

# PASTOR BONUS

TRUE STORIES FROM REAL PRIESTS

Interview by: Joseph Goedtke

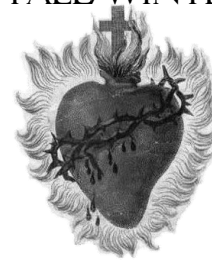
I recently had the opportunity to speak with Fr. Phillip Schotzko about a humorous experience he had when he was the pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Bird Island...

"I think it was a chrisem Mass and all the diocesan seminarians were there serving, and a bat got loose in the church. The church was absolutely full and as the bat flew back and forth up in the top of the nave, some of the people began watching it cautiously with one eye. The bishop continued with the Mass, trying to ignore the flying creature above the congregation, but as the bat grew ever more tired of flying back and forth from the front to the back of the church, it slowly began to get lower and lower. Soon the bat was flying directly above the heads of the congregation, successfully getting the attention of everyone. I was up in the front assisting the bishop, watching the large crowd of people shift their position depending on where the bat was. It looked like a huge wave moving from one side of the church to the other from where I was, as the entire congregation ducked to avoid getting it caught in their hair. Everyone was dodging the creature while simultaneously restraining themselves from disrupting the flow of the ceremony by screaming out loud. The bat continued to get lower and lower and as some members of the congregation started moving towards the exits, it flew up into the sanctuary, hit a wall, and fell to the floor right behind one of the seminarians. Of course, people were relieved that it was no longer flying over them, but the seminarian—I can't remember who it was—grabbed something, a plastic bag I think, that was in the sacristy, and put it over the bat with his hand. He picked it up and took it outside to let it go, but the bat bit him through the bag and unfortunately, he opened the bag and let it go anyway. Having been bit, he should have saved it so that they could test it for rabies, but as a result, he had to go through the whole rigmarole of getting the rabies shot".

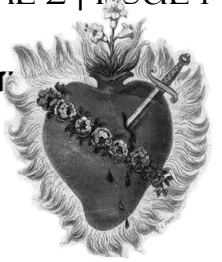
*Fr. Phillip Schotzko is currently the pastor of the Vine and Branches Area Faith Community which includes St. Joseph's Church in Lambertton and St. Raphael's Church in Springfield.*

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## the PULSE



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE YOUTH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM,

BY THE YOUTH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

### ARE YOU READY FOR DECEMBER 26TH?

I'd be willing to bet that Christmas is America's favorite holiday. It's a time of year when everyone - whether Christian or not - gets swept up in the cheer and buzz of the season. We can't even wait to get started! Immediately after Halloween (it seems this year we've just skipped right over Thanksgiving), stores start putting up Christmas decorations and Christmas ads start running. Radio stations start playing non-stop Christmas music. Starbucks starts using their non-Christmas holiday cups. And Santas show up in various locales for photo-ops.

There was a time when I would listen to Christmas music as soon as the radio started playing it. I listened to a lot of Christmas music. A lot. I would decorate my car for Christmas and would regularly wear a Santa hat in public. Christmas was the highlight of my year. But I dreaded December 26th.



I tried to put it out of my mind, but I couldn't help but feel like there was all of this build up for one day and then a sudden let down. I needed to ease out of Christmas, not just drop it cold-turkey. It just wasn't healthy.

But I found a solution, and it's a splendid solution that has made me love Christmas more than I ever have in the past. **Continued on pg. 5**

### *In this issue...*

...The story of an Oklahoma Saint

...A prayer against the devil

...A pope's love for the "devil's drink"

...Some ways to prove God's existence

...And a bat story (not a "bad" story)

# Random Pope Facts

By: Hayley Voller

All but four of the first 35 popes died as martyrs. A martyr is someone who is killed because they are Catholic.

Rumor has it that Pope St. John Paul II snuck out of the Vatican numerous times...to go skiing in the mountains of Northern Italy!

There are 42 recognized “fake popes” throughout the history of the Church. Actually, they are called “anti-popes” and were men who claimed to be the true pope at a given time. There are even people *now* who claim to be the true pope but are not!

