



Reflection, Prayer, and Activity Guide

Here at Our Lady of Lourdes, we're working hard to build a parish of intentional, life-long disciples. We want every member of our parish family to ENCOUNTER Jesus and his church, GROW in knowledge and love of our Catholic faith, and SERVE God and others as missionary disciples.

Though we can't be together physically to learn and grow at Vacation Bible School, this summer we're excited to offer these resources so that each domestic church can dig into the Kerygma - the basic proclamation of the Gospel - in a way that fits them uniquely.

Use the reflection, prayer, and activity resources included in this packet as a companion to the video Bible studies that will be available each day on the parish Facebook page. We hope and pray that they will deepen your family's connection to Jesus and his church, help you to trust in God's love and mercy, and to live as missionary disciples of Christ.

How to get the most out of your VBS @ Home experience...

What does the Bible say?

Here we'll introduce the scripture passage that will guide our study for the day. The text for each day is included, but if you have the time, we'd encourage you to open up your Bible to read and pray with the passage there!

Each day we'll be using our parish Facebook page to send out videos that break open the scripture passage at varying levels. You can access the videos even without a Facebook account by going to <https://www.facebook.com/ololbett>.

- Kids with Emily @ 10:00 am
- Teens with Brett @ 3:00 pm
- Adults with Fr. Chris @ 7:00 pm

Reflect and Pray

Here we'll offer a brief reflection, some questions to ponder, and a prayer related to the day's theme and scripture passage. We'd encourage you to journal about the questions and/or discuss them with others in your family or circle of friends. You can share your thoughts in the comment section associated with the daily Facebook videos too!

Activity

The activities included are do-able with stuff you'll find around the house. They're flexible so that you can adapt them based on the materials you have and the age and number of people in your household. Have fun with them! We hope that putting each day's concept into action will help it sink a little more deeply into your heart.

Saint Spotlight

The Communion of Saints is filled with people from all walks of life who lived their faith in so many different ways, and we can look to them as companions on the journey! Here you'll hear a little about a Saint whose life story connects with the theme of each day.

Catechism Connection

Pope St. John Paul II called the Catechism "A sure norm for teaching the Faith", but many of us find reading it a little intimidating. Here you'll get a nugget of the Church's wisdom as it pertains to the day's theme.

DAY 1 - God created us for a relationship with himself.

What does the Bible say?

Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild,^[a] large and small." **27** So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, **28** blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. **29** I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; **30** but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food"—and it was done. **31** God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

Reflect and Pray

Before the world existed, our Triune God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, was a happy, loving community. God is SO generous with love that he wanted to share it, and so he created the universe and everything that fills it, including human beings! God loved Adam and Eve, our first parents, very much and he loves their children (us) too!

- How does knowing that you're created and loved by God change the way you look at yourself?
- How does it change the way you think about others?

" Dear God,

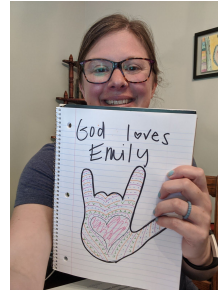
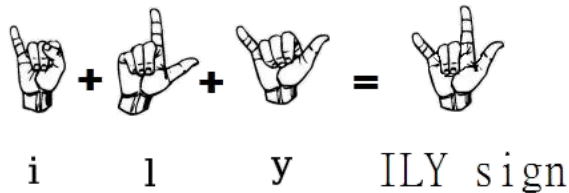
You created the whole universe - the shining stars, delicate flowers, powerful thunderstorms, and beautiful butterflies. You made Adam and Eve, humanity's first parents, to share in the love of the Trinity. Help me to remember that I am fearfully and wonderfully made to know and love you.

Amen. "

Activity

Human beings are magnificent creations! Think of all the cool intricacies of how our bodies work and all amazing things we can do with them.

People who are unable to speak or hear use sign language to communicate. Look at the image below that explains how to say "I love you" in sign language. Make the sign with your hand and trace it on a piece of paper. God created the world to be filled with color...use all the colors of the rainbow to decorate your "I love you" hand.



Sing and sign along to "Jesus Loves Me" - https://youtu.be/_Sa-DxClTXw

saint spotlight

One might say that the key to becoming a Saint is knowing that you are loved by God, and working hard to develop a personal relationship with him. St. Kateri Tekakwitha was a woman who was keenly aware of God's love for her, and she responded to his love by devoting her life to prayer and fasting, loving and serving God and her neighbor, and caring for creation.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us!

