The AMU & APU Newman Center

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE 7 Fall 2018

The Baptism of Christ, by Guido Reni, c. 1623. See page two for a scripture reading and a meditation from Benedict XVI to accompany the first decade of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

A Troubled Time

Gregory Comiskey

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I was first asked to write you about one of our Church doctors. Then a wave of persecutions of our religious around the world led me to believe that an essay comparing the struggles that the French Church endured during the Vendee genocide to our current strife in order to both put things in perspective and to strengthen our resolve was needed. Then the unthinkable happened—Pennsylvania. How does one comprehend the depth of the betrayal? It is inexpressible, the anguish is unbearable at times. I have nearly worn my Rosary beads out. I have cried myself to sleep. This is a troubled time.

The Church is nearly 1,986 years old and in that long march through history it has experienced its share of triumphs and tragedies. As a student and teacher of history I could certainly point to several periods where the Church struggled to find its way or where outside forces assailed it to the brink of destruction. For instance, one of the very reasons we Christians have such a rock solid Faith to that which we have not seen is because of the

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Explore *The Baptism of Christ*—The First Decade of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary


After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

**Meditation from Benedict XVI: The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Homily at the Sistine Chapel, January 10, 2010.**

As soon as he sees Jesus approaching, John realizes that there is something unique in this Man, that he is the mysterious Other for whom he has been waiting and to whom his whole life is oriented. He understands that before him stands One who is greater than he, the thong of whose sandals he is not even worthy to untie.

At the Jordan Jesus reveals himself with an extraordinary humility, reminiscent of the poverty and simplicity of the Child laid in the manger, and anticipates the sentiments with which, at the end of his days on earth, he will come to the point of washing the feet of the disciples and suffering the terrible humiliation of the Cross. The Son of God, the One who is without sin, puts himself among sinners, demonstrates God’s closeness to the process of the human being’s conversion. Jesus takes upon his shoulders the burden of sin of the whole of humanity, he begins his mission by putting himself in our place, in the place of sinners, in the perspective of the Cross. While absorbed in prayer he emerges from the water after his Baptism, the skies break open. It is the moment awaited by so many prophets: “O that you would rend the heavens and come down!”, Isaiah had prayed (64: 1). At that moment, St Luke seems to suggest, this prayer is heard. Indeed, “The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him” (3: 21-22); and words were heard that had never been heard before: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (v. 22). In going up out of the water, as St Gregory Nazianzen says, Jesus “sees the heaven opened which Adam had shut against himself and all his posterity” (Discourse 39 per il Battesimo del Signore, PG 36). The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit come down among human people and reveal to us their love that saves. If it is the Angels who bring the shepherds the announcement of the Saviour’s birth, and the star that conveys it to the Magi who came from the East, now it is the Father’s voice that indicates the presence of his Son in the world to human beings and invites them to look to the Resurrection, to Christ's victory over sin and death.

The Newman Center is pleased to announce that it is now collaborating with the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA to help connect its military members with services and opportunities offered by the Archdiocese.

**About the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA**

**Mission**
The Archdiocese for the Military Services was created by Pope John Paul II to provide the Catholic Church’s full range of pastoral ministries and spiritual services to those in the United States Armed Forces. This includes more than 220 installations in 29 countries, patients in 153 V.A. Medical Centers, and federal employees serving outside the boundaries of the USA in 134 countries. Numerically, the AMS is responsible for more than 1.8 million men, women, and children.

**Coat of Arms**
The coat of arms of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA is divided into three sections, one in red, one in silver or white, and one in blue—the traditional colors of the United States. In the uppermost portion, there is an American Bald Eagle holding in each claw the universal symbol of peace, a green olive branch. In the middle portion, there is a silver cross on the outline meridians of the earth. In the lowest, the red portion of these arms, are the gold and silver crossed keys of Saint Peter, the symbol of the Holy See. The composition of the arms conveys the message and mission of the Archdiocese for the Military Services—to be Americans bearing peace; to proclaim Christ all over the world; and to carry out the mission of the Church to offer healing through the forgiveness of sins.
Let’s congratulate our members on their recent accomplishments!

