Maintain the truth lovingly and always love truthfully. St. John Paul II

Reaching the Ends of the Earth

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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Dear Friends,

Twenty years and CPO is going strong! Our work has never been more critical with all that is happening in the Church and the world. A large part of our Mission is *to ensure the authentic teaching and protection of our Catholic Faith*, which we carry out in various ways.

Our popular video series, *Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism* by Fr. Robert Altier, continues to be one of the best resources available to help catechize and build up our Church. We are very pleased that EWTN is currently airing the entire series on their television network worldwide, as are several other Catholic television stations across the country. It is being used by individuals and parishes across the globe, and here are just a few of the comments:

God bless you from Canada: I am so appreciative of Fr. Altier's teachings - we can start to re-learn all

we've forgotten and maybe be an impetus for the renewed conversion that is so necessary. We need to know what we stand for, if we are to stand against the increasing persecution of Christians. I am so glad to know there are good 'movers and shakers' in this world and all is not lost!

Blessings from a Parish Priest in Australia: We are looking forward to using the DVD series, Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism by Fr. Robert Altier. It was first seen on EWTN which we can pick up here through satellite. I am always looking for effective RCIA material that is truly Catholic because of the tremendous amount of 'waffle' around that really does not help anyone.

Thank you from Nairobi: I have seen the doctrinal presentations by Fr. Robert Altier on EWTN and I must say I love his approach. I must commend you and Fr. Robert for making these teachings available on

DVD. My daughter will soon be

visiting us and I will be asking her to purchase the series for me.

We listened to the suggestions of our loyal supporters and had a very successful Youth Retreat this past year. We are busy planning our 2nd Ultimate Youth

Marilyn Grutsch and Terese Jensen Over 100 youth at 2018 Ultimate Lenten Youth Retreat





this year on Saturday, March 23rd. For more information and to register, please see the flyer on page 8. The CPO website features authentic Catholic educational resources, and we continue to offer current news and excellent articles to our extensive email list. We are also busy with the production of a Spanish version of *Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism* by Fr. Robert Altier, which should be available later this year. Thank you for your prayers and continued support!

The Purification of the Bride

BY FR. ROBERT ALTIER, CPO SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

In many places in the Old Testament God speaks of His marriage to Israel. In this marriage, God is the Bridegroom and Israel is the bride. Frequently the Prophets talk about Israel's infidelity to the marriage covenant they had made with the Lord. One might say the problem is that Israel did not truly believe in God's love, consequently, she did not love God as she ought.

God sought to demonstrate His love for Israel by coming to her in human form. In the Person of Jesus, God took our human nature in order to show us what true love is. If we could not believe His words, He would prove His words by concrete actions. St. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Bridegroom, and on several occasions, our Lord referred to Himself in this manner. So He came to earth, in part, to unite Himself to His Bride, to demonstrate His love, and to consummate His union.

God chose Israel for Himself, but her infidelity led God to make a new covenant. In this, He not only reiterated His love for Israel, but He went farther: He included the Gentiles in this new marriage covenant. The Bride is no longer Israel, but the New Israel, the Church. That means anyone who is baptized into Jesus Christ is not only a member of the Church, but through baptism we have each entered into a marital covenant with the Lord. We are members of the Bride of Christ. That union is expressed most intimately in the reception of Holy Communion.

According to St. Augustine, Jesus, the Bridegroom, consummated His marriage on the marriage bed of the Cross. That consummation is renewed at each and every Mass where He offers Himself for His Bride. He then gives Himself to His Bride in the Eucharist. When we receive Communion, it should be a mutual giving and receiving of a Bridegroom and Bride: both giving themselves to the other 100% and both receiving the gift of the other 100%. Remember, the soul is anima; in other words, the soul, whether we are male or female, always takes the feminine in the relationship with God.

In the sacrifice of Jesus, St. Paul tells us, Christ gave Himself up for the Church to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:27). This, according to St. Paul, is what it means to be a husband.

