



ST. ISIDORE

CATHOLIC CHURCH



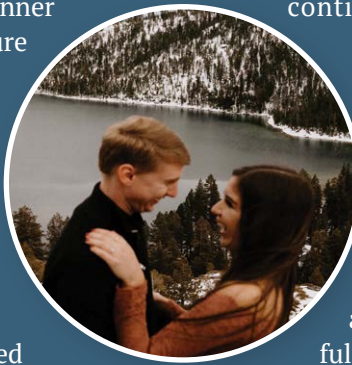
MEET

Samantha Arellano-Torres and Conner Benny *Living for Christ Together*

When Samantha Arellano-Torres and Conner Benny were dating, Samantha made sure to include Jesus in their relationship in a powerful way.

“We worked together as counselors at one of St. Isidore’s summer camps, and we dated for four years after that,” Samantha says. “All that time, I was praying that he would become Catholic. Although his family is Catholic and his dad teaches at St. Isidore Catholic School, he was never baptized as they had stopped going to church for a while. I would pray the Rosary for him, and I would also pray to St. Joseph. I have always loved how strong St. Joseph was in his relationship with Mary.”

Along the way, Samantha didn’t give up hope, but



continued to trust in God’s mercy.

“When we were dating, Conner would come to Mass with me, and eventually he said he wanted to become Catholic,” she says. “I am so glad he decided it for himself. I didn’t want him to do it just because of me.”

Samantha is now reaping the fruit of her labors in prayer, as she has walked alongside Conner on his journey to become a fully initiated Catholic.

“I prayed for this for a very, very long time, so it is really amazing to see it actually happening,” she says. “He is going through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, and will be receiving all of his First Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. I go to the classes with him, and it is

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MASS TIMES: Saturday: 8 a.m. *Bilingual* | 6 p.m. *Spanish* / Sunday: 8 a.m. *English* | 10 a.m. *English* | 12 p.m. *Spanish*
Weekdays: Monday - Friday | 12 p.m. *Bilingual*

CONFESSION TIMES: Wednesday: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. / Thursday - Saturday: 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

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TEACHING BY EXAMPLE

The Importance of Prayer in a Child's Life

**“I want to be just like Mom!”
“I want to be just like Dad!”**

Perhaps nothing lifts a parent's heart like hearing these words. While certainly affirming, such words also remind us of the great responsibility that comes with parenthood.

Children often examine the lives of their parents when making decisions that will affect their own lives. For example, a young boy may dream of becoming a physician one day, just like his father. Or a young girl may hope to become a veterinarian, just like her mother. Could the same be said about their parents' faith lives?

Just as children learn traits and values from their parents, they should also learn the importance and great joy of developing a personal relationship with Christ. And the foundation of such a relationship is prayer — conversation with God.

How should we go about teaching our children to pray? There are several methods, but none works as well as teaching by example. Begin teaching the importance of prayer by praying openly with your spouse. This teaches children that prayer is meaningful and important, and not just a ritual. Also, pray with your children — in the morning and in the evening. Show your sons and daughters the importance of beginning and ending each day in prayer.

While a fortunate dilemma, it's a dilemma nonetheless — Catholics face the challenge of discerning which prayers to use, considering the thousands available. A good rule of thumb is to start simple — maybe an *Our Father* or *Hail Mary*, and then move into something more complex — *Hail, Holy Queen* or

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Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, among others. Begin with prayers your children can pick up fairly quickly. Not only will this show them that praying can be fun and easy, but shorter prayers are also usually easier to understand.

Teach your children the importance of spontaneous prayer, rather than just prescribed prayers. Spontaneous prayer is any prayer that is created at the same time it is offered. Another way to think of spontaneous prayer is “praying in your own words.” Structure spontaneous prayers according to the ACTS acronym — Adoration, Con-

trition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In layman's terms, this means beginning each prayer with words of adoration, such as “You are the Lord God Almighty. I love you.” Move into a period of contrition, asking God's forgiveness for the sins you have committed. Then, give words of thanksgiving, thanking God for the gifts He has given. Finally, spend time sharing with God your heart's desires. These intentions can be personal or on another's behalf. Following this format ensures that spontaneous prayer “covers all the bases,” and doesn't become just a mental wish list. While God wants to hear and grant our wishes, He also expects words of adoration, contrition and thankfulness.

