

By: William Wahlers

I am writing this testimony on my journey in the Catholic faith and how the Parish of St. Rose of Lima has been the “Cornerstone” of that journey. The parish of St. Rose of Lima is more than just a place of worship for Sunday Mass. St. Rose has become a blessing and home for my Catholic faith.

Here is a little background of where and how I am in my journey in the Catholic faith. I was baptized a Catholic and made the Holy Sacraments of my first Holy Communion and Confirmation. I always believed and trusted in the Lord, but, unfortunately, I was what you would call a Catholic by name only, which sadly there may be many more out there. I did not have the blessing of growing up with a family that prayed much or went to weekly masses as a family. I became a lost Catholic, not realizing all that time I was lost from the Glory of the church and its blessings. As I grew older, I always felt that something was missing and did not understand what that was. I now know it was not letting the Lord and the Catholic Church into my daily life.

A few years back I lost a member of my family and became very confused and dark, even though, many have passed away during my life, including a close friend when I was a teenager. For some reason this loss was different and I wasn't sure how to understand it or where to turn. By the Grace of God, St. Rose of Lima sent me a letter about a bereavement group that was about to start and I decided to attend. I now know that was the Lord calling me “home”. The group was a blessing. Father Owen was the voice of reason, compassion and of the Lord. I will be forever grateful for Fr. Owen, the group and St. Rose of Lima.

When the group ended, I knew that wasn't the end of church for me. I then chose or should I say was guided by the Lord to do more in the church. St. Rose is a parish that has so much to offer to anyone that seeks to enhance or enrich their faith to be a disciple in their journey to carry the light of Jesus to all around them. Here are some of the reasons and blessings as to why St. Rose had and is a major part of my journey in my Catholic faith. Sunday mass is not enough for me and my journey, even though Fr. Owen's and Fr. Matthew's masses are enlightening and encouraging, so you not only hear the Word of God and their homilies, but take them into your heart and soul.

I felt a calling to be more involved in the church and St. Rose had what I needed. There are many ministries for all ages and journeys. To name just a few are the Knights of Columbus, the Rosary Altar society, the youth ministry, readers, ushers, catechists, food pantry, RCIA, meals on wheels and so many more. Besides these ministries, St. Rose has several classes throughout the year. There are two classes that I have taken that help one learn and understand our faith even more. One is presented by Deacon Vinny and Peggy Leo and these classes range from The Holy Mass to The Blessed Mother Mary. The other class is presented by Deacon Andrew. This is on the Holy Bible and the Gospels during the summer. I personally cannot get enough. I feel once you take one of these classes,

you will feel the same.

My passion for getting closer to the Lord grows each day and St. Rose was there for me for even more joy. St. Rose has other events such as bus trips to Carnegie Hall to see a Christian concert, a Broadway play and many others. Another blessing is the Pilgrimages. One was to The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. The ultimate pilgrimage for me was to Italy in October of 2016. That was a blessing and joy that brought me to an even higher level of closeness to Jesus and the church. I give thanks for that every day.

I have come a long way in my journey in the Catholic faith through St. Rose of Lima. I am honored to do whatever I can for the parish and all who are a part of it. I am honored to help out with ushering when needed and have just been blessed and honored to become a reader here at our parish and read the word of the Lord at Masses.

God bless Father Owen, Father Matthew, Deacon Vinny, Deacon Michael, Deacon Andrew, Seminarian Alex, Seminarian Kamil, Stephanie Politi, Kelly Robertazzi and all who work and volunteer for St. Rose. Plus all the parishioners, I have had the privilege to get to know and become friends with.

My journey in the Catholic faith has had its twists and turns, as many do, but without St Rose of Lima to light my way, I feel I may never have entered into a renewed life with Jesus. I feel joy and comfort from all of St. Rose of Lima. I give thanks for all the blessings that have come into my life.

We are all on the same journey to have that Beatific Vision with Christ and when we stand before the Lord to give an account of our lives, I pray I will hear the Lord say "Come, O good and faithful servant to share your Father's Joy!"