

A CATHOLIC MINISTRY  
TO PRISONERS

# Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES



3031 FOURTH STREET, NE ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20017

Vol. 22, No. 3 – July/August/September 2015

## Jesus calls us his friends

**D**o you consider Jesus your friend? This is a hard question for many people to face, even for those who try to follow Jesus. Our first tendency is unfortunately to think of Jesus as a hard taskmaster and as someone we are afraid of because he knows our sins and calls us to change so that we might have life more deeply.

But Jesus says, “You are my friends,” and “I have called you friends” (John 15:14, 15). What does he mean by calling us his friends? A friend is “a person one knows, likes and trusts.” It is one who supports you and sympathizes with you.

**No longer slaves, but friends.** So Jesus is telling us that above all else he wants to be with us, support us and enjoy us. Think of someone in your life you consider a *true* friend and how that person lights up your life, gives you hope, and leads you in a positive direction. This is what

*true* friendship is, and it is what Jesus wants to give us and to receive in turn from us.

What an awesome thing it is to be Jesus’ friend. Jesus says we are no longer slaves or servants (John 15:15). He invites us into his very heart of love as his friends. He loves us so deeply that he tells us “everything that I have heard from my Father” (v. 15). What a change—from slave or servant to “friend.” He trusts us with the message he brings. He trusts us to walk with him. There is nothing to fear or hide from.

**How do we become friends?** Jesus asks this of us: that we “keep his commandments” and “love one another” (John 15:10, 17). And there is the challenge. If it were so easy we’d be doing it already! But the truth is that as we taste and see the goodness of



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the Lord, our hearts change and we want to enter more deeply into his life.

When we give God a chance, his grace and love change us. We want his friend-

ship and grow in our desire to keep his commandments and love one other. We see ways that we can do this in our lives. This is what draws us closer to God and to walk with him in friendship.

**Talk to Jesus.** In your daily life, talk to Jesus. Tell him what’s on your mind and in your heart. Ask forgiveness for those things that turn you from him and from people around you, especially your family and friends. Read his words in Scripture to see what he is saying to you. Know that as our friend he came that we “might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We continue our pilgrimage with Jesus. And as we do, let’s remember that we do not walk alone. Each day we walk with Christ, we journey with all people who want to grow closer to Jesus, experience healing, and know God’s life and love.

We are one with and in Christ. We are sent to serve the Lord and his people in all places and circumstances where we find ourselves. That is why the present moment is so important. Take advantage of this time. Walk with Christ and grow in love of God and of those around you, especially family members.

Let us be a blessing to those around us. As we are, we will find that life has meaning and is worth living.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP  
President  
Paulist Evangelization Ministries

### Love Is Our Mission

## People wait in excitement for Pope Francis’ visit to U.S.

**P**ope Francis will make his first visit to the United States from September 23 to 27 this fall. His five-day visit is inspired by “Love Is Our Mission,” the theme of the World Meeting of Families he will attend during the visit. It also recognizes his desire to be a minister of the love of God to all people. Pope Francis has become known and loved for his efforts to embrace people of differing life situations and perspectives as he shares the call of Christ to enter into his life and love (see John 10:10).

The Pope will visit Washington, New York City and Philadelphia, PA. Highlights of the trip will be a visit to the White House, an address to a Joint Session of Congress, an address to the United Nations and a visit to the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. In addition, he will canonize Blessed Junipero Serra, Franciscan missionary to what is today California.

Details of the visit will be evolving throughout the summer and into September. The visit is awaited with excitement by many people. Before he arrives in the U.S., the Pope will first visit Cuba. He is noted there for his efforts to increase communication and peace between the government of Cuba and the Catholic Church. He is also noted for his efforts to open official channels of communication between Cuba and the United States which have been broken since 1961 after Fidel Castro established a communist dictatorship there.

