



## Monthly Newsletter

### When you think of the word "home" what place comes to mind, and why?

by Wilma Vanderzwaag



For Christmas, my daughter and son-in-law gave me, "My Story". "My Story" documents your history through story telling. Each week, via email, you receive a question to answer and at the end of the year all the answers are compiled into a book. This past week the question was, when you think of the word "home" what place comes to mind, and why? Of course, my first thoughts were the house I grew up in as a child and the houses that Rob and I have lived in. But the longer I thought about this question, it became clear that there was more to this question. It is not just the houses I have lived in that make a home. My church is "home" for me too. At Star of the Sea, I feel a sense of belonging and home. I have been blessed that this parish is the only parish I have ever belonged to. I grew up in this parish and received my sacraments here. The parish has shared in all my significant life moments, both joyous and sad. There have been times when differences created tensions for me in the parish, but leaving the parish was not an option for me. Being part of a family is messy sometimes.

I read an article in which it said, the Church was never meant to be a place we visit — it is a family we belong to. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read: ***"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers."*** (Acts 2:42) The word devoted was used in this passage, not visiting or

drifting. They belonged and were committed. From the very beginning, Catholics lived their faith in community. I love this observation, *"Faith grows best in stable soil, not in constant movement"*.

Attending Mass on Sunday by going from parish to parish is not fostering a sense of belonging. We each need to be rooted in a parish. The parish needs your presence, your gifts, your prayers and your support. We in turn need the parish's care, guidance and spiritual family. Last year during the Jubilee Year of Hope, we heard many times that Christian life is not a solo journey — it is a shared pilgrimage.

A "home" parish is where faith becomes personal, where your children are baptized and formed, where your marriage is supported, where you are prayed for when sick and where your funeral Mass will be celebrated. It is to belong to a community, share responsibility and live in communion. Commitment to a parish brings blessings. You form lasting friendships and grow spiritually. If you constantly move from parish to parish, you deprive yourself of that. Star of the Sea should be a spiritual "home" for each of us not a spiritual hotel. Hotels serve guests. Homes form families.



## Saint Casimir – Proclaimer of Peace

(1458 – 1484)

**Feast Day: March 4**

Patron Saint of: Poland, Lithuania

*By Angela Van Kralingen*

Casimir (Kazimierz in Polish) was born a prince, the third child and second son of King Casimir IV of Poland and his wife Elizabeth of Austria. Casimir's older brother, Vladislaus II, would become king of Bohemia in 1471, leaving Casimir the heir to the Polish throne. The king was also the Grand Duke of Lithuania.

Most of us born into a royal family would likely take advantage of all that a privileged life has to offer but not Casimir. Instead, he lived a life of piety, devoted to our Blessed Mother, and shunned riches. He would sleep on the floor and wore a hairshirt under his vestments as a form of penance. His tutor, Father Dlugosz, instilled in Casimir a great love for God.

At the age of thirteen, statesmen in Hungary sought to de-throne their current king and so asked Casimir's father to send his son to take over by force. Casimir ruled for two years but abandoned the throne when he realized that the war being waged by Poland against Hungary was a losing battle. He then returned to Poland on the advice of his officers. He vowed never to engage in war again, thus earning the name, the Peace-Maker.

His father was not too happy with Casimir's



decision and as punishment, he imprisoned the fifteen-year-old for three months. However, this did not have the effect hoped for as Casimir grew stronger in his commitment to God. He even refused a marriage alliance arranged by his father, choosing to remain celibate.

When Casimir was twenty, his father left for five years to see to matters in Lithuania and put Casimir in charge of Poland. He proved to be a thoughtful ruler, known for fairness and charity, especially with the poor.

Casimir died on March 4, 1484, from a lung disease, most likely tuberculosis, at the age of 25 while visiting his father, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He was canonized in 1522 by Pope Adrian VI and is buried in the Chapel of Saint Casimir in Vilnius Cathedral, Lithuania.

