



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

"A loving congregation seeking unity with God and each other in Christ"

Newsletter
October 01 & 08, 2017

(225) 635-4065-Office
(225) 635-4410-Fax

Rector

Vy Rev. Dr. Roman Roldan
rector@gracechurchwfp.org

Director of Family Ministries

Meg Kendrick
Youth@gracechurchwfp.org

Parish Administrator

Anne Klein
secretary@gracechurchwfp.org

Pre-School

(225) 635-4030
Diana Weller
Preschool@gracechurchwfp.org

Emily Barrow
Stacy Loyacono
Erica Blanchard

Director of Music Ministries

Melvin E. Hale
Music@gracechurchwfp.org

Vestry

Leslie Daniel
Christian DeJean
Dare Didier
Zed Howell
Heather Howle
Richard Kendrick
Mickey Melancon
Sue Steib
Dr. Adam Whatley
Glenn Thomas, Treasurer
treasurer@gracechurchwfp.org
Stewart Hughes, Chancellor

Website

www.gracechurchwfp.org

A Rosary Hanging Neatly from an Impossibly High Tree

We had already walked the equivalent of four miles when we decided to take a boat tour of the Middle Lake at Killarney National Park. The views from the Boat house, at one end of the lake, to the Dinis Cottage Tea Room, at the opposite end, are some of the most beautiful views in the country. Lush vegetation, beautiful mountains, impressive rock formations, and crystal blue waters make the area look almost surreal in its beauty. Before we left on our tour, the boat driver warned us that we would have to walk back because he needed to return to the boat house immediately for a prior commitment. The trek back would add an additional 3.5 miles to our journey, which was no reason for concern to either my young wife or my 13-year old daughter. I, on the other hand, knew I was in trouble as soon as the driver finished his warning. In fact, I had been looking forward to the boat ride to get a break from all the walking.

Ireland is famous for its beers and whiskey, but I would place their teas as some of the best I have ever tasted. As you all know, I am a coffee man with a serious Community Coffee addiction. But, when in Ireland, do as the Irish do. This means strong teas and fruit scones every afternoon. Of course, in the name of culture, I had tea and fruit scones four to five times a day. For serious tea drinkers, the historic Dinis Cottage Tea Room offers a wide assortment of biscuits, fruit scones, cakes, and cookies. Not to mention wonderful leek and potato and carrot soups. It truly is an experience that must be enjoyed at least once in your life. After that first visit, we found ourselves going back several times before we left the country. This was a marvelous experience.

Much energized by the mid-afternoon snack, we began the 5.6 Kilometers (about 3.5 miles) journey back to Muckross House, where we would take a taxi to our hotel. The first couple of miles were fine and absolutely beautiful. We had a perfectly sunny, 80-degree day, and we felt very blessed to be in this unbelievably beautiful site. By the beginning of the third mile I was lagging behind by a good stretch and my family had to wait for me a few times. I couldn't remember the last time I had walked six miles, as I had by then. I was exhausted, sweaty, and in some physical pain. My feet were sore and my ego was even more so. Embarrassed, I acknowledged my discomfort to my family and lamented having gained weight these last five years. I admire priests who can keep their weight down and are physically fit. I often wonder how they do it!

My family was very understanding and patiently waited for me from time to time. At one point in my walk I came across a beautiful Irish Oak tree of about 25 meters in height with many wide branches. As I took in the Sessile oak, I noticed a cheap, plastic Rosary, hanging from one of the tallest branches. The rosary was neatly hanging around the branch, which meant that someone had climbed this tree and clasped the Rosary around this branch. I began to wonder if this audacious gesture was perhaps an offering for answered prayers, the result of a dare among kids, or an evangelis-

tic act meant to inspire walkers to pray the Rosary. In my mind's eye, I imagined a number of possible scenarios of how the Rosary made it to the tree, about the person who put it there, and, most importantly, about his or her reasons for such a public display.

As I continued my walk, the words of the familiar prayer filled my mind. "Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." I suddenly remembered an anxious teenage boy of 14, overwhelmed by my own sin, terrified of hell, and convinced that my insignificant good works would never be good enough to ensure my salvation. I remembered praying to Mary to use her influence with her Son to ensure my salvation. As a son begs his mother to protect him from an angry father who is impossible to please, I used to beg Mary to intercede for me and to give me the strength to fight against my overwhelming tendency to sin. At that young age, I knew that my sin was special and exactly the type of thing the nuns at my school had in mind when they taught about the dangers of sin and the eternity of hell. I was consumed by guilt and Mary was an understanding mother who was always willing to listen and offer some comfort, even if the resolution of the problem was not up to her.