“John” is the most common name for a pope. In fact, there were 15 in the first 1000 years of the Church.

31% of popes are also canonized Saints. That’s 83 out of 266 popes!



Coffee was considered by some to be the “devil’s drink.” Because it was introduced to Europeans by Muslims, some people wanted Pope Clement VII to condemn it. Instead, he asked if he could try it first. When he did, he said, “This devil’s drink is delicious! Let us baptize it and make it our own!”



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# Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

By: Anna Timmerman

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.



San Miguel by Raphael

When God revealed to the angels how He was to redeem the human race - through the womb of the Blessed Virgin - one of the angels, named Satan, protested. In response to Satan’s *non serviam* (I will not serve), St. Michael rose to defend God’s honor and rebuked Satan, asking “Quis ut Deus?” (Who is like God?). In fact, in Hebrew *Michael* means just that: who is like God?

Pope Leo the XIII wrote the Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel after seeing a vision of Satan and other demons attempting to destroy the church. He then had it said after every Low Mass until it was removed by Pope St. Paul VI. Then in 1994 Pope St. John Paul II encouraged Catholics to continue saying the prayer and again Pope Francis recently encouraged Catholics to pray it.

This prayer is very important because we are asking Saint Michael to protect and fight for us even when we cannot. Saint Michael is considered a very powerful intercessor against evil. In the Book of Revelation you can see him fighting against a dragon, who is Satan. This prayer is great for battling against sin and temptation.

I find this prayer very humbling. When I say it, I have to admit that I am not strong enough to fight against sin and temptation on my own. I need the help of Jesus and all his grace and Saints to fight for me.

## NEW ADDRESS?

This newsletter is sent to anyone who has attended a diocesan youth event. If you have a new address or would no longer like to receive this newsletter, email your unsubscribe or address change to [cblickem@dnu.org](mailto:cblickem@dnu.org).



## DECEMBER 26TH, CONT...

The solution: Advent.

Advent is the thing that has made me appreciate Christmas so much more. In fact, I would say you can't truly enjoy Christmas until you do Advent well.

### So how do you Advent?

*First, scale back on the Christmas stuff.* It's not Christmas until it's Christmas! Try not to get wrapped up in the hype of the pre-Christmas chaos and instead let your excitement slowly build throughout Advent. Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent) is like the Church saying "I can't contain the excitement anymore!" The rest is a more solemn (that doesn't mean sad) anticipation for Christmas. Get into it.



*Second, do Advent.* Get an Advent wreath and light it during supper. Make a Jesse Tree. Put your shoes out for St. Nicholas Day. Start a St. Andrew's Christmas Novena. These are all classic Advent traditions. Pick a couple and practice them and make some new traditions as well.

*Lastly, if you really want to get the full experience at Christmas, do a little more prayer and penance during Advent.* Although the Church doesn't make Advent a penitential season by law, it certainly makes it one liturgically. Purple vestments, no Gloria at Mass, subdued altar decorations, readings that speak of Jesus' coming and judgement, are all the remnants of a more penitential Advent. The Church is clearly saying, "Hey, Jesus is coming, so prepare yourself." So, prepare yourself!

What you'll find when you do these things is that Christmas is even sweeter than it ever was before. Not only that, but all of that preparation is not just for one day; Christmas lasts for days in the Catholic Church! Holy Mother Church is so wise in slowly easing us out of Christmas rather than letting us experience the December 26th blues. This year, Christmastide extends to January 13 (the Baptism of the Lord), but if you really want to soak in all the Christmas you can get, the traditional ending date of Christmastide is February 2nd (the Feast of the Purification of Mary and Presentation of Jesus, aka Candlemas). So, do a good Advent and have a Merry Christmas!

## TRUTH BE TOLD. . . (PT. I)

By: Carter Currans

Everyone knows someone who struggles to believe something about God. Whether it be that He truly loves them, or that the road to salvation is unattainable. Whether you're one of those people that needs convincing or you know someone who doesn't believe in God, perhaps St. Thomas Aquinas' "Five Proofs for the Existence of God" will help. Let's look at the first two here and revisit the last two in the next issue.