- Bruce Sarte will begin work on his EdD in Educational Leadership at Drexel University in late September
- Stephanie King and Steve McDonald made the Q2 Dean’s List
- Lynn McAfee received the “Top Hat” award from her St. Vincent de Paul conference
- Michael Majerczyk has clocked in more than 150 hours of volunteer time at the Air Zoo Aviation Museum’s restoration department

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### Feature Member—Steven McDonald

After running a small optical boutique with his wife for several years, Steven decided that it was time to pursue his dream career, rather than a mere occupation. Realizing that doing so would be no simple task, Steven decided that the best route to his goal involved going back to school. After researching an array of colleges, Steven came across American Public University System, where he enrolled, earning a BA in Intelligence Studies (Cyber) in 2016 with a 3.93 GPA.

Shortly after completing his bachelor’s program, Steven decided to continue his educational pursuits at APUS, and is currently three courses away from earning a master’s degree. Steven recently became a University Ambassador at APUS, and belongs to several honor societies including National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS), Golden Key, Order of Sword and Shield, Pi Gamma Mu, Alpha Phi Sigma, and Phi Alpha Delta’s Society of Scholars.

Originally from Illinois, Steven and his family relocated to the Flint Hills area of Kansas several years ago, and just recently made the decision to move to Topeka, KS. Steven loves giving back, and for the past year he has spent time volunteering for both the NSCS and the Lint Center for National Security Studies as a scholarship reviewer. In his free time Steven enjoys reading, logic puzzles, lifting weights, painting, traveling, and spending time with his family. Steven’s wife, and eldest daughter (Saebria) are also students at APUS, with his wife currently pursuing a master’s degree, and his daughter pursuing a bachelor’s degree.
persecutions, horrors, imprisonments, and martyrdoms experienced by the Apostolic generation. Men, women, and children were beaten, butchered, eaten by animals, or burnt alive simply because of their Faith. This generation, the first generation that witnessed Christ, that saw Him and the miracles, happily went to their death for Him. Whenever I am challenged about my Faith or asked to “prove” Jesus, I point to this fact—if the Apostles lied, if they stole a body or made up the Resurrection as the Jews alleged, why would they go to their deaths for a lie? Why, when the nails were driven into their hands or when boiling oil or lions were threatened or stoning begun, did not any one of them just say, “Wait! We made it up! I’ll take you to where we hid Him.” They didn’t because they couldn’t . . . it wasn’t a lie.

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (Colossians 3:23). The martyrdoms did not stop with the Apostolic generation; they continue to this day. Such love, such sacrifice, such utter selflessness and complete devotion to God. It is what He asks for. I read Isaiah 53:4 “Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows,” and I think of our Lord on Calvary yelling, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). I compare those verses of selfless sacrifice and unimaginable mercy to the pain, anger, frustration, bitterness, and betrayal I feel towards some of the shepherds in the Holy Mother Church right now. I try to caution myself to keep things in context, the Church is made up of men, and men are prone to sin by nature. They give into temptation—Satan does not force them to sin and God does not prevent anyone (no matter the position) from committing sin. Additionally, I tell myself, that this is part of His plan. This does not comfort me, my friends.

A casual glance in the rear view mirror—not even back as far as the first or second century—will provide examples of tremendous strife let alone Church hypocrisy. I find no period more troubling than when Antiochus IV banned the practice of Judaism during the brief period after Alexander the Great and prior to the Roman occupation of Jerusalem. The Seleucid ruler was so evil that he had places of worship desecrated, banned circumcision, and if it was practiced the mother who had her child circumcised, was executed. He had copies of Scripture destroyed by going house to house or place of worship to place of worship, and hung children by the necks that were circumcised. He ordered Jews to eat banned foods and if they didn’t, they were executed. 2 Maccabees 7 is even more descriptive about seven martyrs and their mother. These warriors for God fought and died with zeal. They died horrible deaths, but were certain of the justness of their cause, and of their God in a time before the Messiah! What are we doing?

