



Reflections on 'The Greater Things'

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"Amen, Amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)

LIKE CATS AND DOGS By Jaci Phillips-Sabol, PhD

God made us in His own image because He desired to create beings who look like Him and operate in His nature. Granted, it's not always easy, but God created us to love Him *and to love others* with His love. After God created Adam, He recognized that "it was not good for man to be alone," so he fashioned Eve so that man would not be alone. It almost makes me cry when I think of the pure love of God looking down and seeing Adam, knowing he was lonely, and making for him one so perfect that Adam finally exclaimed: "This, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

When we are lonely what do we seek? We are becoming a more and more isolated society, with some people texting even people who are at the same table with them. Technology is not bad in and of itself. It *assists* us. But it should never *rule* over us. But just like so many other things that are good, when it is out of balance or when it is used for evil ends, it is not only unhealthy but can be sinful.

There are very real addictions to technology these days in which some people spend hour upon hour upon hour looking at their phones, playing video games, glued to television sets, etc. But in reality, God made us for each other; to help carry one another's burdens; to divide sorrows by feeling someone else's pain, as well as multiply joys when we show our happiness at someone else's good news.

We were created to seek the company of human beings who look like, and even think like, ourselves; we seek our best friend, our spouse, our family, etc. We seek God. But at the same time, God often uses the ears or arms or words of another human being to communicate His love. Did He not most eloquently communicate HIS love for us when He sent us a human being – HIS only begotten Son – in order to communicate HIS love for us? Sending HIS only begotten Son to die in our place? He did.

It is such a sad thing that we live in a society where people can live and die completely alone. The greatest basic need of human beings is to be loved, and since we are made in HIS image and God IS love, it seems that His desire is also to be loved by us. The Church agrees: "We were created to know, love, and serve God in this life, in order to be happy with Him in the next." We also know this conclusively from scripture. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength" and "love your neighbor as yourself." How miserably I fail at these things so often. How thankful I am that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to continue to assist me in growing in my 'Jesus-nature.' It seems clear that we were made for relationship with God and with each other and that God uses us, HIS people, as a way to communicate HIS love to other people in our lives.

I have been thinking about the very prominent place that pets take in the lives of Americans. I have friends from other countries that absolutely cannot comprehend the regard that we give our animals. And I cannot comprehend that they cannot comprehend it (LOL). But no matter how wonderful our animals are (and they are) and how much companionship they provide (and they do), they are not *like* us. They cannot have conversations with us or relate to our human problems or sufferings in the way that a human being can. Nor can they love us or accept us with an unconditional *human* love that loves us *despite* knowing our weaknesses and faults (they think we are perfect). I wonder if God grows weary of this society that keeps referring to every challenging relationship as 'toxic.' Speaking for myself, I have grown weary of the ease with which people refer to people and situations as 'toxic.' If something is abusive, it is a different story. THAT is 'toxic.' But our threshold for what we refer to as 'toxic' in regards to people and relationships has become

lower and lower, including more and more people and situations that God possibly put in our lives for our growth. Or because He knew we needed someone to disagree with us or to point us to an unpopular truth.

It seems to me that, although our pets are such a wonderful blessing to so many lonely people, and I thank God for the tremendous blessing of them in my own life also, they should never replace true and deeply loving relationships with people, which always require us to work through the difficult process of ups and downs that is involved in learning to accept, forgive, and love *imperfect* human beings.

Pets are easy to love because they are rather perfect little beings who don't hurt us. Human beings hurt us and betray us; lie to us or forget us; detract from our character or gossip about us, and do many other things out of imperfect, and sometimes sinful, human nature. And since we are human, we struggle with our human nature and often react with anger, hurt, indignation, pride, and all manner of things that make it difficult to find anything close to our 'Jesus-nature,' which is to show mercy and forgiveness, despite a genuine pain that makes it very difficult to recall that *we also are guilty*, yet Jesus forgave (and forgives) us.

Yes. Pets are certainly easier and safer than people. But made in the image of God, we are made for real fellowship with Him and real fellowship with each other. As much as I love animals, there is something that is disturbing to me, because, in this society, we have crossed some dangerous lines. While animals are gifts from God, they can never hold the same value as a human being. Yet care and concern for the lives of animals has begun to overshadow that of human beings. Regardless of the truly priceless value of pets and animals, in the eyes of God, they can never be compared to the value of a human soul or a human life.

