



Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic Parish

Mission ~ St. John the Evangelist, Keene, Ontario



1830 Keene Rd., Otonabee, ON, K9J 6X7

Phone: (705) 741-1018

email: assumptaest@sympatico.ca

web: www.assumption-stjohns.ca

Pastor: Monsignor Michael Heffernan C.H.H.

Weekend Holy Mass Schedule:

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

Saturday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Keene, Ontario

Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Weekday Holy Mass Schedule:

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday 6:30 p.m.

(Fourth and (Fifth) Tuesdays of the Month at 8:00 a.m.)

Friday 7:00 p.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with Benediction:

Every Friday from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Followed by Holy Mass at 7:00 p.m.

NEW PARISHIONERS—

Have you registered in our Parish?

“Parish Census” Forms can be found at the back of the Churches. Please introduce yourself to Fr. Michael and welcome!!

Reminder -

If you or a family member is in the hospital and you would like the priest at Our Lady of the Assumption to contact you, please phone the office at 705 – 741 – 1018.



27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 2, 2016

Parish Office: Phone: (705) 741-1018

Secretary: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Catholic Women's League:

► President: Anna Marie Bolin
(705)742-8249

Knights of Columbus:

► Grand Knight: Peter Clancy
(705)748-3075

Marriage: Registered Parishioners must contact the Parish Office twelve months before the proposed Wedding date. No date for a Wedding can be set before a couple has met with the Priest.

Baptism: Registered Parishioners must contact the Parish Office one month before the desired Baptism date.

Reconciliation:

Saturday: 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. & 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

You may also ask Father at **ANYTIME**

MOVING? ~ Please let the office know of your move from this parish. Also, an address change is necessary for sending out the year's tax receipts. Call 705-741-1018.

**MASS INTENTIONS**

October 3 – October 9

MONDAY, October 3*St. Gerard of Brogne*

8:00 a.m. ~ Special Intention

TUESDAY, October 4*St. Francis of Assisi*

6:30 p.m. + Marg Caley

(C.W.L.)

WEDNESDAY, October 5*St. Faustina Kowalska*

8:00 a.m. ~ For persecuted Christians and for those who persecute them

THURSDAY, October 6*Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher**St. Bruno*

8:00 a.m. ~ Brendan & Sally Sheridan

(Anne Sheridan)

FRIDAY, October 7*Our Lady of the Rosary*

9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick School

10:45 a.m. Mass at Monsignor O'Donoghue

6:00 p.m. ~ Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

7:00 p.m. + Bernice Young

(Jack & Norma Bertrand)

SATURDAY, October 8*St. Pelagia*

8:00 a.m. ~ Mother Mary Servant of the Cross

(Marrocco Family)

SUNDAY, October 9*28th Sunday in Ordinary Time*

5:00 p.m. (Sat.) ~ Pro Populo

9:00 a.m. + Michael O'Toole

(Sandra O'Toole & Family)

10:30 a.m. + Joe & Frances Sullivan

(The Family)

Life Chain: THIS WEEKEND

The annual Life Chain is scheduled for **Sun., October 2nd**. Please meet at the parking lot at the corner of Lansdowne St. and Monaghan St. at **2:00 p.m.** If you will like to attend, there is a PRAYER VIGIL which will be conducted at St Alphonse Liguori Parish at approximately 3:30 p.m.



Life Chain is an easy way to get involved in pro-life. Show up for one hour, stand on the side walk with others who are not ashamed to be a public witness, and pray for an end to abortion and for those affected by it. Bring lawn chairs if you need them or strollers for your little ones. Let us be witnesses to the sanctity of life!

There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary. – Sr. Lucia of Fatima

St. Faustina Kowalska

Helena Kowalska was born to a poor family in Poland in 1905. From a young age she felt a religious calling, confirmed by a vision of the Suffering Christ at the age of nine. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in 1926 and took the name of Sr. Maria Faustina.