While the Church has been perfectly faithful to our Lord in the sense of her teachings, the people who make up the Church have certainly not been so faithful. Even more tragic, some of those consecrated to the Lord have become a scandal. The infidelity must be purified. Who better to prepare a bride for Christ than His Mother, who is the preeminent member

of that Bride? So our Lord has sent His Mother to get the Bride ready, to be holy and without blemish. This is what we are seeing in the Church today. Mary has begun her work of cleaning up the Church. This is cause for rejoicing, not for shame.

When we talk about marriage with regard to our Lord and the Church, we have to be careful because it is not quite like a normal marriage between a man and a woman. In a human marriage, the two people have to be present together, give and receive the vows, and consummate the marriage together. The marriage of Christ and His Church is spiritual, so it transcends time and space. Our Lord made His vows and sealed the Covenant with His Blood, consummating His marriage on the Cross.

Now, two thousand years later, it is time for the Bride to make her vows and to consummate her marriage to her divine Bridegroom. Although, as I mentioned above, this is a spiritual reality, the marriage cannot be consummated in two different beds. The Bride and the Bridegroom have to consummate the marriage in the same bed, in this case, the Cross. The Bridegroom has proven His love for His Bride, now it is her turn to prove her love for her Bridegroom. Yes, that means the Church will be crucified, but then rise gloriously to meet her husband.

All this is important to understand when we look at what is going on in the Church right now. Again, think of it all as our Lady, being a good mother, getting the Bride ready for her marriage. There are many details to which she must attend. A bride in a normal wedding situation might find this kind of attention a bit frustrating at times, but she will be very grateful because this is her greatest moment and she wants to present herself glorious and beautiful. Think of the preparations of a bride to make sure everything is perfect. That is what our Lady is doing for the Church right now.

As members of the Bride, we cannot run away because it is unpleasant, nor should we cower in shame. This is a glorious moment! Our Mother is getting everything prepared, she is cleaning, ironing, prepping, and doing whatever else Moms do to get the Bride ready for the wedding. Right now, the Bridegroom is doing exactly what He said He would do: when He is lifted up from the earth, He would draw us to Himself. The Bridegroom is ready and calling us to Himself. At this time we have to follow the lead of St. Paul who said: I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:14).

This is the moment for which the Church has been waiting for 2000 years. Stand up, lift up your head, rejoice that everything is being cleaned and pressed, because the Bride is about to consummate her marriage to her divine Bridegroom!

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CPO Board of Directors, L to R: Fr. Robert Altier, Terese Jensen, Kurt Virnig, Jeff Davis, Colleen Perfect, Joe Kolles, Marilyn Grutsch, John Trojack.

ARTHUR A. HERKENHOFF AWARD

Art Herkenhoff, a true friend and one of our founding Board members, was a hero in all areas that truly matter: Faith, family and pro-life involvement. Art had enormous courage in proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and always exhibited true charity, humility and joy. The Board of Directors chose to present the 2018 Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award to a remarkable gentleman, Deacon Dennis Chlebeck. Deacon Dennis has been married to his lovely wife, Annmarie for 45 years. They are members of St. Mark's Catholic Church in St. Paul. They have 5 children: Paul, who was adopted, and has special needs; Anthony; Peter; Tom; and Megan, who was adopted, and has Down Syndrome. They have 7 grandchildren. Prior to his diaconate he was an Extraordinary Eucharistic minister, lector, and sacristan at St. Mark's for over 35 years. Deacon Dennis was ordained a permanent Deacon in 2009, and began serving at Maternity of Mary parish in St. Paul, where he continues and is also at Holy Childhood parish. For the past two years he has been a Chaplain at the Episcopal Homes in St. Paul where there are over 100 Catholics in residence. He is the spiritual advisor for the St. Paul Deanery of CCW, which has been a major commitment the last few years. He spent 40 years in the mental health care field: 15 of those years were at Stillwater prison, and from 2008 to 2016 he was the Chaplain at the Ramsey County Correctional Facility. Deacon Dennis has been actively involved in the pro-life movement for many years. Each year during 40 Days for Life, the prayer campaign to end abortion, he leads a prayer group outside Planned Parenthood and other abortion mills. One of the many things Deacon Dennis and Art had in common is they both loved to share their Christian pro-life values in places where it wasn't always popular or accepted: Art at the public school where he taught, and Deacon Dennis at the correctional facilities. Both these fine men always maintained an attitude of true joy and a positive disposition even in the face of opposition. Deacon Dennis is very deserving of this award.