*Saint Casimir, from an early age you loved God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Please pray for us that we remain steadfast in faith and overcome worldly temptations.*

*Help us to remember that our true*

*King is Jesus Christ and to always serve Him with joy and love. Amen*



### On Friday, February 13:

A free screening of this movie took place on Friday, February 13 in the church hall. A discussion followed led by Clark Pillar with many sharing their thoughts.

“**Triumph of the Heart**” tells the story of St. Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Conventual Franciscan Friar, who took the place of another prisoner in a concentration camp during World War II.

Many thanks to Father Richard and the Star of the Sea Pastoral Council, especially Clark, for obtaining a copy of the film and for bringing this film to our parish.

**The Pope's Prayer**  
**Intention for March**

**For disarmament and peace:**

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

To read more of the Pope's Prayer Intentions, visit

<https://www.popesprayer.va/>



**PRAYER for MARCH**

Lord of all creation, make us instruments of your peace.

Let us learn the lessons of the past, and put an end to nuclear weapons.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love.

May our love for each other and for all of your creation leave no place for making or owning weapons of mass destruction.

Where there is injury, let us be bearers of your healing and pardon.

May we create paths to dialogue, understanding and reconciliation.

Where there is doubt, let us foster faith in you.

May we let the weapons fall from our hands and know that you are God.

Where there is despair, let us hold up hope.

May our lives reflect your love in the face of violence, knowing that love is stronger than death.

Where there is darkness, let us be bearers of your light.

May our choices show that peace is possible.

Where there is sadness, let us bring the joy of the Gospel.

Amen.



We welcome the newest members of our parish family who were baptized in February:

**Cecilia Sgambato**

**Olivia Allard**

**Prayer for Child's Baptism:**

Heavenly Father, surround these children with Your love and protection.

Fill Your little ones with the Holy Spirit and receive them into the family of Your church, that they may walk with us in the way of Christ, and grow in the knowledge of

Your love.

Amen.



Star of the Sea Church has a page on **Facebook**  
Search for:

**Star of the Sea Catholic Church  
- Port Dalhousie**

**Our newsletter is also available online!**

For current or past issues, go to the church's website:

<https://www.staroftheseachurch.ca>



How often, as we enter a Church, do our eyes single out the plaques or picture placed uniformly around the outer walls of all Churches? Unlike the Main Altar or the statue of our favourite Saint, which immediately draw our attention, our eyes usually skim over these items, if in fact we notice them at all. These items, the Stations of the Cross, one of the longest practiced Catholic devotions, are found in Churches all over the world. Early Christians would travel to the actual location of the events in Jesus' passion to walk the Via Dolorosa (the Way of the Cross). Still today if you travel to Jerusalem, you can walk the Via Dolorosa and stop to pray at the significant locations in Jesus' journey to Calvary.



However, in the fifth century, when the Ottoman Turks outlawed visits to the Holy Land, the Church began to replicate the holy places for those Christians who were unable to walk the actual Via Dolorosa. To enable continuation of this devotion, Pope Innocent XI permitted all Churches to erect the Stations of the Cross. In 1726 Pope Benedict XIII extended indulgences to all who participated in this devotion and in 1731, Pope Clement established the number of Stations at 14 although some areas continued to have as many as 600. During the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries the Franciscans began to build outdoor shrines in Europe to duplicate their counterparts in the Holy Land. The number varied between seven and thirty-seven and they were usually placed in small buildings along an approach to a Church. In similar fashion, the Stations of the Cross mark the roadway today in Noord Aruba, on the road to the Alta Vista Chapel, a replica of a chapel built by Domingo Silvestre a Venezuelan missionary in 1751.

Stations of the Cross at Star of the Sea



The Stations of the Cross is one of the simplest, yet most powerful ways to prayerfully walk alongside Jesus and encounter him like nothing before. Although traditionally prayed during Lent this devotion may be celebrated individually or with a group at any time of the year. You pray as you walk from station to station meditating on the message of each station. At St. Anne's Church in Aruba, where I attend while on vacation, the Stations of the Cross are prayed by the congregation before every Mass all year long. To help you pray the Stations of the Cross there are several booklets available, as well as a section in the Sunday Missal beginning on Page 574. The Stations of the Cross are still very important in Catholic worship. Make them a part of your private devotion not only during Lent but throughout the year.