Sister Faustina's mission was to transmit to the Church and world the message of God's mercy revealed to her by Jesus which included the veneration of the image of Divine Mercy with the inscription "Jesus, I Trust in You", the Feast of Divine Mercy, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, all faithfully recorded at the specific request of Our Lord and her confessors in her diary, "Divine Mercy in my Soul". With each form of devotion were attached great promises depending on one's trust in God and mercy



shown towards one's neighbour. St. Faustina contracted tuberculosis and endured innumerable sufferings which she accepted as a voluntary sacrifice for sinners. She died on October 5, 1938, age 33. In his homily for her canonization, Pope John Paul II referred to her as "a gift of God to our time, a gift from the land of Poland to the whole Church."

Jesus said to St. Faustina:

"Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My Merciful Heart." (*Diary*, 1588)

Ave Maria Centre of Peace

Year of Mercy Reflection

General Audience of Pope Francis: Sept. 28, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters: Jesus' words during his Passion culminate in forgiveness: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (*Lk* 23:34). For the good thief, these are not mere words, for Jesus truly forgives him. For the bad thief, however, it is inconceivable that the Messiah would remain

on the Cross and not save himself. But it is precisely by remaining on the Cross that Jesus offers salvation to every person regardless of their situation. This Jubilee Year is a time of grace and mercy for all, the good and the bad, those in health and those who suffer. It is a time to remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God (*cf. Rm* 8:39). To all those sick in hospital, who live within the walls of a prison, or who are trapped by war, we are called to look to Christ Crucified on the Cross, who is God with us, who remains with us on the Cross and who offers himself as our Saviour. The good thief helps us to understand how we should approach God: with awe and not fear, with respect for God's power and infinite goodness. When we approach him in this way, we entrust ourselves to his mercy, even in the darkest of moments. For God is always with us sinners, and he loves us even to death on the Cross. Let us see in the good thief a model of confidence in the Lord and, like him, let us call upon Jesus' name and ask him to remember us in Paradise.



28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 9, 2016

LAY MINISTRY

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 9:00 a.m.
10:30 a.m.

Eucharistic

Colleen Petersen
Mike Malloy
Anna Marie Bolin

Lector

Gladys Fowler
Noreen Malloy
Carolyn Doris

Gift Bearers

Roddy Turpin & Peter Clancy
Joanne Bolton & Betty Clark
Joanne & Sarah Nelson



CWL News

The next C.W.L. Meeting is **Tues., Oct. 4, 7:00 pm after the 6:30 p.m. Mass.** Hopefully, many ladies will join us to develop our fall and winter plans.

Parish Community Dinner - A Huge thank you!

The Assumption and Keene Parish community dinner was a great success! It was wonderful to see so many people from Assumption, Keene and the neighbouring communities come to participate, socialize, and have dinner together. It was a beautiful day and the spirits were soaring! The total profit was \$2,802.08.

A huge thank you to all who participated, guided, donated, decorated, served, baked, cooked, cleaned, advertised, prayed, announced, helped out in any way or gave each other moral and physical support from the beginning to the end of the event! It was great to have so many bright, happy volunteers come out and experience the spirit of community life come alive! Thank you profusely and God bless!

There will be a **debriefing meeting on Wednes, Oct 5th at 7:00pm in the Parish Hall.** All are welcome. If you cannot attend and wish to comment, e-mail: patrickrwpinto@gmail.com or call 743-1984.



Sacred Heart College is starting its new certificate program course - The Church's Best Kept Secret: The Tradition of Catholic Social Justice.

Instructor: Sr. Mary Rowell, CSJ, PhD

Format: One hour lecture, followed by one hour discussion.

When: Six Monday evening, Sept 19—Oct 24, 2016, 7-9pm.

Where: Mount St. Joseph 1545 Monaghan Road, Peterborough

Total Cost: \$60 For information phone [705 745 5549](tel:7057455549), registrations will be done just before the first lectures.

