



Catholic Church  
of St. James

# Parish Newsletter



## **The Holy Spirit's Gift of Awe and Wonder**

Spring  
2017  
Vol. 15 No. 1

Sunday October 9, 2016, was the day after Hurricane Matthew arrived on the Southeast coastline of our country. Many areas of Horry County were required to evacuate, so we decided to stay with relatives in Anderson, SC, in the Northwest portion of our state. The Anderson Sunday newspaper magazine insert, *Parade*, had a one-word front page headline, *AWE*. Below was a picture of Earth from space subtitled "How the soul-stirring wonder of a shooting star or a majestic peak can transform your health and happiness." I sat at the breakfast table in awe of my blue sky and sunshine view of the world, and knew full well that a mere four-hour-drive away, my neighbors' and parish's view was an entirely different type of awe. Rising waters, high winds, power outages, and much less awe than I was gifted with at my brother-in-law's home.

Since I retired in 2009, I have unwrapped the gift of awe and wonder almost daily. I agree with *Parade's* statement that my health and happiness have been transformed by the awe of God's work all around me. From the sheer beauty of the natural environment, to the animal life that lives in that environment, and to all of the ways man has used the gifts of knowledge and understanding to create a more comfortable and safe environment (the gift of common sense), I am in absolute awe of God's greatness.

The *Parade* article refers to instances of spine-tingling awe brought on by seeing something for the first time: Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, a shooting star, fireworks, Cirque du Soleil, the Sistine Chapel, or the first time a newborn baby wraps its fingers around your thumb. Can you see God's handiwork in all of these awe-inspiring things? I can now say that I have absolute faith that God is the only answer to how all of our world was made possible. The birds in the air, the sea life in the oceans, and the ingenuity of man on land to harness electricity, purify water to drink, provide food from field and farm, and build schools to educate boys and girls from all corners of the earth, result in a positive outlook on the future life of us, our children, and our grandchildren. This does make me happier and it also improves my health and outlook on life.

Awe helps me defeat the attempts of the Evil One, along with the temptations that Evil tries to lure me with. Awe binds us together, helps us see new things differently, can make us nicer and happier, can cause good emotions to balance depression, and can break bad habits. We need to keep discovering new awe, and tell friends and neighbors about it. Thank you, Holy Spirit.

By Tom Flench, Newsletter Publisher

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### PEACE and AWE

BE  
WITH  
YOU

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## Alpha is The Beginning

Alpha, as the name implies, is the beginning. Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the basics of Christianity. St. James ran the Alpha program during the winter of 2017, beginning January 25, 2017 through March 8, 2017. There were two sessions; one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The week of Ash Wednesday, the sessions combined for a day-long retreat in the Founder's Center. Approximately 80 people, on average, attended the program. It was an awesome experience and, God-willing, will be offered again next January.

I stumbled upon the program after reading *Divine Renovation*, a book suggested by Father Greg Cailazzo. The book referenced Alpha so many times that curiosity got the best of me. I started to explore the program online. The program is video-based, and all sessions are available on the Alpha website. Then a core group of staff and lay ministers did a pilot program. The team decided to bring the program to our parish.

Alpha is relevant to everyone. It gets people thinking about basic questions like "Why am I here?", "Who is Jesus?", "How Can I Resist Evil?", etc. The small group time fosters guilt-free, thoughtful discussion among participants. All are encouraged to ask any question they like in their small groups. Nothing is treated as too trivial, threatening, or illogical. Every question is discussed courteously and thoughtfully. People were given freedom to return or not. No one was going to chase them. I, personally, went through the course three times and each time I learned something new. Different people bring different perspectives to the discussion table. Alpha is relevant to everyone, no matter where they are in their faith journey.

The session started with a meal. Table hosts ensured that each guest was properly treated with a genuine attitude of hospitality. The meal became a time of personal fellowship. I was honored to witness the growth of caring friendships develop over the weeks. I was humbled by the growth of everyone's love and genuine concern for each other. It was awe-inspiring to see strangers come together and discuss their faith, bond, and form a community. The participants of Alpha shared their lives with each other every Wednesday. The conversation was not surface conversation, but was genuine conversation and testimony. People talked and people genuinely listened, without judgment. I developed many relationships over the eight weeks of sessions and have made lifelong friends. The Holy Spirit retreat day was one which transformed the Founders Center into holy ground, ending with Eucharistic Adoration. The last session focused on the church. The video reiterated that the church is the people. The church thrives when the community gets involved. We all have many different gifts. We need to work in unison to as a community to benefit from these gifts. Alpha encourage gift discovery and gift affirmation.