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'CHARIS' NEW INTERNATIONAL BODY FOR CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

The Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life unveils a new body that will provide services to the international Catholic Charismatic Renewal which will be established on 8 December.

By Sr Bernadette Mary Reis, fsp
(taken from Vatican News)

The Holy See is establishing a body that will provide a “new, single, international service for the needs of the **Catholic Charismatic Renewal** in the Church”. This news was announced by the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life in a [Press Release](#) on 31 October.

DETAILS OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION

According to the Press Release, December 8 is the day that will see this new structure come to light. In addition, the statutes governing it will be approved, “*ad experimentum*” (i.e. on an experimental basis). Pope Francis himself has requested the creation of such an organization “on several occasions”, the Press Release states. CHARIS will be its name and it “will operate in favour of all expressions of the current of grace that is Catholic Charismatic Renewal”.

AUTHORITY

CHARIS will have no authority over what the press release calls “realities of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal”. Each Charismatic entity will remain autonomous, under “the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority upon which it currently depends”. All of these groups will be able to benefit from the services that CHARIS will provide. Listen to our report

CHARIS MEMBERS

After December 8, the following people will be appointed by the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life to various services within CHARIS for a 3-year period beginning on Pentecost in 2019:

Dr. Jean-Luc Moens from Belgium as Moderator

MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE COMMUNION

Bishop Peter Leslie Smith from the United States for English and French speaking North America and the Caribbean

Mr. Andrés Arango from the United States for Spanish-speaking North America and Caribbean

Mrs. María Eugenia de Góngora from Guatemala for Central America

Mr. Pino Scafuro from Argentina for Spanish-speaking South America

Mrs. Gabriella Marcia da Rocha Dias from Brazil for Portuguese-speaking South America

Mr. Cyril John from India for Asia

Br. James Shin San-Hyun from South Korea for Asia

Mr. Jean-Christophe Sakiti from Togo for French-speaking Africa

Mr. Fred Mawanda from Uganda for English-speaking Africa

Mr. Paolo Maino from Italy for Europe

Rev. Deacon Etienne Mellot from France for Europe

Mr. Shayne Bennett from Australia for Oceania

Mr. José Prado Flores from Mexico for Diverse Catholic Charismatic Renewal ministries

Fr. Etienne Vetö from the United States for Charismatic priests or religious

Mr. Jean Barbara from Lebanon for Charismatic communities

Deacon Johannes Fichtenbauer from Austria for Charismatic Communities

Mr. François Prouteau from France for Associations with Holy See recognition

Ms. Giulia Rancan from Italy for young charismatic Catholics under 30 years of age

Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap. from Italy as the Ecclesiastical Assistant

STATUTES AND FINANCES

The Press Release concludes by setting the Solemnity of Pentecost, 2019, as the day on which the Statutes take effect. On that day the following organizations “will cease to exist”: International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service and the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships. “The patrimony of these two bodies will

be transferred to CHARIS, in order to provide this new body with the financial means necessary to undertake the mission intended for it by the Holy Father.”

Holy Father, look upon this humanity of ours that is taking its first steps along the path of the Third Millennium. Its life is still deeply marked by hatred, violence, and oppression, but the thirst for justice, truth, and grace still finds a space in the hearts of many people, who are waiting for someone to bring salvation enacted by You through Your Son

Jesus. There is need for courageous heralds of the Gospel, for generous servants of suffering humanity. Send holy priests to Your Church, we pray, who may sanctify Your people with the tools of Your grace. Send numerous consecrated men and women, that they may show Your holiness in the midst of the world.

Send holy laborers into Your vineyard, that they may labor with the fervor of charity and, moved by Your Holy Spirit, may bring the salvation of Christ to the farthest ends of the Earth. Amen.

May the Lord of the harvest provide many holy priestly and religious vocations for His

Church!

—John Paul II—





I know that some people will see this as a political comment, but it is a moral comment: I think that God must be incredibly angry at all of the excuses that we find to rip human babies from the wombs of their mothers while a federal fine for removing any part of an eagle or eagle egg, "dead or alive," is up to \$250,000 and up to two years in prison (www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/protect/laws.html). *Seriously.* Is there any reasonable person that cannot agree that this is wrong? Does it boggle your mind that you could be fined \$250,000 for even a dead baby eagle while allow babies (oh, sorry... I meant 'fetuses.' No. 'Babies' is what I meant. With no apologies. And I will digress into pointing out that we don't refer to the tiniest of eagle eggs as anything other than what is obvious; an eagle) to be killed from the moment of conception to a point beyond where they would survive outside of the womb? I am

in no way saying that we should not protect eagles or other animals. It is Godly to do so. I merely chose them as an example to point out what it must look like to God (and to Satan) when we place more value on animals than people. Or more value on electronics (or a myriad of other entertaining distractions) than relationships.