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER invites married couples to add more joy into your relationship, to cherish being together, to rediscover each other and focus on ways to make your relationship even better. www.wwme.org Mississauga **Oct. 21-23** Register with Marge & Gerard McCauley (905) 792-1925 gerard.marge@rogers.com

Sacred Heart College is hiring a STUDENT RECRUITMENT OFFICER whose primary responsibility is to implement Sacred Heart College's Recruitment Plan and to achieve enrolments targets.

HOURS: 30 hours weekly from October 31, 2016, to June 30, 2017 at Sacred Heart College.

Applicants possessing some or all of the qualifications listed above are invited to submit the following by **Thurs, Oct 20th at 3:00 p.m.:** A letter of interest, a resume, two professional letters of reference. Kindly submit applications marked Confidential to REGISTRAR, Sacred Heart College, 208 Romaine Street, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, K9J 2C4.

Interviews are scheduled for Tue, Oct 25, and qualified applicants will be contacted for an interview.

High School Girls' Retreat

High School-aged young women are invited to an awesome retreat to bring you together as Sisters in Christ - the retreat will be SIC! These new retreats will gather you to share about your faith and to have a blast! Teaser: corn mazes may be involved. The retreat, called 'The Adventure Begins,' runs from **October 21-23** at Villa St. Joseph in Cobourg (445 Monk St. - we will carpool). Early bird registration fee of \$25 before Oct. 7, \$30 afterwards. Register at www.ptbovocations.ca/sic

Honouring VEYO and Welcoming JP II House

This is an announcement to invite everyone to come to pay tribute to the good work of the VEYO Office, to say goodbye, and to be introduced to JP II House. This event will take place **Sat. Oct. 15 from 10AM to 2PM at 820 Frank Street**, and will feature a prayer service with Bishop McGrattan, an open house and a complimentary BBQ.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT THE BOOK OF REVELATION

One of the English speaking world's top scholars, Msgr. Robert Nunsca, will be doing a day long workshop on **Oct. 22** at St. Mary's School Gym, Lindsay, from **10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m.**

Introduction to the Book of Revelation: God's Message of Hope in a dark time. Everyone is welcome and feel free to invite a friend with you. Lunch is \$10.00 please call the rectory to register so we can order lunch 705-324-4828.

The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social

Research presents **FREE ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE ON SAYING "NO":**

The Ethics of Conscientious Objection in Healthcare THURS, OCT 27 at 7:00 pm, Wycliffe College, 5 Hoskin Ave, University of Toronto with special guest Dr. Ewan Goligher MD, PhD, FRCPC

Serviam Ministries, is hosting our Fall event on Sat **Nov 5** with **Fr. John Zuhlsdorf** and **Stephanie Gray**. The theme is *"Revival - Restoring the sacred in our lives and church"*. <https://www.serviamministries.com/events/revival/schedule/> It is a great opportunity for you and your parishioners to be inspired and engaged in the faith by spending the day with hundreds of fellow Catholics. There will be an opportunity to meet the speakers and go to Confession.



"Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult, when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest. Oh stupendous dignity! O humble sublimity, that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles himself that for our salvation he hides himself under an ordinary piece of bread" (St. Francis of Assisi, Feast Day Oct 4)

Offertory *Thank you for your generosity*

Sept. 25: Env.: \$1292.00 + Loose: \$283.00 = \$1575.00
Fuel: \$20.00 St. Vincent de Paul: \$5.00

protection of life from abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide, followed by the Memorare and St. Michael's Prayer. **Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Church.**

Christopher Leadership Course

Find your voice and learn life skills - The Christopher Leadership Course will enhance your leadership and communication skills, while building your self-confidence. This 11-week course is geared towards those 16 years of age and over. Three hours per class, one evening per week. Christopher Leadership Course 1-800-418-8925 or 416-410-7776 or visit www.clctorontoeast.com

READINGS:

