



Actor Mark Wahlberg and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago

An everyday process

Actor Mark Wahlberg's faith journey makes an impression

By JOYCE DURIGA | Catholic News Service

Hearing the faith journey of Hollywood actor and businessman Mark Wahlberg left an impression on the hearts of young adults at the Archdiocese of Chicago's first (re)Encounter event Oct. 20 at the University of Illinois Chicago Pavilion.

"It's powerful for a celebrity to feel that way about religion," said Omar Lopez, 21, from St. Gall Parish. "For me, when I think about a celebrity, I think cockiness, selfishness, but to hear an artist say that he takes time to just pray, that's an incredible feeling."

Lopez rushed to the stage at the end of Wahlberg's segment and got to shake the actor's hand.

"I came to hear him because personally I feel lost myself," Lopez told the *Chicago Catholic*, the archdiocesan newspaper. "At first I was really skeptical about it. I came here to just hear different stories and to hear different aspects of life."

About 2,000 young adults attended (re)Encounter — an evening of music, speakers, faith sharing and eucharistic adoration aimed at energizing the faith of young adult Catholics.

The highlight was a question-and-answer session with Wahlberg and Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich.

Star of movies such as "Transformers: Age of Extinction," "Ted" and "Deepwater Horizon" and producer of the popular HBO series "Entourage," Wahlberg takes his faith seriously, often

attending daily Mass and making time for quiet prayer each morning.

He emceed the Festival of Families with Pope Francis during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in 2015.

His faith wasn't always important to him. Youngest in a family of nine children, he dropped out of school at 13, and served prison time. At 16, he was charged with attempted murder but he pleaded guilty to assault.

Today, he said, he's committed to being a good father and husband and giving his children the Catholic education he didn't have.

"I'm a street kid from Dorchester, Mass. Grew up in St. Greg's and St. William's parishes," he told the crowd. Because his parents worked a lot,

he was often unsupervised and took to running the streets.

"Ended up getting into a lot of trouble, incarcerated, tried as an adult at 16, 17. That was a big wake-up call for me," he told Cardinal Cupich. "A lot of people go to God, especially when they get in trouble. When I heard the jail doors close behind me, I started praying right away."

It was then that he turned his life around.

"Still, every day it's a process. That's why I start my day, every day, by getting on my hands and my knees and starting a time of prayer and reading, reading Scripture. Then I feel like I can go out there and conquer the world or at least do my job and give back because I've been blessed so much."

VOCATION CORNER

Pray hard to fight sin



By FATHER KYLE MANNO | Assistant Vocations Director

In our journey with discernment one of the biggest obstacles is our own personal sin. This is because sin hinders us from hearing the voice of God.

So what is it that usually is a factor in the fight with sin? Well just last week a friend of mine emailed me and said to open a Google document that he wanted to share with me.

As soon as I read the email I thought, "That's strange. He

usually writes a little bit more in an email and that doesn't sound like him."

So I concluded that the email was spam and that I wasn't going to open it.

In a matter of a minute I was so curious to know what was in that document that I clicked it even though my mind was telling me that it was clearly spam.

Later that evening around midnight my credit card

information was stolen and people were making purchases. That stolen information was all the result of me choosing to ignore my rational thoughts and follow my curiosity.

And that's the fight with sin.

Our mind tells us it's wrong, but then we are so curious to see what's on the other side that we overrule our mind and fall into sin with consequences.

Let us not allow curiosity to kill us, but let us choose life. Life with Christ.

In order to do this we must take on serious prayer, because serious prayer and serious sin can not exist together. One will drive out the other.

Let us take on a life of serious prayer to drive out any level of serious sin and truly hear the voice of God calling us to the life He has created for us!

YO FATHER



Is praying to the saints and Mary a biblical teaching?

A When it comes to answering questions like this one, we have to be very, very careful as to the words and terminology we use.

I will say right now the Bible 100 percent affirms the importance of our asking the saints and Mary to pray FOR us, but it does not support our praying TO them!

The difference may seem subtle, but it is super important. I think sometimes Catholics are misunderstood because others think we pray to the saints with some notion that the saints themselves directly grant favors or graces to us. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let me assure you I do not believe Mary through her own power can grant me anything. However, I do believe if I ask Mary (or any of the other saints for that matter) to intercede for me, they will certainly pray on my behalf before the throne of God around which they are gathered!

The first thing we can establish from Scripture is the fact it is a good thing to pray for others and God desires this.

One example from the Old Testament comes from the book of Job, where God says to some of Job's friends: "Let my servant Job pray for you because I will accept his prayer." (Job 42:8).

Then in the New Testament, Paul makes this same idea clear when he asks for prayer in saying: "I exhort you, brothers, through the love of the Spirit, to strive with me in prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the disobedient in Judea and my ministry may be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem, so in the joy coming to you through the will of God I may rest with you" (Rom 15:30-32).

So too James says: "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in

its effects" (Jas 5:16-17).

These few examples clearly show it is desirable to ask others to pray for us.

So, with this being established, where in the Bible does it speak about asking Mary and the saints to intercede for us?

We can find this in the book of Revelation, which gives us many images of the saints praying as they are gathered around the throne of God.

The first example I can come up with says "When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." (Rev 5:8)

A second passage would be this one: "Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers

YO Father is answered by Father Keith Romke, diocesan director of vocations. Send your questions to youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org



of the saints from the hand of the angel before God." (Rev 8:3-4)

If right now you're thinking these passages refer to the prayer of the saints, but not necessarily about the saints praying for us, you would be correct. However, allow me to point out the saints in heaven do not need to be praying for themselves as they are already in heaven. That means they will be praying on behalf of those of us who are here below, either on earth or in purgatory.

Isn't it incredible to think these prayers ascending like incense before the throne of God are for us?

So pray away and feel free to ask Mary and the saints to offer up prayers for your specific petitions!



Calling young men

If you are a high school upperclassman or a college student, consider your future at the annual Vocations Office Discernment Retreat, coming up soon. Info: Father Keith Romke, Vocations Office, 815/399-4300; kromke@rockforddiocese.org

College kid care



St. Bridget isn't the only parish in the diocese to send packages to college students or service members. Check with your parish to see how you can help fill or fund the boxes.



LOVES PARK—St. Bridget Parish packed and sent 83 Faith Boxes to college students on Nov. 6. The parish mails something to them twice a year. Each item inside the box has a religious saying or purpose to it.

Items in the most recent boxes included:

- a ring rosary (left) with a "how to say the rosary" card;
- a donut from an apple orchard;
- battery-operated votive candles;
- socks with different sayings (guys' socks below left); and

- pretzels with the story of their roots in faith. (Monks shaped them as hands linked in prayer. The three holes symbolize the Trinity.)

A card enclosed in the box reads "Jesus took naps. Be like Jesus."

"Your parish sends this to you to remind you how much we love and care about you and how proud we are of the work that you're doing," wrote Msgr. Daniel Deutsch, pastor, in a letter sent with the boxes.

They've had positive responses from students and their parents.

The next boxes from St. Bridget will be shipped in March.



(Photos provided)

RIGHT: The back of the "Jesus took naps" card is a message from the parish.

The Church of St. Bridget will be saying a Mass for YOU and all the college students in our parish on