It is a matter of balance. My pets so often teach me things about the nature of God and His nature of love and mercy. I know that if I strive to love God in much the same way my dogs love me, I likely will not fall far from the mark. Like Moses, who just wanted to be in the presence of God, my dogs just want my *presence*. It's not enough for them to be in a different room of the same house (as I write this they are contentedly lying at my feet). When I come home, it's not enough for them to just look at me and acknowledge that I am home; an excited jumping up and down greeting complete with kisses is in order every time I come in, even if I was only gone for 10 minutes - because my dogs *missed* my *presence* with them. It's not enough to lay on the other end of the couch from where I am sitting, they need to be touching me or at least be laying so that they can stare lovingly at me and be ready to *move with me* in case my *presence* should get up and move. This is what the Israelites did. They moved with God's glory. Indeed, we have much to learn from our dogs regarding what God desires of us.

My dogs don't do things that they know

displease me. I may forget that I pulled a garbage bag out of the garbage in order to take it outside. It doesn't matter how often they go into the kitchen alone, they will not touch that bag. Because they try to do what pleases me and they don't like it when I am upset with them. They dislike interruption in my loving presence. This is what sin does. It interrupts that connection we feel with God and often with people who we hurt by our sin. Lessons, lessons, lessons.

Back on point... As individuals and as a society, we cannot lose focus on having loving relationships with real-life *imperfect* people, who likely are never going to be as perfect as we see our beloved pets. This is how we start to *look* more like *Him*. We look more like Him when we have mercy on someone and we forgive, not because someone deserves it, but because God, through Jesus, forgave us and had mercy on us when we did not deserve it; when we love not only the people who are easy to love, but we love the people in our lives who are hard to love - the ones who rub us the wrong way, the ones who hurt us, the ones who talk badly about us - and when we *love* our enemies. "*In your patience, you will gain your souls*" (Lk 21:19 (KJV 2000)). Dealing with these things are divine opportunities to look more like our Creator, the Living God. It's a moment by moment opportunity (and battle) to choose our 'God-nature' instead of our human nature. Jesus did this in the face of genuine physical and emotional pain inflicted by people; one of them being His close friend. God made us in order to love each other with His love. He created us to be beings who can love Him and who love just being in His presence, much the way our pets only long to be in our presence. "Our hearts are restless until they rest in You." (St. Augustine)

PROPHECY REPORT

"I need you so much. I am depending on you. I've given you My power and My gifts. Be strong in Me! Stronger than the world! You can defeat the enemy. I am depending on you." - Jack Heintzel

"So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and *salve* to anoint your eyes, *that you may see*."

Rev 3:16-18 (RSV). Lord, anoint our eyes with that salve that we may see what is important to you and always have it at the forefront of our minds. Let it fill our hearts and our will. - Jaci Phillips



upcoming events



24 Hours of Adoration "Oh Come Let Us Adore Him!"

January 25-26 at
Holy Rosary Chapel in
Erie, PA

Exposition at 10 AM Friday
followed by hourly Rosary then
times of worship, prayer, and
quiet time.

Closing Benediction at 9 AM on
Saturday, January 26th

WORD OF LIFE IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT UPON YOUR DONATIONS

to spread the fire of the Holy Spirit in the Diocese of Erie.
Your donation, no matter how much, makes a big difference!

Contributions via 'Text To Give' (easiest)

Just text the word "give" to our dedicated giving number,
(570) 536-9187

You will receive a link to provide information and set up to use 'text to give.' See November 2018 Newsletter for complete details

Contributions can be made through the *Tithe.ly* app on your phone.

Apps for Tithe.ly are available for both iPhones and Android Phones
Search for "tithe.ly" Choose the app with the green logo and install. Open the app and "create account", fill in required fields. In 'find a church' search for and select "Word of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center"

Contributions can be made via our website

<https://www.eriecd.org/wordoflife/donate.html>

Click on the green "give" button

Contributions by mail, payable to 'Word of Life' and sent to:

Word of Life CCRC
St. Mark Catholic Center
429 E. Grandview Blvd., Erie, Pa. 16514

THANK YOU!!!

