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## REGNUM CHRISTI NEWS OF THE WEEK

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**The Joy and Simplicity of Haiti**

## ***Thirty missionaries from the Detroit metro area go on mission to Port-Au-Prince***

“Haiti becomes a part of life, and the people become family.”

These are the words of RC consecrated woman Jenna Coughlin describing her group’s recent experience in Port-Au-Prince, Haiti.

Thirty missionaries, mostly from the Detroit metro area, joined Jenna, Fr. Aaron Smith LC, Brother Kramer Cameron LC, and consecrated woman April Pickett on a July 2014 mission trip. As with all the [Mission Youth](#) organized trips to Haiti, the group worked alongside the Missionaries of Charity (MOC) sisters who have a continuing presence in the country.

At the beginning of the mission, the missionaries helped at a camp for about 200 little girls. Jenna said they were able to break the “the language barrier” with “lots of love and laughter.”

On the first Sunday, the missionaries celebrated Mass with the campers, as well as another hundred or so little boys and families from the area surrounding the MOC Children’s Home (an



Mission Youth missionaries from Detroit area in Haiti



orphanage). The missionaries gathered some of the babies from the Children's Home to attend.

"It's really impressive how well-behaved the children are in Mass, and how they sing with all their hearts and souls!" said Jenna.

Afterwards, the missionaries assisted at the orphanage, providing loving comfort for some of the sick little ones.

Fr. Aaron had the opportunity to baptize one of those sick babies, named Therese, and some of the missionaries served as her Godparents. Later in the week, there was a "heart-wrenching" moment as the missionaries witnessed her tiny body, wrapped in white cloth, taken out after Therese passed away.

More challenging experiences were ahead as the missionaries helped at the Wound Clinic. Local people come to have major wounds, often infected, cleaned, treated and bound. After some quick lessons in treating the wounds, the missionaries did their best to look beyond the "gruesome" work to see the faces of the people who trusted them to receive the help they needed.

One of the most powerful experiences for the missionaries was working in the MOC Home for the Dying, a place where those with terminal illnesses are cared for.

"It is a place of peace, gratitude and everyone lives with their eyes



RC consecrated April Pickett and a friend in Haiti



set on heaven,” said Jenna. “It really seems more like a tribute to life than a place of death. All are treated with utmost respect and care, and it doesn’t matter if the people are Catholic or not.”

During some of their downtime, the missionaries had the opportunity to learn more about the Missionaries of Charity. One of the sisters, who is originally from Detroit, let the visitors question her. They learned she had been a member of the Missionaries of Charity for 33 years, and served 10 years in Haiti. She told them about her memories working with Mother Teresa.

When asked, "Does what we do here really make a difference?" the MOC sister smiled and replied, "Jesus said, 'WHATEVER you do to the least of my brothers, you did to me.' So each moment, every little thing you do, if it's done for Jesus and with love, makes the difference. And can you really change Haiti? Every time you change (the diapers for) that baby, you change Haiti."

Also during their time in Haiti, they had the opportunity to tour the capitol city. They got to see what is left of the Cathedral destroyed during the 2010 earthquake.



Br. Kramer Cameron LC and missionary Mitch Lasceski



They took a moment of prayer and silence, remembering the archbishop and seminarians who, along with so many others, were killed that day.

On the last day of camp, they organized a parade of the children to “When the Saints Go Marching In.” The missionaries wished they did not have to leave. Saying farewell to these little ones was the hardest part.

Fr. Aaron tried to prepare them for the departure with a final Mass on the rooftop where they were staying. He told the missionaries they were called to go back home and bring their experiences to a world that does not have as much material need, but plenty of spiritual need. Then the group spent some time in Eucharistic Adoration underneath the stars.

They would later share with each other their reflections on their experience, discussing how they planned to leave behind their worries and anxieties over the “petty things.” They expressed their desire to bring with them the “joy



Claire Lasceski shares some love and laughter with a Haitian child.



and simplicity” of the Haitian people, especially the children, and to be grateful to God for His gifts given during this special week, and throughout their lives.



Fr. Aaron Smith LC celebrates Mass with the missionaries.



