



Our Lady of Sorrows Church
June 16, 2019

From the Pastor's Desk

My Dear People:

Last Monday we buried Msgr. Bill James with his family in Elmwood, ending a long liturgical ceremony in Robertsdale at St. Patrick's parish, where he served the last 18 years of his pastoral life.

Fr. Bill was born in Birmingham, with an early education at St. Paul's. He went to the minor seminary at St. Bernard, from which he then went to Mount St. Mary's seminary. He was three years my senior at St. Bernard, as well as at the Mount. I actually followed him in our first assignment as teachers at McGill institute in Mobile. We were together at Catholic University, working for a Masters in Catholic education. Retirement was never in his vocabulary until circumstances demanded that of him in the last eight years of his life. He still offered Mass and preached.

When Alabama was split into two diocese, he was from Birmingham and was frozen in Mobile. I, from Mobile, was frozen in Birmingham. God's providence is rich, because Birmingham, with 23 years full time at John Carroll and Our Lady of Sorrows was best for me, while Father James went on to much greater opportunities, having to stay in the Mobile diocese.

In the 60's he was Assistant Superintendent of schools and the Director of Religious Education for the diocese.

At Mount St. Mary's seminary he excelled. He became the student director of Gregorian chant for the 100 members of the student body. Nobody could sing the Exultet of the Easter Vigil as he could. In the seminary and beyond he became my Mentor, of a sort, with his zeal and dedication.

Fr. James was pastor of St. Francis Xavier in Mobile, and served as Vicar of Religious and Family Life for the Diocese of Mobile. He was pastor of Mother Mary parish in Phenix City, Alabama. He was the pastor and administrator of St. Jude's in Montgomery for 11 years. This was fitting, because he was always concerned about the poor and handicapped. Fr. James was pastor of St. Patrick's in Robertsdale for 18 years.

In the 60's Fr. James was such an activist for Civil Rights that he marched in many of the Civil Rights marches and spent his nights in jail for doing so. He gave hundreds of retreats, especially for nuns.

Father loved his extended family and chose to be buried with them in the family plot in Elmwood. We placed his body to rest and we continue to celebrate the priestly life and his life in heaven.

Our thoughts and prayers are especially with his family, our parishioners, Dr. Thomas James, his brother, and his niece, Cathy Dent, and their families.

The last time we saw Fr. Bill was months ago when he preached at the funeral Mass of Fr. Robinson, his very close friend. Fr. James wrote frequently about heaven and ended his homily for Fr. Robinson by quoting St. Paul's description of heaven being beyond any human experience. Bill's last words on the excellent homily were: "I can't wait!" Now, his waiting is no longer.

Freedom is not free. On the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, there were many scenes on television. But, nothing became more alive for me than the article reprinted in this issue of the bulletin. Frank DeVita (still alive) was in the Normandy invasion and has written his experience for the Columbia magazine. Any magazine would be proud to print this article. Be proud of our service men, who have given their lives for our freedom, and continue to

pray for every last one of the 2000 who died in the Normandy invasion.

With prayers and blessings,
Father Muller

P.S. Happy Father's Day! We can never do for our parents what they have done for us. We owe them endless thanks. So, we need to keep thanking them!



Vita D'Amico, Mary Ann Huie,
Charlie Kai Wadsworth,
Melanie Gilchrist, Kennie
Skellie, Debbie White, Jude
Tombrello



Mass Intentions

Monday, June 17	Special Intention Victor Hugh Rumore Ruby Sherman
Tuesday, June 18	Robert Corbett Jackie Franks Ruby Sherman
Wednesday, June 19	J. Huber O'Donnell Jackie Franks Lena Lucia
Thursday, June 20	Special Intention Victor Hugh Rumore Maddalena Mastropasqua
Friday, June 21	Special Intention Sp. Int. the Schiller Family Josephine Romano
Saturday, June 22	Donors to OLS School Foundation Sp. Int. the Putman Family Leonora Fox and Joseph Fox, Jr.
Sunday, June 23	People of the Parish Alfonso Castro Ruby Sherman