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time October 9

1st Reading: 2 Kings 5: 14 – 17

Psalms 98

2nd Reading: 2 Timothy 2: 8 – 13

Gospel: Luke 17: 11 – 19

Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA)

A papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support
No rain and no crops, so no food! Animals are dying. People are starving. "There is a hunger crisis in Ethiopia. And we need your help!" CNEWA's director for Ethiopia, Argaw Fantu, shares about the struggles of poor families in his country and the surrounding region. **Please visit the website** <http://www.cnewa.ca>

Holy Father's Intentions: October

Universal: Journalists

That journalists, in carrying out their work, may always be motivated by respect for truth and a strong sense of ethics.

Evangelization: World Mission Day

That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

Project Rachel

Our retreats provide an opportunity for women who have suffered from an abortion experience to find healing, forgiveness and reconciliation through personal and shared reflection, a compassionate, non-judgemental leadership team, and accompaniment through the steps of healing. The next retreat is October 28 - 30. Please contact us in confidence, at 416 629 8264 or at projectrachel@stmarysrefuge.org



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Every Tuesday evening from 7 pm to 8 pm, we gather at St. Peter-in-Chains Cathedral rectory for prayerful reading, reflection and discussion of the readings for the following Sunday. Everyone is welcome. All that is needed is a desire to come closer to the Lord and to discover what it means to be His follower. Call Tom (705 243 4133).

Vendors Required for Autumn Tea and Bazaar

Sacred Heart Church is hosting their annual **Autumn Tea and Bazaar** on **Sat, Oct 29th**. If you would like to rent a table as a vendor or know someone who would, please contact Jan Burke at 705-868-6307.

LATIN TRIDENTINE MASS

MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED ON THE FIRST AND LAST SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH AT 1:00 PM AND EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, HASTINGS AT 8:30 AM. ALL OTHER SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH, MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED AT ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION CHURCH, CAMPBELLFORD AT 12:30 PM. YOU ARE MOST WELCOME TO ATTEND

Annual Roast Beef Dinner

Immaculate Conception Parish on Sat. Oct. 22nd

Social hr at 5 p.m. followed by dinner at 6 p.m.

Advance tickets only

Adults \$15, Under 12 \$8

Call 742-5466 or Bob Clemens 745-2366

October, the month of the Rosary

The CWL will be leading the rosary before the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption for the month of October.

Upcoming Events for St. Luke's Parish, Downeyville

Fish Fry: Sunday, October 23rd, 4-7 p.m. Cost \$15 per person/\$40 family (2 adults and primary school children). Please contact \mary \jane Connell (793-2013)

Christmas Bazaar & Bake Sale: Saturday, November 19th, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Everyone Welcome! Come and do some Christmas shopping and stock up on delicious baking.

Second Annual Christmas House Tour: Saturday, November 19th, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Six new properties and two returning favorites! Passports may be purchased by contacting Mary Jane Connell (793-2013)

Courses at Sacred Heart College

Please visit our website www.shofp.ca or call Sr. Krolowa 705 745 5549 for info regarding:

- courses schedule
- awards and bursary information
- residence application
- the continuing education course on The Church's Best Kept Secret: The Tradition of Catholic Social Justice

ROSARY FOR LIFE ON THURSDAYS

Come and join in praying the 15-decade Rosary (Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious) for the sanctity and



MAKE A ' LIFE ' DIFFERENCE.

Prayer does have power. Join us this Saturday morning from 10:00 am to 11:00 am across from the Peterborough hospital. Come singly or as part of a group. We need you to participate in our **sidewalk prayer vigil for the unborn**. Defend life and be part of this public witness against the horror of abortion.

For information: **Paul 741- 4000 or Tom 243-4133**

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

At St Alphonsus Oratory 7am-Midnight and Noon-Midnight (Sunday) "Come to me all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest." (Mt. 11:28) INFO: Bernadette 705-742-3055

"A great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world. Through special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer."