The best time to begin praying with your children is right now. The sooner they learn about prayer, the sooner they can begin cultivating their own relationship with Jesus. Many parents even pray with their children before birth, hoping their unborn son or daughter can hear their words in utero. Remember, there is no better way to teach one's children about the value of prayer than by example.

A Letter From Our Pastor

ALL THINGS AND ALL PEOPLE ARE *Made New*

Dear Parishioners,

We associate the Easter season with springtime — a time of new life and new beginnings — and Holy Scripture addresses this idea of newness many times. The Lord declares, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

This idea of being “new” is important to us as Catholics, and it is important to our parish. We need to strive to do this on a regular basis — even on a daily basis. Think of the fact that all was once new. Regardless of how you view the development of this earth and those of us who occupy it, all was once new.

During this Easter season, we need to retain that idea of being “new.” And being “new” means conversion, and we have often pointed out that conversion is at the heart of a life of stewardship.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it, “The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life” (654).

In other words, Christ’s Resurrection is the source of our new life — our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans (Rom 6:5) — “For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.”

Hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven is the result of Jesus’ Resurrection. What



greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope? We should sing with joy about God’s promise to us, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5).

St. Paul also wrote (Col 3:1-2), “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.” Jesus’ Resurrection and His promise of a new life for us mean that we need to live in conformity with our status as adopted children of God.

How do we show our joy and our gratitude to God for this amazing gift He has given us? We join in worship and praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus’ victory over death with our family, friends, and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has entrusted to us.

Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ’s Resurrection indeed makes all things new — the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Avram Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Avram Brown
Pastor



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DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY AND THE EUCHARISTIC APOSTLES OF DIVINE MERCY

Trusting in Jesus and Embracing Prayerful Reflection



As Pope St. John Paul II once said, “Divine Mercy reaches human beings through the heart of Christ crucified.”

On the weekend following Easter Sunday — this year, April 24 — we commemorate Divine Mercy Sunday. This is a day dedicated to reflecting on God’s mercy, especially through Christ’s death and resurrection.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is a devotion that came about from Jesus’ apparitions to St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun from the 20th century. The Diary of Saint Faustina Maria Kowalska includes God’s message of Divine Mercy to the world through St. Faustina. It is a powerful and compelling read, calling us all to embrace God’s mercy.

“Jesus taught me to trust Him through this Chaplet and prayer,” says Cathy Marsh. “My desire is for others to discover Jesus’ inconceivable mercy.”

And while Divine Mercy Sunday gives us a moment to pause and reflect, we at St. Isidore also have an ongoing opportunity of a similar nature.

The Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy is a group that comes together in prayer and service to

promote Divine Mercy and pray for others. They meet twice per month throughout the year.

“At one of our monthly meetings, we study the Diary of St. Faustina along with readings from the Bible and the Catechism,” Cathy says. “We pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy for our members’ intentions, along with intentions for our world’s conversion. At our second monthly meeting, we pray the Litany of Reparation and the Chaplet of Divine for those who are dying, especially for those who are not prepared to die.”

The group has been active at our parish since the mid ’90s.

“Barry Johnson started the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in our parish,” Cathy says. “John and Lucille Berg facilitated obtaining the Divine Mercy image that hangs in the vestibule of St. Isidore. Fr. Francisco Hernandez donated the statue of the Divine Mercy that stands in the church near Our Lady of Guadalupe. Many have supported this devotion while they have been parishioners — they, along with current members are so thankful to God for His mercy poured out on us on each Divine Mercy Sunday and throughout our lives.”

All are welcome to join the Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy, who meet at 6 p.m. in the Bride’s Room of our parish every first and third Monday of the month. For more information, please contact Cathy Marsh at marsh95901@gmail.com.