## I Will Send You...to a Shampoo Unknown

Regnum Christi Live – July 28, 2014  
By Rachel Peach



4:30am found me sprawled out on top of my suitcase, jiggling the zipper and coaxing it to close. Sigh. I'd have to leave the shampoo, body wash, and toothpaste. There simply wasn't room.

Well, at least I wasn't overly attached to my shampoo. I'd acquired that bottle of Mane n' Tail from a similar situation a few weeks ago, when someone else left Greenville for their new apostolic assignment. Still...it was a nice bottle of shampoo. I don't think my hair has ever been that soft and smooth. Oh well.

Finally getting the zipper all the way around, I was able to heave the suitcase upright. As I stepped back to size it up, the words from God spoke to Abraham popped into my mind: "Go, to a land I will show you": to a land unknown.

No kidding. He is even sending me to a shampoo unknown. I guess when I get to Houston I'll find out what extra bottle of shampoo and tube of toothpaste are in the closets there.

I have to admit: it's an awesome, freeing feeling to think that I'm boarding this airplane with all I've got in a just a couple suitcases and a backpack.

Well, actually, in just a suitcase and backpack...the second suitcase has all my turtlenecks and the winter gear I acquired from the past 5 winters in Rhode Island. I have a feeling those won't be as necessary in Houston, Texas!

A missionary: someone sent.

Settling back in my seat, 15D, and eyeing my surroundings, I find people munching and sipping their Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts breakfasts. I'm about to pull out the amazing peanut butter and jelly sandwich I made and packed past night.

I can't help but smile. I love my life. And even more, I love my God.

## **A bigger family**

**Regnum Christi Live – July 29, 2014**  
**By Fr Kevin McKenzie LC**



The other day I was playing soccer in our backyard with a group of boys. We were having a send-off party for a good friend, Father Timothy Walsh, who is heading on to a new assignment. I worked closely with him over the last year, and he has been a godsend of a mentor in more ways than one for this baby priest.

There were over a hundred people there in our backyard – quite the crowd!

Moments earlier, I had pulled out the soccer ball, and little by little it drew the boys in like a magnet. Before long we must have had a 10 on 10 game. Lots of fun, needless to say. After tiring myself out, I had taken the place of the goalie, and was watching the game. The boys ranged from 3-year-olds all the way through a few high school freshmen. Most of the little ones hadn't really passed the "mob-ball" stage yet. They spent the game stealing the ball from their teammates and trying desperately to score. It was a lot of fun watching them, really.

Earlier, I had been thinking about one of the hard parts of being a priest. You take a vow of celibacy, and so you don't get married. No wife. No kids. It was something I had to think long and hard about before I took that vow. Because, personally, I'd love to be married. I'd love to have a family. I know it wouldn't be all fun and games – one sitting in the confessional makes that

clear very quickly – but I do know that it would be very fulfilling, that it would fill a hole in my heart.

But I took the vow. And I became a priest. And I didn't do that out of masochism, or a spirit of penance, or hoping that the rules would change. I did it because I believe God called me to be a priest. I did it because I believe that there is more to fatherhood than physical fatherhood alone. But there's always been plenty of mystery to all this.

As I stood there in the goal, watching the boys play, God gave me a little more clarity. Simply put, I realized that these were my children. My family. My spiritual family. My spiritual children. And these were only a part. There are more than just the hundred that were there. Many of them go to the school where I'm chaplain and they call me father. Others I meet in my travels. Others I serve on retreats and summer camps.

If I were to have my own family - a physical one – I'd have as many children as God would give us (I always wanted to have lots!). Nine, maybe, like my mom and dad had, if I was lucky, But not a hundred! And the kids I was playing soccer with are wonderful kids, from wonderful, faith-filled families. I would do my best at parenting, but I doubt if any of my kids would turn out as good as these.

Get it? If I were physical father to some, then I couldn't be spiritual father to all. After taking a vow of celibacy, God has given me more children, and better children, than I could ever have otherwise. It seems so contradictory, and you certainly don't see it that way when you're contemplating never walking down the aisle with Mrs. Right at your side.

Sure, my desire was, and is, to be married. But there is a greater reality. That hole in my heart is still there, but, to my surprise, there is One who fills it in a marvelous way.

