

St. Ambrose Parish

Our 101st Year!
OCTOBER 22, 2017
BEEHIVE



The riot that didn't happen: Kercheval Avenue 1966

The following is an original essay by Tim Kiska which was written for us as part of our discussion about the anthology: Detroit 1967: Origins, Impacts, Legacies. It chronicles a disturbance that took place in our neighborhood a year before the great insurrection that gripped Detroit the following summer. In this case, however, it was a spark that didn't catch fire. Dr. Kiska holds a Ph.D. in History from Wayne State University and is a life-long resident of Detroit's East Side. He is our featured speaker this Sunday morning in between masses in the ARK.

The corner of Twelfth and Clairmount became famous as the flashpoint of Detroit's 1967 riot. It's the crucial intersection in blues legend John Lee Hooker's 1968 "The Motor City Is Burning." And now it's the title of a Detroit Free Press film on the rebellion's 50th anniversary.

But the corner of Kercheval and McClellan, not quite three miles from this church's front steps, almost became equally famous just one summer earlier.

For two nights in August 1966, neighborhood residents gathered in the streets and gave every indication that a major riot was about to happen. The unrest did not burgeon into full-blown insurrection, and the incident became mostly forgotten. Historian Sidney Fine, the foremost chronicler of Detroit's 1960s-era civil disturbances, called it "The riot that didn't happen."

The conditions at the root of this city's 1967 eruption were certainly evident in 1966. Overwhelming police power and dumb luck are all that prevented something far worse from developing.

The riot in the Watts section of Los Angeles in August 1965 had killed 34 people and caused more than \$40 million in property damage. Although Watts was the biggest and most famous riot that year, five other cities exploded, including Cleveland. Analysts at the time could not help draw parallels: Could it happen here in

Detroit? A marginalized African-American minority, segregated into lousy neighborhoods? *Check.* Dismal police-community relations? *Check.* Inferior schools and questionable quality of city services? *Check.* A Wayne State University conference examined these conditions in late 1965. There were strains between black and white in Detroit, but participants in the study concluded that race relations in the city could be much worse.

Detroit mayor Jerome P. Cavanaugh certainly was aware of the problem, as was police chief Ray Girardin. City Hall wondered if a plan was in place to deal with a disturbance. There was not. John Nichols, a district inspector at the time, later police chief and a candidate for mayor in 1973, put one together.

His blueprint called for a riot area to be surrounded, a police command post to be set up at the perimeter of any disturbance, and for police to flood the area. They would employ tear gas if necessary, this being called "an effective and humane method of riot control." Several sections of the Detroit Police Department, notably the Tactical Mobile Unit, were trained in riot control. Rioters were to be dispersed by police, who were told not to engage in debate with the crowds. Nonetheless, the plan called for them to remove their badges as they dealt with the crowds.

Almost a year to the day of the Watts riot, the plan was put to the test.

The Kercheval-McClellan neighborhood was among the city's most poverty-stricken. Median annual household income stood at just under \$3,000. A similar figure for non-whites citywide stood at roughly \$4,400. It proved to be fertile territory for several radical social

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The Kercheval Riot of 1966

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justice groups, notably the American Union Movement and the Afro-American Youth Movement.

On the evening of August 9, 1966, a “Big Four” car – so named because they were manned by some of the toughest men in the precinct — tried to arrest a group of black males alleged to be loitering. It was just before 8:30 p.m. A crowd gathered. The Big Four were the symbol of everything that was wrong then with the police department, and this particular arrest ignited serious trouble. (On the same evening, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a major civil right bill and passed it on to the U.S. Senate.)

According to a contemporary account, mobs began stoning cars driven by white motorists on Kercheval between Belvidere and Montclair. More than 150 police were immediately mobilized into the area. A crowd of roughly 100 gathered on Kercheval and taunted police. In the words of one person in the crowd: “Wait until tomorrow night. It’ll be just like Vietnam.” However, no arrests were made that evening. The Cavanagh administration, with an eye toward public relations, would characterize what happened the next several nights as a “rampage.”