– Pope John Paul II, The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae), n. 100.

When we ask, we receive. We should invite our people to join the ongoing worldwide novena to end abortion, at www.PrayerCampaign.org.

After Abortion Canadian Helpline

Second Chance Ministry 905-430-7990

We offer support to those struggling with emotional and psychological effects of abortion, sometimes known as post abortion trauma or post abortion syndrome.

Angelina@SecondChanceMinistry.ca

Beautiful words to live by from St. Pope John XXIII:

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."

"Only for Today..." THE DAILY DECALOGUE OF POPE JOHN XXIII

- 1) Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once.
- 2) Only for today, I will take the greatest care of my appearance: I will dress modestly; I will not raise my voice; I will be courteous in my behaviour; I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or to discipline anyone except myself.
- 3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one.
- 4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes.
- 5) Only for today, I will devote 10 minutes of my time to some good reading, remembering that just as food is necessary to the life of the body, so good reading is necessary to the life of the soul.
- 6) Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it.
- 7) Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices.
- 8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself: I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. And I will be on guard against two evils: hastiness and indecision.
- 9) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me as no one else who exists in this world.
- 10) Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness.

Indeed, for 12 hours I can certainly do what might cause me consternation were I to believe I had to do it all my life.

“A saint is not someone who never sins, but one who sins less and less frequently and gets up more and more quickly.”

– Bernard of Clairvaux

Project Rachel

Project Rachel offers accompaniment, counselling, personal presence and support, and other services at any time they are needed by women or men. They also offer weekend retreats which provide opportunity for women who have suffered from an abortion experience to find healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.



Are you hurting as a result of an abortion? Healing is possible. Please contact them for upcoming dates, in confidence, by telephone at 416 629 8264 or by e-mail projectrachel@stmarysrefuge.org.
<http://www.stmarysrefuge.org>

Chalice is a ministry of the Catholic Community, creating and nurturing relationships of life and love. To find out how Chalice Helps go to website

<http://www.ccare.ca/>

Legion of Mary

We are looking for people to join the Legion of Mary. As you know, we are living in a foggy world. With the love of our Blessed Mother you will bring the sunshine and joy of Christ to many people. If interested contact Jack Cerveny 742-9839 or Marilyn Mitchell 745-52505

Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Rosary



Monday, at 6:30 p.m.
Sacred Heart, Peterborough
Join us for coffee/tea/treats after Rosary
Everyone is welcome to attend.

Peterborough Communication Support Systems

A non-profit agency that provides support services to Deaf / non-verbal individuals living with intellectual disabilities. They provide quality sewing, custom embroidery, printing services and woodworking products. They are located at 192 B Hunter St. West. Phone: (705) 748 6680

Please find the church cleaning sheet on the glass religious article case at the back of the church. Once per week, for one month at a time, we need cleaners to vacuum, dust mop and do general dusting/ wiping at Assumption. We need cleaners for October.

FOOD CUPBOARD AT KEENE UNITED CHURCH

Thurs. September 8: 12 -2 p.m., & 4 – 6 p.m.

Donations of goods can be dropped off at Three Roads Farm and other Keene locations.

osmfoodcupboard@nexicom.net or 295-6952



From the Pastor's Desk

■ Fr. Michael



The Season of Lent



Life Chain



The Holy Rosary: www.catholic.org/prwire/headline.php?ID=7806

Church Cleaning Ministry



The Holy Eucharist

The Lord Jesus, on the night before he suffered on the cross, shared one last meal with his disciples. During this meal our Saviour instituted the sacrament of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages and to entrust to the Church his Spouse a memorial of his death and resurrection. As the Gospel of Matthew tells us:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins."

