

# Restore the Roots

Cultivating Your Domestic Church

A Liturgical Living Initiative of St. Joseph the Workman Cathedral, La Crosse, WI

Vol. 3 No. 9

## February

### 2 Presentation of the Lord

What does the Presentation have to do with a groundhog? Find out on page 3!

### 8 St. Jerome Emiliani



St. Jerome Emiliani was a nobleman of Venice in the 1500's who joined the army and eventually was taken as prisoner. During his captivity, he prayed for the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Through a miracle, he escaped. He decided to change his life and devote himself to serving the poor and orphans. He became a priest at 37 and founded many orphanages, hospitals, and institutes for fallen women. In 1532, he created the congregation of Clerks Regular of Somascha (northern Italy) whose goal was to educate the youth in the faith. St. Jerome contracted and died from a plague while selflessly caring for the poor in 1537. Today, pray a rosary for those you love who feel imprisoned by the struggles of this life. Donate to a local center that supports women and children.

### 13 St. Catherine de Ricci



St. Catherine de Ricci (1522--1590) was born in Florence, Italy and was originally named Alexandrina. Her mother died during Alexandrina's infancy. She was raised by a very pious godmother and entered the Dominican convent of nuns at Prato in Tuscany, Italy at age 14, taking the name of Catherine. She had a deep devotion to prayer from an early age and to Our Lord's Passion. She had many mystical experiences including the "Ecstasy of the Passion" (bleeding wounds, stigmata, and a ring wound on her finger) every Thursday from noon until 4 PM on Friday for 12 years. At 25, she was elected perpetual prioress of her convent. Her sanctity was known to many including three Popes with whom she corresponded. Today, read about more about the phenomenon of the stigmata on page 3.

### 18 Ash Wednesday



Go to Mass today! Make sure to pick up the Lent issue or find it online at [cathedralsjworkman.org/restore-the-roots/](http://cathedralsjworkman.org/restore-the-roots/)

### 20 Sts. Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto



Francisco and Jacinta Marto were siblings living in Portugal during WWI. An angel appeared to them, with their cousin, Lucia, while tending their sheep in the Spring of 1916 when they were 8 and 6 years old. Mary then appeared to them on May 13, 1917 with apparitions continuing on the 13th of each month for five more months. In the first apparition, Our Lady instructed the children to pray the rosary for peace in the world, and to sacrifice for sinners. The children faced disbelief and ridicule after sharing that they'd seen Our Lady. Jacinta, usually talkative, became quiet engaging in prayer and voluntary mortifications like giving up lunch and refusing to drink in the heat of the day. Francisco, who was sensitive and contemplative, prayed to console Jesus and make him happy, perceiving Jesus' sadness over sins committed against him. Among the youngest of the saints, dying in 1919, Francisco and Jacinta are patron saints of bodily ills, people ridiculed for their piety, prisoners, sick people, and against sickness. Today, pray the rosary for world peace and for the forgiveness of sins committed against Jesus. Learn the Fatima prayer on Page 3 and add it at the end of each decade of the Rosary!

**Monthly Devotion: *The Holy Family***



# Council of Chalcedon



Many of the debates from these early Councils revolve around the question: Who is Jesus Christ? Is he God? Man? God and man? The Council of Chalcedon was no exception. A mere 20 years after the Council of Ephesus declared that the child in Mary's womb should be properly called God, continued controversies and debates led Emperor Marcian and Pope Leo I to call another Council.

Eutyches was a monk from Constantinople who was zealous in his defense of Ephesus and Cyril of Alexandria. He spoke against what he saw as a new form of Nestorianism. Cyril taught that there was one incarnate physis of God the Word. But theological language was still being developed and refined, and in a world where both Greek and Latin were important to Christianity and the Empire, translations and definitions were difficult to navigate. In this case, some people took physis to mean person, while others took it to be nature. Eutyches understood the latter, condemning anyone who said Christ had both a divine and human nature. Many theologians, including Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, saw this as problematic because it seemed to deny the humanity of Christ. Flavian eventually appealed to Rome, and Leo I responded in defense of Flavian. Eutyches rejected the decision and found support in Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria. Since Constantinople and Alexandria were both important imperial cities, the tensions between the two patriarchs led Emperor Theodosius II to call another council at Ephesus in 449.

Pope Leo sent a few delegates to Ephesus with a letter explaining Rome's position, an eloquent letter now famously referred to as Leo's Tome. The council, however, was a disaster. Dioscorus restored Eutyches, refused to read Leo's Tome, exiled Flavian, and forced the papal legates to flee. Flavian died of injuries sustained from a mob (likely called by Dioscorus) as he clung to an altar.