I had prayed over the months for a song; a song that would motivate and energize everyone. The Casting Crowns song *Thrive* is the song that reminded me of the people of Alpha. We played it to close one of our sessions. As the song says:

*Just to know You and to make You known  
We lift Your name on High  
Shine like the sun made darkness run and hide  
We know we were made for so much more  
Than ordinary lives  
It's time for us to more than just survive  
**We were made to thrive***

Alpha is the beginning. The program Encuentro, "The Encounter," is being offered as a follow-up program to Alpha. Please read more about that on page 5 of this newsletter. There will also be a book study this summer on Matthew Kelly's *Resisting Happiness* book, which was given out at Christmas time. I personally challenge everyone to continue on this communal faith journey. No man is an island. We were created for community. We were created to be part of the Church. Thank you for sharing all your lives with me. It was an honor I will never forget. Remember, Alpha is the beginning. As we continue on this communal faith journey together we can only thrive as a people, as a church, and as a community devoted to God. We were created for this.

By Tami Hinnerschitz, Alpha Leader

## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, 2017 - Matthew 5:38-48

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the New Moses: just as Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from Mt. Sinai, so Jesus issues the New Law in the Sermon on the Mount. Let us take a moment to compare the Law of Moses and the Law of Jesus.

The Law of Moses was given to a sinful people to constrain them from evil; the Law of Jesus is given to a holy people to free them for doing good. How can a law free us for doing good? Take the case of the Good Samaritan. A man was robbed and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest and Levite passed by on the other side of the road. They did not know if the man was dead – they could not afford to touch a corpse and be rendered impure on the way to the Temple in Jerusalem. But their Law constrained them from helping the man. The Good Samaritan, on the other hand, was free to help the robbery victim because he operated from the Law of Compassion: to treat everyone as a neighbor.

Jesus says he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. We still obey the Ten Commandments, but Jesus call us beyond the law to live in the Love of Christ. For example, the Fifth Commandment says, “Do not kill,” but Jesus tells us not even to insult our brothers and sisters (even in a moment of road rage). The Sixth Commandment says, “Do not commit adultery,” but Jesus tell us not even to look at another with lust. Jesus invites us to treat human beings as children of God, not as the objects of our own desire. The old law said you may take an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Jesus instructs us not to take retribution at all but to pray for those who do us harm. We are still a sinful people, but Jesus has given us the sacraments to heal our sin and nourish us with his Body for our journey to holiness. Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit that we may enjoy love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, and chastity.

Sometimes we fulfill the Law of Love in dramatic ways, as when we forgive one who has done us grave harm. Other times we are loving in ordinary ways, as when we are kind to our loved ones. Here I am preaching to myself and allowing you to listen in. It is easy to dwell on the faults of family and friends – that is like shooting fish in a barrel. On the other hand, it is difficult to recognize the virtues of our loved ones and affirm them. Why is it that when couples are courting that their beloved can do no wrong, but then they get married it seems their spouse can do no right? If we choose to harbor resentment, then we allow resentment to imprison us. If we let go of our grievances, then we rise above them as Jesus in his Resurrection rose above the evil that nailed him to the cross.

Legend has it that two wolves live within us. One is kind, patient, and generous. The other is bitter, petty, and self-serving. If you wonder which will grow stronger – it is the one you feed.

I love the character of Rebecca in the story of *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott. The background of *Ivanhoe* is the hatred between French Normans and native Saxons in 12<sup>th</sup> Century England. Yet, both Normans and Saxons hated Jews who flourished in business. Rebecca was reviled not only for being a Jew but a woman in this male-dominated society. The more she was treated with contempt, the more she responded with dignity. While she was maltreated for her ethnicity, she treated the maladies of others with healing arts. While the nobles in her society acted with treachery, she, at the bottom of her society, acted with nobility. Rebecca was raised by a father who was greedy and opportunistic, but emerged as a woman who freely gave away what was hers and put the well-being of others before herself.

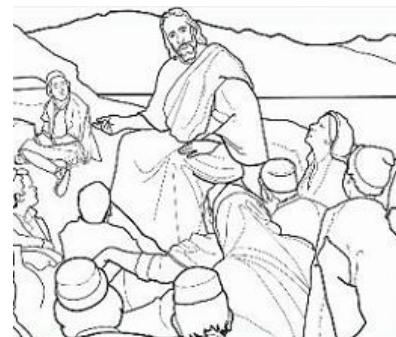
My dear brothers and sisters, do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good (Rom 12:21). Let your light shine so brightly before others, that seeing your good works, they may give glory to your Heavenly Father (Mt 5:16).

