



# Sharing the Catholic Journey

Discovering faith, joy, and community

August 2015

St. John the Apostle Parish, Bloomington, IN

Fr. Daniel Mahan, Pastor

**Sharing the Catholic Journey** is a monthly newsletter for the parishioners of St. John the Apostle Parish. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please write to: [sawyerdenise@yahoo.com](mailto:sawyerdenise@yahoo.com)

the kids usually go to her parents' farm once a week and spend the day driving tractors and playing outside.

Dave and Rochelle were moved to join the Catholic Church this summer and are grateful to have found a home at St. John's.

## Meet....



**Dave and Rochelle,  
Ellie and Will Hart**

Dave and Rochelle have lived in Bloomington for six years. He grew up in Austin, Texas. Dave graduated from Rice University and went to medical school at the University of Texas–Galveston. Rochelle graduated from Purdue University. She grew up on a farm outside of Columbus, Indiana.

Dave was completing his medical training in Indianapolis when he met Rochelle in 2006. Rochelle was working in the veterinary pharmaceutical industry. They married in 2007 before moving to Auburn, Alabama for Dave's first job out of training. An opportunity arose to move closer to family and back to Indiana when Rochelle was pregnant with their first child, Ellie. They moved to Bloomington in 2009.

Dave is a heart and lung surgeon at Bloomington Hospital and Rochelle is a stay at home mom. They have two children Elliana (Ellie), who is five years old, and Will, who is 3. Ellie will start kindergarten at St Charles this fall.

In their spare time, they are chasing Will and Ellie. Dave is an avid reader and Rochelle loves to cook has recently taken up running. Ellie loves crafts and books and Will enjoys anything to do with tractors and dirt. Rochelle and

**Steve and Maria,  
Maximilian and Maris  
Dawson**



Steve and Maria Dawson and their children Maximilian (2.5 years) and Maris (2 months) moved to Bloomington last month from metro Detroit where both Steve and Maria grew up.

Steve works as the national director of a Catholic non-profit called St. Paul Street Evangelization ([streetevangelization.com](http://streetevangelization.com)) whose headquarters is now housed on the grounds of the Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center ("the Farm"). Formerly a middle and high school teacher, Maria now keeps busy as a stay-at-home mom.

Maximilian enjoys asking questions and tinkering with whatever he can find, and Maris eats, sleeps, and smiles. The Dawsons treasure their Catholic faith and are eager to grow spiritually at St. John's.



**Please welcome the Hart  
and Dawson families to  
our St. John parish  
community!**

# Catholicism 101....

by Scott Benningfield, DRE



## Universal Nature of the Church

Around 110 A.D., St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote to the Smyrneans. He stated that “wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.”

We hear the word “catholic” a lot. We read/hear/pray it in the Apostles’ Creed: “...I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints...” In the Nicene Creed that we say every Sunday, we read/hear/pray: “...I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church...”

In short, “catholic” means “universal”. This word “catholic” (καθολικός; *katholikos* as a transliteration) is a Greek word that stems from 2 concepts: “according to” or “concerning” (*kata*) + “the whole” (*holos*).

This particular word “catholic” is important because it is tied to the Church’s essence and her mission. As Catholic Answers notes: “The Church is catholic or universal because she possesses the fullness of Christ’s presence and the means of salvation, and because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race.”

God wills that man be saved (cf. CCC 1045; 1 Tim 2:3–4). That same paragraph of the Catechism notes: “Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed.” Furthermore, as the Catechism notes in paragraph 795: “The Church is one with Christ [and] the saints are acutely aware of this unity.”

We live in a world of disintegration. Our *telos* – our ultimate end – is union with God in heaven. We need to be integrated and oriented towards God. A simple mental assent to God’s sovereignty is insufficient.