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## CHURCH CALENDAR

### JULY 2015

- 1 Bl. Junipero Serra, priest
- 3 **St. Thomas, apostle**
- 5 **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 11 St. Benedict, abbot
- 12 **Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 14 St. Kateri Tekakwitha, virgin
- 15 St. Bonaventure, bishop and doctor
- 19 **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 22 St. Mary Magdalene
- 25 **St. James, apostle**
- 26 **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 29 St. Martha
- 31 St. Ignatius of Loyola, priest

### AUGUST 2015

- 1 St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop and doctor
- 2 **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 4 St. John Vianney, priest
- 6 **The Transfiguration of the Lord**
- 8 St. Dominic, priest
- 9 **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 10 St. Lawrence, deacon and martyr
- 11 St. Clare, virgin
- 14 St. Maximilian Kolbe, priest and martyr
- 15 **Assumption of the Virgin Mary**
- 16 **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 20 St. Bernard, abbot and doctor
- 21 St. Pius X, pope
- 22 Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 23 **Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 24 **St. Bartholomew, apostle**
- 27 St. Monica
- 28 St. Augustine, bishop and doctor
- 29 Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist
- 30 **Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### SEPTEMBER 2015

- 3 St. Gregory the Great, pope and doctor
- 6 **Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 8 **Birth of Mary**
- 9 St. Peter Claver, priest
- 13 **Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 14 **Exaltation of the Holy Cross**
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 16 St. Cornelius, pope and martyr; St. Cyprian, bishop and martyr
- 20 **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 21 **St. Matthew, apostle**
- 23 St. Pius of Pietrelcina, priest
- 27 **Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 29 Sts. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels
- 30 St. Jerome, priest and doctor

## Let's Talk!

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*Love Is Our Mission*

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## People wait in excitement for Pope Francis' visit

**Visit with Government Leaders.** The first days of Pope Francis' trip will include a visit to the White House (September 23) and an address to a Joint Session of Congress (September 24). Reports indicate that both President Obama and the members of Congress are looking forward to the visit. At the same time, they appear a bit apprehensive because Pope Francis is known for speaking his mind on sensitive issues.

While previous Popes have visited the White House, this is the first time a Pope has addressed a Joint Session of Congress and is considered an historic event.

He is likely to talk to both the White House and Congress about the importance of following Gospel teaching on the dignity of the person and on promoting the common good of all people. It is anticipated he may also bring up environmental issues such as climate change.

In practical ways, this will touch upon finding solutions to immigration issues facing the U.S., supporting fair wages for workers, and protecting the life and dignity of all people from conception to natural death. He may also talk about protecting the right of religious groups to freedom of religion and not to be bound by government policies which they consider restrict their rights.

Pope Francis will likely talk about these issues through the theme of the mission

of love which is central to the call of all Catholics, other Christians, and of all people. Pope Francis is known for stating Church teaching in a way that reflects God's invitation into his love rather than criticizing people for the failures of life which all people face. Many

people have found this to be a refreshing part of his ministry.

### Canonization of Bl. Junipero Serra.

At a large Mass on September 23 at Catholic University in Washington, Fr. Junipero Serra, O.F.M. (1713-1784) will be declared a Saint. Serra was a Catholic priest known for his work in establishing Catholic missions

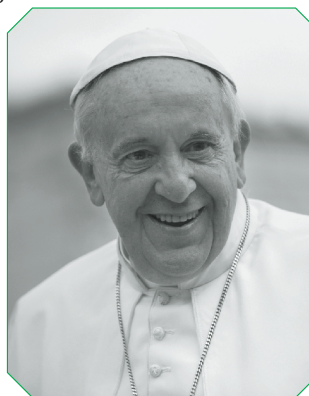
in California. He had a great

love for the native peoples and worked to bring them a better life. Not all agree with the methods of the missions, but the sense of the Church is that Serra lived a life of holiness in the service of the Indians of that region.

**Visit to the United Nations.** No Pope can come to the East Coast of the United States and not address the United Nations. That has been the case since Pope Paul VI spoke at the United Nations in 1965 about issues related to world peace and economic development. Saint Pope John Paul II did the same on his visit in 1995 as did Pope Benedict XVI in 2008.

And now Pope Francis will do the same on September 25. He will also meet with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that day.

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## Prisoner Saint

**St. Vincent de Paul (1581 – 1660) †** In his younger years, people didn't see anything particularly extraordinary about Vincent. But this man came to be known as patron saint of prisoners, charities, hospitals, lost articles, spiritual help, volunteers... among other things. Vincent was born into poverty as a son of peasants. He was seen as an intelligent boy and sent off to get an education, paid for by a rich lawyer. Vincent was ordained a priest at the age of 24. While on board a small ship, he was captured by pirates, taken prisoner and sold into slavery in Africa for six years. He escaped, took up his priestly work and especially began to care for the poor and needy. He founded hospitals, a religious order for men, and helped found the Sisters of Charity, known world-wide for charitable works. He was declared a Saint in 1737.