Pope Leo was outraged, while Emperor Theodosius began appointing bishops who followed Eutyches' teaching. In 450, Theodosius died suddenly, and his successor Marcian was interested in resolving the tensions which had

now spread throughout the Empire. In 451, he convened a council in Chalcedon (near Constantinople) to repudiate the actions of the "Robber Council" of 449, as Leo called it. 520 bishops attended, making it the largest of the first seven Ecumenical Councils. Leo's Tome was read, studied, and scrutinized in accordance with the teachings of Cyril of Alexandria. They were found compatible. In the end, the Council served to clarify the language about Christ. He is one divine person with two natures: human and divine. These natures are united "unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, and inseparably."

Unfortunately, Chalcedon also marks the beginning of a major schism. Those who refused to acknowledge the Council decrees (the majority of present-day Egypt) split and became what we today call the Coptic Orthodox Church. While it would be 100 years before another Ecumenical Council was called, efforts to restore union began immediately after Chalcedon (which we will explore next month). Today, we continue to pray that all those outside of communion with Rome.

---

St. Josaphat, who was born and raised in the Orthodox Church, came into communion with Rome and encouraged others to do the same. Eventually killed for this, he is an intercessor for reunification.

*O Saint Josaphat, wonderful Saint and heroic martyr for the union of our Church with the Vicar of Christ, the Pope of Rome. Thou art glorious on account of thy zeal in the propagation of the true Catholic faith among our people. Thou art wonderful because of thy heroic martyrdom for the unity of faith of our people with the Holy See of Rome, the true center of orthodox Catholicism.*

*Thou art admirable on account of thy sublime virtues with which thou has adorned thy soul. We admire thy ardent love for Jesus and Mary and thy allegiance to the Vicar of Christ. Thou art a sublime example of all virtues for the people of whom thou wert born. Since thou art so powerful with God as thy miracles prove, I ask thee to obtain for me from Jesus and Mary a strong attachment to the Catholic faith and my beautiful Eastern Rite which I shall never betray nor abandon. Obtain also the grace of indefatigable zeal that I may labor for the reunion of my separated Eastern Brethren.*  
Amen.



## The Presentation and Groundhog Day



The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, celebrated on February 2, commemorates Mary and Joseph's offering of the infant Jesus in the Temple, as described in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon hails Him as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles," earning it the name Candlemas—a day of blessing candles symbolizing Christ, the Light of the World. This ancient Christian feast, rooted in Jewish purification rites, invites the faithful to carry blessed candles in procession, affirming Jesus' role in dispelling spiritual darkness.

Coinciding with Groundhog Day, a German and North American folk tradition, the dates intertwine sacred and secular weather lore. On this day, legend holds that if the groundhog sees its shadow upon emerging from hibernation, six more weeks of winter follow; no shadow signals an early spring. This echoes Candlemas proverbs across Europe, like the English rhyme:



*If Candlemas be fair and bright,  
Winter will have another flight.*

*If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,  
Winter won't come again.*



Both traditions blend hope for renewal with nature's signs, tracing back to pagan roots but Christianized to focus on Christ's Divine light over mere superstition.

In Catholic tradition, Candlemas underscores consecration to God amid winter's end, reminding us that true light comes not from animals or shadows, but from Christ. To celebrate today, you can participate by attending Mass, getting some candles blessed, having a candlelit meal or evening and reflecting on offering their lives anew to God. (If you have kids, scan the QR code for a video explanation just for them!) No matter what the weather will look like, we can always live life for Christ!



**Editors: Msgr. Richard Gilles and Natalie Elskamp**  
Special thanks to all the contributing writers.  
No part of this may be edited, copied or distributed without the express permission of the editors.  
Want to bring Restore the Roots to your parish?  
Email us! [RestoretheRootsLAX@gmail.com](mailto:RestoretheRootsLAX@gmail.com)

## Why do Catholics talk to dead people?

Maybe there was a time in your life when a non-Catholic has asked you, "Why do Catholics talk to dead people?" or "Why do you worship saints?" Depending on our experience and knowledge of the saints, we might not have a good response to help them understand the deep and beautiful meaning behind the intercession of the Saints.

### Who are Saints?

Saints are people who lived a holy life and have died and gone to heaven enjoying eternal life with God. They did not live according to the culture around them, but according to God's will for their lives. We should all have the goal to one day be a Saint! (To be declared a Saint of the Church, the candidate must go through an extensive process run by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints.)