FRATERNUS

Helping Men of All Ages Find Common Bonds in Christ

Here at St. Isidore, we have many opportunities to provide spiritual formation for the younger members of our parish community — but Fraternus is unique in that it allows men of all ages across generations to grow in faith alongside one another. The ministry creates an environment for young men to find fellowship with their peers, while also providing a group of role models for them to look towards.

“This ministry was started this past fall, but we have been working on it since last spring,” says ministry member Matt Nelson. “There is a great need for a ministry to help men — especially young men — grow in love for God. Young men can get lost in the secular society that encourages them to turn from Christ. Fraternus is a discipleship that helps them to grow in virtue while strengthening their faith, and their love for God and his Catholic Church.”

Young men must be in the fifth grade or older to participate in the ministry, and they meet every Tuesday night from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the gym. While the group is Catholic, men do not need to be Catholic to participate.

“Men are able to always be part of the group — no one outgrows it,” Matt says. “We have both 80-year-old and 10-year-olds. We strive to help our members grow in virtue. We do this by prayer, study, community service, group discussion, listening to speakers, and helping build community within the Church.”

In addition to regular meetings, the group also organizes excursions throughout the year. They have participated in activities such as climbing the Sutter Buttes mountains; barbecues, a pig roast, and Rosaries at a ranch in the Sutter Buttes; an overnight camping trip along the Yuba River; and many members have attended a Fraternus National weeklong camp in Tennessee.

Especially in these turbulent times, faith is more important than ever and can help ground us in a world that



threatens to shake our foundations. Fraternus provides a solid faith community for these men and young men.

“Young men need a group to belong to,” Matt says. “We help make their group one that is full of good, Catholic, virtuous young men as their peers, and virtuous role models of men to look up to and who they want to emulate. We grow in community. We grow in charity. We help develop what our Church is — and today and in the future, it is in great need for good Catholic men.

“The father of one of our members sent me a text the other day,” he adds. “He said, ‘I just wanted to say that since my son joined Fraternus he has been so overjoyed and has begun praying for the first time in his life. He

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Fraternus *continued from page 5*

wants to become Catholic and feels no shame praying with peers his age at frat night — this is hard for kids his age who fear judgment from peers. As a father I can tell you that in two weeks I have seen a drastic change in his desire to be a moral man, he cares much more about doing the right thing. We are doing something special. Thank you all for showing him brotherly love.”



If you would like more information about Fraternus, or to get involved, please contact Greg Thompson or Matt Nelson via the parish office at 530-673-1573.

Samantha Arellano-Torres and Conner Benny

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going very well. We are really enjoying ourselves!”

By diving into the rich treasure chest of Catholicism, Conner and Samantha have found just how beautiful our faith really is.

“I am learning a lot of things that I didn’t know about the Catholic faith, and Conner is always saying how excited he is about what he is learning in our classes,” she says. “Some of the most interesting things we have covered were about Church history, as well as how to disprove arguments against atheism. The teachers are so wonderful as well, and it has been such a blessing to learn from those who have so much knowledge.”

Further, they have also found themselves to be more profoundly integrated into our parish family, who they have grown to know and love.

“Our faith has grown a lot from being in RCIA,” Samantha says. “We have also gotten to know more people, and it has been inspiring to be around people

that have such a deep faith.”

Conner and Samantha plan to get married at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Lincoln on July 16, with Fr. Avram conferring the sacrament.

“We definitely want the Catholic faith to be an important part of our family life,” she says. “It is so essential in a marriage. We want God to be the center of our marriage, and we know how important it will be to instill Catholic values in our children when we have them.”

Amazingly, God has been opening their hearts to living out the stewardship vision as a couple, so that they may find great joy in His love.

“We like to practice stewardship as a couple,” Samantha says. “We believe that giving your time and talent is very important for you. For example, we gave out some meals to the homeless this past year. It really helped us grow in our relationship.”