It's that easy! Donate today!



PRAYER GROUPS

† SUNDAY

Shalom in Jesus Prayer Group

In home, DuBois, PA 6:30 PM
Rick Kenawell (814) 771-7932

Acts II Community

St. Julia Church, Erie, PA 6:30 PM
West Lake Rd. & Powell Ave. (814) 838-1325
Jack Heintzel

Holy Crown of Thorns Prayer Group

First Sunday of the Month 1:30 PM
749 Bean Farm Rd, Sheffield, PA (814) 968-3208
Lil Herbstritt

† MONDAY

Disciples of the Holy Spirit

St. Mary's Church Annex 6:00 PM
139 Church St., St. Marys, PA (814) 781-3904
Mary Ellen Frank

St. Andrew Chapel

(formerly Leopold Center group)
Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Rosary 3:15 pm (before Mass)
1116 West 7th St., Erie Pa (814) 866-5678
Mary Lou Peterson

River of Life PG

St. Bridget Ch., Rm. 4, Meadville, PA 7:00PM
2nd & 4th Monday evenings (814) 724-6104
Amy Mosbacher

† TUESDAY

Son of God Prayer Group

Holy Rosary Church 7:00 PM
2701 East Ave. (814) 823-3968
Pat Montefiori

† FRIDAY

Light of the World Community

In Home Prayer Meeting 1:00 PM
Call for location (814) 833-9717
T.A. Walkiewicz

† SATURDAY

God's Holy Love (United Hearts)

11 Russell St., Warren, PA 10:30 AM
Virginia Baker (781) 217-1683

Promises Of God Prayer Group

St. Mary's Church—Crown, PA
Contact Denise Varo for details/times
(814) 744-8199

**Annual WOL CCRC Membership Meeting: Thursday December 13, at 7pm.
3656 Bellaire Drive, Erie, PA. Snacks provided.**

CHRISTMAS TREE? PAGAN RITUAL? By Kathryn Wilcox

There are many stories about the origins of the Christmas tree; some associated with pagan traditions. The most legitimate information points to a Catholic Saint and is based on actual historical events related to Boniface (Saint Boniface), a Catholic missionary to Germany. Many historical documents, including a number of official documents, support the account attributed to Saint Boniface. The most significant documentation comes from the 'Vita Bonifatii auctore' compiled by Willibaldi, who was a contemporary of Boniface. There are legal documents, sermons, and most importantly, his personal correspondence with Boniface, which all support that Boniface was the first to use a fir tree to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child and it is a wonderful story. Interestingly, the origin of the Christmas tree tradition is further supported by a Presbyterian minister, Henry VanDyke, who wrote a book about the Christmas tree in the 1890s: *The First Christmas Tree*, by Henry VanDyke.

Boniface was born in England 675 AD to a prominent family and was baptized 'Wyrfred.' He was educated and taught at English monasteries and was ordained a priest around age 30. He could have easily remained in England, teaching in the monastery. However, his heart's desire was to evangelize so he opted to become a missionary. He traveled to the Netherlands and then to Rome to meet with Pope Gregory II who gave him the Latin name, Bonifatius, before sending Bonifatius to Germany.

Pope Gregory sending Boniface to Germany was the defining moment of his life. He traveled through old Germany to convert pagans who worshiped many gods; gods who demanded animal and human sacrifices. It was a region steeped in darkness, fear, and death. Following the Roman-made roads through the wooded region, Boniface began preaching, teaching, and baptizing.

As he traveled the countryside, Boniface learned that in winter, the inhabitants of the village of Geismar assembled around a huge old oak tree, known as

the Thunder Oak, which was dedicated to the god Thor. The worship culminated once a year with the sacrifice of a human, usually a small child, to the pagan god. The pagan leaders, threatened by Boniface's success in evangelization to the true and Living God, boasted that "the God of Boniface could not destroy the Thunder Oak." Like Elijah and the prophets of Baal, Boniface, knowing the time for a confrontation had come, faced the challenge full of faith in the Living God:

"Let two bulls be given to us; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay it on the wood, but put no fire to it and I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood, and put no fire to it. And you call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, he is God." And all the people answered, "It is well spoken." Then Eli'jah said to the prophets of Ba'al, "Choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire to it." And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning until noon, saying, "O Ba'al, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped about the altar which they had made. And at noon Eli'jah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is musing, or he has gone aside, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded.

