

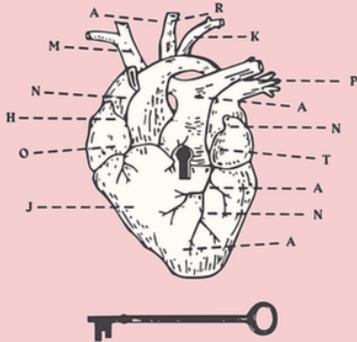
CANVAS & THE CLAY

Seeing The Work of the Divine Artist & Embracing Catholic Living

January/February 2022

Mary Kathryn Ladnier

LOVE SECRETS



PRAAYER IN SONG

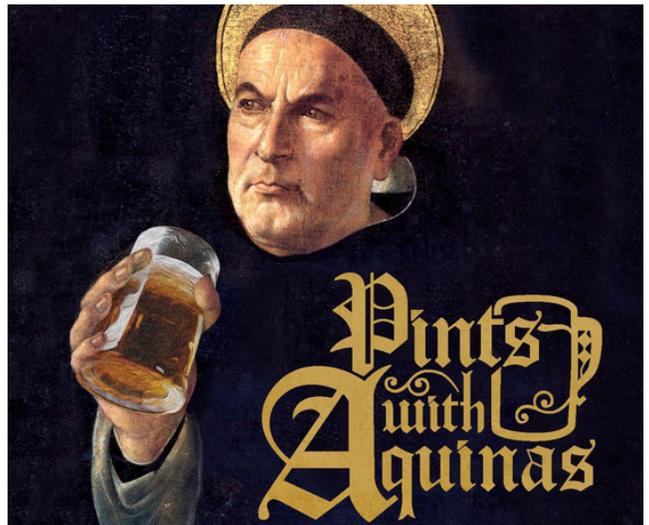
Album: Love Secrets by John Mark Pantana

The month of February: a month where stores are filled with heart shaped candies, roses, and teddy bears to give to those we love for a holiday named after St. Valentine. I can't help but think of the cheesy messages and candy cards we were all given during our childhood, some even saying "From your Secret Admirer..." and the ways we would wonder "Who is it!?" Love is a funny thing. Although the word "Love" has so many different misunderstandings today amidst our society, I think this is a time for us to consider really what Love is. Who do we all have as a Secret Admirer, waiting for us to turn to Him, to seek His Love, to acknowledge him in the recesses of our soul? This is not in a cheesy sense of "Jesus loves me, yes I know, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO!" He really does love you deeply and wants you to acknowledge Him. This album released by John Mark Pantana two years ago is filled with love poetry built upon our relationship with the Lord. I love the cover art that he created for this album also; it captures the reality that the Lord sees every aspect of our heart that makes us uniquely ourselves but also His. He knows that he has the key. Maybe you are not a fan of Pantana's style of music, but I encourage you to at least look up the lyrics and pray with the words. Song suggestions of my favorites to pray with: Made for Jesus, Eternal Valentine, This is Love, I Don't Know Anything.

TRUTH IN PODCAST

Episode: From Antifa to Catholicism w/ Daniel James

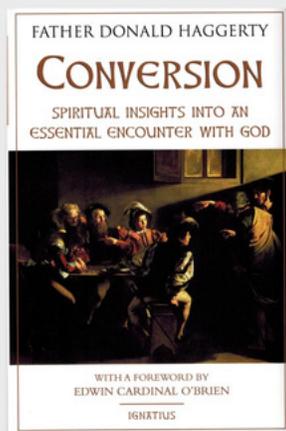
As you may remember from past newsletters, Matt Fradd is known for his interviews of diverse audiences, Catholic and abroad, based on a variety of different topics. His longer podcasts are always good if you are looking for something to listen to on long car rides, mornings/evenings of leisure, or a work day at home or the office. Last time, I highlighted his interview with famous exorcist Fr. Vincent Lampert. While I was driving around running some errands, I came across his interview with Mr. Daniel James, a past Antifa activist in the United Kingdom that has recently converted to Catholicism. Although I have never been interested in the issues of politics or any of these radical movements, I thought I would give the first few minutes a listen to hear the testimony of this man and to possibly be informed on the beliefs of the Antifa movement and their morals. This interview does not show any political bias, but does just this! You can hear with every word from Daniel's mouth a heart that has been transformed by the Lord's mercy, recognizing his past, the mistakes he has made, and yet the Lord loves him amidst his brokenness and welcomes Him home, no matter his past. I chose to highlight this interview, because although I listened to this at the very beginning of the year, I can't stop thinking about it. I highly encourage you to give it a listen! If anything, you will leave inspired and informed.

