

HOLY REDEEMER



GRACE NOTES

April 2024

Introduction...

Lent is over for another year, and while you are reviewing your scorecard from the past several weeks you might want to consider ways to improve your prayer, fasting and almsgiving efforts when Lent, 2025 rolls around. Take fasting. While most people focus on giving up things like coffee or dessert, here are a few other items you might want to consider giving up next Lent.



Give up your worries and anxieties. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live for today instead.

Give up television one evening a week. Instead, visit a friend that could use some cheering up.

Give up buying anything but essentials for yourself. The money you would spend on the luxuries could help someone meet their basic needs.

Give up judging by appearances and by the standard of the world. There is only one who has the right to judge.

Give up looking at other people's worst points. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults and it is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.

Give up speaking unkindly. Instead, let your speech be generous and understanding. It costs so little to say something kind and uplifting. Why not check that sharp tongue at the door?

Give up your hatred of anyone or anything.



And if you want to make sure you are in shape for Lent, 2025 it might not be a bad idea to start practicing a few “Give Ups” right now.

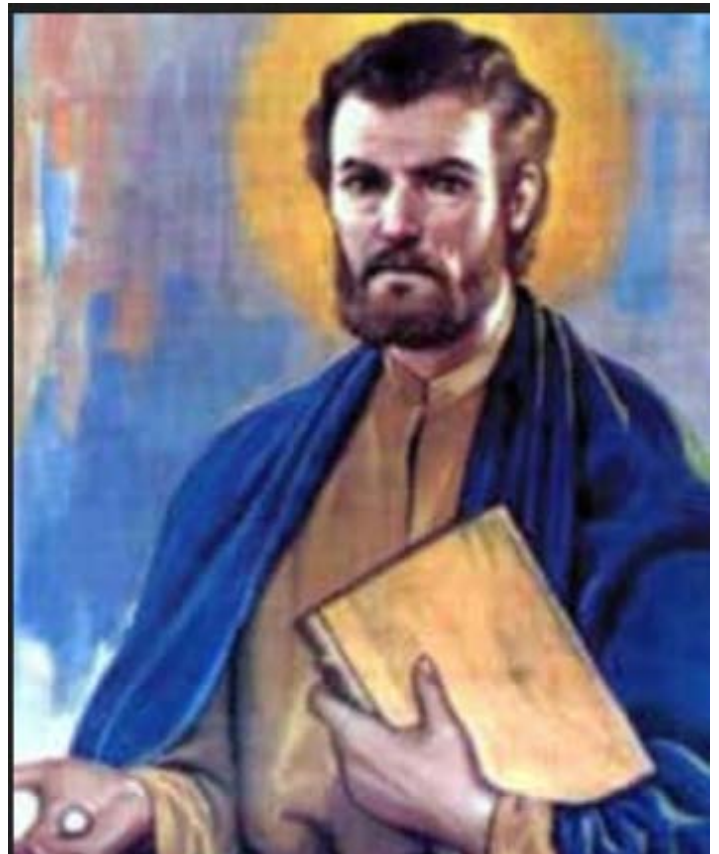
On the Shoulders of Giants – The Apostles

Isaac Newton said that all he had accomplished in life was due to “standing on the shoulders of the giants” who came before him. Each month we will remember one of the giants upon whose shoulders the parishioners of Holy Redeemer are perched.

For the past year Grace Notes has been focusing on the Apostles and individually illuminating each of their life stories. So far we’ve profiled the twelve original Apostles: Andrew, Simon Peter, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Lesser, Jude Thaddeus, Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot. This month we are focusing on the first of two Apostles who were added to the original twelve following the death of Jesus. We’ll start with Matthias.

Matthias was chosen by the other Apostles to replace Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus and committed suicide after Jesus was crucified. Matthias thus has the unique distinction of being the only Apostle who was not personally called by Jesus. He is only mentioned by name in Acts 1:23 and Acts 1:26, but from that point on, whenever the Twelve Apostles are referred to collectively, he is with them.

Matthias began following Jesus early in his ministry, from the day Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. He was not a member of Jesus’ inner circle, like the other members of the Twelve, but he did live with Jesus and the Apostles, witnessing Jesus’ miracles and teachings. Before the Apostles chose Matthias, Peter declared: “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.” (Acts 1:21–22)



The fact that Matthias was with Jesus from the beginning has led many biblical scholars to speculate that he was among the 72 disciples Jesus anointed to spread the gospel. “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go” (Luke 10:1). These believers were sent out to test the hospitality of the towns Jesus was heading for and to gauge their receptiveness to the gospel. They were given the authority to heal the sick and cast out demons (Luke 10:9, Luke 10:17), and they preached the gospel. All of this was of course prior Matthias’ elevation to an Apostle following Jesus’ death and Judas’ suicide.