I no longer see God as a father who is impossible to please, I no longer see Mary as an intermediary, I no longer see the need for "go-betweens", and I no longer believe my sin is so special that even Christ's sacrifice on the cross is too insufficient a payment. I am now convinced that I am a sinner of the garden variety type. But, most importantly, I now know that the cross is sufficient payment for all my sins. I am no longer consumed by guilt and anxiety because I now know that salvation is not dependent upon what I do for God, but, rather, upon what God has already done for me. With this knowledge comes great freedom and great joy.

As I arrived at my destination, lost in thought and feeling quite nostalgic, I realized that I missed having a relationship with Mary. She was very important to my childhood and adolescence, but, with the discovery that I have unimpeded access to God without the need of intermediaries, I gave up on Mary. If I didn't need her to intercede, perhaps I didn't need her at all. What is it that I miss? For starters, a relatable role model who shows the world the radical nature of faith. A vivid picture of what love and sacrifice look like in our world today. An inspiring disciple who didn't need to have all the answers before she choose to take an incredible leap of faith. A powerful example of the ministry of women in the early church. The list is long indeed.

Symbols are important and they have the power to transport us to times gone by. I may never know who placed that Rosary on that Oak branch, but I am grateful that returning to my childhood was exactly what I needed to find the physical strength to finish my walk. I wonder if perhaps the key to getting spiritually unstuck can be found in the memories of those moments when God was the most present in our lives? May God continue to bless you, Fr. Roldan+

Funeral arrangements for Roberta Anne Barrow, sister of Emmette Barrow, who died September 23, are visitation on Thursday, September 28, 9:00 until the service begins at 11:00am. Burial will be in Grace Cemetery, followed by a reception in Jackson Hall. If you can help with food for the reception, call the Church Office, 635-4065, and speak to Anne Klein. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult time.

The English Reformation: To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, we invite you to a four week study of the English Reformation, starting on Wednesday, October 4, at 6:00pm. This study is open to the community. Please bring friends.

Intercessory prayers are asked for Grace Church members who are ill:

Matt Armstrong,
David Barnes,
Russell Daniel,
Daisye Howell,
Lucile Lawrason,
Tom Morris, Eric Nelson, Sara Nelson, Dahn Savell, Kay Tengler, Wendell Wade, David Walker, Jake Wray, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Kyle Betz, Ashton Hanchey-Oct. 2; Sara Klein, Alma Ruth Skaggs, Drake Weller-Oct. 3; Kaleb Rhody-Oct. 5; Olivia Pass-Oct. 6; Annie Ruth Paul, Jude Weller -Oct.8; Emmette Barrow-Oct. 9; Eileen Barrow-Oct. 10; Lucie Butler-Oct. 11; Mary Elizabeth Barrow, Wil Wilson, Davis Havard, Joshua David-Oct. 12; Ben Klein, Don Reinhardt-Oct. 13; Susan LeBlanc, David Weller, Claire Ford, Daisye Howell-Oct. 14.

Wedding

Anniversaries

Charles and Emily Fusilier-Oct. 4; Tom and Susie Tully-Oct. 9; George and Ann Newton-Oct. 10.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Claiborne Arbuthnot, Charles Barham, Michaela Kell Bennett, Isabella Bertucci, Leslie Bickham, Phillip Bowen, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, Jenny Clark, Kitty Claus, Bob Crowley, Sandy Davenport, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Cathy Doslovic, Molly Douglas, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Mark Feltner, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Michelle Jean-sonne, Jill Joffrion, Henry Jones, Mary Jo Kaly, Cecil Kelly, Jody Lemoine, Bob Lewis, Jessica Liddle, Max, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Mar-train, Kathy Drew Mat-ter, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, David Merritt, Robin Michel, Bill Miller, Dor-othy Anne Millikin, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Randall Nachman, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Susan Pray, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Cole Rourke, Stephen Seale, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Roland Troups, Denham Turner, Rufus Yerger.

Those serving in the armed forces:

Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, Jay Christo-pher, Ryan Coacher, Ben Colia, John Davis, Joseph Dooley, Bryan Geltz, Edward Jenkins, Laura Latson, Shawn Lemons, Terry Palmer, James Powers, Jeff Ragu-sa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, Aaron Zuccsro, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped. Support Squads.

Please check the prayer list to the left to see if someone you put on can be removed.

The Feast of St. Francis and Blessing of the Animals, Sunday, October 8, 4:00pm. Join us in front of the Church with your pets: dogs, cats, horses, rabbits, snakes, birds, etc. for a blessing. Be sure they are securely in your control by leash, harness or cage at all times.

Our Episcopal Church Women (ECW) will host an Ecumenical Breakfast on Saturday, October 14 at 8:30am in Jackson Hall. The guest speaker will be Fr. Bill Miller, rector of Christ Church in Covington. Bill has written several books about his real life and inter-twines them with Gospel stories to enlighten and entertain his audiences. Everyone is invit-ed to attend.