It all doesn't make sense at first glance, or even at the ten-thousandth glance... but for God it makes sense. And sooner or later, often little by little, God lets us see things His way. He gives us glimmers and moments of clarity that help us keep going.

Please pray for all priests, that we may be faithful to our vows, and that we make seek our wholeness from the only One who can truly give it – God Himself. His is the everlasting Romance.

## Arms that reach...

**Regnum Christi Live – July 30, 2014**  
**By Heidi Seubert**



I can still hear my mom's voice, "Hug her, and tell her you are sorry. Hug each other".

Seconds before, we engaged in a favorite pursuit of scaling, up and down, with our palms and heels, the open doorway in our kitchen. I don't remember exactly what we needed to make up about. Most likely, we acted selfish and pushy and loud over doorway rights. (It's amazing the avenues of adventure that TV restrictions produced in our early lives.) I do recall looking askance at my sister's blonde-framed face and slightly challenging glare.

Mom's unexpected intervention did not seem to suit either of us. However, our child wills vs. Mom's left small doubt as to whose would prevail. Eyeing

each other, we gingerly stepped forward. Stiff little arms thrust out, limbs askew, reaching for each other, distance lessening and gone. We mumbled contrite words, mostly to the linoleum floor. And, closer, closer drawn into that tight embrace and two tiny hearts thudding with the effort. I recall her soft cheeks, her hair brushing against my younger face and her, “Sorry Heidi”. My, “sorry,” also whispered loud enough for Mom to hear, but certainly strained with emotion. Then, settling back, slowly letting go, and our faces had relaxed, muscles no longer tense...we could begin again.

It was hard to say “it”...to say, “Sorry”! It wasn’t perfectly said or perfectly felt, but the effects changed our day and hardening hearts. Today, years after, praying before the Eucharist, I ponder this mystery of forgiveness. Was it in this young, life lesson that I really began to experience and understand forgiveness? It doesn’t always feel automatic or cozy or easy. What about now, that I am “grown up” and in some ways, less flexible and free in reaching for another?



How do I forgive now or ask forgiveness? Could it be that through the tangle of arms and stiffness, if I reach, I'll discover another heart thudding next to mine? A heart resembling my own, brimming with personal battles, triumphs, joys and sorrows. Maybe a heart not sure it is REALLY loved, until it feels my heartbeats too. The heartbeats of a sister! Because, after all, isn't it true that deep down we

are all each other's sisters and brothers? Am I not my sister's and brother's keeper?

So, those little things of my "little" life, like a hug to make amends, bring me into the heart of the mystery of forgiving and life. And now, with anyone I've hurt who I need to hug, even in a seeming impenetrable distance, through the power of the Eucharist, I can reach for them. Really, she and everyone is only an arm's length away. Jesus, please give me arms that reach, inside of arms frozen at my side!

## Catholic Advice

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

### *Fr. John Bartunek tackles spiritual questions in his new book*

Fr. John Bartunek LC has taken his years of experience answering questions about the spiritual life and collected them into a new Q & A book called *Answers: Catholic Advice for Your Spiritual Questions*, published by Servant Books, a subsidiary of Franciscan Media.



Fr. John Bartunek LC directing a small group.

Dan Burke, executive director of EWTN's *National Catholic Register* and organizer of the website [RCSpiritualDirection.com](http://RCSpiritualDirection.com), asked Fr. John to contribute to the website a few years ago. Since then, Fr. John has continued to field spiritual questions on a weekly basis.

"Properly aimed and answered, these questions can launch a soul into engagement with God that it would otherwise have never known," writes Dan in his "Foreword" for Fr. John's new book.

