Three new permanent deacons for the Virgin Islands
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ON THE COVER: Deacon candidates and wives on retreat in May at St. Joseph Church, St. Croix: (l-r) Cassius and Janice Mathurin, Peter and Bianca Laurencin, Evans (Smiley) and Digna Doway, together with the retreat team (l-r) Msgr. Mike Kosak, Father John Mark, pastor, and his father, Deacon Joseph (JT) Mark.

Please submit
News and digital photography for the July/August 2016 issue of The Catholic Islander by June 1, 2016. Submit to thecatholicislander@gmail.com.

Charles Wright Bevard – July 9, 1942 – May 2, 2016

CONDOLENCES - Please offer expressions of support to Bishop Bevard, whose brother Charles Wright Bevard, Jr. died on May 2, 2016, after a long illness. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Catholic Charities of the Virgin Islands. Please make checks payable to the Diocese of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands P. O. Box 301825, St. Thomas, VI 00803.
Confirmations at St. Joseph Church
Saturday, April 23

Front row, from left: Bishop Herbert Bevard and Father John Mark.
Back row, from left: Deacon Conrad Williams, Shane Welcome,
M’ Kaydia Peter, Maya Hosein, Elise Charles and Neisha Bennett.

Shane Welcome being confirmed.
Father Kenneth McKenna, O.S.F.S., and provincial superior of the Toledo-Detroit Province of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, made his annual visitation to Brother James Petrait, O.S.F.S. at St. Joseph High School and Church from April 19-21, 2016. During a school Mass, Father McKenna received Brother James’ 59th annual renewal of vows as a member of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

Brother James Petrait, O.S.F.S., came to the Virgin Islands shortly before hurricane Hugo. He wrote about that experience in an online book, “Faith Stories of a Science Teacher.” Brother James has taught the sciences at St. Joseph High School for over 25 years, and has served as web administrator for the diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

St. Patrick’s Catholic School celebrated Founders’ Day on May 1, with Quadrille dancers, a steel pan band, and children’s games.
St. Joseph High School Benefit Concert

The Living Praise Worship Ministry Band from Steubenville, Ohio, led a lively evening festival of praise. The group was brought to St. Joseph Church by the St. Croix Chapter of Magnificat, and a collection was taken up for the benefit of St. Joseph High School. Members of the St. Croix Chapter of Magnificat presented Father John Mark a check for the $1,500 that was collected for the school.

(from left): Mary Jacob, Lorna Cave, Jeanette Williams, Father John Mark, Jeanne Garcia and Grace Juliene.
ST. ANN BARRENSPOT CONFIRMATIONS

Earle Robinson, a parishioner at St. Ann, Barrens­spot with Cardinal Peter Turkson in the Vatican Gardens. Earle and his wife Hilary received a grand tour of the Vatican while visiting Rome. They met the cardinal in 1988 when, as a student priest, he assisted at St. Ann’s during the summer months.


ENTIRE FAMILY JOINS GROUP TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION

Earle Robinson, a parishioner at St. Ann, Barrens­spot with Cardinal Peter Turkson in the Vatican Gardens. Earle and his wife Hilary received a grand tour of the Vatican while visiting Rome. They met the cardinal in 1988 when, as a student priest, he assisted at St. Ann’s during the summer months.
CONGRATULATIONS to the Black/VI History Month Quiz Bowl Winners and participants!

SMCS Winners and participants in St. Mary’s Black and VI History Month Bowl.

Visit the website of the Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands at www.catholicvi.com

Visit the Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dioceseofstthomas

Read The Catholic Islander online at www.catholicislander.com
There Is A Wideness In God’s Mercy

Father Louis Olive, CSSR, will give a mission at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Charlotte Amalie, from July 16 - 22. Featuring the call for the Lord’s mercy, Father Olive’s talks will include: ‘Let Us Remember God’s Mercy, Let Us Praise God’s Mercy, Let Us Sing About God’s Mercy, and Let Us Celebrate God’s Mercy. Father will present at three Masses daily. All parishes are invited to attend. Following the mission, in late July and early August, Father Olive will offer Masses at St. Anne Chapel, Frenchtown, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Mafolie, and Holy Family, Estate Anna’s Retreat. See advertisements in this issue of the Catholic islander for pilgrimages which Father Olive will be leading, in September and October, 2016. For more information you may reach Father Olive at 410.9904085.
Magnificat Ministry for Women, celebrated its 30th Anniversary on St. Croix with a luncheon at Gertrude’s Restaurant. The “Living Praise & Worship Team” from Ohio performed many spirit filled hymns. Founded by Msgr. Michael Kosak and Mrs. Babsy Beadsell in 1986 and lead by Ms. Rita Schuster, its current coordinator, Ms Jeanne Garcia, has spearheaded annual Magnificat for Women meetings for the past fifteen years. More than 150 women were in attendance.

