

## “For All the Divinity Saints”

### Revelation 21:16a

We remember and give thanks for these loved ones who have died in the past year.

**Barbara Bollinger’s** soul was revived when she was creating clothes for her daughters with one of them sitting on her lap and learning. Later being blessed to teach her granddaughter, Vanessa, how to sew.

Barbara’s soul was revived when she could host a family gathering for a holiday meal or serve a special breakfast to her children on their birthdays. “Can I get something to eat?” was her favorite question when you came to visit.

Oma, Opa and son, **Martin Ordosch, Jr.**, were reunited and relocated to Austria where they struggled to survive in a post-war ravaged Europe. Oma relayed many heart tugging stories of the difficulties they endured, but also of the simple joys she experienced; again, with family and friends she had at that time. It’s what got her and Martin through it all. The struggle continued to the point it led to the decision to leave Austria behind for the potential of a better life in America. So, they made the HUGE decision and risk of immigrating to the United States. She speaks often of the harrowing Atlantic crossing they made in a small, wholly inadequate freighter. How sweet a sight it must have been to finally sail past the statue of Liberty and all the hope and potential it symbolized.

**Helen Lesniak’s** soul was revived with the blessings of five children – Mark, the only one not baptized at Divinity, Katherine, Christine, Philip, and Paul. It says something about their Christian faith when they named their sons – Mark, Philip, and Paul. The Lesniak family joined Divinity Lutheran on October 27, 1957.

Helen was the loving grandmother of eight grandchildren whom she enjoyed having come to her house for family gatherings for which Helen and Ted enjoyed cooking such delicacies as sauerkraut soup, hunter's stew, and chicken paprikash. Helen leaves them the legacy of a faithful woman who enjoyed life.

**Marge Bettles** spent the last 30 years of her life caring for her daughter Sue Goist. Whenever I visited Sue in the nursing home, Marge was faithfully at her side. Marge always said, "the circumstances of life always gifted her with new friends".

**Jeanne Ormsby** wrote . . . We walked two and a half miles to school. School buses were for the handicapped. When I graduated high school, it was decided I'd go to streetcar school – Cleveland College on Public Square – where I worked my way through at a variety of jobs. In my Junior year I was given the opportunity to attend The Encampment for Citizenship. That experience literally changed my life. The curriculum was in four parts – American history, Race Relations in the South, The Union Movement, and the Rudiments of Communism. My father and Lillian were convinced it was a Communist school, such was not the case. The only thing they urged us on the last day was to become active in politics of either political party, community activities, running for office, something in addition to a job. I took this admonition to heart and over the years was active in fund-raising, went through the chairs at the YWCA, rising to Vice President, (they wanted me to be President, but I had a new job) was two term president of the Zonta Club (Women's Rotary where I met Lillian Bumgartner), first woman president of the local chapter of The Public Relations Society of America. I was as busy as a one-armed paper hanger with fleas. I'd wake up while coming to bed in the morning. I must

have worked fourteen jobs over the years, forever restless, easily bored, ready to move on to greater challenges.

Letter dated August 31, 1971:

Dear **Alice Mitchell**, Thank you for your letter. I okayed the bills for Mrs. Grega, and she will be taking care of the payments. I also turned your letter over to Pastor Boehm as he is now adviser to the Property and Grounds Committee.

But I did want to respond to your letter and let you know how grateful we are for what you have done for the courtyard during these past four years. You have a tremendous gift and talent to get things organized and done. I'm proud of the courtyard and the well-kept appearance that has been a part of it ever since you have gotten it going. We'll miss you and your efficient operation but are grateful that you were able to do it for this long-a-time. Thanks, a lot of big bunches, Gratefully Pastor Don

Whenever I or Sue Marko would visit with **Dorothy Havel** in the nursing home, she would ask what was going on at Divinity and if Pastor Don had a girlfriend yet. Dorothy was married to John Zavotka and was blessed with three sons – Wayne (a now retired Lutheran pastor), Craig, and Bruce. She was an identical twin to Ruth Havel. After Ruth and Dorothy's husband John passed away, Dorothy married her twin sister's husband, Bud, and became a Havel. Dorothy was spunky, outgoing, and liked to have a good time!

