

Gifts of Grace Ministry Newsletter

Summer Edition, 2016



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Greetings Friends & Saints:

I traveled all over this country, only to find that the best place in the summer is my own backyard. Living on a 6,600 acre state forest in the beautiful Finger Lakes of New York, is the greatest blessing. For many people in the north, surviving the grueling winters is rewarded greatly by the awesome summers.

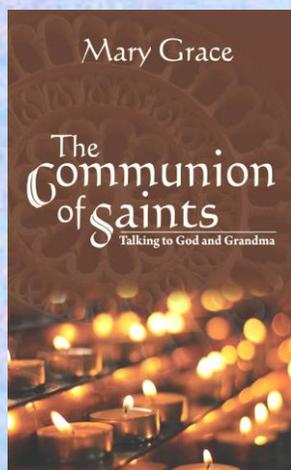
One reason I love summer so much is because I have a seasonal camp in the woods behind my house. On this site is a twenty-five-foot camper that serves as my summertime office. On sunny days I enjoy working in the flower garden that wraps around the front porch. Many afternoons are spent reading, writing, and working in my sanctuary, while many nights are spent with family, friends, or just God, around the campfire.

Sleeping outside on a cot, next to the fire, on a warm summer night, is one of my favorite pastimes. Gazing up at the multitude of stars, listening to the sound of peepers, while fireflies dart around my head, is a spiritual experience. It provides a fantastic setting for an intimate communion with God and nature at its most spectacular. With grateful prayers, I count my blessings and thank my heavenly friends for providing such an amazing world.

Some of the great wonders in summertime come from the myriad wildlife that emerges from their nesting sites to explore and forage for food. This activity provides ample opportunities to experience encounters with nature in new and interesting ways. It also reminds me that I am just one element in the food chain and a part of nature, not apart from it. Let me give a few examples.

One night, two weeks ago, my friend, Sherry and I were enjoying a campfire while listening to an oldies station on the radio.

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We were catching up on all our news of the past few weeks, when Sherry stopped in mid-sentence to simply and calmly state, “Bear.” Her surprised eyes were fixed behind me. I quickly turned around to see a huge black bear stroll through our campsite, a mere twenty feet away from us. In response, I froze in shock by the close encounter with a creature that could have had me for his happy meal.

The bear did not stop; however, he simply glanced our way and proceeded to mosey down the path to my backyard and the birdfeeder hanging from the deck. Grabbing pots and pans, we banged loudly and followed the bear to scare it away from the house and my nearby cats. At the same time, I repeatedly hollered “bear” to warn my neighbors. They responded by yelling, “He was just here!” We got a big laugh when my husband emerged through the back door wondering what the heck was going on so late at night. Needless to say, the event made for a memorable and exciting evening.

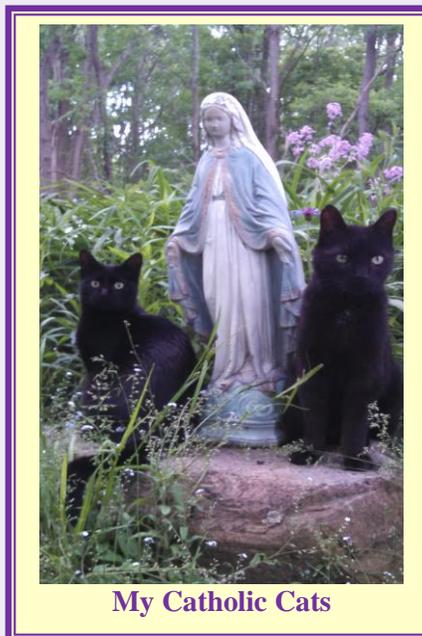
On the next day, I had another encounter with nature while sitting in my barnyard reading in the afternoon sun. Hearing a noise coming from the hedgerow behind me, I turned around to see an enormous turkey step out of the tall grass; she was only a few feet away from me. Then, a tiny chick popped out of the weeds and bounced awkwardly behind his mother. The extreme difference in size was comical and I laughed out loud at the precious sight.

Several days later, while sitting in the same spot, but reading a different book, I noticed three very young raccoons coming out of the field, about thirty yards in front of me. Tickled by their cuteness, I was totally surprised when the trio started running across the mowed grass directly towards me. Even more amazing, they ran right under my chair and then disappeared into the bushes; yet another, treasured experience.

Whether you live in the country or the city, whether you live near bears or squirrels, be sure to stop and appreciate all of God’s pets. You may also take a lesson from them and learn to live in the moment, be happy with whatever food is available, and don’t worry about the next day or your next meal. Trust that the Lord will provide for you, the same way he provides for all his creatures. We are a part of God and nature, not apart from them.

May the saints be with you this summer.

Love, Mary Grace
& Co-writers: Mimi & Mercy →



My Catholic Cats

Events

No public events are scheduled for July or August.

***After-Death Communication
Staying Connected to Loved Ones in Spirit
Institute of Noetic Science (IONS)
Sunday, September 18, 2016; 4:00 – 6:00pm
Cortland, NY – Exact Location: TBA***

Don't treat your loved ones as if they were dead!