Brothers and sisters in Christ I am both enraged and devastated. For over fifty years, Holy Mother Church has allowed individuals to infiltrate her institutions and corrupt her like a viral infection, like a STAPH infection. This is not the first time that the Church has dealt with evil from within, and make no mistake, we are battling evil. I am not talking simply about the abuse of indulgences or using tithes to build new cathedrals—both of those practices were bad enough. In the early fourteenth century when a conclave nominated a hermit Peter di Morone to become pope it was a disaster. This hermit became St. Celestine V (1294) but he abdicated after a few months, and one of the main conspirators became Pope Boniface VIII. This man suffered from too many sins to list but his on-going confrontations with Philip IV of France and Edward I of England led to excommunications, the murder of Thomas Beckett, and shame brought on the papacy. This entire episode led to Rome abandoned and the Avignon Papacy which lasted almost the entire Century.

Church crisis begets Church crisis—all from lack of leadership that is in no small part due to ego and pride getting in the way of the Holy Spirit. After the return to Rome, there is the Great Western Schism and the Protestant Reformation. All of these incidents would be enough to make faithful Catholics feel as though the Church had abandoned them or at the very least, wasn’t looking out for their best interests. But this is different—men pursuing power, position, wealth, even women are nothing new under the sun. It does not make it acceptable. No. And again no. As the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen once said, we expect more from our Priests because...
Church activities forever. They are banished, separated from the body of Christ, no matter how high in the hierarchy they are positioned. Their penance is between themselves, the Justice System, their victims, and God.

One of Fulton Sheen’s favorite authors, Malcolm Muggeridge, made a very prescient observation in 1980. He wrote the following, “Let us rejoice that we see around us on every hand the decay of institutions and instruments of power. . . . For it is precisely when every earthly hope has been explored and found wanting . . . that Christ’s hand reaches out sure and firm” (End of Christendom, Muggeridge, 1980). He argues well that Christ did not create Christendom, Emperor Constantine did when he tolerated Christianity. Christendom and its institutions have done a lot of good but they have ended. This twenty-first century world is not “post Christian” as the some on the Left driven by ego, pride, vanity, greed, sloth, envy, and individualism would want us to believe, but it is post-Christendom. We should use our pain, grief, and betrayal not to scrap Holy Mother Church but take it back! Cast out the wicked. Reaffirm our core tenets of Faith, our Dogmatic beliefs. Reclaim the Mass of Our Fathers before the Corruption. Reclaim the halls of the Church that Hell will not prevail against. Satan has influenced sick and evil men inside but they are a fraction of the Catholics. We have survived the Coliseum, Exiles, Purges, Invasions, Heresies, Reformations, Corrupt Popes, Corrupt clergy, and prideful selfish religious but who is the Church? We are.

Read Scripture every day. Pray every day for the Church. Read the Saints, Doctors, and Defenders of the Church as often as you can. Emulate them. Jesus wants us all to be Saints.

JMJ.

Photo by Anne Midgley. Verse selected by Steven McDonald.
Finding Christ on the Street Corner

Mark Bowles, PhD

Several years ago, as I was reading Matthew Chapter 25, I had a soul-searching moment when I came to well-known verse 25. Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” I thought to myself, “What really have I done for the least of God’s children?” Yes, I had participated in many volunteer projects and donated money for causes that helped the needy. But I wondered if this was enough. Reading further, Jesus said, “For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.”

I knew that I daily encountered people who fit this exact description in my hometown of Akron, Ohio. My response? I simply passed them by. I saw them on the street corners asking for food, money, work, or clothing. And while the cynical said they were simply too lazy to work, scamming the gullible, or spent the money on drugs, I knew that ultimately it was not for me to judge. Jesus’s final words here echoed in my mind for many days, “Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.”

These words inspired me to do something, and maybe put myself on the front lines more than I had in the past. That is when I reached out to the Peter Maurin Center in Akron, Ohio. Its mission is to “serve the unsheltered and marginalized individuals and families in the Greater Akron area by offering prepared meals, warm clothing and friendship at our facilities and in the community.” I had donated toys and clothes through our church to this center at Christmastime, but I had never visited and met the homeless personally.

I remember my first visit vividly. It was a very cold winter day and so they opened the doors early so the “guests” (as they are referred to) could get warm before lunch. All the regular volunteers already had their preparatory tasks assigned, and so I was told just to go mingle and make everyone feel welcome. I will admit this did not come easily to me, so I simply sat down with a few guests and started listening, and eventually talking. We talked about sports and the weather, and instantly I felt like I was simply relaxing with new friends.