In these last years, every Tuesday night while Samantha was at choir practice, grandpa, **Richard Roff**, could be found sitting in the hallway outside the Divinity offices, visiting with other parents. He would bring a dish of his homemade cookies to share with choir members,

Tricia, the choir director, parents, and the pastor. We enjoyed his Tuesday night cookies so much that Tricia presented him with a certificate recognizing him as the “Choir Cookie Baker”.

**Mary Jozwiak** liked to share stories with me of growing up in Cleveland with three sisters and three brothers. She loved the story of walking to school every day down the alley past Jackass Hill as she gave me one of her big smiles and laughs. She told the story of her dad building a wagon for the girls that he would pull to the West Side Market every week to buy meat that we would stack between them. He had immigrated from Czechoslovakia and was strong enough to pull that wagon home now loaded with daughters and meat. Mary’s parents would give each of them a penny to go to the flea market. Mary said, “We didn’t have much”, but they were never in want.

God’s goodness and mercy has followed **Sue Laperna** all the days of her life which she would share at Divinity’s Bible Studies. When I asked the class to write about how money has affected their life, Sue wrote these words:

My earliest recollection of money is the tooth fairy. I could put my tooth under my pillow and the next morning there would be ten cents. I figured I could make more money with less work if I used the dog’s teeth, it worked once, but not twice.

My first job was cashier at Revco when I was sixteen, minimum wage was \$3.75. I bought a David Cassidy record.

My earliest recollection of money in the church was the Sunday school offering and singing the collection song, “Dropping Pennies”.

I was taught to work hard for your money and spend and invest it wisely.

While in the nursing home, Sue read the Bible aloud to Mary Jozwiak, her roommate and fellow Divinity member. We all enjoyed Sue's sense of humor and faith.

When Matt came home from college, my mom, **Carolyn Aquilia** found it to be an insult not to bring home laundry. Matt thought his name was "are you hungry" or "do you want something to eat" whenever he came home. She always made sure we were well fed. She was a great cook other than her beef or pork roasts we lovingly dubbed "the shoes". Michael mentions we never went without. Dad busted his butt long hours to provide, and mom was a wizard stretching the money. Multiple stores and coupons were part of the normal shopping runs. Matt learned the art of couponing from her and still uses it today.

No story of Mom would be complete without mentioning her discipline weapon of choice. The dreaded HOT WHEELS TRACK. This was well before children of today became soft. When she was really mad, she would leave in the purple connector. I don't think she every really hit us, but the sight of it in her hand ended every problem instantly. Heck, that's how I (Joe) learned self-defense.

**John Miess'** soul was revived when he and his best friend went to German Central to a Sunday evening dance. They noticed two young women dancing together so John said, "Let's go and ask them to dance. So, we did". From Elizabeth's side, she experienced a "good looking man with wild, thick hair" asking her to dance. Both couples from that dance ended up married. John and Elizabeth were joined together in the covenant of marriage on April 16, 1955.

**Dale Borger** married Carol, the first of three wives on December 22, 1956. They were blessed with two children, Dale and Dalee, in 1956 and '58. Dale's family joined Divinity in 1969 while living on E. Wallings Road.

Dale served Divinity on the Building and Grounds board. Son, Dale, has memories of climbing into our Divinity bell tower with his father and Pastor Don to try to clean out the birds.

**Susan Zettl's** soul was revived when she was cooking, baking, and working outside in her flower and vegetable gardens. Her soul was revived when her neighbor, Georgia, would come in the evenings to visit with her while sitting outside on the patio watching her yellow flowers open up and bloom as the sun went down. Susan's soul was revived when her good friend from Divinity, Carolyn, would come and visit while they would take a walk together. She also enjoyed visits from Marty and Chris, who would bring her Holy Communion over the years. Susan's soul was revived when she would take her family every year to the Ocktoberfest at the German Club on York Road where she would enjoy a tasty German meal, listen to the old-world music, and watch the polka dancers.

**Stevie Zettl** enjoyed mealtimes when he joined his family around the dinner table to share his mama's delicious German cooking. He enjoyed scooting out to the patio and hoisting himself up into a chair to enjoy the flowers and sunshine. He enjoyed listening to music whether it be the German Hour as a child or soft rock as an adult. Stevie enjoyed sitting in the front seat of his sister, Helga's, minivan taking in the sights and listening to the music.

**Doug Kupniewski** and Elizabeth embraced buying a fixer upper home. In 2012 and 2014, they embraced being blessed with the births of Arabella and Ethan, who quickly became Button and E.B. Doug's greatest and ambition in life, to be a daddy, was fulfilled.

