



Crystal Lake Musician to Perform in France

Joseph Schneider (right), parishoner at St. Thomas the Apostle in Crystal Lake, will travel with the Iowa State University Marching Band to Normandy, France, this summer for the annual memorial of D-Day. The only musical ambassadors for the U.S., they will take part in a parade and at services at Omaha Beach and the American Cemetery at Brittany. Schneider is a drum major for the band, but will also play the trombone. Support is welcome at joseph95@iastate.edu.



(Photo provided)



Q Somebody told me that St. Joan of Arc wasn't a real person. I've also heard that about St. Christopher. How does the Church know whether a saint is real or not?

A I can tell you for sure that St. Joan of Arc was real and that her faith was incredible and that she is a saint in heaven! So too, St. Christopher is up there with her, and both of them are probably pretty happy that you're reading *The Observer* right now!

Some people falsely claim that due to a lack of historical evidence on the life of St. Christopher, that in the 1960s the Church declared that he is no longer a saint. This is nonsense!

I'll tell you what did happen in the 1960s. During this time the Church revised its *universal calendar*, in order to introduce newer saints into the yearly celebration of the Church. At the same time other

saints were removed from the universal calendar, meaning that their feast days would only be celebrated in certain places, such as the countries that they were from.

St. Christopher was one of these saints who is no longer on the universal calendar but is still 100 percent in heaven!

We know that St. Christopher lived in modern day Turkey and that he died around 251 A.D. during the persecution of Decius.

So too we have real, historical facts about St. Joan of Arc. She was born in France in 1412, had visions of several saints during her childhood. She fought bravely as a soldier for France against the English but she was eventually captured and burned at the stake in 1431.

In her nal moments she cried out to Jesus giving witness to her faith and her love of Christ.

She also had a deep love of the sacraments and was very compassionate with the poor.

The amazing thing about some saints is that their lives are so inspiring that their stories spill out beyond the realms of the Church and into the secular realm

as well. St. Joan of Arc's story is so amazing that Mark Twain wrote a book about her life.

All of this goes to show that saints are real people!

Ten years after the death of St. Christopher and St. Joan of Arc no one would have denied all that they had done for the Church and the strength of their faith, just like today none of us would deny that Pope St. John Paul II lived and made an incredible impact on the Church during his life here on earth and that he now dwells in heaven with God.

So when it comes to the question of how the Church knows whether a saint is real or not, I'd say that the Church today trusts the judgment of the Church of centuries ago. That is the gift and the beauty of Catholicism. Our Church was founded by Christ and there has been an unbroken line of leadership since the time of Christ.

For this reason when it comes to the saints (and all doctrine for that matter) we can have confidence that we can believe it today because the people who knew these saints believed them to have incredible sanctity.

This month's YO Father question is answered by Father Keith Romke. Send your questions to youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org.

Rosary Swimmers Honored

Rosary High School's Swim team, 2015 IHSA champions, visited Gov. Bruce Rauner in Springfield March 3. The team is coached by Bill Schalz. At the gathering are (from left) State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, Rosary Principal Sister Ann Brummel OP, coach Schalz, Alexis Yager, Athena Ye, Emily Ryan, Samantha Laurich, Gov. Rauner, Camryn Streid, Sydney VanOvermeiren, Georgia Young, Kathryn Mueller, Linda Licari, Julie Bottarini, and Rosary athletic director Mary Lou Kunold. The team was undefeated this season. The team also visited the motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield who sponsor Rosary High School.



(Photo provided)

VOCATION CORNER

What is your reaction?

It's a fascinating moment. Jesus is calling the Apostles right after enabling them to catch a huge number of fish following a night at sea in which they had come in empty-handed. He says "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." And Peter has a very strange response.

Peter has just realized that Jesus truly is the Son of God. His immediate response to this epiphany is to say, "Depart from me Lord for I am a sinful man."

Why in the moment that Peter meets the man who

can forgive him for all that he's done, does he desire distance rather than closeness? It's crazy!

Yet it's what all of us are tempted to do. We desire to be close enough to God that we'll be able to go to heaven, but if we get too close we're afraid of what we'll have to give up. It might make us change our ways!

Yes it is true that we might have to let go of certain things, but no matter what these things are, God only takes away lesser things in order to give us

greater things!

The way that we can be sure of carrying out God's will is by avoiding any temptation to say, "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinner," and instead say "Draw near to me Lord for I am a sinner who needs your mercy!"

Draw close to God so He can enable you to be who you were created to be!

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations
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