CHAPEL OF OUR SAVIOR

The Chapel needs permanent Committed Adorers for:

Wednesday at 9 AM (Share with Partner)

Thursday at 7 AM (Share with Partner)

Friday at 1 PM (Share with Partner)

Saturday at 11 AM (Share with Partner)

Sunday at 2 PM (Share with Partner)

Our goal is to have at least 2 people on each

hour. These are the hours needed, but do select an hour that best fits your schedule. Please call Mary Claire Brouillette at 871-2909 or Trudy Carpri at 643-0248.

The Family Life Center walking track will be closed for painting beginning Monday, June 17, through Friday, June 21. We apologize for any inconvenience. Thank you.

What's Going on in Youth Ministry?

Friday, June 28: We will have a Day of Service in association with the Eucharistic Congress. Email carol@olsyouth.com to sign up your teen or for more information. This event is open to Middle and High School.

Saturday, June 29: Join us for the Youth Track at Eucharistic Congress! Email carol@olsyouth.com to sign up your teen or for more information. This event is open to Middle and High School.

Check out olsyouth.com for our summer schedules!

Life Teen High School

Wednesday, June 19: Kidnapped Gnomes Scavenger Hunt. Come ready to compete on teams and have fun!

Rising Freshman and outgoing seniors are invited all summer long.

Edge Middle School

If you are attending Camp Hidden Lake, your final balances are due! One spot remaining – contact carol@olsyouth.com for more info!

Elementary Children's Ministry

Saturday, June 29: Register now for the Children's Track at Eucharistic Congress at <https://bhmcatholic.com/ec-childrens-track!> For more information email ecm@ourladyofsorrowsc.com

Fourth of July Festival Volunteers—

The Signup Genius website is still the preferred method to sign-up for each area of the festival. There are also convenient links to each sign-up located on the Church website:

www.ourladyofsorrows.com. Once you sign-up, each volunteer will receive an immediate email reminder and a second reminder 2 days before your chosen volunteer slot. We ask that children get their parent's permission before signing up.

Signup sheets will also be in the vestibule beginning with the weekend of June 15-16.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer but don't have internet access, please contact Greg Pierre at 907-5605.



The OLS Altar Sodality will be distributing cake mixes for the 4th of July Cake Booth after all Masses on June 15 - 16 and possibly June 23.

Please pick up one or two in the vestibule as you exit. Bring your baked cake to the OLS School Cake Booth either July 3rd from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. or July 4th from 8 - 10 a.m. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Leigh Nabors at 908-5468. Thank you for your support!

Do you play Bridge or do you want to learn? We are offering free lessons at the Family Life Center on Wednesday, June 19 and June 25. If interested, call Jean Holt at 979-0259 or Lil Bruzzese at 942-4431.

The Padre Pio Prayer Group will meet on Saturday, June 22, at 10 a.m. Fr. Frankline will lead us in the rosary, prayers, Benediction and Holy Mass. Please join us for this time of prayer. All are welcome!



Trash and Treasure Needs You!

We are now accepting:

Household items	Toys
Collectibles	Bikes
Holiday Items	Art
Jewelry	Rugs
Camping Gear	Religious
Tools	Linens
Books	Appliances(working)
Gardening	Crafts
Luggage	Lamps
Yard Items	Electronics(working)
Clothing – clean, <u>gently used</u> , and on hangers if possible	

Donations may be dropped off at the school gym at the bottom of the steps. **Last day for pick-ups is June 26th and the last day for donations is July 1st.**

If you need a large furniture item pick-up, call Mike Montenegro at 205-335-9046.

Items we are NOT able to take at this time include:

- Broken/non-working items
- Car seats past the expiration date
- Mattresses
- Sleeper sofas
- Cribs
- Pianos
- Large tube TVs
- Large appliances

We appreciate everyone's time and donations. For questions, please call Melanie Falconer at 281-9695. Thank you!!

