

Holy Compassion

Saints Show Us How 'To Suffer With'

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

We're often reminded that saints are models of holiness. Most had "specialties" at which they excelled. For some, it was compassion.

The dictionary defines compassion as "sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it." Father Brian Kolodiejchuk of the Missionaries of Charity Fathers and postulator of St. Teresa of Calcutta's canonization cause points out "compassion" comes from the Latin meaning "to suffer with."

Mother Teresa served the poor by living among the poor, to be able to say, "Look, we live like you too," explained Father Kolodiejchuk.

"Mother Teresa excelled in faith because she had to live and serve and be an apostle of joy," her postulator said, showing that compassion needs to include a smile. Father Kolodiejchuk said, "That's also how we can 'suffer with.'"

He shared the time Mother Teresa noticed a sad-looking woman in a crowd. Mother Teresa made her way to her and said, "Hello, I'm Mother Teresa. Here's my business card" (which had only her name and a favorite quote of hers: "The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service").

Later, one of the sisters who was with Mother Teresa wrote in a testimony about how she "looked back and noticed the smile on the lady's face," said Father Kolodiejchuk.

As Mother Teresa said, "Let there be kindness in your face, in your eyes, in your smile, in the warmth of your greeting. Always have a cheerful smile. Don't only give your care, but give your heart, as well."

Mother Teresa's contemporary, St. John Paul II, is another compassionate example. "One of the most powerful saints who showed compassion in his life and is not [always] remembered for that is St. John Paul II," said Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of the Cross, who serves as director of the Treasures of the Church, a ministry evangelizing through the relics of the saints. The Church will mark All Saints' Day Nov. 1.

John Paul II had a daily luncheon with a variety of guests, whether youth or visitors from developing countries. "He made himself available and recognized the value of his place in the faith life of the masses," said Father Martins, who related a touching example of his compassion. A homeless man told a Monsignor he met on the street that he went to seminary with John Paul II. The Monsignor told the Pope about this meeting. The Holy Father asked the man's name and said he wanted to see him.

"Sure enough, he had been in the seminary with the Pope, was ordained a priest, left the priesthood, lived with a woman and was no longer with her, and eventually found himself on the streets in Rome," Father Martins related. "John

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Judith's Last Testimony

Lesson in Death Teaches A Lesson of Life

BY KATHRYN MIHALIAK

Judith Barillaro of Meriden, Connecticut, was a mother of four, a grandmother, a speech pathologist, an "Apprentice" to the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist, and a board member to the Holy Family School in Bethlehem, in the Holy Land.

An objective observer could conclude that she certainly led a full life.

Yet it was in her death that the fullness of her life was most beautifully expressed. After a prolonged struggle with cancer, she died in hospice care in 2015. Her husband, Francis, was with her through every arduous step. Capturing their family's story through Judith's own words, which she journaled throughout the ordeal, Francis has commemorated her life — and her death — in his book *Judith's Journey*.

The self-published book lightly touches on Judith's life prior to the cancer, but focuses mainly on how Francis' beloved wife of 48 years embraced with hope and faith the end of her earthly life in the face of eternal life. He wanted to share his wife's story of approaching death with true dignity — something seldom seen today in a society that seeks to numb all pain or suffering and is increasingly embracing a culture of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

After reading through Judith's collection of favorite quotations and her own journal entries, Francis decided there was something there that was calling to be shared.

"I realized it is more than an inspirational story," he said. "*Judith's Journey* is a testimony to the culture of life. ... It shouts that we can live even while we are dying — that dying is part of living and growing, a process of preparation for eternal life that should never be artificially cut short."

"Throughout the journey, she lived with a 'This is where we are now; where do we go from here?' attitude," Francis explained. "During that week in hospice, through the pain and discomfort, she knew where she was going 'from here,' and she was preparing. I always think of our daughter Gina's statement, 'My mom lived while she was dying.'"

