

Volume 4/Issue 9 - Summer 2019

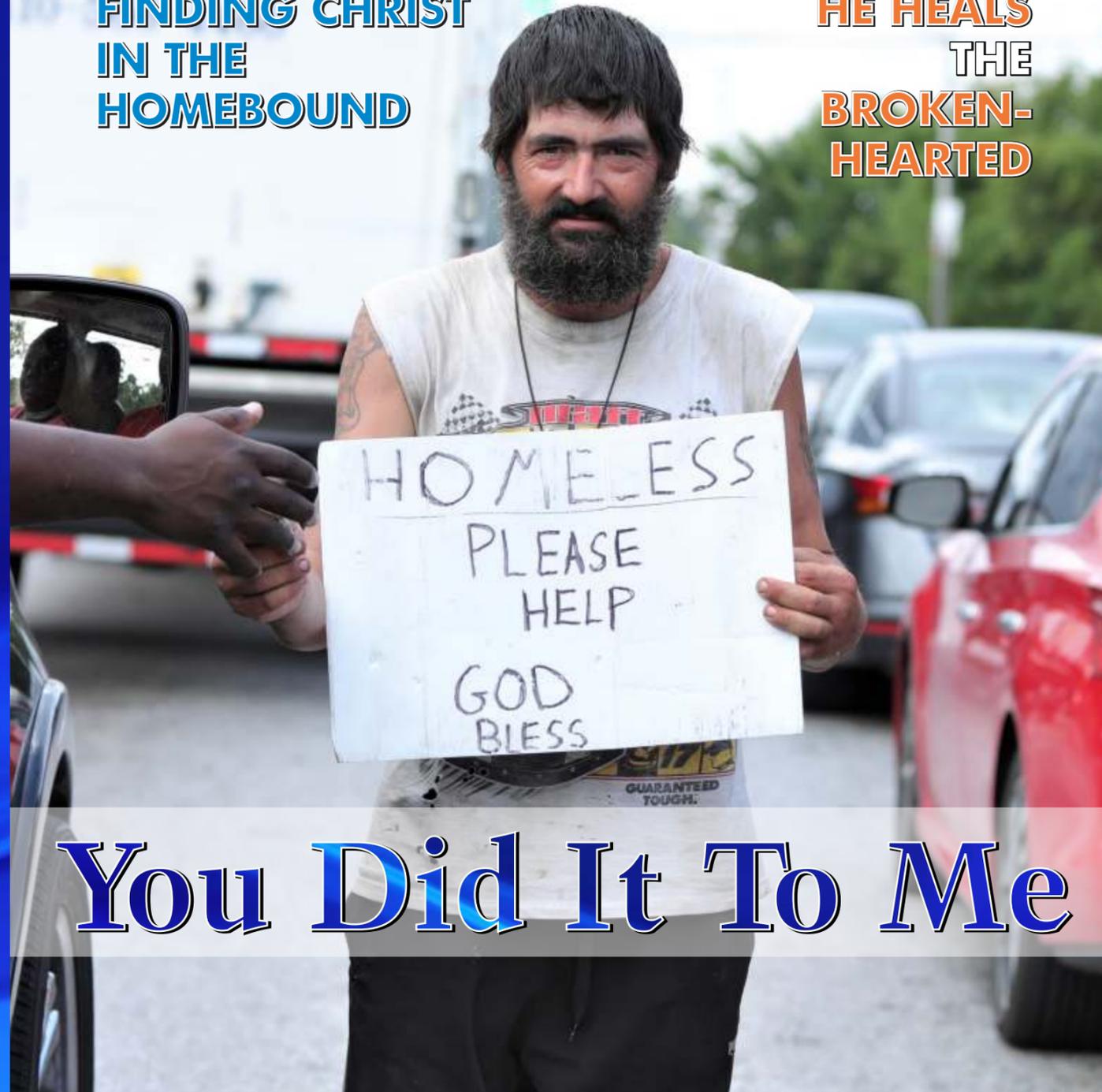


The Family Apostolate

Where Faith and Family Meet

**FINDING CHRIST
IN THE
HOMEBOUND**

**HE HEALS
THE
BROKEN-
HEARTED**



You Did It To Me

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The Family Apostolate provides pastoral care, promotes the critical need for family prayer and regular reception of the sacraments, imparts catechesis, offers opportunities for family get-togethers, and builds bridges between individual families and the larger church community. Through offering diverse spiritual and psychological resources, the Family Apostolate seeks to bring the merciful presence of Christ to families in an increasingly difficult world.



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Join us every Thursday for an hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament – Scripture reflection, silent prayer, praise and worship music and Benediction. 7:00-8:00 p.m. For more information, contact Patti Rubin
pattirubin@familypriest.com

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First Saturday Mass and Breakfast

Held every first Saturday morning of the month. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass honors our Blessed Mother, Queen of the Family Apostolate. Anniversaries, birthdays and special occasions are also recognized and blessed. Mass is followed by breakfast in the Holy Trinity hall. Begins with 8:30 am mass. For more information, contact Marlene Lauer -
graysoxmom@msn.com

Special Events/Prayer Requests

The FA sponsors special events throughout the year such as retreats, healing masses and group celebrations. Our prayer teams also pray for your special needs and requests. For more information, contact Patti Sadler -
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Welcoming the new Pastor at the first Saturday Breakfast



Children show excitement at the First Saturday Breakfast



August birthday celebrants at the First Saturday breakfast

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Editorial

It's the Little Things

As a newborn, no one can predict what the person will be in 30, 40 or 50 years. In the cradle, we see an innocent child with potential. No one aspires to be a beggar, homeless, prisoner, stranger, addict, or cancer patient. We start to crawl, stand, walk, run, develop the ability to reason and understand. Then, the things of life happen. We experience crosses, get sick, encounter losses, experience heartbreaks, failures, and disappointments. While some are lucky to survive the storms, others give up. Spiraling into dysfunction, they can feel suffocated by environmental, socioeconomic, psychological, and spiritual forces.

Matthew 25:40 instructs us, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Two things stand out here: First, Christianity demands action since faith without works is dead. Second, it is about doing simple things. When Christ requests that the lawyer go and do likewise in the Scripture, he exposes him to the dangers of rugged individualism and selfishness that neglects the needs of the other. We cannot look away, pretend not to feel, or avoid helping others. That's the lesson from the Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:39).

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, known as the Little Flower, reminds us of the importance of little actions done with great love. She also tells us, "Bloom where you are planted." Hence, holiness is found in simplicity among the people and circumstances that God places daily in our path. Christ led by example, tending to those around Him with great love. Then he commanded us to go and do likewise when he said, "whatever you do to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

We have taken this up for our summer edition with the theme, "You did it to me." We wish to remind our readers that the ways of Christ are simple - visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowful, caring for strangers, attending to the needy and homeless, visiting prisoners, clothing the naked, embracing the lonely. Think about the very little things that we neglect but which make a difference in the lives of others. How many times have you paid attention to the countenance of those you meet right at the parking lot on your way to church? Are you more concerned about your parking space than the person in front of you?

Now, imagine those who wake up perpetually on their bed of pains, sickness, and suffering. Imagine those confined in jail without the privilege of enjoying the air or the sun at will. Imagine those who have nowhere to lay their heads at night. Imagine neglected children who never hear the words, "I love you." Imagine the poor person who relies on the spare change from others to survive. Imagine the homeless person, exposed to the harsh elements, begging on the streets. Such persons carry their misery which becomes part of their existence. Do we see them? Do we care?

The theme, "You did it to me," is a clarion call in this summer issue of the FA magazine. We invite our readers to ask, "How can I extend the hand of compassion, support, and love to others?" How can I engage in the Corporal Works of Mercy, which form the crux of Christian discipleship? Each of us can bring the warmth of Christ in a world grown cold. It's about doing little things for others with great love.



V. Arisukwu



SHE
Lives
ON!

Theresa Ibrinke came from a humble beginning, from a background where human life was recognized and respected above every other value. She was brought up in a culture where helping others is the greatest act of religion. Right from the beginning, Theresa understood that the fear of the Lord is indispensably connected with love of neighbor. She lived it, experienced it, and transmitted it to anyone around her. These were the voices of the various speakers at her viewing on Friday June 21, 2019

~Mommy was not just a mother-in-law, she was my mum. She cared for me the same way she cared for her children" - Adenike

~My grandma will never judge you but listen, she taught me on how to deal with my problems- Ademola

~Mom will do anything possible to raise her kids in a good way, she gave us the

best of everything - Anne

~ the motherhood in her cannot be limited - Olaolu

You remember the Little Flower, Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus! Theresa Ibrinke was given that name not by chance. She bloomed where she was planted. She was a strong family woman and became a widow for a long time in a tough African society. She stood up for her children, trained them to the best of their educational ability, and most importantly, handed to them the baton of faith.

Theresa took other children as hers. She provided clothes to the naked, food to the hungry, water to the thirsty and would give away her possessions to make others

comfortable.

What an interesting way to write one's name on the sands of history. After describing who the neighbor is to the Lawyer in the Bible, Christ said to him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:39). Theresa just did likewise. She was well known for coordinating, planning and executing events even in the Church with a goal to put smiles on others' faces. Theresa bequeathed to her children, George, Joachim, Pius, Simeon, and Anne this great spirit of service. Her spirit of service lives on. Her generosity lives on. Her commitment to human life lives on. Theresa was ready to hear those words from her Creator, "Well done my good and faithful servant ... enter into the joy of your Lord." Matthew 25:23



BUY AD SPACE

MY SPOUSE, MY SACRAMENT

Fr. Michael DeAscanis

There are approximately 7 billion people currently living on planet earth. They are intended by God to live in pairs; each human to be paired with another. Everyone is supposed to have someone assigned to them (or chosen by them) who promises never to give up on them. This is God's vision for our planet and for the human race. No one is alone. When we are children our parents love us unconditionally. But, our parents die. Who will take their place? Your spouse. On your wedding day you promise not to give up on each other. You promise to love one another unconditionally, in good times and bad.

Marriage is something natural; we have an instinct for it deep in our mind and soul. Men and women are attracted to each other and fall in love, whether they intend to or not. It is natural for humans. But marriage is also something supernatural! When two Christians get married, Jesus told us they receive the Spirit of God in their souls. God blesses and motivates them to love one another well, to keep the promises they made on the wedding day. Catholics call marriage a Sacrament. A Sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible reality. Your wife or husband is a sign of love; a visible reminder that there is an invisible thing called human love.

For Christians, marriage is also a sign of God's love for us. We understand that God loves human beings. We are significant to Him! So much so that He – Jesus – came to earth to tell us that He loves us. He came to serve us, to put our needs before His own, even to die for us.



Delia and Kapil Tyagi. Photo: Sarah Kioko.

And then He challenged us to do likewise, to love one another as He loved us. The principal way that humans fulfill this command of Jesus is through marriage. On your wedding day, that magnificent and fearful promise is made to love and serve one another until one partner dies, no matter what!

Jesus challenged humans to serve the needs of others. Not merely to look out for numero uno, myself, but to look out for others. He told us to care for the bodily and spiritual needs of others. He said to us, "As long as you did it for these little ones. You did it for me." (Matt 25:40)

By serving our neighbor, we are serving

God. And who is my neighbor? Your closest neighbor is the one who shares your house, indeed, your very bed; your spouse. This is the person we must get along with first. We cannot expect peace in the world if not first in the home. How can we expect peace in Baltimore City or in the Middle East if married couples cannot get along? However, increasingly, married couples aren't getting along. In the United States, statistically half of all married couples separate, even though initially they were in love!

How do we fix marriage? How do we help couples to get along, indeed, thrive? If a

As humans, we are seriously tempted to selfishness. For marriage to work, we need to be generous. We need to break out of our selfishness and put our spouse before ourselves. And if we are blessed with children, we need to put them before ourselves, too.



Carla Marie de Castro and Aaron Michael Wescott. Photo: Kirsten Marie.

This is our chance for nobility, for greatness. In a real sense, the mark of a good person, at the end of life, is their family. How did I relate to them? This is the human project, so to speak. Did I conquer myself, my selfishness, and serve well? What impact did I have on others?

I presided at a funeral recently of a woman who had been married over 60 years. The atmosphere at the cemetery was very emotional as the husband lingered at his wife's coffin. How could he turn and walk away? They had spent so much of their existence together. Who was he without her? As he finally turned from the coffin, he looked upon their five children, their spouses, eighteen grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He and his wife had been generous to each other and generous with children. He and his wife had done something noble, something great. They had overcome their selfishness and loved each other well. They had persevered through the ups and downs of married life. They had brought new life into the world, loving and forming those lives.

We need help to be consistently generous. We need to rise above our natural instincts and to act in a supernatural way. We need God's help, his Spirit within us stretching our soul, stretching our heart.

Dear spouses, I challenge you to want to be a better couple, to want a better marriage. Don't be complacent. Read books that enhance your good qualities, attend

seminars, take marriage counseling when necessary. And talk to your priest/pastor! So few couples speak with their pastor about marriage. He is there to assist. Sometimes his best help is simply facilitating a conversation between spouses because they don't give one another the chance to say what they are thinking or feeling.

Be considerate. Consideration is key to happiness in marriage. Consider the needs of the other. Consideration is an essential aspect of generosity. Ask yourself: *How can I assist or encourage my spouse? How I can I be more attractive to my spouse or more pleasing?*

Perhaps the best way to grow in consideration is Confession. I encourage couples in my parish to receive the Sacrament of Confession once a month. If every four weeks you stop and seriously consider how you have treated your husband or wife, and then confess the times you were inconsiderate or selfish, asking God and your spouse to forgive you, how can you not succeed? How can your marriage not be great?

So, you have found that one person to marry, that one in 7 billion, your spouse. Give your life in service to him or her. Some days it may be difficult, but your spouse and the sacrament of Matrimony are your path to greatness.

couple is struggling, whose fault is it? Is there some mysterious third party that comes along to wreck marriages? Of course not. If marriage is struggling it's his fault or her fault, or both. One or the other or both are not being generous. The solution? Be more generous! And forgive the lack of generosity in the other.

