

Reflections

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Catholic Family Newsletter

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Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

Jesus is the Gate Way to Heaven

Family Consecration Prayer

The Miracle of the Loaves & Fishes

Charlene Richard, The Little Cajun Saint

The Real Presence of Christ

*****THOUGHT FOR TODAY*****

There is **no evil** to be faced
that Christ does not face with us.
There is **no enemy** that Christ
has not already conquered.
There is **no cross** to bear that Christ
has not already borne for us,
and does not now bear with us.

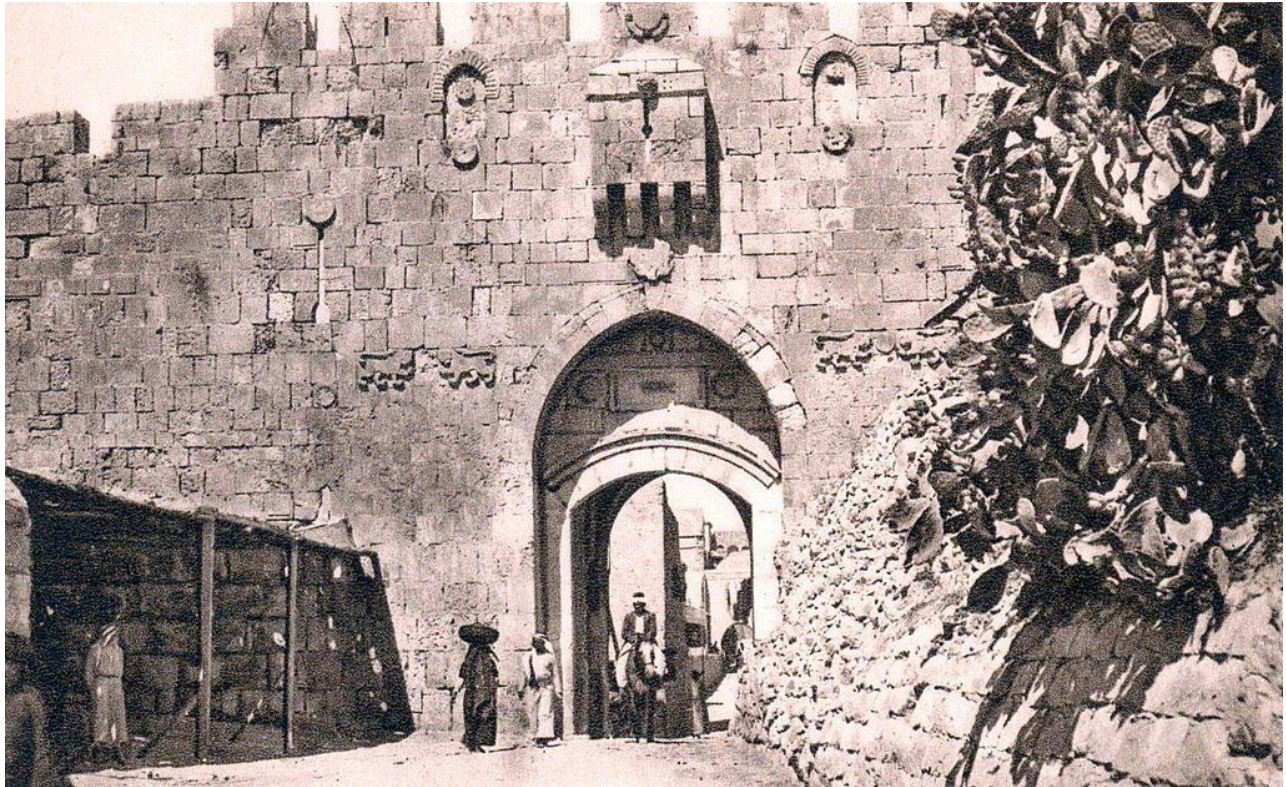
– *Pope John Paul II*



By: Richard Pickard
Blessings to All:

Some passages in the Bible are overlooked by many Christians, that actually have deeper and profound meanings. One in particular, concerns the statement by Jesus, that he is the Gate for the Sheep found in John 10:7. Here is the true meaning and the significance of the Sheep Gate as mentioned in the Bible.

The Sheep Gate in Jerusalem



The Sheep Gate is mentioned in the Bible in the book of Nehemiah, specifically in Nehemiah 3:1. This gate was one of the entrances to the city of Jerusalem and held significant symbolic importance. It was named the Sheep Gate because it was the gate through which sheep and other livestock would enter the city for sacrifice in the temple for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus uses this image of the Sheep Gate in His teachings to help his followers understand His role in the protection and salvation of those who believe in Him.

