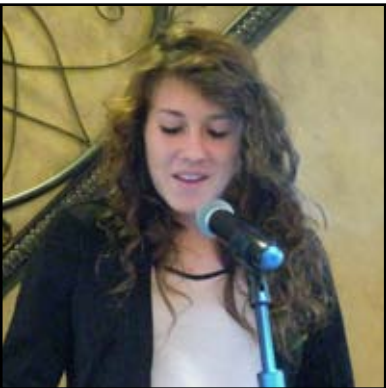


Maintain the truth lovingly and
 always love truthfully.
 John Paul II

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Emma Mattheison, age 18, shares fond memories of her beloved grandfather, Art, during the Arthur Hirkenhoff Award.



Faithful to Our Mission

PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Dear Friends,

For over 15 years our mission has remained the same: *To build a network of faithful, dynamic, and informed parents, students, and alumni, committed to working with Catholic schools and other programs of education to ensure the authentic teaching and protection of our Catholic Faith.* CPO was founded in 1998 when a group of parents learned that in our Archdiocese, Catholic high school teachers were being trained as “safe staff” to create a “safe” climate for young people to “explore” their “sexual identities.” We worked tirelessly to inform parents, teachers and clergy that the group, Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM), was teaching contrary to Catholic Church teaching. Within the first year, CPO was successful in getting the CPCSM representatives removed from participating in any future training in our Catholic high schools. We will continue our efforts and keep a watchful eye as we know that CPCSM and similar groups continue to be active and attempt to portray themselves as “Catholic”.

The Catholic Parents OnLine website (catholicparents.org) continues to be a critical tool providing authentic Catholic education resources to parents, grandparents, teachers and clergy. Recently a Catholic parent wrote to us saying:

I started attending CPO events and subscribing to your emails almost two years ago. CPO is a great parenting resource for those seeking good solid, orthodox, Catholic resources and up-to-date information from a Catholic perspective. Sometimes, as parents, it is hard to find reliable and pertinent information, amidst all the hubbub and demands of daily life. CPO has been a wonderful resource for me, in this regard. Thank you!

This year we are pleased to announce Fr. Robert Altier’s NEW series: ***Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism*** which airs on CPO TV every Sunday at 9:30 pm on the Metro Cable Network, channel 6, and can also be viewed on our website. These excellent catechetical teachings are needed now more than ever!

You won’t want to miss the annual CPO Lenten Retreat! This year’s theme is: *Every Saint Has a Past and Every Sinner Has a Future*, featuring Father Robert Altier. The Retreat will be held on **Saturday, April 5, 2014** at St. Agnes Catholic Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. For

more information and to register, please see the flyer on page 7. Seating is limited, so register early!

Also, PLEASE help us by completing the **important survey** which can be found on the back of the Retreat flyer. You can mail it back to us in the enclosed envelope (along with your Retreat registration if you plan to attend). Thank you!

*God bless you and yours,
 Colleen Perfect*

Lenten Challenge

BY FR. ROBERT ALTIER, CPO SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

We have embarked on that blessed and grace filled season of Lent. This season in the Church seems to affect people in extreme ways. Some people consider Lent their favorite time of the year while others loathe the season and see it very negatively. Regardless of our personal feelings about the season, it is a call to a deeper conversion for all of us.

During this holy time the Church asks us to look at our lives and consider what changes need to be made. Most people, when they think of Lent, immediately think about what they are going to give up. For all too many people this is little more than a perfunctory exercise of giving up something that has little real effect in our lives. I challenge you to reconsider and look deeply into your soul.

Lent is not just about giving things up, but about making changes that will help us live lives that are more holy. This may, indeed, require getting rid of some areas of our lives that are sinful. However, it may also require adding some things to our lives like more time in prayer, daily Mass, works of charity, volunteering, or any number of good things that would make our lives better.

One thing I would recommend for this Lent will address both of these aspects of doing something and giving something up. If you follow my recommendation you will find greater peace, you will grow in grace, you will make serious changes that will help you and those around you. My recommendation: go to confession.