**The first proof is the "Argument from Motion."** As we can tell, many things are in motion or changing, but why? Everything stays in its current state (either moving or motionless) unless it is changed by another force. To put this plainly, something can't move unless it is made to move by something else. But if this is the case, what set everything in motion? And what set that thing in motion? At some point, there must be some one thing that can generate its own motion or change without the assistance of something else (even human beings need energy from food in order to act). That thing is called the "first unmoved mover," and the "First Unmoved Mover" of the universe is God.

**The second proof is the "Argument from Efficient Causes."** This argument states that nothing exists until, well, it is existing! So everything is created by another thing; nothing causes itself. So if everything was created by something previous to itself, there must be a first thing or being in the line of creation that caused itself to exist. Think about it: would you exist if your parents didn't exist? In religion class one day we were watching a Y Disciple video and it said something along the lines of, "buildings have a builder, paintings have a painter, and creation has a creator." This quote stuck out to me and it pops into my head from time to time. God is the First Cause of everything; He needs no one to cause Him.

**The third argument is the "Argument from Necessary Being."** Things come and things go. Think about your existence right now: what is sustaining your existence in this very moment? Existence is not something to take for granted, because in the blink of an eye anything can cease to exist. Imagine if everything *did* cease to exist: how would it come back into existence? There must be one being that is necessary for everything else's existence. That Necessary Being is God, Who is existence Itself.



# A HOMEGROWN SAINT

By: Cecilia Rabaey



On December 2, 2016, Father Stanley Rother was declared to be the first American-born martyr. One year later, on September 23, 2017, he also became the first American priest to be beatified.

Father Stanley Rother was a missionary to the people of Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. When he first arrived there in 1968, he spoke no Spanish and had shown no aptitude for learning languages. In time, however, Father Rother became fluent both in Spanish and Tzutujil, the native Mayan language spoken by the villagers. Despite the fact that Tzutujil did not have a system of writing until 1966, he directed the translation of the New Testament into Tzutujil, as well as working hard on repairs and renovations of his church.

The 1980s marked the climax of the bloody thirty-six year Guatemalan Civil War. In October of 1980, when Father Rother had been at the mission for twelve years, the military began its occupation of Santiago Atitlan. Coinciding with their arrival were the disappearances and deaths of many members of the community, including a former deacon who ran a humanitarian radio station. In response, Father Rother strengthened security at the church and the rectory with locks and fences in order to protect himself and those who sought refuge there.

Although he worked for justice pastorally instead of politically, Father Rother was a government target. The simple act of setting up a charity



Photo credit: Catholic News Service

for the orphans and widows of the captured and missing men was a risk, although not as much as offering sanctuary to parishioners whom the government was openly pursuing.

In January of the next year, Father Rother stopped at the nearby San Lucas mission,

run by New Ulm's Father Greg Schaffer. Father Schaffer informed Father Rother that his name had appeared on a death list.

Father Schaffer advised Father Rother to leave immediately and return to America, but Father Rother would not leave without his associate pastor, who was also a target. The two priests went into hiding until they could legally gain entrance to the United States.

Father Rother soon discovered, however, that his heart was still in Guatemala. He stayed at his family's Oklahoma farm until April, when word reached him that his name had been removed from the death list. Although he was advised against it, Father Rother insisted on returning to Guatemala, saying that "a shepherd cannot run from his flock". Only a few months after his return, three men broke into the rectory and a fight ensued. Father Rother was shot twice and the murderers fled. They were never brought to justice.

Although he is buried in Oklahoma, his heart remains enshrined in Guatemala, along with a jar containing his blood, which was collected from the rectory by Sister Linda Wanner. Father Rother did not win the undying love of the Guatemalan people by being superior. He was humble. He visited families, bringing food, medicine, or just simply his company. He helped as a farmer, a carpenter, and a mechanic.

Looking in the mirror, how many of us are willing to do even these humble acts of service for one another? Even if it takes your entire life, allow God to fill you with the grace you need in order to follow in Father Stanley Rother's footsteps on his path to sainthood.



Photo credit: Archdiocese of Oklahoma City