In the beginning of Acts, Jesus ascends to heaven and tells his followers: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8).”



Peter realized there was something they should do while they waited. Judas’s suicide had reduced the number of Apostles from twelve to eleven, and the number twelve carried deep spiritual significance to the Israelites: it represented the twelve tribes of Israel. And since the Christian movement was meant to be the “true Israel,” Peter felt the Apostles needed to appoint a new twelfth member. “Brothers and sisters,” Peter said, “the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. He was one of our number and shared in our ministry (Acts 1:16-19).”

Some scholars have suggested that Peter acted prematurely, given that Paul was later called directly by Jesus and made an apostle, bringing the number to thirteen. In the end it does not really matter, because as an Apostle Matthias played a larger role in helping spread the gospel. In addition, Matthias’ elevation to Apostle had no impact on Paul’s ability to perform his ministry or to be considered an Apostle.

Where exactly Matthias spread the gospel is somewhat vague. Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos was a fourteenth century historian who built on the work of his predecessors and had access to important texts that no longer exist. He claimed Matthias preached in Judea, then Aethiopia (modern-day Georgia). A surviving copy of the “Acts of Andrew and Matthias” claims he went to an unnamed land of cannibals: “About that time all the apostles had come together to the same place, and shared among themselves the countries, casting lots, in order that each might go away into the part that had fallen to him. By lot, then, it fell to Matthias to set out to the country of the man-eaters.”

Other traditions suggest Matthias preached in Jerusalem.

Similar to Matthias’ ministry, the nature of his death varies. Some traditions claim he was stoned at the end of his ministry in “the country of the man-eaters.” Another says he was stoned by Jews in Jerusalem and then beheaded. Hippolytus of Rome records that he died in Jerusalem of old age.

And though he unquestionably performed excellent service to the early Church, and converted many along the way, Matthias will nevertheless forever be regarded as “the Back-up Apostle.”

Jesus And The Eucharist -- A Small Group Series For Eucharistic Revival



In February, over 80 parishioners gathered for a day of reflection and faith-sharing at Our Lady of Grace and to launch the concept of “small groups.” It was an amazing day resulting in over 50 parishioners signing up for small groups that will begin meeting in April for a series entitled “Jesus and the Eucharist.” Jesus and the Eucharist is a dynamic, 7-session study designed to help participants connect with their fellow parishioners as they fall deeper in love with our Eucharistic Lord.

The small faith-sharing groups will meet at Our Lady of Grace for about two hours a week on Saturdays immersing themselves in the beauty of our faith, hearing some of the most brilliant voices in Catholicism and exploring the mystery of the Eucharist anew as a part of the National Eucharistic Revival.

Come and join us. You can call the Parish Office at 508 945-0677 or email us at: parish@holyredeemerchatham.org providing your name, email address and telephone number. We will promptly contact you and fill you in on the details.

Movie Review - Cabrini

Plot Summary – “Cabrini” charts the rise of a poor audacious nun who became one of the great missionaries of the 19th Century. Through her willpower, courage, and business skill, she overcame sexism and violent anti-Italian bigotry in 19th century New York to build orphanages and hospitals for the poorest of the poor.

There is a terrific scene late in the powerful and old-fashioned epic “Cabrini,” which tells the story of the Italian Catholic missionary nun who not only founded a peerless orphanage in New York at the turn of the 20th century (and gave her name to Hudson Heights’ serene Cabrini Boulevard in Manhattan), but also resolutely built a worldwide missionary network in the decades that followed.



In the scene in question Francesca Cabrini, played with quiet command by a convincing Cristiana Dell’Anna, faces and at long last wins over the until-then villainous and sabotaging New York Mayor (played by John Lithgow), who finally agrees to support her mission. The two toast to their newfound understanding, with the Mayor dropping the most patriarchal observation imaginable onto the headstrong and stubborn go-getter Cabrini. “It’s too bad you’re not a man. You would’ve been an

excellent man,” he toasts. In response, Cabrini simply and correctively reminds him that a man could *never* do what she and her Sisters do.