It's not complicated, but it's also not simple.



Fr. Michael DeAscanis is a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, ordained in 2004. His seminary studies specialized in bioethics and medical ethics. He currently serves as pastor of St. Philip Neri and St. Clement parishes. He also serves as chaplain of the Catholic Medical Association in Baltimore, giving spiritual and ethical support to physicians and medical students. Fr. DeAscanis writes for the FA Magazine on Theology and the Sacraments

PRACTICING WHAT WE CELEBRATE:

Communion Beyond the Ciborium and the Chalice

Fr. Boniface Nkem Anusiem, Ph.D.



Photo credit – Patti Rubin

Once upon a time, a man who had never been in a church discovered a Catholic Mass on television while flipping through the channels. The presiding priest was preaching about the priestly prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ on unity (John 17). His homily made a deep impression on the man, to the extent he stayed on the channel through the kiss of peace and the reception of the Holy Eucharist from one plate and cup. The man was delighted to experience such a deep sharing and fellowship in an individualistic society.

The next Sunday, the man went to a Catholic Church nearby. In the parking lot, he noticed an available spot and backed in properly, but a woman in her vehicle dashed into the

spot before he could. Shocked and wondering how someone attending a loving and spiritual place could be so unkind, he searched for, and found, another spot. As he locked the car door, another driver was locking his car, too. The man smiled in greeting, but the other guy did not seem to care, and walked away.

Our first-time church visitor felt discouraged about the negative experience so far, yet still entered the church. From the back, he saw the woman who had nabbed his parking spot – she was happily leading the choir. During the offertory, he saw the man who could not respond to his hello – he served as an usher, offering friendly smiles to parishioners.

At the end of the Mass, the priest asked if there was anyone new to the church; the man stood up with a few others. Guess who welcomed him with a warm hug? The man who did not answer his greeting outside. Meeting the priest at the door after the recessional, the man asked if the parishioners are friendly only inside the church yet dispassionate outdoors? He shared his disappointing experience to the speechless priest.

This prose makes a case for the incarnation and fruition of communion in the lives of those who partake in the Eucharist through which we receive the body and blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

To establish the relevance of this reflection, a review of the actual words and actions of Jesus Christ about the reality and importance of His body and blood as real food and drink would be expedient.

Our Lord Jesus Christ on the Eucharist

After the last supper with the apostles, the Synoptics Gospels, and St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians report Jesus Christ took the bread and after giving thanks (blessing it), tells the apostles to take and eat his body. "He also took a cup filled with wine, and

understand more profoundly the concept of "communion" which means "coming into a union" with Jesus Christ and numerous brothers and sisters with whom we partake from the same meal.

Communion does not just happen; we must be intentional about it, even when it pains us. During the last supper, one could observe our Lord breaking the bread after blessing it and before giving it to His disciples as His real body. The breaking of bread remains extremely symbolic as we receive the broken Lord. Our Lord is telling us that communion will not be possible unless we break ourselves for one another as He did for us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed we would achieve communion by our participation in the Holy Eucharist. It is only as we gather together to celebrate the sacrament of the body and blood of Jesus Christ that we eat from the same "plate" and drink from the same "cup." Our Lord intends for us to achieve unity through the reception of His body and blood; for this reason, we also call

the Eucharist "Holy Communion" – the union with Christ and with each other.

In his reflections on the Holy Eucharist, St. Augustine maintains that the proper effect of the sacrament is the unity of the mystical body of Christ, namely, the Church. In one of his Sermons to the neophytes on Easter, the bishop of Hippo teaches that through the devout reception of the body and blood

of our Lord Jesus Christ, we become that body; in other words, we achieve perfect union. In a related profound reflection, St. Thomas Aquinas relates our partaking in the Holy Eucharist to the injection of our daily food. The food we eat changes into the person who eats; it functions in restoring strength and increasing vitality. Spiritual food changes the person who partakes of it. Hence when we eat the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we become one with Him and with those around the table.

Moving Forward: Practicing what we celebrate!

Christianity is not an abstract principle but a life that should reflect Christ. We remember that the name "Christian" was a nickname for the followers of Christ, and it derived from non-believers observing how Christians were staying together, sharing things in common, and loving each other.

It is unfortunate that receiving the Lord in the Holy Eucharist is becoming more of a religious ritual than a conscientious spiritual exercise with a sense of awe and reverence as well as responsibility. The erosion of the spiritual significance of the Holy Eucharist is a challenge the Church needs to confront, starting from its domestic front, namely, the family. Catechesis should start from the family where parents should lay the faith foundation in words and actions.

Practicing what we celebrate is an invitation to extend the joy of "Holy Communion" in the streets and indeed everywhere outside of the church building. Practicing what we celebrate means breaking the barriers and limitations of individualism and reaching out to others with a deep sense of fellowship. Practicing what we celebrate means celebrating our Lord Jesus Christ in the lives of others, as He celebrates and advocates for us before His heavenly Father. (1 John 21:1)

Reference
Commentary on Book IV of the Sentences, d.12, q.2, a.11



Rev. Fr. Boniface Nkem Anusiem, Ph.D. is a Nigerian Catholic Priest, author of books and professional works. He is a blogger, motivational speaker, and a communication expert. He believes and assists in integral human development at all levels through works of charity, spiritual retreats, counseling, workshops, and conferences. Fr. Bonnie lives and works in New Jersey, USA.

GOD

Appreciates the effort

Stephen Driver

There's a recurrent theme in this issue of Family Apostolate. It refers to *Matthew 25:40* with Jesus speaking about judgment of humankind and the way we have treated the least among us: the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the ill, and the imprisoned.

How do we treat those among us who can least take care of themselves? I would like to juxtapose the passage with another: "The poor you will always have with you; but you will not always have me" (*Matthew 26:11*).

I've spent a fair bit of time thinking about exactly how to best live like Jesus and what we're being taught in scripture passages such as this. Often, these can seem at odds. Yet I realized – or perhaps had a revelation – God appreciates the effort.

There are often running themes throughout the Bible. Many first appear in the Old Testament, and the Gospels pick up and sometimes repeat or reframe the theme. Truth is, after all, Truth. This one goes back to the beginning: "God blessed them, saying: Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth" (*Gen 1:22*).

Referring to the fish and birds He had created, God had given them the means not to merely perpetuate their species, but to flourish. Why didn't God just create more of them? Later, God tells the first parents, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." It's the same thing. God is supplying not only the means for survival, but for prosperity. Yet, He's placing the

responsibility for that multiplication on us.

Jump to the end in *Rev 22:11*: "The righteous must still do right, and the holy still be holy." The Bible isn't a singular book, more of a library of books, written by numerous authors across time and geography. The books have been written, edited, revised, ordered, and revealed to people, with the earliest parts roughly some 3,500 years old. Yet it is by no means disconnected, disjointed, or fragmented. There's a coherent theme throughout the text from the first words of Genesis to the last words of Revelation.

There are things to do. God wants us to do them. Our salvation depends on doing them. God is very smart. After the expulsion from Paradise, there is the knowledge the world isn't perfect anymore, and certainly we are not perfect in it. We are surrounded by sickness, death, violence, and tragedy ... the few constants in human lives. Even if today you are blessed with health, happiness, and being well-adjusted within your world, it won't last. It happens to everyone. And here's the rub – happiness, while wonderful, won't sustain you when times turn tragic.

What will sustain you is purpose. Doing something which holds meaning. What does God tell Adam and Eve as He expels them from Paradise? "... to the woman he

says: I will intensify your toil in childbearing ... to the man he said: Cursed is the ground because of you! In toil you shall eat its yield all the days of your life" (*Gen 3:16-17*).

In this moment, God introduces the need for work as the consequence for having become mortal with knowledge of death – a result of eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This is partly punishment for disobedience, but I think also partly the creation of a process by which we are strengthened to bear the difficulties that await us in the world.

The Church and Christ in their perfection set a high bar for success. They're trying to make us pleasing to God so we can enter Heaven. But, in His omniscience, Christ is certainly aware of human weakness and the tragic violence existing in the world. No one knows better since He bore all human depravity in His sacrifice. As a result we are granted His grace to achieve salvation.

As Catholics, we are continually called to make the effort: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the ill, visit the imprisoned (and there are all sorts of prisons!). But when we fall short of reaching that high bar, and we're truly sorrowful for our weakness and inadequacy, Christ is there to reach out to us, lift us to our feet, and push us to try again and do for Him as He has done for us.



Stephen Driver is an editor in the Washington, D.C. area. He has been a part of Christ The King Parish in Glen Burnie since he was old enough to walk. He's still working toward being a better Catholic. Stephen Driver writes for the FA Magazine on Evangelization and Prayer.



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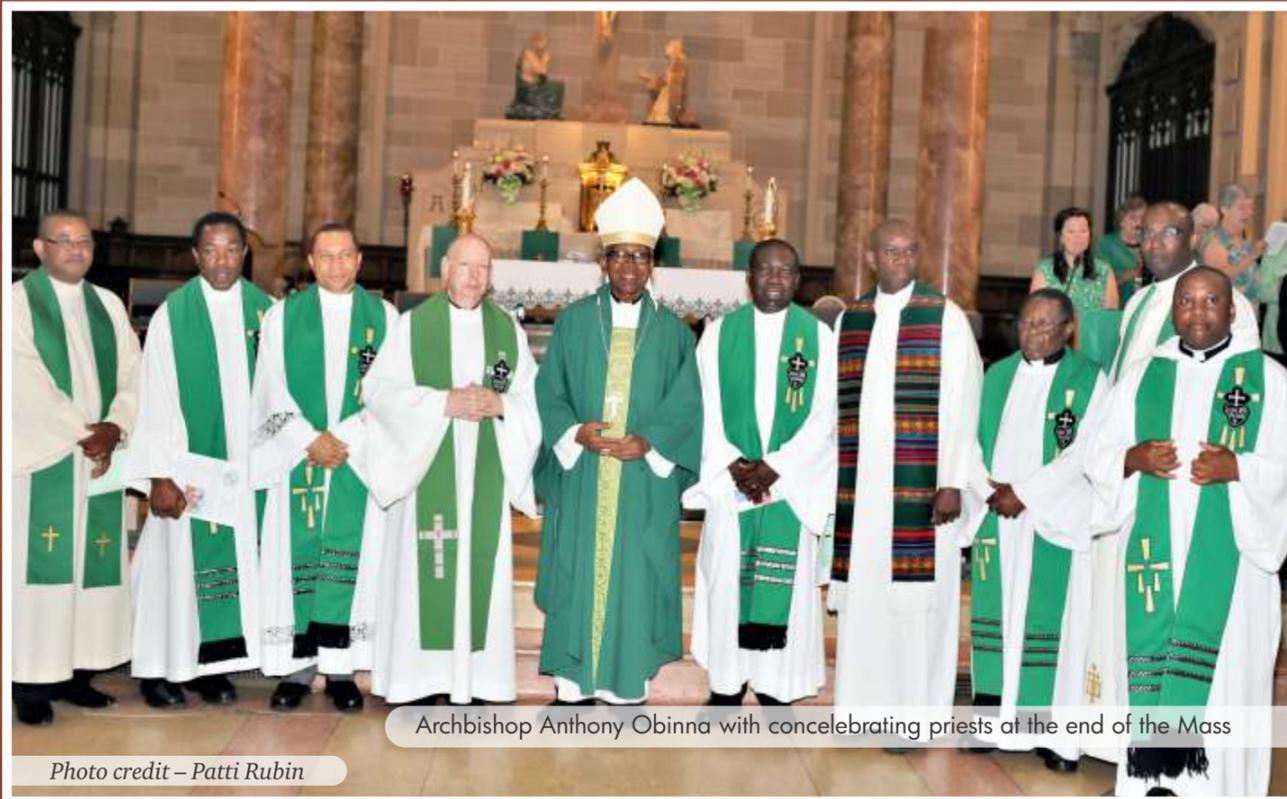
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f t G+

AFRICAN PRIESTS BECOME KEY TO EVANGELIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

...AS SAINT JOSEPH'S MONASTERY PARISH IN BALTIMORE COMMEMORATES BISHOP WHELAN'S LEGACY

Fr. Vincent Arisukwu



Archbishop Anthony Obinna with concelebrating priests at the end of the Mass

Photo credit – Patti Rubin

History was made on Sunday, July 14 as the Archbishop of Owerri in Nigeria, Most Rev. Anthony JV Obinna, visited St. Joseph's Monastery Parish in West Baltimore. After the parish had discovered Owerri's pioneer bishop, Most Rev. Brendan J. B. Whelan, had travelled to Baltimore in 1954 to dedicate the parish's altar, Rev. Michael Murphy, Saint Joseph's pastor, proposed the 65 year-event be commemorated by a pastoral visit of the incumbent archbishop of Owerri. Bishop Whelan was one of the first Irish missionaries who evangelized Igboland in Eastern Nigeria.

During the visit, Archbishop Anthony Obinna was the chief celebrant at the Eucharistic celebration with about eight other African priests who joined him for the occasion. Obinna expressed appreciation to the pastor and parishioners of Saint Joseph's Monastery parish for acknowledging the pastoral contribution of his first predecessor, Bishop Whelan. He highlighted the tremendous growth of the church in the Nigerian archdiocese which bears eloquent testimony to the missionary efforts of Bishop J.B Whelan. He remarked that the Owerri archdiocese now has priests serving around the world and in the U.S.

Revered Obinna invited Christians to embrace the gospel message in a spirit of love. Using the biblical example of the Good Samaritan, the visiting prelate challenged Americans to break barriers of discrimination. He affirmed that the good news brought to Africa by Irish missionaries such as Bishop Whelan, germinated fruits of faith making it possible for African priests to minister to Americans today. Africans have become key agents of the gospel.

