# LIFE IN CHRIST

Receiving God's Gifts — Sharing God's Gifts

The Newsletter of Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, MS + August 2021 +



On the Cover:

Praying Girl
Roberto Ferruzzi
1854-1944

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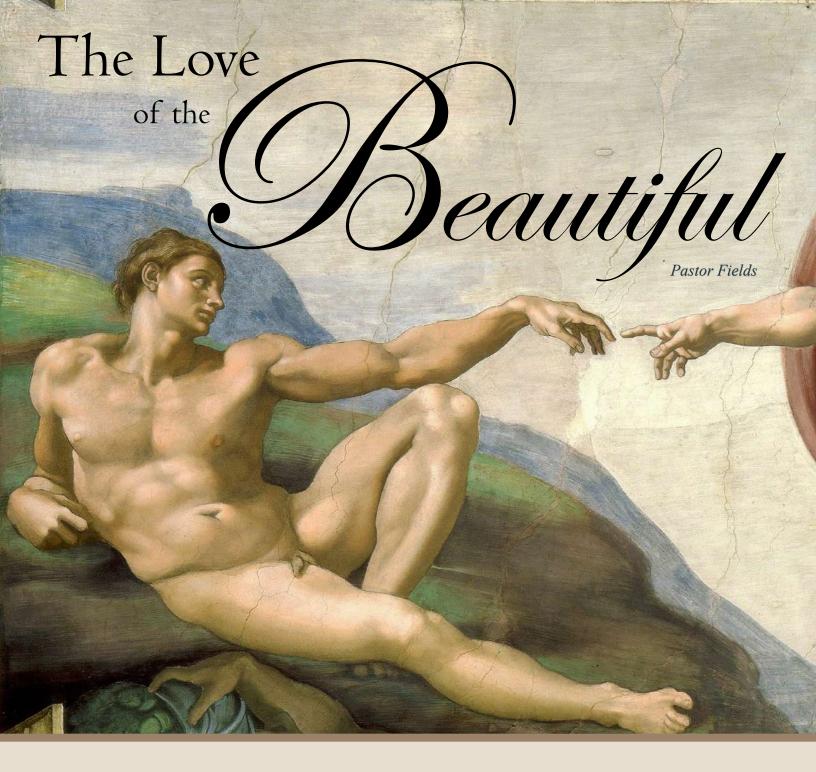






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Throughout the year, we learn through the readings of the lectionary, through the sermons preached upon in those texts, what is true, what is good, what is honest, what is pure. We learn Truth, what God has revealed of Himself, Who is the absolute truth. We learn what is Good, what is His perfect will for His creation.

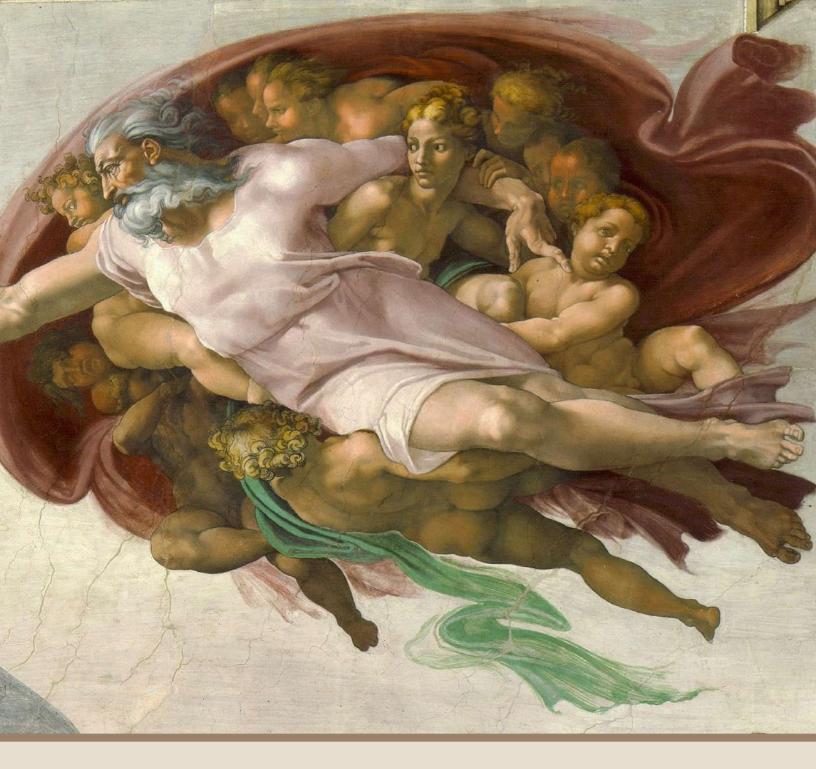
The early Church had many names for what we now call 'Christianity.' They called it 'The Way.' They called it 'Worship in Spirit.' But most commonly, they called it the *Philokalia*, Greek for 'The Love of the Beautiful.'

Our Fathers in the Faith, those who endured whip and lash, lions' teeth and cruel men's blades, believed

that they suffered all that they suffered, bled all the blood that their veins held, for the sake *of beauty*.

It is not natural for us to think of our religion as *beauty*. Beauty we associate with great paintings or statues or architecture or music. And yet is it no coincidence that the Church has created the most sublime works of art; the most heart-rending statues; the most breathtaking architecture; the most rapturous music?

And why did the Church in the depths of its medieval poverty create such a great wonder as (the now destroyed) Notre Dame Cathedral? Why did Michelangelo blind himself painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? Why did Bach labor week after week



composing hymn and song and cantata in the aftermath of the devastation of a war that ravaged Europe for thirty years with massacre, murder, and disease?