Police presence was bumped up to 200 the next night. Clergy and neighborhood leaders were also out in force, trying to talk people into going home. State Senator Coleman Young, perhaps the most respected African-American leader on the east side, was chewed out by cops and invited to get lost. Help came from above, literally, when rain began to fall. During the following two nights, peacekeepers composed of clergy, block captains and such showed up again.

The final arrest numbers: 89 adults, 93 juveniles. No deaths. There had been one firebombing of a drug store, but the incident did not morph into a full-scale riot. In the end, the Detroit Police Department and the Cavanagh administration saw hope in the way the situation had been handled. City Hall became confident it knew how to handle any future situation.

If there was a memo, the folks who converged on Twelfth and Clairmount the following summer did not get a copy. Nor did any police tactical plan account for somewhat difference circumstances.

The 1966 Kercheval incident began in the early evening hours, when police were at full force and could easily be mobilized. It was an early Sunday morning July 23, 1967, when police raided a blind pig at Twelfth and Clairmount. A full-scale police mobilization would be more challenging, and the situation was not well assessed. The crowd on Twelfth Street swelled, growing angrier at the rousting of the after-hours bar’s clientele. By the time police had a chance to put John Nichols’s plan into place, it was too late.

The 1967 spark became a full-scale conflagration, which would not be put down until state police, the National Guard and the U.S. Army were on Detroit’s streets, and 43 people had died. Twelfth and Clairmount became infamous. It could easily have been here.



LOOKING
TOWARD
EASTER
2018

Name

Home Phone

Work Phone

Email Address

- I would simply like to learn more about the Catholic Faith.
- I desire to prepare for my Baptism into Christianity.
- I've been Baptized as a Christian and now desire to join in Catholic Communion.
- I'm non-Catholic, but married to a Catholic, and now wish to join the Catholic Church.
- I'm Catholic and I would like to complete my initiation into the Catholic Church by celebrating Confirmation and/or Communion.
- I'm Baptized Catholic and would like to learn more about my faith and how to practice it.
- I want to propose someone for Catholic Church membership and offer to serve as their sponsor.
- I would be willing to help with an R.C.I.A. program.
- I have other needs, requests, and questions. Please contact me.

Return this to the Parish Rectory or place it in the Collection basket.

Conflict Resolution

Explore how prayer-based action can help heal conflicts in your own life and in the world – from century-old divisions to a family fight. With degrees from both Princeton and *Institute d'Etudes Politiques* in Paris, John Tyler will be at the Grosse Pointe Woods Community Center on Friday, October 27th at 7:30 p.m. presenting his approach to the power of prayer in promoting health and healing in people’s lives. The Grosse Pointe Woods Community Center is located at 20025 Mack Plaza in the Woods.

All Things Considered

You don't want to miss this Sunday morning's Adult Education presentation by **Tim Kiska**. In my reading about the Detroit insurrection of 1967, I kept on coming across references to the Kercheval riot of 1966. I admit to knowing nothing of that event and could find nothing written about it. Knowing Tim's penchant for local history prompted me to ask him to do an original article and presentation for us on that very topic. It does not get any closer to home than this.

The question is why did the Kercheval episode get resolved without igniting the whole city, while just a year later another small incident sparked a conflagration. Why there and not here? If you lived here during that time, you'll want to come to share your personal account. If you did not, it would be good for you to know what happened. History has a nasty way of repeating itself.

OYSTERFEST is now a happy memory and enters into the annals of

our parish as the 27th year of that party's founding. It's certainly grown since its humble beginnings at the long-lost Tom's Oyster Bar on Mack.

This year, we served 848 ticketed adults and 82 children. There were 107 volunteers. A rough count of our vendors and food purveyors numbered at 80. That put about 1,000 people at the event. Oysterfest 27 saw 160 more patrons than we did the year before, but 270 fewer than the high water mark the event saw in 2014.

It truly has become a signature summer event for this part of town. The amount of good will and positive community relations that is produced by Oysterfest is incalculable. We can, however, calculate the finances for the evening.

In terms of gross income, we saw \$65,284.43 which included \$25,450.00 in sponsorships and \$9,096.00 for the raffle – or roughly half the proceeds.

In terms of expenses, the event cost \$37,423.90 to produce – \$17,539.41 went to the physical set up, which is by far the most expensive and complicated part of the evening.

