

MISSION INTENTIONS

NOVEMBER 2022-2023

We pray for children who are suffering, especially those who are homeless, orphans, and victims of war; may they be given the right to an education and the chance to experience life in a loving family.

Country Focus: Syria

Damascus, Syria, is one of the oldest cities in the world. People have been living there since 200 B.C., including Saint Paul the Apostle, who had his conversion experience on the road to Damascus.

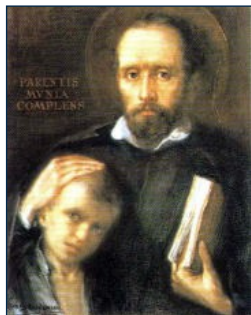
Today, the people of Syria are suffering from an ongoing civil war. Many of the Eastern Rite churches, who have called Syria home for centuries, are providing as much care as possible for the Syrian people. One such Eastern Rite church is the Maronite Archeparchy (Archdiocese) of Damascus. They provide spiritual and physical care to Syrians in need. Our own archdiocese has joined them in this effort through a solidarity partnership established in 2017. Together, we pray for, and provide financial support to those suffering from war, especially the children. Let us join Pope Francis in praying for all children who suffer this month of November.



Leading to Knowledge of the Faith

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, or USCCB), teaches us that *“The demands of solidarity require not another program, but greater awareness and integration into the ongoing life of the parish”* (Called to Global Solidarity, 1997). Solidarity is more than a one-time action or parish ministry, although these can be examples of solidarity. True solidarity is a way of life, of putting the needs of others before yourself. We will learn more about solidarity on the second page of this newsletter.

Saint Spotlight



Some saints know from a very early age that they are called to devote their lives to God. This was not the case for Saint Jerome Emiliani.

Born in Venice, Italy, around 1486, Jerome’s first career was as a soldier in the Venetian army. It wasn’t until he was captured and imprisoned in a dungeon that he began to reflect on his life. He began praying to God and realized he had not been living as he should. When he finally escaped prison, he vowed to spend the rest of his life serving God.

One of the first things he did was to begin studying for the priesthood, and was ordained around 1518. He also began caring for the sick and the poor. In 1528, when the plague broke out, Jerome used his

Saint Jerome Emiliani

own money to provide food for those who were hungry, and medical care for those who were sick. Because of the plague, many children were left homeless, abandoned, and orphaned. Jerome devoted himself to their care, founding three orphanages, a hospital, and a shelter for penitent women. With two other priests, he also founded a congregation called the Servants of the Poor, which was dedicated to caring for orphans and educating priests and children. This congregation still exists today, now going by the name Clerks Regular of Somasca.

Sadly, in 1537, Jerome died from a disease he most likely caught while caring for the sick. He was canonized in 1767, and made the patron saint of orphans and abandoned children in 1928, by Pope Pius XI. **His feast day is February 8. Saint Jerome Emiliani, pray for us!**

Formation for Life in Christ

During his papacy, Pope Francis has continually called all Catholics to a “culture of encounter”. The Holy Father encourages us to build genuine and Christ-centered relationships with all God’s children as a way of living out our baptismal call. This call to a “culture of encounter” is rooted in the Catholic social teaching theme of solidarity.

Practicing solidarity means taking care of our neighbors, whether they live near or far. It means doing what is best for the community before doing what is best for the individual. It means creating or working for societies who strive for justice, where the dignity of everyone is recognized and valued above all else.

One of the ways the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis practices solidarity is through global partnership relationships. We’ve talked about two of these relationships in our September and October newsletters: with the Diocese of Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela and the Diocese of Kitui in Kenya, respectively. This month, we will learn about the archdiocese’s third global partnership relationship with the Maronite Archeparchy (Archdiocese) of Damascus, Syria.

In 2016, in response to the increasingly difficult situation faced by

Christians in the Middle East, Archbishop Hebda asked the Center for Mission to identify a partner diocese in the Middle East with whom we might journey in faith. Through God’s providence, the Maronite Archeparchy in Damascus accepted our invitation to partnership, and on January 25th, 2017, the partnership was formalized.

In the five years our two dioceses



have been walking in faith together, we have supported one another in prayer, and the people of the Archdiocese of Saint

Paul and Minneapolis have also remembered their brothers and sisters in Damascus financially. While the current events in Syria prevent us from visiting Damascus, the Archeparch (Archbishop) of Damascus, Samir Nassar, visited us in 2018. We hope to host him again in 2023.

In this month’s video, we will learn more about the Catholic social teaching theme of solidarity. As you watch the video, think about how you can incorporate actions of solidarity into your daily life.

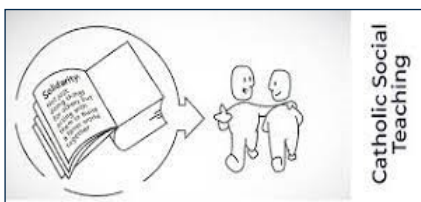
Celebrating the Mystery

Service projects are common in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation because this sacrament calls us in a deeper way to participate in the Church’s mission of promoting human life and dignity and working for justice. When we are confirmed, we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which we are to use for the common good. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops teaches, Confirmation is “not only an *anointing*, but also a *commissioning* to live out our faith in the world” (Sacraments and Social Mission, 2013). After being confirmed, we are to go out and live in solidarity with the human family. How can you live in solidarity with others?

Teaching Prayer: Stations of the Cross

This month’s focus prayer is probably one you are familiar with: the Stations of the Cross. Commonly prayed during Lent, the Stations of the Cross remind us of the events of Jesus’s passion and death. It is a very important prayer to the Church in Damascus, because they see their own suffering reflected in the suffering of Jesus. To learn more about the Stations of the Cross, [click here](#).

Catholic Social Teaching: Solidarity, [Click Here>>](#)



✚ What is the difference between doing something for someone and acting with them?

✚ The video names examples of living in solidarity. Can you name others?

✚ How do acts of solidarity help us build up Christ’s community? How do they help us live as missionary disciples?