Ara and Evan have many wonderful memories of their daddy. They shared a few with me. Daddy would become the “tickle monster” and chase them around the house. I do the same with our five- and seven-year-old grandsons. It’s fun to be the tickle monster, especially when we catch you.

**Denise Zabudske’s** soul was restored whenever she spent time with her family and friends. I listened to stories of Denise picking up her nieces and nephews in her 1985 Monte Carlo Super Sport to go put-putting, go to the movies, go to her favorite restaurants – Taco Bell, Antonio’s, Red Lobster, or Friendly’s where everybody feasted on Peanut Butter sauce on chocolate ice cream. Then going back to Boundary Lane to play video games on Nintendo while feasting on her homemade chocolate chip cookies with a Hershey Kiss in the middle. As I enjoyed those stories of having fun with their Mom and aunt, there seemed to be a common theme of chocolate and sharing their love with one another.

Eventually, with a little encouragement from her neighbors, Bill and Chris Rettig, **Sandy Petersen** and her family were guided on the pathway to Divinity joining in 2000. Other neighbors, the Votava’s and Roff’s would follow.

When I arrived in 2003 and was guided on the pathway up 130<sup>th</sup> to Park Drive to visit Sandy, I would find a house adorned with snowmen, sunflowers, Precious Moments, dolls, and a yippy Jezebel. She would tell me how much she loved visits from her young grandchildren and how much she appreciated Christian taking care of her.

**Ken Kopec** and Gayle found green pastures in North Royalton and were blessed with the births of Lana and Jeff. They have good memories of him taking them to the Cleveland Auto

Show, never missing their sporting and school events, and even Ken going camping with the Girl Scouts.

**David Neece's** soul was restored when he was helping to care for his mother or just being there to help a friend in need. His soul was restored on Christmas Eve when he came with Jill to worship at Divinity and give thanks for the birth of the Christ-child.

When **Mary Kay Kahl** and Ed moved back here after Ed's retirement in 1993, they rejoined Divinity and Mary Kay became our greeter coordinator.

As Ed and Mary Kay looked back, they smiled remembering their children learning how to water ski on Lake Medina north of San Antonio. They smiled remembering the taste of Mary Kay's pecan pies made from pecans from her mother's tree in her backyard. They smiled remembering northern visitors coming to New Orleans during Mardi Gras week.

**Dan Taddeo** told me that in the Smith family, he and Laura were known as the outlaws. Then he asked me, "Do you know the difference between an in-law and an outlaw?" Pretending to have not heard it before, I asked, "What's the difference?" With the Dan sly smile on his face, he said, "An outlaw is wanted".

Joining the Smith gang meant joining Divinity which meant my enjoying Dan's presence and wisdom most Sunday mornings in adult Sunday School class since 2003. In recent years Dan and Barb Skerl would come to class together, enjoying one another's companionship. It also meant having Laura available to edit his first of several books, entitled "Back to Basics". Dan also wrote a column for the "Parma Observer".

As I came to know **Kathy Czapor** and Steve better over the past 18 years, I realized how much their faith is strengthened, knowing that God always keeps his promises. A faithful God

has always motivated Kathy to live out her faith in her relationships with all of us and especially in her relationship with Steve.

Kathy wrote, “I was a stay-at-home mom for several years. I enjoyed camping, football, needlework, cooking, and baking. Here at Divinity, I’ve been on altar guild, in the hand-bell choir and was a member of the Arts in Action Committee.”

“I am an avid Noah’s Ark collector, love animals, including 5 pet rats Steve and I had, 50’s and 60’s music, antiques, and vintage T.V.”

**Chris Jira’s** soul was restored on her Las Vegas honeymoon, sitting in the front row of a Siegfried and Roy performance. Her soul was restored sitting at a table at Tangiers during a Rick Springfield concert, when he jumped on to the table from the stage as it collapsed in front of her. In the turmoil, she touched his chest, providing her with that “lightness of being” sensation that my daughter also experienced at a Josh Groban concert when he high fived her.

With those kinds of highs there are also lows during this roller coaster ride we call “life”.