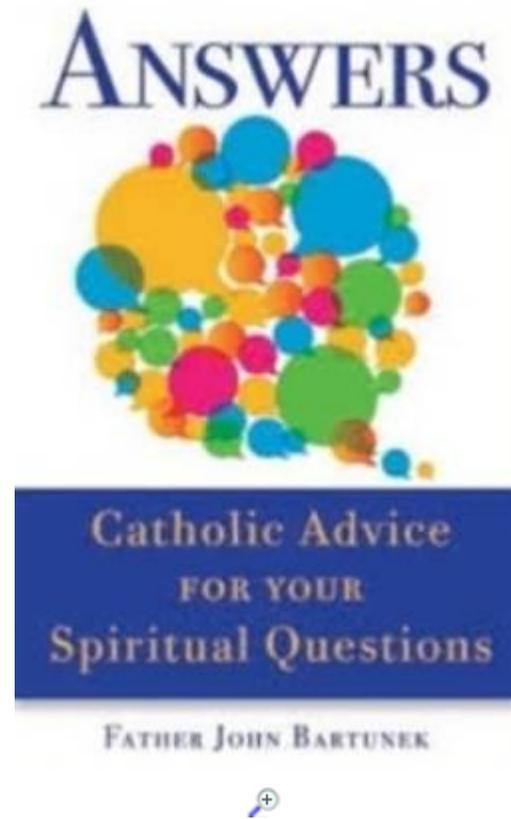
Taking this series of real-life questions answered on the website, Fr.

John has compiled what he describes as a handbook to deal with some of the toughest spiritual questions, ranging from prayer to solving moral dilemmas.

Samples of

some of the questions include:

- How can I hear God speaking in prayer?
- What is redemptive suffering? What does it mean to 'offer it up'?
- How can I learn to love God?
- How can I be joyful when life seems hopeless?
- Why are some sins so hard to overcome?
- How can I forgive someone who shows no remorse?
- What kind of entertainment is appropriate?
- Is it possible to be too spiritual or passionate about my faith?
- What are Indulgences? What is a Novena?
- Why is it Important to attend Sunday Mass?
- Can non-Christians go to Heaven?



The new book focuses specifically on how a Christian can grow spiritually. Fr. John said he tried to make his answers concise and easy to read, in what he calls “a practical compendium” useful as spiritual reading for beginners and veterans in the Christian life. He also pointed out that the book can be an apologetics tool, showing ways to explain these truths to inquisitive colleagues, family members, and acquaintances.

“You can get through one or two questions in just a few minutes,” he said. “It serves as an excellent source for spiritual reading. And since the questions are all from real people trying to grow spiritually, the

answers always bring theoretical truths down to practical behaviors and applications.”

Don't just take Fr. John's word for it. "Every single Catholic should keep a copy of *Answers* at home and at work to help them better understand and share their faith with others," writes Patrick Lencioni, author of *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Advantage*, in his recommendation for the book. "Outside of the Bible and the Catechism, this may be the most complete explanation of our faith that I've ever encountered. Fr. John Bartunek has an amazing gift for describing the most important

things with clarity, completeness and humanity.”

The book is available at Amazon at the following link:

<http://www.amazon.com/Answers-Catholic-Advice-Spiritual-Questions/dp/1616368225>



Fr. John Bartunek talking with Dan Burke.



## **A life lived in service culminates in the embrace of Christ**

MEXICO | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

*Fr. Brian Fagan LC passed away yesterday in Mexico City*

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Yesterday, July 29, 2014, Fr. Brian Fagan, LC, left this life to meet the Lord.

He has returned to the “Father’s House” after faithfully treading the path of his priestly pilgrimage in the Legion and Regnum Christi.



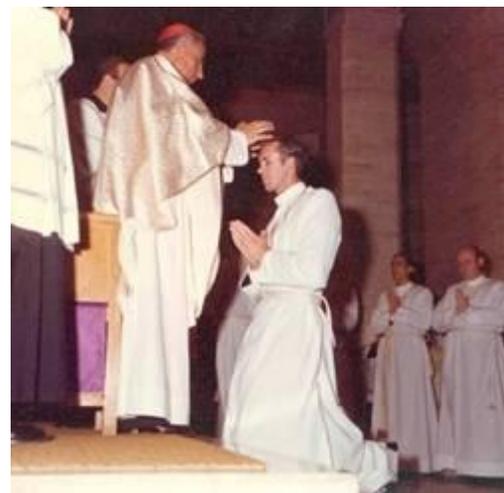
He died of a heart attack as he slept, after long years of suffering from Huntington’s disease, a neurodegenerative genetic disorder that appears in the mid-life adult.

Fr. Brian was born in Dublin, Ireland, on January 24, 1950. He was an only child, and joined the novitiate of the Legion of Christ on September 29, 1967. Two years later, the Legion held its first extraordinary General Chapter, during which Br. Brian made his first religious profession.