To learn more about St. Kateri, follow these links...

- <https://catholicrurallife.org/st-kateri-tekakwitha-love-god-first-and-love-for-creation-will-follow/>
- <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-kateri-tekakwitha/>

Catechism Connection

"God created the world to show forth and communicate his glory. That his creatures should share in his truth, goodness, and beauty - this is the glory for which God created them." (CCC 319)

DAY 2 - Our sin broke that relationship.

What does the Bible say?

Genesis 3: 1-7

1 Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?'" **2** The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; **3** it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" **4** But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! **5** God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know* good and evil." **6** The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Reflect and Pray

If God created our world to be good, why do we see so much bad stuff happening? Turn on the news and you'll hear about storms, disease, hatred, and violence. The answer is in today's scripture passage...Adam and Eve *chose* to do what *they* wanted to do rather than what God had asked them to do. This is sin. Adam and Eve faced the consequences of their choice, and we face them too. The original sin of our first parents caused the created world to fall and break, and that brokenness gets passed on to us, making it hard for us to *choose* to be loving and obedient.

- Why did God have to punish Adam and Eve?
- How have you experienced the consequences for a choice you made?
- Things that look good or feel good aren't always good for us...how have you seen this in your own life?

" Dear God,

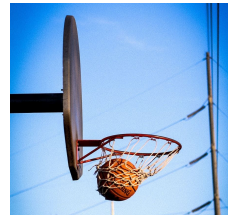
Sometimes it's hard to trust that you want what's best for me
when the wrong things are easier to do than the right things.
Help me to resist temptation when it comes my way.

Amen. "

Activity

God has a holy standard of perfection for us. We can think about sin as falling short of that standard, or missing the mark.

For today's activity, find a creative way to do some target practice! You could use Nerf guns, darts, or a basketball and hoop if you have those items, OR simply draw a target on a piece of paper and get some cotton balls or q-tips to toss at it. Give each person 5 tries to hit the bullseye and see who can get the best score. Play your target game a few times and see if your score improves with practice.



Examining our consciences to look for where we've missed the mark of holiness is an important habit of discipleship. Pray along with "God's Not Done With You" by Taurence Wells here... <https://youtu.be/cVHrkYBEgFM>

Saint Spotlight

It's hard to hit the target every time isn't it!? Resisting sin, doing the right thing, and striving for holiness takes effort, practice, and prayer. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was a young man who loved God and loved sports. He found that going to Mass and praying every day helped him live his life to the fullest, to achieve his goals, to be a good son and friend, and to share his faith with others.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, pray for us!

Get to know Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati better by watching this video...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaFL036mYkA>

Or reading about him here...
<http://saintsresource.com/pier-giorgio-frassati>

Catechism Connection

"...since sin is universal, those who pretend not to need salvation are blind to themselves." (CCC 588)

DAY 3 - God wasn't willing to abandon us.

What does the Bible say?

John 3:16-21

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. **18** Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. **19** And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. **20** For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. **21** But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Reflect and Pray

Because God is just, there are consequences for sin. But because God is loving, he doesn't abandon his children. Despite the disobedience of the human family that began with Adam and Eve and continues with us today, God never forgot the covenant promise he made to redeem his fallen children. On the cross, Jesus Christ paid the debt of our sin.

- What does it mean to be condemned? What is the opposite of being condemned?
- Think about the fact that God allowed his Son to be sacrificed not just for the sins of all humanity, but for *your* sins...what does that show you about how much you are loved?

" Dear God,

Thank you for not abandoning me to the consequences of my sin.
Help me to be steadfast in my devotion to you no matter the cost.

Amen. "

Activity

Many of the injustices in our world today are a result of sin. God gave us tools to combat these injustices - they're called the Spiritual Works of Mercy and the Corporal Works of Mercy. These give us concrete ways to bring God's love, mercy, and light into the world.

Attached you'll find coloring sheets that name all of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. As you color, think, talk, and pray about each of them. Ask God to help you come up with a list of actions to take over the next few weeks that can help your domestic church share his mercy with those who need it most. (Thanks to Katie at www.looktohimandberadiant.com for the great coloring sheets!)

Listen and pray along with this music video for Jason Gray's song "With Every Act of Love"... <https://youtu.be/V4bB7BUxBbY>

Saint Spotlight

Just as God was not willing to abandon his children to the consequences of sin, St. José Sánchez del Río was not willing to abandon his faith in Jesus even when he faced great pressure from others, including bribery, threats, and torture. Also known as Josécito - or Little José - because of his youth, he courageously defended the faith and the rights of Catholics during the Cristero Wars and died a martyr at just 14 year old.