Recalling these words of Jesus, the Catholic Church professes that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the priest. Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. . . . For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:51-55). The whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine—the glorified Christ who rose from the dead after dying for our sins. This is what the Church means when she speaks of the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist. This presence of Christ in the Eucharist is called "real" not to exclude other types of his presence as if they could not be understood as real (cf. *Catechism*, no. 1374). The risen Christ is present to his Church in many ways, but most especially through the sacrament of his Body and Blood.

What does it mean that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine? How does this happen? The presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery that the Church can never fully explain in words. We must remember that the triune God is the creator of all that exists and has the power to do more than we

can possibly imagine. As St. Ambrose said: "If the word of the Lord Jesus is so powerful as to bring into existence things which were not, then *a fortiori* those things which already exist can be changed into something else" (*De Sacramentis*, IV, 5-16). God created the world in order to share his life with persons who are not God. This great plan of salvation reveals a wisdom that surpasses our understanding. But we are not left in ignorance: for out of his love for us, God reveals his truth to us in ways that we can understand through the gift of faith and the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are thus enabled to understand at least in some measure what would otherwise remain unknown to us, though we can never completely comprehend the mystery of God.

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/the-real-presence-of-jesus-christ-in-the-sacrament-of-the-eucharist-basic-questions-and-answers.cfm>

St. Francis of Assisi

It has been said that Francis represents an *alter Christus*, that he was truly a living icon of Christ. He has also been called "the brother of Jesus". Indeed, this was his ideal: to be like Jesus, to contemplate Christ in the Gospel, to love him intensely and to imitate his virtues. In particular, he wished to ascribe interior and exterior poverty with a fundamental value, which he also taught to his spiritual sons. The first Beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5: 3) found a luminous fulfilment in the life and words of St Francis. Truly, dear friends, the saints are the best interpreters of the Bible. As they incarnate the word of God in their own lives, they make it more captivating than ever, so that it really speaks to us. The witness of Francis, who loved poverty as a means to follow Christ with dedication and total freedom, continues to be for us too an invitation to cultivate interior poverty in order to grow in our trust of God, also by adopting a sober lifestyle and a detachment from material goods. Francis' love for Christ expressed itself in a special way in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. In the *Fonti Francescane* (Writings of St Francis) one reads such moving expressions as: "Let everyone be struck with fear, let the whole world tremble, and let the heavens exult, when Christ, the Son of the living God, is present on the altar in the hands of a priest. Oh stupendous dignity! O humble sublimity, that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles himself that for our salvation he hides himself under an ordinary piece of bread" (Francis of Assisi, *Scritti*, Editrici Francescane, Padova 2002, 401). From love for Christ stems love for others and also for all God's creatures. This is yet another characteristic trait of

Francis' spirituality: the sense of universal brotherhood and love for Creation, which inspired the famous *Canticle of Creatures*. This too is an extremely timely message. As I recalled in my recent Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, development is sustainable only when it respects Creation and does not damage the environment (cf. nn. 48-52), and in the Message for the World Day of Peace this year, I also underscored that even building stable peace is linked to respect for Creation. Francis reminds us that the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator is expressed through Creation. He understood nature as a language in which God speaks to us, in which reality becomes clear, and we can speak *of* God and *with* God.

Dear friends, Francis was a great Saint and a joyful man. His simplicity, his humility, his faith, his love for Christ, his goodness towards every man and every woman, brought him gladness in every circumstance. Indeed, there subsists an intimate and indissoluble relationship between holiness and joy. A French writer once wrote that there is only one sorrow in the world: not to be saints, that is, not to be near to God. Looking at the testimony of St Francis, we understand that this is the secret of true happiness: to become saints, close to God!

May the Virgin, so tenderly loved by Francis, obtain this gift for us. Let us entrust ourselves to her with the words of the *Poverello* of Assisi himself: "Blessed Virgin Mary, no one like you among women has ever been born in the world, daughter and handmaid of the Most High King and heavenly Father, Mother of our Most Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us... to your most blessed and beloved Son, Lord and Master" (Francesco di Assisi, *Scritti*, 163).

Pope Benedict XVI