Fr. Altier, Art Herkenhoff family members, Deacon Dennis with daughter Megan and wife, Annmarie, and Colleen Perfect.



The CPO Board of Directors seeks the names of individuals who would be worthy of nomination for the 2019 - 15th Annual Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award. The persons nominated should exhibit the same qualities, principles and values which characterized the life and person of Art Herkenhoff: Faith, family, pro-life involvement, courage, charity and joy.

Please submit your nomination by October 1, 2019. You may complete the Online Nomination Form at: www.catholicparents.org/herkenhoff/index.html or contact us at 651-705-5409 and we'll be happy to mail you the form.

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You Are a Priest Forever: Book Reviews on the Priesthood

The Catholic priesthood has been under demonic attack ever since Christ instituted the sacrament of Holy Orders and ordained the Apostles His first priests on the evening of Holy Thursday. Satan fears the priesthood because he knows the spiritual power Christ has given to His priests: power to administer the sacraments; power to make Him fully present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Mass; power to forgive sins; power to preach and teach the Word of God; power to be His instruments in the salvation of souls. Therefore, the Evil One, the Great Deceiver, will do anything and everything to not only undermine but destroy Christ's holy priesthood. In our own time, Satan's attack against the priesthood continues, most obviously with the recent clerical sexual abuse scandal, one of the worst scandals to ever afflict the Church and a scandal caused primarily by allowing homosexual men to be ordained priests. Over 80% of the sexual abuse cases involved homosexual priests abusing teenage boys. The damage done to the priesthood by this recent scandal is incalculable. And despite the enormous suffering endured by abuse victims, the billions of dollars paid in law suit settlements to these victims, and the tremendous loss of confidence in clerical authority that has ensued from this sexual abuse crisis, the homosexual network within the Church continues to do the devil's work of attempting to destroy the priesthood and lead to the loss of perhaps countless souls. There is still much work that needs to be done to eradicate this diabolical homosexual network within the Church. But through the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit and the work of courageous leaders within the Church, the disorder and confusion caused by the homosexual movement can be removed and the Catholic priesthood can again be the strong fraternal brotherhood Christ intended it to be from the beginning.

In light of this ongoing crisis in the priesthood, it is more important than ever to affirm the priesthood and remind the world of the incredible honor, privilege, and sacred dignity of the Catholic priesthood, and to remind the world of the countless number of holy, brave, and dedicated priests who have and are serving God's people in a spirit of selfless love. The following recent books on the priesthood are a significant contribution to a renewed love, reverence, and respect due to the Catholic priesthood established by the Eternal Priest, Jesus Christ.

Ever since its inception, Ignatius Press has published many, if not most, of the translated works of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. A recent publication, *Teaching and Learning the Love of God: Being a Priest Today*, is a beautiful and inspiring collection of homilies delivered by Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) over a period of sixty years on the nature and purpose of the priesthood. When one reads these insightful and often moving homilies, the first thought that comes to mind is that they were written and delivered by a man of