From the Daily News obituary:

Rev. Austin Medina died Wednesday, March 30, 2016, at home in Florida. He was 85. Surviving are daughters Sharon Medina, Marlene Medina and Jacqueline Saltus; and sons, Jeffrey Medina and Haden Rojas. The late, beloved deacon leaves behind many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and extended family. Ordained in 2001 at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul, he served as deacon for almost 26 years.

Deacon Medina was laid to rest at Eastern Cemetery, on St. Thomas. He will be greatly missed, and greatly benefitted by your continued prayers, sacrifices and, especially, by the faithful’s offerings of holy Mass for the repose of his soul.

Deacon Medina assists Father Anthony Abraham at the altar.
St. Joseph High School students inducted into the 2016 National Honor Society
(Front row, from left): Mhina Barry (grade 11), Amyah Estrill (grade 10), Djenne Green (grade 11), Petra Hoover (grade 11), Robyn Williams (grade 11) and Xarquisha Somme (grade 11); (back row, from left) Dr. Brenda Jackson (English teacher), Jeana Edney (grade 12), Estelle Jules (grade 12), Jaina Warren (grade 12), Ms. Meg Bryson (religion teacher) and Ms. Diane John (guidance counselor).

SJHS Students receive Certificates for High Honors
SJHS students receive Honor Roll certificates


St. Joseph High School 2015-16 Senior Class


Father Kenneth McKenna, O.S.F.S., presented a captivating PowerPoint presentation on the holy Mass to St. Joseph Catholic High School students.
Father François reflects on progress of Haitian community

When I look at the Haitian's Catholic community, I am so proud of all that we have done. Despite all the responsibilities that I have on my shoulders, I always try my best to make time for them, because I was ordained for this purpose. On May 31, 2016, the Haitian Catholic community will celebrate its third anniversary.

On May 31, 2013, the day of the visitation of our Blessed Mother, we had our first meeting at the hospitality lounge, followed by our prayer meeting at the cathedral chapel. Since then, we have gathered together every Sunday at 6 p.m. at the hospitality lounge to prepare for our Mass. On Aug. 25, 2013, we celebrated our first Mass at the cathedral, presided by the Bishop Herbert Bevard, celebrated by Msgr. Jerome Feudjio and concelebrated by Father Louis Kemayou and assisted by Deacon Kerly Francois.

I was ordained a deacon on Aug. 17, 2013, along with Father John Matthew Fewel and Father Touchard Tignonou Goula. After our priestly ordination, on Jan. 4, 2014, I was moved from the cathedral to Holy Family Church as associate pastor. Father Neil agreed that the Haitian's Catholic community should move along with me to Holy Family Church. This is a dynamic community. Since our arrival at Holy Family Church, we have been working wonders. We used to celebrate Mass one Thursday each month, at Miss Maria Griffin’s Court Yard, in Bovoni; many Haitians live in that area. However, Bishop Bevard soon obtained the current building, where the parish has a chapel today. That chapel is named after Venerable Pierre Toussaint, a native of Haiti. As a slave, he moved along with his master from Haiti to New York during the 19th century. The entire Church looks forward to seeing him becoming the first Caribbean saint.

We have Creole Mass on the last Thursday of the month and on Saturdays, we have Mass in Spanish at 4 p.m. and in Creole at 6 p.m. Catholic Charities also has an outreach program with food and clothing on Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the less fortunate in that area. On Sundays, we have Mass at 6 p.m. at Holy Family Church. Our congregation keeps growing.

Today, we have two choirs: Chorale de l’Espérance, the adult choir, and Chorale Choeur Angelique, the youth choir. We have also a strong prayer meeting group whose members gather to pray on the first, second and third Thursday of the month at the Shrine of Our Lady of Cassy Hill at 6:30 p.m; rain or not, they come to pray. After the prayer meeting, there is a van available to take each one of them back home.

We look forward to starting again with the Legion of Mary within the Haitian Catholic community. We have a committee to organize all the activities that we have — and it is because of that committee we have that van today. Two safari drivers, that also are part of the committee: Sr. Pierre Laguerre and Sr. Louis Gérard Révil have been helping with expenses by providing services free of charge. Our tireless coordinator, Sr. Antony Legrand, is always available to take everyone back home using the van. We look forward to getting a second van as the community keeps growing.

Since 2015, we have operated an ESOL program for the Haitians and it is free of charge. We welcome whatever denomination, because our goal is that everybody should be able to present himself in English. Miss Myrtha Bourdeau, originally from Haiti, is responsible for the ESOL program. We have five instructors helping us out so far with that program and we look forward to getting more. What I really appreciate in that program is the willingness of my people to learn English.