In John 10:7, Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep." And in John 10:9 Jesus says "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture." People of His time understood the meaning of His words.

Jesus is emphasizing that those who follow him will be safe and cared for. But also, in John 1:29 and John 1:36, Jesus is called the Lamb of God. The perfect

and ultimate sacrifice for sin. Not only would Jesus be the Gate to eternal life, but He would offer Himself as the ultimate sacrifice on the Cross for our salvation. He becomes through the death on the Cross, the doorway or gate into Heaven through which humanity enters.

We see in Isaiah 53:5-6, a prophecy of the sacrifice that the Messiah would make for His people which Isaiah calls 'sheep that have gone astray.' "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds, we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The suffering and death of Jesus on the cross are seen as the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. The New Testament presents Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). The accounts of His crucifixion and the suffering He endured are central to the Gospel message, highlighting the sacrificial nature of His mission.

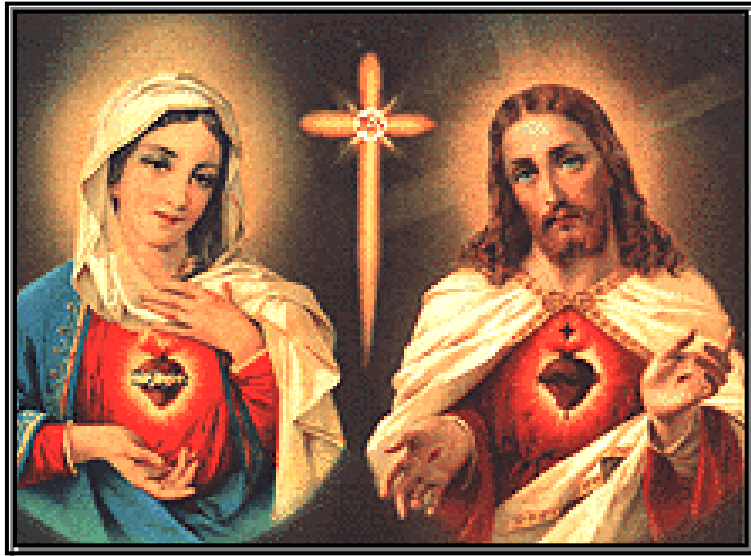
All throughout the Jewish history we see the sacrifice of sheep for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus as the Lamb of God is certainly prefigured in Old Testament account of the Passover. When God prepared to bring His final plague on the Egyptians, the death of every firstborn male of the Egyptians, including the crown prince of the Pharaoh, He instructed His people Israel to slay lambs without blemish and to spread the blood on their doorposts. God promised to pass over all the houses where He saw the blood of the lambs on the doorposts (Ex. 12:3-13). Just as the blood of those lambs caused the people of Israel to be spared from God's wrath, the Lamb of God redeemed His people from the penalty that was due for their sin.

Each word of Jesus spoken during His lifetime, has meaning. Sometimes, you have to look deeper into His words to find them.



Jesus said He is The Sheep Gate and described as the Lamb of God in the Gospel of John. These are examples of the true meaning of this relationship with us. Both as Protector and the One pure offering for our sins. Amen.

Family Consecration Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus And the Immaculate Heart of Mary