The pastoral visit of the Nigerian Archbishop confirms the fact that African priests play an indefatigable role in today's



Archbishop Obinna with former pastor, Fr. Sam Lupico



American church. In a recent article by Lekan Oguntoyinbo, titled, "African priests are now the future of the Catholic Church in the United States," Reverend Martins Emeh, a one-time president of the African Conference of Catholic Clergy and Religious in the United States stated, "there were about 700 African priests in the country in 2013 and believes the number is much higher today. While the overwhelming majority are Nigerians there are also a few priests from countries including Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Cameroon." These African priests work in parishes, hospitals, and other church institutions. They passionately strengthen evangelization in the U.S. as they celebrate weekday and weekend Masses, conduct funeral services, officiate at weddings, anoint the sick, hear confessions, celebrate baptisms, and provide support to families at critical times such as during divorce, loss, and bereavement.

This is the message which Archbishop Anthony Obinna reinforced, and which Bishop Whelan and his missionary counterparts had produced hundreds of years ago. Through immigrant African priests, American spirituality and culture embrace African culture thereby forming a healthy alliance. We can view this from Mary's visitation to Elizabeth in the Scriptures, "At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea" (Luke 1:39). African priests now bear the image of Mary. They hasten to parts of the U.S. preaching and defending the good news of Christ - New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Orlando, Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, New York, Alaska, Maryland, and other territories despite cultural and climatic challenges.

Couples Corner

THE ROUGH PATH TO FORGIVENESS

Fr. Vincent Arisukwu

Dee Carroll, a successful woman with a Ph.D. in business administration, was running her own multi-million dollar company and doing very well financially. Then, one day she was surprised by a startling discovery.

Some documents needed reviewing and she called the bank. Its numbers and her numbers didn't align. Carroll summoned outside auditors to search for a discrepant half million. The day she confronted the chief financial officer (CFO), he admitted to running two sets of books. It took forensic accountants months to figure out how the guy had walked off with more than \$2 million. Carroll cashed in her 401k and filed for reorganization to keep the company afloat while she spent a year in and out of hospitals with stress-induced illnesses. Then the bank froze her assets, and it was all over. "I was so angry, all I wanted was to get my hands on that CFO and punch him out," says Carroll. Miraculously, the day came when she could. They found themselves side-by-side in the parking lot of a giant Walgreens – she in her old Land Cruiser, he in a new Audi. Ever the planner, she pulled out her phone and called her attorney: "Get down here – and prepare to get me out of jail." Carroll chased the CFO through the super store. He outpaced her. So she shifted strategies: I'll just ram his car. Behind the wheel, it hit her. "If he had me going like that, he was in control of my life. I drove off – and I felt good."¹



Don't we all act like Ms. Carroll sometimes? Could revenge ever be the right answer? Your emotions would say it is okay – only in the little things, of course. Sometimes, we're cut off by a reckless driver, and we go into a rage. Instincts lead us to miles of a futile chase, to catch up with this driver and show him or her how wrong he or she was. That's how crazy emotions can make us and run us ragged. Forgiveness is forgotten when our emotions are in high gear.

Like a wife hurt by her husband, Carroll experiences at the hands of her CFO what seems like damage for life, depending on how one views it. She loses her company. Her ego and self-esteem are deflated. Her feelings are threatened. Her stress level skyrockets. She endures physical health challenges, and the future appears bleak. Is any part of life left undamaged? That's how much the victim suffers. When facing the thief for the first time after the fall of her company, Carroll's first response is to track him down to hurt him in return for the hurt he caused her. Yet, in the long run, the price of revenge is much costlier than the price of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is an intrinsic part of our faith as believers. However, is there a limit to what we can and should forgive? "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (Matt. 18:21) Consider some extreme cases: a struggling marriage that eventually ends in divorce, a family torn apart by hatred, a daughter sexually abused by her step-father, a husband who discloses he's fathered other children with another woman, a verbally and physically abusive mom. These situations expose the daunting challenge of forgiveness.

What if the one who hurt me doesn't even recognize the harm he or she has done to me? Or, they apologize but still continue to hurt me again and again? How many times must I forgive?

Jesus answers Peter and us, "Not seven times but seventy-seven times." (Matt. 18:22). Ironically, too, there might be victims who have gone beyond the "seventy-seven" forgiveness mark set by the Lord. They seem to absorb their pains in faith. What happens? Scripture scholars remind us that the figure "seventy-seven" is not to be interpreted literally, rather as a figurative image of the endless demands for forgiveness. Christianity is not for the faint of heart!

Proceeding from the premise above, the offender's action would cause great injury to the victim. Trauma and depression, emotional, physical, and spiritual injuries raise the question about healing and forgiveness. Is forgiveness necessary for healing and recovery? Must there be reconciliation to demonstrate that forgiveness has taken place?

In my study of marriage and human relationships, I have often wondered whether forgiveness resides more in the spiritual realm or more in the psychological realm. Obviously, it is in both. However, Christians might sometimes imagine that forgiveness is only spiritual. On the other hand, the greater problem is to assume that forgiveness is only an emotional feeling with no spiritual connection. We hear statements such as, "I can deal with my feelings." That's a great way to set yourself up for failure. Don Davis and his colleagues maintain that, "emotional forgiveness occurs when the victim replaces negative emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions. Thus, spiritual experiences that evoke positive emotions should tend to promote forgiveness, but spiritual experiences that evoke negative emotions should hinder forgiveness."² We must be able to integrate our feelings with the divine presence in us. God's grace is the driving force for healing.

In this article, we are specifically referring to relationships between married couples. What about reconciliation? A husband was repeatedly physically abusive leading to

divorce. Now that the couple is apart, does the wife need to go back for physical reconciliation to heal from resentment? Not necessarily. Sometimes, we are unable to reconcile physically due to extenuating circumstances. It could be that the physical presence of the offender triggers old wounds and hurts. Asking the victim to physically reconcile therefore generates further damage. They don't have to be reconciled physically again. However, there should be some form of spiritual reconciliation. Saint Paul encourages us to, "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph. 4:32) You must start the process of reconciliation within yourself first.

The individual reconciles first with God by cleansing himself or herself of every form of resentment against his or her offender. You are willing to remove every instinct for revenge from your heart. Like Ms. Carroll, the question becomes, "What would you do if you run into your adversary in the store or even in a parking lot with the two of you all alone?" Would you smack him or at least ram into his car? If you did, then the process of inner reconciliation has not begun yet. Ask God to relieve you of the instinct for revenge.

For healing to be effective, there is a need to avoid seeing yourself as the loser. Don't see letting go as weakness. You're not weak when you forgive. You're not the loser. Avoid any sense of shame. Reconciling with yourself means accepting that resentment drains you emotionally and spiritually. Resentment will always speak the wrong words about your self-worth. When you can overcome that vengeful urge, you can gain peace.

This leads to a decisive step, letting go of the offender. Carroll's words in recognizing the danger in her continued pursuit of the CFO were, "If he had me going like that, he was in control of my life. I drove off – and I

felt good." Pay attention to the words, "If he had me going like that, he was in control of my life." If you're able to forgive, you are the victor. The offender will always want to control you, even if he or she is no longer physically in your life. That ex-husband would want you to feel he's still in control. Since he cannot do that by physically harming you as in the past, he enjoys having you constantly hunt him down just like Carroll's CFO. Your frustration and anger fit into his game-plan. You can't concentrate. That's the emotional side of it. You can only get depressed. Physically, you lose sleep. Your heart, head, and stomach ache. Spiritually, you are pitted against your faith. Prayer becomes disinteresting for you. Remember the Lord's prayer, "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matt. 6:12) Does it work? Yes. That's why Jesus told Peter, "Not seven times but seventy-seven times."

Ms. Carroll teaches us a lesson in our relationships. Stop that chase, it's not worth it. You might have been hurt, bruised, and injured. You might be nursing the revenge of your life. You might even be justified on a human level to want retribution. The question remains, "Is it worth it?" Revenge can misfire. It could lead to further anger and frustration... and destruction of your soul. Forgiveness is a process. You may not have gotten there yet, but keep going. God will lead you to the right path. That path is the peace and comfort that comes from a free heart. Don't count the number of times. You might give up before reaching the "seventy-seven" mark. Tell yourself, those who hurt me will not be in control of my life. Like Carroll, you'll say at the end, "I drove off – and I felt good."



Fr. Vincent is a priest from Nigeria, currently serving as associate pastor at Christ the King Church in Maryland. Founder of the FA Ministry and FA Magazine, he holds a master's degree in Communication and is presently a doctoral student of Marriage and Family Therapy at Eastern University in Pennsylvania.

When talking about forgiveness, we need to remember:

- Forgiveness is not just a theoretical concept.
- Forgiveness is more than what we give to our transgressor.
- Forgiveness is not easy.
- Forgiveness is inseparably linked with faith.
- Forgiveness brings physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.

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THE JOY OF BRINGING COMMUNION TO THE SICK

Deacon Kevin Brown

Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me. (Mt 25: 40)



We may not usually think of visiting the sick as a joyful occasion or as being capable of bringing joy to us. In some cases, we may not want to visit but consider it our duty. If we visit a family member or friend who is ill, it disturbs us to see a loved one in pain and suffering. Occasionally, it happens especially in hospitals, that our visits are rejected by the patient. But keeping Christ's words in mind, we do what is possible, and if we invoke God's help, we can gain the courage to visit anyone, even when we find it difficult. There are many different conditions and many different situations

that arise when we visit the sick, but we are enabled to visit in even the most difficult situation by asking the Holy Spirit to give us His love, so that we may see the patient with God's eyes and heart. I like to say when I bring someone Holy Communion that it is Jesus who really visits them— I'm just his driver.

We may be reluctant to visit hospitals or nursing homes or the homebound because we don't know what to say, or what they need, or how to pray for them. Some people may be afraid of visiting because it reminds them of death. So, we bring cards

and flowers, or a toy, or their favorite food or some material thing that tries to express our feelings. Those things are all good, but what the patient needs more is our presence, our time, our listening, our understanding. The sick person needs to know that they have not been forgotten or abandoned. Sickness can be very isolating, and the patient needs to hear that God loves him, and that there is hope for him, both in this life and in the life after death. We can also gain much ourselves while providing for those whom we visit.

Spiritual Growth

What is the joy we experience when we visit the sick? It isn't an overwhelming happiness, at least in my experience, but a quiet satisfaction that we have done God's will. Many have commented that visiting the sick is an occasion of spiritual growth. Pope St. John Paul II said: "We begin by imagining that we are giving to them [the sick]; we end by realizing that they have enriched us."¹

My own experience of visiting the sick includes hospital and nursing home visits, but mostly visiting the homebound, so I will concentrate on those visits. Of course, all

Questions about suffering

Usually the homebound are elderly and can no longer drive themselves to the store or doctor's appointments or to church. It is quite natural to miss all of the normal activities that they used to do. Old age or infirmity may strip away our abilities one by one until we become as dependent as small children. I invite you to consider Christ's words: "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

Some people are accepting of their dependency in old age and/or sickness, and others are filled with resentment that this has happened to them. We always have questions when we suffer: Why is this happening? Why now? Why me? Did I do something wrong? When will it end so my life can get back to normal? Does God love me or not?

All these questions about suffering are natural, and it is not wrong to ask them. God's response to suffering is varied—there can be cures of ailments, or not. But in all cases, God is asking for our trust—trust that there is an end to suffering, and that it has meaning, even if we cannot see what that is. St. Paul suffered a "thorn in my flesh," and God did not take it away, although he asked three times, telling him that "My grace is sufficient for you." (2 Cor 12:7-10)

Bringing hope to the sick

Part of the joy of bringing the Eucharist to the sick is bringing them hope. "Those who visit the sick must be conveyors of hope. When one has Jesus Christ's life in him, he can see hope even in the most impossible situations. God is a God of the impossible."²

Many times I have heard from those I visited that receiving the Eucharist made a great difference in their spirit—they had been despondent, but were encouraged. It would be a mistake to think that my visit is important—we should never fall into the trap of pursuing a better self-image, or pursuing good feelings about doing good. Our own holiness and spiritual growth is not measured by our feelings, which can be unreliable and inconsistent. We should carry out our visits with a heart filled with love for the patients, and if we do not have that love we must pray to the Holy Spirit to provide it.

The sick are apostles of prayer

We always must address the problem of suffering. Many holy persons, some now declared saints, were chosen by God to suffer and to offer their suffering to Him. Suffering can truly test our faith, especially when it seems useless or without cause. Suffering is not only physical, but involves the whole person—heart, soul, mind, and body. Pope St. John Paul II, in a 1984 homily to several hundred sick people, said

"Dear Sick! Offer your sufferings to the Lord with love and with generosity for the conversion of the world! Man must understand the gravity of sin, of offending God, and be converted to him who, through love, created him and calls him to everlasting happiness... The Church needs people who pray and love in silence and in suffering: and in your infirmity, you can truly be those apostles!"³

Joy flows from God to encourage us

So where is the joy in visiting the sick? Do I feel sorrow at their condition? Yes, I do. Do I feel some sense of helplessness as I see their condition deteriorate? Yes, I do. Are there times when I do not feel like visiting, especially the more difficult personalities? Yes, that's true also. The afflictions of the sick can afflict my spirit as well. But recall St. Paul's words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction" (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

The joy that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit is deeper than mere happiness; it is rooted in God and comes from Him. Jesus said: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). Since joy comes from God, it is more serene and stable than worldly happiness, which is merely emotional and lasts only for a time. Joy encourages us to help others—it operates

as a sign that we are on the right path, doing the will of God. Sickness may bring with it fear, worry, depression, discouragement, and even doubt about God's love for us. Jesus wants joy to replace all these negative thoughts because we are the branches on his vine, and draw on His love and joy.

When we visit the sick we visit the Lord

The joy of visiting the sick and bringing them Holy Communion comes from realizing that although I am a poor servant,

The joy that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit is deeper than mere happiness; it is rooted in God and comes from Him.



Deacon Kevin Brown was ordained for the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2005, and has served in Glen Burnie since then. He resides in Severna Park with his wife Monica (and their cat Sasha). They will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. Deacon Kevin has an M.A. in Church ministry from the Ecumenical Institute at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Roland Park.

