

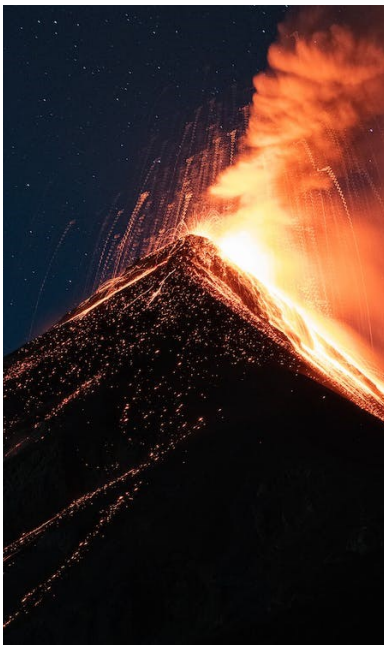
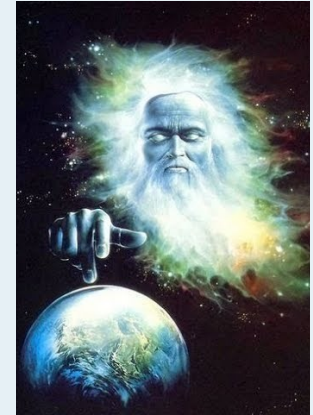
Youth Ministry Questions

The questions presented in the "Youth Ministry Questions" newsletter are generated from questions asked of the youth ministry participants at St. Joseph Parish in Pewamo, MI.

The answers are provided by Fr. Darrel Kempf, Pastor.

Where does God come from?

First we have to explain God, then we can answer this question. God is not created, is timeless and does not grow or change. So, the answer is that God has always existed because God is existence itself. Our existence is not our own but for God's existence and who God is are the same. Our existence depends on our parents and we have a beginning but God does not have a beginning. We use the word mystery to explain things that we can't explain because they are beyond our understanding, not because they aren't able to be explained. Flight would have been a mystery before we finally understood how to make it possible, flight has been something humans have tried to understand for a long time. Keep in mind that the mystery of God remains the more that God reveals about Himself because God is infinite.



Why does God allow natural disasters to happen?

We have to go to the beginning of creation for this answer. God created everything and gave it order (natural law- such as gravity, tides, etc.). The world was to be kept in order by God's creatures most especially by the highest creature of creation (you) Man. The relationship of God and Man was to be one of freedom of Man to act in the way that God desired but this freedom meant that Man could choose to ignore God's way. Man in the beginning was created male and female to imitate the Trinity in having loving relationships that do not see the other as an object, possession or seek to take advantage of the other's bodily good (nakedness). When they ate of the fruit they saw that they could take advantage of each other in a way that could harm and so in fear of that they covered themselves; this then had consequences to their relationships going forward (Original Sin).

Due to this action the world itself still aligned to God became set against them and the gifts they had when in union with God were lost. Humanity then lost the ability to understand the created world in a way that could help to avoid being the victims of natural disasters (Natural Evil). God did not intend for the order of the world to cause harm to human persons but God can bring good out of evil; this is something only God has the power to do. Think of the good God brings out of the sin of Adam; we become sons and daughters of the Father through the death of Jesus. Slowly we have learned how to manage, predict and avoid natural disasters but we still don't have the ability to fully understand and avoid them completely.

CONTACT US

St. Joseph Catholic Church
126 East St., PO Box 37
Pewamo, MI 48873
989-593-3440
parishoffice@stjosephpewamo.org



Who would win in a fight, a grizzly bear or a lion?

The challenge with this question is that the answer depends on if we are just guessing or we really want to know. If I were guessing I would say the lion because it seems that it would move quickly.

If we want to find the actual answer then we have to ask the question about if it is a good act to get them to fight. The Church calls us to not harm or cause harm to them in a way that does not serve the good. There are a lot of things that would not be allowed given this call. In order to find out for sure we would have to get the animals, make them fight and determine who won, so, we can never know for

sure and should not try to know. However, it is fun to think about the strengths and weaknesses, especially, as far as I know they don't seem to encounter each other in the wild.