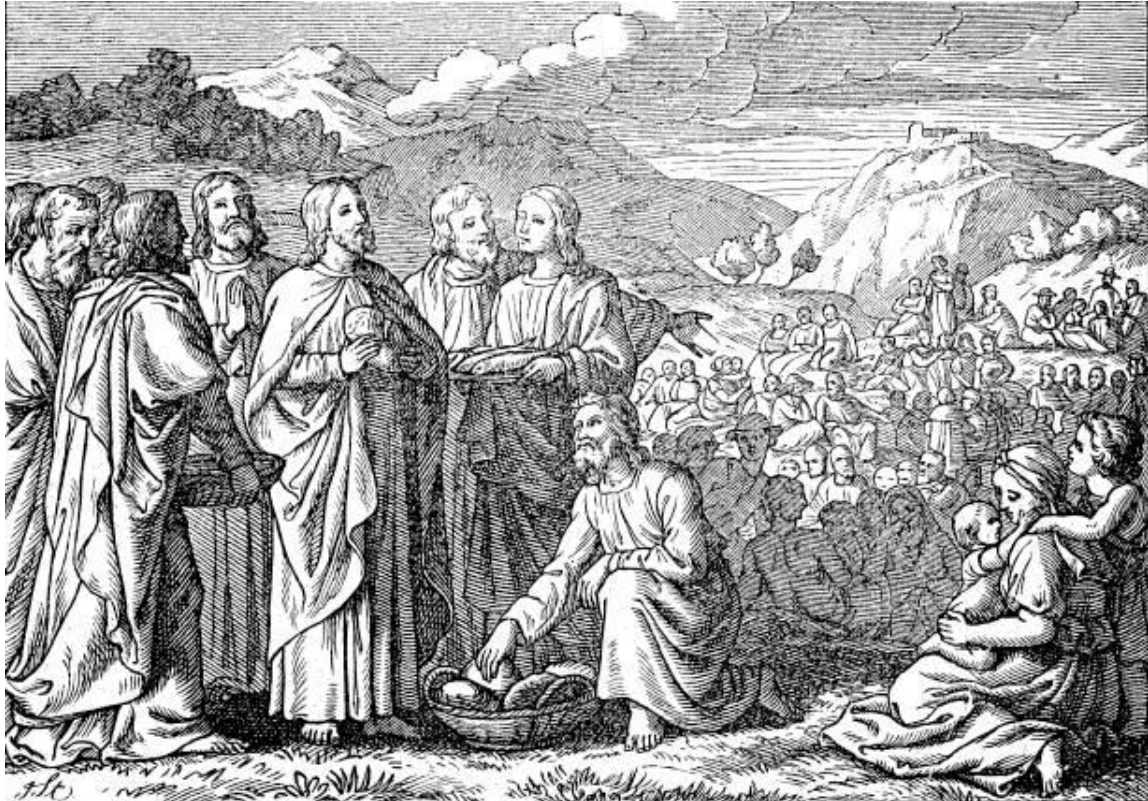


Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary, I come to you to consecrate myself and my entire family to Your Two Hearts. I desire to renew the vows of my baptism and place each member of my family through an act of Faith, Hope and Love into loving union with the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I dedicate myself and each member of My family to the Guardian Angels God has given each one of us. O Holy Guardian Angels, enlighten, guide And protect each one, so as to lead us safely home to heaven.

At Fatima, dear Mother of God, you appeared with St. Joseph and the Child Jesus blessing the world. O Holy Family, Bestow blessings upon me and my entire family so that we may live the Christ-life. I desire that each member of my family adore always the Most Blessed Trinity and love our God in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Dear Jesus, please keep my family in the state of grace sufficient for salvation, especially at the hour of our deaths. For you alone, are our salvation through your Cross and Resurrection. Amen.

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes



Of all of Jesus' many miracles, only the resurrection and the feeding of the 5,000 are recorded in all four Gospels. Obviously, the Gospel writers considered the feeding of 5,000 a significant miracle. When Christ fed the masses that day, He began with only "five barley loaves and two fish," borrowed from a boy's lunch (John 6:9). To feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish is indeed miraculous, but the Greek term used in Matthew 14:21 specifies males, and Matthew further emphasizes the point by adding, "Besides women and children." Many Bible scholars believe the actual number fed that day could have been 15,000–20,000 people.

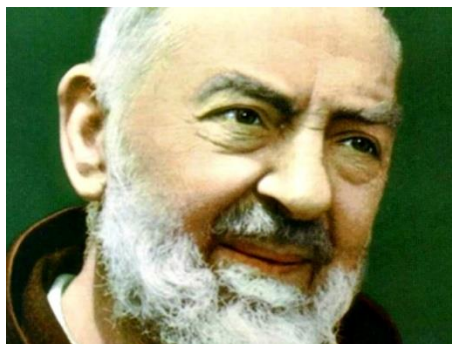


Jesus' disciples had wanted to send the people away because evening was approaching and they were in a remote place. They knew the people needed to reach surrounding villages soon to buy food, find lodging, etc., or they would likely go hungry. But Christ had a better idea: "You give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16). At this point, the disciples should have recalled the many miracles they had seen Jesus do. Perhaps some of them did, but Andrew asked, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" (John 6:9). And Philip exclaimed, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Jesus called for the bread and fish to be brought to Him. He then gave thanks for the meal, broke the bread, and gave it to His disciples to give to the crowd. Amazingly, the entire multitude was fed with that small meal. Jesus provided "as much as they wanted" (John 6:11), and "they all ate and were satisfied" (Matthew 14:20). *Christ did not just meet the need; He lavished them with so much food that there were "twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish" left over (Mark 6:43).*

Jesus Will Exceed Your Expectations

God will shatter the pint-sized expectations of what He can do for you and your family. Little is 'much', when God is in your lives. When Christians are willing to walk and follow Jesus, ordinary things in life become extraordinary. Christians must never believe their lives are unimportant, no matter what their bank account shows. God delights in those who follow His Son, Jesus, no matter their worldly status. Prayer and faith in Jesus are the most important thing that you can possess. St Padre Pio had these sayings that seem relative to today.