God desires unity; Satan desires disunity. The more we disintegrate our relationship with God due to sin, the further we are from union with God. Too many people in our society have dismissed sin as a true reality and too many people in our society either dismiss heaven or presume a heavenly reward for themselves. Jesus spoke of sin and Jesus spoke of hell. We need help to overcome sin and get back on track to a life directed towards God. This help is found in the Catholic Church. We are so blessed to be a part of the Church founded by Jesus – God Incarnate –

with its Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. (Sacred Tradition refers to Apostolic Tradition; Sacred Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by members of the Church and the canon was set by the Catholic Church.)

The Catholic Church (founded directly by Jesus Christ) was given a mandate to go out to “all nations”. We see this mandate clearly at the end of the Gospel according to St. Matthew (28:19–20) when Jesus said: “19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them ..., 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”

The Catechism states: “Because men’s communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the unity of the human race” (CCC 775). Quite simply, the Church in its universal breadth serves as an instrument to help people along the path to God. This desired unity with God is spread universally! In traveling the world and experiencing Mass in different languages, it is a true joy for me to see how universally connected we are!

The Church needs to be “universal” due to this divine desire for unity. But the unity is also vital for clarity and consistent sound teaching. Due to a lack of spiritual maturity and “holy integration”, many people can easily(!) slip into other philosophies and approaches to life. (For example, St. Paul warns the community in Colossae to be careful of empty and seductive philosophies!) We need God and we need the teaching and the graces from the Church. In growing in grace, we build up the body of Christ – we build up the universal Church.

We see from many saints the importance they saw in the universal Church. I leave you with the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem who said: “The Church is called catholic, then, because it extends over the whole world, from end to end of the earth, and because it teaches universally and infallibly each and every doctrine which must come to the knowledge of men, concerning things visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly, and because it brings every race of men into subjection to godliness...”



## Our Universal Church...the Catholic Church in Poland



Poland is today the most devoutly religious country in Europe with 87% of the population identifying as Catholic in a 2011 survey. The second largest church is the Eastern Orthodox Church. For the average Polish citizens, their families and their homes are deeply rooted in society and in the culture of the Roman Catholic Church. It's been that way for over 1000 years.

The history of Poland goes back thousands of years, long before it was established as a nation. Much of the population descends from Slavic people from the East who migrated west to establish permanent settlements in the Polish lands during the Early Middle Ages. A land populated by both Barbarians and Celts, its exposure to Christianity came slowly through missionaries and through "word of mouth."

Poland officially became a Christian nation during the reign of Duke Mieszko in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. After his marriage to Princess Dobrawa of Bohemia, he chose to be baptised in the Western Latin Rite in 966. This event became known as the baptism of Poland for it was the symbolic beginning of Polish statehood; during the following years, he worked for the unification of the West Slavic tribal lands. He eventually adopted the same style of Catholic monarchy that was present throughout Europe at that time.



His son, Duke Boleslaw I Chrobry established a Polish Church structure and was officially crowned the first king of Poland in 1025. During his life, he worked to spread Christianity to parts of eastern Europe that remained pagan. Over the centuries, a series of rulers helped to create a strong Kingdom of Poland with a distinctive Polish culture even as the country was being integrated into the larger European culture.

In more recent centuries, the Catholic Church was not only a spiritual institution during the 1800's and 1900's, it was also a social and political force, for it combined religious and political symbols which help to form the Polish people's conception of their national history and their destiny. This Polish culture helped to sustain the people during the communist era when the usual social and political symbols were suppressed. Even after the establishment of a Communist government after World War II, the Church remained strong and the people maintained a strong sense of identity.

The 1978 election of the Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II strengthened the country's sense of Polish identity. His papal visits to his homeland galvanized opposition to the Soviet regime, and when he was canonized in 2013, there was pride and joy among the Polish people.

