Great Commission, that all of the world should be saved. In the first reading the ascension of Jesus is recounted and the Apostles are told they will receive the Holy Spirit. In the second reading we hear that Jesus Christ rules heaven and earth. And in the gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to preach the Good News to the whole world.

Bishop Barron's radio homily for the Solemnity of the Ascension Use this link: https://www.wordonfire.org/videos/sermons/at-the-right-hand-of-the-father/

This Sunday we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord, perhaps one of the most misunderstood elements within the Christian narrative. The Ascension does

not mean Jesus goes "up, up, and away" as if his presence leave with, but rather that he assumes the throne of heaven so as to direct matters here on earth.

Scott Hahn Gives us a reflection of the First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles Use this link: https://stpaulcenter.com/audio/sunday-bible-reflections/the-good-news-scott-hahn-reflects-on-the-ascension-of-the-lord-3/

Another homily from the Center for Action and Contemplation. Use this link: https://cac.org/podcasts/the-map-comes-full-circle/

Use this link to watch of Video of this week's Gospel Matthew 28: 1-20. Note this video gives you Matthew's version of the Resurrection and then ends with the Ascension of Jesus.

Use this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPvi9pGnl-A

Loyola Commentary

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today's Gospel is taken from the conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's Gospel quickly moves from the disciples' discovery of Jesus' empty tomb, to Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to the commission that Jesus gives his disciples in today's Gospel.

The Final Commission, as this Gospel is sometimes called, is given on the mountaintop. Throughout Scripture, the most important events happen on the mountaintop, and Matthew has used this motif throughout his Gospel. Earlier in Matthew's Gospel, Peter, James, and John had seen Jesus transfigured on the mountaintop (Matthew 17:1-8). Also, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught the crowds from the mountaintop in what we now call the Sermon on the Mount.

Here we are told that the eleven disciples go the mountaintop in Galilee, as Jesus had instructed through Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (cf. Matthew 28:9-10). They see Jesus, and both worship and doubt at the same time. Jesus approaches them and commissions them to baptize and teach, "to make disciples of all nations." It is a task which Jesus had previously prepared his disciples for; recall that Jesus had sent the twelve apostles to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal (cf. Matthew 10:1-15). However, earlier the Twelve were sent only to the House of Israel; in this Final Commission, the eleven are told to go to "all nations." The mission of Jesus is now to be taken to all people; the task now is to baptize and to teach.

Jesus commissions his disciples to baptize in the name of the Trinity, one of the clearest attestations found in Scripture for baptism in the name of the Trinity. In

the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of Paul, baptism is more frequently offered "in the name of Jesus."

The ending of Matthew's Gospel can be understood as the beginning of the Church. Jesus commissions his disciples to continue to teach in his name and to bring others into the community of disciples through baptism. The Gospel ends, as it had begun, with the promise that Jesus will continue to be Emmanuel, "God with us" (cf. Matthew 1:23), for all eternity.

Family Connection

Just as Jesus sent his disciples to make disciples, our family, the domestic Church, is called to bear witness to the life of discipleship. That act of witnessing can take many forms. First and foremost ,our family should call people to discipleship by the example of our love for one another. That example is only the beginning; our love must extend beyond the family, reaching out to others and to the world.

Together with your family, identify one or more ways in which your family lives the life of Christian discipleship. Thank God for the blessing of the opportunity to be able to show God's love. Then read together today's Gospel, Matthew 28:16-20. Discuss what Jesus sends his disciples to do. Work together to identify one or more ways in which your family would like to do a better job bearing witness to the life of discipleship. Choose one of those ways and work together to make it happen. Pray as a family for the grace to be witnesses to the world of the life of discipleship. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

Living the Word Commentary

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Optional Song: Go Make of All Disciples
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrHmgGJrMI8

Focus: We are called to take up Christ's mission.

Reflection: The reading for the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord describes what some Christians call "the Great Commission." Before ascending into heaven, Jesus calls his disciples to him one more time and gives them a mission to evangelize the world.

