



Monthly Newsletter

Let's Get Walking!

by Wilma Vanderzwaag

May is the month that everyone starts thinking about being outdoors more. We live in an area that has so many wonderful trails and places to enjoy a walk outdoors. Walking outdoors can be a time of enjoying all that nature offers us. Walking is great for your mental health and is good exercise. It is a time to be with your thoughts and perhaps problem solve. Take the time to walk without your phone or devices, they stop you from hearing the birds or paying attention to the surroundings. Walking can be an opportunity for prayer and thanking God for the beauty that surrounds us. When you are walking be



sure to acknowledge the neighbours you meet along the way. Your "hello" may be just what they need to smile. There is nothing better than walking and watching the rowers on the water training for upcoming regattas or walking on the pier, watching the waves and marvelling at how vast Lake Ontario is. How blessed are we? The following story also has a message on the power of a walk. This is what happened when the prisoners at a concentration camp were liberated.

When the gates finally swung open and the world outside the camps became visible once more, the flood of liberation wasn't a sudden flood rush of joy - it was a quiet, fragile morning. After years of bodies being treated as machinery, broken by hunger and exhaustion, the simple act of standing felt like a monumental struggle.

In the days following liberation, medical teams encouraged survivors to try short, gentle walks to regain their strength. To an outsider, it might have looked like a simple medical exercise, but to those who had lived through the unthinkable,

those few unsteady meters were a revolution. For the first time in an eternity, movement was not a response to a barked command or a threat of violence; it was a choice.

These first walks were the beginning of a profound transformation. For years, walking had been a tool of cruelty—forced marches, endless labor, and the soul-crushing routine of roll calls. But as survivors leaned on makeshift canes or on the shoulders of their brothers and sisters, that same movement became something sacred. Each step was a quiet declaration that they were still here, that their bodies belonged to them again, and that the space around them was no longer a cage. There were no fear-filled destinations waiting at the end of the path; there was only the open air and the return of agency.

Freedom, in its purest and most intimate form, was practiced in these quiet moments of persistence. It wasn't found in a grand speech or a signed document, but in the courage it took to gathering strength and move forward without permission. Every unsteady stride was a brick in the foundation of a new life, a way of learning how to inhabit the world again as a person rather than a number.

Remember that healing is a journey of a thousand miles that begins with a single, trembling step—and that even when we are at our weakest, the act of moving forward is the greatest victory of all.

Hope to see you walking!



Rowing season has begun. There will be more activity in Port Dalhousie. Please drive carefully as they jog and run to Henley Island.

Saint Athanasius – Bishop and Doctor of the Church

c.296 – 373

Feast Day: May 2

Patron Saint of: Theologians, Scholars and Defenders of the Faith

Did Alexander, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt (he would later be canonized; his feast day is May 29) know that among the group of children he saw playing on the beach would be a future saint?

On that day, the Christian children decided that they would baptize their pagan friends and chose Athanasius to be bishop and perform the baptism. Athanasius had been born into a pious Christian family who practiced their faith and were able to give him a good secular education. He did so using the precise wording that he had heard at church. Upon witnessing this, the Patriarch then requested a meeting with the children and their parents to discuss this “baptism”. After talking at length to them, he determined that the baptisms were valid and Patriarch Alexander completed this sacrament by sealing each child with the oil of chrism. After this, the Patriarch took charge of the spiritual education of Athanasius and when he was older, Alexander ordained Athanasius as deacon.

During this time period there was a priest in Alexandria named Arius, who was teaching that Jesus was created by God and thus had a beginning. This heresy became known as Arianism, the belief that Jesus is not co-eternal or co-equal with God the Father. Sadly, Arius had many followers in the church.

When Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325, Patriarch Alexander was accompanied by Deacon Athanasius. It was at this council that Athanasius gave a speech against the heresy of Arianism, arguing that if Christ is not God, then He cannot truly redeem humanity. This speech was met with approval by the Orthodox Fathers but not by the Arians. He would later be called the Father of Orthodoxy and for championing the Nicene Creed which affirms that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine.



Upon the death of Patriarch Alexander, Athanasius was unanimously chosen as his successor and at the young age of 28, he was consecrated as Bishop of Alexandria. He guided the church for 47 years, continuing to fight against Arianism.

