



By God's providence, I was selected to celebrate and preach at the Eucharist on July 3, the Feast of St. Thomas. First, it is always a privilege to preside and preach at the chapel in our Motherhouse. But, this is also a special day for me because it is the anniversary of death of two men who greatly influenced me: my father, Gene Donohue, who died on July 3, 2012, and Fr. Norm Choate, C.R., who died on July 3, 2011. My dad was a great inspiration of fidelity, both to me and my



brothers, but especially to my mother. I wrote about this in *Moral Vision* in the chapter on “Church” about different ways that people can be called “holy.”

Over the last seven years of her life, my mother was not able to walk. With assistance, she was able to transfer from her wheel chair to a chair in the living room, to the toilet in the bathroom, and to the seat in the car. She needed assistance about five times a night to use the toilet, and my father dutifully helped her day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. And then he went to work, putting in a full day after having to wake up five times each night. One time when I was home for a visit, after my father had helped my mother get into bed, we were sitting in the living room together. I looked at him and asked him how he managed to keep doing all this. He said, “Well, what can you do?” Because I know him, I understand that he did not mean, “Hey, what can you do? I’m trapped.” Rather, he meant, “What else can you do when you have been married to someone for over fifty years, and over all these years we have become one?” This is holiness in the concrete; it is love and compassion that passes the crucible for testing holiness. (McCarthy and Donohue, *Moral Vision: Seeing the World with Love and Justice*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2018], 206).



I first met Fr. Norm when he was a chaplain at St. Jerome's University, where I studied as an undergraduate while at Resurrection College in Waterloo, Ontario. Over time, we became great friends, and I am indebted to him for teaching me about God's unconditional love for us. He was an embodiment of the first line of the *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Resurrection*: "God loves each of us with a personal, unconditional love." My gradual realization of Fr. Norm's love for me has made it easier for me to trust that God loves me in this way. In other words, he made God's unconditional love concrete and "real" for me.



We celebrated July 4th with a visit to the Motherhouse of the Resurrection Sisters in Rome. They gave us a tour of their beautiful chapel and museum.



Then we were treated to refreshments, including an ice cream bar with about 8 different ice cream flavors and an assortment of toppings. For people who know me well, you know I forced down some ice cream in order to be polite and not

embarrass the Resurrectionist priests and brothers in the face of such great hospitality on the part of the Resurrectionists sisters!



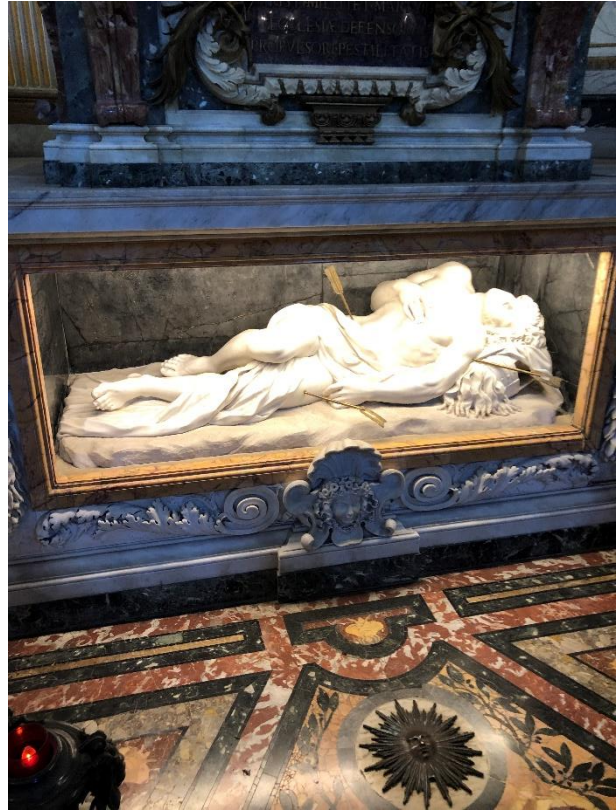
On Friday, July 5 we toured the “Scavi” which contains a necropolis (“city of the dead”) and the burial place of St. Peter. As with the Sistine Chapel, you are not allowed to take photos. On the way, however, I spotted this tapestry of the Resurrection.



As we approached the end of our renewal program, we visited the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, where our founders professed their vows on Easter



morning of 1842 and took the name “The Congregation of the Resurrection.” The Catacombs are below the Church, which contains the remains of St. Sebastian.

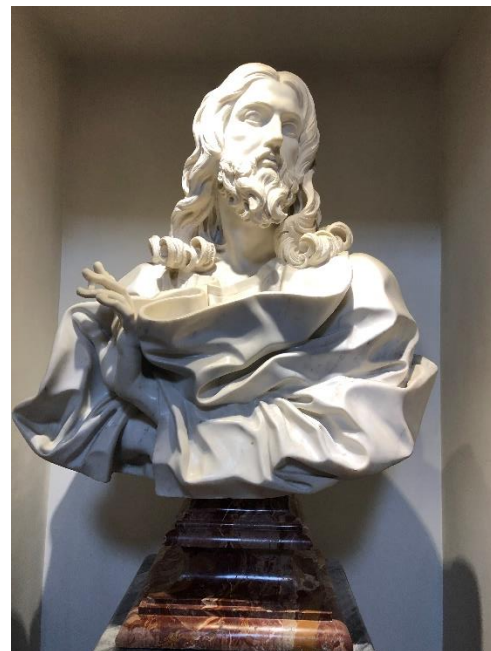


There were over 100,000 Christians buried in these catacombs on three levels. We renewed our vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience during a celebration of the Eucharist in the crypt chapel, at which Dan Lobsinger presided and preached.

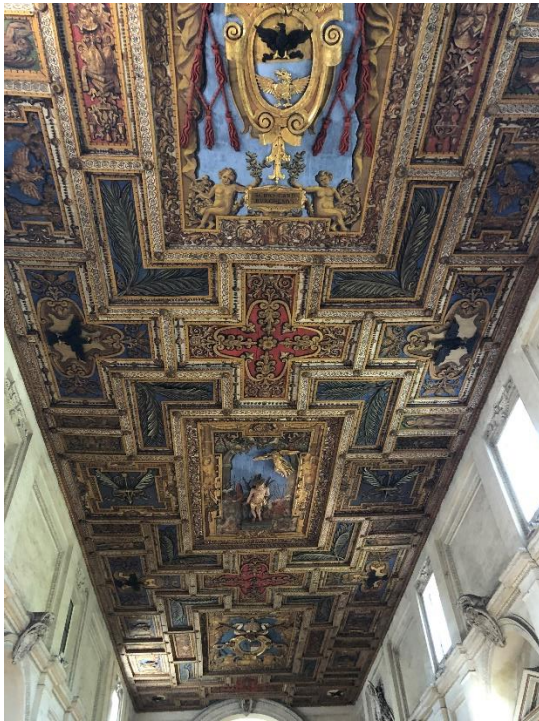




There are two exquisite sculptures in San Sebastian, both by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. One is a bust of St. Sebastian and the other of Jesus, entitled *Salvator Mundi*



(Savior of the World). The latter is believed to be Bernini's last work and it was lost for about 200 years.



The ceiling in the church is made of wood.



Steps leading to the tombs in the catacombs.



Renewal of vows in the catacombs.

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