In May, we held a celebration for Haiti’s flag and marked Haitian Mothers’ Day. In June, on the Father’s day, one of our Haitian brothers, Julio Compere, will be honored by Holy Family Church and the St. Joseph Workers.
Papa François reflete sou pwogrè de kominote ayisyen

Quand je regarde la communauté des Haïtiens catholique à St. Thomas, je suis me fier de tout ce que nous avons réalisé jusqu’à présent. En dépit de toutes les responsabilités que j’ai sur mes épaules, je fais toujours de mon mieux pour créer un peu de temps pour eux, car à cette fin, j’ai été ordonné. Le 31 mai 2016 prochain, cette communauté va fêter son 3e anniversaire de fondation.

J’ai été encore à la Cathédrale Saint Pierre et Saint Paul, quand je les ai encouragés à se rassembler comme il est écrit dans notre devise: “l’Union Fait la Force”, surtout avec l’aide d’une station de radio sur laquelle un frère Haïtien, Oskar Lalane a un programme chaque mercredi à 9 h 30. Le 31 mai 2013, jour de la Visitation de la très Sainte Vierge, nous avons eu notre première réunion au salon d’accueil, suivie par la prière à la Chapelle de la Cathédrale.

Depuis lors, tous les dimanches à 6h pm, nous utilisons le salon d’accueil pour préparer notre première messe. Le 25 Août 2013, nous avons célébré notre première messe à la Cathédrale, présidée par le Très Rev. Evêque Herbert Bevard, célébrée par Rev. Mgr Jérome Feudjio, concélébrée par le Rev P. Louis Kemayou, aidée par le Diacre François Kerly, car j’ai été ordonné Diacre le 17 Août de concert avec le P. John Fewel Matthew et le P. Touchard Tignoua Goula.


Cette Chapelle est dédiée au Vénérable Pierre Toussaint, esclave originaire d’Haïti, (St. Marc) qui a été immigré d’Haïti à New York avec son maître Jean Béard, au cours du 19ème siècle.

l’Eglise toute entière a hâte de le voir devenir le premier Saint des Caraïbes. Nous avons la messe en créole le dernier jeudi du mois et, le samedi, nous avons aussi la messe à la fois en espagnol à 4 h pm et en créole à 6 h pm. La Charité Catholique du Diocèse a aussi un programme de sensibilisation avec des vêtements de la nourriture, le jeudi et le samedi de 9h am à 3h pm au profit des moins fortunés de la zone. Le dimanche, nous avons la messe à 6h pm à l’Eglise de la Sainte Famille et de la Congrégation continue de croître considérablement.

Aujourd’hui, nous avons deux chorales: la (Chorale de l’Espérance), Chorale des adultes et la (Chorale Choeur Angélique), celle des jeunes. Nous avons aussi un vibrant groupe de prière qui se rassemble pour prier le premier, deuxième et troisième jeudi du mois au sanctuaire de Notre-Dame du Cassy Hill à 6 h 30. Qu’il pleuve qu’il tonne, ils viennent prier. Après la réunion de prière il y a une camionnette disponible pour ramener chacun d’eux à sa maison. Nous sommes impatients de commencer à nouveau avec le Légion de Marie au sein de la Communauté Catholique Haïtienne. Nous avons un comité pour organiser et gérer toutes les activités de la communauté et, c’est à cause de ce comité, que nous avons cette camionnette aujourd’hui. Deux Chauffeurs de safari qui font également partie du comité: Mr. Pierre Laguerre et Mr. Louis Gérard Révil nous ont aidés et nous aide jusqu’au présent moment avec le transport le dimanche, gratuitement. Notre infatigable coordinateur Mr. Antony Legrand est toujours disponible pour ramener les genres chez eux en utilisant la camionnette. Nous souhaitons obtenir une deuxième Camionnette pour la Communauté car, cette dernière continue de croître considérablement et nous ne pouvons pas compter sur l’aide des chauffeurs de safari éternellement.

Depuis 2015, nous avons un programme d’Anglais (ESOL) pour les Haïtiens et, cette session en cours est la 3e, en plus c’est gratuit. Nous accomplissons les Haïtiens de toutes les religions car, notre but c’est: que chaque haitien soit en mesure de se défendre en Anglais. Madame Myrtha Bourdeau, originaire d’Haïti, est responsable du programme ESOL. Nous avons cinq instructeurs qui nous aident en attendant avec ce programme et nous souhaitons en avoir plus. Ce que j’apprécie vraiment dans ce programme c’est la volonté que mes frères et soeurs montre pour apprendre l’Anglais. Nous avons beaucoup de projets dans notre calendrier pour le mois de mai: Journée de plage à Magens Bay, célébration du drapeau Haïtien, et le dernier; la fête des Mères Haïtiennes. En Juin 2016, au jour de la fête des Pères, l’un de nos frères Haïtiens, Mr. Julio Compere sera honoré par l’Eglise de la Sainte Famille et les Travailleurs de Saint Joseph. Que Dieu bénisse tous ceux et celles qui lisent cet article!
Cassius Mathurin traveled a long way to get where he is today. His faith journey took him from a hard-working childhood to the depths of despair, and finally to redemption and a new life in Jesus Christ.