How right she is in this impressive “Great Woman” biopic. In fact, the entire film refreshingly feels like a testament to those unique powers of femininity. It’s that fortitude that sets Cabrini in motion in 1889 and brings her over to New York with a group of nuns, all appointed by the Pope Leo XIII in a mission to support the city’s impoverished Italian immigrant communities. At that time, New York City was ruthlessly hostile towards the Italians, and the environment was also predictably antagonistic towards women. And helpless children were dying in a city that refused to care for its most vulnerable. So defying the odds (and ignoring her failing health condition), Francesca immediately settles into the slums of Lower Manhattan’s Five Points and launches her battle against the powers that neither want her nor her country men, women, and children.

The film humbly challenges its contemporary viewers to ask themselves what kind of a city, country or world would they want to live in—those that favor a select few and leave everyone else behind, or those founded on values of true equality? “Cabrini” is not a perfect movie but it is a wonderfully dignified one that honors the little-known efforts of these fearless women.

Jeopardy for Catholics – Here’s the way this works. We highlight an important aspect of Catholicism as noted in the “The Mary Knoll Catholic Dictionary,” and ask you to identify three components of it. As always, your answers must worded in the form of a question. Given that April is the month when nature awakens after a long winter’s sleep, we’re employing a nature-related theme for Jeopardy for Catholics, namely “Trees in the Bible.”

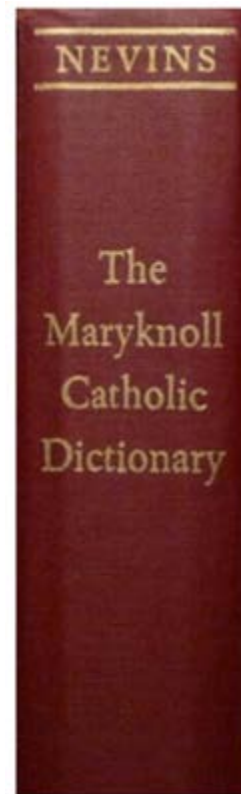
Here goes.

Number 1: Jesus prayed under this type of tree in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Number 2: Legend has it that Jesus was crucified on a cross made from this type of tree.

Number 3: It has been described as the most sacred tree in the Bible. (WARNING: Trick question).

The answers are provided on the final page of Grace Notes.



Request for Photos from Holy Redeemer's Past

In anticipation of the Holy Redeemer Rededication Activities to be conducted this summer, we are requesting any historical photos you might have of the church or activities that were conducted there. Pictures of wedding ceremonies, baptisms, church picnics, golf outings, etc., would be greatly appreciated. We will of course return the photos to you. You can drop off your photos at the back of church or at the rectory (please include your name and phone number on the back), or you can email digital photos to parish@holyredeemerchatham.org.



The interface of Religion and Sports

The major league baseball season kicked off on March 28th, so we thought it would be appropriate to recall a remarkable day when religion and sports collided. There have other such days. For example, the basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a Sunni Muslim, always took part in December fasting during Ramadan, and Eric Liddell, a devout Christian and one of the greatest runners of the early twentieth century, gave up a chance to win several medals at the 1924 Olympics because the events required running on a Sunday. But none of these examples compare with what occurred in the 1934 pennant race when Detroit Tiger first baseman Hank Greenberg was caught between baseball and his religion.

In 1930s America, being Jewish was very different than it is today. Neighborhoods barred Jews from buying homes, stores had signs which read, "No Jews or dogs allowed," and the 1924 Immigration Act had installed quotas which significantly slowed Jewish immigration to the United States.

Detroit was no exception. Car magnate Henry Ford -- perhaps the most famous Detroit of that era -- spent much of his spare time distributing anti-Semitic propaganda. His newspaper, "The Dearborn Independent," went so far as to call Jews, "the World's Foremost Problem." Then there was Father Coughlin. Coughlin was a Catholic priest in Detroit who used his radio program to broadcast anti-Semitic diatribes to an estimated 30 million weekly listeners.



It was a tough environment for a Jewish ballplayer who grew up orthodox, playing in only his second year in the majors. Greenberg's son later recalled that the fans "were calling him every name in the book. Sheeny and Kike. They taunted him by shouting 'Throw him a pork chop; he can't hit that.'"

But Hank Greenberg was no ordinary ballplayer and he was having an amazing season, batting .338 and leading the American League in doubles. And with only 20 games left in the season, Greenberg's Detroit Tigers were in first place, four games up on the second-place New York Yankees. That might sound like a cushy lead, these were the Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig Yankees. Against a team like that, a four-game lead with 20 to play was anything but safe.