I can bring Christ to the sick, and so encourage them in their journey of life. And I am encouraged because when I leave them, I feel, often strongly, that the Father of compassion has blessed my poor efforts and made them an occasion of grace for the sick and for myself. Whatever we feel when we visit the sick, we go with the love of Christ within us, and we go to visit the Lord himself. What a beautiful mystery!

In closing, my hope is that this article will inspire you to visit the sick—ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and give you courage!

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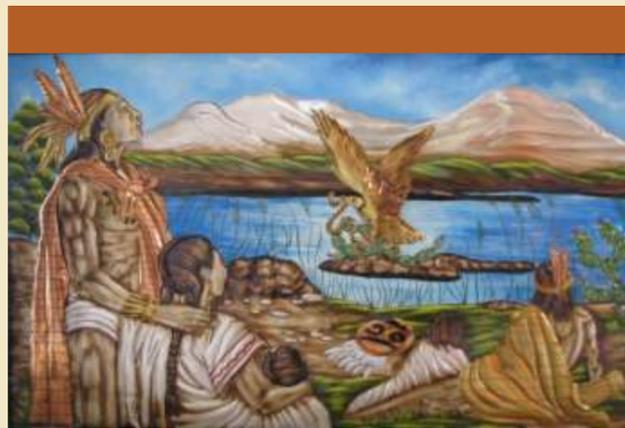
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Fashion's A Stitch

FINDING CHRIST IN THE HOMEBOUND

Fr. Brian Nolan

A few years ago, I ended up in the Emergency Room because of some symptoms that could have been serious but turned out to be just muscle spasms. As I lay in the hospital bed that evening, a number of people visited me, including several lay friends and two priests. I'll never forget their kindness and presence during a frightening time while experiencing uncertainty and a sense of helplessness. Is there anything more memorable than the care people show us during our time of need?

In one of the most famous passages in the Scriptures (Matthew 25:31-46), Jesus spoke about the necessity of charity, true love of our neighbor, to enter the kingdom of Heaven. He spoke about the Last Judgement and how at the end of time the angels will separate the sheep from the goats. The goats neglected serving others, therefore, neglected caring for Jesus Himself and will be cast out for eternal punishment. The sheep are defined by their love for their neighbor. Here, Jesus reveals a truth that shapes the lives of His followers, "As often as you did it to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me (Matt. 25:40)" One of my favorite quotes was by St. John

of the Cross, "At the evening of life, we shall be judged by our love." This is both encouraging and a radical reminder that we have the gift and responsibility to love and care for our neighbor in need.

Did You Visit Me?

Some years back, I was speaking with a friend who had been involved with prison ministry for a long time. When I asked how he got involved, he told me that this passage in Matthew's Gospel inspired him. He said, when I meet the Lord, I want to be able to say, "I visited you in prison."

While not all of us are called to prison ministry or can visit those in prison (sometimes there are extensive processes to do so), most of us know or will hear about those who are sick, homebound, in assisted living or a nursing home. How many people feel a sense of helplessness in times of sickness or poor health? How many people feel a sense of hopelessness, discouragement or are tempted to despair because they live more isolated from their families or society. How many people feel unloved, left out, or that life doesn't have meaning anymore. What if we were that person? Wouldn't we want someone to visit us, acknowledge us, show us that we still

matter, both in God's eyes and in ours?

Our Response Is Love: "The Little Way" of Love, Sacrifice, and Compassion

In *Story of a Soul*, the diary of St. Therese of Lisieux, she wrote, "My vocation is love." Her story is one of living the "little way" of small acts of love, kindness, and joy given away freely to others. Because of this "little way" to holiness, she was declared a Doctor of the Church. St. Therese reminds us that this is possible for everyone and in everyday life. Love and kindness for the homebound and sick can be through a phone call, a short note, or a visit. The visit doesn't need to last for hours on end, it can be for 15-20 minutes. I know of several people who show their love and compassion for the homebound through, either occasionally or regularly, buying groceries, running errands, bringing them to church, delivering a meal, or sharing a dessert with them. The most important gift is our presence and the presence of Christ that we bring.

On the one hand, acts of charity and love are simple and easy. On the other hand, it is a sacrifice of time and presence for another. Love both demands and requires

sacrifice. It's an expression of our faith to love in concrete ways (James 2:14-26). It's living out Jesus' call to imitate His love, "There is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

It's also helpful to remember that the word compassion means "to suffer with" or "to suffer together." Visiting the sick or homebound allows us to grow in our care and concern for others. Their concerns become our concerns, their prayers become our prayers. Consider this saying that sorrow shared is divided, and joy shared is multiplied. Visiting the sick or homebound involves sharing both the sorrows and joys of life, and one of those joys is encountering Jesus Christ in them.

Supernatural Encounter – Be Jesus and See Jesus

When Jesus said in his parable of the sheep and goats, "you did it to me," he proclaimed a supernatural truth. As often as we do it to the least, we do it to Him. It's more than as if it was done to Him. In a supernatural way, we actually encounter Jesus Christ in the sick and homebound. Years ago, I was serving with the Missionaries of the Poor in Jamaica. They affectionately called themselves by their

initials, the "MOPs". Every day they prayed for several hours, participated in Mass, and spent the rest of the day serving those with severe disabilities, special needs, and those with late-stage HIV-AIDS. After spending a few days serving with them, I noticed their tireless service to the poor and radiant joy and asked them how they do this every day. Their response was, "We don't know why more people don't do this; we get to see Jesus every day!" What an inspiring response through their witnesses of the love of Jesus Christ for the poor. They get to be Jesus and, more importantly, see Jesus in all their works of love and charity. When you visit the sick or homebound, do you go with the expectation to see Jesus? If we keep open our eyes of faith, we will begin to notice His subtle, but real, presence in them as well!

Love Will Never Be Forgotten

I recently preached a funeral for a young adult in her late 30's who suffered greatly from an aggressive cancer that took a great toll on her body. Shortly before passing away she was reconciled with her Catholic faith and was anointed, including having the Apostolic Pardon – a plenary indulgence that prepared her to meet her Lord face-to-face. One of the gifts we should always give to our deceased loved ones is our prayers for their soul; our prayers can help them.

As I was preparing to preach at the funeral, I sensed that the trauma from all the suffering was still fresh in the mind of the family. In praying with the Scriptures, there is a passage in the Gospel of John where Jesus speaks about how grief will be changed to joy. In this passage, he uses the image of labor pains. "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world" (John 16:21).

In my prayer and later my preaching, I shared with them, "Over the last few months there were many times when you

comforted your loved one, and there may be a temptation to say, 'I'm sorry you had to suffer, I'm sorry you had to go through all this.' But what if we were to hear from that person who is with the Lord, 'I wouldn't change anything. Remember that time that you wiped the sweat off my brow with a cold washcloth when my head was hurting? I will never forget it, and Jesus will never forget it. Remember that time you couldn't take away the pain and you held my hand or just held me? I will never forget it, and Jesus will never forget it. Remember that time when...' It would be like labor pains. While labor is happening, it's an indescribable pain (though I can't speak from experience, please ask any mother), but once the child is born and you hold that newborn baby in your arms, it is an unforgettable experience of joy!

Love For Others Will Never Be Forgotten!

In fact, as St. Paul reminds us, in the end, only three things will matter: "...faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

A Word To Those in Ministry to the Homebound or Sick

Over the years I have met countless faithful and dedicated men and women, lay, religious, and clerical who have an inspiring commitment to show Christ's compassion to the sick and homebound throughout the year. A number of them commit to weekly visits that include genuine care and friendship, the gift of praying together, and offering Holy Communion to those who are disposed to receive the Eucharist. How many times have the laity, religious women and men, and deacons been bridges and sharers of the Good News with those of frail health, including an attentiveness to inviting priests to administer the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to those who have serious health issues. May the Lord bless you in abundance for your sacrifice for the love of God and others. May you know and continue to experience the reality that, as the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi says, "It is in giving that we receive."



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BURYING THE DEAD: GOD'S PLAN, THEN AND NOW

John F. Collins



I have been asked so many times about my job, "How did you get into this business?" "What made you do this?" "How can you be around people crying all the time?" "I could never do that, or I could never work around all that sadness." These comments are spontaneous and often with a scrunched-up face, but no matter how the question is asked, I always give the same answer. God had His plan.

I began my career in funeral service when I was only 16. I was in 10th grade in high school with the dream of being an auto mechanic. I wanted to find a job, but back in 1980, jobs were scarce in my town since the steel mills in Pennsylvania were closing. I went to my high school guidance counselor who told me that he knew of one place, but it was in a funeral home. I took the job while still pursuing my goal of being an auto mechanic. However, God had His plan, and although He let me finish my training as a mechanic, He was leading me to the field of funeral service, a call I later willingly accepted without hesitation.

God's plan continued to flourish. Over the last 39 years. I have had my faith tested, shanked, questioned, and reassured. I have seen people at their best, and of course at their worst, and everywhere in between. I have buried Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, whites, blacks, Asians, Indians, Mexicans, people who are short, tall, gay, straight, old or young. Every type of person God ever created, I have met: families that have been pleasant and those that were so difficult I wished I had stuck with auto mechanics. I

treated every one of them with the utmost respect and dignity they deserved as a child of God.

I have often been asked, "What is the worst body you have ever seen?" To be honest, I just can't pick one or even a top 50. I have seen so much of man's horrific inhumanity that answering this question is impossible. However, when I have been preparing these bodies for burial, each time I turned to my faith and prayed. I have even gathered others to pray with me in the embalming room.

Death can be natural or caused by some horrific trauma. Sometimes before beginning I just stand by the table knowing what tragedy befell them and cry before I can pick up my instruments and start my work. Sometimes I carry the thought of them

with me for weeks and the grief of their family even longer. People continually ask, "How can you do this?" As I said, God had His Plan. It is only by God's grace and my faith in Him that I do what I do along with many other funeral directors who carry the burden for those grieving. I trust in Our Lady and her rosary to strengthen me daily. My faith is the biggest part of my life and as I grow older it becomes clearer and clearer that I need to continue strengthening it. Not only as a funeral director but as a Catholic. I don't go around telling people that I am a Catholic, I just hope that people see Christ working in me and inquire. Maybe some will be led to the Church by my example. To God be the Glory.

Matthew 25:40 tells us that "Whatever you do for the least of my people you do to me." I have always held these words close to my



John Collins



Morticians - John Collins and his wife Ashley

heart when working with families. I always try to meet them where they are and not where I am. But if I'm being honest, some people have more challenging needs than others. Being empathetic and placing myself in their shoes has helped me become a better funeral director, but when I lost my father and had to trust another funeral director in another state, I found out what it feels like to be the grieving family, and I didn't like it. Relying on another funeral director because I was too emotional gave me an up close and personal view I didn't want.

Now I know personally how the families I meet are feeling and I can sympathize with them on the same level. I remember the day vividly. After I had buried my father, I was back at work preparing someone else's father. Even though I was hurting, this firsthand experience changed me, and it changed me for the better. I finally got it. I got what it means to lose someone close to you, and while it was painful, it made me a better person and a better funeral director. I have always told the apprentices I have helped train over the years that you should treat everyone you prepare as if they were your mother, father, sister or brother. Keeping this in the forefront of your mind will help you along the way because one day it will be true. One day you will have to let go of someone you love, just like I had to

trust another funeral director with my father.

This increased sensitivity for other people is crucial to my work. I recall a little Jewish lady I was burying. Her husband was heartbroken and was grieving intensely. My heart ached for him. Her rabbi didn't want the union pallbearers to place her in the grave as is the requirement in New York, so he asked all the men attending the funeral to serve. However there were only five men, and they needed six, so they asked me to help. I willingly signed the release form that was required by the cemetery and five Jewish men and this Roman Catholic placed this beloved lady gently in her grave. I was honored to participate. I never stopped caring for someone because we didn't share the same faith. I believe God wants us to love one another no matter our faith or lack thereof.

In doing this I truly believe I am living the life of faith God wants me to live. By being loving, caring, non-judgmental, and willing to help anyone who is suffering, I believe I am fulfilling my call from God and I keep sharpening these skills. We must continue to grow and learn in the Catholic faith, trusting in God and trusting His plan for our lives.



John F. Collins, Mortician and Manager of the McCully-Polyniak Funeral Home, P.A. in Pasadena, Maryland for 22 years. He graduated in 1984 from the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. He works with his wife Ashley who is also a mortician.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 2300) I think I have fulfilled this guideline along with praying for those families I have met and praying for those who have passed on to be with God. I know a lot of religions don't hold on to the belief in Purgatory, but I do offer a prayer for those poor souls who haven't yet been purified. What a day that will be when we see Christ our Savior in His full glory.

I don't want anyone to get the wrong impression. My years as a funeral director have been filled with a lot of sadness and trauma, but also a lot of good. I have met many wonderful people and have been able to share my faith with them in a welcoming and an accepting manner. I will continue to learn if I trust in God and His plan for my life. The ride so far has been a wild one and I am grateful for the 39 years of serving as a funeral director. I can't wait to see what our Lord has in store for me in the future.

The Life Of A Funeral Director

Mike Canapp



Photo credit – Patti Rubin

“The funeral director's constant exposure to death and the circumstances that may surround the deaths can sometimes numb our feelings.”