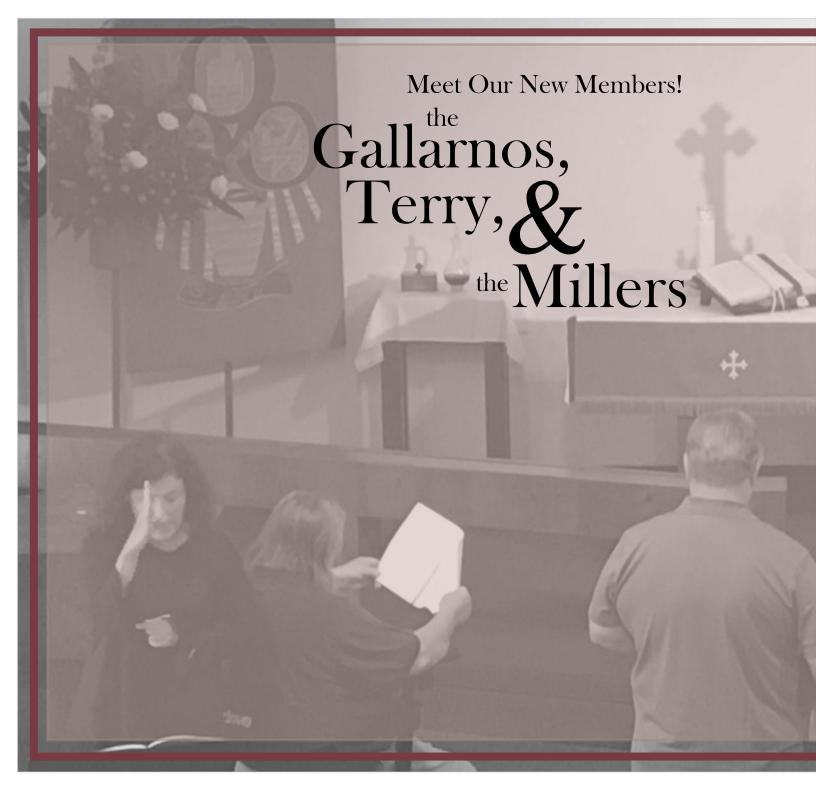
It was *beauty* that compelled them. And not simply beauty, but the beauty of Jesus; the beauty of His work, the beauty of His love.

Now you may say that such things are beautiful, but they are far off. We do not worship in Notre Dame. We do not look upward, and see the immaculate art of the Sistine Chapel. We do not close our eyes to listen to the perfect harmonies of Bach's invention. We worship in a simple sanctuary; we gaze upon the images that our modest incomes can afford; we hear the music that our sister and deaconess can contrive; that our lay choir can give voice. Yet the great Christian artists of old and the humble artists of our congregation gaze upon the same beauty, the same nobility, the same grace.

And how could they not? For they all look upon the same Christ; whether with great means, or with small means, we all look upon the same Christ, our beautiful Lord.

Some may think, 'Surely Our Lord is the way, the truth, and the life. Surely He is our Savior, Our Redeemer, Our Good Shepherd. But is He beautiful?'

Dear Christian, were you there when Jairus wept over his dead daughter, cold, yet covered in feverish



Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133). And indeed, the Lord has blessed the communion of Christ Lutheran with new brothers and sisters!

Eddie and Christina Gallarno have come to us from Grace Lutheran in Little Rock, Arkansas. Initially attracted to CLC by the rich liturgy and friendly fellowship, they have worshipped with us since their sweet baby girl, Phoebe (9 mos), was only a few months old (raising her up in the way she should go!). Eddie and Christina are a mathematically inclined couple: Eddie works as a research engineer at the U.S. Army Engineer

Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, and Christina has a masters in applied mathematics. However, in their down time, Eddie plays bluegrass and disc golf, Christa draws and paints, and both enjoy reading and playing board games.

Though originally also hailing from Little Rock, **Terry Hubmann** recently moved here from St. Matthew Lutheran in Gulfport, Mississippi. A long-time Lutheran, he looked for an LCMS church in Jackson and found us! Terry spent his career in the U.S. Air Force as a repairman, wandering far and wide as the



military needed (ask him about his adventures to Alaska and beyond!). Now that he is retired, he enjoys fishing, woodworking, and listening to music.

The **Miller** clan came to us from Our Savior Lutheran in Columbus, Mississippi. **Jo**, the esteemed matron of the family, is an Illinois native who eventually found her way down to Dixie. Formerly a banker, she is now reveling in retirement and filling her time with everything from crochet to sci fi movies. She is also an avid reader of mysteries! **David and Michelle** have married multiple hemispheres under one roof, as

David is a born and bred American, and Michelle is a proud Kiwi (i.e., from New Zealand). David worked as an air traffic controller for over forty years, and is now reaping the rewards of retirement: fishing, boating, traveling, and—of course!—home improvement activities. Michelle's interests include all manner of handiwork, from quilting and cross-stitch to scrapbooking and cardmaking. She also enjoys gardening, reading, and traveling (especially to see family back in NZ!).

We praise God for these new members of our Christ Lutheran family, and we look forward to getting to know them more!













Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for Your great goodness in bringing these Your sons and daughters to the knowledge of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and enabling them both with the heart to believe and with the mouth to confess His saving name. Grant that, bringing forth the fruits of faith, they may continue steadfast and victorious to the day when all who have fought the good fight of faith shall receive the crown of righteousness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



(Continued from page 5)

sweat, and your Lord brought her up to life? Were you there when the gentile woman wept and plead, and your Lord granted her her prayer because of her faith? Were you there when your Lord submitted Himself to be scourged and mutilated, so that you could be free? Free from sin? Free from Satan? Free from Hell? Free to enter the sapphire halls of eternal glory?

If you were Jairus, and saw your daughter raised from her plague; if you were the gentile heathen, and saw your desperate pleading given answer; if you were a hateful sinner, and saw the blood drip from your innocent God's back upon the stone pavement out of love for you; yes, love, for you, who did not even know that there was anyone who truly loved you, who would truly bleed for you; what would you call that?

I think you would, with tears in your eyes, call it what Our Fathers in Faith called it for ten thousand years. You would call it *beautiful*.

And you would pray: 'Let the beauty of The Lord Our God be upon us.'