His outspoken criticism of Arianism made him the enemy of followers of this movement. Over the course of his life, Athanasius was banished from Alexandria 5 times and spent close to 20 years in exile for defending the divinity of Christ. Each new emperor would allow him to return only to banish him again under false allegations from his enemies, many of whom were Arian bishops.

Athanasius was a prolific writer, especially when in exile, mostly writing against Arianism and it was these writings that earned him the title of Doctor of the Church. These and many others have been preserved including commentaries on Holy Scripture as well as a biography of Saint Anthony the Great of Egypt (feast day: January 17), a friend of Athanasius.

After the death of Emperor Julian in 363, Athanasius returned to guide the church in Alexandria until his own death in 373. The body of Saint Athanasius was first transferred to Constantinople and then to Venice where his relics are primarily housed in the Church of San Zaccaria. However, in 1973, Pope Paul VI had a portion of the relics brought back to Cairo, Egypt and is resting there in St. Mark's Cathedral.

Quotes from Saint Athanasius:

If the world is against the truth, then I am against the world.

You cannot put straight in others what is warped in yourself.

By Angela Van Kralingen

God said to Moses, “I AM who I AM.” And He said, “Say this to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Exodus 3:14

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

John 8:58

The Pope's Prayer
Intention for May

That everyone might have food:

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

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

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



*Good and gracious God,
We thank You today for
the gift of Motherhood,
brought to perfection in
our Holy Mother, Mary.*

*We ask You to bless all
mothers, who show Your
face to the world through their love.*

*We ask You to comfort those who bear the pain of
losing a child and those for whom motherhood is a
broken dream.*

*Bless with Your peace those who mourn the loss of
their mothers or suffer wounds from a mother's
imperfections.*

*Bless all the women who share a mother's love
with those who are not their children.*

*Give us a spirit of gratitude for those who have
been mothers to us and help us, the children of
their bodies and hearts, return the love they have
so graciously given.*

Amen.

PRAYER for MAY

Lord God, Provider of all our needs...

Help us to be responsible stewards of Your bounty.

Just as You fed the multitude and instructed the disciples to gather the leftovers, remind us to never discard food recklessly.

We come before You, O God, conscious of our faults and failures, but full of hope to share food with all members in this global family.

Through Your wisdom, inspire leaders of government and of business, as well as all the world's citizens, to find just and charitable solutions to end hunger by assuring that all people enjoy the right to food.

In Your Holy Name we pray.

Amen.



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

Samuel Jordan Romanelli
Reggie Farlow
Sebastian Beck

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.

In Memoriam

We remember the recently departed faithful of our parish:

Lawrence Redman
Betty Smith
Maureen Soni



Let Us Pray:

God our Father, in company with Christ, may our departed loved ones rejoice in Your kingdom, where all our tears are wiped away. Unite us again in one family, to sing Your praise forever and ever. Amen

*Views
from the
Pews*



*Fridays in Lent
-Weekly Stations
of the Cross*

*Holy Thursday -
Mass of the Lord's
Supper and washing
of the feet.*



Good Friday



Easter Vigil





At the Easter Vigil Mass on Saturday, April 4, 2026, RCIA candidate, Radley Gull, completed her journey by receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

We are blessed to have her join the Catholic Church and may God continue to bless the journey of our neophyte.



90 Years Young!

Esther Rykovich, a faithful parishioner of Star of the Sea, celebrated her 90th birthday on March 24th. After morning Mass, we gathered in the church hall where Fr Richard conferred a blessing on Esther. A delicious birthday cake and fellowship was then enjoyed by all.



Esther, may God continue to bless you with abundant peace, joy, and health!

Deacon's Franciscan Bench

#4 **"WORK** *faithfully and devotedly, BUT in such a way that ... you do not extinguish your spirit of holy prayer and devotion"*

From the Testament of St Francis (Test 20) *And I worked with my hands and I want to work; and I firmly want all the other brothers to work at a job that is befitting honesty.*

In January 2026, all branches of the Franciscan family gathered to begin the year long celebration of the **800th anniversary of His death**. They identified six Stages in St. Francis' Legacy: **Mercy, Prayer, Fraternity, Work, Peace, and Blessing**.