However, if one wants a statistical probability from a scientific perspective... A-Z Animals claims that "A bear would win a fight against a lion. Bears have the advantage in just about every aspect, from size to offensive capabilities. The only time that a lion would win is if it managed to sneak up and ambush a bear, leaping onto it and biting into its head with such power that it shattered the skull."¹

Comparing a Bear and a Lion by A-Z Animals

	BEAR	LION
Size	Weight: 60lbs – 990lbs Length: 4.5ft – 9.5ft	Weight: 264lbs – 550lbs Length: 4.7ft – 8.2ft
Speed	25-35 mph	35 mph Up to 50mph for very short bursts
Bite Power	1200 PSI	650 PSI
Senses	Some bears can smell from several miles away, Hearing twice as good as humans, Good vision and some bears can see better at dusk.	Amazing sense of sight, especially night vision. Good sense of smell capable of smelling other lions' markings, Great hearing allows them to hear prey miles away.
Defenses	Large size, Speed to run away, Fierce threat displays, Ability to traverse land and water, Can climb trees to escape fights	Stays with pride for safety in numbers, Large size, Can quickly run away from enemies

¹ <https://a-z-animals.com/blog/bear-vs-lion-who-would-win-in-a-fight/>

² <https://aleteia.org/2016/12/15/5-saints-who-didnt-get-along-with-their-families/>

How do we approach friends and family when they are not living the teachings of the Catholic faith?

This is a very common situation and we all experience it at different times in our lives. I remember when my father told us that he didn't even know people didn't go to Church until he was in his 20's. It can be confusing and shocking.

The place to start is to think about what they may share about reasons they don't practice. When it is your friends they tend to share openly. Families may not share as openly (this is ok). I had an Uncle who stopped going to Church when I was in middle school after his son died at 11. Often, after I found out he stopped going I asked if he was going to church and he never shared why he wouldn't but would laugh and joke about not going; three years ago his daughter died and he opened up when I least expected and shared those reasons and now practices the faith again. In my ministry as a priest this type of situation is very common; people want to share the struggles they have but are afraid of what will happen. I know for myself it doesn't always go as well as I plan. It is the willingness to not give up on anyone even when we don't get it right. Understanding their reasons can help us understand them and in prayer to think about how to help the person see God in their struggle. That God has not left them or abandoned them.

Being a friend is always a challenge, think of the Gospel stories about Jesus and sinners Jesus talked, ate and spent time with them. He didn't stop being good or who He was. Example is huge, it is the idea that you belong here. We have a God who loves us so much that He comes to be with us in reality and makes us members of His family. Every baptized person belongs to that family and, like in our physical families, our spiritual family has struggles also. Behavior comes from an understanding of belonging to God.

Remember the most important thing is that all this depends upon the person being open to God and ultimately it is a work of God and we cooperate by being willing to ask, hear and be someone they can trust to want what is best for them as a person.

Start small talk. Opportunities will show up. Pray for help to recognize them. Ask God for help with the words. Think of how you would approach yourself. Ultimately prayer is most important.

Saint Connection

Saints Augustine & Monica

Born to a pagan father and Christian mother, Saint Augustine was enrolled as a catechumen but was never baptized until his conversion later in life. At first Augustine, being an intellectual young man, was won over by philosophy and the teachings of the Manicheans.

This led to a rather sinful and hedonistic lifestyle that he did not want to give up. He even prayed to God during this time saying, "Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet."

His choice to live in a way contrary to the Gospel was something that greatly burdened his mother, Saint Monica. She tried to lead her son in the right direction, even believing that if she locked him out of the house that he would come to his senses. This tension put a stress on their relationship, but Monica persisted.

Later on Augustine decided to move to Rome and Monica wanted to go with him. She was set on sailing to Rome with her son when Augustine told her to pray at a nearby chapel. When she finished praying Monica went to the harbor, only to see Augustine sailing away without her!

