

Diocese of Wilmington
celebrates *The Year of Faith* with

*One
Faith
One
Story*

October 11, 2012 to November 24, 2013

Journey month by month with those whose lives express heroic faith



Diocese of Wilmington
Office for Religious Education

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Office for Life, Family and Laity for use of content and materials"**

Diocese of Wilmington
One Faith, One Story

Introduction

"By faith, across the centuries, men and women of all ages, whose names are written in the Book of Life (cf. Rev 7:9, 13:8), have confessed the beauty of following the Lord Jesus wherever they were called to bear witness to the fact that they were Christian: in the family, in the workplace, in public life, in the exercise of the charisms and ministries to which they were called."

-Porta Fidei 13

The best testimony to our faith comes about through the witness of a life lived in and for Jesus Christ. During the Year of Faith, we place before our eyes those who have allowed the Gospel to transform their ordinary lives into something beautiful for God. This guidebook presents a monthly book that tells the story of faith of those who, throughout the ages, bore great witness to the joy of faith in Christ. The stories present diverse people, young and old, rich and poor, and from all states of life who demonstrate the great power of following Jesus Christ.

The monthly book can be used in a variety of ways:

- ◇ a book club
- ◇ adult faith formation opportunity
- ◇ supplement to a study of the 12 Articles of Faith
- ◇ family reading at home
- ◇ read to school children or in PREP
- ◇ personal faith enrichment

Please be creative in your use of these books. They have been specially chosen to complement the 12 Articles of Faith, which will be studied monthly during the Year of Faith. Please feel free to share your suggestions and ideas with us!

November 2012



Book Title & Description

Edith Stein: St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
by Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, Our Sunday Visitor

Teresa Benedicta of the Cross was a brilliant professor, an intellectual, a philosopher, a feminist, and a Jew. She was also a convert, a contemplative nun, a martyr of the Holocaust. Now she is a saint of the Roman Catholic Church. Better known as Edith Stein, she is perhaps the most controversial saint in recent history. Award-winning journalist María Ruiz Scaperlanda shows how this complex woman, her culture, and the pivotal period of history in which she lived and died can lead Catholics to holiness today. More than a biography, this gripping account calls to mind the struggle with truth, Faith, and prayer all of us must ultimately face.

Purchasing Information

www.amazon.com \$11.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 1: I believe in God the Father

Reflection Questions

1. How does the life of St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein) show that faith is a work of grace and always a response to God's initiative (CCC 26)?
2. What moments in Edith Stein's life can you identify as God's clear work of drawing her to know him?
3. What moments in your own life would you identify as God's particular work of drawing you to know him?
4. Based on the life of St. Teresa Benedicta, how can the intellectual pursuit of truth lead us to God?

Suggested Activity

1. Research how many scientific discoveries and intellectual contributions over the centuries were made by devout Catholics. Note, especially, how many of them were priests.
2. Read the encyclical *Fides Et Ratio* in a small group and reflect upon the relationship of faith and reason. Reflect upon how the gift of faith enables the practice of the scientific disciplines to flourish.

December 2012

Book Title & Description

St. Gianna Molla

by Pietro Molla, Ignatius Press



This is the inspiring story of a canonized contemporary woman. Gianna Molla (1923-1962) risked her life in order to save her unborn child. Diagnosed with uterine tumors during her fourth pregnancy, she refused a hysterectomy that would have aborted the child, and opted for a riskier surgery in an attempt to save the baby. Herself a medical doctor, Molla did give birth to the child, but succumbed to an infection. Molla was a dedicated physician and devoted wife and mother who lived life to the fullest, yet generously risked death by cancer for the sake of her child. A unique story, co-authored by her own husband, with his deeply moving personal insights of the heroic witness, love, sacrifice and joy of his saintly wife. A woman for all times and walks of life, this moving account of the multi-faceted, selfless St. Gianna Molla, who made the ultimate sacrifice to save her unborn child, will be an inspiration to all readers.