TNT Work Hours:

Monday, June 17 th	9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Wednesday, June 19 th	9 a.m.- 2 p.m.
Thursday, June 20 th	4 p.m.- 8 p.m.
Saturday, June 22 nd	9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Brooklyn native Frank DeVita was 19 when he participated in the D-Day invasion. For the next 70 years, he did not speak about his wartime experience, even to his wife and children. Then, in 2014, on the occasion of receiving the French Legion of Honor medal — the highest award given by the French government — he opened up in an NBC interview with Tom Brokaw conducted on Omaha Beach.

DeVita returns to Normandy this month with family and friends to mark the 75th anniversary of one of the most pivotal events in modern history.

THE FIRST WAVE

When the war broke out in 1941, I immediately tried to enlist. I was only 16 years old at the time, and my mom said I had to wait and finish high school. At 18, I joined the Coast Guard and was assigned to the USS Samuel Chase, an attack transport.

After we did the invasions of North Africa, Sicily and Salerno, we practiced two or three months for Normandy, raising and lowering the boats, day and night. The invasion was supposed to be June 5, but there was a big storm in the Channel and Eisenhower called it off till June 6.

At four o'clock in the morning, we started loading our boats. We had 21 Higgins boats — LCVPs: Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel. Each one carried between 30 and 32 men.

We were 11 miles from the beach because the German 88 (mm) guns had a range of 10 miles. We started on toward the beach. It was very dangerous because of the mines and obstacles in the water called Belgian Gates. Along the beach were MG42 machine guns, each capable of firing 160 rounds per minute — 35 of these buggers were firing at us.

We were all scared. It was terrible. The best word is pandemonium.

My job was to drop or raise the ramp on the front of the boat; it was made of two or three inches of reinforced steel. Machine gun bullets were bouncing off the ramp like firecrackers, so we were safe for the time being.

Then the coxswain said, "DeVita, drop the ramp." I didn't hear him because of the roar of the guns and the two big diesel engines in the back of the boat.

Then he yelled louder, "DeVita, drop the ramp!"

For a few seconds I froze, because I knew when I dropped that ramp, the machine gun bullets will come into the boat.

And then for the third time he yelled, "G— d— it, DeVita! Drop the f— ramp!" I dropped the ramp and the bullets that were hitting the ramp came into the boat. About 15 or 16 GIs died immediately; many were wounded, some very seriously.

Everybody thinks when you go to die, you pray to God. But when you're about to die, the only word that comes out of your mouth is, "Mama! Mama!" That's what they were saying.

I'm in the back of the boat, where the handle was to lower and raise the ramp, so I actually had some protection. The troops who died in front of me were absorbing the bullets that probably would have hit me.

Near me were two stragglers, two young boys. One took a round in the belly, but somehow he survived that day. He was very lucky. The second kid had red hair and was maybe a foot away from me. The machine gun took his helmet and part of his head off. He was not so lucky.

He was screaming, "Help me! Help me!" But I couldn't help him. He fell at my feet, and I didn't know what to do. I had no morphine. The only thing I had in my possession was the Lord's Prayer. I started praying over him,

and when he heard the words, it seemed to calm him. Then I reached down and squeezed his hand because I wanted him to know he wasn't alone. And then he squeezed my hand a little bit, and he died. He was just a little boy. Just a little boy.

'WHY AM I STILL ALIVE?'

Now, the coxswain started screaming, "Lift up the ramp. Let's get the hell out of here!" So, I pulled the handle and the ramp didn't come up. I pulled it again. Nothing. So now we're in serious trouble. We're gonna be target practice for the 88s.

I didn't know what to do. The ramp was in the front, and I'm in the back. I can't see it from where I am because of the dead and wounded in front of me. I had to crawl over them to get to the ramp.



DeVita, who served as a gunner's mate third class aboard the USS Samuel Chase during World War II and crewed a Higgins boat on 15 D-Day landings, is pictured in uniform in 1943.