This is an uncomfortable command for many modern Christians. Maybe we are struggling to live a Christian life and feel like a hypocrite telling other people how to live and what to believe. Or maybe we just don't know what to say. Where do we start? What is there to say that hasn't been said a hundred times by someone more knowledgeable, saintly, or charismatic? What give us the authority to presume to speak for God?

Jesus knows our doubts, just as he know the unspoken doubts of his apostles during that last mountaintop meeting. He assures us, as he assured them, that the power or authority we have comes from God through him. Only then does he tell his apostles to make disciples all over the world , baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity, and pass on his teachings.

Action Jesus has promised to be with the Church to the end of time. We don't need any special wisdom, strength, authority to evangelize. If we live for Jesus, his Spirit will touch others through our lives. We only need to be ready to explain the reason we have hope (1 Peter 3:15) This week think about how you can be more prepared to talk about your faith. Would you be able to honestly explain how the love of Jesus has changed you?

"Go forth and set the world on fire." St. Ignatius of Loyola

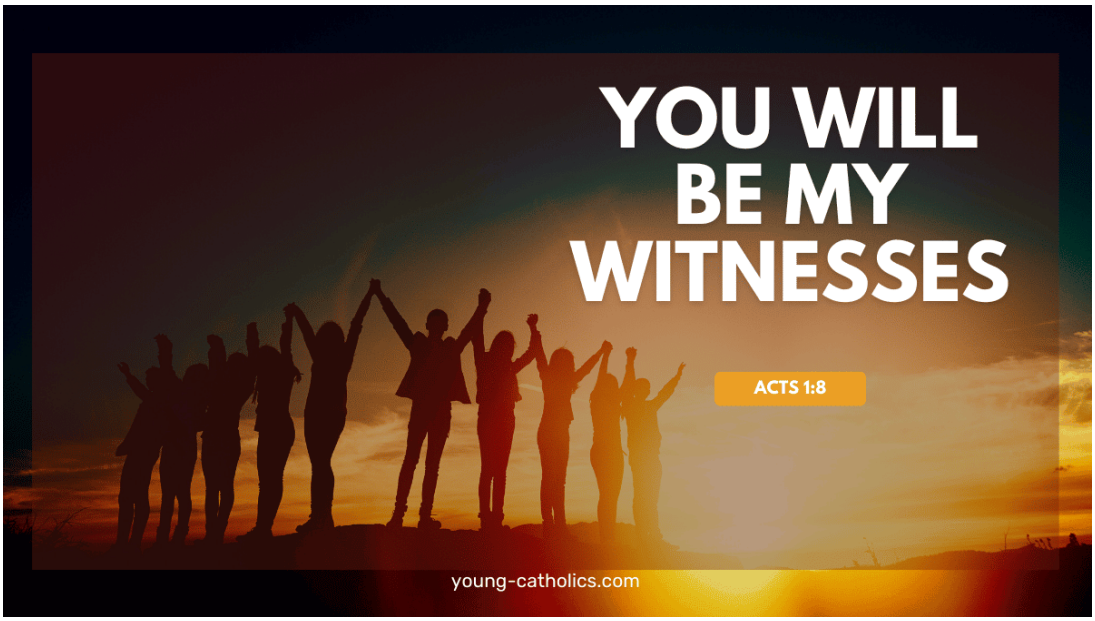
"but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation for a reason for your hope, 1 Peter 3:15

Questions: Pick one question and work on it this week !

1. Are doubt and faith contradictory, or can they coexist?
2. Who is the most powerful Christian witness you know? What makes their faith compelling?
3. Even if you were baptized as an infant or small child, it forever changed you into an adopted son or daughter of God. How is the change reflected in your life right now?