## The Roamin' Catholic...A Pilgrimage to Poland

Always a beautifully scenic country to visit, in recent years Poland has increasingly become a popular pilgrimage destination for Catholics, thanks to three beloved 20<sup>th</sup> century saints who were born in this Eastern European country. **St. Maria Faustina**, **St. Maximilian Kolbe**, and **St. Pope John Paul II**, Not only did they come from the same country, their lives overlapped, and at one time in their lives, they were within 50 miles of each other.



In 2014 St. John parishioner **Pat Car**, along with other pilgrims, including **Father Elias** from the Mother of the Redeemer Retreat Center, went to Poland, visiting the many religious sites throughout the country, including those connected with these three Catholic saints.

One of their stops was to **Niepokalanow**, the City of the Immaculate where St. Maximilian Kolbe established a religious community in the 1920's. At one time, over 800 friars lived there. It included a seminary, a radio station, and it was home to several organizations and publications, including a daily newspaper with a circulation of 230,000





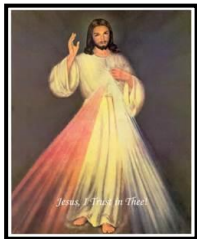
and a monthly magazine with a circulation of over one million. Fully embracing the technology of his day to teach about

the Catholic faith, he would have adapted well to using the modern technology of today, including the Internet.

A pilgrimage to Poland is incomplete without a trip to **Auschwitz**, which was the largest Nazi German concentration camp and death camp between the years 1940–



1945. 1,300,000 people were sent to Auschwitz, many arriving by train. 1,100,000 of them died, most of them in the gas chambers that were disguised as showers. **St. Maximilian Kolbe** died there in 1941, slowly starved to death after he offered his life to save a man with a wife and children. Pat Car and the other pilgrims were able to see the cell where St. Maximilian died, where there is a small memorial. As Pat noted, “We saw the ovens and the gas chambers, but the overwhelming feel of the whole compound gave a sense of the evil that was perpetuated there.”



St. Faustina was born in Poland in 1905 and died just 33 years later in 1938. She entered a convent at the age of 20, and in 1931, she had a vision of the Risen Christ, with his hand raised in blessing. The beautiful Chaplet of Divine Mercy was given to her by Jesus, and she was told to share it with the world. She also left behind a spiritual diary of the messages she received. At

right is the convent in which she lived during the last years of her life. The Kaplica Chapel, seen below is part of a large



complex where she had lived. On the grounds, there is also a very large modern church for large crowds that visit the Shrine.



**Czestochowa** in Poland is the home of one of the most revered icons, **Our Lady of Czestochowa**, often referred to as the **Black Madonna**. The icon is housed in the

Jasna Gora Monastery, which has been a pilgrim destination since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Black Madonna is known as the Queen and Protector of Poland. The icon itself has a history going back to the first century of Christianity, and it shows slashes where people have tried to damage it in the past.



The icon is placed high above the altar in the church. Pilgrims are able to walk around the path that goes behind the altar. Many people will walk on their knees. The icon has been frequently copied by iconographers over the years.

Another popular destination is Wadowice, a small town of about 20,000 located about 30 miles from Krakow. It is best known to pilgrims because it was the birth place of Saint Pope John Paul II. Seen in the photo at right is the Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the central square. This was where the beloved saint was baptized, confirmed, and served as an altar boy.



In writing about her pilgrimage to Poland, Pat Car reflected, “A visit to Poland offers a wide variety of religious as well as cultural experiences. Touring

the old towns of Krakow and Warsaw with their history and culture brought the past alive. Large town squares with all the activity of vendors, music of various sorts and great food. Aside from all this there is a spiritual heritage of Poland besides St. John Paul II. The past is one filled with oppression and wars. The future is still unknown but amidst all this is a presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the simple shrine of Our Lady at Gietrzwald to the large new Basilica dedicated to St. John Paul there is a sense of connection to the spiritual roots of Poland. The faith of many of the Polish people was evident wherever we traveled. Often simple but still a faith learned from times of suffering and persecution.”

