



Archdiocese of Galveston — Hou-

625 Nottingham Oaks Trail  
Houston, TX 77079

**Tel.: 281-497-1500**  
**Fax: 281-584-2024**  
[www.stjohnvianney.org](http://www.stjohnvianney.org)

#### PARISH CLERGY

**Rev. R. Troy Gately**  
Pastor

**Rev. Richard Hinkley**  
Parochial Vicar

**Rev. Charles J. Talar**  
In Residence

#### Deacons

Fred Kossegi  
Dale Steffes  
Greg Stokes  
Al Vacek  
Jeff Willard

#### PASTORAL STAFF

**Adult Formation**  
Yvonne Gill

**Music Ministry**  
Michael Madrid

**Pastoral Care and  
Spiritual Life**  
Jeff Willard

**Parish Life/  
Activity Center**  
Richard Fairly

**Social Service  
Ministries**  
Deborah Alvarenga

**Youth Formation**  
Carolina Sayago

**Business Office**  
C.J. Pete Prados

**St. John Paul II  
Catholic School**  
1400 Parkway Plaza Dr.  
Houston, TX 77077  
281.496.1500  
Pre K-8th Grade

### *Living Faith*

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is one of those “catch all” letters. First and foremost, please know that you and your loved ones are in my prayers. I pray for your safety and wellbeing, your health and most especially that you may remain close to Our Lord who loves you so very much. It has been a true burden that we have been unable to open up the church and have everyone come to Mass. It saddens my heart to know that many have been deprived of the sacraments for many weeks now. I would like to invite you again to come to one of the weekday masses. These are smaller gatherings than the Sunday masses. If you cannot come to Mass, then I invite you to come to church and pray before the Blessed Sacrament. The church is open all day and the Adoration Chapel is open 24/7. If you are restricted to home, pray the Liturgy of the Word and make a Spiritual Communion. Pray your rosary or spend time in mental prayer.

*If you do come to Mass, please remember that you are asked to observe the health protocols of washing hands frequently, keeping social distance, wearing face masks, and receiving communion in the hand. If you are in any of the “at risk” groups (over 65, have health issues, etc.) you are advised to refrain from coming to Mass at this time. If you are sick, PLEASE STAY HOME. If you are anxious or have concerns about being with others during this time, PLEASE STAY HOME.*

We are busy here at the parish trying to plan the best we can for the fall. We are planning on restarting our activities and programs in the fall. How and to what degree remain to be seen. Obviously, plans are subject to changing conditions. I would encourage you to plan as well. Plan on coming to Mass, sending the kids to Religious Education, being part of our Adult Formation program, coming to the Bazaar, etc. One of the more dangerous consequences of this pandemic is that the “new normal” that many are talking about will be missing some of the important and good things of the “old normal”. I am particularly concerned about our human interaction. For months we have been forced and socialized to keep distance from others, to be suspicious and to be fearful. This is not good. We have been kept from Mass and the sacraments. This has been tragic. In the past, one of the ways people dealt with crisis situations was to turn to God in prayer and by coming to church! We need to reach out to one another, to reassure each other and to support each other in the faith. I ask that you reach out to other parishioners and neighbors. Keep connected and in communication. Pray for them and ask them to pray for you. Invite them to come to church and pray privately and when we totally open back up, invite them to come with you. The best way to get people back to church is not to lose them in the first place. It is up to all of us.

We have on-going registration right now for a number of things in the Fall. You can register on-line for our Youth Formation (Religious Education) and for a number of our Adult Formation programs. Details are on the parish website, in this bulletin and you can just contact the offices. Why not consider being a catechist, a youth ministry volunteer or a facilitator for an adult study group? We always receive more than we give when we serve others. As I mentioned, we are planning for our Annual Parish Bazaar on October 11. This is a wonderful event that helps us build and strengthen our parish community and assists us in providing funds for our charitable works. It takes more than 1400 individuals happily serving to make the day a success. Be one of them.

### *Changing Lives*

### *Making a Difference*

One of the most important things that our parish does is bring people to Jesus and to His Holy Catholic Church through the RCIA (Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults). This year, these wonderful men and women were delayed. But thanks be to God, we were blessed with 31 new Catholics! Some have taken to calling them our "COVID CATHOLICS". They were indeed wonderful to remain faithful to their formation and so patient and understanding. It was a joy to see the excitement in them when they were able to be baptized and confirmed and to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Do you know someone who would like to become Catholic? Not sure? Then pray for them and then ask them. Invite them to church with you. Let them know it would be wonderful for them to become Catholic. Share with them your own joy of being a Catholic. It is better to risk a "no" than to miss a "yes"!