Of the six, **WORK** is the most surprising. Francis was actually more frequently a **preacher** than a labourer. And, the complexity of including 'work' as a foundation of the Franciscan legacy is that work would have to be disconnected from money. The first approved rule of the Franciscan Friars included, "*I strictly forbid the brothers to receive money in any form either directly or through an intermediary. [When they] work... this must be done ... in such a way that they do not receive money.*" Rule of 1223 IV

This separation between the intrinsic value of work and the financial reward for work is particularly significant to Secular Franciscans - who live and work in the world. Tibor Kauser, OFS, spoke about the intrinsic values of work - which are more important than the remuneration received for the working.

Intervention of Tibor Kauser, OFS, Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order.

Work is a gift, working is a grace... All those who have it "should consider work as a participation in creation, redemption, and a service of the human community." OFS Rule 16 *Only those who have suffered from its absence can truly appreciate work. ... we must do everything that helps every person have a job, because "men and women are nourished by work: through work they are "anointed with dignity."* Pope Francis, May 27, 2017 **Helping men and women to have dignified work** is ... the duty of all:... "*Through work, people can: provide for their... families, communicate with others, render a service to others, practice true charity, and actively collaborate in the completion of divine creation.*" Gaudium et Spes 67 *All of us who work ... are God's collaborators in creation. What a grace it is to work together with God! ...*

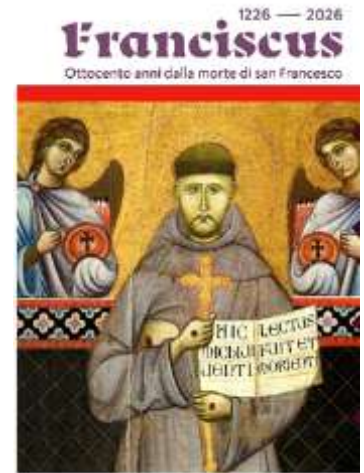
For those who follow Francis in the secular world, money earned from work provides for family, and makes almsgiving possible. Yet the value of their work must be something other than monetary gain. The Secular Franciscan Rule of life, #11, uses the term "**detachment**" to describe this separation: "*...Let them seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs... striving to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power.*"

The approved rule of the first friars called for a **prioritization** of spiritual value over work of any kind - even work for the purest of motives. Work and all other actions should serve prayer and devotion. "*Let those friars, to whom the Lord gives the grace to work, work faithfully and devotedly, in such a way that ... they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion, which all other temporal things should serve zealously.*" Regula Bullata, V

pax et bonum - deacon maurice o.f.s

"Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ."

Colossians 3:23-24





April 26 — Feast Day of Our Lady of Good Counsel
Patroness of the Catholic Womens League of Canada
Mass & Reception

9 am Mass



11 am Mass



Image of Our
Lady of Good
Counsel

Goodies Galore after 11 am Mass



Enjoying coffee time after 9 am Mass

Kitchen helpers



Buy Canadian. Buy Local.

By Pat Waters

Buy Local programs in Canada did not have a single start date as they have existed in various forms for decades across provinces and sectors. However, there was a significant push towards this dynamic which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and again after new federal initiatives starting in 2025. The new Buy Canadian Policy became effective in December 2025 to protect and prioritize Canadian workers and industries and strengthen Canada’s domestic policy.



Let’s examine the Pope’s intention for the month of May-***That everyone might have food-*** in the light of these two directives.

For many, here in the Niagara Region, access to fresh fruit and vegetables, from Spring to Fall, is as easy as taking a short drive on one of the county roads just outside the urban areas. There you will find large and small stands selling farm fresh produce. What could be better! How lucky are we to have this access to buy local!

For others, although they would like to use this method to buy local, they may not have the time or the means to drive and buy. For them the chance to get involved in the actual growing is also a great drawing card. The **Community Garden Program**, instituted and operated by the Region, municipalities and various organizations, empowers those participating to learn how to tend a garden that will then give them the opportunity to provide food security and healthy foods for their families. The community gardens also provide thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables to our local food bank shelves. For information on the location and how to become a volunteer or a gardener at a community garden check the Community Garden websites. If you are not actually interested in growing anything perhaps you would consider providing your time as a volunteer to teach gardening methods to the gardening neophytes. Also consider donating your unused tools or other gardening accessories to your local community garden.