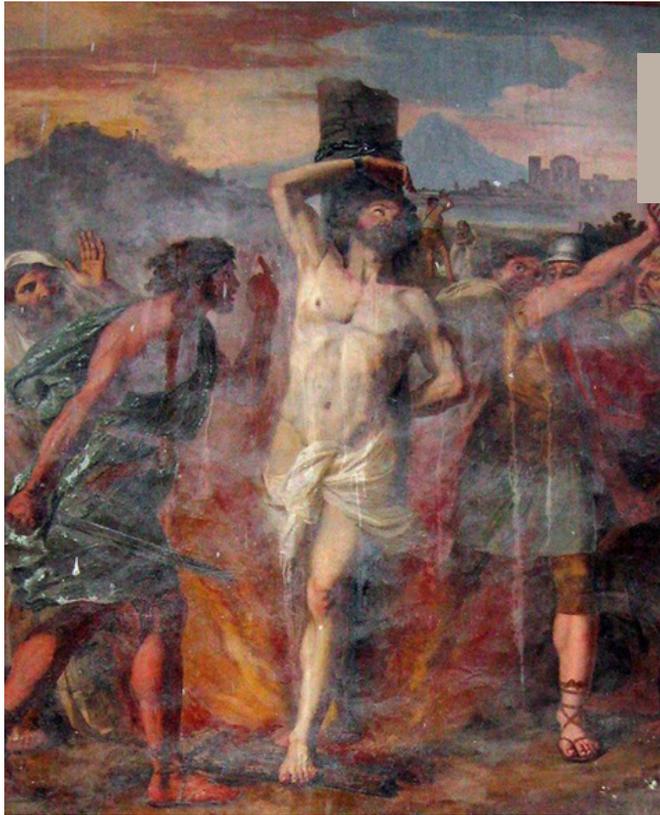


WISDOM IN WORDS

Book: Conversion by Fr. Donald Haggerty

Once again, the CFR friars never disappoint in their book recommendations! To begin the new year, they have begun a series working through Fr. Donald Haggerty's book Conversion: Spiritual Insights into An Essential Encounter with God. Fr Haggerty, a parish priest in the Archdiocese of New York, does a great job at arranging a collection of concise, meditative reflections of the essential elements of a soul's continual return to God, including the repercussions of our sin, the proper understanding of God's mercy, and the importance of a more radical response to God's will. He explores the fruits of conversion that makes a difference between our mediocre relationship with God and a truly holy life: the special graces of loving the poor, choosing a simplistic lifestyle, and a devotion to the Eucharist. He also addresses "second conversions" and the invitation to a deeper passion for God. Every single chapter has provoked me and made me think deeply about how the Lord desires to work in my life in a new radical way everyday. He speaks to our initial conversion or choosing of being a Christian/following Christ in our lives in only an initial spark, but what are you doing to feed the fire of your heart? Have you let your fire die out? Are you looking for some more oil, some more flames, some more logs to place on the fire to begin this new year or this Lent? This is the book for you. It is a good book to read slowly and ponder; don't try to rush through it.





BEAUTY OF EXAMPLE

St. Polycarp of Smyrna

"Let us continually persevere in our hope and the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ 'who bore our sins in His own body on the tree'... endured all things for us that we might live in Him. Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him."

Have you ever heard of St. Polycarp? He is one of our foundational Early Church Fathers! He was a close companion and friend of the Apostle John the Beloved and would later become the Bishop of Smyrna in the Asian Minor. We today have a letter that he wrote to the Philippians, where I have found these encouraging and consoling words above. We also have a detailed record of His martyrdom and His trial taken down by Irenaeus, his close friend and consul. Why is this important to us? Why do we care about these details? Irenaeus, later known as St. Irenaeus of Lyons, was the first Bishop of Lyons, France. Lyons throughout history would become a wellspring of Catholicism and also the home of Bishop Michael Portier, the first bishop of the Archdiocese of Mobile. We have close ancestral ties to St. Polycarp within our diocese. He was not scared to die for his belief in Jesus Christ and the truth of His Gospel along with the other apostles. I encourage you to go to NewAdvent.com under Church Fathers to find this account and his letter to the Philippians. Get to know our ancestral brother and follow in his footsteps this month. His feast day is February 23rd.

CINEMA SPEAKS

Film: Venerable Jerome Lejeune (2021)

This French film was recently re-released by 4PM Media in English about French Geneticist Jerome Lejeune. At the turn of the 20th century, Lejeune discovered through chromosomal examination trisomy 21, the extra protein found within Down Syndrome patient gene pools. A devout Catholic, Jerome knew that his discovery would not necessarily be for the betterment of his dear friends and patients that he came to know very well and see as his own children in ways. Due to his discovery at the height of the legalization of abortion worldwide in the 1970s, he decided to speak out openly about how he knew his discovery of examining chromosomes early on would affect the mother's intention of keeping her child with his or her abnormalities. He knew that if some found out this diagnosis earlier on in the pregnancy, they would choose to terminate the child rather than allowing them to live. Lejeune soon would become despised by his colleagues due to this statement, yet he was not afraid to speak out and stand up for his brothers and sisters that he loved very dearly. He later would become a close friend to John Paul II for his work. Pope Francis has moved his cause of canonization forward within recent years. He is a true example of one that fought for the right to life at all stages. Find this film on Youtube for free at 4PM Media.



HIDDEN INTIMACY

This month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family as the Christmas season in a traditional sense ends on February 2nd with the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple before Simeon and Anna. Beyond this moment and a small scene of a family pilgrimage to Jerusalem with Jesus at the age of twelve, we have no firsthand accounts of the Holy Family's little life in Nazareth or even their experiences in Egypt before the Presentation for that matter. We don't even have an account in scripture of St. Joseph's death! We do not have any accounts until Jesus is in His thirties. Why is this the case? What does this mean for our spiritual lives? It shows us that the Holy Family lived a very normal life amidst that little home of Nazareth: Joseph working in carpentry to provide for them, Mary taking care of the home, teaching Jesus simple life skills. They were no different than you and I. That is the whole point of their so called "Hidden Life." This famous sculpture from Timothy Schmalz called "A Quiet Moment" gives us a glimpse of this intimacy they experienced: Joseph coming home from a hard day of work, comes to hold and embrace Mary close with Jesus asleep on her chest, maybe after she has finally gotten Him to sleep. They can't help but admire the gift of this Son that they have been given and the life they are able to foster and participate in. This is the true heart of a father and a mother for their child. If you have never considered or prayed with what Jesus, Mary, and Joseph did within their home, I encourage you to ponder this month what their lives would have looked like amidst the mundane. They have a lot to teach us about ourselves and our own families. Would you yourself be comfortable living amidst their simple life or would there be things that would hold you back? Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, take care of us and our hearts.