### What is intercession?



Intercession is the act of intervening or praying on behalf of another. Any time we ask others for prayers or we pray for others, we are practicing intercession. We even have a part during Mass where we do this called The Universal Prayer, or The Prayers of the Faithful.

### Why ask Saints to pray for us?

Instead of asking a living person to pray for us, we are asking someone we know to be in heaven to pray for us. They are standing in front of God praising Him and bringing our prayers to Him. "They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us" (CCC 956).

### How can we have Saints intercede?

Very simply, at the end of your meal prayer, daily prayers or rosary, say the name of your confirmation Saint or other favorite Saints followed by, "pray for us." If you have a special intention, you can also look up which Saint is the patron of your need. Another way to invoke the intercession of a Saint is to pray their prayer card or novena for a special intention. Both can be found quickly online.

### Fatima Prayer

*O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.*

FEB  
13

# The Stigmata



The stigmata is defined as the spontaneous appearance of the wounds of our crucified Lord on a person's body without medical explanation. Wounds can include the hands, feet, side, head and/or back. They may be either visible or invisible, permanent, periodic or temporary. The first recorded stigmatic was St. Francis of Assisi who received the stigmata while on retreat on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in 1224, two years before his death. A six-winged seraph appearing as a crucified man descended from the heavens causing him to experience the wounds of Christ on his hands, side and feet; which persisted until his death. In 1375, St. Catherine of Siena received the stigmata in a mystical vision she had in Pisa. She asked God that they remain invisible though the pain remained. They persisted until her death in 1380 when they

became visible. The best known modern stigmatic is St. Padre Pio who received the stigmata on two occasions in 1918, the lance wound on his side on Aug. 5 and the hand and feet wounds on Sept. 20. He experienced continuous bleeding of one cup per day for 50 years until his death. Countless others have experienced the stigmata through history including presently. Of the recorded stigmatists, 90% have been women and the majority of them died when they were 33 years old. Many are also incorrupt saints. Without exception, all "knew profoundly the sufferings of our Lord."

Want to read more about the stigmata? We recommend "Stigmata: A Medieval Mystery in a Modern Age" by Ted Harrison



LENT

## Lent Station Churches



The station churches of Rome represent one of the Church's most ancient Lenten practices, transforming the Eternal City into a spiritual map of faith and penance. Originating in the early centuries, these stations evolved from gatherings at martyrs' tombs to processions led by the pope or bishop to designated basilicas for Eucharist. By St. Gregory the Great's time (late 6th century), Rome had 86 stations. This "singular geography of faith" symbolized Rome as the new Jerusalem. Historically, the custom intensified during Lent, mirroring the Israelites' desert journey and Christ's Passion. Lenten stations featured daily visits to different churches, with readings tailored to the site.

In practice, the faithful assemble at a collecta church for prayers, then process to the station for Mass, singing litanies. Though modern life shifted focus to parishes, the tradition persists via papal rites and pilgrim devotions, offering indulgences: preparatory prayers, journey recitations, and De Profundis prayer at arrival. The practice of the station churches declined in the middle ages but was resurrected after the Council of Trent in the 16th century. In recent years this practice has seen a revival especially with Popes like John Paul II and Benedict XVI actively promoting this as Lenten pilgrimage.

You likely aren't going to be in Rome for this

journey so but you can journey to each of these churches from the comfort of your home with these options:

- **The Pontifical North American College** in Rome (where our very own, Dcn. Kyle Lang is studying) makes this journey every year and has a webpage with a short bio on each church. *\*Note-The station churches do change from year to year if a church is closed for renovation, this is a current list.* [www.pnac.org/station-churches/stationchurch/](http://www.pnac.org/station-churches/stationchurch/)
- **"Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches"** by George Wiegel is a comprehensive Station Church guide (409 pages). Each day includes the readings citations, a reflection of each day that includes saints and stories that tie to the readings and the church, and a description of each church. While the majority of pictures are black and white, there are pages with color photos. *\*4 churches are not in order.*
- **Crux Stationalis** Youtube Channel has featured the Pilgrimage many times over the past years. (The videos posted but they are difficult to find quickly. We've created a playlist with his videos for 2026 linked here or on our Restore the Roots page.)
- **Fisheaters** has a clickable map to see pictures of the church for each day. [www.fisheaters.com/stationchurches.html](http://www.fisheaters.com/stationchurches.html)