Then a priest, who I did not know, came over to talk with us. I quickly realized that as he was sharing his grace and time with us, he simply assumed that I was one of the unsheltered guests. Suddenly there were no walls between us. I realized that I was no different from them, and they were no different from me. In fact, imagining a “them and me” was the worst way that I could conceive of this meeting. It was simply “us.”

One of the rules I had been given was not to offer any money or gifts while I was mingling with the guests. My next encounter put that to the test when I met a man who was visibly very upset. I asked him if he was alright, and he told me the story of earlier that morning when someone stole his prized coffee mug. He always braved the cold days with a strong and hot cup of coffee in that mug. And today, that warmth was stolen from him.

There are a million things we take for granted in our lives, and I added a new one to my list that day. I thought about my messy car at that moment that had several old cups in it that I considered a nuisance to clean. While I could not respond personally to his need, I made sure that one of the long-term volunteers knew about his loss, and I was so gratified to see him
leaving later that day with a hot cup of coffee in his new mug. I thought, maybe today I had taken one small step towards the ideals expressed in Matthew 25.

That was my personal first experience with this remarkable organization. Let me share some of its history (I am a Professor of History, so you could not escape that!) Peter Maurin was an immigrant from France and was the inspiration for The Peter Maurin Center. Peter and Dorothy Day started The Catholic Worker newspaper in 1933 in the height of the depression in New York City. Dorothy and others sold the paper for a penny at Union Square, which is still the price of the newspaper today. Peter and Dorothy later opened a store-front facility to serve the multitude of hungry during the Great Depression. Today there are 240 Catholic Worker communities that are “committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry, and forsaken.”

The Peter Maurin Center in Akron opened its doors at 1096 South Main Street in February 2006. Its building was initially constructed in 1913 and had served as a mortuary, bar, and a restaurant. Having been vacant for ten years it required a great deal of renovation. It is in one of the poorest residential areas in Akron.

Thankfully, it has a bus stop at its front door. In 2015 we established Alex’s Memorial Bus Pass, (Alex was my nephew), because treasure to a person living on the edge is access to transportation. Bus passes are made available to those in need for medical and legal appointments, for job interviews, and sometimes, during inclement weather, just to provide the warmth of a City Bus during winter weather.

In December 2014 the new Peter Maurin Community Center opened next door to the dining hall (see the video of the dedication I took here). The new center enables us to provide additional ministries such as providing bicycles and seasonally appropriate clothing to our guests. We also offer personal hygiene items and some medical screening. We help facilitate vision and dental services for our visitors. And we simply offer a place to enable our guests to be part of the community. In the summertime you can see the beautiful Community Garden between our two buildings, made possible through the efforts of Let’s Grow Akron.

The Peter Maurin Center is a work in progress. We are completely supported by volunteers, with no paid staff, and no government assistance. Please visit us at our website to learn more about our various ministries and services to the unsheltered and marginalized in our community.
Candidates for Office

The AMU & APU Newman Center will conduct its first election of officers in October 2018. We are grateful that two current officers have decided to run for election and welcome the two additional members who have volunteered to serve in a leadership capacity. While we do not have multiple candidates for any leadership role this year, we encourage you to read the candidate bios and show your support by voting in the upcoming election.

For President—Anne Midgley: Anne graduated from American Public University in August 2014 with a MA in Military History (Honors). Having been in the financial services industry for almost forty years, she retired from her position as Senior Vice President and Business Support Executive with Bank of America in 2015. Anne and her husband, Bill, recently celebrated their 39th anniversary. They have two children, James (wife Lauren) and Katie ( fiancé Kyle) and recently welcomed their first grandchild, Will. Since retiring, Anne has committed herself to deepening her faith and growing in her knowledge of Catholicism. She has been active in volunteer work with her home parish, Our Lady of the Assumption, and is passionate about sharing the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith. Working with Newman Connections, APUS Student Life, the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, WV and with the three Newman Center academic advisors, Dr. Mark Bowles, Dr. Cynthia Nolan, and Dr. Robert Smith, Anne founded the AMU & APU Newman Center in April 2017. Anne has been active in a number of American Military University (AMU) and American Public University (APU) student organizations. She serves as an editor for the Saber and Scroll Journal and previously served two terms as the Editor-In-Chief of the Journal. Anne is pictured at the right with Dr. John Dolan, Newman Center Honorary Member, during the 2018 Alumni Rally.