By Deacon Jeff Mevissen

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



Exodus 20: 3-17



## **The Vocations of Life**

Mary Hood Hart wrote a column for the January 12 *Miscellany* in which she wrote about the vulnerability of elders. She observed that our life expands from emerging from the home of our parents to starting our career, to perhaps getting married and starting a family, to seeing our children launch into lives of their own, to rejoice that our children are having children. To this point our life is an ever-widening circle of new experiences, new relationships, new horizons. After a high point, however, our life no longer expands but contracts. We lose relatives and friends to death. Our bodies and our senses become weaker; our minds and memories begin to fail. We lose the ability to drive a car. Perhaps we need a cane to walk, then a walker, then a wheel chair. Then we are confined to bed.

There is a sadness when a loved one or we ourselves begin this decline towards the end of life. It is no fun to be locked in a body that is wracked by pain; it is humbling to need a ride from people to go shopping or visit the doctor. Yet a person facing disability with grace and dignity shows the most noble part of the human spirit. For Christians, life is a series of vocations and being elderly is a vocation, too.

I think of my Dad in this context. Dad was as tough as a \$2 steak – you don't work construction in Minnesota winters without being tough. Yet at the end of his life he could only stay at his woodworking 15 minutes at a time because of the fatigue his cancer caused him. When he was supporting his family, he was strong for the Lord, when he was called to suffer, he was weak for the Lord. In 2nd Corinthians 12, 7-8 Paul writes, "...in order that I might not become conceited I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to beat me and keep me from getting proud. Three times I begged the Lord that this might leave me. He said to me, 'My grace is enough for you, for in your weakness my power reaches perfection.'"

Aging has a way of distilling our life down to its essence. When we are young and life is good, we sometimes forget we belong to the Lord; we get lost in our activities and our possessions. When age and disability takes everything from us, we are left with only our relationship with God. Maybe this is the way God plans it, so our focus is on Him when we prepare for glory.

In our succession of vocations, the important thing is to give glory to God in all things. In Philippians 4:12 Paul offers this encouragement: "I have learned how to cope with every circumstance – how to eat well or go hungry, to be well provided for or do without. I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me." Amen.

By Deacon Jeff Mevissen

## **Our Parish Bulletin's Insert Page Messages**

Every week in our parish bulletin, we receive informative material about our faith. On one side is a question, starting with *Dear Padre*. These are real and pertinent issues being answered by real priests that write for [sundaybulletin@liguori.org](mailto:sundaybulletin@liguori.org). Questions like, "Why doesn't God offer undeniable proof of his existence?" "How does 'the fruits of the holy Spirit' relate to daily life?" "What are social or communal sins?"

On the flip side you will see *Our Parish Community*, which deals with the readings for that particular weekend, and an article which sheds additional light on the Gospel reading for that weekend's Mass. The article is accompanied by a piece of religious art or a painting, compliments of Father Mark Haydu, LC., International Director of the Patrons of the Arts of the Vatican Museums. For instance, March 26th, the 4th Sunday of Lent, featured the story of the blind man receiving the gift of sight from Jesus, and yet the Pharisees believed this to be impossible. Next to the article is a beautiful carving called *Dogmatic Sarcophagus*, artist unknown, location is Vatican Museums. For our reflection, we ask, "Are there people I blindly judge?" "To what truths am I blind?" How can I open my heart to these truths during lent?"

I urge everyone to read both sides of the insert page, either before Mass begins, or spend a few minutes in your seat after Mass ends, or at home. This experience will enlighten you and at the same time, bolster your faith to a higher level. You will discover answers to questions that can make your faith more meaningful, and give you the ability to evangelize your faith with family and friends.

By Tom Flench, Newsletter Publisher



# Congregational Health and Parish Nursing



We all know about HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. This law was passed by Congress in 1996, and went into effect April 14, 2003. The act protects against the sharing of private health information. There is no direct applicability of HIPAA regulations for parish nurses or clergy who serve a congregation, UNLESS they seek health information from other health providers. As you correctly would assume, normal standards for confidentiality within the nursing profession DOES apply to parish nurses.

Having said this, here at St. James we are so close and know each other so well, it is a blessing. I sincerely hope that as a parish nurse, I have been of true help in some personal, and of course family, situations. Some of those situations included required medical equipment, dietary questions, help with appointments, and questions regarding medications. I thank Mercy Hospice, Father 'Rick, and Sister Connie for sending me to Furman for the Parish Nurse Program. I completed the trainers' and leaders' "Better Choices Better Health" program, which I use almost on a daily basis. I also attended another very valuable course from Stanford University entitled "Chronic Diseases and Self-Management."