I was born in St. Lucia,” Cassius said, “and I was raised in the Catholic Church ... growing up, I didn't finish high school because things were tight, my father wasn't there for us and I had to work.” Cassius’ mother and brother moved to St. John, and, following a health scare with his brother, Cassius soon joined them. All went well for a few years, but then tragedy struck twice within a short time.

“My brother passed away,” Cassius said. “He had a heart problem and there was no cure for it. My mother took it very badly and I was helping her, when my girlfriend, whom I had a child with, got very sick and died suddenly.”

Within a week of falling ill, his girlfriend had been taken to a clinic, and then the hospital, and finally flown to a hospital in Puerto Rico. The doctors could not save her, and Cassius recalls holding her hand when she passed. She was 22 years old, and he was 25, now with a 2-year-old girl to raise. The grief was overwhelming to Cassius. "At that time, I wasn't thinking about Jesus or God or anything, I was just out of it. But his grace was protecting me all this time, I just didn't know.

"With all that was happening, I was just drinking, and smoking, and not working," he recalled. He spent a long time going down the wrong path, but, looking back, he knew God was looking out for him. Cassius met a woman who had children of her own, and they got together and married. She urged him to go to church, and, after resisting for some time, he did.

He was surprised at what he heard. Father Anthony Abraham was preaching, and the message stuck with Cassius. He kept coming back.

Father Anthony invited Cassius on a retreat in Trinidad. There, he encountered with full force the message of the Gospel, and it stopped him in his tracks. "The priest was talking about changing your life ... it was like he was talking to me! I was up all night thinking about what he said. The next day, I went to confession ... because there was something on my heart I had to get out." Cassius continued, "That evening, they had a prayer service and asked all who would give their lives to Christ to come up to be prayed over. I went up front, and I have never cried so much in my life. I felt something release off of me, I had no more desire for smoking, drinking, none of that stuff.” When he returned home, he ran into some of his old friends who noticed he had changed. When asked about it, Cassius told them, “If you don’t know, it’s Christ Jesus.”

Returning to St. John a new man, Cassius got more involved at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. After some time, Father Anthony asked him if he’d consider the diaconate program, and he accepted. Through the classes, he woke up to the full truth of the faith and his calling to spread the Good News. On Cassius’ ordination day in May, Father Anthony set up a special few activities for him — ordination in the morning, preaching at the 6 p.m. Mass and presiding over his first baptism. The baby he baptized is none other than Cassius’ grandson.

With a fire in his heart for the saving power of the Gospel, Cassius looks forward to living out his vocation as a deacon. “I’m really thanking God for what he's done in my life,” he said. “It’s just getting better and better!”

One of three new permanent deacons ordained in May for the U.S. Virgin Islands
Hearts inseparable, hearts united, hearts aflame

The depictions in Church art of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are countless. The white-hot blaze of hearts aflame represented in Catholic art, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, show graphically that Deus Caritas est — that God is Love. A consuming, burning love; a deep and fathomless desire of the lover (God) for the beloved (The Son, and his Immaculate Mother); and this love is extended to all who will both accept and return, God's infinite love.

We know from God's word that he created all things, and that he called them “good.” There was in the beginning, no sin. God made the world for love, and only love. That all things might glorify God — things animate and things inanimate — God created the world. Almighty God made the world and everything in it, for the Eternal Word to dwell among mankind. In God the Father’s perfect and holy will, humanity was not to sin but to give, in return, to God, the burning love with which God loves the Son; and with which the Son loves the Father. All of mankind was made especially to share in that love.

Then, our first parents left their calling and gave over their trust to the devil, sinning and terribly offending against so great a love coming to them from their creator. Without that stain of the sin of Adam and Eve, which broke the bond of love being removed in baptism, no one can ever know the joy of heaven and enter into God's loving and eternal embrace.

With the greatest fear of losing that union with God, everyone who has been so baptized must flee every sin. Sin, which can cause the eternal death of the soul in the torments of hell — where the fire is never quenched, and the worm never dies.

The sacrament of Confirmation — with its seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord) — is given to seal each soul in every possible way from the danger of dying the eternal death, and steering them safely to heaven with the burning love of God.

Even so, many pursuits in the world — so many false allures and traps — may cheat the soul of its highest good and goal. These, which can lead into terrible sins, drag more souls than are saved, into the eternal and terrifying dungeons of hell.

Yet, the taking up of Christ's yoke is so easy, and the immense helps given in the seven sacraments of the Church, so lighten every burden and care of life, that heaven is all but assured for the soul who earnestly and with discipline seeks the face of God.

For every young person baptized and formed in their Catholic faith, nothing is higher than the constant and unflagging enrichment and flowering of that faith. For every parent, their child’s cradle to adulthood immersion in the Cathechism of the Catholic Church — especially when it is delivered as part of a Catholic education, in a Catholic school classroom — should be not one bit less important than their daily physical nutrition.