***"We adore You O Christ and we praise You.  
Because by Your holy cross You have redeemed the world."***

- ◆ ***Stations of the Cross devotion will be available every Friday during Lent at 4:15 p.m. followed by Mass at 5 p.m.***

## Deacon's Franciscan Bench

In January 2026, all branches of the Franciscan family came together in Assisi to celebrate the beginning of a year long celebration of the **800th anniversary of His death**. The assembly celebrated six “Stages in St. Francis' Legacy”: **Mercy, Prayer, Fraternity, Work, Peace, Blessing**; and provided resources and reflections on each of the six stages.

These six are **stages** - not six separate elements. They're linked; they occur in sequence. Prayer **follows from** and flows from **practising** the Mercy of Jesus. We do not truly pray until we have experienced Jesus by extending His mercy to others.



### #2 PRAYER

#### From the Testament of St Francis

*"And the Lord gave me such faith in the churches, that I simply **prayed** and said: We adore You Lord Jesus Christ, **here and in all the churches throughout the world** and we bless You, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world."*

This **prayer** that we customarily say **during Lent** at each station of the Way of The Cross was **slightly longer** when St. Francis first composed it - probably around 1205 - in the ruined chapel of San Damiano. But it always contained the two elements that are familiar to us.

1. "*We **ADORE** You, Lord Jesus Christ and we **BLESS** You*" ... This Lent, may our prayers more often be **adoration and praise** - that petitions for favours we seek.

2. "*Because **BY YOUR HOLY CROSS**, You have **REDEEMED THE WORLD***." Francis' prayer is focused on the Holy Cross. When we gaze upon Christ Crucified - we encounter the ultimate sign of His love - and we are called to love as He loves, and to sacrifice as He sacrifices... and to praise Him and adore Him. Redemption through the Cross is a creed: We confess that 1. He **has** redeemed the world, 2. **by** His Holy Cross, and 3. that His Cross is **holy** - not horrible - because by it He has redeemed the world.

The additional words in the original prayer are - "*here and in all the churches throughout the world*."

*"... here and in all the churches throughout the world."*

*"Saint Francis ... places his spiritual awakening [always in the context of the Universal Church...] For him, [all local instances of the Church] ... are not simple buildings, but sacramental signs in which he can pray and worship Christ, the Crucified One, who "with His Holy Cross has redeemed the world." ... By adding, "here and in all Your churches throughout the world," Saint Francis extends his adoration from one specific location to the entire Church throughout the world..."* Fr. Carlos Alberto Trovarelli, OFM Conv

Prayer is never just **your / my** prayer. It is **our** prayer in unity with the Church everywhere: in every Basilica, Cathedral, and humble obscure chapel, in every land, and at every hour. Our Lenten prayer is never just private and personal. In "**We** adore You and praise You..." **WE** unites us - not only with those present with us - but with the whole Church.

pax et bonum - deacon maurice o.f.s

**"So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the Church."**

Acts 12:5



# Star of the Sea Church

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper—Tuesday, February 17

Knights of Columbus cooking

CWL serving



Parishioners of all ages enjoying dinner.





Photos courtesy of Linda Dirks & Rob Vanderzwaag



## CWL Star of the Sea News

(Report and photos courtesy of Jayne Evans, CWL President)

### **GENERAL MEETING February 3, 2026**

As this was the Feast of St. Blaise, Father Richard kindly offered to bless the throats of all the ladies present at this meeting.