Purchasing Information

www.ignatius.com \$10.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 2: I believe in God the Son

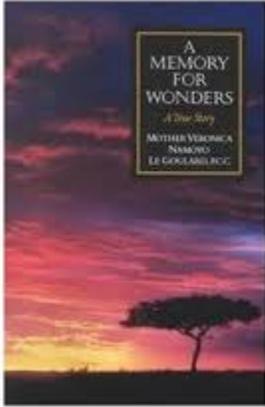
Reflection Questions

1. What does the story of St. Gianna Molla reveal to us about sacrificial love?
2. St. Gianna Molla was a highly educated woman, a physician, a wife and mother. How hard would it be for accomplished women today to accept death for the sake of the life of her unborn child? Why?
3. How can the example of St. Gianna Molla strengthen marriages today?

Suggested Activity

1. Find out what your Parish Respect Life Committee is doing to build a culture of life. Participate in these activities or help your parish build a Respect Life Committee if it does not have one already.

January 2013



Book Title & Description

A Memory for Wonders: A True Story

by Mother Veronica Namoyo Le Goulard, PCC, Ignatius Press

Here for the first time is a captivating autobiography of a French girl raised in the wild Moroccan frontier by her communist parents who fled France and vowed that "no one would speak to her of God and influence the development of her mind with oppressive superstition." Everything in her education, environment and training was targeted toward making her a perfect product of Marxist atheism. But God had other plans for Lucette. At the age of three, upon witnessing the overwhelming beauty of a sunset after a violent sirocco sand storm, she gained the unshakable certainty that this beauty was *created*, and that there was a God.

She began to pray. That was the first link in a chain of remarkable events that grace alone could forge, which led her to embrace the faith and become a Poor Clare nun in Algiers. Lucette, now Mother Veronica Namoyo, is an Abbess and foundress of two flourishing monasteries in Africa.

Purchasing Information

www.ignatius.com \$11.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 3: The Incarnation

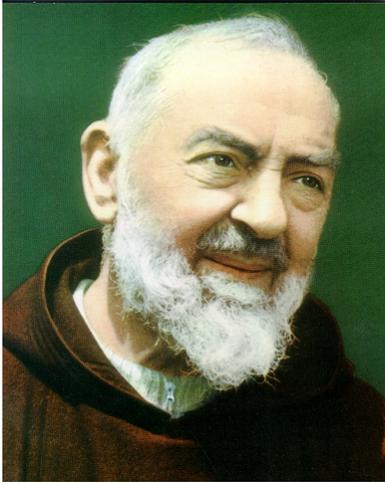
Reflection Questions

1. What were the false beliefs in the lives of Lucette's parents that led them to raise Lucette as they did?
2. What beliefs in our modern culture would lead today's parents to raise their children without faith?
3. Lucette says that the whole of her life was nothing more than an unfolding of the graces she received at her Baptism in infancy. How do these graces unfold in her life? What things transpire for her that can be identified as baptismal grace?
4. Does this story help you identify the unfolding of baptismal grace in your own life? In what ways?
5. How does faith come about in a person's life? Who does most of the "work" in bringing about faith in a person's life? What is God's role and what is our role?

Suggested Activity

1. Find out the date of your Baptism and the details of the day (if possible). Make a habit of celebrating your Baptism Day each year, thanking God for this inestimable grace.
2. Commit to spending time each evening making a review of your day (consider keeping a journal to keep you on track): How has God been speaking to me today? In what moments particularly did he offer me grace? How did I respond to that grace? Then, thank God for the gifts he gave you and the grace to respond to them. Also ask his forgiveness for the ways you may have resisted or missed his grace that day.

February 2013



Book Title & Description

Padre Pio: Man of Hope
by Renzo Allegri, Ignatius Press

Beatified on May 22, 1999, Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) was a Capuchin monk and mystic whose life was marked with miracles and wonders, but who said that his only desire was "to be a poor friar who prays." Observes the author: "When people write about Padre Pio, they tend to dwell on the penitential aspect of his life, thereby giving a somewhat dark and medieval tinge to his personality.... Padre Pio was and is a man of hope. Throughout his life, in the midst of the most difficult trials, he always looked to the future with a spirit of optimism, faith, and love." In this intimate biography, you will see the results of this humble Capuchin's prayers and discover for yourself the Source of his great hope.