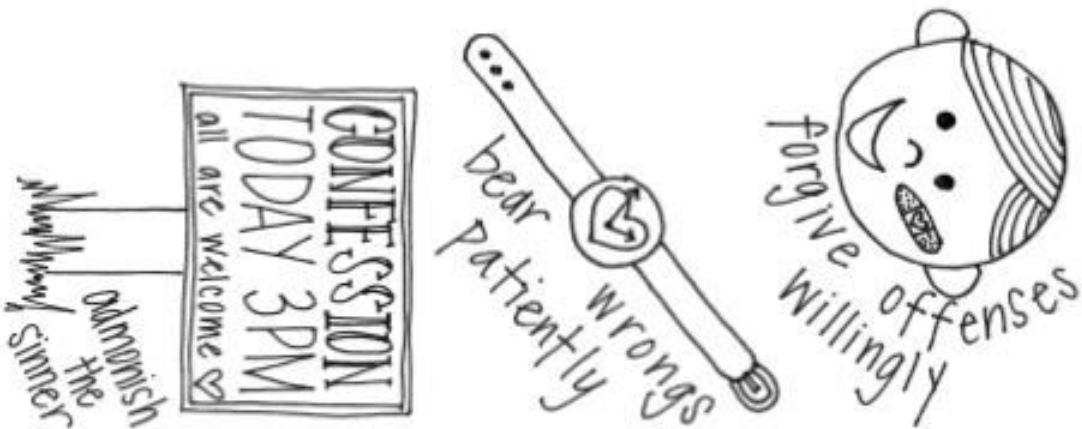
St. José Sánchez del Río, pray for us!

To learn more about this young hero of the faith, check out these sites...

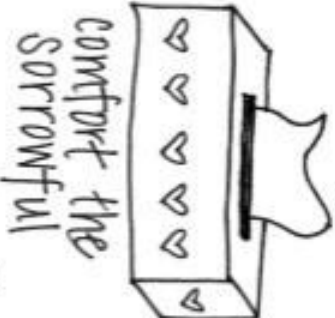
- <http://www.synod.va/content/synod2018/en/youth-testimonies/saint-jose-sanchez-del-rio.html>
- <https://denvercatholic.org/st-jose-de-jesus-sanchez-del-rio-boy-died-love-christ-king/>

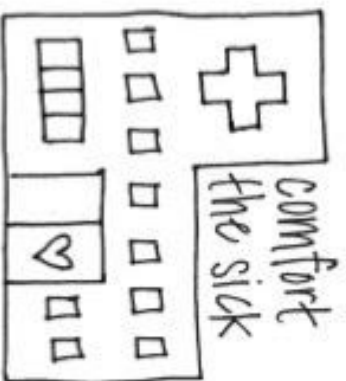
Catechism Connection

"By his loving obedience to the Father, "unto death, even death on a cross" (*Phil 2:8*), Jesus fulfills the atoning mission (*cf. Is 53:10*) of the suffering Servant, who will "make many righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities" (*Is 53:11; cf. Rom 5:19*)." (CCC 623)

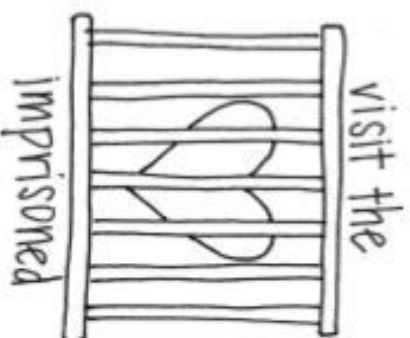
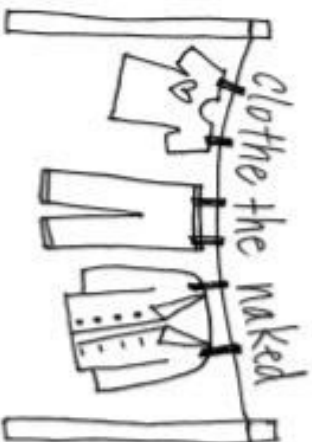
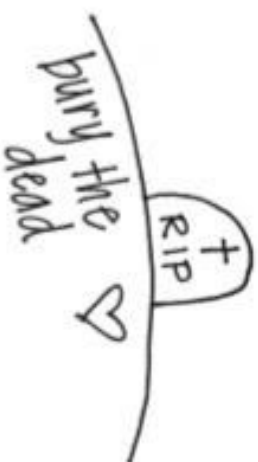


The Spiritual Works of Mercy





The Corporal Works of Mercy



DAY 4 - Jesus restores our relationship with God.