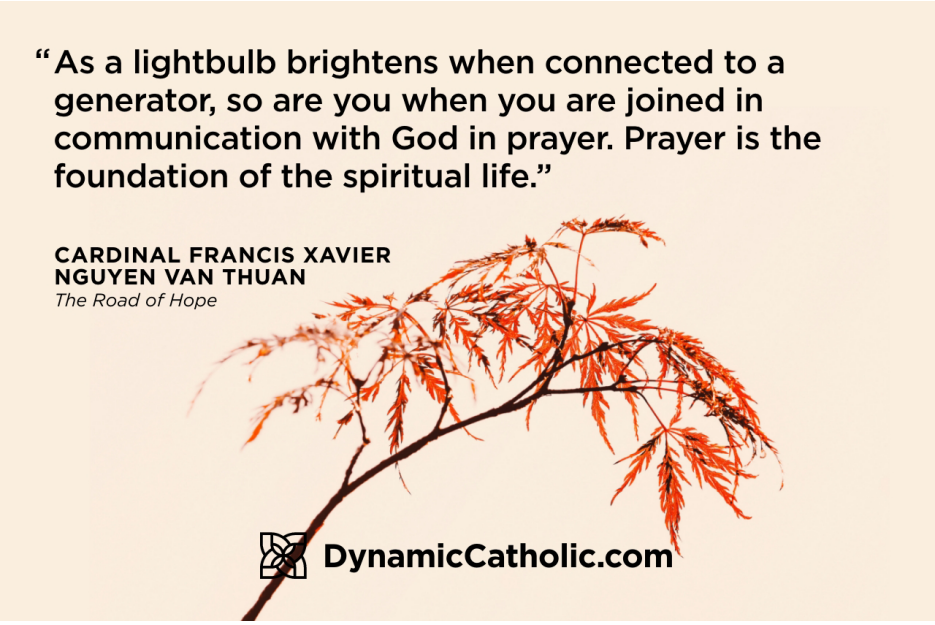
4. How do you feel about the commission to be a witness of Christ? Is it something that you take seriously in your daily life?
5. What are some ways that you have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? How has it helped you to ser e others and carry out God's mission?
6. How does the promise of Christ's return impact your daily life? Does it give you hope and motivation to live out your faith?

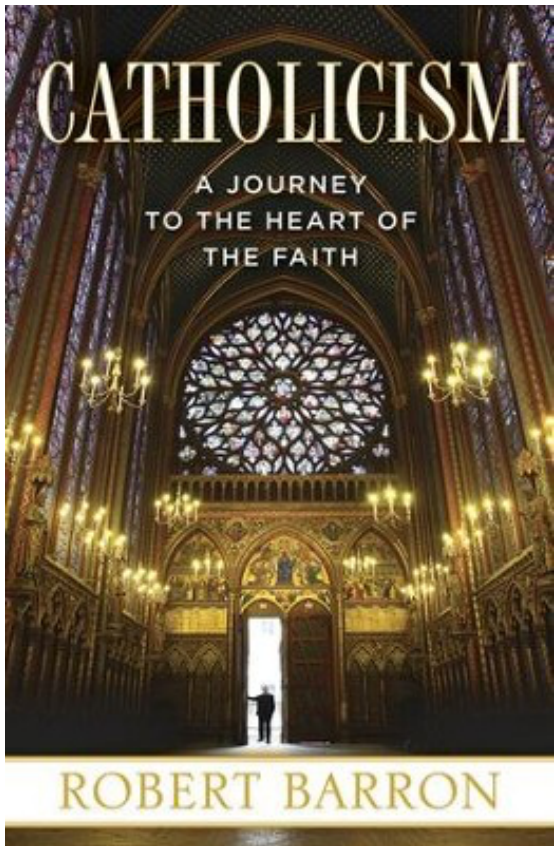
7. What does being a disciple maker mean to you? How do you try to embody the love of Christ in your interactions with others?
8. Have you ever stepped out of your comfort zone to engage with someone who may have different beliefs or backgrounds? How did that experinec4 impact you and the other person?