That gives us a net profit for the event of \$27,423.90. That's not too bad, but when you understand that we had \$25,450.00 in sponsor money,

that amount by itself is pretty much our profitability margin. That sponsor money, by the way, does not include all the donated food and beverages that were provided by generous restaurants and suppliers throughout the community.

We're having a great time with Oysterfest, but if we had to look at it in cold economic terms, it really does not benefit us all that much. The set-up is ideal but costly. Plus we've known for some time now that the way we have structured Oysterfest as a fixed ticket price, all-you-can-eat night, is an out-moded way of operating this kind of festival, but we decided to continue to give our patrons a good deal assuming it would increase attendance. That does not seem to translate. As with so many of our fund-raising efforts, we have a great time, but achieve only limited financial success. After 27 years we're better, but we've got to get smarter.

Next Sunday we will celebrate "sainthood" with the students in our Religious Education Department. At the 11:15 mass, there will be a presentation from the various classes wherein they will have created a pumpkin in the likeness of a saint. It's a good way to connect the Halloween holiday with its religious roots as well as a good way for

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Fifty years after the 1967 Detroit uprising, we will host a dialogue with three of the contributing authors from the anthology: [Detroit 1967](#), along with the former chief of the Detroit police. What were the origins, impacts and legacies of that time in history.

- Oct. 1 The Rages of Whiteness: Racism, Segregation and the Making of Modern Detroit**
Kevin Boyle: American History Professor at Northwestern University, holder of four National Book Awards, including [Arc of Justice](#).
- Oct. 8 The Detroit I Knew and Know**
Ike McKinnon: Associate Professor of Education at University of Detroit. He is a former Deputy Mayor and Chief of Police of the City of Detroit.
- Oct. 15 It Can Happen Here: Model City Once Again?**
Desiree Cooper: Attorney, Pulitzer Prize-nominated journalist and Detroit community activist
- Oct. 22 The Riot That Didn't Happen – Kercheval Avenue 1966**
Tim Kiska: Detroit newsman, author and professor of journalism at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Discussion will be held this Sunday morning from 9:45 to 11 in the ARK at St. Ambrose.

All Things Considered

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us to learn more about the saints ... this year, American saints.

That very same Sunday at 3:00 at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, there will be a presentation about the holy woman and notorious trouble-maker, **Dorothy Day** (1897-1980), by **Kate Hennissey**, her granddaughter. It should be an interesting presentation about a woman who during her lifetime stated: *'Don't call me a saint, I don't want to be dismissed that easily.'*

✠✠✠

Solanus Casey died at St. John Hospital in 1957. So many people thought it important to preserve his memory that in 1960 a group called the Solanus Guild was organized. For more than half a century they kept pushing for his beatification, and they kept paying the bills. Because the official path to sainthood is an elaborate process involving testimony, examinations and verification of miracles by medical experts, there are costs involved as there are for any judicial process.

It should surprise no one that the beatification ceremonies next month for Fr. Solanus, will also carry a price tag. The Capuchins cannot underwrite the event — nor should they — so it falls once again to the Solanus Guild and others to come up with the cash. In the end, it is not the Pope who makes a saint, it's the people, and it's local people who are convinced of Solanus' sainthood and are promoting and funding it.

An entry level donation would be a \$20 signature card. Of course, there are other more generous opportunities to help defray the cost of the event which includes the rental of Ford Field and all that goes with making it into a church for a day. Given the magnitude of the event and looking out for the financial well-being of the Capuchins, check out TheCapuchins.org/Support-Beatification or talk with **Frs. Bede, Wotypka or Nguyen**.

TRP

Post Diakonos

There's a bit of April 15th in Matthew 22 today, when Jesus' opponents are trying to entrap him in a civil/religious quandary. It's a Scripture so familiar that there's a risk of overlooking its vitality. My starting point is "Whither our taxes?" By that I mean I accept my responsibility as a citizen (now greatly reduced as a religious) but I want accountability and results. As a native Philadelphian, I was predisposed to buy into the work and worth of the state — to see almost daily Carpenter's Hall, Independence Hall, the First and Second National Bank buildings among other landmarks of the nation's founding, made acceptance of The American Experiment nearly a given for me. But history is one thing, civics another — yet my acceptance was sustained even in the face of a sustained and disastrous initial encounter with the state in action. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was (is? I don't keep up much with it these days) a hub of corruption in the 70's and 80's. By the time I left for college I had witnessed my US rep, my state rep, and my state senator all go to the big house for lining their pockets.