Hospice Often Misunderstood

Death is seldom easy for either the loved one or the ones they leave. Yet with the growth in availability of Catholic grief counseling and networks, there are resources the faithful can turn to. For some, the beauty of this time of preparation is captured through "hospice."

Hospice itself is often misunderstood. Dr. Francis Milligan, a family doctor from Bow, New Hampshire, explained that hospice is not about a "fight with the sickness," adding that "we are not causing death — we are allowing nature to take its course."

As Milligan explained, "In a Catholic sense, we are trying to have the patients aware of the process of death in a way that they can prepare themselves."

"A great part of a good hospice system is using human interaction as a principle form of treatment," Milligan pointed out, "using the person's relationships to treat ... instead of medicine." Through a good hospice program, "we are putting at the patient's disposal people who have experienced death so often that they can properly guide the person through death."

One such program is found in Meriden, Connecticut, at the home of the Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist. The Franciscan Life Center provides marriage and family counseling, along with hospice care and services; the caretakers there are not new to the difficult moments of life and relationships.

Sister Catherine Mary, one of the veteran hospice workers at the center, explained her work: "While physical comfort is the primary focus, hospice acknowledges the psychosocial, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the person's life as critical to his or her process of



END-OF-LIFE JOURNEY. Judith Barillaro and her husband, Francis, on Easter 2015. Courtesy of the Barillaro family

being truly comfortable and peaceful. The body, mind and soul of a person are intricately connected; and unless all dimensions are provided proper care, all dimensions will experience some discomfort."

Sister Catherine Mary said hospice is a time where the focus shifts from the patient's illness to the patient's relationships. It is a time that the patient tries, with the assistance of hospice care, to reflect on and say the "four final things" — "Thank you," "I forgive you," "Forgive me," and "I love you" — to those who need to hear them.

"More often than not, the conversation (when conversation is still possible) involving the last four things to say takes place within days or even hours of a person's death," Sister Catherine Mary explained. "It can take almost the entire length of the dying process for the person who is dying or a family member to be able to speak so vulnerably and honestly."

'Something Bigger Than Themselves'

Human relationships are not the only ones that are focused on at this time.

"Even those who think they don't believe in God, or who are angry with God for some reason," said Sister Catherine Mary in her writings on the seven phases of dying, "recognize something within that they know is bigger than themselves and that they need to in some way acknowledge that presence."

Sister Catherine Mary explained that the dying process involves "a sense of self [that] is really our true identity, where we are free to relate to others and to God, and even to be alone without fear or reserve."

Our "true identity" can be a humble realization, but also a glorious one. Father Robert Rousseau recently became chaplain for the Little Sisters of the Poor, who run the St. Joseph's Residence in Enfield, Connecticut, for elderly patients.

Father Rousseau also serves as the director of pro-life activities for the Archdiocese of Hartford. He pointed out that the pro-life movement expands from beginning to end of life, and he described how the sisters and staff at this residence carry this spirit, where the residents are "seen as persons and treated as individuals."

Father Rousseau often reminds the elderly of the power of the Our Father.

"They are the words of God himself, telling us how to communicate with him," Father Rousseau explained. "It's an act of love which opens the door for God's love to work in our lives."

'Just Six Days Out of 11 Years'

For Francis Barillaro and his wife Judith, hospice was "just six days out of 11 years" of her sickness. They had a beautiful marriage and had drawn ever closer to each other throughout the many treatments and appointments, he recalled. He said that hospice is a time for relationships — and their beauty — to be acknowledged in a way that is, perhaps, only possible under those circumstances. Francis put it simply: "Hospice helped bring us to the place we needed to be and held us in the process of peacefully, with a lively faith, [going] where we once feared to go."

The Barillaros exemplify a love story that endures. It is an inspiring witness to the dignity of life and to the beauty of love found in the sacrament of marriage. And, in a society where both human dignity and married love are under constant siege, the Barillaros' story is a reassuring reminder that when life is lived to the fullest, valued and marked by faith and trust in God, there is always hope.