Closing Prayer: Almighty and eternal God, you have received the Risen Lord into your eternal glory. Grant that we who are called to continue his mission in this world may be faithful to his commands and come one day to share in that same glory. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Optional Song: Hallelujah is Our Song
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbgryIGz3YQ





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Catholicism #9
The Fire of His Love: Prayer and the Life of the Spirit

Fr. Barron, like in Episode #8, gives us a narrative about three individuals and their influence on how the church's prays. He spends most of the time on Thomas Merton and touches us with interesting story of St. John of the Cross and the mystic Teresa of Avila. Central to his presentation is a discussion about prayer of petition. Personally, I found this discussion more helpful that his rather detailed and somewhat complicated discussion on contemplative prayer.

His opening remarks about prayer are worth looking at in detail. "Prayer has taken on myriad forms over the centuries. Speaking, processing, singing, remaining silent, emptying mind of all imagery and conceptuality, reading sacred texts, dancing, and petitioning from the bottom of one hearts all been construed as modalities (types) of prayer" (Page 224). Fr. Barron identifies the source, Saint John of Damascus, a monk and theologian from the eighth century, for the often-repeated definition of prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God." Fr. Barron speaks about prayer as a longing - our longing for God and God's longing for us. Somehow that transcendent realm – that God person – impinges on our lowly world. We finally discover the church Fr. Barron enters in that opening scene for the Catholicism series. It is Sante Chapelle in Paris built by King Louis IX (Saint Louis) in the thirteenth century.

How would you describe prayer? What kind or type of prayer do you practice? Why should you pray anyway?

THOMAS MERTON

Fr Barron chooses for us not an ancient monk or some holy wise person from another time and age. Fr. Barron instead chooses a man who was no saint, but someone "who trampled through Times Square and frequented the jazz clubs of Manhattan in the first half of the twenty century, a spiritual teacher who emerged from the maelstrom of contemporary doubt and secularism" (Page 226). Thomas Merton was born in the south of France in 1915, the son of a New Zealander and an American mother who met at art school in Paris before the outbreak of World War I. Merton's mother died when he was six, and his father when we was sixteen. Merton fathered a child while at Cambridge University in 1933 who later died with his mother in the London Blitz of 1940. Meanwhile Merton's guardian friend of his father make arrangements for Merton to come to New York and became a student at Columbia University.

Fr Barron goes into many details about how Merton read a book that lead to his desire to become a Catholic, to commune personally with the God he had discovered intellectually, and the conversation with a friend that said to Merton "there is only one real sadness in life: not to be a saint" (Page 230). After exploring the possibility of becoming a priest and being rejected, Merton took a teaching position at St. Bonaventure teaching English in upper state New York. After a visit to Trappist Abbey in Gethsemani, Kentucky, Merton decided that was the life for him and entered the monastery on December 10, 1941. Fr.

Barron returns to Merton later, but turns his attention to John of the Cross and Contemplative Prayer.

What about Thomas Merton fascinates you? Would you ever consider becoming a monk? Why or why not? Recall Dorothy Day (Page 59) or Mother Theresa? Are you more of a person who wants to" do" something for people?

JOHN OF THE CROSS AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Fr. Barron spins a wonderful tale about John the Cross, who was born in 1542 and became a Carmelite friar in 1563. We need to put him into the context of what was going on in the Catholic Church. The 1500's were the century of the Protestant Reformation. So, it should not surprise us that John like Teresa of Avila, who Fr. Baron will speak about next, were all about reforming the Carmelite order. And it should also not surprise us that some of the Carmelites didn't want any such reforms. In December 1577 a group of his Carmelite brothers arrested him and effectively imprisoned him in a small room in Toledo. John used the time by composing poetry and eventually escaped.

A few quotes might be fitting here to summarize John's teaching: "John the Cross uses his image of the infinitely deep caverns to diagnose the fundamental spiritual disorder that we all share, namely trying to fill those caverns with the petty goods of the finite world: pleasure, sex, power, and prestige. As we have seen in episode or chapter 2, this drive leads, inexorably, to addiction and hence to deeper dissatisfaction" (Page 235).

Fr Barron continues later on that page: "If the soul is to order itself to God, it must rid itself of attachments to anything creaturely. That is, is must overcome its tendency to turn something less than God into God, and it must accordingly purge and let go of idols."

