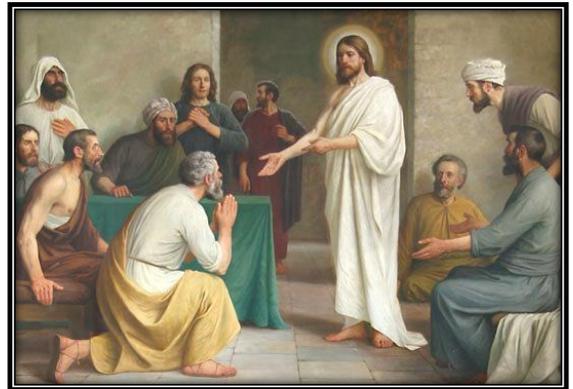




## TIME IN WONDERLAND!

Readers of Pope Francis' *Message On The Occasion Of The 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day Of Prayer For Vocations* (which appeared in last Sunday's Our Holy Redeemer Parish Bulletin) may recall that it was/is the "great hope (of the Pope) that, during the course of this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (8 December 2015 – 20 November 2016), all the Baptized may experience the joy of belonging to the Church." At first reading of the Message, it was difficult for me – a Priest – to understand why the Holy Father would choose to begin a message for *vocations* with an expression of hope for "all the Baptized". Yet after spending some "time in wonderland" (with God not Alice), the Holy Spirit/the Paraclete/the Advocate/the Helper (**get your red hats and ties ready: Pentecost will be here on 15 May**) led me (as Jesus promised) to understand it, and that is why I could conclude my own message (Calling Joyful Members of the Church) last Sunday/Good Shepherd Sunday by writing: **"If we are going to see today's young Freeporters from Dodd Middle School and Freeport High School join the ranks of fellow Freeporters Sister Dorothy Lynch C.I.J., Monsignor Charles Swiger, Brother Pierre Toussaint, and Mr. Odalis Rodriguez in these "specific vocations", then these young Freeporters must see old Freeporters who have reached a certain maturity, joyful in our membership and service to the Church."**



What I didn't share in my Good Shepherd Sunday Pastor's Message, I did share in my Good Shepherd Sunday homily at the 9:30 A.M. Sunday Mass, namely: the way God chose to lead me to understand the relationship between the great hope of the Pope and vocations during my "time in wonderland". It was while "wondering" about my own call to the Priesthood that I was brought back to a Sunday Mass at Saint Gertrude's Roman Catholic Church/Bayville, New York in 1987 where it was my experience of a joyful member of the Church – a Priest – that opened my ears to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd say: "follow Me".

Time in *wonderland* (which is really time in prayer) is the necessary part that must be chosen by anyone who sincerely seeks understanding (cf. Saint Luke X:38-42). Please, take the time to wonder again. Wonder about how Jesus has loved you and you will understand how to love others. Wonder about God dwelling with the human race and you will understand that He is with you always. Yes, spend time in *wonderland* and you, just like the Apostles in the Upper Room and on the Road to Emmaus, will "experience the joy of belonging to the Church"!

## *Looking for a Miracle?"*

Well, so is

### **Venerable Father Anthony Vincent Gallo**

*Diocesan Priest, Oblate of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart*

Montforte Irpino: 11 January 1899 – 2 May 1934

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