Living in New York in the 80's didn't strengthen my faith in the polis — the city and its people suffered greatly through the crack epidemic and the shifting of federal funds away from urban centers. It was only when I moved to the DC area that I first experienced well-run communities, and saw theories transformed into priorities and policies in an objectively beneficial way. What has been your experience of governance?

In these times, starting at the federal level and moving to the local, I hear another presupposition, that "Our taxes wither." The starting point is the desirability of allowing individuals to retain as much of their income as possible, and to limit the reach and scope of all government. I can't square that with what is necessary to maintain a commitment to the common good — even as I trust in the goodness of people and the fruitful works of faith to provide for those in need when policies and leaders don't. Jesus' solution is the summit of wisdom, the verse that closes today's Gospel: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Mt 22: 21). This is an early expression of the "both/and" embrace which forms so many of our faith's insights, and shows what can bloom when we engage the questions of the day from the core of our beliefs.

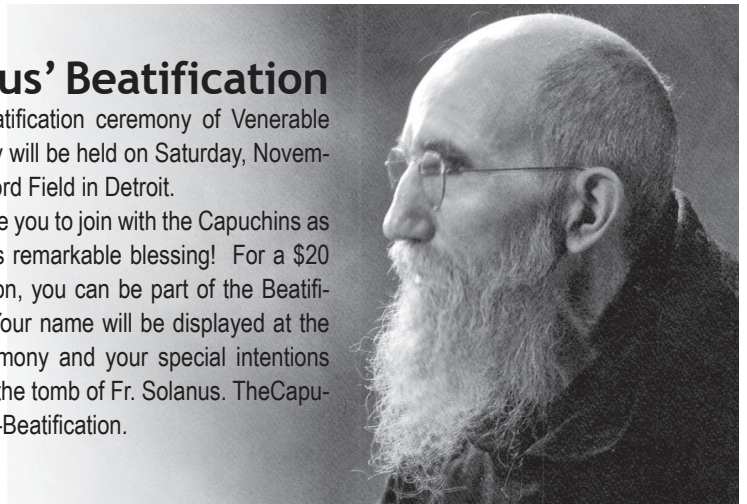
There is an alternative approach in our Catholic tradition, one that doesn't accept the need for side-by-side systems, voiced by Servant of God Dorothy Day, who never paid income tax (she never voted, either). She famously retorted in a public debate, when her opponent referenced this very Scripture, "My friend, if we rendered unto God everything that is truly God's, there'd be nothing left for Caesar." Perhaps the matter isn't settled. All voices are welcome. *E pluribus unum*.

Fr. Robert Wotypka

Fr. Solanus' Beatification

The beatification ceremony of Venerable Fr. Solanus Casey will be held on Saturday, November 18, 2017 at Ford Field in Detroit.

We invite you to join with the Capuchins as they rejoice in this remarkable blessing! For a \$20 suggested donation, you can be part of the Beatification Program. Your name will be displayed at the Beatification ceremony and your special intentions will be brought to the tomb of Fr. Solanus. TheCapuchins.org/Support-Beatification.



Faith Formation Station

"The saints in each generation are joined to those who have gone before, and filled like them with light to become a golden chain...united to the next by faith, works, and love."

- St. Simeon of Asia Minor

By our baptism, we are called to be saints. From the examples and lives of the saints, we can learn ways to love God, others, and ourselves. The word saint means "one who is made holy." We honor the saints as followers of Christ who lived lives of holiness on earth and now share eternal life with God in heaven.

As we prepare for the Feast of All Saints on November 1st, we find that so many of our students love learning about the saints. Children love to hear about all the ways the saints have showed their love for God and others. This All Saints Day, research saints with your child/ren on the internet or in a book of saints and learn about their heroic and courageous love for God. Additionally, talk with your child/ren about your own favorite saints. You as a parent are called to be a saint through all that you do to raise your child. Your child, too, is called to be a saint. After you talk, bless your child by making the Sign of the Cross on their forehead. Then pray together: "May all the saints in heaven bless you and watch over you now and always. Amen."