Purchasing Information

www.ignatius.com \$13.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 4: The Passion and Death of Christ

Reflection Questions

1. What aspects of Padre Pio's life made him so much like Jesus Christ?
2. What habits and practices helped Padre Pio persevere in hope amidst all of his sufferings?
3. What habits and practices can I cultivate in my life to give me the same constancy in hope in both good times and bad?
4. What do I most admire about Padre Pio? How can I imitate him?

Suggested Activity

1. Choose one of the virtues of Padre Pio and commit this Lent to praying for that virtue and practicing it.
2. Write Padre Pio a letter as if he were your own spiritual director. What would you confide to him? What would you ask him advice about? Based on your reading, consider that he might say in response to your letter.

March 2013

Book Title & Description



Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta
by Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Doubleday

During her lifelong service to the poorest of the poor, Mother Teresa became an icon of compassion to people of all religions. Little is known, however, about her own spiritual heights or her struggles. This collection of letters she wrote to her spiritual advisors over decades, almost all of which have never been made public before, sheds light on Mother Teresa's interior life in a way that reveals the depth and intensity of her holiness for the first time. A moving chronicle of her spiritual journey—including moments, indeed years, of utter desolation—these letters reveal the secrets she shared only with her closest confidants. She emerges as a classic mystic whose inner life burned with the fire of charity and whose heart was tested and purified by an intense trial of faith, a true dark night of the soul.

Purchasing Information

www.amazon.com \$13.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 5: The Resurrection of Christ

Reflection Questions

1. How do the writings of Mother Teresa in this book change your view of her?
2. How can we understand Mother Teresa's dark night of the soul as a gift of love from Jesus to her?
3. Mother Teresa saw that the way to the Resurrection was through the Cross. How did her suffering become a gift of life to those around her?
4. How can the joys and sufferings in my own life be transformed into a gift to others?

Suggested Activity

1. Find out if there is a Missionary of Charity convent in your area and volunteer to help the sisters in some way. (The Missionaries of Charity in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are in Norristown and West Chester)
2. Make a donation to one of the Missionary of Charity convents all over the world.

April 2013



Book Title & Description

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati: An Ordinary Christian
by Maria De Lorenzo, Pauline Books & Media

Athletic, handsome, and always good for a laugh, Pier Giorgio Frassati was the charismatic leader of a band of rowdy friends. He smoked, pulled pranks, relished extreme sports, fiercely debated politics into the night... ...and secretly gave away his wealth to help the poor: a mother unexpectedly widowed, a homeless invalid, a boy without warm clothes... ...and plunged eagerly into intense experiences of Eucharistic prayer. An inspiring biography that captures Frassati's spirit, *Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati: An Ordinary Christian* explores the adventuresome personality and forthright love of a man who succeeded in wresting holiness from everyday life.

Purchasing Information

www.pauline.org \$10.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 6: The Ascension of Christ

Reflection Questions

1. What do you find the most interesting about Blessed Pier Giorgio?
2. What does Blessed Pier Giorgio have to teach to young adults today?
3. What does Blessed Pier Giorgio teach us about Christian joy?
4. Does the life of Blessed Pier Giorgio make holiness seem more attainable? Why or why not?

Suggested Activity

1. Plan an adventurous outing (e.g. hiking, canoeing, travel) and invite friends to join you. Try to integrate both prayer and fun and take note of how the time of prayer makes the fun more enjoyable.
2. Introduce Blessed Pier Giorgio to your sports team as the patron saint of athletes. Invoke him before each game.