Going to confession is pretty obvious on the positive level, that is, something to do, but what about giving something up? When you go to confession you give up sin. Obviously, we are to work to stop sinning, but this is not my point regarding confession. When you receive absolution your sins are forgiven. This means they are gone, destroyed, removed from your soul, never to be heard of again. If there is sin on your soul, this is a way to get rid of it. When God removes the sin, He fills the soul with Sanctifying Grace which is His own life. So, we get rid of the bad stuff and we are filled with the good stuff. This grace helps us to fight temptation and avoid sin; it gives greater clarity and strength to the mind and the will. It also helps us to be more attuned to the ways of the Lord.

Some might be afraid to go to confession. This is actually a temptation. The devil does not want you to go to confession because he knows what will happen to your soul when your sins are forgiven. I will say this: the priest is not there to condemn you, but to forgive you. He is not there to yell at you or to judge you. He is there to bring the mercy of God to you and to reconcile you to the Lord. You have nothing to fear; any priest who has been ordained for about a year has heard just about everything there is to hear. He will not be shocked by your confession.

If it has been many years since your last confession the priest will rejoice that you are there. He will not shame you for being away, but will joyfully welcome you back. It is a privilege for the priest and it is a great benefit to your soul. It is, therefore, a win-win situation.

Recall, also, that the priest cannot speak about anything he hears in the confessional. In fact, God's grace actually takes everything out of his head so that he forgets as soon as you leave the confessional. If you do not know what to

confess, there is a link on the CPO website to a fairly thorough examination of conscience. Whatever is there, get rid of it this Lent. Do not be afraid.

Finally, remember that if you die with a sin on your soul, you will have to answer to God for that unforgiven sin. However, as mentioned above, when your sins are forgiven they are gone. That means that on the Day of Judgment God will not bring those sins up. You have already addressed them in the confessional, so He does not have to address them when you stand before Him. This is what I mean when I say the sins are gone. They are not "swept under the rug" nor are they simply ignored; they are **gone**, they are no longer on your soul!

If you are willing to accept my challenge, you will accomplish two wonderful things at the same

time. You will do something that will give glory to God and will be good for your soul. At the same time, you will give up the sins that have been weighing down your soul. Of all the things you can do this Lent, this is the one that will make the biggest difference and get your soul back on track.



ARTHUR A. HERKENHOFF AWARD

Art Herkenhoff was a true friend and one of CPO's founding Board members. He was a hero in all the areas that truly matter: in Faith, Family and Pro-life involvement. Art had enormous courage in the face of opposition to proclaim the Truth of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and he always exhibited true charity, humility and joy. Each year CPO receives many outstanding nominations for the Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award. This year the Board of Directors has chosen to present the 2013 Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award to a remarkable woman, Debra Braun.

Debra has been the Education and Counseling Director of Pro-Life Action Ministries in St. Paul, Minnesota since 1986. Prior to that, she was the assistant to the editor of National Right to Life News in Washington, D.C. She has also worked for the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Debra has sidewalk counseled outside abortion centers on a regular basis since 1983. She has trained hundreds of people in sidewalk counseling techniques. She is the editor of Pro-Life Action News and Sidewalk Counseling News. Debra has a B.A. in mass communications and an M.A. in religious studies. She is a parishioner at St. Agnes Catholic Church in St. Paul.

Debra was nominated by 2 different people who had this to say...

I've known Debra for over 20 years. She has been one of the prime and original forces in Pro-Life Action Ministries, formerly Peace of Minnesota. During that time, branches in Duluth and Orlando have opened. Hundreds of children are alive because of her.

Debra does marvelous pro-life work outside the abortion clinics: lonely, often discouraging work, in good weather and in bad. I admire her immensely. She is a true "comforter of the afflicted" who charitably admonishes those who would sin. She is a true soldier of Christ.



Debra Braun with Herkenhoff family members and Colleen Perfect, President of CPO, to the left of her.

The CPO Board of Directors seeks the names of individuals who would be worthy of nomination for the 2014 - 10th 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. This year's award will be presented at the CPO Annual Fundraising Luncheon to be held on Saturday, October 25, 2014.

Please submit your nomination by October 1, 2014. 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.