To Him alone be all glory, honor, and dominion, now and forever. Amen.■



# Signum Christi How to Cross Yourself & Why Pastor Fields

It is often a bit of an awkward moment for many traditional Christians when they cross themselves, whether it be during a blessing, or after receiving the Lord's Supper. They know that they are supposed to do something with their hands. They know they should make some shape with it, then move it around in something that resembles a 't' on their body.

This is truly a shame, as the sign of the cross is perhaps one of the most ancient confessions in the entire history of Christianity, and should be for us the most natural.

Further confusion may be added to the matter from the fact that clergy and laity are supposed to make the sign of the cross differently. But this month, let us focus on the sign of the cross as you, God's baptized, can make it.

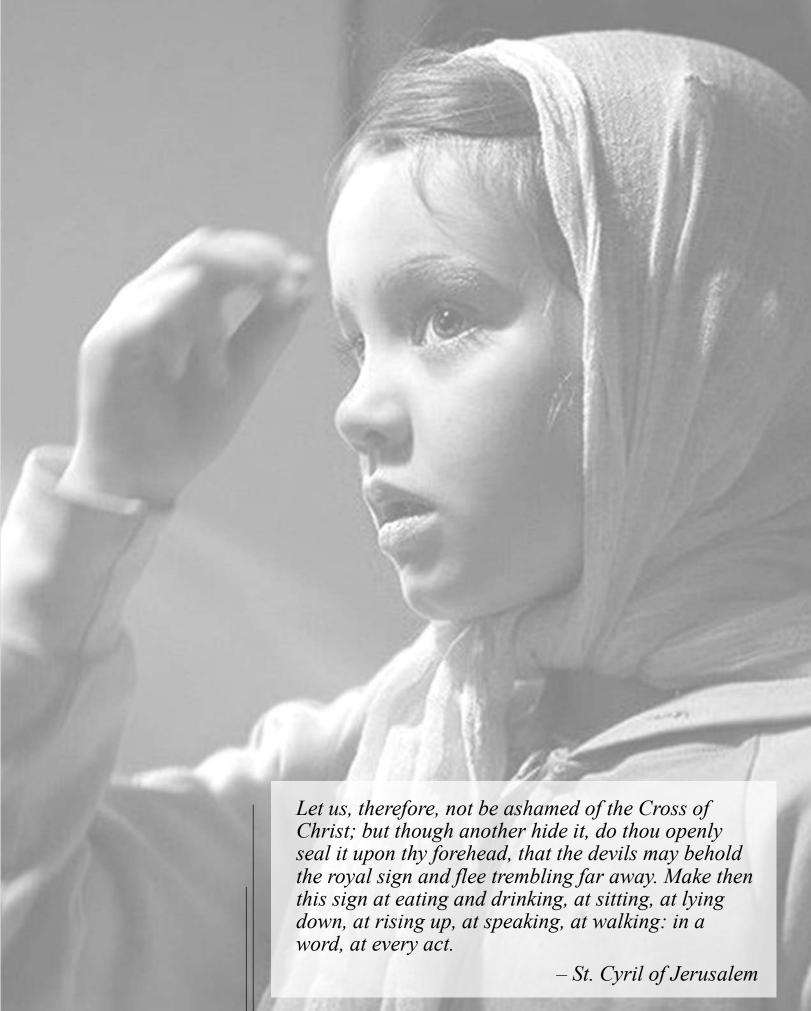
Here is a simple explanation of how to 'cross yourself', and what it means.

The sign of the cross should be made with your right hand in this position: your thumb, index finger, and middle finger touching each-other, and your pinky and ring finger pressed against the middle of your palm.

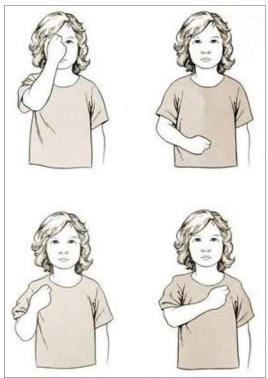
Once your hand is in this position, you may draw the sign of the cross upon your body by touching your hand to your forehead, waist, right shoulder, then left shoulder. Remember: Up, down, right, left!

The three fingers (thumb, index, and middle) joined together signify the three persons of the Trinity. The two fingers (ring and pinky) which are pressed against the palm signify the two natures of Christ. The palm signifies the place









Up, down, right, left

wherein the nails of Christ's crucifixion where driven into Him. By placing the two fingers signifying His two natures into your palm, you are confessing that Jesus, both in His divine and human natures was crucified. By drawing the cross upon your body with your hand in this position, you are confessing that God has marked you as His own; that He has Redeemed you, loves you, and will bring you to Himself.

Thus, when you make the sign of the cross, you confess that God is in three persons; that Christ is both God and Man; that Christ was crucified; and that He will bring you into His joyous glory.

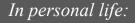
To make the sign of the cross is no small thing. It is, in a simple gesture, a confession of the entire Christian religion; the faith that, no matter how messed up your life is, no matter how sinful and damaged you are, will save you. And not merely save you, but, in your salvation, draw you to the presence of Jesus, who loves you more than any word can say.

# Adendum:

### and When?

#### When should one cross himself?

Well, I would say a simple answer is whenever he pleases, for making the confession of the sign of the cross is never a bad thing, and not something that could be said to happen to often. But there are traditional occasions, both in one's personal life and during the liturgy that one makes the sign of the cross. Here is a simple list of what is most generally accepted and practiced.



One may make the sign of the cross...

- 1. Before morning prayers.
- 2. Before evening prayers.
- 3. After the blessing of a meal.
- 4. During the phrase 'deliver us from evil' when saying the Lord's prayer.
- 5. During the last line of the recitation of any of the Ecumenical Creeds.
- 6. In times of distress or thanksgiving.







"Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and in everything; over the bread we eat. and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake: when we are in the way and when we are still. Great is that preservative: it is without price, for the poor's sake; without toil, for the sick, since also its grace is from God. It is the Sign of the faithful, and the *dread of evils; for* He has triumphed over them in it. having made a shew of them openly; for when they see the Cross. they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him. Who hath bruised the heads of the dragon. Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the Gift: but for this rather honor thy Benefactor."