"Today's society does not pray. That is why it is falling apart."

"Prayer is the best weapon we possess, the key that opens the heart of God."

"Pray, hope and don't worry. Worry is useless. Our Merciful Lord will listen to your prayer."

It is noteworthy that Jesus fed the people through the agency of His disciples. He could have simply snapped His fingers and caused everyone present to have a meal, but He didn't. Instead, He "gave . . . to his disciples to distribute to the people" In this way, the disciples had to trust the Lord for everything they distributed. Our trust in Jesus and the prayers of your heart for our families is greatly needed today.

We should also be reminded that our problems are never too large for God to handle. God wants to meet our needs, and He wants to lavish us with spiritual blessings, even to overflowing (Psalm 23:5).

Pray, Hope and Don't Worry. Jesus is listening.

Charlene Richard, 'The Little Cajun Saint'



Charlene Richard was born in 1947, the second of ten children born of Mary Alice and Joseph Elvin Richard. The Richard family lived in a small Louisiana town named Church Point, close to Lafayette. The Richards were a typical Cajun-Catholic farm family — their sons were altar servers, while the daughters sang in the choir. They regularly attended Holy Mass three days a week in addition to Sunday. Charlene and her siblings attended Catholic school until she was in second grade. If the children were not at school, they were tending to the Richard's farm, where they raised several different types of crops and raised multiple farm animals.

The New York Times describes Charlene as "exuberant, loyal, [and] generous." Charlene's "Mom-Mom" played a major role in the young girl's spiritual development. Charlene was known to pray the rosary nightly by an altar she had improvised on her bedside table. At a young age, she developed a particular devotion to St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and desired to be a saint as great as she. In 1959, Satan, in the form of a woman wearing a black bonnet covering her face, allegedly appeared to the young girl twice. Though no one else witnessed this vision, Charlene's story was believed as she was honest and devout.

It was not long after Charlene received the strange apparitions that she began to have intense hip pain and many bruises appeared on her body. She received radiation therapy, but it provided no relief. She began bleeding from her rectum and severely from her nose. After visiting her local doctor, Charlene was sent with a letter to Lafayette to see a specialist. Once the specialist opened the letter, he asked that a priest be present while he explained Charlene's condition to the Richards. This priest was Fr. Joseph Brennan — a young, recently ordained priest who later stated, "It was pure chance that I was the priest in the room when the news was told to Charlene's parents." After Fr. Brennan's arrival, the doctor told Mary Alice and Joseph Elvin Richard that their daughter had acute lymphatic leukemia and had about two weeks to live. Understandably, the Richards did not wish to inform Charlene of her condition and asked that Fr. Brennan do so instead.

Fr. Brennan reluctantly agreed to tell Charlene the heartbreaking news. He kindly told her, "A beautiful lady is going to come to take you home." In reply, Charlene said, "When she does, I'll say, 'Blessed Mother, Father Brennan says hello.'"

During the thirteen days that followed, she was in excruciating pain, but Charlene was joyful and did not complain once. Fr. Brennan spent much time with her during these days, teaching her of redemptive suffering. Each day, Charlene would ask the priest, "Who am I to suffer for today?" Often, Fr. Brennan would suggest that her sufferings be offered for another patient with a terminal illness or a person who was not Catholic. Fr. Brennan later stated that the sick she prayed for recovered, and the non-Catholics converted. The day before she died, she kissed Fr. Brennan and told him that she would pray for him while she was in heaven. The day after, August 11, 1959, she passed from this life.

Though Charlene's life on earth ended over six decades ago, her story is far from over. There have been several miracles attributed to Charlene since her death, thus leading to the opening of her cause. Many people pray at her grave each year, especially those with illnesses asking that she heal them. Within fifteen years of Charlene's death, there were cards made with her picture, as well as intercessory and beatification prayers on them. Her evident sanctity in life, especially in her final days, and the purported miracles after her death earned her the sobriquet, "the Little Cajun Saint."