Then Eli'jah said to all the people, "Come near to me"; and all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been thrown down; Eli'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel shall be your name"; and with the stones he

built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood." And he said, "Do it a second time"; and they did it a second time. And he said, "Do it a third time"; and they did it a third time. And the water ran round about the altar, and filled the trench also with water.

And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Eli'jah the prophet came near and said, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that thou, O LORD, art God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back." Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God." (1 Kings 18:23-39, RSV)

Like Elijah before him, Boniface knew that His God was more powerful than any pagan god. He and a small group of companions loaded provisions in a horse drawn cart and set out for Geismar. They arrived after dark on Christmas Eve. Worshipers, led by a wizened old pagan priest, chanted around a bonfire. He roused the group with fear, pointing to recent bad times; about sickness and death, and bellowing that "the god Thor demanded a blood sacrifice to be appeased." He then approached a group of children and chose his victim, the young son of the village chieftain. He led the child to a stone near the fire and placed a blindfold over his eyes. Then he lifted a black stone hammer from the ground: the 'sacred hammer' of the god Thor. As he raised it high above the child's head, Boniface, watching from the shadows, knew it was time to act. He moved quickly, wielding his staff against the hammer, it fell from the old

BASKETS AND MANAGERS By Deacon Andrew Froberg

It may not seem at a quick glance that there is anything in common between the birth of Moses and the birth of Jesus; however, there are fascinating facts and implications.

Moses is considered to be a 'typology' of Jesus, or a 'type' of Jesus, prophetically prefigured in the Old Testament. As we take time to look deeply into scripture, we find what only God could do; we find layer upon layer of meaning and it is exciting when our eyes are opened to the typology, or symbolism, in the Bible.

When we compare Jesus and Moses, the similarities are exciting, so LET'S LOOK!

First, we see that both Moses and Jesus were born at a time of governmental unrest. When Moses was born, the king of the Egyptians was worried about the Israelites rising up to possibly overtake the country, because over a period of time, the Israelites began to outnumber the native Egyptians. The king, referred to as 'Pharaoh,' was concerned that the Israelites would join with an enemy in a time of war. It was then that Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill the male children of the Israelites.

At the time of Jesus, the Jewish people had a king named 'Herod the Great.' It was this Herod that had the second temple built in order to ingratiate himself to the Jewish people. It is not recorded in the Bible that Herod was a Jew or that he participated in Jewish customs. What is recorded is that he did not want any competition for his kingship. In the same way as Moses, Herod the Great ordered the massacre of all boys younger than two in Bethlehem and its vicinity. So in this way, Moses and Jesus perfectly parallel each other.

Both Moses and Jesus were in grave danger due to these rulers. This led to

both Moses and Jesus being 'hidden' after their respective births. Pharaoh's mother placed him in a basket floating on the Nile where he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. So Moses was hidden in plain sight in the house of Pharaoh. It was not known to the Egyptians that Moses was a Hebrew child and so he was able to escape the infanticide ordered by Pharaoh.

Jesus was 'hidden' by being taken out of the country of threat and *into* the *same* country where God hid Moses in plain sight. Joseph, prompted by an angel in a dream, fled, taking Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

So both Moses and Jesus were in danger as a result of rulers in fear of losing their power and kingdoms and placing the love of earthly status over the value of the human lives of the innocents.

At first glance, there seems to be a point of departure between Jesus and Moses. When Pharaoh's daughter came to the Nile river, she saw the basket, had her handmaid bring it to her, found the baby Moses, and adopted him. This led to Moses being brought up and raised in the royal household. When Jesus was born, Mary placed Him in a manger (a feeding trough for animals) that served as a crib. The mother of Jesus, along with her husband, Joseph; were traveling to Bethlehem in order to register for the census that was proclaimed by Caesar Augustus. As there were no rooms available at that time, they had to stay in an animal shelter. But as we look more closely at this, we see another striking similarity. Moses ended up leaving his riches and fleeing into the mountains; giving up his false life of being treated as an Egyptian member of the royal household. He was humbly tending sheep when God first spoke to him. Jesus, in a similar manner, left His *authentic* position with the Father in Heaven, giving up

all the beauty and riches and honor given to Him in Heaven, being born as a helpless infant in a humble family.