Fr. Barron explains for John the purgative process unfolds in two steps: "the dark night of the senses" and "the dark night of the soul." During the "dark night of the senses" a person detaches himself from every sensual good or pleasure that has taken central position in his life. Once this "dark night of the senses" is complete, the seeker enters into "the dark night of the soul" and learns to detach himself from those more rarified substitutes for God, which are the concepts, ideas, and images of the mind (Page 236).

Fr Barron continues, but in all honesty he leaves me somewhere in the "dark." I am not sure if it is because I can't understand what he says, or is it because I prefer not to understand.

And so, what did you get from Fr. Barron's discussion about the teaching of John of the Cross. Does it make sense to you? How will it change you and how you look at life?

TERESA OF AVILA AND THE PRAYER OF THE CENTER

Fr. Barron moves next to Teresa of Avila, who was a reformer like John the Cross, a few decades earlier. She enjoyed a fairly pampered childhood and came from the nobility. Her early years in the Carmelite monastery at Avila were of "unheroic spiritual life." When Teresa begins to enter her forties her spirituality became "more intense and serious" and she began to receive a series of mystical visitations (page 239).

Fr. Barron cautions us not to make too much of Teresa's encounters, but at the same time not to make too little of them (Page 240). He moves us to consider her teaching by looking at her most famous work. Let use a quote from Fr. Barron directly: "Teresa of Avila discovered, at the very depth of her soul, Christ dwelling in her, and this divine presence, she said, was like an interior castle. Consider what this image would have conveyed to a sixteenth century Spaniard. A castle was a place of safety and power, a shelter from the storm. To be grounded in Christ, Teresa realized, was to be rooted in the very power that is here and now creating the cosmos, in the God who is beyond the vagaries of space and time (Page 241).

What does this view about God mean to you? Does it make sense? Does Teresa echo Paul's "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me?

PRAYER OF PETITION

Fr. Barron begins this section with these words: "when most people hear the word "prayer" they don't think immediately of such a thing; (that is contemplative prayer, that rare and rarefied encounter with God beyond speech and words, and concepts) they probably thinking of asking God for something (Page 243). The *Our Father* is nothing but a series of petitions!

But Fr. Barron says that prayer of petition has its own set of dilemmas. " If God cannot change, what is the point of asking him for anything? And if God knows all, what is the point of asking him what you need? Keep in mind that the same Jesus who told us to ask and ask again also informed us that God "knows what we need before we ask." Fr Barron suggests that to shed light on this problem to look at the metaphor of God as a parent. God is like a good parent who delights in hearing our requests – and like a good parent, he does not always respond the way we would like him to.

Saint Augustine offers another perspective on our dilemma. God wants us to ask, seek, and petition persistently not in order that he might be changed but we might be changed.

Aquinas provides what Fr Barron takes to be the richest theological framework for petitionary prayers when he speaks of God praying through us. God can arrange his providential governance of the universe in such a way that what he wants to give will be coordinated with our asking for it. Fr. Barron also reminds us that God is not in competition with us. Since God is not a supreme being but the very ground of being, God's "invasion" enhances us, makes us more abundantly free (Page 246).

Do you have any problem with prayer of petition? If so, which of the above arguments is most convincing to you?

BACK TO MERTON
They are Shining Like the Sun

Fr. Barron completes his look at Thomas Merton by showing us the place where Merton spent the last years of his life. Once again, Fr. Barron speaks about contemplative prayer as "finding that place in you where you are here and now being converted by God" (Page 248).

Fr Barron continues: "To pray contemplatively is to find the place at the very bottom of one's being – the *point vierge* (the virginal point), the interior castle, the inner wine cellar – where God's life and love are sustaining you in existence. Once that center is found, everything else changes. When we find that place, we necessarily find that which connects us to everyone else and everything else in the cosmos" (Page 248).

Do you find these ideas of contemplative prayer strange? How can one practice contemplative prayer and live in the world? Is there any time or place we make this kind of connection with God? What about Sunday Mass? What about Holy Communion? How can we escape from the busyness of our lives for some time alone with God?