Dinners are needed for youth group through December. The sign up sheet is in the nar-thex of the church.

Over 50 and Super Senior: Plans are being made for an overnight pilgrimage to Poverty Point, in Pioneer, Louisiana. We will leave Grace Church at 11:30am on Thursday, Octo-ber 12, and stay at a hotel in Vicksburg overnight. On Friday we will eat breakfast and then travel about an hour to Poverty Point, tour the area and return to Grace Church between 5-6pm. A non-refundable deposit of \$50 will be needed when you sign up and the balance for the room will be paid by you when you get to the hotel. Please sign the list in the narthex

Rector's Discretionary Fund: This Sunday is the first Sunday of the month. The loose of-fering is dedicated to the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Envelopes will be in your liturgy sheet to put your cash or check (made out to Grace Episcopal Church and on the memo line: Rector's Discretionary Fund). Please be generous.

Status of the Church: We have been studying the problem of humidity and water intrusion into the attic of the church. We have had experts tell us we need a new roof, others tell us the problem is condensation caused by the type of insulation we chose to use six years ago, still others tell us it maybe a combination of factors. Our response is as follows: (a) Our Jun-ior Warden has done a great job learning how our church breathes and works. He has or-dered several assessments that are helping us understand the problem better. (b) We have engaged Koch and Wilson Historical Architects to study the problem and offer recommen-dations. These are the same architects that did the restoration in 1982 and 1999. (c) At Koch and Wilson's recommendation, we have decided to remove the problematic insula-tion attached to the ceiling of the attic. (d) We have postponed any decisions on a new roof until Koch and Wilson studies the problem and gives us a set of recommendations. There is a rumor that we are planning to spend half a million dollars on a new roof, and \$200,000 on a new air-conditioning systems for the church. This is NOT TRUE. In fact, when we obtained 3 bids to replace the roof, before we engaged Koch and Wilson, the highest bid was way under \$200,000. The improvements to the air system will be less than \$50,000 and we will do them ONLY if Koch and Wilson believe these improvements will help us fix the problem of condensation. So, for now, just breathe and pray for us. We will fix this prob-lem responsibly and effectively and it will be done in a financially-sensitive manner. Call me or Zed Howell if you have any questions. Blessings, RR+

Confirmation and New Comers Classes: All youth in grades 8 and above are welcome to start confirmation classes on Sundays at 11:30am beginning on October 15. There will be 5 one-hour classes. New Comer Classes will also be 5 weeks on Wednesday evenings at 6:00pm beginning on October 18. Please sign up in the Narthex.

Grace Church
of West Feliciana Parish
P.O. Box 28
St. Francisville LA 70775

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Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

Sunday October 1, 2017

Acolytes: Nicole Mulkey, Charles Fox-Smith,
Wyatt Olsen, volunteer

Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Carol Stamey
10am: Landon Anderson, Sara Klein

Ushers: Shannon Pollet, Rob Reinhardt

Lectors: Will Plettinger, Donna Wright

Vestry Rep: Christian DeJean

Altar Guild Team 1

Altar flowers: Joe and Dahn Savell

Sanctuary Candle: Suzanne Beckley

Coffee Hour: Tom and Susie Tully

Babysitters: Landry Higgins, Shelby Griffin

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Acolytes: Hayden Howle, James Kirschling, Lilly
Higgins, Clara Jane Hughes

Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Lucie Butler

10am: Rucker Leake, Mark Mulkey

Ushers: Joe Savell, Dwight Singer

Lectors: Landon Anderson doing both readings

Vestry Rep: Dare Didier

Altar Guild Team 2

Altar flowers: Tom and Susie Tully

Sanctuary candle: Penny Reinhardt

Coffee Hour: Leslie Daniel

Babysitters: Julie DeJean, Marleigh Jaehnel

October 1, 2017

7:30am - Holy Eucharist
Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist
Coffee Hour

October 8, 2017

7:30am - Holy Eucharist
Bible Study

10:00am - Holy Eucharist
Coffee Hour

4:00 pm - Blessing of the
Animals

Wednesday, October 4

9:00am - Fall Bible Study

5:15pm - Eucharist

5 - 7pm - Youth Group

6:00pm - English Reformation Class

Thursday, October 5

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, October 6

7:00am - Eucharist

8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, October 8

7:30am - Eucharist

9:15am - Bible Study

10:00am - Eucharist

4:00 pm - Blessing of the Animals

Wednesday, October 11

9:00am - Fall Bible Study

5:15pm - Eucharist

5-7pm - Youth Group

6:00pm - English Reformation Class

Thursday, October 12

9:15am - Morning Prayer

10:00am - Worship: SF Country Manor

Friday, October 13

7:00am - Eucharist