Our Social Services Ministries, Joseph's Coat and the Food Pantry remain closed. This is out of concern for our volunteers as we cannot observe social distance and other health protocols since many of our wonderful volunteers are also in the "at risk" categories. That does not mean that we are not helping those in need. We have teamed up with other agencies to support them remotely. We are also reaching out to our elderly and others in the parish with "care calls" and other efforts. Our parish Home Repair Mission Team made the journey to Eagle Pass to provide shelter for some of the poorest people in the United States.

You will notice that we are continuing with some of the renovations that were part of our IGNITE Archdiocesan Capital Campaign. In particular, we are continuing with the renovations to the Activity Center, Youth Lounge (now christened "THE DEN") and the Adult Formation Offices. We received a portion of the funds from the campaign which enabled us to continue on these projects that had already begun. There are other elements of the campaign that are being postponed until a later date. Our ability to continue these projects means that not only do we receive freshly remodeled and nice spaces, but that the contractors and their workers have a job and a paycheck during these difficult times. That means a roof over their heads, clothes for their kids, food on the table and gas in the car. Your generosity has an impact that touches many lives.

Lastly, I want to say *Thank You* to all who have so generously supported the parish during these trying times by your financial offerings. Without you and your faithful stewardship, this horrible situation would be even worse. We have taken strides to reduce our spending dramatically. We have cut our budgets for the coming fiscal year and we are monitoring things very closely. So far, we are weathering this storm by the grace of God and you, our devoted and faithful parishioners. I know some have made sacrifices to continue to support our parish. May God bless you. I know as well that there are some who are unable to support the parish financially during this time due to personal financial issues: the loss of a job, family members in crisis, etc. May God bless you in your need. Please do not worry or be anxious, stay strong in your faith and keep praying for our parish. As Mass attendance is still only a small portion of normal, most people are still not able to attend Sunday Mass. As part of the health protocols, we are not able to take up a weekly collection by passing the basket, but we still have bills to pay. It takes more than half million dollars a month to keep our beloved parish going. Payroll, maintenance, overhead, etc. They are all still with us and they add up. I encourage you to please keep our parish, our parishioners and our ministries in your prayers and in your monthly budget! An easy way to make your stewardship offering is by electronic giving. You can set this up on-line with your bank as a bill to pay from your checking account. Another easy way is by automatic giving through the WeShare Program. To set this up, just go on our website or contact the parish offices. Of course, there is still dropping your offertory off at the parish and by mail.

Keep praying and be holy!

In Pace Christi,



**Mass Readings**

**Monday** 2 Kgs 17:5-8, 13-15a, 18; Ps 60:3, 4-5, 12-13; Mt 7:1-5

**Tuesday** 2 Kgs 19:9b-11, 14-21, 31-35a, 36; Ps 48:2-3ab, 3cd-4, 10-11; Mt 7:6, 12-14

**Wednesday** Jer 1:4-10; Ps 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5-6ab, 15ab and 17; 1 Pt 1:8-12; Lk 1:5-17; Is 49:1-6; Ps 139:1b-3, 13-14ab, 14c-15; Acts 13:22-26; Lk 1:57-66, 80

**Thursday** 2 Kgs 24:8-17; Ps 79:1b-2, 3-5, 8, 9; Mt 7:21-29

**Friday** 2 Kgs 25:1-12; Ps 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6; Mt 8:1-4

**Saturday** Lam 2:2, 10-14, 18-19; Ps 74:1b-2, 3-5, 6-7, 20-21; Mt 8:5-17

**Sunday** 2 Kgs 4:8-11, 14-16a; Ps 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19; Rom 6:3-4, 8-11; Mt 10:37-42

**This Sunday's Reading**

**Reading I** Jer 20:10-13  
**Reading II** Rom 5:12-15  
**Gospel** MT 10:26-33

Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father."

**New Parishioners**

**Welcome to our St. John Vianney Family**

Kato and Cynthia Hawthorne, Gregory Shoalmire, Ronald Muery and Ana Maria Tripicchio, Richard and Maureen Thomas, Maura Marcano, Lawrence and Kathleen Medina, William and Elizabeth Hill, Thomas and Hannah Casey, Nyazum Gwamma, Mamie Gonzales, Darryl Hotz, Rosana Yorde, Jairo and Nury Bautista, Enrique and Vivian Leon, Tri Nguyen and Tiffani Le

**STEWARDSHIP**



Your continued support and financial stewardship is vital in fulfilling our parish mission of bringing the love of Christ to others. **New to online giving?** Automatic,

electronic giving is easy, safe and confidential. Donate on [WeShare](#) or simply text a dollar amount to 281.884.3212.