The most noble and honorable sacrifices which so many parents make to send their children to Catholic schools throughout their childhood and young adulthood; and the constant and ready help of our diocese to offer Catholic education, scholarships and every kind of financial help and incentive, so that faith may grow in every young person, is assurance of heaven’s promise being well within reach. These two guardians of our children’s souls: parents, and Catholic education, working together, may assure that every child remains life-long on the steep and narrow path which leads to eternal life and happiness forever with God.

If your child or children are presently enrolled in Catholic school, keep them there — with every help and aid available to you. If they are not presently attending Catholic school, the effort and sacrifice you will make to place them there will be worth every effort. The cost of letting the world educate our children is high and does not include the generous helps which can be found only in the Church, her seven sacraments and in the discipline of methodically learning and growing our children's Catholic faith. Our schools teach every skill, science and discipline for success in the world, while alongside, faith, in word and practice, grows with design, planning and purpose.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary are forever united in divine and eternal love. A successful life in this world will only be measured an eternal success on the judgment day, when the blessed of the world are called to be with Jesus, Mary, God the Father, the Holy spirit and all of the saints and angels in heaven.

NOTE: To find out more about our Catholic schools’ curriculum, enrollment, scholarship and financial helps, see ads on page 19 in this issue of The Catholic Islander.

By Father John Matthew Fewel

FEATURE STORY
The parable

In the Gospel of Luke (15:11-32), Jesus follows his parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin with a story about a father and his two sons. The parable begins with the younger of the sons asking and receiving from his father his share of his inheritance. This younger son then leaves his father’s home, squanders his money and eventually finds himself tending swine on a farm. Dying from hunger, he finally resolves to return to his father’s house, beg his father’s forgiveness and seek employment as a servant.

However, when the father sees his son approaching, he runs to him, embraces and kisses him, and orders that his son be given “the finest robe,” a ring, sandals and a feast. When the eldest son, who had been out in the field, returns to the estate and hears music and dancing, he is confused and asks a servant what is happening. Upon hearing that a feast is under way to celebrate the return of his brother, the eldest son grows angry and refuses to enter the house.

When the father goes out to his eldest son, the son complains that it is unfair for his brother to receive such a feast. After all, his younger brother had abandoned them and spent his money in dissolute living. Meanwhile, he points out that he has always been faithful to his father, but has never been treated to such a celebration. To this the father replies, “My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.”

LESIONS IN MERCY: THE LOST SON

The motto for the Year of Mercy is “Merciful like the Father.” Perhaps no parable is better suited to teach us what this motto actually looks like in practice than the parable of the lost son.
The lesson of the younger son

We do not know what motivated the younger son to ask for his inheritance. Perhaps, he wanted his freedom: from his father's rules, from financial dependence, from work, duty and responsibility. Whatever the reason, he was unwilling to wait until his father passed away to receive his portion of the estate. Instead, he sought, in effect, to declare that his father was already dead to him.

The younger son chose to reject his father. He chose to live as though his father did not exist. He lived only to satisfy his every desire for self-gratification. His decision led him to eventually lose his money, self-worth and that very freedom he so much wanted.

In the depths of despair and regret, he decided to return repentant to his father as a servant, rather than as a son. He found the immediate forgiveness of his father and the restoration of his familial status. In a word, he experienced the unconditional mercy of his father.

The father had not wanted his younger son to leave, but he would not force the younger son to stay. Instead, the father decided to respect his son's choice even when the choice meant he would lose his son. Our heavenly Father, likewise, does not force us to love him or remain in communion with him. He respects our free will and honors our choices, even when the choice is to reject him.

At the same time, the father's desire for communion with his son explains his immediate and unconditional welcoming of the son back into the family. Nothing the son had done could exclude him from receiving the father's forgiveness once he made the decision to turn back and repent. Further, the father, like our heavenly Father, not only offered forgiveness, but was also filled with joy because the finding of his son anew restored the order of his relationship with his son. It made communion possible again.

The lesson of the faithful son

Now the faithful son had to deal with his younger brother running off with a large portion of his father's wealth in order to live a life of debauchery. He also had to manage the increased responsibility for the family business he inherited. It is not difficult to imagine the seeds of resentment taking root in the faithful brother's heart.

When he returned from the field one day to learn of his brother's return and of his father's reaction, there were no tears of joy. On the contrary, a tremendous sense of injustice overcame the faithful son. He had been the good son. He had stayed and fulfilled his duties to his father. How could his father be so unfair, so unjust?

The father now bears the older son's anger over the reception. He first assured his son that everything he had was the son's as well; that his mercifulness to his younger son did nothing to diminish his older son's position. Then, he invited his older son to enter into his joy over the return of his younger son, to be merciful like the father.

This invitation was an invitation into a deeper participation in the life of the father. Certainly, the eldest son had remained faithful and obedient, but his path to growth in spiritual perfection lay in the direction of taking on the mind, love, heart, and thought of the father — to see through the father's eyes. It is an invitation that our heavenly Father extends to each of us today.