# Stories of Faith....

By Steve Flores



I attended Mass with my parents and family, five brothers and two sisters, until I graduated from high school in 1981. We attended the Holy Family Catholic Church in Kingsburg, California where I made my First Communion and was confirmed. Then I attended a junior college and began to work, which included having to work on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. This began my falling away from the Catholic Church for 29 years. When I met Kathy Ryan in 2010, I knew it was time for me to come back home to the Church.

I knew growing up that we were Catholics and that the Church was important to our family. However, I didn't realize how important the Mass was to my soul. Most of the Masses we went to were in Spanish, so I do not remember very well and didn't understand or pay attention. I thought it was just what I had to do because that's what my family did. We grew up speaking mostly Spanish to our parents, although they could understand some English.

I began dating a girl, Lola, in 1990 who, I believe, said she was somewhat Christian, but she wasn't Catholic and neither one of us were actually living a Christian life. She went to a Mass with me once, but she didn't like the standing, sitting, and kneeling. She wanted to try some other churches, including Lutheran and Baptist, but I felt in my heart that I could not stop calling myself a Catholic, although it was in name only since I wasn't really practicing my faith. We stopped looking for a church, and it all faded away.

During the time away from the church, I "knew" I couldn't go back into a Church "because it would fall down" due to the way I was living my life. I believe my mom was always praying for me to return because she would frequently either ask me if I was "going to Mass" or she would remind me, "Don't forget to go to Mass."

Lola and I moved to Indiana in January, 2002. Her sister had lived here for 12 years with her husband and two children, so we decided to bring some "family" to her. Although Lola and I were together for 17 years, we were only married for the last four years, making our vows at the Courthouse/Clerk's Office. We separated and divorced in 2007. The only reason we got married was because my brother-in-law's mom thought we should be married to be

a good example for our niece and nephew. She was right, of course, but I just hadn't seen the situation from her point of view.

I first met Kathy while Mike was still alive around late 2006 or early 2007. I worked at Tree of Life with Mike; both of us were drivers. My sister and brother-in-law (Lola's sister) lived down the street. I saw Mike and Kathy on their front porch one day driving to my sister's house and decided to stop and talk to them for a moment. I had noticed occasionally that Mike wore a miraculous medal, but I did not put two and two together. Mike was a quiet man, and I got to know him slowly during the five years before he died in July 2007.

I saw Kathy again in 2009, and I finally realized that she was Catholic when I visited her house. She told me she was going to Mass. However, I didn't go with her; I was too afraid of all of my sins to go back into a Catholic Church. Seeing Kathy's kindness, love, and caring for others made me realize that to continue this friendship (Kathy never thought about marrying me), I should go to confession and return to Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is such a blessing, to know and feel the love of mercy of God our Father when our priests give us those words of absolution. It was as if the shame and embarrassment was just wiped away. The more frequently one goes to Confession, the easier it is to stop committing a particular sin.

In returning to Mass and seeing Ethan and Ernie Mobley and the other Altar Servers, especially Nick Joachim, I saw great reverence in them. I wanted the Mobley boys to serve at Kathy's and my wedding. As I got to know the whole Mobley family, what a blessing it is to know them, as well as Father Elias and the rest of the Friars.

I used to listen to Howard Stern, but Fr. Elias and Sara Mobley suggested I listen to EWTN Catholic Radio. It took a few months, but I finally stopped listening to Howard Stern! Oh my, how much of my faith I didn't know! It is amazing to hear all the programs on EWTN.

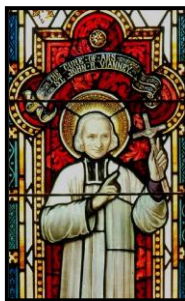
The best things I like about being back in the Church is receiving Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the mercy of God in being able to go to Confession, fellowship with faithful believers, getting to go to Mass (as opposed to "having to go" ), learning how Catholics have always been called to evangelize (even if we sometimes don't know how to do it). Kathy and I attend weekly Bible Study and Apologetics groups, as well as any other event St. John is involved with, including helping out at the St. John booth at the Fall Festival in Ellettsville and participating in the parade.