*Feast Day: September 27*

## Pope Francis' Prayer Requests for July/August/September

### JULY

**Universal. Politics:** That political responsibility may be lived at all levels as a high form of charity.

**Evangelization. The poor in Latin America:** That, amid social inequalities, Latin American Christians may bear witness to love for the poor and contribute to a more fraternal society.

### AUGUST

**Universal. Volunteers:** That volunteers may give themselves generously to the service of the needy.

**Evangelization. Outreach to the marginalized:** That setting aside our very selves we may learn to be neighbors to those who find themselves on the margins of human life and society.

### SEPTEMBER

**Universal. Opportunities for the young:** That opportunities for education and employment may increase for all young people.

### Evangelization.

**Catechists:** That catechists may give witness by living in a way consistent with the faith they proclaim.

*Pope Francis invites you to join him in praying for these intentions.*

## Friends of Jesus

# If this is the way you treat your friends...

by Deacon Dennis Dolan

**Peaches:** So, Deekster, help me to help someone. This woman on my tier is really afraid of God.

**Me:** There's a lot of toxic ideas about God that people have gotten from others, often from parents and grandparents. It's not uncommon for that stuff to be passed down for generations in families. It's especially strong in people who are generally fearful to begin with. They have a hard time shaking it because it fits with their general approach to life.

**Peaches:** How do I help her to get passed it?

**Me:** The major point of Jesus' coming was that God is for us—not against us. That's why it's both "Good" and "News."

**Peaches:** So, how do you become God's friend?

**Me:** Well, first you stop listening to the toxic people—even if it's yourself! Then, you let Jesus speak for himself.

**Peaches:** So, Scripture.

**Me:** And more importantly, good Bible study! Fearful, toxic people have NO problem turning the good news into toxic old news. Someone has to help them overcome that as they learn what Jesus was really all about.

**Peaches:** I guess the best part is that God is already our friend. The only question is will we be *his* friend?

**Me:** Jesus did say, "I call you friends" (John 15:15). So, she's half way home right there!

**Peaches:** What else besides Bible study?

**Me:** Prayer, the Sacraments. Gotta get that Holy Spirit cooking inside if this is going to work at all! Not to mention that without the Holy Spirit "welling up" (John 4:14) within us, there will be no joy in her relationship with God. The last thing we need is another sour, resistant Christian!

**Peaches:** I was thinking about the 12-Step advice to "Fake it till you make it."

**Me:** You mean, "Act as if"? Yeah, that's probably an excellent suggestion, particularly if she's a fearful type of person. By the way, we call that "faith" in Church.

**Peaches:** Very funny, Reverend Mister "Wise Guy"!

**Me:** Just sayin' . . . . Jesus also said you are my friends *if* you do what I command you (John 15:14).

**Peaches:** So love.

**Me:** Yes, but more precisely, love *in action!* Being a friend of Jesus is about being his disciple. His follower. Following him means doing what he did.

**Peaches:** Feeding the hungry, healing people, accepting those excluded, standing up for the poor and the little ones, etc.

**Me:** Yes. In a word: Service. That is where you will meet Jesus for real. Jesus is not about whipping up some emotion. Even love.

**Peaches:** So practice love. Got it. So far, we've got Turn off the Toxic, as well as Bible study, Prayer, Sacraments, Holy Spirit, Joy and Discipleship of love in action. Anything else I should add to this recipe?

**Me:** One more thing: the Cross. Being a friend of Jesus means that you stand with him to free humanity from everything that oppresses people. The powerful will strike back. She needs to be prepared. It will cost her something—for sure. It is not easy being God's friend. But then, what in life that is worth having is easy?

**Peaches:** I heard a great story about that in Bible study. It seems St. Teresa of Avila was travelling around taking care of God's business at all the convents of Sisters that she was in charge of. She gets out of the carriage at this convent and falls flat on her face in the mud!

As she gets up and brushes herself off, she says, "Well, Lord, if this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder that you have so few of them!" Ain't that a hoot!? I can't believe a Saint and a Doctor of the Church would talk to God like that! She certainly wasn't afraid of God, was she?!

**Me:** Friends kid each other, don't they?

*Deacon Dennis Dolan recently retired as chaplain at York Correctional Institution in Connecticut. He continues his ministry with and for prisoners through his writing as he discerns where God is calling him in service.*

## The Seven Deadly Sins, Part 6

# Lust is all about me

**L**ust is an overwhelming desire or craving for self-satisfaction. Many people think of it only in terms of sexual desire, but it is an overwhelming desire for anything—power, money, food, cars, acceptance. Just look at the covers of popular magazines and we see that lust sells.