**Mass Intentions**

**Monday, June 22, 2020**  
9:00 AM Dani Greene  
12:10 PM +William Murphy  
7:00 PM +Camelia Vilar Holz

**Tuesday, June 23, 2020**  
9:00 AM +Olga Castillo rip  
12:10 PM +Edgar Bendana  
7:00 PM Lucie Koutra

**Wednesday, June 24, 2020**  
9:00 AM +Guillermo & Sara de Cadena  
12:10 PM Frances Thompson Clinton  
7:00 PM Brandon and Wen Chu

**Thursday, June 25, 2020**  
9:00 AM +Stephanie Gunter  
12:10 PM +Karen Houston  
7:00 PM +Mark Nadorlik

**Friday, June 26, 2020**  
9:00 AM +Elliot Lawrence Craig  
12:10 PM +Virginia and Richard Reed, Jr.  
7:00 PM Liying Chang

**Saturday, June 27, 2020**  
5:30 PM Mr. & Mrs. Ulises Zamora

**Sunday, June 28, 2020**  
8:00 AM Roy Vasquez  
9:30 AM Missa Pro Populo  
11:00 AM +Maria de Lourdes Alvarez Aldana  
12:30 PM Wendy Rodriguez  
2:00 PM +Margarita Navarro  
5:30 PM +Maria Bello  
7:00 PM +Monica Vargas

**Did You Know....** You may request a Mass for any of the following special intentions:

- For the living
- For the deceased
- In thanksgiving
- For an anniversary
- For a birthday
- For healing

For more details, please come to the parish front office.

**AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE**  
Let us Rejoice and Pray for these soon-to-be married couples:

Alyssa Brant and Daniel Dosal  
Kristina Droz and Colton Bach  
Jennifer Borja and Eriberto Betancourt  
Stephanie Rios and Francisco Hernandez



**Let us Pray**

For the souls of the recently deceased, Madge Iseminger Fleeger. May Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them.

**MASS SCHEDULE**

**Saturday Vigil**  
5:30 p.m.

**Sunday**  
8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m.,  
11:00 a.m.,  
12:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m.  
Spanish: 2:00 p.m.,  
7:00 p.m.

**Weekdays**

Monday - Friday  
9:00 a.m.  
Tuesday & Thursday  
7:00 p.m.

**LITURGY OF THE HOURS**

Monday - Friday  
6:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

**NOVENA & ROSARY**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.  
Novena of the Sacred Heart  
1st Fridays following  
9:00 a.m. Mass  
Divine Mercy Chaplet & Rosary after 9:00 a.m. daily Mass

**CONFESSIONS**

Saturday  
10:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.

**BAPTISMS**

Classes offered monthly.  
Please contact the Parish Office  
**MARRIAGE**  
Please contact the Parish Office at least eight months prior to desired date

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK/COMMUNION TO THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND**

Please contact the Parish Office

**OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – Friday  
8:30 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

**Adoro Te Devote**

Adóro te devóte, látens Déitas,  
 Quæ sub his figúris, vere látitas:  
 Tibi se cor meum totum súbjicit,  
 Quia, te contéplans, totum déficit.

Visus, tactus, gustus, in te fállitur,  
 Sed audítu solo tuto crédito:  
 Credo quidquid díxit Dei Fílius;  
 Nil hoc verbo veritátis vérius.

In cruce latébat sola Déitas,  
 At hic látet simul et humánitas:  
 Ambo támen crédens átque cónfitens,  
 Peto quod petívit latro pœnitens.

Plagas, sicut Thomas, non intúeor,  
 Deum támen meum te confíteor.  
 Fac me tibi sémpet mágis crédere,  
 In te spem habére, te dilígere.

O memoriále mortis Dómini,  
 Panis vivus, vitam præstans hómini,  
 Præsta meæ menti de te vívere,  
 Et te illi semper dulce sápere.

Pie pellicáne, Jesu Dómine,  
 Me immúndum munda tuo ságuine,  
 Cujus una stilla salvum fácere,  
 Totum mundum quit ab ómni scélere.