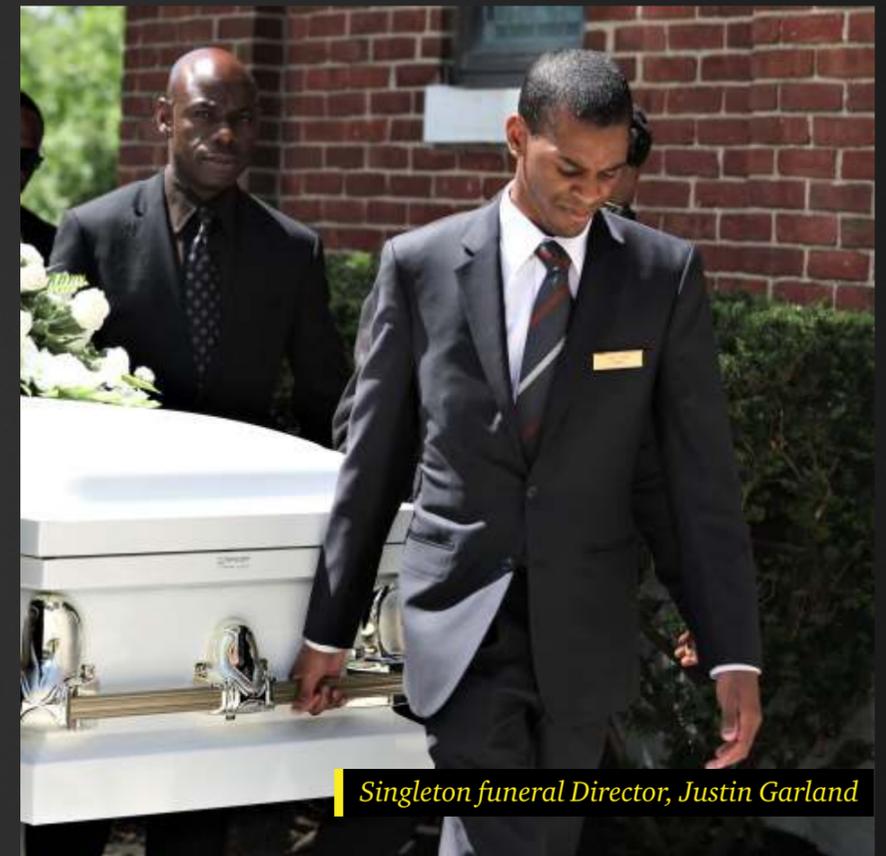
In order to become a funeral director, you should first and foremost possess a natural empathy for those who are grieving and desire to help them through a difficult and painful process. Yes, you will certainly need the required education and licensure to become a funeral director, but you must first wish to serve others. In a world where everyone places his or her own needs above others, it's nice to know there's a profession that still considers compassion and service to others at the forefront of its job description.

How does your position as a funeral director bring compassion to grieving families?

As with every caregiving or helping profession, it is necessary to have compassion and it's no different for funeral service. Being supportive and caring to the families we serve, both before and after death are paramount to our profession as a funeral director. With gentle hands and words we walk the families through what can sometimes be the unknown process of death. We need to put ourselves in their shoes when explaining and educating them in the steps they will need to perform in the days to come. In some cases, this may be the first time they are experiencing a death in the family, and that can be very scary to some. You have to be compassionate to their needs no matter how they are processing their grief. Some people get angry when there is a loss, some are distant or quiet, and others may just not be able to communicate or process the grief at all. Funeral directors need to be aware and have a good understanding of the different stages of grief in order to guide and direct families properly.

How would you consider the work that you do as ministry?

I believe most funeral directors enter into our profession because of experiences they've had surrounding a past death of a family member or friend. But for others it may seem like a calling, serving others through God. It takes a special person to be able to help people at such a difficult time in their lives. It is our duty as funeral directors to care for the loved ones of our community, being there to console, counsel, educate, listen, facilitate, and advocate on their behalf. As funeral directors, we are able to



Singleton funeral Director, Justin Garland

do this with God's help.

Do you consider yourself ministering to the dead or the living?

It is our calling to care for, or minister to, both the living and the dead simultaneously. Each are cared for with equal respect and dignity. As funeral directors we are called upon to prepare the remains for burial or cremation in accordance with the families' wishes or requests. Funerals are just as important, if not more so, to the living as they are for the dead. It's through funeral rites and rituals that the living are given the opportunity to grieve and say goodbye in their own way and that other family and friends may show support during this difficult time. Through the Funeral Mass or Liturgy, our prayers and actions show our respect for the gift of life from God and help comfort those who mourn. At the same time, these prayers allow the souls of the dead to be given graces they may need to get to Heaven. A funeral director helps to celebrate everyone's life.

Does your contact with dead people make you more or less empathetic in your daily relationships with others?

Death makes funeral directors unique and being surrounded by death 24/7 isolates them by profession. Good funeral directors will generally immerse themselves into the grieving families' dialogue and situation to better know the deceased, sometimes at the sacrifice of our own emotions. The funeral director's constant exposure to death and the circumstances that may surround the deaths can sometimes numb our feelings. While we strive to connect with the families we serve or maintain the relationships we form outside of work, we may still lose the ability to empathize because we're surrounded by the reality of death in our lives on a daily basis.

What do you consider to be your motivation in working with grieving families?

Funeral service can be a very rewarding calling, I know it has been for me. Knowing you helped someone, no matter how great



or small, is truly a rewarding experience. This is why people enter into funeral service in the first place. To be able to help people, to give back, is what motivates our profession. There is no greater feeling than when a grieving family member comes over to you at the end of the funeral and gives you a hug or thanks you for being there for them and helping them through the process in such a dignified and professional manner. They know they can turn to you when times are difficult. It's special to know that they regard you in such high esteem, that they are entrusting their loved ones with you. I'm truly honored and humbled by that gesture in every family I serve.

What are the challenges of being a funeral director?

Every job has its challenges and funeral service is no different. A funeral director is a caregiver and not only handles the details of the viewing, memorial service, and funeral, plus preparing the remains, they also are the shoulder to lean on for the grieving. While we may appear calm and in charge on the outside, there are a lot of things going on behind the scenes that can cause a funeral director stress and fatigue. We operate in a 24/7 environment and make ourselves available to families without care to ourselves or to our families. It's easy to be torn between the needs of our own family and the needs of those we serve. A good deal of emotional and physical energy is also required in funeral service. A lot of preparation goes into planning a funeral, so our hours are long. The challenge is trying to balance the stresses and tolls that we are confronted with while serving others with other healthy

avenues to relieve the pressures we find in our profession.

What particular experience stands out for you in preparing a funeral or meeting with families before a funeral?

Each family is different, so I have to approach the preparation slightly different with each family that I serve. I generally like to get as much information on the first call (notification of death call) that I can. Gathering information like where the person passed away at, who the legal next of kin is, have they made any pre-arrangements with the funeral home, are their wishes to be buried or cremated, is the deceased a veteran, all is needed information for the funeral director. With this information I can assist them further by answering a lot of questions they may have, before they even come into the funeral home. There might be some legal issues that they need to know about or they might need certain documentation to bring in with them. I like to prepare the families as much as possible in advance. I find this is very helpful, especially if they've never gone through the process before. Having them prepared will help alleviate some of the anxiety of the unknown. When I said each family is different, I also meant that they each grieve differently as well. Some might be in shock, some angry, some

reserved and some might even be jovial with you. Having the families prepared helps us better serve them when we meet with them to make the final arrangements for their loved one.

A funeral director is a caregiver and not only handles the details of the viewing, memorial service, and funeral, plus preparing the remains,



Michael Canapp

Michael Canapp is the Managing Director of Singleton Funeral & Cremation Services, PA, and has served as a licensed Funeral Director for over 20 years.



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I was in prison and you visited me

Laura Graham

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" [Matthew 34:40]

It is easy to forget the imprisoned. Out of sight, out of mind. Who wants to forge through paperwork, fingerprinting, visitor badges, and walk through prison security to visit prisoners? Jesus tells us He wants us to do this, for whatever we do for the imprisoned, we do for Him. So we do it. For Him. We bring His mercy behind 10-foot fences and barbed wire into cinder block rooms and hearts and souls of those in profound need of His grace and mercy.

This is what the Women's Prison Ministry of St. Philip Neri parish's does weekly – visit prisoners at the Patuxent Institute for Women (PIW) in Jessup, Maryland. An overlapping group visits female inmates at the Anne Arundel County Detention Center on Ordinance Road.

The PIW ministry has been faithfully visiting women weekly for 15 years. The Detention Center ministry is entering its fourth year, with a steady group of eight alternating weekly visits. It also facilitates monthly priest visits to hear confession and say Mass.

Tara was incarcerated for 20 years for killing her baby. She admits if she had been living the Catholic faith, she would never have done it. She had two other daughters to live for, who visited her in prison on Family Day and whom she phoned monthly. She desperately wanted to be their mother. Her most difficult days in prison were on the anniversary of the crime. She attended Catholic Ministry weekly. The group encouraged her to trust in Christ, seek His redemption, and know and live the Catholic faith. This helped sustain her while living in a psychologically tough prison environment. It provided her with hope for after her release. Tara pushed through, was released, and we pray she is living the faith outside of the prison walls.

The female population of each facility varies. The Detention Center is mostly filled with drug offenders serving sentences between several weeks and several months. Those women are still close to drug use and arrest. PIW houses women serving 10 to 40 years for having committed grave crimes.

Visits to both prisons are not scary at all.

Volunteers generally feel welcomed and appreciated. The scary part about the prisons is the ongoing effort by members of other faiths and cults to convert vulnerable Catholic inmates to other religions or practices. This is the biggest challenge for our Catholic Ministry – daunting and delicate. Because inmates are desolate, in need of consolation, medicated, upset, confused, and looking for a new identity, they can be tempted by religions and cults which seem simple and absolute, and validate their sense of alienation and anger.

We cannot compel our Catholic sisters to attend our visits or monthly Mass; nor can we force them to reject beliefs preying on their fragile souls. We can only encourage and try to keep them in fellowship with Jesus and fellow believers.

Daria is a non-Catholic. Another inmate convinced her to attend the Catholic Ministry. Although she thinks Catholics worship Mother Mary and pray to religious statues, she was persuaded to meet the Catholic women who visited on Tuesdays –

without fail – to pray, reflect and offer Jesus' consolation. Daria thinks there is something good about Catholics making the sign of the cross and offering beautiful prayer cards. She is heartened by our humility and eventually opened up to express her resolve to live differently after release. Yet sadly, after detention, she relapsed to the same conditions. Sadder still, Daria died after a suspicious accident two days after she was released from prison. The women of the Catholic Ministry prayed for her soul.

More than half of the inmates who attend our visits are non-Catholics. Some are unsure if they were baptized; if they were, they do not know in which parish. However, they understand we welcome all women. So they give Catholic ministry a try, seeking God, forgiveness, compassion, and truth. For some, the veil falls from their eyes and they embrace the sacraments of baptism, confession, Holy Communion, and Confirmation while in prison.

The core of Catholic prison ministry is listening, then guiding the inmates to unite their sufferings with Jesus' redemptive suffering. We sing, we pray, we read Scripture, we read inspirational books. Most importantly, we listen. The women are

eager for compassion and view our visits as personal. They understand it is about the salvation of their soul and that Christ still loves them. Focusing on God's forgiveness and mercy, we help them accept Jesus as consoler and redeemer. Together, inmates and volunteers seek Christ as healer, physician, and shepherd.

Melissa was 19 when she ran away from home, met a man in the park and spiraled down into a drug-induced crime which claimed the lives of two people. While incarcerated she attended the weekly visits of the prison ministry, rediscovered her baptismal faith, and sought Christ's saving grace. Further, she began her own mission in the prison and invited others to attend Catholic Ministry and seek the sacraments. On her years-long path of recovery of mind and soul, Melissa is now on the pathway to release.

In the Detention Center, the women are fresh from drug crimes. Their short incarcerations make it tough to find traction. Most are non-Catholic and still, they respond to our invitation for fellowship in the Lord. They seem grateful that Catholic Ministry is reliably present on for them. They arrive, pray, cry, and share.

At PIW, we have more time to build relationships and trust with the inmates. It takes time – and they have plenty of it. Most of these women have committed quite serious felonies while under drug influence. They are serving time for 15-40 years.

The Christmas season is more a time of sadness than joy for inmates; they live in cells and dress in maroon uniforms. They are separated from their families; most are estranged because of their crimes. Many have children. There are no Christmas decorations. The unit is without Christmas cheer. Yet, Catholic Ministry volunteers to visit them, even on Christmas Eve. We sing carols and distribute copies of beautiful Nativity scenes and parish bulletins, featuring photos of Christmas liturgies and celebrations. There is a minor Christmas observance in the prison, but it is tempered by sadness. In turn, the inmates make us lovely Christmas cards. The women appreciate our efforts to bring the joy of Christmas to them: the Christ Child in humble surroundings and God becoming man for the sake of humanity – including including the imprisoned.



Saint Philip Neri Prison Ministry ladies in prayer

Most prisoners will have an uphill battle after release; some have died, some have relapsed, and others have successfully transitioned with the support of caring families. The inmates have written to show that they benefited from our visits:

"Thank you for your time and dedication to the ladies here at Patuxent."

~ Sylvia

"Thank you for taking the time to bring the Word to us. You have no idea what a difference you make and we love you!"

~ Darlene

"Thanks so much for your time and service to the Catholic Ministry in prison."

~ Yolanda

"Thank you for everything you have done for me in the time we have known each other."

~ Monica

The surprise! Prison ministry benefits the volunteers as well. We grow in faith and spirit by ministering to women who are broken and rebuilding from the inside out. Through sharing, teaching, listening, and sometimes defending the Faith, volunteers' Catholic faith is strengthened. This is truly fertile ground for all involved.

Prison ministry is especially in need of Catholic men to serve the much larger male inmate population. This type of ministry is not for everyone ... but is it for you?



Laura Graham is a convert to the Catholic faith. She is Religious Education Coordinator at St. Philip Neri parish, a veteran catechist and has served in Women's Prison Ministry for 12 years. She and her husband Doug have two adopted sons from Estonia. She worked in international development in Central Asia before becoming an adoptive mother and homeschooling her sons.



St Vincent De Paul

MARY SET OUT AS QUICKLY AS SHE COULD INTO THE HILL COUNTRY. (Lk. 1:39)

How home visits as Vincentians impact lives

Rene Cover

I remember clearly the first visit I made in August 2015 with a fellow Vincentian to the home of a neighbor who had reached out for assistance. (Vincentians call our brothers and sisters in need "neighbors.") The woman lived alone in the community next to mine and needed help avoiding eviction. She had called our parish, Christ the King Catholic Church, not knowing about the Society of St. Vincent De Paul. Our ministry was new at the time.