Thanks to her proponents — Fr. Brennan; her brother, John Dale; and a witness to several miracles attributed to Charlene, Bonnie Brossard — at the beginning of 2020, Charlene's cause was opened in the Diocese of Lafayette. If Charlene is to be canonized, she would be the first official saint from Cajun Country.

On the thirtieth anniversary of her death, there was a commemorative Mass offered where Fr. Brennan spoke of his experiences with the young saint, saying, "Charlene taught us lessons in humility, acceptance, simplicity, and faith. We have many books teaching us how to live. Charlene wrote the book on how to die."

The overriding lesson of Charlene's story is in the words of Christ Himself in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done." Rather than viewing suffering as something to complain about, we can look at it as not only an opportunity for growth in our relationship with God, but also a way to help others as Charlene did, when she offered her agonizing pain for whomever Fr. Brennan requested, she pray.

Charlene's life shows us that pain, whether it be physical, emotional, or spiritual, is truly a gift from God, as it gives us the opportunity to imitate Christ in His Passion and death, as we can see the words of St. Paul, "For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow into our lives; so too does the encouragement we receive through Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:5). Though she died young, Charlene has changed many people's lives both during her life on earth and after her death, by means of her edifying story and intercessory power.



Ryan Verret holds his infant daughter Azélie during a 2009 visit to the gravesite of Charlene Richard at St. She was miraculously cured of severe Ventriculomegaly and pontocerebellar hypoplasia, resulting in a severely disabled life or early infant death. She had a head ultrasound and MRI done, with results showing no signs of brain abnormalities. Just a healthy little girl. The drawing was made by his daughter, Azélie, at age 15.

The Church for 2,000 Years Believed the Teaching of the Apostles and Early Church Fathers

The Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 10-16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? So when we receive communion, we actually participate in the body and blood of Christ. Paul also gave respect and honor to the Eucharist in 1 Cor 11:27-29 when eating the Lord's Supper.....

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the **Body and Blood of the Lord**. A person should examine himself and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the **Body**, eats and drinks judgment on himself."*

St. Paul would not threaten the believers with the wrath of God's judgment if the bread and wine were just that. It doesn't make sense to tell people that God's judgment will be incurred if they eat plain bread and wine while they are in sin.....It only makes sense in light of the reality of the True Presence's of Christ in the bread and wine.

A few decades later around 110 AD., the Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius said "those who hold heterodox (unorthodox) opinions, they abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the **Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again.**" (Ignatius, Epistula ad Smyrnaeos 6, 21.)

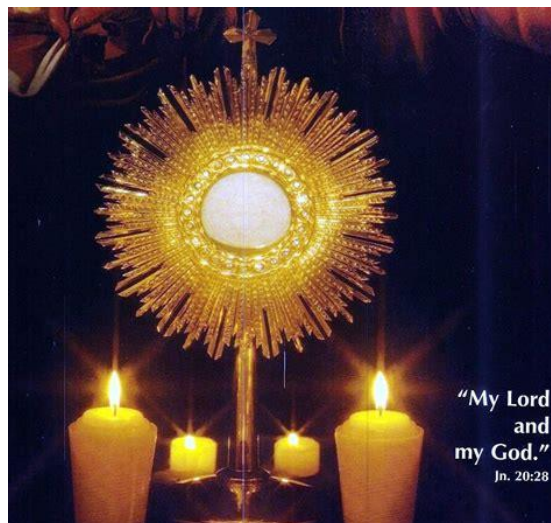
Forty years later, a renowned Church father, Justin Martyr, wrote (Apologia prima pro Christianis 65) "***We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true, and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration and is thereby living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by Him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus.***"

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in 373 AD said in his Sermon to the Newly Baptized; "***You shall see the Levites bringing loaves and a cup of wine and placing them on a table. So long as the prayers of supplication and***

entreaties have not been made, there is only bread and wine. But after the great and wonderful prayers have been completed, then the bread is become the Body, and the wine the Blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures presented in the middle of the fourth century, told his listeners: "**Do not, therefore, regard the Bread and Wine as simply that; for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm.**"

The early Church took Christ seriously about His True Presences in the Eucharist. In fact, there is no record from the early centuries that implies Christians doubted the constant Catholic interpretation of the True Presence. There exists no document in which the literal interpretation is opposed.



The Divine Praises: An Act of Reparation

“In reparation for the sins of the world. ”



The Divine Praises

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most Holy.

Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

Amen.

**The International Catholic Family Newsletter
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Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio

St. Paul Ministry

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>