SPIRITUAL READING

“Spiritual reading is not only reading about spiritual people or spiritual things. It is also reading spiritually, that is, in a spiritual way! Reading in a spiritual way is reading with a desire to let God come closer to us.”

These words of Henri Nouwen (1932-1996) invite us to continue our spiritual reading during this Year of Mercy with the renewed intention to listen for the voice of God in the pages. This month consider reading Nouwen's *The Return of the Prodigal Son*.

Nouwen, a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian, wrote the book in response to a viewing of Rembrandt's painting of the same name — first as a poster in France, then the original in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the book, Nouwen describes his own spiritual journey, identifying personally with the prodigal younger son, the resentful elder son, and the merciful father each in turn.

Test your knowledge of what the Bible has to say about mercy...

“Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to ______ , abounding in ______ .”

a. see; distraction b. rebuke; gentleness c. anger; kindness d. forget; forgiveness

Answer: c. anger; kindness (Ps 103:8)

The Return of the Prodigal Son

*Canonization of Mother Teresa*  
August 30 – Sept. 5 & Sept. 1 – 11  
With Father Tom Sullivan (Fathers of Mercy)  
Rome, Assisi, Padre Pio, Canonization,  
Vatican Museums. From $2,385.00

*Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy Cruise Conference*  
Oct. 31 - Nov. 15, 2016 • $3,085.00  
Holy Land, Greece, Rome, Ephesus

*Incredible India*  
Sept. 10 – Oct. 4 & Nov. 27 – Dec. 20, 2016 • $9,755.00  
Cochin, Darjeeling, Delhi, Bombay, Goa, Cochín, Chennai, Agra; Taj

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But keeping God's commandments is easier said than done. Having someone, even a benevolent God, tell us how to live our lives can sometimes rub us the wrong way, but the attraction of joy-filled life is not so easily dismissed. Joyful people are fun to be around. We are fortunate in the Catholic Church to have a joy-filled pontiff. Pope Francis recently said: "Let the joyous wonder of Easter Sunday radiate through our thoughts, looks, attitudes, gestures, and words." He then added, "When it comes from within, it comes from a heart immersed in the source of this joy."

The source of our joy is Jesus. I remember my first assignment as a priest, 25 years ago, in Dominica. Dominica boasts of 365 rivers, many of them clean enough to drink from directly. I used to walk with friends and youth group members up some of these rivers. If we had the time, the goal was to reach the source of the river. What we usually found was a spring bubbling up from the ground; the water cold, clear and pure. That is an image for Jesus and, we could add, an image of a heart immersed in joy.

Can you recall the last time you felt joy? I am sure that you have a smile on your face as you remember. It might have been as recent as this morning on your way to school or work. Or perhaps it was with your family as you gathered for a special meal. The laughter that often accompanies joy is unique because it is not directed at a person's faults or shortcomings. Rather, it is a sweet laughter that comes up from the depths, a laugh that cleanses and purifies. It is holy laughter that is among our most precious gifts from God.

As the pope so accurately points out, we will not win hearts for Christ with dour faces and somber words. God's message is wholly authentic, fully alive. When we step aside and allow God's Good News to flow, we find ourselves swept into its embrace, into that joy which the pope says radiates through our thoughts, looks, attitudes, gestures and words. Such joy is not easily restrained or obstructed — even as it leads us deep into the Passion of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist. Any sadness that lingers over the death of Christ on the cross is swept away in fresh joy, because Jesus just didn't die, he died for us. If he suffered death for us, then we must be extraordinary. The least that we can do in return, or, really, the most that we can do, is not be content with simply living, but living joyfully for him.

PILGRIMAGES FOR THE YEAR OF MERCY

Father Louis Olive is spearheading three pilgrimages for the Year of Mercy:
3. Pilgrimage extension to Sri Lanka, Oct. 6, 2016. He will also lead the Catholic Cruise Conference, Oct. 31-Nov. 15, 2016, along with five Filipino bishops and archbishops. Travelers will depart from Newark, N.J., to Rome, Naples, Sicily, Athens (Greece), Israel, Jerusalem, Haifa, Ephesus in Turkey, Istanbul, Cappadocia and back to the U.S. For further information, please call Father Louis Olive, CSsR at 410.990.4085.

REFLECTION

By Father Kevin MacDonald, CSsR

THE SOURCE OF OUR JOY

Have you ever thought what it is that God wants for us? You might answer “salvation” or “forgiveness” or “redemption.” All of these answers are true, but I think what God most wants for us is joy. Jesus tells us to keep God's commandments so that “my joy might be in you and your joy might be complete.”
Please collect the following items at your church, school or workplace and bring them to Catholic Charities:

- Powdered milk, rice, lentils and beans
- Infant formula and baby food
- Canned meat and vegetables

Catholic Charities’ May Food Drive

The Diocese of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands is committed to protecting children from all harm. If you have knowledge of any church worker who may have abused a minor, please contact the diocesan child protection coordinator, Callista Julien, at 340.778.5773 or 340.772.4214.
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Representing accident victims
Order of Malta
Virgin Islands Area
The Order of Malta is raising funds for Bishop Herbert Bevard’s Catholic Scholarship Program through the sale of commemorative bricks. The bricks will be installed in the Rosary Garden at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. This is a great way to remember a loved one or express gratitude to God for answering a prayer. Your message will last forever.