What does the Bible say?

Acts 2:37-42

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do, my brothers?" 38 Peter [said] to them, "Repent and be baptized,* every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call." 40 He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand persons were added that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Reflect and Pray

The English word "grace" comes from a Greek word that means "gift". Through Jesus' crucifixion, God offered the gift of reconciliation to all of humanity. Through the acceptance of this gift, and the Sacrament of Baptism, we are saved from sin, filled with grace and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed into the relationship with God which we were designed for.

- Baptism is essential for our salvation. As you reflect on today's scripture passage, do you see connections to other sacraments too? What are they and how important are they to your faith life?
- Why can Christians have hope even in the midst of trials or hardship? How have you seen this in your own life?

" Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of the cross and the Sacrament of Baptism that allow me to share in your life, death, and resurrection. Help me to unite any suffering I may face to yours and to always hope in the promise of heaven.

Amen. "

Activity

Sometimes things happen in our lives that we weren't planning on. These might be considered obstacles. The many obstacles of life may make it hard to live out our faith, and may even cause us to question it.

Use objects (chairs, hula hoops, brooms, balls, cardboard boxes, etc.) you find around the house to create an obstacle course either indoors or in your yard. Try drawing an obstacle course with chalk or finding your way to the cross through the attached maze.



In the sacraments, God gives us his grace to make our way through all the obstacles of life.

Listen and pray with "Look Up Child" by Lauren Daigle...

<https://youtu.be/g8TYZBlvBlA>

Saint Spotlight

While Jesus' death and resurrection free us from sin, being a Christian doesn't free us from earthly suffering. Because of her strong Catholic faith, Blessed Chiara Luce Badano had a joy that never wavered even as she faced the bone cancer that took her life when she was only 18.

Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, pray for us!

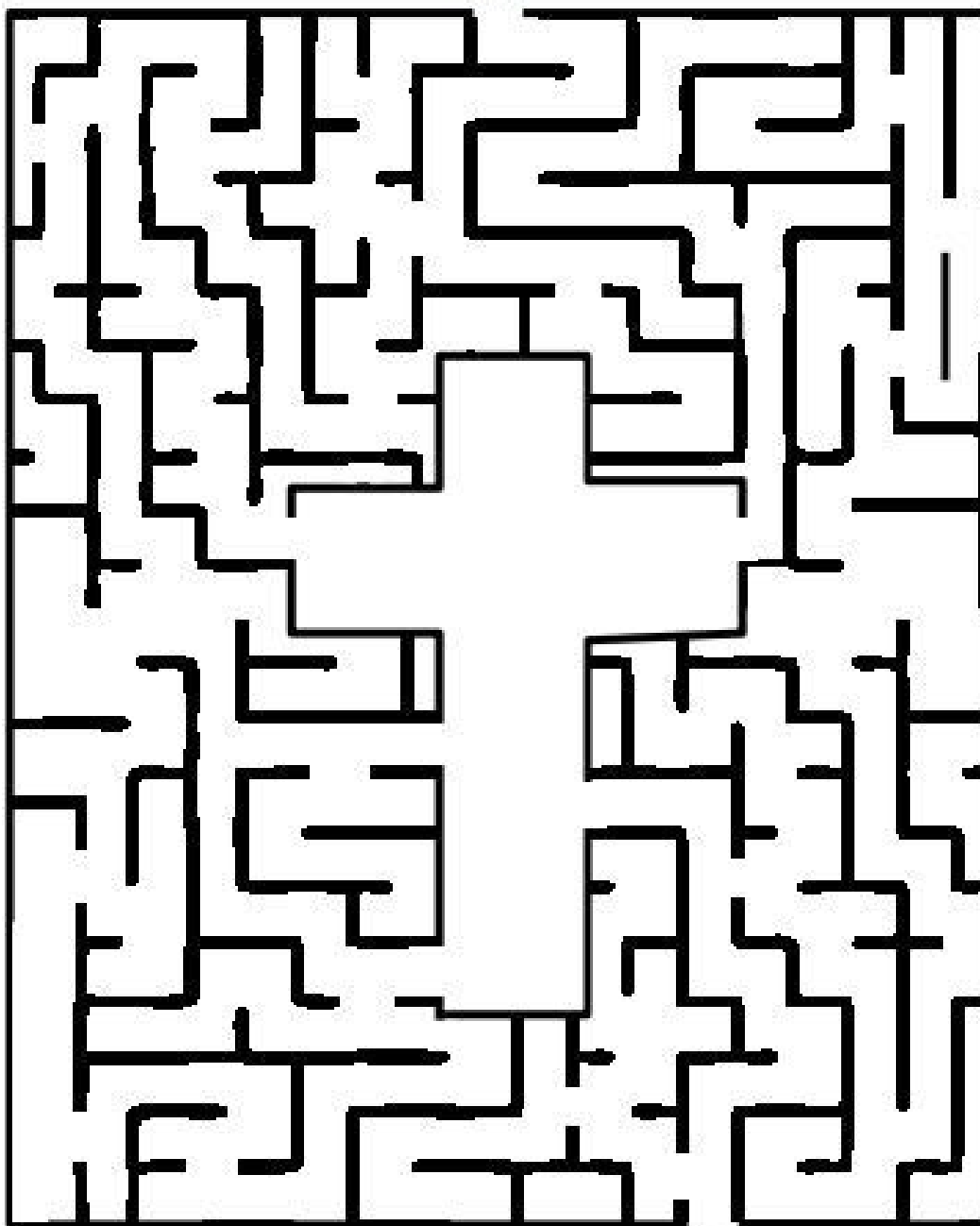
To get to know this great young woman on the way to canonized sainthood, visit...
<https://cruxnow.com/commentary/2016/10/teen-girls-life-death-stuff-saints-made/>