Meet Your Guardian Angel

BY MARILYN GRUTSCH

*Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
to whom God's love, commits me here.
Ever this day, be at my side, to light, to guard,
to rule and guide. Amen.*

Most Catholics learn this prayer as a child. It conjures up the familiar image of two children crossing a bridge with a beautiful angel hovering over them, as they, in a carefree manner oblivious to possible danger, frolic across the raging waters below.

Are Guardian Angels just a childhood myth, on the level of Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy, merely to give children a warm fuzzy feeling of being watched over? What do we know about the existence of Guardian Angels? The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us,

Beside each believer stands an angel as a protector and shepherd leading him to life. The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls 'angels' is a truth of faith.

Tradition tells us there are nine choirs of angels, with Guardian Angels being closest to the material world and human beings. They deliver the prayers to God and God's answers and other messages to humans. Father John Hardon's Catholic Dictionary describes them as "celestial spirits assigned by God to watch over each individual during life." He also explains that this general doctrine is part of the Church's constant tradition, based on Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, adding,

The role of the guardian spirit is both to guide and guard. This protection is mainly from the evil of sin and malice of the devil, but can also protect from physical evil, insofar as necessary to guard the soul from spiritual harm.

There are no shortage of accounts told or written of angels interacting with humans, sometimes described as invisible spirits or even manifesting themselves in body form. Most of us can recall times when it seems the only explanation for surviving some peril or near-miss evil is that our angel was there to keep us safely guarded. It's even been said that if one falls asleep saying the rosary in the middle of the night, our Guardian Angel will finish it for us. Whether these are legends or truth, we aren't always sure, but we do know Guardian Angels exist because it has been substantiated by Sacred

Scripture, Popes, and by the Saints.

It was in the 17th century that Pope Clement X named October 2nd as the Church's Feast Day of Guardian Angels. Pope Pius XI advised, "Every day ... morning and evening, pray to your guardian angel, especially in difficulties." Pope Pius XII describes how directly and personally they are with us,

In speaking with someone who is closed to your argument, go to your Guardian Angel and recommend the matter to him. Ask him to take it up with the Guardian Angel of the person you have to see. Once the two angels establish an understanding, the conversation with the visitor will be much easier.



Blessed Pope John XXIII even attributed the idea of calling the Ecumenical Council to an inspiration of his Guardian Angel. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI once reminded Christians in his Sunday Angelus to call upon their Guardian Angels,

Dear friends, the Lord is always near and active in human history, and follows us with the unique presence of his angels, that today the Church venerates as 'guardian', in other words those who minister God's care for every man. From the beginning until death, human life is surrounded by their constant protection.

Numerous saints have taught us about our angels. St. Anselm said, "Every soul, at the moment when it is infused into the body, is entrusted to the keeping of an angel." St. Augustine emphasizes the loving relationship our Guardian Angels have to us, "We cannot pass our

Guardian Angel's bounds, resigned or sullen; he will hear our sighs." St. John Bosco tells us: "When tempted, invoke your angel. He is more eager to help you than you are to be helped! Ignore the devil and do not be afraid of him: He trembles and flees at the sight of your Guardian Angel." And St. Ambrose reminds us the power of calling upon them, "The servants of Christ are protected by invisible rather than by visible beings. But if these guard you, they do so because they have been summoned by your prayer."

It causes one to ponder the immense love that God our Father and Creator has for each one of us, that He would intimately care for every moment of our lives with a constant connection from Heaven while we are on our earthly journey. St. Thomas

Aquinas describes this as

...golden threads of spirit power with coarser sinews of natural energy holding the universe together. The angel does not stop gazing on God's unveiled presence; rather the human enters the sphere of the angels' activity like a planet kept within the orbit of the sun. The world of pure spirits stretches between the Divine nature and the world of human beings; because Divine wisdom has ordered that the higher should look after the lower, angels execute the Divine plan for human salvation: they are our guardians, who free us when hindered and help to bring us home.

So lest we dismiss the Guardian Angel prayer as a sweet nursery rhyme only meant for children, let us remember that it is packed with genuine and true power. Blessed Pope John XXIII, who disclosed that he prayed this prayer at least five times a day, advises,

Rely on your Guardian Angels. Teach the children that they are never alone, that an angel is at their side. Show them how to have a trusting conversation with the angel who is a good advisor and intercedes for you and helps you in your needs.