Probably the classic example of lust in the Bible is of David's lust toward Bathsheba which led to sin (see 2 Samuel 11-12). After accomplishing so much, David gave in to lust and nearly self-destructed. Another good example is the lust of the two elders toward Susanna. Their lust also led to their destruction (see Daniel 13). Sexual lust resides deeply in the human heart—in man and woman, young and old, religious and indifferent. It is the human experience, so it is no wonder that we think first of sexual lust.

But Scripture looks at it more broadly to include an overwhelming desire for *anything*, as stated above. This desire is referred to as "worldly desires" (1 Peter 1:4), "lusts of their hearts" (Romans 1:24), "desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). St. Paul teaches us: "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24).

### The Seven Deadly Sins

Pride    Lust  
Envy    Gluttony  
Anger    Greed  
Sloth

**Why is lust deadly?** Lust turns us in on ourselves and away from others and from God. Our senses and wants are fixed on getting for ourselves with no thought of the other person. Human beings are created to be in relation to others. Our greatest fulfillment comes through relationships. This is what

brings blessing and life, for the love we receive when we are in relation with God and others nourishes and enriches our lives.

Individualism and self-focus isolates us from others and from God. Life becomes all about us, and not about the other. When we focus on ourselves and our own desires, we shut ourselves off from life-giving love. And this is deadly. We need to do all we can to build bonds with others to experience life to the full (see John 10:10).

When it is all about us and not about the other, we empty ourselves from those things that truly give meaning and pleasure. There might be some short-term and even some long term pleasure, but in the end we are left empty. Focusing on ourselves, we don't build the connections of love and care that bring meaning.

Think about your own life to see that this is true. When are you happiest? Be honest with yourself. Is it when you get your way regardless of the other person? Or is it when you work and struggle to deepen a relationship with someone, when you are respectful of their persona and property, when you see love as something generous and not self-seeking?

If you think that you are happiest when you are exploiting or using someone for your pleasure or exercising power over someone, this is not a healthy relationship. Ask God to help you see what a healthy relationship is and how to grow in it.

**Why bother?** Avoiding lust is important to us as Christians because we are invited to live the Resurrection life in our lives. The more we embrace lives of virtue, the more faithfully and joyfully we can walk with Jesus. And from that, the more we live the Resurrection, knowing God's presence and power in our lives. If we want that, it matters that we seek to avoid lust.

As the Saints and millions of everyday Christians show us, it is worth the effort. God is generous and gives the grace for it to happen. But we must be generous receivers of that grace. Rejecting lust and the deadly sins helps to make that happen.

So we turn once again to those things that bring us closer to God. We have written about them many times in *Let's Talk!*, even in our last issue. Here again are the points in short form: 1) Read the Word of God. 2) Worship and pray. 3) Be part of a community. 4) Care for and serve others. (If you want to know more, ask your chaplain or volunteer for a copy of the Paulist Prison Ministries pamphlet "Conversion and Commitment to Christ.")

God is generous in his grace, giving us all we need in abundance to experience his life. Grace super-abounds in this world and in our lives (see Romans 5:20). Let us be open to that grace in our lives!

~ Anthony Bosnick

## Love Is Our Mission

# People wait in excitement for Pope Francis' visit

(continued from page 2)

Many topics may occupy the U.N. this session because of challenging world issues such as climate change, the need for new development targets, the continued war in Syria and ethnic war in South Sudan. Secretary-General Ban, it is reported, "is confident" that "Pope Francis's visit will inspire the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve human dignity for all through ensuring greater social justice, tolerance and understanding among all of the world's peoples."

**World Meeting of Families.** Concluding his trip, Pope Francis will spend September 26 and 27 at the gathering of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. This is the eighth World Meeting. The first was called in 1993 by Pope John Paul II. It is held every three years in a different area of the world.

Philadelphia organizers say that the World Meeting "seeks to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe and highlight its intrinsic value to the good of society." Before the Pope arrives, four days of meetings, talks, and discussions will be held. Pope Francis will close the meeting and celebrate Mass on Sunday, September 27. Organizers are planning for one million people to attend.

*This is a significant first-visit of Pope Francis to the United States. Many important pastoral and political issues will be considered. Most people reading this will not be able to attend, but some people think Pope Francis will add a visit to prisoners. You can keep the whole Papal trip in your prayer. That is the most important contribution you can make to the Papal Visit and to the promotion of world peace and understanding.*

## Pray for our benefactors

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