> St. Cyril of Jerusalem

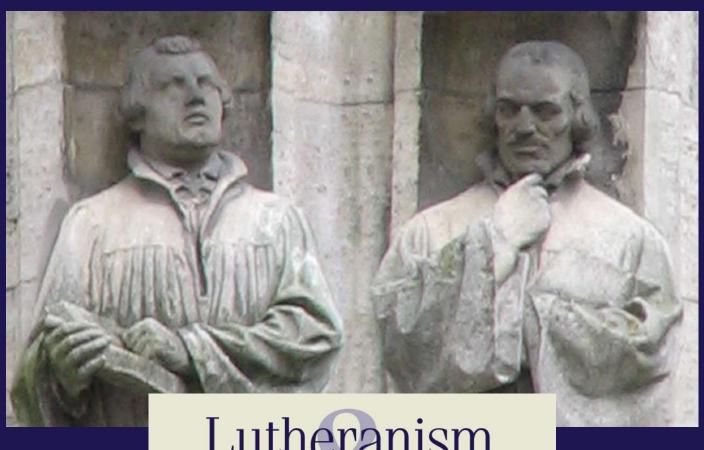
#### During the Liturgy:

One may make the sign of the cross...

- 1. When entering the sanctuary.
- 2. At the Invocation at the beginning of the service of Confession and Absolution.
- 3. At the reception of Absolution at the end of the service of Confession and Absolution during the phrase 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- 4. At the end of the Gloria In Excelsis, during the phrase 'thou only Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high.'
- 5. At the announcement of the Gospel Reading.
- 6. At the last line of the Nicene Creed, during the phrase 'and the life of the world to come.'
- 7. At the Sanctus, during the phrase 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'
- 8. During the phrase of the Lord's Prayer 'deliver us from evil.'
- 9. At The Words of Our Lord, also called the Verba, during the two phrases 'this is my body' and 'this cup is the new testament in my blood.'
- 10. At the Pax Domini.
- 11. At the dismissal from the communion rail, during the words 'depart in peace.'
- 12. At the Benediction at the end of the Liturgy, during the words 'and give you peace.' [Twelve times, one for each Apostle!]

This might seem like a lot, but it is a way of involving your physical body in your life of prayer, both in Church and outside of Church. It is, of course, *adiaphora*, that is, something neither required nor forbidden. But the Lutheran church has always counted it among those good and pious practices that, in small ways, encourage and build up our faith together.





# Lutheranism the Classics VI **Beauty**

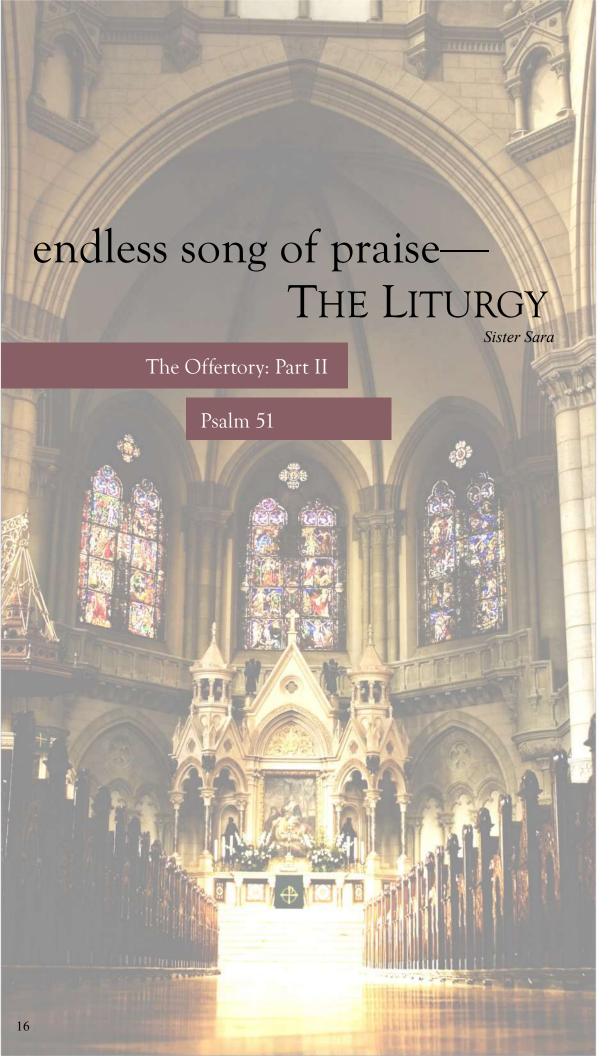
#### September 30-October 1, 2021

Lutheranism & the Classics is a biennial conference designed for the language and literary scholar with an interest in the Reformation and Lutheranism's connection with the Greek and Roman classics, focusing on specific topics for each conference. This 6th biennial conference celebrates Lutheranism's preoccupation with beauty in the past while contemplating its value for the propagation of the faith to present and future generations.

From the Reformation onward, Lutherans have not only held the languages and literatures of the ancient Greeks and Romans in high regard, but also respected their theories of aesthetics and artistic sensibilities. While Martin Luther came to believe that beauty is found not in an Aristotelian golden mean but rather in God's own self-giving in Christ Jesus under forms that may seem ugly to unbelief, he valued proportionality, aesthetics, music, and the visual arts as precious gifts of a generous Creator.

The conference will feature three plenary papers, a banquet address, and as many as 15 sectional presenters on such themes as Reformation-era perspectives on beauty in Plato and Aristotle, the role of images in the Early Church, the strange beauty of the cross, beauty in Orthodoxy, Pietism, and Rationalism, how Christian children might learn aesthetics, and iconolatry and iconoclasm. Latin will be used in three worship settings, with three pedagogical papers in the final session designed especially for Lutheran teachers, classical educators, and homeschoolers. A discount shall be given to the first 10 registrants who belong to the Consortium of Classical Lutheran Educators.