Every parent knows the challenges of gradually relinquishing our layers of protection for our children as they grow from infancy into young adults. It is a comfort to know that God's individual protectors and guides stay with us forever, although, humbly honoring our free will.

Dr. Mark Miravalle, professor of Theology and Mariology at Franciscan University of Steubenville, strongly urges us to start tapping the supernatural power of our Guardian Angels. He adds, "They are our personal guides, who know us better than we know ourselves and whose principal task is to bring us to Heaven."

He encourages daily prayer to our angel and if the traditional one seems too simplistic or child-like, make up your own, using the same elements. Even so, aren't we all children to our Father in Heaven? Scripture says, "Beware lest you scandalize any of these little ones, for their angels in Heaven see the face of My Father." Pope Pius XII tells us: "There exists another, an invisible world, real as our own, it is all around us; it is peopled with angels who travel with you and play a part in your lives." Our angels are a pure gift from God to help us while we are still living as a part of the Church Militant. It's time to meet your angel!



You are truly a ministry that has blessed and helped us grow to be courageous in our faith.

Thank you. I love your website and I send out your articles to every Catholic I know. Keep up the good work and God bless you.

I got 'lost' in the materials on your website today and two hours flew by. Thanks for the resources.

Your Apostolate is a great gift to the Church and mankind, thanks.

I wanted to let you know that I received the DVD today and my husband and I watched it tonight. It was wonderful. I plan to pass it on to my sister who has a

daughter. My husband is a convert and accepts the "rules" of the Church, but it was so good for him to hear (especially men) talking about the reasoning behind the "rules" (i.e. NFP versus contracepting). Thank you for a great video! I wish so much that I had heard all of this as a young woman...I might have saved myself years of heartache. God bless you for your work.

God Bless CPO...I really appreciate all your hard work and the insight.

Thank you for keeping us all so well-informed. There are so many things I would never know were it not for CPO!

I love the way you help me keep on top of what is going on. You are the greatest!

I'm glad you're doing this wonderful work—especially as it pertains to our children/grandchildren. I'm the grandfather of 8 grandchildren.

I really appreciate reading all your news. Living in upstate New York, it's good to read what others are doing.

Thanks for all the excellent emails you send out! It is helping our people be more aware and stay focused on the genius of our Catholic faith!





FR. ROBERT ALTIER
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS



2013

Lenten Retreat

Saturday, April 5, 2014

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM



*Every Saint has a Past
and Every Sinner has a Future*



Featuring Father Robert J. Altier

Church of Saint Agnes
535 W. Thomas Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

The day begins with Mass at 8:00 AM at Church of Saint Agnes, followed by a continental breakfast, and includes three dynamic presentations by Fr. Robert Altier, a delicious lunch, the Rosary and more.

Please join us!

Register early, seating is limited.

For more information, please call 651-705-5409 or email info@catholicparents.org

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Cost is \$25 per person or \$40 per married couple.

Please send check made payable & mailed to:

Catholic Parents OnLine

P.O. Box 130815

St. Paul, MN 55113

Number Attending _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Includes continental breakfast and lunch

Tickets will not be mailed out in advance; name tags will be waiting for you at the registration table after Mass.

CPO Award-Winning Multimedia

Categories include CDs and DVDs, most featuring Fr. Robert Altier

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Sacraments
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Catholic Music & Bookstore
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Marriage Enrichment
Prayer & Devotions
School Education
The Virgin Mary

Find more information at: www.catholicparents.org/cpomedia.html



Newsletter SURVEY

Please let us know what you think!

Please **circle** the most accurate response.

1. How much of the CPO annual newsletter do you normally read?

In its entirety About $\frac{3}{4}$ About half About $\frac{1}{4}$ Only skim it None at all

2. What sections do you read? (Circle all that apply)

President's Letter Photographs Fr. Altier's Article Articles by CPO Members
Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award Annual Recipient From the CPO Mailbag

3. Do you prefer to receive the newsletter via US Postal Service, or email, or both?

US Postal Service Email Both

Please write any additional comments below:

Thank you for your feedback! Please return this in the enclosed envelope-you can include the Retreat registration, too.