ALL HALLOWS EVE – OCTOBER 31ST: HALLOWEEN takes its name from a Christian feast: All Hallows' Eve. Hallows is another word for saints — and thus All Hallows Eve is the night before All Saints' Day. The holiday marked the end of the food-growing season; the ancient Celts called the day "Samhain" or "end of summer." The Druids, members of a priesthood in ancient Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, believed that evil spirits roamed the earth at this time. People looked for ways in which to appease them; they believed that offering them treats would fend off their tricks! They would also light fires to chase away demonic forces, even making lamps out of turnips – our modern-day Jack O' Lantern.

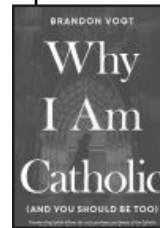
ALL SAINTS DAY – NOVEMBER 1ST: On the feast of All Saints, we honor those men and women who – whether they've been canonized or not – have led lives of heroic virtue that set an example for all Christians. They have truly witnessed to their faith. Although no two saints are alike, there are certain qualities they all share: Saints are big dreamers. Saints are go-getters. Saints are love-bringers. Saints try to see Christ in every person and in every situation. Their lives tell us that what matters is how much we love God, others, and ourselves, and how well we show that love in all we do.

ALL SOULS' DAY – NOVEMBER 2ND: The feast of All Souls is when the Church remembers and prays for all people who have died. We believe that death can separate us from the people we love only for a while. We are still united with them in the Communion of Saints. We remember the people we knew and loved who have died. We save pictures and mementos of the loved ones. On the anniversaries of their deaths, we might bring flowers or plants to their graves as signs of our continuing love and prayers. In some Latin American countries, All Souls' Day is celebrated as the Day of the Dead. Villagers may hold processions to the cemetery bringing flowers, wreaths, favorite food offerings, and pictures to decorate the gravesites of the dead. People may bring picnic lunches to the gravesite and spend time until day-break, partying, telling stories, dancing, and sharing recipes and traditions.

Presentation of the Sainly Pumpkins: All religious education families are invited to attend Mass together on Sunday October 29th at 11:15am. In honor of the feast of All Saints, your child/ren will have learned about a special Saint in their classrooms and helped design a special saintly pumpkin in honor of that particular saint. These pumpkins will be presented to the parish community during Mass. Parishioners are invited to vote later for their favorite pumpkin by making a contribution to St. Ambrose's St. Vincent de Paul Society in that pumpkin saint's honor. Ask your child/ren about their particular Saint. Come join us at Mass and celebrate this special St. Ambrose tradition together.

Kelly Woolums

Marcellina's Book Club



With atheism on the rise and millions tossing off religion, why would anyone consider the Catholic Church? Brandon Vogt, makes a persuasive case for the faith and reveals a vision of Catholicism that

has answers our world desperately needs and reminds those already in the Church what they love about it.

Why I Am Catholic serves as a compelling reproposal of the Church for former Catholics, and a persuasive argument for truth and beauty to those who have become jaded and disenchanting with religion.

Our book club gatherings will be held on Sunday mornings in November from 9:45 until 11:00 a.m. in the ARK.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Assistant: Rev. Robert Wotycka OFM, Cap
Assistant: Rev. Mr. John Maksym
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolums
Minister of Music: Norah Duncan IV
Office Manager: Pamela Moffitt

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –
 Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.
 Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton
 Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230
Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838
Email address: stambrose@comcast.net
Religious Education: (313) 822-1248
Pastoral Ministry: (313) 822-2017
Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814
Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, October 23

St. John of Capistrano, priest

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Tuesday, October 24

St. Anthony Mary Claret, bishop

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Marilyn Jean Dallavo

Wednesday, October 25

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Thursday, October 26

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Beverly Kummer

Friday, October 27

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Robert Weikel

Saturday, October 28

SS. Simon & Jude, apostles

4:00 p.m. - Mass - For All People

6:00 p.m. - Wedding - Brittany Bachteal & Anthony Walker

Sunday, October 29

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary time

8:30 a.m. - Mass - For All People

11:15 a.m. - Mass - For All People



Scriptures for the 29th Week of Ordinary Time

Monday, October 23

- Rom 4: 20-25
- (Ps) Lk 1: 69-75
- Lk 12: 13-21

Tuesday, October 24

- Rom 5: 12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21
- Ps 40: 7-10, 17
- Lk 12: 35-38