"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

(Ezekiel 36:26)

This month we look forward to the Service of the Sacrament with one last song. We ponder the words of the offertory found in Divine Service III, words taken from Psalm 51:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and uphold me with Thy

free Spirit. Amen. (Psalm 51:10-12)

Psalm 51 is a pretty well-known one, as far as psalms go. If you remember, it was first prayed by penitent King David after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband. We often turn to these fitting words in our own times of sorrow and repentance, seeking God's forgiveness and restoration.

Although Psalm 51 is a beautiful confession and confident prayer of hope in God's mercies, one does have to ask why we recall its words at this particular point in our liturgy... I mean, we already began the whole church service with Confession and Absolution. Pastor pronounced forgiveness

upon us and welcomed us into the presence of God. Is this a confession just to cover our sins from the past half hour (we all know we let our minds wander during the sermon...)? Or maybe there is something more going on...?

Well, of course there is something more going on! If there's one thing we have learned by now, it is that nothing in the liturgy is arbitrary—for God is not arbitrary! As His own Body, all that we do is done on purpose, as a confession of who we are and who God is.

So, what is going on? For the answer, we must look to an Old Testament prophet, St. Ezekiel. Ezekiel brings many harsh words of judgment against the people of Israel, for they have repeatedly rejected God and scorned His love, unabashedly whoring after idols and reveling in utter wickedness. Indeed, just as Ezekiel warned, devastating destruction came to Jerusalem by the hand of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, and God's people were exiled from the Promised Land. But, in their woe and penitence, Ezekiel (who was taken captive with them) speaks to words of comfort, even of tenderness, to God's people:

"[Thus says the Lord God:] I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God." (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

Here, Ezekiel prophesies of the restoration of Israel, even of their *messianic* deliverance. He speaks of a time beyond his own, and indeed beyond Ezra and Nehemiah (who eventually help to rebuild Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile). In fact, Ezekiel beholds a New Israel - a *New Man*, you might say - who is no longer willfully divorced from and scornful of God. Rather than being alienated from the source of Life, and reduced to the dust of death and a heart of stone, this New Man restores humanity to its right relationship with God. He, in His own Body, bears the long-promised heart of flesh, and within Him

resides God's Spirit. Jesus is the New Man. In Him, all is made perfect.

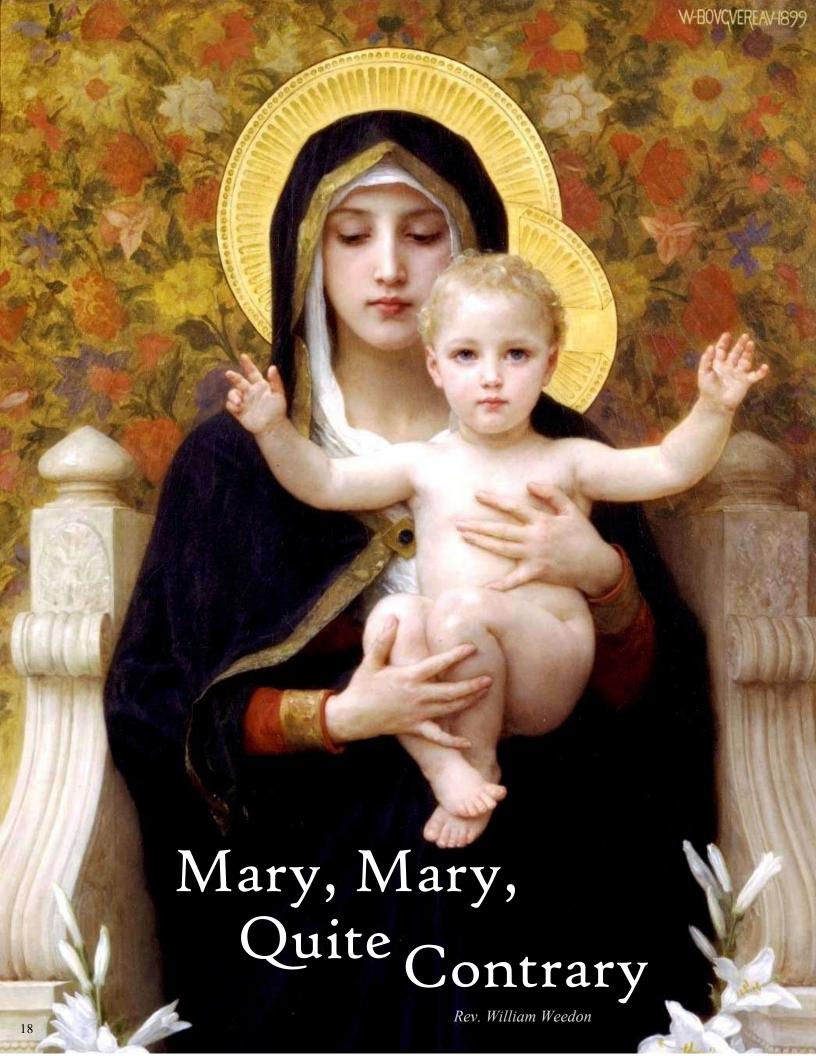
We are baptized into His Body - "sprinkled with clean water" and "cleansed from all your uncleannesses" - and so our lifeless forms of earth and stone receive the breath of His Spirit once more, and we become a Living Being. Drinking the cup of His Blood enlivens our hearts, that they might beat as His own Flesh. United to Christ, we partake of the wondrous fulfillment of the prophecy made by ancient Ezekiel!

And in fulfillment of that prophecy, we shall "dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God." Where else is the Promised Land, than in the presence of God? Where is our dwelling place, but the sanctuary wherein God unites Himself with His people? In the offertory, we begin our approach to the Sacrament of the Altar, to Mount Zion itself, where we are made His own Body and Blood. Here, we are God's people, and He is our God.