NIAGARA
COMMUNITY
GARDEN
NETWORK

<https://niagaracommunitygardens.ca/>

Since the pandemic the interest in gardening has intensified with more and more residents finding a spot to grow some vegetables or herbs on their property. It might be a small patch in a corner of the yard or tomato plants in among the flowers, or pots on the balcony. Just watching things grow is a magical experience for children and adults alike.

Let us all be an attentive to the Pope’s May intention:

Let us pray that everyone from large producers to small consumers be committed to avoid wasting food and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.



HEARTS on FIRE
CATHOLIC CONFERENCE FOR BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS
SAT MAY 9 | 8:30AM - 3:15PM
4106 Mountain St, Beamsville, ON

ST. HELEN CATHOLIC CHURCH **CHANGED VENUE!!**

FEATURING: **CHRIS BRAY!** (with other Dynamic Clergy and Ministry Leaders)
Inspirational Catholic speaker and award winning Christian musician with numerous #1 hit songs on Christian radio in Canada!

- Eucharistic Adoration
- Praise & Worship Music
- Exciting Youth Program
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Catholic Vendor Market
- Holy Mass
- Light lunch included!

Tickets on Eventbrite [click here](#)

Dear Pastor Letters From Children:



Dear Pastor,
I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished.

Star of the Sea
church

June 29 – July 3, 2026

8:45am – 3:30pm



FAITH



MUSIC

A FULL DAY of

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



CRAFTS



GAMES

I can't wait for Star of The Sea Vacation Bible School

Reserve my Spot by May 22, 2026! Only 45 places

Please print NEATLY!

Name _____

Birthdate _____

School _____

School Grade completed: _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Email: _____

Please include \$120 fee/child with this form

Cash or Cheques payable to Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church

T shirt size: _____

Youth sizes:	XS/TP	S/P	M/M	L/G	XL/TG
W	15.5"	17"	18"	19"	20"
L	19.5"	21.5"	23"	25"	26.5"

Call (905) 934-1170 to reserve your spot!

A detailed Itinerary and Information/Permission Form will be emailed upon registration, once registration has been processed.

Star of the Sea Vacation Bible School 2026

Welcome to the Wilderness Adventure Through the Sacraments, where we embark on a five-day journey with **John the Baptist**, as we uncover the 7 sacraments and the wonders of our Faith! **Bring your Kingdom Trailblazers Pass to begin the quest!**

Our Camp is loaded with friendship, learning and adventure! Our team has planned a fun-filled experience for children in Grades 1 through 8. Every morning, we will explore our Faith with lessons, games, songs, arts and crafts, and drama, all guided by the Saints! We will embark on an exciting five-day journey into the Wilderness with John the Baptist to develop a better understanding of the seven sacraments that deepen our love for Jesus and our Faith. The Wilderness Adventure through the Sacraments VBS program is specially designed to help kids to discover amazing things about Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. Campers will have fun learning and celebrating the importance of having courage, gratitude, perseverance, self-control and hope! Come and join us!

VBS Afternoon activities will include:

Monday	Baptism <i>Courage</i>	Drama and video making 
Tuesday	Eucharist <i>Gratitude</i>	 Bowling at PlaMor and then a movie! 
Wednesday	Confirmation <i>Perseverance</i>	 Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Shrine and BBQ!
Thursday	Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick <i>Self-Control</i>	 We are off to Balls Falls for Camp Wilderness!
Friday	Matrimony and Holy Orders <i>Hope</i>	Wilderness Party on the lawn!

- * Daily "theme" meal provided
- * Fee includes *all* events
- * VBS Star of the Sea T shirt included!

All For \$120

All adult staff and Counselors are Star of the Sea members, and SOLI Sisters, with police checks.
Participating children are to bring their own lunch with the exception of Wednesday and Friday. Afternoon snack is provided.
Sunscreen, hats and weather-appropriate clothing required daily.



Day 1

*St. John The Baptist



Day 2

*St. Martin de Porres



Day 3

*St. Kateri Tekakwitha



Day 4

*St. Padre Pio



Day 5

*St. Gianna and St. John Vianney