For Vice President—Gregory Comiskey: Gregory graduated from American Military University in November 2013 with a BA in History (Magna Cum Laude). He medically retired from the U.S. Army in October 2013 after 17.5 years with the rank of First Sergeant. He served as a Scout in most light Cavalry and Airborne units. He deployed twice to Iraq (2003-2004 and 2008-2009). Greg received a Purple Heart in 2003, a Bronze Star in 2009, and is a Disabled Veteran. Now that he has transitioned from working full time to civilian life, he devotes all of his time to coaching, teaching, and mentoring the youth in Southwest Central, GA near Fort Benning where he lives with his wife Crystal and eight-year-old daughter, Shelby Lynn. Since retiring, Greg has begun teaching at Saint Anne-Pacelli Catholic School in Columbus, GA, where he teaches Church History and Sacred Scripture. He actively sponsors Seneca Choices for Life, the local pro-life ministry where his wife works. He is a Knight of Columbus and the Knights of Columbus Youth Director at Bishop Gross Council 1019. He is active in the Knights of Columbus Pro-life ministry, the Saint Anne Catholic Church Pro-life ministry, and has participated in events with the Georgia Right to Life and the Chattahoochee Valley United for Life organizations. Greg is currently two classes away from completing his Georgia Teaching certificate, which will qualify him to teach History to grades 6-12. Additionally, he has only three courses remaining in his Master of Public Administration program at AMU. Greg hopes to finish both his Certificate and his MPA by next Spring. Greg is a member of the AMU & APU Historical Studies Honors Society, Pi Gamma Mu, Student Veterans of America, The Golden Key, Saber and Scroll Historical Society, and The Cardinal Newman Society, and the American Historical Association. He is also a DAV Life member and a Patron NRA member. Gregory teaches U.S. and World History at Jordan Vocational High School in Columbus, GA as he earned his Post-Secondary Educational Teaching Certificate (History) in May 2018.

For Secretary—Steve Thompson: Steve is a student at American Military University, currently pursuing a master’s degree in Military Studies. He is a career Army officer who has been serving for the past twenty-seven years in various command and staff capacities. A 4th Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, he functioned as a Recorder and as a Deputy Grand Knight in that organization and has been active in several K of C volunteer programs. He strives to continuously learn and enlighten others about the Catholic Faith through activities in the parishes to which he has belonged over the past years. He enjoys spending as much time as possible with his family. His wife Jennifer is an interior designer, while his son Alex is a student at George Mason University and his daughter is studying at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

For Webmaster—Tatum Regan: My name is Tatum Regan. I believe I would be considered a freshman, though I could be wrong! I have currently received over half the credits I need to get my bachelor’s degree in psychology. After getting all the necessary degrees and certifications, I intend to become a child’s psychiatrist. I am also considering whether or not I want to work on ways to own my own practice. I currently live with my parents, brother, sister, and our pets. I am running for the Webmaster position. To prepare for this, I have been doing research on how to properly run a website. I have also ensured that I will have time to not only attend to the duties I would have as Webmaster, but to excel at these duties.


Events and Resources

Upcoming Events

- September 25 at 7:00pm EDT: History of Catholic Eastern Rite Churches, by Fr. Joseph Matlak
- November 14, 10:00-2:00pm EST: Virtual Organization Fair
- December 15, 2018: Wreaths Across America
- May 10-11, 2019: APUS Commencement Weekend

For information about the National Wreaths Across America event, contact member Lynn McAfee.
For information about all other events, contact Anne Midgley.

Resources

Bible
Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd edition
Rich Gift of Love (Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body)
Daily Mass Readings
Catholic Social Teaching
St. Thomas Aquinas The Summa Theologica
The Confessions of St. Augustine
The Fathers of the Church and their Writings
US Conference of Catholic Bishops
Vatican Radio
Vatican News Service
EWTN
Word on Fire
Documents from Vatican II:
Dei Verbum
Lumen Gentium
Sacrosanctum Concilium
Gaudium et Spes

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