As we age, things change and we sometimes need something like a little self-management tool box. In it we'll have **A.** Physical activity/exercise, proper breathing, and a healthy diet. **B.** Relaxation/managing fatigue. **C.** Prayer and meditation. **D.** Call a friend/talk with someone. **E.** Get out and away from the house. Socialize. **F.** Help someone else. Volunteer. **G.** Do something nice for yourself. **H.** Write down your feelings. Emotions are important. **I.** Think about life positively. Be grateful for family. **J.** Keep people informed, ask for help when needed.

Here is something a parishioner sent me about the abbreviation ASAP. There's work to do, deadlines to meet, no time to spare, always in a hurry. ASAP= always say a prayer. In the midst of family chaos, quality time is rare. Do your best and let God do the rest. ASAP. Always say a prayer.

In conclusion, please remember, don't make old people mad. We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to tick us off. Enjoy your day. See you every second Saturday and Sunday for blood pressures. Respectfully....

By Jean Witt R.N. , Parish Nurse

## V Encuentro (Fifth Encounter)

Bishop Guglielmone has announced that the national V Encuentro (Spanish for Fifth Encounter) presented by the USCCB is taking place in our diocese. It is a four-year process of church reflection and action, which invites all Catholics in the U.S. to intense missionary activity, discussion, leadership development, and identification of the best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization. The goal of V Encuentro is to discern ways in which the Church can better respond to the Hispanic presence in our country.

It is important to know that this process is not simply intended for Hispanics/Latinos. Rather, it is for the entire Church. It is intended to be both celebratory and inspirational, but it is also intended to help us all to enhance our ministry by identifying both needs and ideas.

You are invited to attend our sessions at St. James on the Mondays of May 1 and 8, from 6:30-8:30 PM. There, we will meet in small groups to read Scripture, discuss how the Gospel message applies to our lives, and consider how we can spread this message to the rest of our brothers and sisters, especially those in the periphery.

These sessions will be held in English; the Hispanic community has already been holding sessions in Spanish. We will conclude this portion of the Encuentro process with a celebration for our entire deanery. The date/time will be announced soon. Also, be on the lookout for information regarding our Diocesan Encuentro to be held later this year. For more information, or to sign up to attend, please contact Paulette Flench at 843-347-5168, or [pflench@stjamesconway.org](mailto:pflench@stjamesconway.org).

By Paulette Flench, Pastoral Associate

## Safe Haven Replaces Virtus

*Safe Haven* is the name of the educational component of our diocese's Office of Child and Youth Protection. This course replaces *Virtus*, the program we have been using for over a decade to educate those who have regular contact with children. With *Virtus*, people needed to attend a 3-hour class in person at a Catholic church. Often people found it difficult to attend a class within the first 30 days of employment or volunteering, due to their personal and professional obligations which could conflict with the time the class was being offered.

In January, our diocese changed to an online course called *Safe Haven-It's Up to You*, which takes approximately 90 minutes to complete and can be done any time of the day or night, at a time that is convenient. The course has three video parts, with questions answered by the participant after each one. Upon completion, a certificate is awarded. The certificate is valid for five years.

Over the years, people have mistakenly called the Diocese of Charleston's Office of Child and Youth Protection the Virtus Office. But *Virtus* is simply the name of the program that our diocese was using to educate volunteers and employees about the dangers of sexual abuse and how to help create a safe environment.

As we all know, participation in the sacramental life of the Church sustains each of us, which is why the Pastoral Visitors of St. James is such a vital ministry. Pastoral visitors who take Holy Communion to our brothers and sisters who are homebound or in a nursing home or hospital are also taking the *Safe Haven* course, since they regularly visit these vulnerable adults. This adds another layer of protection. Those who are homebound or ill are particularly vulnerable to abuse, and those who visit them each week have a unique opportunity to notice if things don't appear safe.

Isn't it reassuring to know that the Catholic Church is being proactive in protecting not only children, but also the elderly and ill? We have all experienced in our own lives, or read in the news, stories of people who were taken advantage of by others when they were least able to defend themselves. It even has a term: elder-abuse.