Sitting in front of his locker before a crucial game against the Boston Red Sox, Greenberg had a critical decision to make. It was Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Should he play or should he sit it out? He was worried that choosing to sit on the bench for Rosh Hashanah might inspire even more vitriol. He looked up and spotted his coach, Mickey Cochrane. "I need you out there," Cochrane said. "But in the end, it's your choice."



Greenberg decided to play. He hits two home runs – the only runs the Tigers scored – and Detroit won 2-1.

The next day Greenberg received phone calls and telegrams from rabbis and Orthodox Jews who felt that he had given up on his religion, that he had made it harder for Jews to stay true to their faith in the future. They felt he was someone who, when push came to shove, would choose his livelihood over his religion.

But there was another – and bigger – decision still to come: Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which came ten days after Rosh Hashanah. The pennant race was still on, and Tigers fans were anxiously waiting to see what Greenberg would do. He had played on the Jewish New Year, but would he play on the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar.

He decided to sit it out.

"The only way I would ever think that I might have been a hero in those days," Greenberg later said, "was the day I walked into Shaare Tzedek Temple on Yom Kippur. The poor rabbi's standing on the podium, davening, praying, and suddenly I walk in and everybody in the congregation gets up and claps, and the poor rabbi looks around — he doesn't know what's happening, and I'm embarrassed as can be, because it was all totally unexpected."

With Greenberg sitting out, the Tigers lost. But the next day the Detroit Free Press published a poem commending Greenberg for his decision.

*"Came Yom Kippur — holy fast day worldwide over to the Jew,
And Hank Greenberg to his teaching and the old tradition true
Spent the day among his people and he didn't come to play.
Said Murphy to Mulrooney, 'We shall lose the game today!
We shall miss him on the infield and shall miss him at the bat
But he's true to his religion — and we honor him for that!"*

Here's the rest of the story. The Detroit Tigers went on to win the American League pennant, but came up short in the World Series, losing the seventh and deciding game to the St. Louis Cardinals. Greenberg and the Tigers would go on to win the American League pennant and World Series the following year.

Greenberg had a fabulous career in Detroit. He had a career batting average of .313, was twice named the American League's Most Valuable Player, and four times led the league in home runs. When the United States joined World War II, Greenberg was the first major leaguer to join the armed forces; he spent 47 months in military service, more than any other major league player. In 1956 he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.



Getting to Know the Congregation – Rich Brothers

There's an old joke about a dog who spends his every waking moment running as fast as he can to catch passing cars, never succeeding. Finally another dog sidles up to him and asks, "What are you going to do when you *catch* a car?" The dog shrugs his shoulders, then heads off after another car. And unfortunately that's a lot like most of us, working as fast as we can to get from Point A to Point Z and not really thinking about what our lives will be like if we ever make it to whatever Point Z represents.



Rich Brothers has found an alternative approach.



Rich grew up in Roxbury. "We were Catholic, but we never talked that much about religion."

Rich describes himself as a poor student and adds that he was even held back a year in high school. "I had no formal training beyond high school, and after I graduated I immediately went to work for Blue Cross." But while he never considered himself well-educated in the traditional sense Rich definitely had something going for him, because he advanced quickly and steadily within the Blue Cross organization, and soon he was managing the major accounts development group. He was also married and had two children. Everything was humming, or so it seemed.

And then his wife asked for a divorce. Though they received counseling from Catholic Family Services the dye was cast. And despite all the success that Rich had achieved to that point he was alone. His “Summer of Depression” as he referred to it had begun.

But then fate – or something else – lent a hand.

Blue Cross felt a brief change of scenery might help Rich deal with the rough patch he was going through. They assigned him to something called the “Loaned Executive Program,” which sent him to work temporarily with The United Way. The assignment was ironic since Catholic Family Services – the group that helped counsel Rich during his divorce – was funded by The United Way.

“When I went to The United Way I ended up speaking to people about my experiences with Catholic Family Services, and my story helped them raise money.” That early success led to more speaking opportunities for The United Way, but left Rich feeling perplexed. “I’ve always been a nice guy. I’ve always been likable. I’ve always managed people well. But I’ve also always been a wallflower. Where were these words suddenly coming from?” And that was when Rich adopted his new mantra: “I have accepted fully that I am an empty vessel, to be filled by the Holy Spirit.”