When we said we would visit to discuss her needs, she was shocked. No other organization in the area which provides assistance to the poor conducts home visits. My fellow Vincentian and I were nervous about visiting a stranger's house to discuss a stressful situation and ask uncomfortable questions. Fortunately, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been visiting the poor for hundreds of years and provided us with prayers and reflections to prepare us. We prayed together before the visit and after entering the home; we then prayed with the neighbor. The Holy Spirit was present and led us through the conversation.

She was gracious, kind and open. It was more comfortable than we had imagined. The time with her seemed more like a pleasant visit between new acquaintances than with a person in a dire situation needing financial help.

Meeting our neighbors "where they are" is a fundamental activity of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Visiting the poor at home "is the clearest symbol of the Vincentian charism which dictates the highest respect for the dignity of the poor: the visitor becomes the guest and the person being helped is the master." (*Serving in Hope Module VI, pg. 36*) In the place where they are most comfortable – home – sharing their struggles and hardships is easier.

Vincentians share a devotion to Mother

Mary. St. Vincent de Paul focused his attention on three mysteries in Mary's life – one is The Visitation. He "offered Mary's generosity and compassion in her visit to her cousin, Elizabeth, as our model of service to the poor." (*National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul Manual 3.4, pg. 67*)

Why is it so important to Vincentians and to our neighbors to visit families in their homes? The immediate financial or food need is met through these meetings. Material need is the reason they first reached out. Financially, coming to us is not

We bring the love of God to those in need. We represent Christ to those we serve ... Our neighbors know, without a doubt, we are present on behalf of Christ.

always a viable option since many do not have transportation – going to them takes off the burden of finding and paying for it. We also schedule visits around their availability. This allows those who work to meet with us outside of "business" hours without having to take time off, sometimes unpaid.

Yet the home visits provide much more for our neighbors and for Vincentians. We are not bound by time limits or lines of people in need of help. We are able to spend the time needed to get acquainted. We learn about their needs, lives, families, and stories. We have ample time to simply listen.



Rene Cover is currently serving as the Secretary of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Bakhita Conference of Christ the King Catholic Church of Glen Burnie. She converted to the Catholic faith in 2014 and has actively served the poor through her work with St. Vincent de Paul, the Winter Relief Shelter program and as a volunteer with HOPE for All.

What are the most important ways our visits impact our neighbors' lives?

We bring the love of God to those in need. We represent Christ to those we serve. Our visits begin with prayer and a brief background on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Our neighbors know, without a doubt, we are present on behalf of Christ.

We show those in need God loves them and gives them hope. In times of high stress and desperation, we bring the light and hope of God. Many, many times a neighbor has told us they felt blessed by our visit or God had answered their prayers.

Visiting our neighbors reaffirms their dignity. Going to their homes as guests helps to balance the power in our relationships. It reminds them they, too, are children of God, our brothers and sisters, our equals. In *Matthew 25*, Jesus instructed his disciples on how to serve their brothers and sisters. He also instructed us through His actions.

While visits to our brothers and sisters in their time of need provide material and spiritual blessings, the visits are also a blessing to the Vincentians who visit. Carrying the love of Christ to others reminds us how much He loves us. We are reminded to pray, hope, and have faith in God. In visiting these homes, Vincentians emulate Mary in her visit to Elizabeth. But beyond being Vincentians, we are invited as Christians to set out eagerly to visit others in their times of need and pain.



Why Not Offer Our Pain To God For The Good Of Others?

My experience as a homebound

Helen Wyrwas

Sometimes we become so busy working toward our goals or planning our futures, we forget God is beside us and wants us to be with Him. We forget our goals and plans should begin with "Thy will be done." When our lives are shocked by a sickness, tragedy or the death of a loved one, those goals and plans may fall apart, stop dead in their tracks. One may wonder, "What will happen to me?" "What will I do?" "Of what use am I?" If you are struggling with new and unwelcome changes in your life, the answer to these questions may only be found in, "Thy will be done." Yet how do we practice it? This can be very challenging.

As Catholics and believers in Jesus, we belong to the one body of Christ, the Head of His Church, which includes the Communion of Saints. We believe the faithful on earth and the souls in Purgatory are being purified and the saints in Heaven are connected in spiritual solidarity. We are encouraged to pray for those souls and each other, and to pray for intercession from the Blessed Mother Mary, Saint

Joseph, and all the saints in Heaven. We pray as well to our guardian angels, and the archangels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael.

When we pray for the living and the dead, we help unite ourselves closer to Christ. We are able to build up the Body of Christ by

Learning from many blessed people I have met since recent medical changes in my life, offering up my suffering may be the only way to follow Jesus ... the only way to His Divine Mercy.

offering our suffering for others whom we love and for the worldwide Church. Your pain and suffering can be a prayer – for the needs of family and friends; for shortening the time of the souls in Purgatory; for the salvation of souls who hurt the Sacred Heart of Jesus with sin; for healing of the Church from the abuse scandal; for protection of

the unborn and vulnerable; for the end to war; for holy priests to continue to administer the precious Sacraments; and for many more intentions.

I was reflecting on the end of the rosary and a part of the prayer, "Hail, Holy Queen" in which we ask Mary for help with this difficult life. We pray, "To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears." Everyone suffers. Some people suffer more physically and emotionally than others. The Church teaches that through suffering we can become spiritual mothers and fathers to each other. We can petition the saints to pray and offer their merits for us – not only Catholics, but anyone who wishes to do good.

When we suffer, Christ may be asking us to share in His Passion. On the Eternal World Television Network (EWTN), a young woman with Multiple Sclerosis was interviewed about how she deals with the

disease's limitations and pain. She said she considered her suffering a small part of Jesus' cross.

I learned as a child that offering our suffering for the poor souls in Purgatory was very important. Along the way, somehow, I forgot about it. It seems easier to ask for healing and improving things than to accept the suffering; to offer it for our sins and the great needs of others. I think many of us reflect on our purpose in life. Monsignor Jay F. O'Connor, Pastor of Our Lady of the Fields Catholic Church in Maryland, once said that when a baby is born, many parents wonder, "What will my child become?" What an enormous value you are to the world! What a wonderful gift you can be to others! It may be hard to imagine or believe, considering challenging circumstances, yet our sole purposes may be to accept what happens and give ourselves to God's Will in humility. Perhaps your current situation looks like Jesus' 40 days in the desert where

he prayed, fasted, and was alone. Perhaps now is your solo time with Jesus.

In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul encourages the greeting of each other with a holy kiss and to live in harmony and peace. Is it possible for us to do one of these deeds even from a weakened state?

Also, Saint Paul writes, "Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude" (Philippians 4:6). Perhaps we can find something or someone for which to be grateful and thank God for things like water, a bed, medicine, a Eucharistic Minister, nurse, therapist, or loved one. Being appreciative praises God and may bring us peace and a sense of closeness to Him.

I have been reminded that God answers prayer in three ways: Yes ... not yet ... or no, I have something better for you. Saint John the Evangelist wrote of Jesus telling Peter, "When you are older you will stretch out your hands and another will tie you fast and carry you off against your will ... When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to him, 'Follow me' (John 21: 18-19).

Learning from many blessed people I have met since recent medical changes in my life, offering up our suffering may be the only way to follow Jesus ... the only way to His Divine Mercy. I have found prayers like Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be were even too difficult for me in the middle of pain. Yet repeating Jesus' or Mary's name can be consoling and if we are able to think about others amidst our pain, how much more will those small thoughts mean to God? I have learned from listening to EWTN that those small prayers are very important for the world's salvation. I have a Divine Mercy Chaplet



Helen and Ed Wyrwas are blessed with 4 children, 3 in-law and 2 grandkids. At the start of her 23rd year as a Catholic School Counselor, she fell down the steps. The Grace of God, prayers of family, friends, her former school and many Catholic Church Communities support her through the medical adventures.

printed on the back of a funeral Holy Card which I had put aside. I have been able to latch onto that prayer in the middle of my medical issues.

In the Gospel of Saint Matthew 25:34-46, Jesus instructs His disciples and us that our goals are to love others through physical acts of charity. But for some of us who have experienced painful medical situations, we might not be able to perform the Corporal Works of Mercy. When we are not independent; unable to do things for ourselves; or are limited by money, time or physical, mental or emotional capacity, the Spiritual Works of Mercy might be the way to follow Jesus.

Through our words, prayers, sacrifice, humility, gratitude, and spiritual thoughts, we can be called to a deeper love – the Mercy of Jesus. Everyone may not be spiritual. Not everyone is holy. And none of us are perfect. I pray for God to send us His compassion and strength; for the Holy Spirit to breathe in us wisdom, courage, joy, faith, and patience; and for Jesus to guide us in His path to salvation so we can reflect on love, charity, kindness, humility, gentleness, generosity, and self-control – in what we say and do for others as we journey through this vale of tears to His Divine Mercy in Heaven.

Please God, let us pray to remember that we belong to the Communion of Saints. Please help us be like Mary, Our Mother, who humbly responded "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" (Luke 1:38).

The mentioned article is based on information in 'Saint Faustina's Dairy', and aired on EWTN from blessed people, including Mother Angelica.

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Photo credit – Patti Rubin

Interview With **Karen Biagiotti**

WE ARE BLESSED BY SERVING

I go out to the woods and campsites, under the bridges, meet people at the light-rail. I feel that God created this position for me.

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I've lived in Glen Burnie my whole life. My parents were married at Holy Trinity. Rick and I received all our sacraments at HT, our children as well. My family grew up very poor financially with nine of us living in a 1,000 square foot home. My parents divorced when I was 5 years old and my 3 sisters and I lived with my dad, his mom, brother and other family members. My father slept on a sofa in the living room and my grandmother in a rocking chair. My grandmother would always say, "We might not be rich but we're rich in love. No matter how bad we have it, there are others out there who have it worse." As a child, I couldn't imagine that, but I believed what she said and it really stuck with me my whole life. My dad was a cab driver and somehow, he managed to send all 4 of us to Arthur Slade Catholic school. That showed

me that if he could do it, anyone can do it. Most summers were spent without electricity; most winters without heat. But we had food every night.

Tell us about your marriage with Rick?

Rick and I met on a CRY (Christ Renews Youth) retreat at Holy Trinity. We started dating as teenagers. It was very eye opening to walk into his family's home because my husband grew up in the "perfect family." Big Italian family, 3 boys, solid parents. He would go out and play at the playground and be home when the street lights came on. It was truly a slice of the quintessential American pie. Rick was the foundation and came from a faithful family which I admired. Our relationship helped us to break that cycle of poverty together.

Can you tell us about Winter Relief?

Winter Relief is an inter-denominational program started in 1992 as a lifesaving ministry to feed and house people without homes. It's only run through the coldest months of the year. It's usually organized around the second week of October till the first week of April (about 26 weeks). Holy Trinity is one of the founding churches in the program. Tragically, every year, about 20 people or more will die on the streets. Churches in the area volunteer for one week to house and feed the people without a home.

Interestingly, Winter Relief is a ministry that changes the volunteer's hearts. I find that there are two types of volunteers: those who know it's the right thing to do; they hear and understand the gospel in Matthew 25 (you did it to the least of these little ones). The

other volunteers not only understand that, but they've made the heart connection as well. Over these years, it's been edifying to see people make the heart connection. So, the guests from Winter Relief are also a blessing to the volunteers. Really, they are the ones blessing us right back. For instance, I've seen it in my own husband. Rick's involvement in Winter Relief has brought great transformation in him. He knew it was the right thing to do but he had hesitation and all it took was for him to sit down and talk with the guys. He was able to make that head and heart connection.

What's the link between Winter Relief and Arundel House of Hope?

Arundel House of Hope was born out of Winter Relief. In the year 2000, it became a non-profit. In 2006, the Day Center opened. Then, it opened a transitional 10 bed home for men. Since then it's expanded to include several homes, a medical clinic, recovery center, and family program.

I began volunteering two hours per week at the Arundel House of Hope. Those two hours turned into a day, turned into two days, turned into whatever available time I had. I eventually ended up running the Day Center and Winter Relief.

How are you able to handle the emotions of seeing these people broken and bruised? Do you experience any vicarious trauma working with the people?

Absolutely. Doing this work for as long as I have and working with the people directly who are living on the streets, I know them. I know their history; I know their family. They are my friends. I remember one time I went out to the campsite and this gentleman was severely beaten up and wouldn't go to the hospital. So, I brought him to my house along with his two friends and made him take a shower and clean up. I nursed the wounds, put butterfly stitches on his head, wrapped him up and sent them on their way. The risk factor is a broken heart on my own part, a lot of my own sadness. Oftentimes I just push the feelings down and keep going rather than dwell on it. It's hard when I lose someone. Of the last two

people who died, one was killed, and one from complications from cancer. Both men had just received a voucher and we were in the process of looking for a home for them. Last year I had a guy I was taking care of. He was able to get a housing voucher and two weeks later, he was hit and killed by a car. Every year we have a memorial service on December 21st in Annapolis. December 21st is the longest day of the year. We read the names of the people across the county who have died on the streets. We have a representative for the different faith backgrounds – Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

What dangers do you see doing this job as a woman?

I don't see it as dangerous. I go out to the woods and campsites, under the bridges, meet people at the light-rail. I feel that God created this position for me. I believe that what I do working with the people on the streets is because God knows that I've asked Him to increase the love in my heart for His people. I want to love His people the way He loves us. That has enabled me to do what I do. When I walk into the woods or up the stairs at House of Hope, in my heart I'm singing, "These are my people. This is where I come from." Because the people here are part of our community.

Tell us about the people living in tents on the side of the roads?

It's their home. When I'm approaching them, I always call out, "Hello. It's Karen. Is anyone home?" because that's where they live. And just like you don't want groups of people showing up at your house to talk to you, they don't either. This is why I don't take volunteers

What expectations do you have for the person who is homeless?