He made his perpetual profession on September 10, 1975 in

Rome, while studying philosophy and theology. During this time he was asked to serve on the team of formators there. He was ordained in Rome on December 24, 1978, in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, by Cardinal Eduardo Pironio.

From 1976 to 1991, Fr. Brian served as director and formator of the lay consecrated men of Regnum Christi in their founding years. He was sent to work in the Cancún-Chetumal Prelature in Mexico from 1991 to 2004, with the exception of a brief stay in Monterrey from 1996 to 1997.



Fr. Brian Fagan is ordained a priest in the Legion of Christ.

Fr. Brian began to experience at a fairly young age the symptoms of the disease he knew he may have inherited from his father. He continued

to take on humble tasks despite knowing that his faculties were beginning to fail him.

## Legionaries

and lay consecrated men who knew him were impressed at the way he never complained. Many of them have accompanied and visited him in the last few years, and upon his passing, expressed their esteem for Fr. Brian, and their appreciation for his personal concern for them, the confidence in Christ that he inspired in them, and his huge heart.

An on-line book has been set up at <http://legionariosdecristo.org/inmemoriam-PBrian/> for remembrances and condolences from anyone who would like to record experiences they shared with Fr. Brian, or offer their prayers and support.

We entrust our brother to the Lord's mercy,



Here Fr. Brian is pictured during the time he was studying philosophy in Rome.



Fr. Brian plays a game of dominoes with Jaime Perez in 2012.

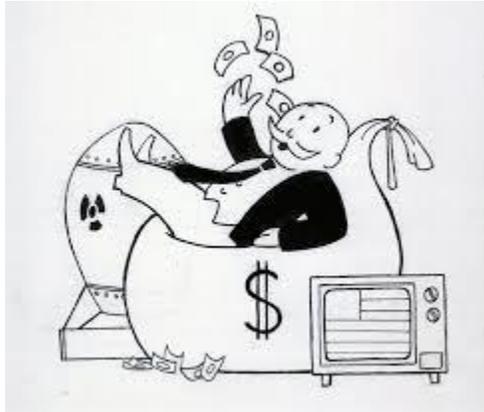
that he may enjoy in heaven the mysteries that he announced and celebrated as a priest of Jesus Christ. May he rest in peace!



## Only God can bring peace to your heart

Regnum Christi Live – July 31

By Fr Michael Sliney LC



"Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy." -- CS Lewis

My experience in guiding souls and my own personal experience in life, is that God, ONLY God can bring true and lasting peace to your souls. No "perfect" human relationship, or anything that the world can offer will ever fully satisfy the human heart. And to remember that we are mere pilgrims passing through this world...our true citizenship and complete happiness awaits us in heaven!

## Striving for Sainthood

U. S. A. | WHO WE ARE | NEWS

*The Everest Mountaineers incorporate spiritual formation into their pre-season preparations*

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**Clarkston, Michigan** -- "Talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God."

This is one of the inspiring quotes the Everest Collegiate High School football team heard during a recent "Virtue Camp" that kicked off the boys' off-season training this summer.



EC football team with U of M speaker Lewis Caralla.



In addition to team building activities like dodge ball, swimming, and camping overnight on the football field, the team was privileged to hear presentations from three men who shared the competitive advantages of living a life of virtue.

The quote mentioned above came from Dr. John R. Wood, author of *Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission: 5 Steps to Winning the War Within*, and founder of Mobile Eyes, LLC. His practice provides optical care to patients at nursing homes and developmental disability facilities.

"As an all-star athlete in high school and college, John knows the hard work and dedication it takes to obtain a certain level of greatness," said Everest Football Coach Mike Pruchnicki, who organized the camp. "His knowledge of the faith and his ability to teach has allowed him to encourage others to strive for their own level of Catholic greatness -- sainthood."

Senior cornerback, Adam Legg, said of Dr. Wood's presentation, "This was a tremendous advantage to our football team, and also to our lives in general. The main message he got across was that... we must win the internal war we have with ourselves. We need to know our enemies, the things that will prevent us from reaching heaven, and to know our

allies, the things that will help us to attain the ultimate goal.”