May 2013

Book Title & Description

Kolbe

by Br. Francis Mary Kalvelage, FFI, Ignatius Press



The most in-depth book yet on the life and work of the great modern martyr of charity and Marian Saint, Maximilian Kolbe, whom Pope John Paul II called "The Saint of our difficult century". This book explains the controversial misrepresentation of Kolbe as anti-Semitic, his insights and strong stand against Freemasonry, and his unique, powerful Marian teachings that have made him the "prophet of the Immaculata". Missionary, theologian, writer, publisher, founder of Marytown, Marian mystic, and martyr of charity in Auschwitz, St. Maximilian Kolbe shines through the pages of this powerful book, and the reader will see why Kolbe will soon be regarded as one of the greatest saints in Church history, truly a man for all times.

Purchasing Information

www.ignatius.com \$11.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 7: The Second Coming of Christ

Reflection Questions

1. How did St. Maximilian's relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary give him strength to make such a heroic sacrifice of his life?
2. How did St. Maximilian's belief in the second coming of Christ and our final destiny in our heavenly homeland give him courage to give his life for another?
3. How does my belief in Heaven and Christ's return shape and transform the situations of my daily life? Especially problems and worries?

Suggested Activity

1. Make a list of the things you worry about the most. Re-consider these problems in light of the life of St. Maximilian and his faith in the eternal life of Heaven. Write down how this belief alters the way I view these problems.
2. Think of ways you can cultivate a deeper relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary. Put these ideas into practice.

June 2013

Book Title & Description

St. Monica: The Power of a Mother's Love
by Giovanni Falbo, Pauline Books & Media



Using extensive excerpts from the writings of St. Augustine, notably from his *Confessions*, Giovanni Falbo sheds new light on Monica's patience, sweetness, and unwavering determination. This mother never yielded in her efforts to see her beloved son find comfort and peace in God, and she endured countless sacrifices and health risks in her quest to help Augustine embrace the faith. Monica's quiet wisdom and courage, coupled with her earnest tears and prayers to God, bore fruit she could only have dreamed of. "Monica is a shining example for families today, bringing them courage and hope by guaranteeing that with the grace of God, good will, and perseverance, any difficulty can be overcome in building a true Christian family founded upon the values of the Gospel"— Giovanni Falbo

Purchasing Information

www.amazon.com \$10.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 8: The Holy Spirit

Reflection Questions

1. What does the story of St. Monica reveal to us about the power of prayer?
2. What does the story of St. Monica reveal to us about how to respond to the problem of a loved one who is far away from God and the Church?
3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of St. Monica? In the life of St. Augustine?
4. Reflect upon how St. Monica was a mother to St. Augustine in the fullest sense of the word—both physical and spiritual. Reflect upon how our own motherhood, fatherhood, sisterhood or brotherhood must always be both physical and spiritual. How can we live this out?

Suggested Activity

1. Make a list of people in your life who do not yet know the love of Jesus Christ. Commit a period of time during which you will pray for them daily.
2. At the end of each day, write a journal entry about the ways the Holy Spirit was working in your life and speaking to you throughout the day.

July 2013

Book Title & Description

For Greater Glory: The True Story of Cristiada The Cristero War and Mexico's Struggle for Religious Freedom (Español: *Cristiada*)
by Ruben Quezada, Ignatius Press



This book tells the epic tale of Mexico's heroic struggle for religious freedom in a little-known conflict called the Cristero War in which many faith-filled Catholics gave their lives for religious freedom. The book highlights the story of Blessed Jose Luis Sanchez del Rio, a young boy who was martyred for this faith during the Cristero war at the age of 14. As a companion to the inspiring movie, this book answers the questions: Who were the Cristeros? What drove the Mexican government to ruthlessly persecute Catholics? Can a priest "wage war"? Why did thousands of Catholics - priests, religious, lay people - willingly give their lives in the Cristiada? What role did the U.S. play in ending this bitter conflict? What did the Pope do to support the Church in Mexico? Which characters in the movie went on to become Catholic saints and blessed in real life? Why is this dramatic episode of history so little known today? What is the lesson of the Cristiada for those struggling for religious freedom today?