deep prayer. This view is affirmed by Pope Francis in the forward to this work when he says, Every time I read the works of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, it becomes clear to me that he pursued theology 'on his knees' and still does: on his knees, because we see that he is not only a preeminent theologian and master of the faith, but a man who really believes, really prays. High praise, indeed coming from His Holiness, and echoed by countless readers of Pope Benedict XVI's vast theological oeuvre. Distinguished Catholic historian Dr. James Hitchcock argues that, in his judgment, Pope Benedict XVI was the single greatest theologian ever to sit on the Chair of St. Peter, and that includes such magisterial popes and Doctors of the Church as Sts. Leo the Great, Gregory the Great and the recent papacy of St. Pope John Paul II. On virtually every page of this collection, Pope Benedict demonstrates his extraordinarily wise and perceptive understanding of the priesthood. For example, at the Chrism Mass in Munich on April 11, 1979, in a homily entitled "Becoming 'Spiritual Clergymen' in the Breathing Space of the Spirit," the future pope says: The priest must first and foremost be a man who believes. This is the center of all his activity, and if it is not present, then nothing really happens anymore.... People expect above all a priest with deep faith, a priest who prays, a priest who lives according to the program of the Beatitudes.

Another example of Pope Benedict's brilliant theological insight is found again in Munich at a Chrism Mass on April 15, 1981, in a homily entitled "Eucharist and Pentecost as the Origin of the Church." Joseph Ratzinger is speaking about the role of the Holy Spirit and then says the following words, addressed to clergy and laity alike, but especially to all priests:

And finally: the Holy Spirit is mission. At the end of the Mass come the words, Ite missa est. Go it is mission! And it is not wrong that this key word in tradition gave the name Mass to the whole event, because this whole thing is mission, because all of God's deeds always exist for others, also. The Holy Spirit always works under the banner of For; he never merely comes to someone privately; rather, he always comes so that something can be handed on. He is always the mission, the appeal to hand on. And so we should take into ourselves anew this law of For. It is depicted in Sacred Scripture when the Holy Spirit appears in the image of the fiery tongue. Fire is the power that warms and brightens. Did not our hearts burn within us...while he opened to us the Scripture (Lk 24:32)? Only someone who himself is burning can kindle. We must become burning Christians. We must make that journey of the disciples of Emmaus with him, in which we let him make us burn with his word, in which we submit to and expose ourselves to the fire that makes separated elements molten and combines them and creates unity.

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A third example of the quality and depth of these Pope Benedict homilies comes from a sixtieth priestly jubilee Mass for a friend of the pope's given in Munich in 1983. The

When God is Silent

I prayed and prayed, but I guess God doesn't answer our prayers. This was a comment from a friend of our family at my 39-year-old brother's funeral years ago. It took me by surprise, but in my own grief, I didn't have a good answer for her. Many of us might wonder whether God is listening to our pleas in what seems like an upside-down world today. Abortion and euthanasia continue to be vehemently supported by many; sexual impurity, in so many ways, is becoming tolerable and, in fact, made to be the norm; religious liberties are constantly being challenged; violence and hatred are more frequent and tragic; our country is critically and perilously polarized, and, even within our holy Church, we are aware of our own enormous problems. It has left us with feelings of betrayal, lack of hope, confusion, and wondering where to place our trust...government, news reports, educators, law makers, Church leaders...God?

Where is God in all of this? It sometimes seems He has given up on humanity. Has He had enough of our rebellious, relativistic, narcissistic, and secular behavior and left us to our own battles? We may think this feeling of abandonment by God is new, but if we look back over the history of mankind, we will quickly see that we are not unique in our time and place here on this earth. Even in Old Testament scripture, we hear some of the same lamentations: I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me (Job 30:20). And King David: My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest (Psalm 22:1-2). But we can also find in Scripture God's reassuring words to us: I will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5) and I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (2 John 14:18).

So how do we reconcile this when we feel like God is silent? If we are humble and willing, we can learn a lot from those who have gone before us. I recently had the blessing of making a pilgrimage to France to meet some of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have blazed the trail for us. As I reflected on their lives, it shed light on some of my own lack of confidence in whom I should place my trust and how to deal with this confusion.