Psalm 51 is simply a foreshadowing of this beatific fulfillment, and with King David's words, we implore God to remember His promises. We pray with the voice of Christ Himself, coming before the Father with the full assurance of faith, that He will not cast us away from His presence, nor take His Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us, stones who You made Flesh, the joy of Thy salvation. Uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

Behold the words which immediately follow our song, the very first words of the Service of the Sacrament. The Father does not turn His face away, but rather, He breathes His Spirit upon us and answers our prayer: "The Lord be with you."





August 15th marks the Church's commemoration of St. Mary, the Mother of Our Lord. Saints, and St. Mary in particular, have a complicated relationship with Lutheranism, especially within the sea of American Protestantism which so virulently rejects any notion of the sanctity of saints. Although we depart from the heretical Roman Catholic understanding of sainthood, Lutherans continue to hold these icons of Christ in high regard. Rev. Will Weedon explains how we approach St. Mary in this article originally published in the December 2017 issue of The Lutheran Witness.

#### Whatever are Lutherans to make of Mary?

Looking around at the contrary approaches to Mary that other church traditions take, it's easy to be confused. At times it seems that Christians in the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches elevate Mary almost to the status of a goddess. They pray to her, sing hymns to glorify her and even commend their souls into her keeping at death. On the other hand, many Protestant Christians believe her to be "just like us" — nothing special. That surely is not right either. After all, who among us has been visited by an archangel and been declared highly favored of God? Who among us has conceived a child by the power of the Holy Spirit and given birth to the long-promised Savior, the eternal Son of God? Nothing about this screams "just like us."

#### So is there a third way? Yes.

Before we can identify that third way, however, it is important to understand that the contrary teachings about Mary we see all around us today have their roots not in the Bible, but in some extrabiblical traditions that arose in the history of the Church.

#### Mary in the Middle Ages

As time passed, the traditions surrounding the Virgin and her place in Christian devotion and piety continued to expand, and these practices gradually moved from private piety and speculation into public worship. Beginning with the churches of the eastern half of the empire but later spreading also into the West, prayers and hymns began to be offered to Mary in various liturgies. The picture that took firm hold in the hearts of the faithful during the High Middle Ages was of Christ as a stern and forbidding judge who needed to be appeased and made kind toward us. His mother was thought to be the one for the job. Mother Mary thus became a refuge for sinners, who fled to her and begged her to implore her Son on their behalf — to "pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death," as Catholics repeat to this day in the Rosary. Hand in hand with the invocation of the Virgin came the teaching that she was granted by her Son an early resurrection and enthroned at His side as the Queen of Heaven. This is the tradition of Mary's Assumption that came to be celebrated on August 15th. The notion that Mary was conceived without original sin arose also, though not without some significant opposition.

#### **Reform and Reaction**

During the Reformation, Lutherans and Protestants alike sought to critique and rein in the unscriptural elements of medieval devotion to Mary. Some of the more radical reformers even destroyed all statuary and pictures of Mary (and of the other saints and even of Christ Himself) and pretty much scrubbed her from their piety entirely. "She's just like us," was their thought. "Nothing special about her." It's sadly true that this more radical approach came to influence later generations of Lutherans. Just ask yourself: Among all the St. Peter and St. Paul and even St. James Lutheran churches, have you ever noticed a St. Mary Lutheran Church in your neighborhood?

The Lutheran approach, however, as witnessed in the *Book of Concord*, differed from that of those more radical reformers from the start. While acknowledging and eliminating the abuses attached to devotion to Mary and the other saints, early Lutherans still envisioned a place in the Church of the Augsburg Confession for a positive remembrance of all the saints, including the Virgin Mary. Thus Lutherans continued to celebrate the memory of the Virgin Mary in the chief feasts associated with her: Annunciation, Visitation, Purification and, of course, Christmas. The non-biblical feast of the Assumption was largely discontinued in Lutheran use (and where it did remain, it was redirected, as in our own hymnal where it simply commemorates the traditional day of her death). All invocation of the Virgin or any other saint was set completely aside; Lutherans prayed, as we still do, to the Triune God alone. All nonsense about saintly merit was discarded by the Lutheran reformers without question, even as they continued to honor Mary in a biblical way.

#### A Lutheran View of Mary

How, then, should Lutherans view Mary today? Through the Bible, of course!

In the Gospels, we learn that this young virgin, betrothed to a carpenter named Joseph, was a descendent of King David. Before the betrothed couple came together, the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive and bear a Son and call His name Jesus. In great faith, Mary responded to the angel's words: "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word."

After the angel left her, Mary made her way into the hill country of Judea and arrived at the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth. As Mary called out a greeting, John the Baptist in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy and Elizabeth cried out in amazement: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ... And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (LUKE 1:42–45). Shortly thereafter Mary herself prophesied: "For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me" (LUKE 1:48, 49). It has thus been a pious custom ever since — and one that Lutherans can certainly embrace — for Christians to speak of Mary as "the Blessed Virgin."

Mary speaks of people calling her blessed not because she is great or has done great things, but because God her Savior has done great things for her. Elizabeth specifically calls Mary blessed because she believed what God said; this in contrast to her husband Zechariah, who doubted the angel's words and was stricken with nine months of muteness! Many years after the events in Luke 1, a woman would cry out to Jesus: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed!" To which He replied: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (LUKE 11:27, 28). In saying this, Jesus was not disrespecting his mother, but He was making sure we don't miss out on what made His mother truly blessed: not merely that she was privileged to give birth to Him, but rather, that her deepest blessedness came when God spoke His promise to her and she believed it — and not only believed it, but kept and "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (LUKE 2:19; 2:51).

All of this means that Mary is the virgin mother foretold in Isaiah 7:14. She is the Mother of Immanuel, the Mother of God-with-us. This, of course, is not saying that she herself is divine, or eternal, or anything at all like that. We confess instead that this truly human creature, who freely admitted herself in need of a Savior (LUKE 1:47), was chosen by God's grace to become the mother of the Eternal Word. She really is the Mother of God. God the Eternal Word took on flesh in her womb, nursed at her breasts and was swaddled in the warmth of her embrace.