Jesu, quem velátum nunc aspício,  
 Oro fiat illud, quod tam sítio:  
 Ut, te reveláta cernens fácie,  
 Visu sim beátus tuæ glóriæ. Amen

I devoutly adore you, O hidden Deity,  
 Truly hidden beneath these appearances.  
 My whole heart submits to you, And in contemplating  
 you, It surrenders itself completely.

Sight, touch, taste are all deceived in their judgment  
 of you, But hearing suffices firmly to believe.  
 I believe all that the Son of God has spoken;  
 There is nothing truer than this word of truth.

On the cross only the divinity was hidden,  
 But here the humanity is also hidden.  
 Yet believing and confessing both,  
 I ask for what the repentant thief asked.

I do not see the wounds as Thomas did,  
 But I confess that you are my God.  
 Make me believe more and more in you,  
 Hope in you, and love you.

O memorial of our Lord's death!  
 Living bread that gives life to man,  
 Grant my soul to live on you,  
 And always to savor your sweetness.

Lord Jesus, Good Pelican,  
 wash my filthiness and clean me with your blood,  
 One drop of which can free  
 the entire world of all its sins.

Jesus, whom now I see hidden,  
 I ask you to fulfill what I so desire:  
 That the sight of your face being unveiled  
 I may have the happiness of seeing your glory. Amen.

**“Could you not watch one hour  
 with Me?”**

Matthew 26:40

**The Adoration Chapel is  
 Open 24/7**



**Please observe  
 “Social Distancing”  
 but not  
 “Spiritual Distancing”**

## ADULT FORMATION



***Catholic?  
Thinking about it?  
Know someone who is?***



For information on the RCIA

(Rite of Christian Initiation) process contact:

**Yvonne Gill: [ygill@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:ygill@stjohnvianney.org)**

The RCIA process is an opportunity to learn about the faith and traditions of the Catholic Church with no pressure or presumption that you will decide to come into Communion with the Catholic Church.

**CAN'T COME TO US?  
WE'LL COME TO YOU!**

*A Virtual Marriage Encounter Weekend you can participate in from home.*

**MULTIPLE DATES AVAILABLE  
JUNE - JULY  
SEE WEB SITE  
[WWME10.ORG/VIRTUAL](http://WWME10.ORG/VIRTUAL)**



**WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES**  
*Connect on a Deeper Level.*

**APPLY ONLINE AT [WWME10.ORG/VIRTUAL](http://WWME10.ORG/VIRTUAL)  
QUESTIONS? CALL BRIAN & TINA LITTLE 281-773-4014**

ADULT FORMATION

# J E F F C A V I N S

Presents

## The Activated Disciple

Taking Your Faith To The Next Level!

St. John Vianney Catholic Church

August 28 & 29, 2020



Friday evening presentation (in the Church):

*Simplifying Your Life With Heaven In Mind*

7:00pm—8:30pm (check-in begins at 6pm)

Dessert reception immediately following on the  
Activity Center Court!

Saturday (in the Church):

*The Activated Disciple*

9:00am -3:00pm (check-in begins at 8am)

\$40.00 includes both presentations, dessert reception, light breakfast refreshments, and box lunch on Saturday (sorry, no partial packages)

Register on-line on the parish website or download form and mail to address below or deliver to the Adult Formation office.

<https://www.stjohnvianney.org/news-events/events/jeff-cavins-presentation-2/>

Questions? Contact Yvonne Gill: [ygill@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:ygill@stjohnvianney.org)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 625 Nottingham Oaks Trail, Houston, TX 77079

## YOUTH FORMATION

# CCE and Sacrament Registration 2020-2021 is now open

We invite you to register your student, PK-12th grade,  
for our weekly faith formation classes.

Sacrament forms  
available by  
appointment only

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist and RCIC:  
email [cmagsipok@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:cmagsipok@stjohnvianney.org)  
For Youth Confirmation: email  
[tcooper@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:tcooper@stjohnvianney.org)

CCE Registration  
forms available  
online:  
[https://www.stjohnvianney.org/  
youth-formation/](https://www.stjohnvianney.org/youth-formation/)

### Vacation Online Bible School



#### The Adventure

begins July 27

Registration now Open

\$15 each - K-5th Grade child

Visit parish website or  
email Anabel Acosta at

[aacosta@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:aacosta@stjohnvianney.org)  
for more information