Monica "won" in the end, and it was by the fruit of her prayers that her son converted and became a great saint in the Catholic Church. ²

Is Mary all knowing?

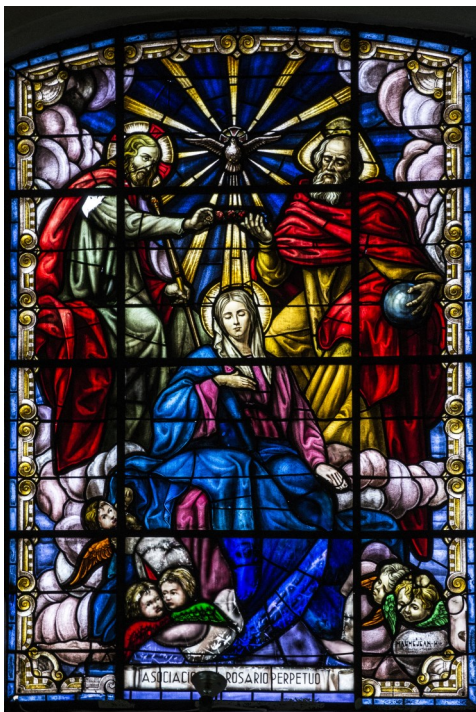
No. Mary is a creature just like we are. She received a grace at conception that kept her free from Original Sin. Original Sin is what we call the attitude we now have that was not given to us by God. This attitude causes our focus to turn away from God more easily. The grace is called prevenient, or a gift (grace) to prevent the passing on of this attitude from her parents. Mary by being free from sin conception to assumption (going to heaven) is in a better position to understand God's plan and more open to trusting God. Her knowledge grew the same as ours does but without sin.



Why do we pray through her?

We pray because we believe that those in heaven can help us here to become more aware of God in our lives. This, in turn, makes us aware of needs for help with temptations, fear, emotions, etc. when thinking of who to have on your team in a human activity we make the same kinds of decisions. Who do I want to help me in asking for God's help. You can't go wrong in choosing Mary to help.

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and Blessed is the fruit of your womb. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”



What does Consubstantial mean?

The question being answered is 'what' (substance, what it is) (Father and Son) are they. The Father and the Son are God. This avoids a mistake in thinking Jesus (the Son) is not God or that he became God or that he is a different God.

Do people still do extreme things like they did in the Bible today?

Yes, but it is a journey in the same way that Abraham and Mary experienced. The destination is not necessarily clear and the way is not easy but God is going to be with you. There are many saints who have done remarkable things like in the Bible.

Saint Connection

Saint Stephen, first martyr

Saint Stephen was one of the first ordained deacons of the Church. He was also the first Christian martyr. Stephen was so conformed to Jesus in his holy life that his martyrdom was both a natural and supernatural sign of his love for the Lord. It also inspired the early believers as they faced the first round of brutal persecution.

His behavior, even forgiving those who were taking his life while he was being stoned to death, was a beautiful reflection of how conformed he truly was to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is recorded in Chapter 7 of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 7:54-60), which immediately follows the Gospels in the New Testament.

Feast Day: December 26

**Patron of deacons, altar servers,
bricklayers, casket makers,
& stonemasons**



St. Stephen, Pray for Us!

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=137

How do you discern what God is calling you to do? How do you know that it is God that is asking you and not personal desires?