First, there was little 14-year-old Bernadette of Lourdes, whose family was so poor, they lived in an abandoned jail that was deemed to be unfit for prisoners. They lived without many of the things we would consider bare necessities, such as enough food to feed their family, warmth, clothing, and medical care. Yet, Bernadette was the humble, little, innocent, unassuming child to whom our Blessed Mother chose to appear as the Immaculate Conception. Bernadette was ridiculed, but she held fast against all the attempts to make her recant Mary's appearances. In her quiet little way, she

continued to listen to Our Lady, who asked that she wash in the waters of the nearby spring (which was not even apparent at that time) and that a chapel be built at that site. The spring waters began to flow on that day of Bernadette's obedience, and still flow today, bringing miraculous spiritual and physical healings to many who bathe in it. St. Bernadette knew that she was just one soul whose purpose was to be a cog in the wheel of life helping others get to heaven. She said, *The Blessed Virgin used me like a broom, and then put me back in my place.*

Then, in Paris, I visited Rue de Bac, where St. Catherine Laboure, St. Louise Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul lived. The three of them brought about healing and caring for many hopeless and forsaken individuals. Their work goes on, even today, throughout the world in St. Vincent de Paul societies and Daughters of Charity.

And then on to Lisieux, where we visited the home and convent of St. Therese. Despite the fact she never left France and spent most of her life in a cloistered convent, she is a Patron Saint of Missionaries and a Doctor of the Church. Her parents, Zelie and Louis Martin, are also now canonized saints. Their lives continue to inspire and convert even today.

What do all these saints have to do with unanswered prayers? They were each called to their unique "job" in this life, just like us. They faced much of what we are dealing with today and some even more directly, in the way they personally sacrificed and suffered. What did they have that kept them faithful and trusting in God? Humility, openness to God's call, obedience, patience, willingness to sacrifice, a devout prayer life, child-like faith, and love of God and neighbor were some common threads. When we fret and worry about all that seems wrong in our world, we have much to learn from them. The world, during their lifetimes, was messy too, but they just stepped out and did what God asked of them one little deed, prayer or task at a time, always staying faithful to the Truth. Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves (Matthew 10:16).

It would have been much easier for Bernadette to just give in to the pressure her community placed on her, to forget about going to the grotto and heeding Mary's call. And Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise Marillac and Catherine Laboure could have turned their backs on the poor and lived much more comfortable lives, but they chose to roll up their sleeves and try to make an impact on the broken world in front of them. When Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine and asked her to have a medal made showing graces emanating from her blessed hands, Catherine obeyed, but did not reveal to the world until her death, that she was the one to whom Mary had appeared and entrusted this. Without her obedience and

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humility, we would not have this Miraculous Medal, which was aptly named because of the graces Mary promised to those who wear it. And St. Louis Martin, who mourned the premature loss of his dear wife, Zelie, surely would have liked to keep his daughters more accessible in his life, but he gave completely by permitting each one to enter religious life. St. Therese, wise beyond her years, chose not to hate a convicted man on death row, but instead, with charity, prayed fervently for his soul. This is true Christian charity: to

love someone is to want the best for them, which is their eternal salvation. St. Catherine Laboure once said, *One must see God in everyone*.

Understandably, we would all desire this world to be restored to the glory as God created it, but maybe God is waiting on us. He stands outside of time and His ways are not our ways. He desires all of mankind to be in Heaven with Him someday. We are His hands and feet on earth. St. Paul writes in 2 Peter 3: 8-9: With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

It is said that St. Teresa of Calcutta experienced 50 years without consolation in prayer. Her response? I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that He will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now, I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us, and we change things.

These words from Pope St. John Paul remind us that, in good times and in bad, we must remember that even if the world betrays or disappoints us, the One to whom we can always trust is Our Lord: While we are pilgrims here on earth, we look toward heaven, our definitive homeland. To reach the divine kingdom, the gospel urges us not to follow the 'prince of this world' (John 16:11), who sows division and scandal, but to remain faithful and humble in following Christ. 'Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for his precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and late rains' (James 5:7). You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand.