Typically, what I say is, "I'll be here with you every step of the way. I'll check on you regularly and I'll keep in contact with you. Here's my cell phone number. If you need something, find a way to text or call me. I'll do whatever I can to help. I will do 80% of the work. I need you to do 20%. But over time, that 80/20 will flip and you'll do most of the work and I'll be here to support you in your work." So that's how I like to come across to people. It's a tough situation to navigate through the different providers. They must go to this building or go to that doctor. I've gotten in my car and driven 4 hours to pick up a birth certificate to help someone connect to the help or opportunity they needed. If you don't have a ride, let me know. I'll get you a bus pass or do whatever is necessary.





It's really like a warfront, being on the battle lines. I'm wondering about your self-care.

Yes it is, especially the women I see battered and beaten up within inches of their lives. I tend to push it down and think, "Ok, there's someone else out there who God wants me to help. He doesn't want me to dwell on this." So, I push it down and don't deal with it emotionally. I started seeing a counselor recently to try to unload some of this stuff that happens. I'm also currently taking a 30 day leave of absence. These last two deaths have really impacted me. I give it to God at night, so I can sleep but I don't deal with it either.

If you have a call for a man and another for a woman at the same time, would you be more inclined to rescue the woman faster?

No, not necessarily. It depends on where I am at. If they both have equally pressing situations, location will determine who I help first. The folks know I live in Glen Burnie and know that if something happens, I will come to help.

What has been your experience with security and first responders?

Working at Arundel House of Hope, I had police, fire and crisis response contacts. And since the county came up with this position, I get phone calls from police officers or first responders saying, "Hey we have someone. Are you available to come talk to them?" Because they don't necessarily want to arrest them for loitering or whatever. So, building that relationship with the community of law enforcement has been a benefit for the people on the streets.

What professional help are you able to give? Do you make referrals to outpatient or inpatient or detox?

We go into the campsites and bring professional services to them. Do they need medical insurance? I'll bring my laptop and begin the procedure to get them health insurance. Do they need an ID? I will begin the process of getting their birth certificate. We go to the Social Security office to get their social security card. Both of those documents are needed to obtain an ID. Then we get Arundel House of Hope to write a letter that these folks are on the streets and they're able to take that letter and those documents and obtain an ID. Anyone who wants to go into detox or treatment, the best place to go is the

firehouse or police station. They are considered safe stations. Crisis response will come there and do an evaluation.

What would you say to someone who's considering volunteering for this type of work?

First, my question would be why? Why do you want to do this? I remember that was the first question posed to me when I wanted to volunteer at Arundel House of Hope. Even if it seems like a rhetorical question, it's one that needs to be asked. I think if you're coming from a faith perspective, it's more about how to be a blessing to someone else.

Can a person do this without faith?

I think there are a lot of people who do this who don't have faith...and faith is the only reason I do this work. Discerning what God is calling me to do is the difference. What I believe is people on the streets are walking very close to Jesus. Jesus was an outcast. Jesus didn't have a fixed address for 3 years of his ministry, and he relied on others. I am my brother's keeper.



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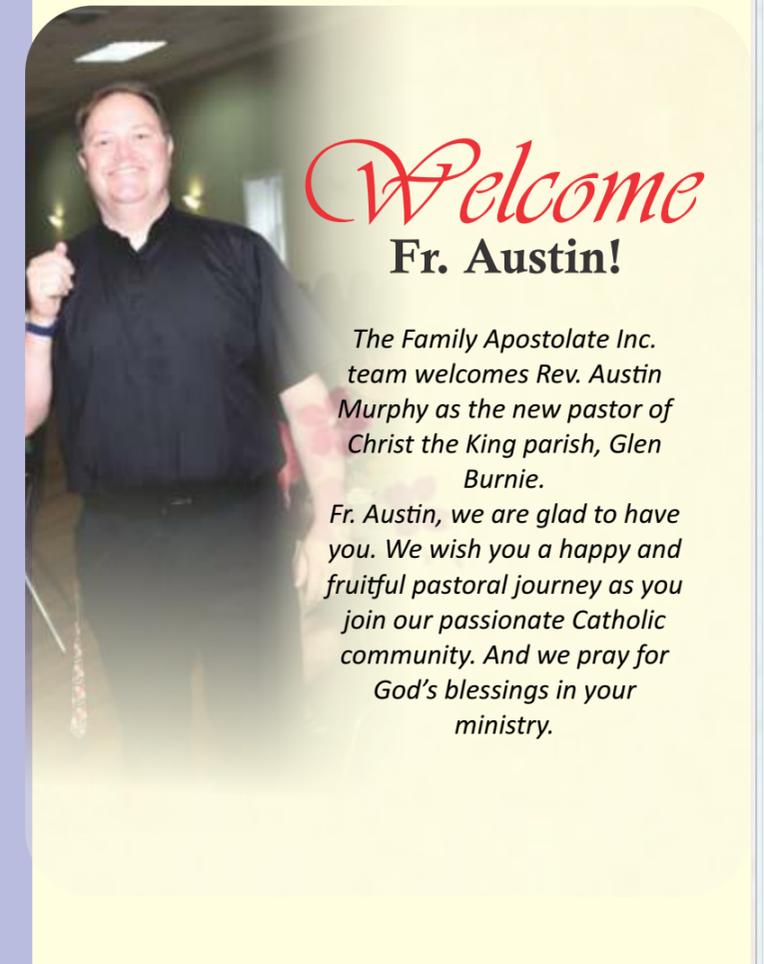
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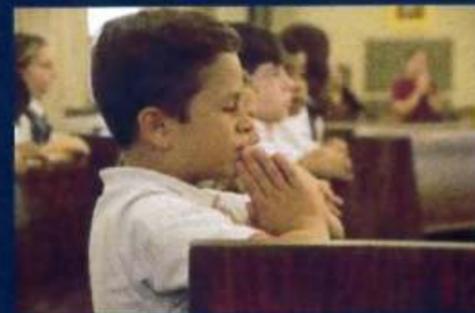
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Welcome
Fr. Austin!

The Family Apostolate Inc. team welcomes Rev. Austin Murphy as the new pastor of Christ the King parish, Glen Burnie.

Fr. Austin, we are glad to have you. We wish you a happy and fruitful pastoral journey as you join our passionate Catholic community. And we pray for God's blessings in your ministry.



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ALL FAITHS WELCOME!

It's been 40 years and I still cannot drive past the clinic," says a woman who contacted Project Rachel Baltimore for post-abortion healing. The trauma caused by abortion can be the source of life-long pain and suffering for many women and men. At times, the person who is suffering may know it is because of her abortion. All too often, however, a person may experience psychological problems and not know that they stem from the abortion. Though relatively unacknowledged by the wider psychology field, post-abortion stress is an intense reality for some women and men who have had, or participated in, an abortion. They then experience a variety of symptoms, similar to those of post-traumatic stress disorder.

I don't know what to do. I cannot believe what I have just done. Everyone said it would be quick and easy. Maybe the procedure was, but now I'm alone, facing what I've done and what I've lost.

Trained volunteers from Project Rachel, Baltimore, the Catholic Church's outreach to those who are suffering after involvement with abortion, hear this refrain time and time again. The experiences of grief, shame, denial, depression, anxiety, guilt, fear, anger, loneliness, despair, helplessness, emptiness, purposelessness, sexual dysfunction, and fear that many people experience after an abortion can greatly alter the quality of their lives.

I suffered for years—in and out of addiction, rehab, counseling, trouble in my marriage. Highs and lows that were so very low. My counselors all told me it was this or that, but never said it could be my abortions. When I found a counselor who gave me permission to grieve, all the pain came into focus. It didn't go away, but it made sense.

Those who have experienced post-abortion stress have reported a number of problems such as: eating disorders, nightmares, flashbacks, repeat abortions, having another child as a replacement, panic attacks, negative self-image, broken relationships, suicidal tendencies, alienation and withdrawal, substance abuse, etc. The pain and brokenness



HEALING AFTER ABORTION

"He Heals the Brokenhearted and Binds Up Their Wounds" (Ps. 147:3).

Amy Erardi

experienced often impacts every facet of life.

Abortion always has some ripple effect – both through the community and in the lives of those most intimately touched by it. Imagine for a moment the web of people affected in some way by abortion – the mother, father, grandparents, siblings, the abortion providers, pharmacists, the Uber driver taking her to the clinic, the best friend or teacher who encourages or discourages the decision. It also ripples through the life of those closely involved.

Project Rachel has served many women who lost a child to abortion and are now middle aged, having never been able to conceive a child again for various reasons. We help shoulder their grief – over the loss of her aborted child; over the loss of motherhood, and possible grandmotherhood; over the loss of her plans for her future; over her fear of being alone. A father tried to talk his girlfriend out of the abortion but was unable to prevent it. He shared over the phone, sobbing, "I tried to stop her, but I could not save her or my child." Even though he did not commit or support the abortion, he certainly experienced it as a sort of vicarious trauma. So many people connected with the mother

and child can experience stress associated with abortion.

Every single year – for the past 39 years – I go into a dark place for a few days surrounding January 24th. I lost my child that day, and I will never forget the pain . . . or my child.

When the child's due date, or the date when the abortion happened, comes back around on the calendar, such an anniversary can trigger memories of the abortion and the life that was lost. Other triggers, like abortion being debated or highlighted in the news, can resurface this grief. Imagine the conflicting feelings so many of these people might be feeling these last few months as abortion has been hotly debated in mass and social media. This is often a time when Project Rachel and other post-abortion ministries try to reach out and offer opportunities for healing.

My entire life has changed. I saw other women who had been through the same thing, just different details. And I didn't condemn them. And I realized I needed to stop condemning myself. And I read Scripture about the amazing power of God's forgiveness. And when I brought

down that wall that I had put up between me and him, I was drenched in that forgiveness.

Project Rachel ministers, and maybe many of you in your own relationships, have heard and seen post-abortion stress. And we know that so many people still suffer in silence, either unaware of post-abortion healing ministry or afraid to reach out. So how can they find healing from the wounds of abortion?

Project Rachel Baltimore offers a holistic approach to healing. Recognizing that abortion has an effect on the whole person, affecting mind, body, and soul, Project Rachel offers resources and services that address the psychological, the emotional, and the spiritual healing of the person. A team comprised of trained lay people, professional counselors, and clergy is ready to assist anyone seeking post-abortion healing. Some of these ministers have had personal experiences with abortion, while others have not but feel a call to this ministry of Christ's mercy. When someone contacts Project Rachel Baltimore, they reach our dedicated helpline where they are put in contact with an Archdiocesan-approved intake specialist.

She listens to the person's story and the needs that the person expresses, hopefully shouldering some of that grief as they walk together through the process. Several options are offered, as each person grieves in his or her own way and at his or her own pace. Clergy are available for Confession; specially trained counselors are available (with financial support if necessary); "companions" from the team of trained volunteers are willing to pray with and listen to the person; and retreats are available. Project Rachel Baltimore has one-day retreats for women and weekend retreats for women and men.

On Friday of the weekend retreat, one participant commented, "I only came here today to help my girlfriend. She's really struggling. I respect your faith, but I should tell you, I was raised in a family that said faith was unnecessary, maybe even foolish." By Saturday evening, following a Scripture exercise where a cloak is draped over a cross on the altar and retreatants are invited to approach the altar and pray either privately or aloud he remarked,

"Until this afternoon, I've never felt a desire or a worthiness to approach God. Thank you for that."

If you know someone who may be struggling with an abortion experience, please share this healing ministry with them. Statistics show that between 1/3 and 1/4 of all women aged 45 and older have had an abortion. That means roughly the same number of men and countless families have been affected. Given this tragic reality, we all probably know someone who is grieving. Please share this ministry – in conversation, at your parish and in your communities, on social media – wherever the good news of God's mercy can be shared. If you feel called to serve in this ministry, please contact us. We are especially in need of

Spanish-speaking volunteers.

All services are confidential and rooted in prayer. Anyone is welcome to this ministry – any age, any or no religious affiliation, etc. We serve because we are awed by Christ's mercy in our own lives and feel called to share the good news of that abundant mercy with others.



Amy Erardi is the coordinator for Pastoral Care for Project Rachel and Holy Innocents Ministries in the Respect Life Office in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. She is active in the prolife group at Saint Philip and James Catholic Church and University Parish. Amy is also a medical imaging technologist (x-ray & ultrasound) and works at Medstar-Union Memorial Hospital.



GRACE in the face of Substance ABUSE

Jamie Rockmore

Drug and alcohol addiction is common in the United States. Multiple substance abuse programs and residential treatment centers exist for individuals who suffer from various forms of substance abuse. Addiction can ruin a person's image, destroy a family, and lead one down a disparaging path. Rarely does it begin that way; it might be innocently recreational, due to peer pressure, or stress.

Yet that one time is enough to begin a journey that can take years to repair. Recovery doesn't happen until the addict receives the necessary support and shows determination to give up a morbid habit.

Let's begin with the basic definition of addiction from Webster's dictionary: *compulsive need for, and use of, a habit-forming substance (such as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal.*

Addiction consumes time. If the individual's focus on a

habit causes him or her not to work, refuse to spend time with family, or not produce sustainable goals in life, it is a disruption in the person's way of living. However, a person living with an addiction does not make him or her less of a human being. Society may view someone as such, yet that's where we begin to educate ourselves and the public.

Some addictive behaviors stem from depression, family issues, and/or deep-rooted issues stuffed inside and never discussed. People tend to seek satisfaction elsewhere; substance abuse is easier to access than seeking professional help – reaching for a bottle of alcohol or sniffing a line of cocaine – instead of calling to schedule an appointment and find a therapist or mental health provider. Perhaps the addict doesn't know how or where to seek help. Depending on their environment, if peers or family are engaging in substance abuse, it is quite common for potential addicts to also use and not view it as a major issue.

For many, substance abuse is "safer" and can be socially acceptable in certain crowds. To minister to people struggling with addiction, we must not judge. We must speak with them as who they are – children of God.

Any of us can fall short in life; this is important to remember even if we don't struggle with a substance abuse problem. It doesn't mean we don't struggle with other issues. Therefore, speaking with people respectfully is what we each want and deserve.