Call 774.2166 for information

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Recitation of the Rosary
Intention of sick parishioners at OLPH and the Order of Malta maladies: second Wednesday of each month at 5:45 p.m. (followed by Mass) at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in the Order of Malta Rosary Garden. Everyone is invited to attend.

Legion of Mary
Presidium Mary, Mystical Rose, meets in Holy Family Church's classroom, Sundays at 4 p.m.

Catholic Charities of the VI
Catholic Charities serves the needy — through our shelter, soup kitchen and outreach programs — with help from the community. There is an ongoing need for financial support. Please contact us at 340.777.8518 or ccusvi@outlook.com to explore the many ways you can help. Thank you.

Catholic Daughters of America
Court 2049 meets at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral's Hospitality Lounge on the third Saturday of every month at 3 p.m.

Charismatic Prayer
► Prayers in Spanish are offered at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral's Hospitality Lounge on Mondays at 6 p.m.
► Holy Family Church holds evenings of charismatic prayer on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Divine Mercy Chaplet
► Altar servers from Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church lead the Divine Mercy Chaplet at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral on Mondays at 3 p.m.
► The chaplet is prayed at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Tuesdays at 3 p.m.

Holy Hours/Eucharistic Adoration
► Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church has Exposition on Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. until Benediction at 6 p.m. and on Fridays at 6 p.m., followed by Mass at 7 p.m.
► Holy Family Church and St. Anne Chapel have Holy Hours with Exposition and Benediction on Fridays at 6 p.m., followed by Mass at 7 p.m.

Intercessory Prayer Group
A team is prepared to pray for the needs of all who ask at Holy Family Church on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

Pro-life Rosary
Pray a pro-life rosary at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m.

Legion of Mary
► Presidium Mary, Morning Star, meets at Our Lady of Perpetual Help every Friday at 8 p.m. in the conference room. For more information about the Legion of Mary, call the church office at 340.774.0885.
► Presidium Maria, Arca de la Alianza, holds meetings in Spanish at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral's Hospitality Lounge on Sundays at 2 p.m.
► Presidium Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, meets in the St. Anne Chapel Hall on Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

Our Lady of Fatima Devotion
The Children of Mary lead a devotion to Our Lady of Fatima at Holy Family Church on the first Saturday of every month at 4 p.m.

Rosary Walk
Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral hosts a rosary walk on the first Saturday of every month at 7 a.m., followed by Mass at 7:30 a.m.

St. Joseph Workers
The St. Joseph Workers meet at Holy Family Church's Columban Hall on the second Sunday of every month at 9:30 a.m.

St. Vincent de Paul Society
The Young Vincentians meet on the third Sunday of every month at 11:30 a.m. The adult members meet on the fourth Saturday of every month at 3:30 p.m. Both groups meet in Holy Family Church's classroom.

World Apostolate of Fatima
The World Apostolate of Fatima meets at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Thursdays at 7:30 a.m.

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Devotions
Devotions to Our Mother of Perpetual Help are prayed before Mass on Wednesdays at:
► Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral at 6:45 a.m. and noon.
► Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church at 6:15 p.m.
► Holy Family Church at 6:50 p.m.
► St. Anne Chapel at 7 p.m.

Magnificat
Magnificat, an international ministry to Catholic women, meets at Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral's Hospitality Lounge on the first Saturday of every month at 8 a.m.

Men’s Prayer Group
The Sons of Joseph and Mary meet at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Pro-life
Bound 4 Life USVI, the diocesan pro-life group, meets at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church every other week. There is also a pro-life Holy Hour and Mass at 6 p.m. on the first Friday of the month. For more information, visit Facebook.com/bound4lifeUSVI or call the OLPH Church office at 340.774.0885.
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Anniversary of St. Patrick Catholic School
St. Patrick Catholic School (SPCS) is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding date of the school starting this June. We are planning events such as a welcome reception, a gala at Fort Frederick, school tours and more. This celebration is a big part about our alumni reconnection program, which means we need the community’s help! We are asking the community to please send any interesting stories or remarks, original photos (with names on back — we will return once scanned), digital photos and any SPCS memorabilia (uniforms, athletic gear, documents, “artifacts”) that they would not mind having on loan to us either by email to catholicschoolvi@gmail.com or mail to:

St. Patrick Catholic School
150th Anniversary Committee
406 Custom House St.
Frederiksted, VI 00840

Adult Education
The St. Patrick Alumni Association offers an After School Tutorial Program, which is coordinated by Sister Claina Letang, ICM. They are now also operating as a Public Computer Center, which is part of the ViNGN Digital Literacy Program. It is open to the public during scheduled mornings to mid-day.