*Safe Haven* is part of the Church's ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for everyone. As stated in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities*:

We are grateful to those who participate in the Church's teaching ministry for all they have done and continue to do on behalf of human life. We invite them in a special way to be leaders in this campaign to build a culture of life. We note especially **lay persons and volunteers**, who through their charisms and unique responsibilities impact individuals and the broader community in a profound way when they assume roles of leadership in their parishes and in society.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a "Gospel of life." It invites all persons to a new life lived abundantly in respect for human dignity. We believe that this Gospel is not only a complement to American . . . principles, but also the cure for the spiritual sickness now infecting our society. . . . We cannot simultaneously commit ourselves to human rights and progress while eliminating or marginalizing the weakest among us. Nor can we practice the Gospel of life only as a private piety. American Catholics must live it vigorously and publicly, as a matter of national leadership and witness, or we will not live it at all. (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 20)

If you need have questions concerning *Safe Haven* or other aspects of the Safe Environment program, or want to volunteer with children or as a pastoral visitor, please contact Paulette Flench, Safe Environment Coordinator, by calling her at 843-347-5168, or emailing pflench@stjamesconway.org. Volunteers will submit to a background screening, sign the diocese's *Code of Conduct*, sign the *Receipt of the Policy Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct*, and take the *Safe Haven* course.

By Paulette Flench, Safe Environment Coordinator

## My Experience with an Alzheimer's Patient

On meeting Deacon Jeff at the Newcomer's Breakfast, he mentioned he was writing an article about Alzheimer's for the newsletter. I told him my husband, Rick, had passed away from it in July, 2016, and he asked me to share my experience with an Alzheimer's patient.

Alzheimer's is a mean, ugly disease. It robs the family slowly and horrifically of the one they love. My mother-in-law had dementia. It changed her from a very opinionated, strong-willed woman into a sweet old lady who loved everyone. Her son, my husband Rick, had memory issues start slowly after his knee replacement surgery in 2006. At first, we thought it was just normal aging. We moved to South Carolina that year, and, as a former golf course superintendent, Rick found a dream job working at Arrowhead Country Club. We traveled and life was good.

In October 2008 Rick had a mild heart attack. After stents were placed, Rick returned to work. Then we found out that he had a 100% blockage in his left carotid artery which probably occurred during the first knee replacement, or the implantation of the stents. Rick's memory issues became more evident, from refusing to travel, to not putting things away in their usual places. I began a notebook to document every doctor's appointment, test, and ER visit going back to 2006. I also included all our legal papers such as health care proxies, power of attorney, etc.

In May 2012 Rick had the other knee replaced. After that surgery, the dementia became full blown. Rick stopped recognizing people and where he was. He no longer could drive or work. We went to the Duke University Stroke and Vascular Center for a cognitive test, and the diagnosis was completed. We were told Rick was "under the umbrella of dementia and Alzheimer's."

Over the next four years I became Rick's 24/7 caregiver. I had always handled the financial side in our 44 years, so I asked our attorney to update our wills, power of attorney, and health proxies. As we didn't have long-term care insurance, I made sure I knew where every piece of paper was that might be needed should he have to go on Medicaid, and I put copies in his binder.

We found a neurologist at MUSC, Dr. Nicholas Molina, who was incredibly supportive as we tried various medications to slow down the disease. Dr. Molina or his P.A. would email me almost nightly to ask how Rick was doing as the Alzheimer's took a stronger hold.

I had to make sure we had alarms on all the doors and windows. Rick developed orthostatic hypotension. This is where the brain and the heart no longer work together, resulting in a fall at any time. Because he refused to use a walker, I had to watch him much more closely. I applied for a respite care grant from the Waccamaw Council of Aging in Georgetown, which was \$500 a calendar quarter, and we hired a home health care agency to provide us with three hours of respite twice a week, but Rick would have none of it.

In March, 2016, Rick started to become violent. He no longer recognized me. I was "her" or his sister. He would tell me he could kill me at any time. He began to stray from home. If he knew I was busy, he was out the door in a flash. I would jump in the car to look for him. My neighbors would call to tell me, "He is walking down Pecan Grove Blvd" ...etc. Rick got to a point where he would jump out of the car at red lights.

On May 23, Dr. Molina had me bring Rick down to MUSC's Senior Care unit for a medication review. Rick never came home. At first it was determined that he needed to go to a locked Alzheimer's unit, of which there is only one, in Georgetown. I was told to apply for Medicaid, which I did, and he was approved in seven days because the binder I made contained everything that was required. However, Rick stopped eating on July 5 and on July 12 was transferred to the Hospice of Charleston where he passed away four days later, on July 16.

It has been a long, hard journey, but I would not do anything differently. I could not have done it without the incredible support from our son (who lives in Boston), and our many friends and neighbors. There are websites that give you all the medical hard facts, and Facebook groups that can provide some support. But my faith is what pulled me through. I am now at peace knowing that Rick is also at peace.

By Patricia Francis, Parishioner

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Sarah Taylor	Youth Minister
Jean Witt, RN	Parish Nurse

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