~Faith Formation Forum~

Vol. 3 Issue 4 Theme: The Creed October 24, 2021

Verse of the Month:

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.

~Hebrews 11:1

Saint of the Month:

**St. Francis of Assisi**

Have you ever wished you could talk to the animals? It is believed that St. Francis could.

St. Francis was born while his father was away in France. His mother baptized him shortly after his birth, naming him Giovanni after St. John the Baptist. When his father returned, he was angry–naming his son after a saint! “I want my son to be a wealthy cloth merchant like I am,” believed his father. So he renamed his son Francesco after the country of France which he loved.

Growing up young Francis had everything he could want, and as a teenager he led a sinful life. But he felt something was missing. St. Francis thought it was glory. “If I just become famous, my life will be PERFECT!” So Francis, at the age of 19, went to battle against the nearby town of Perugia. Francis was captured and taken prisoner. He was held captive in a dungeon for a year before his father could pay the ransom and set him free. Soon after, still in his quest for glory, Francis decided to join a crusade (a war to save the Holy Land). He purchased a beautiful set of armor, a horse and everything else that was needed. He boasted he would return famous. One day into the crusade, he had a dream. God wanted him to return home. St. Francis followed God’s will. This was not an easy thing to do because of all the boasting he had done before leaving. “HA! HA! look at Francis. He sure became famous! Famous for only being in the army one day! HA! HA!” St. Francis heard this kind of teasing everywhere he went. St. Francis tried his best not to let the teasing bother him. He began to pray. One day while he was out riding his horse, he spied a dirty leper who smelled badly. What would you do if you met someone who was very sick and smelled? Well, St. Francis got down off his horse and gave this man a kiss on the hand. This surprisingly made St. Francis delightedly happy. As he rode off on his horse he glanced back. The man had disappeared! “That must have been a test,” thought Francis. “A year ago I would have turned my horse away from that man and ignored him.”

St. Francis regularly went to a crumbling church to pray. One day, he heard Jesus talking to him from the crucifix. “Repair my church,” Jesus said. Believing he was to fix this old church, St. Francis gave a bunch of his family money for repairs. This made his father angry. “Give me back that money, Francis!” demanded his father. In response, Francis declared that he was no longer part of the family, and he didn’t want any of his inheritance. “I give back everything you have given me father, even the clothes on my body,” said St. Francis. St. Francis then led the life of a beggar and served God. Eventually he established an order of monks.

There are stories about St. Francis being able to talk to the animals. One day there was a large flock of birds that St. Francis preached to, telling them they should be thankful. The birds stood still and listened as he walked among them. They only flew off when St. Francis told them to fly away. When they did, they flew into the shape of a cross in mid-air.

Another story about St. Francis talking to an animal involved a wolf. This wolf had killed many people in a town due to hunger. The townspeople were going to hunt it down and kill the wolf. Instead, St. Francis went out and talked to the wolf, telling him to no longer kill anyone. The wolf obeyed and even became the town pet. The townspeople always fed the wolf from then on too.

Here is a link to an invaluable source for more information and activities related to St. Francis of Assisi. <https://www.catholicicing.com/st-francis-of-assisi-crafts-for/>

My family has had the honor of being able to host 6 different exchange students over the years. We hope to be able to start doing so again in a few years when our own girls can help with all the extra driving that comes with kids being involved in sports and other extra-curriculars. The girls we’ve had have been intelligent, funny, intelligent, helpful, independent, driven, creative, and more! We love to help others have an experience they’d otherwise not get. We are hopeful that our own daughters develop a bigger vision of the world. We enjoy learning about and experiencing other cultures. But one of my favorite reasons for hosting is for the opportunity to see the wonder of the world again through new eyes. It’s like having a newborn and the “firsts” that come with one.

Our world is such an amazing creation! And Michigan especially has so much to offer. Some of our favorite destinations are Grand Haven and Lake Michigan, Sleeping Bear Dunes, the Cross in the Woods at Indian River, the Mackinaw Bridge and Mackinac Island, Tahquamenon Falls, Lake Superior, Pictured Rocks, and Big Spring (Kitch-iti-kipi) just to name a few. Most of these tourist destinations are works of God’s hand. They are naturally formed geographic features that stand to help prove God’s existence.

Beyond the mathematic impossibility of having our universe just randomly exploding into the work of perfection that it is, there’s too much beauty in it to think otherwise. Sometimes that beauty is in the landforms and the flora and fauna that reside there, but it’s also in the newborn’s first cry and his first smile. It’s in the gentle interaction of young girls as they play house, and it’s in the rambunctious energy of young boys as they throw around the football. It’s in the joy when someone first sees the changing color of trees in fall or feels snow for the first time in winter. God’s hand is in every bit of creation and all those within it. Between reason, Divine Revelation, and Creation, how can anyone not believe in God?!?

Join us for Faith Formation class on Sundays at noon/right after the 11 am Mass. We meet in Fellowship Hall. **I am still in need of just one or two adults who are willing to provide childcare or lead a kids group while the parents are attending their class. It only requires a one or at most 2 Sunday/month commitment**. Please contact me ASAP if you can help with this. Depending on the age you want to work with, there may be the presentation of content. I can provide the lessons and activities; I just need YOU to present it.

As always, if there is anything I can do to help you grow your relationship with God, if you are looking for answers to your questions, or if you need a listening ear, please contact me. You can call 231-937-5757 or email me at faithformation@ctknsf.org.

Blessings,

Julie Gould

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