Donation: St Ann Resources  
Principal: Brian Palujanskas



Donation:  
St Teresa  
of Calcutta  
Breakfast  
Club

Principal:  
Greg  
Morawek

## **CWL SCHOOL DONATIONS**

Jayne Evans dropped off donation cheques to our Parish schools on February 18<sup>th</sup>. All of the principals were grateful for the cheque and the visit :)

Donation: Saint Francis Breakfast Club  
Principal: Fraser Hebert





## Sister M. Stella and her Ten Companions Beatified by Pope John Paul II – March 5, 2000

In July 1943, the Nazis had arrested all the husbands, fathers and sons in the town of

Nowogrodek in Poland. They were told by the soldiers they were all sentenced to death by firing squad. The women from the town went to the convent asking the sisters to pray for their men. Everyone in the town had already witnessed the removal and deaths of their Jewish neighbours. Sister Maria Stella and the other Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth met and prayed. The following morning Sister Maria Stella walked to the parish priest and advised that the sisters wanted to take their place in exchange for the sparing the men. The execution of the men was cancelled with no reason given, but the men were all loaded onto trains to labour camps in Germany instead. A few were released outright. Two weeks later, the Gestapo came for the nuns. There were no charges and no trial, just to report to headquarters that evening. Before Sister Maria Stella left, she instructed Sister Malgorzata to stay behind at the convent. She was chosen to stay behind to tend the church. Then the eleven sisters walked up the streets in their habits and spent the night in a basement jail cell. In their cell they prayed the rosary. At dawn on August 1, 1943, they were loaded into a covered truck. They were driven approximately five kilometres outside of town to a forested area where a large grave had

already been dug. Here they knelt, said goodbye to each other then, one by one, they were shot.

The war dragged on for two more years. Sister Malgorzata stayed in the empty convent. The parish priest they had tried to save survived and was part of the underground resistance. In 1945, when the war ended, the people in the town learned something miraculous. All 120 men that were taken to labour camps had survived. They were all reunited with their families thanks to the courage and sacrifice of those 11 nuns.

On March 5, 2000, Pope John Paul II declared them martyrs. At the ceremony, he spoke words from the Gospel of John: "No one has greater love than this, that one lays down his life for his friends." John 15:13

Their relics rest in the same church where they used to kneel and pray in the town. The church sits on a hill, and local people used to say the sisters looked like birds when they walked up to pray, their habits flowing in the wind like wings.

These sisters had no guarantee that their sacrifice would work and save the men in the town. They just believed that love offered freely, even unto death, had power to save lives.

**"WE, THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH, ARE CALLED TO EXTEND THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S LOVE AMONG OURSELVES AND OTHERS BY LIVING THE SPIRIT OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH WHOSE LIVES WERE CENTERED IN THE LOVE OF GOD AND ONE ANOTHER. WE WITNESS TO THIS LOVE THROUGH DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE CHURCH, ESPECIALLY IN MINISTRY TO THE FAMILY."**

**CHARISM STATEMENT,  
COVENANT OF LOVE**

*by Wilma Vanderzwaag*

### Future Event:



### Star of the Sea Photo Directory

Father Richard has invited our CWL Council to spearhead the Parish Photo Directory Project for 2026.

It has been 9 years since the last Parish Photo Directory.

**Each Photographed Family Receives a FREE DIRECTORY.**

**Families may choose to purchase their portraits.**

### Our dates for the photo sittings are:

<b>Tuesday, April 28</b>	<b>1:30 PM-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday, April 29</b>	<b>1:30 PM-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Thursday, April 30</b>	<b>1:30 PM-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Friday, May 1</b>	<b>1:30 PM-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Saturday, May 2</b>	<b>9:30 AM-4:00 PM</b>

### 2nd week

<b>Thursday, May 28</b>	<b>1:30-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Friday, May 29</b>	<b>1:30-8:30 PM</b>
<b>Saturday, May 30</b>	<b>9:30 AM- 4:00 PM</b>

- ◆ Information regarding where and when to sign up will be included in a future bulletin.

*Let's get Together and* **Build Community!**

**All Photography & Viewing Is Done In One Convenient Appointment At Our Church**