Bible Study
Holy Cross Church hosts Bible studies in McAlpin Hall on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., following morning Mass.

Carmelite Spirituality
The Our Lady Star of the Sea Community shares Carmelite spirituality in the St. Joseph Church Hospitality Lounge and Learning Center on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1 p.m.

Charismatic Prayer
▶ St. Patrick Church has charismatic prayer in the chapel on the third Friday of each month at 6 p.m.
▶ St. Ann Church has charismatic prayer in Marian Hall on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Cursillo Prayer Group
The Cursillo movement hosts a Spanish prayer meeting in the St. Michael Chapel at St. Joseph Church on the last Monday of every month at 7 p.m.

Devotions to St. Gerard Majella
Every Tuesday after the 6:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Masses.

Cursillo Ultreya
Cursillo members meet for Ultreya in the Cursillo office at St. Joseph Church on Thursdays after the 7 p.m. Mass. Meetings are in Spanish.

Divine Mercy Chaplet
St. Joseph Church hosts Divine Mercy devotions on the fourth Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. The hour-long program includes the chaplet, prayers, adoration and teachings of the Divine Mercy by Father John Mark.

Franciscan Spirituality
The Our Lady of the Angels fraternity of the Third Order of St. Francis shares Franciscan spirituality at Franciscan House on the fourth Sunday of each month at 3 p.m.

Rosary Prayer Group
Cenacle of Our Lady of the Rosary Prayer Group meets at the Franciscan House every Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Holy Hours/Eucharistic Adoration
All day adoration every Thursday from after the 8:15 a.m. Mass until 6 p.m.

Knights of Columbus
Holy Cross Council 6482 meets at Holy Cross Church’s McAlpin Hall on the first and third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m.

St. Patrick Youth Ministry
Come be with us and enjoy a variety of exciting activities as St. Patrick parents and youths mix work and play to spread the Gospel message on St. Croix. For more information, contact Father Boniface Blanchard at 340.772.0138.

Magnificat
Magnificat, an international ministry to Catholic women, meets at Franciscan House on the third Sunday of each month at 3 p.m.

Neo-catechumenal Way
The Neo-catechumenal Way leads a celebration of the word at St. Joseph Church on Mondays and Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Devotions
Devotions to Our Mother of Perpetual Help are prayed at:
▶ St. Patrick Church on Wednesdays at 6:30 a.m. and 8 a.m.
▶ Holy Cross Church every Wednesday after the 6:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Mass. Also on the First Saturday of each month at the 8:15 a.m. Mass.
▶ St. Joseph Church on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
All-night Vigil
Our Lady of Mount Carmel holds an all-night vigil on the first Friday of each month after the 7 p.m. Mass.

Charismatic Prayer
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church hosts an evening of charismatic prayer on Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Men’s Fellowship
Men’s Fellowship meets the first and third Sunday of each month.

Spanish Mass
Our Lady of Mount Carmel has Spanish Mass at 6 p.m. Sundays.

Eucharistic Adoration
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church has Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction on Thursdays from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Free Meals
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church’s Kallaloo Kitchen: Food for the Soul feeds the needy in the parish’s Guadalupe Hall on Mondays and Fridays at noon. Volunteers are welcomed.

Legion of Mary
Presidium Mary, Queen of Angels, meets in the Guadalupe Hall of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. Presidium Mary, Mystical Rose, meets in Holy Family Church’s classroom, Sundays at 4 p.m.

Sunday Mass in Coral Bay
Mass is celebrated each Sunday at 12:30 p.m. at the John’s Folly Learning Center in Coral Bay. For questions or transportation, call the church office at 776.6339.

Shepherds of Christ Associates
The Shepherds of Christ Associates meet for prayer in the St. Michael Chapel of St. Joseph Church on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. and on the second and fourth Sunday of every month at 5 p.m.

Spanish Prayer and Reflection
Pray the rosary and share reflections on the readings of the coming Sunday Mass at Holy Cross Church on alternate Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Meetings are in Spanish.

World Apostolate of Fatima
The World Apostolate of Fatima meets in the chapel at Holy Cross Church on Tuesdays at 5 p.m.

Rosary for the Unborn
St. Joseph Church hosts a bilingual English/Spanish rosary for the unborn on Fridays at 6 p.m.

Santo Niño
St. Joseph Church hosts devotions to the Santo Niño (the Holy Child Jesus) on the first Saturday of every month at 4:30 p.m. The sacrament of reconciliation is offered during this time.

Holy Cross Youth Ministry
Every Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. in McAlpin Hall. Father Touchard is the spiritual advisor.

Visit the website of the Diocese of Saint Thomas in the Virgin Islands at www.catholicvci.com