We walked through the valley in 2020. I was walking through the valley with Jesus during 62 days in the hospital with pancreatitis complications during the summer of 2020. In the midst of that walk through the valley, Jesus told me to “go back”. On that same walk with Jesus on April 2, 2020, Jesus said to Chris, “stay with me. I’m taking you home”.

**Arlene Seil** enjoyed sewing and taught her daughter, Karen. Karen remembers some good advice from her mother to “sew slowly” and learn to keep the material straight. Wisdom for the ages – better to move slowly and do it right than move quickly and do it wrong.

**Eileen Wereb** was born in Ireland in 1937 and immigrated to the U.S. at age 18. She was blessed with 4 daughters (many of you know one of her daughters, Denise Kronenberger)

and 2 sons that all graduated from my alma mater – Buckeye High School. These last 20 years, Eileen loved worshipping at Divinity, especially enjoying our choir and soloists. As a strong Christian, she ended her before bed prayers by praying for everyone who had nobody to pray for them.

**Elizabeth Wallace's** daughter, Debbie Galgoczy told me that her mother was always a happy person who never let anything get her down. Elizabeth and Robert were married 72 years before his death 2½ years ago. She was able to retire at age 52 from the office of Hamilton Trucking, freeing her up to enjoy socializing with her friends and hosting holiday family gatherings.

**John Schroeder's** soul was restored through his love for fire stations and fire trucks. Lyn remembers John riding his 3-wheeler down the street where they grew up, to visit the local fire station. I'm sure John was all smiles when he got to dress in a full fireman's uniform with helmet while riding on the fire truck in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.

Soon after moving to Brook Park **Merle Graning** joined Divinity and he began singing in our choir in 1958. He had sung in Army worship services and as a part of a barbershop quartet while overseas. Many of us remember our choir singing their annual Christmas concert in the front of the church when Merle passed out at the end of the last hymn and had to be taken to the emergency room. Merle proudly remembered, "I hit that last note." After 50 years of singing in our choir and coming to rehearsals, Merle said, "Wednesday is my night out." 103 year-old Merle's last words of wisdom during one of our visits, "Time went so fast. Enjoy life while you can."

I close with some **Jim Howe** wisdom and faith . . . Besides how a family defines you, including aunts, uncles, cousins, and even close friends, there are others who come into our lives. Dr. Dyer calls this “synchronicity” which is the people we meet on our life’s journey and that we are destined to meet. These people come into our lives for reasons and purposes we don’t always know.

Pastor Doug was one of those people. I enjoyed his Bible studies, asking him questions nobody could answer. I sat between him and Marilyn, a progressive trio to offset the conservatives facing us across the tables, Walt, and John whom I will now meet again in the heavenly realm.

I experienced many people on my journey and search for my own wisdom, purpose, and enlightenment. It is these people who often left a lasting impression in my life as well as my heart. Some offer life lessons whereas one learns a little about oneself.

The Shack – the book, movie and Divinity book study helped prepare me for my own death. Octavia Spencer, a black woman as God, taught me God is in the business of disintegrating our assumptions and expectations and replacing them with an invitation to encounter his love and allow Him to work in our lives. God is not hiding from us but is pursuing us.

As Mack grieves the death of his young, murdered daughter, the Holy Spirit, a young, beautiful, Indian woman comes to him to help him clean out his garden, clean out his sorrow, and tells him, “the wind of the Spirit catches you by surprise”.

Then there is Jesus, the young, bearded, curly haired, brown Middle Eastern man to whom he asks, “Why are you doing this to me?”

You've probably been in a similar place at some point or another. None of us is immune to difficulty, hardship, or pain. When we focus on our circumstances, or on the pain inside ourselves, we are easily overwhelmed.

But when we encounter pain – whether memories rising from our past or struggles unfolding in the everyday present – we are faced with a choice. What will we allow our minds to dwell on?

We can blame God and allow our hurt to overwhelm us or we can look to God and listen to His voice. We can hear and respond to His guidance. Some more questions for Pastor Doug and all of you. Can we trust that God knows best? Do we believe God is the righteous judge? Can we believe that His love is enough for us? Is God's love enough to heal our hurt?

The answer lies within our experience of God. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we can fall back on our experience to believe Him. We can allow our heartbeat to align with His. We can follow His leading to let go of the throats of those who have hurt and wronged us. We can forgive. We can love. This is one of those “Godwinks”. Adversity shows us who we are.

May the peace of God . . .

#423 – Shall We Gather at the River