In this inspirational presentation you will learn about maintaining relationships with loved ones in spirit. Through the science of parapsychology, discover spiritual sign-language and how to communicate with family and friends in heaven.

Cost: \$10.00 donation for non-members to IONS.

**To reserve a seat, contact Beth Miller 315-252-5932
or E-mail: vocalcolors@yahoo.com**

Need a guest speaker or workshop for your event?

Book now for Fall, Winter or 2017.

Mary Grace is available for your conference, seminar, retreat, spiritual group, fund-raiser, professional organization, or private party. Specializing in paranormal, supernatural, mystical and near-death phenomena, as well as, The Communion of Saints and Parapsychology in Christian Theology.

Reasonable rates are a donation to Gifts of Grace Ministry and are negotiable.

See website for topics, testimonials and previous speaking experience:

<http://www.giftsofgraceministry.org/>

Or call Mary Grace @ 585-766-9318 / E-mail: mgrace-888@outlook.com

Mary Grace is a parapsychologist, spiritual teacher, public speaker, and founder of Gifts of Grace Ministry. She provides a unique perspective on spirituality by integrating parapsychology with Christian Theology, Spiritualism, Mysticism and Catholicism. She is a member of The Parapsychological Association, Institute of Noetic Science, International Association of Near-Death Studies, Rochester UFO & Paranormal Researchers, as well as Spiritus Christi Catholic Church of Rochester, NY

Featured Saint: St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

Feast Day, July 31

**Patron Saint of Soldiers, Retreats
& Spiritual Exercises**



Inigo Lopez de Loyola (also known as “Ignatius”) is most famous for founding the Society of Jesus, more commonly called the “Jesuits.” He was born into a wealthy family in Guipuzcoa, Spain and was the youngest of thirteen children. As a boy, he was sent to be a page at the royal court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He spent a lot of time in the palaces of dukes and princes and lived in the family castle at Azpeita.

By the time he was a teenager, Ignatius was a soldier in the Spanish military. Although he believed in God, he was not a devout Christian and was more concerned with his career on the battlefield. However, his life changed forever at the age of thirty, when he was fighting against the French. During the siege of Pamplona, he suffered a serious injury when he was struck in the leg by a cannonball.

Ignatius returned home where he underwent excruciating operations. During his long convalescence, he requested books on romance and adventure to pass the time; but the only stories available were those of Jesus and the saints. Out of boredom, he began to read them. Little by little, the books started to change his whole attitude and outlook on life. He reflected,

“Why am I using my life just for myself? These people did so much good during their time on earth, why can’t I?”

All the glory he had wanted before seemed worthless now. He began to imitate the saints in their prayers, penances and good works. One day he had a vision of the Blessed Mother holding the baby Jesus in her arms. His soul was filled with light and his body was healed of its wounds, save the limp in his leg, which would always remind Ignatius of the need for humility.

When he was fully recovered, Ignatius made a journey to the shrine at Montserrat, near Barcelona, where he laid down his sword before the altar of the Virgin Mary. He exchanged his lavish clothes for plain robes and began to

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live a simple life. He then traveled to Europe and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy land before he settled in Rome. He wanted to start a new life as a priest.

To prepare for his pastoral path, Ignatius had to go back to school to study Latin grammar for the first time. The rest of the students were ten-year-old boys and Ignatius was thirty-three! Yet, he was willing to bear the shame because he knew he would need this knowledge to help him in his work for Jesus.

Ignatius graduated from the University of Paris at the age of forty-three. He took his religious vows and became a priest, along with six other students, including Blessed Peter Faber and Saint Francis Xavier. The group of devotees vowed to live in poverty, chastity and obedience. Furthermore, they offered to go wherever the Holy Father would send them for the salvation of souls. Pleased with the passion and commitment of this band of brothers, Pope Paul III created a new religious order for them. In 1540, the *Society of Jesus* was officially established; Ignatius was elected the first Superior General.

As the head of the fledgling order, Ignatius sent his priests throughout Catholic Europe to start schools, colleges and seminaries. During his life, the Jesuits founded 74 colleges on three continents. With missionary work as a core value, the Jesuits have been known for spreading Catholicism throughout the world.

Ignatius was a true mystic. He centered his spiritual life on the essential foundations of Christianity-the Trinity, Christ and the Eucharist. His spirituality is expressed in the Jesuit motto, "For the greater glory of God." One of Ignatius's most significant contributions was in the publication of his *Spiritual Exercises*. The premise is centered on a series of guided meditations on such themes as the creation of the world, as well as the life, ministry and resurrection of Jesus.

Over the years, Ignatius watched his order grow to over one thousand members. For the last fifteen years of his life, he directed the work of his Society almost totally blind. On July 31, 1556, he succumbed to an illness and died unexpectedly in Rome at the age of 65. He was canonized a saint in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

Today, the Jesuits have over five hundred universities and colleges with thirty thousand members; they teach over twenty thousand students each year.

Reflection of St. Ignatius Loyola:

"Give me only your love and your grace. With this I am rich enough, and I have no more to ask."



Francis is the first Jesuit Pope