Wednesday, October 25

- Rom 6: 12-18
- Ps 124: 1-8
- Lk 12: 39-48

Thursday, October 26

- Rom 6: 19-23
- Ps 1: 1-4, 6
- Lk 12: 49-53

Friday, October 27

- Rom 7: 18-25a
- Ps 119: 60, 68, 76-77, 93-94
- Lk 12: 54-59

Saturday, October 28

- Eph 2: 19-22
- Ps 19: 2-5
- Lk 6: 12-16

Sunday, October 29

- Ex 22: 20-26
- 1 Thes 1: 5c-10
- Mt 22: 34-40

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 28th and October 29th

4:00 p.m. – Saturday – Celebrant: Fr. Bede **Lector:** Mary Urbanski

Eucharistic Ministers: Maria Cox- & Adam Borkowski,
Della Cimini, Karen McShane, Mary Helen Quigg

Altar Servers: Frankie Pangborn, Sean Hall

8:30 a.m. – Sunday – Celebrant: Fr. Wotypka **Lector:** Karlos Haynes

Eucharistic Ministers: Christopher Harrison, Bob Jogan, Steve Linne,
Bernadette Pieczynski, Joellyn Valgoi, Chris Walsh

Altar Servers: Erica, Corey, & Carrigan McGraw

11:15 a.m. – Sunday - Celebrant: Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Pat Sperti

Eucharistic Ministers: Beverly Bennert, Anne Billiu, Lupe Davila,
Janis Ramsey, Darryl Swiatkowski, Patty Yaden

Altar Servers: Ella Chamberlain, Liam O'Byrne

Your Envelope Speaks ... the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of \$10,100.00

On Sunday, October 15, 2017

in envelopes we received \$6,170.00

in the loose collection \$485.00

in electronic donations \$1,390.00

in children's envelopes \$5.00

for a total of **\$8,050.00**

Under budget for the week \$2,050.00

Number of envelopes mailed 800

Number of envelopes used 142

*"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's
and to God the things that are God's."*

-MATTHEW 22:21

*We aren't "owners" of anything, we are merely
"stewards" of the gifts God has given each
of us. All God is asking is that we give back a
portion of what He gave us. This is the essence
of Stewardship. God should be our first priority
in everything. All else comes second.*

Our Sick

Please pray for our parishioners who are seriously ill or hospitalized: Pat Blake, Dominic Centorbi, Andrew Chavez, Maria Chinchilla, Karen Culver, Kathleen Elbersen, Ann Sullivan Kay, Josephine Marino, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Mary Myers, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Scott Nedoff, Emilie Kasper, Arthur Stoyshin, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dan Urbiel, Dina Engels, Cheryl Lapensee, Darby O'Toole, Lou Rondini, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Mike Corrión, Betty Greenia, Bill Grogan, Graham McGivern, Karen Czechowicz, Alexandra Cullen, Larry Garcia and Charmaine Kaptur.



In the Gospel today Jesus says: "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." When God is the center of our lives there is no problem with giving others their due. Your gift to the St. Vincent de Paul Conference here at St. Ambrose helps your neighbors who are hungry, hopeless and frightened about what tomorrow will bring ... to know that they belong to God and He sends us to make them feel loved. Please support our Spaghetti Dinner – a fun way to help others.

Our own enjoyment of a meal on Thanksgiving should also ensure that some low-income families can also enjoy a special holiday meal. Our St. Vincent dePaul Society here in the parish provides all the fixings for a great meal for about 50 households who otherwise might go without.

All the boxes to be filled have been taken by parishioners. They should be returned to the church by October 29th. But if you didn't get one, money donations to the Society are still welcome to cover the cost of fresh items to be included just before delivery. Call the rectory if you can help in this way.



Join us on Facebook
facebook.com/stambroseparish

We're Theological and Biblical Illiterates

Before moving into this month's 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation, let's think about what a recent Pew Forum survey says about Catholics and Protestants in the U.S. today.