Purchasing Information

www.ignatius.com \$11.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 9: The Church

Reflection Questions (based on the book & movie *below*)

1. Why did Blessed Jose del Rio love his faith so much? What experiences did he have that led him to be courageous in offering his life for Jesus Christ?
2. What did it mean to the Mexican people to lose the ability to practice their faith? What would it mean to you if the government prohibited you to practice your faith?
3. What does the story of Blessed Jose del Rio have to say to the young people of today?
4. How do you think someone so young found the courage to die for his faith?

Suggested Activity

1. Find out what your parish or diocese is doing to stand up for religious freedom in the United States. Participate in these activities and help your parish or faith community to do the same.
2. Assemble a group to watch the movie *For Greater Glory*. Lead a discussion on the major themes of the movie. Try to discern the similarities between the situation in Mexico during the Cristero War and our own struggle to protect our religious freedom today in the United States.

August 2013



Book Title & Description

To Whom Shall We Go? Lessons from the Apostle Peter
by Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Our Sunday Visitor

To be a Christian today, to follow Our Lord and accept His call to discipleship, demands heroic courage. It takes deep faith to live the particular - special, unique - vocation that's yours alone. Heaven knows it isn't easy. St. Peter knows it, too. He's well aware that even the most enthusiastic and committed Christian can become frightened and unsure, can make mistakes and betray a loved one, can seek and receive forgiveness, can begin again and - with an even stronger faith - can go on to face life's most difficult challenges. *To Whom Shall We Go?* presents the words and actions of St. Peter as it clearly shows how his life - his strengths, weaknesses, joys, and sorrows - offers an example for all of us. How it offers hope for each of us.

Purchasing Information

www.amazon.com \$11.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 10: The Forgiveness of Sins

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus chose Peter to lead his Church?
2. Why did Christ give us a Pope? What purposes does he serve?
3. Peter's faith grows and matures over time. What was Peter like when he first encountered the Lord? How did he change? How did he remain the same?
4. What gifts and weaknesses of Peter did Christ use to bring the Gospel to others?

Suggested Activity

1. Make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral Basilica of Ss. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia.

September 2013

Book Title & Description

The Secret Diary of Elisabeth Leseur: The Woman Whose Goodness Changed Her Husband from Atheist to Priest
by Elizabeth Leseur, Sophia Institute Press



Just at the turn of the century, there was a woman married in Paris, just a good, ordinary Catholic girl, to an atheist doctor, Dr. Felix Leseur. He attempted to break down the faith of his wife and she reacted and began studying her faith. In 1905, she was taken ill and tossed on a bed of constant pain until August 1914. When she was dying, she said to her husband, "Felix, when I am dead, you will become a Catholic and a Dominican priest." "Elisabeth, you know my sentiments. I've sworn hatred of God, I shall live in the hatred and I shall die in it." She repeated her words and passed away. She died in her husband's arms at the early age of 47. Rummaging through her papers, Felix found her will. She wrote: "In 1905, I asked almighty God to send me sufficient sufferings to purchase your soul. On the day that I die, the price will have been paid. Greater love than this no woman has than she who lay down her life for her husband." Dr. Felix Leseur soon after experienced a conversion and became a Dominican priest. Elisabeth Leseur's cause for canonization is now in process in Rome.

Purchasing Information

www.amazon.com \$14.00

Relevant Article of Faith

Article 11 & 12: The Life of the World to Come

Reflection Questions

1. How did Elisabeth Leseur transform her ordinary life into something extraordinary for God and for her family?
2. Are there ways in which you can use the trials of life to grow deeper in your relationship with Christ?
3. What teachings of our faith were particularly present in the life of Elisabeth Leseur?
4. What kinds of virtues and habits must she have cultivated in order to live the heroic life she did?
5. How did Elisabeth's belief in the Life of the World to Come direct her earthly life and actions?

Suggested Activity

1. Married couples: consider how everything about their spouse (strengths and weaknesses) can become a cause of growth in love for God and for each other.
2. Choose one area of your life where you find yourself often complaining and commit to a period of time (one week, one month, Lent) of offering it to God as a sacrifice instead of complaining. Take note of how this offering transforms the situation.