Prayer for discernment

Dear heavenly Father,
I seek your counsel,
I invoke your Spirit,
Help me discern,
As nothing escapes your sight.
Guide me Lord.
Give me a healthy spirit,
A clear eye and wisdom.
Help me identify,
Any presence of the enemy,
Trying to tempt or trap me,
Into the sin of pride or vanity.
Set me free of my flesh,
So that I may see with,
The eyes of Christ.
Let me identify the spirit,
Behind any choices,
I must make.
May your Holy Spirit fill me,
And take control,
So that I only need,
To walk in obedience.
For you alone are holy,
You are my sovereign Lord,
And all my decisions,
Must glorify you,
And your beloved Son,
Jesus Christ.
In his sweet and holy name,
Amen.

prayerforanxiety.com

First and always, prayer. A life of prayer always places us in the position of openness to God. If my prayer life is all over the place it doesn't help the situation. Make it real, don't pretend with God; speak to Him words that you're even afraid to say. The key is remembering that God already knows, loves you completely knowing it so just speak it. I recommend adoration once a week or showing up 10-15 minutes early to Mass. Here is where courage comes in; ask your parents to help you with what is on your mind and in your heart. Don't try to do it without someone you trust. You need a person who has your best interest in mind.

To be set apart for God (holiness) is something we are all called to do; this means you should seek ways to separate from things that don't turn you towards God. This is all part of our call to holiness. This is an ordinary calling of God.

A vocation is a calling for particular service of God. It is about determining my desires First, desires have to be checked for the appropriate circumstances.

- Is the desire good?
- How can I fulfill the desire, is this way of doing it good?

Desiring to serve God does not mean becoming a priest or religious or married or etc. . As mentioned above, we are already called to serve in holiness of life. It is about your particular way of living out holiness that is at the service of God and the Church.

- Ask yourself these questions:
- How am I going to be holy in my work?
- What work will help me to be holy given who I am?
- Do I need time away to help with deciding?
- What would be helpful to know?

Don't be afraid to bring these things to your parents, priest, your Confirmation sponsor, Godparents, or someone else you can trust to help with answers.

Has Father ever performed an exorcism?

Yes, every time someone is baptized or during the blessing of a house, church, etc. These are ordinary exorcisms. Fr. Darrel has only performed ordinary exorcisms. Extraordinary Exorcisms are handled by priests who have been trained for a long time. They are specialized in discerning (digging into) the situation and what is the correct approach to be taken.



The Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing

Almighty and ever-living God, who sent your Son into the world to drive out from us the power of Satan, the spirit of evil, and bring the human race, rescued from darkness, into the marvelous Kingdom of your life: we humble beseech you to free this child from Original Sin, to make him/her the temple of your glory, and to grant that your Holy Spirit may dwell in him/her, Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Baptism in the Bible

“He who believes and is baptized will be *saved*; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
~Mark 16:16

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of your sins*; and you shall *receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.’ And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, ‘*Save yourselves* from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were *added that day about three thousand souls*.”
~Acts 2:38-41

Official Church Teaching

Exorcisms are divided into two kinds (or forms). Simple or minor forms of exorcism are found in two places: first, for those preparing for Baptism, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) and the *Rite of Baptism for Children* both call for minor exorcisms; secondly, the appendix of *Exorcisms and Related Supplications* includes a series of prayers which may be used by the faithful.

The second kind is the solemn or "major exorcism," which is a rite that can only be performed by a bishop or a by priest, with the special and express permission of the local ordinary (cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 1172). This form is directed "at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation [of a person] from demonic possession" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1673).

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/exorcism>

Why do we bow in the Nicene Creed at a certain part?

We bow when we get to the words that describe the incarnation. This act of God becoming man is so amazing that our response to it being spoken of is to show reverence for what we are saying. This act of reverence draws our attention so that we don't forget what God has done.

Think of how disappointed you get when people don't remember what you did; we don't want to forget what God did so we remind ourselves by bowing.



Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus
Christ, the Only Begotten Son of
God, born of the Father before
all ages. God from God, Light
from Light, true God from true
God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the
Father; through him all things
were made.

For us men and for our
salvation he came down from
heaven, **and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.** For
our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate, he suffered death
and was buried, and rose again
on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures. He ascended
into heaven and is seated at the
right hand of the Father. He will
come again in glory to judge the
living and the dead and his
kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father
and the Son, who with the
Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken
through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the
forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the
resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to
come. Amen.