He said Dr. Wood quoted the famous line from the movie, *Spiderman*: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

“We are given all these talents and gifts, even our Catholic faith, and it is our duty as people of God to share the faith with everyone around us,” said Adam.

Also presenting during the camp was Lewis Caralla, an assistant strength and conditioning coach at the University of Michigan, who discussed what Everest quarterback Sal Mastromatteo described as the “mental side of the game” of football.

“He talked about virtues such as integrity and discipline,” said Sal. “Those virtues, and others, lay down the foundation of a great football player. In the end, we should all be looking to better the team, not the individual.”

Senior linebacker Ben Bellestri called the camp a “truly enlightening experience.”

He was most inspired by speaker



Dr. John R. Wood, author of "Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission: 5 Steps to Winning the War Within"



Nik Hoot, a high school wrestler from Indiana who spoke to the group via Skype. Born in Russia in 1996 after surviving a botched 24-week abortion, he was adopted and brought to the United States. Nik's traumatic entrance caused him to lose part of both of his legs in the process. (His story is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHw3jgXIYLI> on YouTube.)



Wrestler and abortion-survivor Nik Hoot



Ben said he was impressed with how Nik “never gave up.”

“This past year, Nik came within one point of qualifying for the semi-state competitions (in wrestling),” he said. “Nik is a true figure of perseverance because his disabilities never slowed him down.”

“He spoke about his life and what struggles he has gone through. It was a truly eye-opening talk. He showed us that no matter what hurdles life throws at you, (you should) keep going and never let those hurdles knock you down.”

The Everest football team recently had the opportunity to

demonstrate the virtue they learned at the camp. On July 23, before taking part in a scrimmage, the team helped make 150 bologna and cheese sandwiches and assembled them into lunches for the homeless in Detroit. Some of the players and their mothers delivered the lunches to Sister Judy Ann Ruggirello and the [Sisters of Christian Love](#) the following day.



EC football team members make sandwiches for the homeless in Detroit.



This is the second year the team has assisted the sisters in their efforts to help Detroit's neediest. Team member

Lucas Neme and one of the team mothers, Kristi Fenske, talked with the boys afterwards about knowing the difference between just being a volunteer, and being an apostle for Jesus Christ.

It is apparent this team knows the difference! Great job Everest Mountaineers!

## Grandma's Table

Regnum Christi Live --- August 1, 2014

By Donna Garrett



After 30 years of quiet anticipation, I found myself in possession of my grandmother's dining room table. My grandfather passed away some 30 years ago and within six months my beloved grandma came to live with my parents. I was living on my own at the time and one of my first thoughts was, "Who is going to take care of grandma's table?" At 20 I had no concept of the intrinsic value of her table, but I cared about it, because she cared about it. My grandfather had saved for years to buy it for my grandmother and every Saturday from the age of 16 to 20, I drove to my grandmother's house, took her grocery shopping, washed her hair, and dusted her table.

Grandma's table for me was one of the first places I learned about sacrificing for those you love, and the importance of the family meal. Most often the table sat with its six chairs around it. But on special occasions, extra leaves were added and it no longer was just a table, but a place of

communion. 80 years of love and loss, life and death, joy and sorrow, where shared around that table. For the last 20 years grandma's table sat in a home that eventually abandoned its usage. Years of smoke, grease, and neglect had taken its toll on the wood. This is how it came to me, filthy, neglected, unappreciated.

I found myself getting frustrated at first, how could anyone pay so little attention to something that had been purchased by sacrificial love? Then I thought, how much like my soul was this table during those periods of my life when long stretches of time passed and little attention was paid to its preservation. How the build up of my trivial sins created a film over my soul marring its beauty and its light, just like it hid the beauty of the wood underneath. I thought how too my soul had been purchased by the sacrificial love of another. My frustration turned into gratitude.

As I gently remove years of grime and neglect from grandma's table, the beauty of the hand carved mahogany underneath is being revealed. It's not an easy process, neither is sainthood. It takes work and patience. Today I am reminded that through effort, God's grace and by blood of his Son, I will enter eternity, and my soul will be refurbished to its original beauty. Just like grandma's table.

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