# What's happening in August....

## Tuesday, August 4: Memorial of Saint John Vianney

Saint John Vianney, known as the "Curé of Ars," became a priest in 1815 and was assigned to a remote parish in France. He never left that small community, but his reputation as a confessor and as a spiritual director spread far and wide. He had a childlike simplicity and was loved by the people. Now the patron saint of priests, he once said, "Without the priest, the Passion and Death of our Lord would be of no avail...What use would be a house filled with gold, were there no one to open its door?"



**ANTIPHON:** Your priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with justice; your holy ones shall ring out their joy.

## Thursday, August 6: Solemnity of the Transfiguration of the Lord



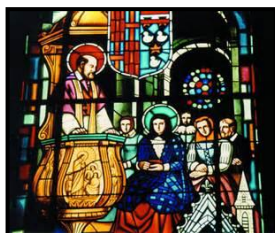
At Mount Tabor, Jesus allowed Peter, James, and John to see His glory. Not fully understanding what they were seeing, Peter wanted to make tents for Jesus and His two heavenly visitors. Then they heard the voice of God, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to

Him." This was a private revelation for these three disciples, and Jesus asked them not to share it with the others until after He had risen from the dead.

**ANTIPHON:** In a resplendent cloud the Holy Spirit appeared. The Father's voice was heard: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

## Wednesday, August 12: Memorial of Saint Jane Frances de Chantel

Saint Jane Frances de Chantel was born in Dijon, France, in 1572 into a prominent family. Receiving an excellent education, she married the Baron de Chantel, an army officer, at the age of 20. After 8 years of marriage and 4 children, her husband was killed in a hunting accident. Four years later, the grieving widow heard St. Frances de Sales preached; inspired by his words, she asked him to become her spiritual director. Her commitment to her faith and to the poor grew, and when her children had grown, in 1610, together with St. Frances de Sales, she established a religious order, Congregation of the Visitation.



**ANTIPHON:** The Lord has taken her as his bride for ever in faithfulness and mercy.

## Friday, August 14: Memorial of Saint Maximilian Kolbe

St. Maximilian Kolbe is a 20<sup>th</sup> century saint. A Polish Franciscan friar who, even before being ordained, had founded the Immaculata Movement devoted to our Lady. As a priest, he formed a community of 800 men in Poland, and in the 1930's he went to Japan where he built a similar monastery. Returning to Poland because of ill health, he was arrested by the Nazis and imprisoned at Auschwitz. There, in 1941, when ten men were chosen to die because one prisoner had escaped, he offered his life to replace that of a young husband and father. Slowly starved to death, he was the last to die. Present at his canonization in 1982 was the man he saved.



**ANTIPHON:** Come, you blessed of my Father, says the Lord. Amen, I say to you: Whatever you did for the least of my brethren, you did it for me.

## Saturday, August 15: Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Having been conceived without the stain of Original Sin, Mary was assumed directly into Heaven, both body and soul, at the end of her earthly life. Although this was defined as dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, the concept had been clear since the earliest period of the Church.



**ANTIPHON:** Let us all rejoice in the Lord, as we celebrate the feast day in honor of the Virgin Mary, at whose Assumption the Angels rejoice and praise the Son of God.

## Monday, August 24: Feast of Saint Bartholomew



Saint Bartholomew was one of the twelve Apostles. Ancient writings support the belief that he preached as far as India. Eusebius, who wrote a history of the early Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, related that when St. Pantaeunus went to India in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, he discovered that

people already knew of Christ. He was shown a copy of the Gospel of Matthew, written in Hebrew, and was told that it had been brought there by St. Bartholomew. Like all of the Apostles except St. John, he was martyred, flayed alive.

**ANTIPHON:** Go forth and proclaim the good news of the kingdom; and freely share with others what God has given you