Kathryn Mihaliak writes from Hartford, Connecticut.

INFORMATION

JudithsJourney.com/how-to-order/

Family Matters

CATHOLIC LIVING

Appointment With Jesus At Adoration

BY BILL ZALOT

"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11: 26).

Nearly each time I go to adoration, I am reminded of these words of St. Paul — for as St. John Paul II announced the Year of the Eucharist June 10, 2004, the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, he quoted that verse. Shortly after the special year began, I got in the habit of weekly visits before the Blessed Sacrament.

On Thursdays, I have an appointment with Jesus. It is one I've had for the last 13 years. I can't think of my week without this special time with Jesus.

Most times, I bring the prayer intentions of family and friends. For those whose intentions are unknown to me, I simply pray, "Jesus, give them what they need today." And who among us doesn't have family members or friends who have left the Church? These souls need our prayers, so I pray for them, too.

Christ wants to meet us in our brokenness. It is at that point he can touch, at the core of our being, the depth of our souls — the point at which Christ can heal our emotional and spiritual wounds. Those emotional scars may come from a hurt we can't let go of from the past. While sitting, standing or kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, we can give such hurts to Jesus.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith, so when I sit before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, I am spending time with my closest friend.

Adoration also reminds me that human agendas are different from God's.

He tells us that in sacred Scripture. Isaiah 55:8-9 reads: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways — oracle of the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

So often we think of decisions and plans without truly seeking God's will. Spending time with Jesus before the Blessed Sacrament allows us the time to see his will for our lives.

I come prepared to sit before Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, attempting to do his holy will. More than a few times, I have been surprised by what that is! Seeking Christ is an ongoing adventure — far beyond an appointment.

And, as Catholics, we have "a great cloud of witnesses" to help us on our journey of faith. They can intercede for us and for our loved ones. This is one of the realities of the awesome treasure of

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PAPAL GREETING. President Richard Jusseume and his wife, Theresa, meet with Pope Francis May 10. Courtesy of Walsh University

Catholic Faith at the Core

Walsh University Is Anchored to Religious Order's Mission

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

Walsh University is a home away from home for roughly 3,000 students from 30 states and several countries.

The spring of 2017 was quite a year at the university. In April, the commencement speaker was the U.S. papal nuncio, Archbishop Christophe Pierre. Then, on May 10, President Richard Jusseume and his wife, Theresa, led the annual student pilgrimage to Rome, where they met with Pope Francis and presented to

him Walsh's new "Servant of the Servants of God Scholarship" established in the Holy Father's name.

"He was very pleased and very grateful about that," said Jusseume. "I also gave him a 'Walsh' rosary in the school colors of maroon and gold — our patroness is Our Lady of Perpetual Help — and a copy of a book on Edith Stein by one of our professors."

Jusseume said as Pope Francis held the couple's hands and asked, "Please pray for me; I need a lot of prayers; I said we will be happy to do that, but please pray for us and

our university."

The land on which Walsh University began to be built in 1960 was once an alfalfa field. But since the Brothers of Christian Instruction came to establish a university, Bishop Emmet Walsh of Youngstown sold the land and gave the brothers money to build a home for themselves on the campus. They named the college after the good bishop.

Walsh University is the only college the Brothers of Christian Instruction founded in the United States. Their mission: "to educate the chil-

dren of the working class in a faith-based environment."

Jusseume explained three parts to the founding mission.

"Part One: We're going to educate working-class families and their children. It's not about prestige, not about being elite, but taking a generation of people who would not be going to college and helping them."

He pointed out that 46% of current Walsh students are the first in their families to go to college. More than 30% are from families at or below poverty level. "One-third of our income, our annual revenue, goes back to students," Jusseume said. Last year, from the \$77-million budget, \$27 million went back to students

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