### Teen Acts Retreat Camp Kappe

**New Date:**  
**August 6-9**  
**Cost: \$165**



Registration for Teen Acts is now open!  
We only have 30 slots available, 15 for girls and 15 for guys. Priority will be given to registered parishioners.  
Registration is first come, first served. This retreat is  
open to all rising 9th-12th graders.

email Lee Clark at [lclark@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:lclark@stjohnvianney.org)  
for information: [www.stjohnvianney.org/teen-acts](http://www.stjohnvianney.org/teen-acts)



#### Teen Mass and Donuts!

Every Wednesday this Summer 2020 (excluding July 1), all  
Middle School & High School teens are invited to join the  
Youth Ministry at 9am daily Mass & donuts in St. Jude Hall.  
Come pray with us & your friends!  
No cost, please have teens picked up by 10:45am

### SJV Middle School Olympics!



Thursday June 25th 630-8pm  
Activity Center Basketball Court  
All MS Teens welcome!

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY  
YOUNG ADULTS

Check out our virtual offerings!  
Email: [TCooper@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:TCooper@stjohnvianney.org)  
Website: [www.stjohnvianney.org/youngadults](http://www.stjohnvianney.org/youngadults)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SJVYoungAdults>  
Instagram: SJVYA

# The Gospel of Mark

YOUNG ADULT BIBLE STUDY



Tuesday's 7-8:30pm  
SJV Room C-24

RSVP Required to Ensure Space  
[TCooper@StJohnVianney.Org](mailto:TCooper@StJohnVianney.Org)

Tuesday, June 23rd Chapter 5 & 6

## Young Adult Campfire and S'mores Social

Friday, June 26th 8pm Location: SJV Back Fire Pit

Bring your favorite s'mores fixings to share!

RSVP Required by 6/23 to [TCooper@StJohnVianney.Org](mailto:TCooper@StJohnVianney.Org)

## C. S. LEWIS' SCREWTAPE LETTERS: A WEEKLY GROUP STUDY



WEEK 9 TOPIC: DRY/DESERT  
EXPERIENCES

NO NEED TO READ AHEAD. JUST JOIN, LISTEN TO THAT WEEK'S LETTER, AND DISCUSS.  
MONDAYS 7-8:30PM ON ZOOM. TO JOIN EMAIL [TCooper@STJOHNVIANNEY.ORG](mailto:TCooper@STJOHNVIANNEY.ORG)



## SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRY

### Pray for Life on Father's Day

While not a liturgical observance, Father's Day is an appropriate time to recall the essential role of fathers in the life of the family and in building a culture of life. It is also an opportunity to highlight spiritual fatherhood, which all men are called to embrace.



Fatherhood has its origins in God, who chose to reveal Himself to us as Our Father, sending his only Son for the sake of our salvation.

Fathers therefore have a special role "in revealing and in reliving on earth the very fatherhood of God" (*Familiaris consortio* 25). Indeed, the role of the father "is of unique and irreplaceable importance" (FC 25).

Although society increasingly tells fathers that they have no say in the lives of their children before birth and fails to recognize the dynamic and critically important role of fatherhood, it is both a biological and spiritual reality. Pope Saint John Paul II said fathers are called to exhibit "generous responsibility for the life conceived under the heart of the mother" (FC 25). They are uniquely entrusted with the protection and defense of both mother and child and, in this way, in safeguarding the sanctity of human life. Yet research continues to show that the top reasons women seek abortions include lacking support from the child's father and financial challenges, which are only exacerbated by a father's absence.

As a Church community, we need to encourage and support men to follow the example of St. Joseph and embrace their various roles as father. Even if a man is not a parent, he is still called to spiritual fatherhood—a fatherhood that fosters others' relationship with God, protecting them from evil and providing an example of Christ's love.

St. Joseph, himself, was unexpectedly called to both practical and spiritual fatherhood, and amid very difficult circumstances. But despite all obstacles, Joseph was faithful. He welcomed life, offering care and protection to Mary and Jesus. We pray that each expectant father will find courage in the example of St. Joseph and offer loving, life-affirming support to the mother of his child.



May expectant mothers be lovingly supported by the fathers of their children in welcoming new life.



RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM  
WEEK  
June 22 - 29

Beginning June 22, the Feasts of Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops celebrates Religious Freedom Week. Join us in promoting religious freedom For the Good of All.