And while I'm crawling, I'm crying. I'm saying to these kids, "Please excuse me. I have no other alternative." When I got closer, I realized that two dead soldiers were on the ramp, holding it down. They never got off the boat.

I tried lifting them up but I couldn't. I weighed 125 pounds. Another guy came to help, and inch by inch, we pulled them into the boat.

Meanwhile, we're getting fired at. The bullets are like locusts, like a swarm of angry bees. You wondered when the next one's gonna take your head off.

Now, the ramp went up and the coxswain started backing out. He did a masterful job avoiding the mines and the Belgian Gates and got us out of there. We had a torturous first wave. It was 90% casualties. It was a bloodbath.

We pulled alongside a hospital ship. They would only take the very badly wounded. Two guys, God bless them, jumped in our boat and started peeling the dead off to get to the live ones underneath. They retrieved seven badly wounded boys, and I said, "Maybe they'll live through the day."

When we got to our ship, I had a big decision to make. Do I go back? And I said to myself, "Why should I send somebody in my place to be killed?" So I went back with the second wave.

Altogether, I made 15 trips to the beach. They weren't all bringing troops to the beach. Probably around the sixth or seventh wave, we started taking the dead and the wounded off the beach and back to the ship. We pulled out 308 dead bodies from the water.

By 10 o'clock at night, the white flags started coming out from the Germans, surrendering.

Then our Higgins boat started going back — it looked like popcorn, all shot up — and all the others went back to the *Chase*. I was covered with blood and vomit and didn't want to be with anybody.

So I walked to the stern of the ship. It was late. I sat down on the cold deck and I said to myself, "What the hell just happened here? Why am I still alive?"

And when my eyes got acclimated, I turned around. Against the bulkhead, piled like logs, were all these dead soldiers on top of one another. I started to cry, and cried myself to sleep.

The next morning, somebody shook me up and said, "Come on. We have to unload the dead." And that's what we did.

Two people saved my life: Jesus and my mom. The reason I say my mom is that when you're killed in action, the government sends a telegram. I was determined to live so my mom wouldn't get that telegram.

We were just kids — 17, 18, 19 years old! There were 2,000 boys that were not going see their Mamas. It was by the grace of God I was alive.

'THE BIGGEST SACRIFICE'

After D-Day, we took part in the invasion in southern France and the tail end of Okinawa. I was in the occupation of Japan for about four months and then my service was over. They gave me a check for \$84 and a train ticket to go home.

When I got back in '47, I had only a high school diploma. My dad was a chief designer for the Navy for 30 years. He said to me, "Why don't you follow my footsteps?" So I became a clothing designer.

I got married in '49. Her name was Dorothy; we went to kindergarten together. We had three children — a girl and two boys. For 70 years, I never talked about the war. My wife died six years ago; she never knew. It was too horrible. I still have nightmares about that little redheaded boy.

Then, my friend Fred told me, "You gotta talk about it so people know." He opened up the lock in my brain. The 70th anniversary, five years ago, was the first time I talked about it, when I told the story to Tom Brokaw.

My wife was after me for a few years to join the Knights, but I'm not a joiner. I didn't join the Veterans of Foreign Wars or anything like that. A friend of mine passed away, and they had a dinner after the funeral. One of the grand knights sitting next to me asked, "Why don't you join the Knights?" I said, "I'll join the Knights for the man who just died. I'll take his place." That was 10 years ago. Now, I'm a Fourth Degree Knight. And it was the best thing I ever did. I should have done it years ago.

I belong to a great council — 5959. We dedicate all our time to helping others; that's what the Knights is all about. I give talks at high schools and I always tell the kids, "Join the service; join the Knights; help people!"

This June will be my 11th trip to Normandy. The beach itself doesn't affect me that much, but there's a cemetery right above Omaha Beach with 9,400 dead GIs. I go there every year, and I cry and I cry. They made the biggest sacrifice. They gave their lives so that we have freedom today. ♦

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