Here's a primary conclusion I draw: Many of us don't know lots about theology. We don't understand much of our own faith tradition's history and we're willing to adopt ideas in conflict with that history. In other words, many of us live theologically unexamined lives. We're theological and biblical illiterates.

The Pew survey, for instance, reports that "many U.S. Protestants espouse traditionally Catholic beliefs on some issues. "For example, nearly half of U.S. Protestants today (46%) say faith alone is needed to attain salvation (a belief held by Protestant reformers in the 16th century, known in Latin as *sola fide*). But about half (52%) say both good deeds and faith are needed to get into heaven, a historically Catholic belief."

That Pew wording "nearly half" seems misleading, making it sound as though 46 percent is a big number. It should say "barely half," to suggest that it's a surprisingly low number, which it is. After all, "faith alone," or *sola fide*, rooted in *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), the most important of the four other solas, became a primary distinction in the 1500's between Protestants and Catholics. Luther specifically rejected the idea that he needed the pope or other Catholic leaders to tell him what Scripture meant. Each individual, he said, could figure that out alone.

It's been only in recent decades that Lutherans and Catholics (and, more recently, Reformed Protestants and Catholics) have agreed that salvation is solely dependent on God's grace, not a bit on our works or merit. I don't know if the 52 percent of Protestants who didn't understand that are among the 46 percent who seem not to understand the Protestant belief in *sola scriptura*. But many of them probably are.

In a strange way, this kind of widespread ignorance is helpful in that, unlike in the early 1500's, Christians for the most part today aren't out killing other Christians to convince them that they're wrong. Such wars went on for decades in various parts of Europe after the start of the Reformation. And often those wars were Protestant against Protestant. (The book to read is [Rebel in the Ranks](#) by Brad Gregory.) In other words, perhaps religious ignorance really is bliss. If you don't care about it, you won't fight over it.

But how much better it would be if, instead of flabby agreement on — or disinterest in — previously divisive points of faith, we could understand in detail what we believe and why it differs from what others believe? That might bring us to the possibility of meaningful discoveries of surprising common ground or an agreement to live in peace despite our sometimes-profound differences.

I'm reminded of what an Orthodox rabbi once told me about interfaith dialogue. A lot of it amounts to "interfaithless dialogue," he said, in which people with nominal commitments to a faith tradition and not much knowledge of other traditions come together and agree on generalities that they would have agreed on even if they'd never met.

"It's insulting, actually," he said. True interfaith dialogue is hard, it takes lots of time and it presumes a reasonably deep knowledge of what you're talking about. But I suppose no one should be surprised to discover the ignorance the Pew study reveals when it tells us that about 30 percent of the Protestants didn't quite know what the Reformation was and couldn't name Martin Luther as its progenitor.

I'm not asking that we return to the days when much daily conversation on the streets consisted of arguments about what happens in the Eucharist. But if we don't understand the essential tenets of our faith, how can we use them to motivate us to help heal a wounded world?

For National Catholic Reporter by Bill Tammeus, a Presbyterian elder and faith columnist for [The Kansas City Star](#). [ncronline.org](#)



Pasta for the Poor

The St. Vincent De Paul Society Spaghetti Dinner is scheduled for Friday, November 10th, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., in the ARK. Dinner includes all-you-can-eat choice of pasta and sauces, garlic bread, salad, dessert, soft drinks and coffee.

Prices are: adults: \$15, children (6-12) \$6, and children (5 and under) free. Tickets are available in the back of church after the Masses on the weekends of October 28-29 and November 4-5. They can also be purchased at the door. We need donations of purchased desserts. You can sign up for this at the back of church on the same weekends.

November 1st

November 1st is All Saints Day, which this year falls on a Wednesday.

It is a Holy Day of Obligation for U.S. Catholics. There will be a morning mass at 10:00 a.m. and an evening mass at 7:00 p.m. where we will remember in a special way those who have died and were buried from our parish in the past twelve months.

There will be a candle-lighting memorial calling out each of the deceased by name. We extend the invitation to all our parishioners to come and pray for the beloved dead in their own families at that Mass.