Rich also discovered another truism: “When things are really important angels appear.” And so it should come as no surprise that Rich’s inspirational speaking engagements on behalf of The United Way soon caught the attention Bob Chandler, and executive at The United Way. He recommended Rich to Charles Francis Adams, great-great-great-great grandson of John Adams and the CEO of Raytheon, who just happened to also be a volunteer chairman of the United Way of New England. Both men thought Rich could help increase corporate donations to The United Way and arranged for him to meet with top executives from Massachusetts’ most prominent companies: Polaroid, Liberty Mutual, Digital Computer, and Bank Boston to name a few. The executives in turn arranged for Rich to speak with their employees. And soon corporate donations to The United Way skyrocketed.

After 14 years in the Boston area Rich was chosen to be president of Cape and Islands United Way, where more success followed. During his first year at the helm donations to the Cape and Islands United Way increased by 50%. Rich attributed his success to taking a more “personal” approach to soliciting donations. “Rather than relying only on employee payroll deductions I decided to meet personally with local company executives and wealthy individuals who had second homes on the Cape and Islands, all of whom had made donations to The United Way in the past. I simply shared my experiences with The United Way and then asked them if they would be willing to give more. And they were happy to. And then I asked them if they would ask their friends to give more. And their friends we happy to give more as well.”

There are very few perks associated with being a fund raiser for The United Way, but one of them has to be when a corporate sponsor honors you with your own “Rich Brothers Bobble Head,” which was a present given to Rich by local company Shepley Wood Products.

Now retired, Rich’s days are spent *making* donations rather than soliciting them. He recently approached Father Sullivan, and after explaining his mantra, and that he had a calling as a gifted story teller, asked what he could do to help Holy Redeemer. Father Sullivan’s response was to assign Rich to the Spirituality Committee that helped coordinate last month remarkable Day of Reflection and Faith Sharing.



During his “Summer of Depression,” Rich met Ellen and she was instrumental in helping him find his new path. They have now been married forty-three years and have nine grandchildren. “Ellen took care of me and her mother, who lived with us until she was 97.” Twenty-five years ago Ellen was diagnosed with a chronic and incapacitating disease. “I saw Ellen take care of her mother all those years,” Rich added. “Now I know how to take care of her.”

Rich relayed a story about a funeral he attended a decade ago for a fellow who had been one of the brightest legal minds on Cape Cod, and who was credited with making a lasting impact on a wide range of local planning and business ventures. However, the individuals who spoke at his funeral did not talk about his successes in the legal world but about his extraordinarily relationship with his church. Spend a few minutes speaking with Rich and you will share a similar experience, in that while he will reluctantly provide details regarding his astonishing sums of money he has raised for The United Way, he will gladly share examples of the ways in which the Holy Spirit and a variety of different angels have illuminated his path.

...Conclusion

We started this newsletter by showing how you can keep one aspect of Lent – fasting – going all year. We'll end by showing how you can do the same with another component of Lent, namely almsgiving.

Here's a thought-provoking quote: "Almsgiving is a muscle that needs to be flexed -- a habit that needs to be practiced." Listed below are some ways to keep flexing your almsgiving muscle throughout the year.

- Always hit the "round up" button in the check-out line. The money goes to charity, and you don't really need the \$0.40 in change that you would otherwise get back.
- Never pass a Salvation Army Christmas bucket without tossing something in, no matter how small.
- Always hit the "donate" button when you check out at Whole Foods or any other store that regularly solicits donations for charity.
- Keep a jar for loose change near where you hang your car keys and empty your pockets. They are plenty of worthy causes that could use the \$10 or \$20 in change you will quickly accumulate.
- Buy an extra can of vegetables or soup every time you go to the grocery store and save it for the next food drive at church or school. And make a vow to never miss a food drive.
- Give blood at least once a year. It's not money but it can mean life or death to someone on the operating table.
- Get the Acorns app. The app automatically invests the spare change you would normally receive from any credit card purchase. At predetermined intervals you can direct the money accrued to your favorite charity.

These may seem like baby steps, but little things add up, and you will be astonished how much you have amassed in your "almsgiving basket" over the course of a year. To paraphrase the song "Joy Is Like The Rain," "Bit by bit the almsgiving grows, 'til all at once it overflows."

Answers to Jeopardy for Catholics

Answer to Number 1: What is an olive tree?



Answer to Number 2: What is a dogwood tree? (NOTE: The legend goes that God decreed that following Jesus' crucifixion the dogwood tree would never again grow large enough to be used to make a cross.)



Answer to Number 3: What is the "Tree of Life"? We will also accept "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