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priest block (1,034) died at the hands of their Nazi captors. This book is an extraordinary account of almost unimaginable cruelty and brutality at the hands of the Nazis, and the heroic holiness demonstrated by so many of the priests imprisoned at Dachau. The intense hatred of the Nazi regime for Christianity was manifested with special ferocity in the priest barracks at Dachau. Precisely because they were priests, many of the prisoners were treated with additional inhumanity by both the guards and fellow prisoners. Suffering was intense: long hours of grinding work, a starvation diet, rampant disease, and prisoners being used in ghoulish medical experiments. Dachau, like all the Nazi concentration camps, was a veritable hell on earth. And yet even amidst such unbelievable suffering and evil, the light of God's grace penetrated this dark godless world. The priests secretly administered the sacraments, especially penance and anointing of the sick, and amazingly were allowed to have a makeshift chapel in the camp where the Eucharist was celebrated, under the strict surveillance of the camp guards. Because there were bishops imprisoned at Dachau, some of the priest prisoners even organized a secret ordination of a deacon to the priesthood.

One priest prisoner at Dachau said of his stay at the camp: *Three years of experience that I would not have missed for anything in the world.* This statement may seem surprising and even shocking but it was shared by many of the priests that passed through this infamous camp. The experience of enduring such inhuman evil bore much fruit in the lives of these priests. An amazing brotherhood among the priests was forged in Dachau: they worked together to uphold the dignity of their vocation in the most difficult of circumstances. They rediscovered in the deepest way the enormous dignity of their apostolate as God's instruments for the salvation of souls. And in their suffering these priests underwent the profoundest purification and, for those who survived, a renewed desire to spend the rest of their lives working tirelessly to build God's kingdom through word and sacrament.

This book is an important addition to literature on the Holocaust. It is a powerful account of courage, sacrifice, fidelity, and powerful witness to the Gospel. Anyone who reads this moving book will come away with a renewed gratitude to God, for calling to the priesthood men of such amazing virtue and heroic holiness lived out in an environment of unspeakable evil and degradation.

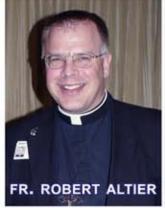
The Catholic priesthood today is in crisis, but it is a crisis that can be overcome by fidelity to Christ, the Eternal High Priest, and by a renewed understanding of the profound dignity of the priestly vocation: a calling made by God to men He has chosen from all eternity to be sons in the Son, to be ontologically conformed to Christ in a fraternal brotherhood rooted uniquely in the ineffable union of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. St. John Chrysostom, great Eastern Father of the Church, in what is perhaps the most famous treatise on the priesthood in all of Patristic literature, *On the Priesthood*, captures the glory of this great vocation when he says, *The soul of the priest ought to blaze like a light illuminating the world*. May God grant the Church in our time such men ready to set the world on fire with the light and love of Christ.

7

TEENS: are you seeking answers to life questions about faith and morality?

Join us Saturday, March 23 for the

Ultimate Youth Lenten Retreat





Sample Questions To Be Addressed

- Are the 10 Commandments still relevant?
- Is it okay to have sex outside of marriage?
- Can two people of the same sex get married?
- Why do I have to go to Mass?

- What is a personal relationship with Jesus?
- Why do we pray to the saints?
- What is Truth and relativism?
- How can I live a life of virtue?

This one-day retreat will include lectures by Fr. Robert Altier, girls/boys break-out sessions led by young adults, Q&A, praise and worship music, lunch, Eucharistic Adoration, Confession and an optional vigil Mass. Don't miss this opportunity to enter more deeply into your Lenten journey with Jesus.

WHO: High School students

WHEN: Saturday, March 23, 2019 - 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Maternity of Mary Church, 1414 Dale St. N., St. Paul, MN

COST: \$15 per participant

PARENTS: Register your teens at www.LentenRetreat.com