Catechism Connection

"To live, grow, and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church." (CCC 162)

Cross Maze Activity Page

Finish



Start

DAY 5 - Jesus calls us to share the Good News.

What does the Bible say?

Matthew 28:16-20

16 The eleven* disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. **18** Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Reflect and Pray

Jesus sent his disciples on a mission to take the Good News out into the whole world...this is what it means to evangelize! At our baptism, we become sharers in the same mission that Jesus gives to his disciples in today's scripture passage. Jesus didn't send the disciples out on this mission alone - they were given the power of the Holy Spirit which enabled them to do many amazing things so that people come to faith in Jesus. We're given the same gifts in the sacraments and God wants to be *as alive* and *as active* now in our domestic churches, circles of influence, and parish communities as he was in the days of the disciples. He wants us to continue the work that they began!

- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus gave them their mission? How do you feel about being sent out to continue their work?
- How can you fulfill the "Great Commission" in your family, at school or work, and in your community?

" Dear God,

Thank you for calling me to share in your mission of spreading the Good News! Help me to be open to the ways the Holy Spirit is leading my words and actions so that I can always point others to you.

Amen. "

Activity

Evangelization is all about passing the Good News of Jesus' love and forgiveness along to others! Play a game where you have to communicate a message or idea to someone else. Here are some ideas...

- Telephone - pass a whispered message down a line of people and see if it can remain accurate as it is passed along
- Charades - use actions to get others to guess what you are
- Pictionary - draw someone or something and see how quickly someone can guess what it is

Watch this video to learn more about the Holy Spirit and how his gifts inspire and empower us to be missionary disciples...<https://youtu.be/iUFdHxBXM44>.

Praise God along with "Rescuer" by Rend Collective...<https://youtu.be/sAg7rn7fH3Q>.

saint spotlight

Each and every baptized person is called to share the Good News and give a special vocation to further the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit helped Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli to say yes to his vocation even though it meant leaving his life of wealth and status in Italy and becoming a priest, teacher, and architect in the midwestern United States. Saying yes to God's call for his life filled Fr. Samuel with great joy and energy and he ministered to Native Americans, founded churches along the Mississippi River Valley, and even helped design Iowa's capitol building!

Venerable Samuel Mazzuchelli, pray for us!

To learn more about this local saint, visit...

- <https://www.sinsinawa.org/mazzuchelli/mazzuchelli.html>
- <https://aleteia.org/2017/07/09/this-zealous-wisconsin-missionary-heard-confessions-for-14-hours-a-day/>

Catechism Connection

"The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbor impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers." (CCC166)

Thanks for participating in VBS @ Home with our parish family! May God bless you and your domestic church as you strive to love God and your neighbor and live out your Catholic faith!