We also see that both Moses and Jesus were sent by God to save His people from captivity. God 'heard the prayers' of the Israelites and first spoke to Moses as he was *tending sheep*. God then sent Moses to save the Israelites from their captivity and slavery. Jesus, the '*Good Shepherd*,' was also sent by God the Father to rescue us from the captivity of the devil, slavery to sin, and from a heavy and burdensome law.

Moses fled out of Egypt, and then returned to the land of his birth to fulfill the destiny of God for him to deliver his people from Pharaoh. Jesus and His family also fled the land of His birth and then returned in order to fulfill God's plan, leading to the door of salvation being opened to all.

Both Moses and Jesus were adopted; Moses by Pharaoh's daughter and Jesus by Joseph; the earthly father chosen or Jesus by God the Father.

Moses worked miracles, through the power of God, that led both the Egyptians and the Israelites to believe that the power of the true Living God was at work in them. Jesus' miracles also provided evidence of His authentic Sonship of God the Father. There are several references in the New Testament in which Jesus states that, if people do not believe by taking Him at His word, they should believe because of the miracles He performed through the power of God. Many people believed that He was the true Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us, because of the miracles they witnessed.

In adult life, both Moses and Jesus were servants of God. Both were effective teachers and law givers. The teaching and laws that were BEGUN with Moses were FULFILLED with

BASKETS AND MANAGERS - CONTINUED

By Deacon Andrew Froberg

Jesus. The New Testament makes many references between Jesus and Moses. However, Matthew is the first one who points to Jesus being the fulfillment of Moses' prophetic description of Jesus in Deuteronomy:

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me

see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' "And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

There are many other parallels between Jesus and Moses and perhaps

we will examine them in the future.

Only God could so perfectly prefigure His own Divine Son with what began in a basket and a manger! Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. Emmanuel, God with us!

Oh come
let us
adore
Him

CHRISTMAS TREE? PAGAN RITUAL? - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 - By Kathryn Wilcox

man's grasp, striking the edge of the altar and it splitting in two. The child's mother screamed and scooped her child away to safety as Boniface and the old priest faced each other; the crowd frozen in the moment. Then some shouted that the intruder must be sacrificed instead. As voices rose in discord, the village chieftain spoke: "Let the stranger speak."

Boniface faced the angry crowd and defiant priest. He then read a letter from Pope Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, which introduced himself and authenticated Boniface as the Bishop of Germany.

Boniface then explained that the message was to the people, declaring that they should depart from their evil ways and turn away from the false gods and never again offer bloody sacrifices. He introduced them to Christ, the Son of a loving God, and declared the tree god, Thor, dead. He turned to the giant oak tree and ordered his companions to chop the tree down. Only a few cuts had been made to the base of the tree when, out of the stillness of the night, a mighty rushing wind arose and tore the tree out of the ground by its roots, splitting it into four equal parts as it fell.

Boniface bowed his head in thanksgiving to God for the miracle and then turned to the people proclaiming that the wood from the tree should be used to erect a chapel to the only true God. Looking

beyond the clearing to a young fir tree standing straight and green, he explained that it was a living tree, unstained by blood, and pointing upward to the Living God. "Let this living tree be carried into your homes so you can gather around it to rejoice on the birth night of Christ!" he proclaimed. Then he began to tell the children the story of Christ's birth as he decorated the tree as a celebration of Christ's birth.

This then is the Catholic legend of the Christmas tree. We can't be sure of all the details, but we do know that Boniface brought Christianity to Germany and that he destroyed the Thunder Oak, breaking the power of the pagan god, Thor. We also know that Germany was covered with trees, many of them fir trees. And we do know that the German immigrants brought the Christmas tree tradition to the United States.

The most important part of the legend is the awesome evangelical accomplishment of this young English priest who bravely carried God's truth to a pagan land. He had faith and God performed a mighty miracle that aided evangelization, and most likely, also gave us the beautiful tradition of the Christmas tree. The most important lesson? *Know* the true power of the Living God *through Jesus* who, though He was God, was born a helpless baby who would win our salvation. Merry **Christmas** and God bless you!



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The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide teaching, news and calendar of events, which help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the Diocese of Erie.

This newsletter may be copied to put in churches or shared with others.

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