Mary is not, then, "contrary" to our confession. As Lutherans, we remember her and thank God for her life. We find our own faith strengthened when we ponder the way God's grace worked in her. We certainly want to imitate her joyous "yes" to the will of God and her holding tight to the words and promises she heard.

Fittingly, Mary's last recorded words in the Bible are, "Do whatever He tells you" (JOHN 2:5). In this, Mary sets a fine example for us to follow — one that invites us all to trust in her Son's love and join the psalmist in crying out: "Not to us, O Lord! Not to us but to Your name be glory" (PS. 115:1).

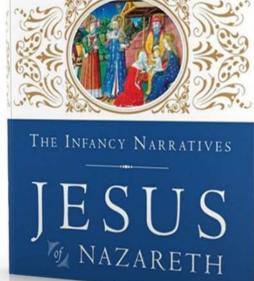




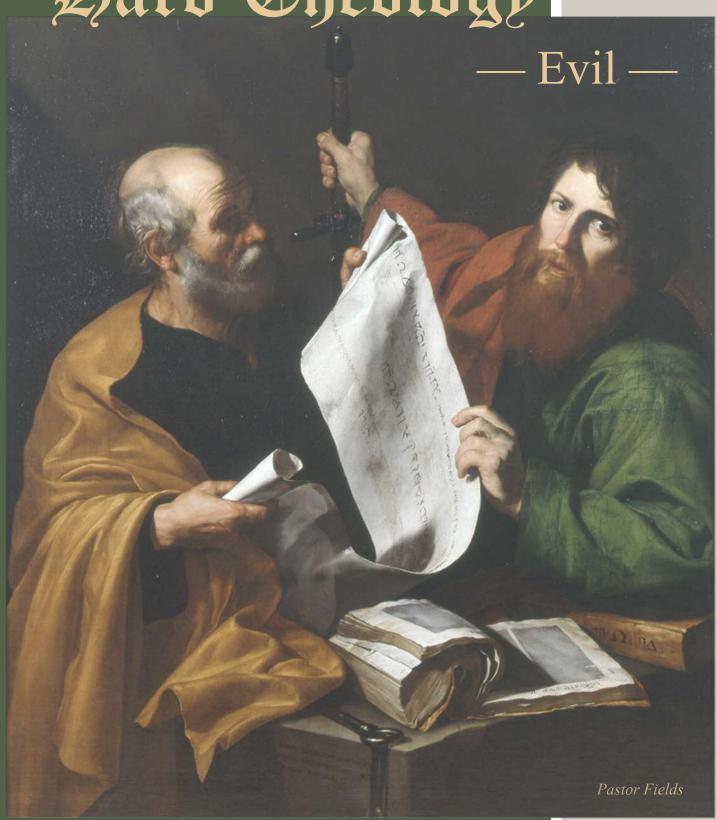


digging deeper into the Faith as we examine texts of many and various kinds.

This Fall, we dive back into our study with Joseph Ratzinger's Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives, a book from his three-part series examining the life of Christ. In *The Infancy Narratives*, he focuses exclusively on the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life as a child—from His birth to the visitation of the Magi to His 12-year-old trek to the Temple. As we near the end of the Church year, this book is a perfect prelude to Advent. Join us as we prepare for the coming of our Infant King!



Hard Theology



We continue our trek through can be called what 'hard theology', that theology that most laymen never lay an eye on, but that which keeps bleary-eyed seminarians up until the wee hours of the morn, racking their heads as the quake in fear of professors witnessing a disapproving gaze when they are found not having an answer to a question.

Again this month, we return to Aquinas, and to a question that many, both Christian and non-Christian, have struggled with, what is often known as 'The Problem of Evil,' that is, why, if God is all powerful and perfectly good, does He allow pain and suffering in the world?

St. Thomas Aquinas writes:

'If one of two contraries be infinite, the other would be altogether destroyed. But the word "God" means that He is infinite, and infinite goodness. If, therefore, God existed, there would be no evil discoverable. But there is evil in the world. Therefore God does not exist. However, as Augustine says, "Since God is the highest Good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil.'

Aquinas goes on to explain the above statement, but I will not quote it here, as the way he explains it is more likely to confuse than to clarify. Instead, I will summarize. What is good is good relative to something else, and what is most good is good compared to what is less good. If one says they own a good lawn mower, it is compared to some alternative less-good lawn mower, you know, the one that takes six pulls to get going.

This applies to objects and things. But it also applies to works: a work is considered good insofar as it moves things from a state of being less good to more good. If a meal is perfectly cooked, then messing with it isn't a 'good work' because you are not necessarily improving the meal. However, if the meal is just not coming together right, it tastes all wrong or the meat it too tough, then one who comes in and knows how to fix and improve the meal is indeed doing something good.

To 'do' good is to move something from a state of being

less good to more good. Therefore, Aquinas reasons, that the greatest 'doing of good' is to move something from a state of true evil (that is, Original Sin, and all the misery that follows from that) to perfect good (that is, union with God Himself, who is Goodness).

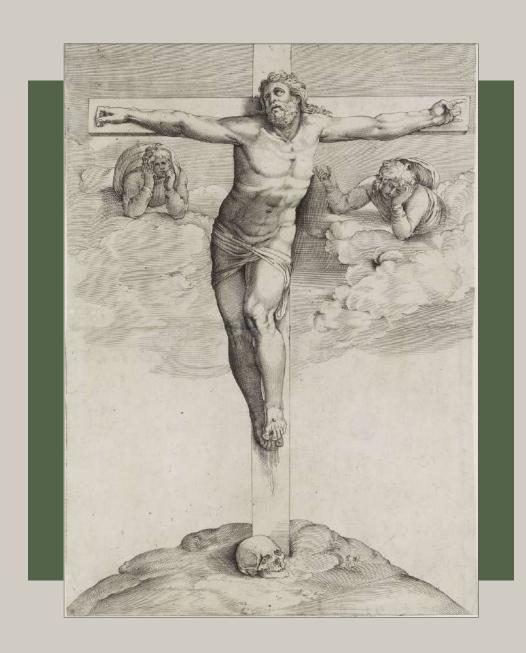
Now one may ask, why not just make everything 'the best' to begin with? Well, one simple Biblical response is to say that 'God did, and we messed it up' and that is true enough. But from a higher point of view, one may ask the question of how one can be considered 'good' if he never 'does good'? In order to be considered 'good' one must act out 'good works', which means that there must be room for improvement in the world, or to use a harsher word, there must be 'evil.' So in order for God to be truly good, He must not merely create a good world (which He, of course, did) but also turn all evil that man would cause into good, and thereby enact goodness in the world, by making straight what man has made crooked.