Join us **June 22—29** as we pray, reflect and take action on religious liberty, both here in this country and abroad. For daily text and action alerts, text "FREEDOM" to 84576 . Twitter: @USCCBFreedom, or visit the USCCB's website at [www.usccb.org/freedom](http://www.usccb.org/freedom)

*"Whenever adherence to a specific religious tradition gives birth to service that shows conviction, generosity and concern for the whole of society without making distinctions, then there too exists an authentic and mature living out of religious freedom... The more men and women are at the service of others, the greater their freedom!" - Pope Francis*

PARISH BAZAAR

**Save the Date**  
**Parish Bazaar**  
 Sunday, October 11 11:00 am – 6:00 pm  
**BAZAAR**

YOUNG CHILDREN’S PROGRAM



We have a few spaces left for our **YOUNG CHILDREN’S PROGRAM** which will begin in September. Children must be one on or before 9/1/2020.

If you have questions or are interested in more info, please email Ann Turner at [aturner@stjohnvianney.org](mailto:aturner@stjohnvianney.org)

SAINT OF THE DAY - SS. THOMAS MORE & JOHN FISHER JUNE 22

SS. Thomas More and John Fisher were Renaissance men. Talented and energetic, they contributed to the humanist scholarship of early modern England. More wrote theological and philosophical treatises, while making a career as a lawyer and government official. Bishop John Fisher worked as an administrator at Cambridge, confronted the challenge Martin Luther presented to Christian Europe, and most importantly served as Bishop of Rochester. As a bishop, he is notable for his dedication to preaching at a time when bishops tended to focus on politics. These men were brilliant. They both corresponded with Erasmus, who helped Bishop Fisher learn Greek and Hebrew, and who also famously referred to More as a man *omnium horarium*, a man of all seasons.

Above all their accomplishments, these men bore witness to a deep faith in Christ and his Church. More considered joining religious life and was assiduous in his devotional practices. As a married man, he committed himself wholly to his vocation as a father. At the time, disciplinary practices with children tended to be severe, but More’s children testify to his warmth, patience, and generosity.

St. John Fisher was a model shepherd and demonstrated remarkable humility. He remained in the small Diocese of Rochester his entire episcopal ministry, devoting himself to his local church rather than seeking promotion to a larger, more powerful diocese.

More and Fisher are well-known for opposing King Henry’s divorce. Ultimately, it was their refusal to sign an oath of supremacy that led them to be executed. King Henry VIII claimed to be the supreme head of the Church in England, asserting sovereign power over English Christians. Neither Fisher nor More could abide this claim, and their steadfastness to their consciences put them in conflict with the king. They were convicted of treason. When More made his way to the gallows, he is said to have stated, “I die the King’s good servant, but God’s first.” Both More and Fisher were patriots, not traitors. They never rose up to incite rebellion or foment revolution. But when the law of the king came into conflict with the law of Christ, they chose Christ.

**Reflection:**

For us as Catholics, it’s important that we understand the saints’ full story: they stood up to a tyrant to defend their Catholic faith and what their faith taught them to be true, namely upholding the doctrine of papal supremacy and the unity of the Church. Even though he declared himself to be the head of the Church of England, Henry VIII never

considered himself to be a Protestant. Rather, he saw the Church of England as a Catholic body under his authority. Henry persecuted Protestants and Catholics alike as it suited his purposes. Once considered two of his closest friends and advisors, St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher would not acknowledge Henry’s authority as head of the Church in England. Since they would not bend to his will, he had them silenced. Although it’s easy to see the connection to religious liberty, their stories could also mean something different to us as Catholics:

Henry will be remembered forever as a murderer, a tyrant, and as the man who “broke” with the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher will be remembered for dying in defense of their faith. Ironically, it was Henry who was awarded the title, “Defender of the Faith,” by Pope Leo X when he was a young man, and he wore this title with pride. Although it may not have been his intention to lead the way for the English Reformation, this “defender of the faith” ultimately tore the Church apart through his willfulness, pride, and self-interested actions. Henry was devoutly Catholic when it was convenient for him to be so, but he opposed Church authority in any way if it stopped him from getting what he wanted. For us, could this be an example of how destructive it can be to be a convenient Catholic or a Catholic just when it suits our own viewpoint and purposes? St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher were executed as traitors because they would not compromise their faith to placate a tyrant. They were incredibly brave men who believed so fervently in the fullness of the truth of the Catholic Church that they were willing to die for it. This week, we remember these saints as defenders of the faith and celebrate their courage and conviction. Their example is one that we, as people of faith, need to take to heart today.

**Pray:** SS.

Thomas More & John Fisher, pray that we too will be good servants to our country, but God’s first!