The greatest example of this is the Crucifixion, for out of all the sufferings that man caused to the Christ during His Passion, God brought out the greatest good of all, that is, the salvation of mankind through the sacrifice of God's beloved Son.

Of course, we do not always know what greater good is being brought out of the evils that we experience every day in our life. In fact, we should not, for it is not ours to know, but only God's to know. As St. Catherine once said,

'God is God, and we are not.' And that simple confession is the beginning of humility, which in turn is the beginning of wisdom. This is the nature of faith, that even in the midst of worldly pain, we still place our hope in God, knowing that He will turn even this agony into ecstasy. As St. Job spoke to his friends, 'Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust Him.'

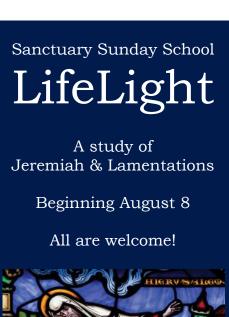
May we carry this trust and consolation in our hearts and minds always.

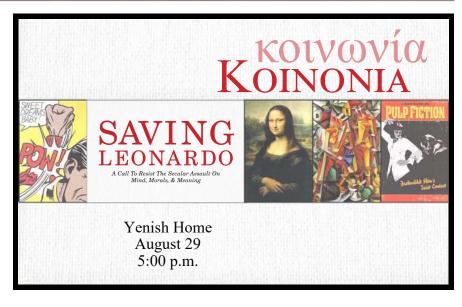


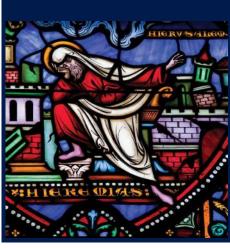


## This Month

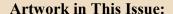
At Christ Lutheran

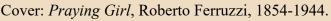












Page 4-5: Creation of Adam, Michelangelo, 1508-1512.

Page 9: Sistine Madonna, Raphael, c. 1513-1514.

Page 18: The Madonna of the Lilies, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1899.

Page 20: The Visitation, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1885.

Page 20: Christ Meeting His Mother on the Way to Calvary, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1888.

Page 21: The Adoration of the Shepherds, Gerard van Honthorst, 1622.

Page 22: Saint Peter & Saint Paul, Jusepe de Ribera, 1616.

Page 24: Christ on the Cross, Michelangelo, 1541.







FEAST OF ST. MARY, MOTHER OF OUR LORD & ICON OF THE CHURCH

+ August 15 +

#### The world is crazy.

Stave off the chaos with a wearable reminder:

Jesus is our peace!

Christ Lutheran has t-shirts (long—and short-sleeve), sweatshirts, and hoodies available from now until August 29.

These shirts feature the iconic CLC silhouette of our Savior, along with the verse emblazoned upon our chancel wall.

Order online at https://www.customink.com/g/src0-00cf-r09n or contact Alexis Burkhalter!



# GREETERSNEEDED

Become a greeter. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall.

We are praying for our teachers and students as they return to school this fall!



#### Gemütlichkeit

Sunday September 12 5:00 p.m. Atchley Home



THE INFANCY NARRATIVES





#### Saints' Days in August

- Sts. Joanna, Mary, & Salome, Myrrhbearers
- 10 St. Lawrence, Archdeacon & Martyr
- 15 St. Mary, Mother of Our Lord
- 16 St. Isaac, Patriarch
- 17 St. Johann Gerhard, Theologian
- 19 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Abbott
- 20 St. Samuel, Prophet
- 23 St. Zacchaeus
- 24 St. Bartholomew, Apostle
- 25 St. Louis, King & Confessor
- 27 St. Monica, Mother of St. Augustine
- 28 St. Augustine of Hippo, Bishop & Confessor
- 29 The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist



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	–Eric Held	Serving this month: Elder-	Serving thi	31	30	PENTECOST XIV 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service 5:00 p.m. Koinonia Martyrdom of St. John the Batpist	James Jarratt 30—Yvonne Townes
28 St. Augustine	6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Monica	26 9:30 a.m. LifeLight	25 St. Louis 6:00 p.m. LNO	24 St. Bartholomew	23 St. Zacchaeus	PENTECOST XIII 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	Terry Hubmann 23—Bruce Bodkin 24—Roger Fuhrer 28—Jake Yenish
21	6:30 a.m. Bible Study St. Samuel	9:30 a.m. LifeLight St. Bernard of Clairvaux	18	St. Johann Gerhard	St. Isaac	PENTECOST XII 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service St. Mary	Held Family 20—Eric Held
14	6:30 a.m. Bible Study	9:30 a.m. LifeLight	1.1	St. Lawrence 6:15 p.m. Council Mtg.	9	PENTECOST XI 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	Chuck & Margaret Haynes 12—Michelle Miller 13—Roz Nelson
9:00 a.m. Council Retreat	6 6:30 a.m. Bible Study	9:30 a.m. LifeLight	4	3 Sts. Joanna, Mary, & Salome 6:15 p.m. Elders Mtg.	2	PENTECOST X 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Divine Service	and BIRTHDAYS  Brent & Becky Hathcock  4—Micah Everson
Saturday	Friday	Thursday	Wednesday	Tuesday	Monday	Sunday	PRAYER FAMILES