Imagine trying to describe Christ to a successful business person. You approach them with respect, the same way a person with an addiction should be approached.

To bring hope, we must humble ourselves so an addict can see us for who we are; show grace as God shows us grace. Be there. Be consistent.

Those dealing with addiction may be facing inconsistency in life or unhealthy relationships, therefore, we must display empathy. How can we help someone grow if we cannot empathize? We can share our struggles and feelings if the addict is open to hearing our stories. We help them to understand no one is perfect. We may not be agreeable in our understanding of addiction, however, that does not mean we cannot help someone struggling with it. We must show understanding and compassion since we live in a world already filled with judgment and criticism.

If someone relapses, that is a part of the addiction journey. Imagine having a weight loss goal, yet you happen to eat a piece of cake at a birthday party. Does that mean you stop trying to lose weight? Do you give up? Or do you begin anew the next day?

I believe society is harsh on addicts because of the negative effects of these substances in our society. Instead of condemning someone for taking a step backward, we must encourage the individual for showing promise of healing – perhaps they coped a few days without using drugs or alcohol. Small steps matter and will lead them to greater outcome of healing and recovery.

I strongly encourage family and other social support to be available, if they can tolerate the journey. Abstaining from any addiction is not easy. Family members and society must do their best to understand withdrawal from the substance can lead the addicted

individual to relapse. Battling addiction certainly is more challenging than standing on the sideline, observing it and talking about what you would and wouldn't do in that person's situation.

For spiritual healing, the power of prayer is vital. Pray for individuals struggling with addiction. Teach them how they, too, can pray for themselves. Help them to know and understand that God is not mad at them, but that He desires to be a part of their healing journey. Many people feel shameful, too 'dirty' to seek God and ask for help. As spiritual leaders, we can inform them about characters and prophets in the Bible who fell short. They need to hear they were able to turn around their lives and

about the treatment support they can access from the faith community, research clinics, and community support. The more support one has, the better chances of healing.

Life is a journey for which none of us can prepare. The "normal" person can be just one tragedy away from living on the street or turning to drugs or alcohol. We must remind ourselves that we are humans who make mistakes. We are continually confronted by our brokenness. Yet it is our duty to share with others the beauty of Jesus Christ and His ultimate sacrifice made for all of us.

Being accessible to someone while they are



share their testimonies about Christ. No one is exempt from learning Gospel teachings; that includes people dealing with alcohol and substance addiction.

Providing support is a solid action by the faith community. It may be in the form of supplying a meal or holding an open discussion on the difficulties of addiction. Allow people to speak their minds without passing judgment on them; remind them

experiencing trying times is the most effective way to help that person turn to positive reinforcements. We all need reminders that optimistic outcomes can occur. Be that person who doesn't judge. Lend your hand of support to someone dealing with an addiction because addiction is a disease that alters the functioning of the brain. The addicted person needs help.



Jamie Rockmore-Bess is the Editor in Chief of Helpful Living Magazine where her focus is to promote mental health awareness. She has worked in the mental health industry for over 10 years and focus on providing education and resources to those in need of mental health. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology as well as a Masters in Communication. Her magazine stems from patients, providers, and supporters who are all in agreement of spreading awareness of mental health. You can find many of the resources at HelpfulLivingMag.com

IMPACTING THE LIVES OF PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS:

What We Do At St. Lawrence Martyr Parish

Matthew Behum

But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it (1 Corinthians 12:25-26).

This famous passage from St. Paul underscores what it means to be a Christian and a Catholic – focusing on our universality as believers – and it is a slogan we echo through ministry work performed at Saint Lawrence Martyr's "SIT Ministry" in Hanover, Maryland for persecuted Christians. "SIT" stands for *Trinitarian International Solidarity* (an acronym translated from Spanish) and it is the Trinitarian Order's ministry primarily focused on supporting the lives of the persecuted around the world. Indeed, the Order of the Most Holy Trinity was founded in the late 12th Century by St. John de Matha with the original purpose of ransoming Christian captives during the

Crusades. SIT was established by the order in 1999 as a structured means of utilizing prayer, awareness, and action in helping the lives of thousands in desperate need for ultimately professing Jesus as their Lord and Savior, even in the face of grave danger.

By God's grace, Saint Lawrence parish, which is staffed by the Trinitarian Order, introduced the first ever lay-person driven form of SIT, and I have the esteemed honor of serving as its director. SIT St. Lawrence was inspired by the Holy Spirit in my life. In late 2015, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) began to brazenly advertise atrocities it inflicted upon Christians in Iraq and Syria. People occasionally would compare ISIS extremists to the Nazis of World War II, but one key area where ISIS differed from the fascists of that time is how they advertised their mission. Nazis wanted their terrible acts kept from public view; ISIS produced high quality theatrical productions of beheadings, electrocutions, drownings, and other means of Christian

martyrdom for the world to see. And as these examples became publicized more on news outlets, I felt a stirring within me. And to this day, I remember a radio show host ruminating on these atrocities committed against our brothers and sisters and how it impacted (or didn't impact) the Christian of the West:

*What is your parish doing about this?
What is your pastor doing about this?
What are YOU doing about this?*

I immediately approached our pastor, Father Victor Scocco, about those very concerns, and I knew the Holy Spirit was involved as I received a detailed, almost prepared, reply. I learned our parish just that weekend was including a regular intercession at all Masses for persecuted Christians (we say it to this day). I learned the parish had invited Juliana Taimoorazy, Assyrian Catholic advocate for persecuted Christians in northern Iraq, to our church to speak. In addition, I learned that our pastor wanted to begin this ministry called "SIT."

I never thought about participating in the parish beyond weekly celebration in the Lord's Supper because my life had other commitments. But the voice of the Holy Spirit was strong through Father Victor. I felt God saying, "I really need you to be a part of this." I began the ministry not knowing how effective we would be, or really where we were even going with it. At the time it seemed like an interest group aimed at generating awareness in the parish – but I quickly learned that was only one (albeit an important) component. *Prayer, awareness, and action, which are the three charisms, formed the foundation of our meetings and planning for outreach.*

Our ministry holds prayer vigils throughout the year for the persecuted – we draft programs including readings, hymns, and intercessions, all of course open to the parish and public at large. Members of our group ardently pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, where we adhere to the belief that no weapon can combat evil better than honest prayer with Jesus. We have also designed prayer cards with examples of persecuted Christians detailing their lives. Examples include Asia Bibi (Pakistani Catholic woman who was recently freed from a blasphemy death sentence), Pastor Andrew Brunson (American minister recently freed from false insurrection claims in Turkey), Father Samaan Shehata (Coptic



Priests of Enugu diocese in Nigeria protesting against the recent killing of Fr. Paul Offu by alleged Fulani Herdsmen

priest murdered in Cairo while collecting for the poor), and Leah Sharibu (Nigerian Christian teen abducted by Boko Haram over 18 months ago due to her faith). In terms of awareness, we educate our parishioners with stories that mass media outlets fail to include. I provide weekly bulletin reflections on issues of Christian persecution dovetailing with our day to day living.

As for action, we have supported groups including Assyrian students in northern Iraq, a Coptic Christian boy in Egypt who lost his father to ISIS, Nigerian students

wishing to maintain a Christian education after being displaced by terrorists. We continually look for reliable outlets where our funds can be used to directly impact lives in other areas as East Asia, Pakistan, and India. Although we are a small group, we are boosted by the support of our parish and other supporting members outside St. Lawrence who embody the words of St. Paul above.

Our goal as a ministry, now in its 3rd full year, has always been to ensure, first and foremost, our parish is enlightened to the plight of the persecuted – that their suffering isn't something we brush off the second we race to our cars after a recessional hymn on a Sunday. The three-tier charism allows us in a multidimensional way to reach the parish over and over. Our donations have been humbling and generous, but we do not want our efforts to stop at St. Lawrence.

God bless you all and God bless the persecuted around the world.

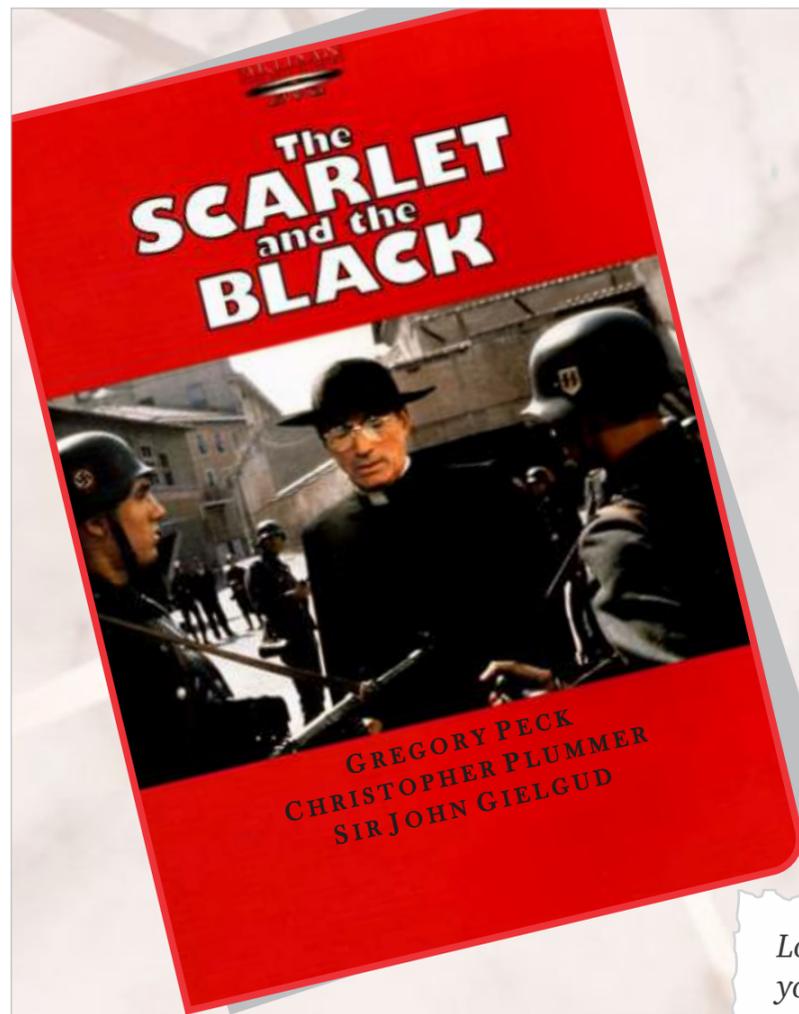


The SIT ministry team at St. Lawrence. Father Kurt Klismet O.S.S.T, president of SIT USA (far left). Father Victor Scocco, O.S.S.T, St. Lawrence pastor (far right).



Assyrian students of Al Tahira School in Qaraqosh, northern Iraq whom we support through Iraqi Christian Relief Council. Dominican Sisters there offer tuition-free Catholic education for the students who have returned after ISIS' retreat.

 Matthew Behum, SIT St. Lawrence Director
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Movie Review: The Scarlet and the Black

Christine Sybert

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:27-28

World War II was a time of terrible trials, especially in Europe. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party took control of Germany, then proceeded to annex Austria and destroy Czechoslovakia without a battle. Next fell Poland, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and the Baltic states. During this time, Italy became an ally of Germany. The Vatican, although a separate country from Italy, was (and still is) surrounded by the city of Rome. When the German occupation of parts of northern Italy, including Rome, occurred in 1943, two years before the end of World War II, that meant the Vatican was essentially under siege. What about the Jews and Allied prisoners-of-war (POWs) who were in Rome at the time? Was there nothing that could be done to help them avoid shipment to concentration camps without leading the Vatican to open war with

Germany? *The Scarlet and the Black* is a made-for-television movie that was released in 1983, based on the book by J.P. Gallagher, *The Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican*. It portrays the true story of the efforts of one Irish-Catholic priest, Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty (played by Gregory Peck), to fight back against German persecution. He led an underground network of priests, religious, and lay people who risked their lives to harbor Jews and POWs and help them to hide or to escape from Rome to the Italian countryside. Through the use of clever disguises, great cunning, and even his excellent boxing skills, the Monsignor was able to outwit the Nazis, specifically the "Chief of Police" Colonel Herbert Kappler (played by Christopher Plummer), on

numerous occasions, including surviving an assassination attempt. Through it all, the Monsignor urges peaceful, albeit deceptive, measures to combat the oppression and persecution by the Nazis. He very much practiced the instructions of Jesus to "love your enemies." Of course, Monsignor O'Flaherty also demonstrated that it doesn't mean you have to *like* your enemies or what they're doing; it is acceptable to defend yourself and those who are in danger. Plan to spend a few hours to view it (2 hours and 23 minutes to be exact), but it is well worth the time! Be sure to keep watching to the very end to find an amazing surprise and a display of what loving your enemies can do through God's grace.



Dr. Sybert is a Clinical Pharmacist who practices at St. Agnes Hospital. She is a member of the Baltimore Guild of the Catholic Medical Association and has a special interest in bioethics. She lives in the Baltimore suburbs with her husband and four teen and pre-teen children.

Bible Quiz

Matthew 25

1. **What shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened to? (Mt 25:1)**

- a. Ten brides
- b. Ten grooms
- c. Ten talents

2. **What made five of the women foolish? (Mt. 25:3)**

- a. they were sleeping
- b. they didn't bring extra oil
- c. they didn't bring matches

3. **When they cried, "Master, master open the door for us," how did he respond? Mt 25:11-12)**

- a. you will wail and gnash your teeth
- b. come back when you are more prepared
- c. I do not know you

Reflection question: *what is the moral of the story?*

Parable of the Talents

4. **The man gave talents to his servants according to what? (Mt. 25:14)**

- a. rank
- b. age
- c. ability

5. **What did the servant with 1,000 talents do? (Mt. 25:18)**

- a. buried the talents in the ground
- b. put the talents in the bank
- c. invested the talents

6. **What did the master do about the servant who simply returned his money? (Mt. 25:26)**

- a. he thanked him for giving it back
- b. he whipped him
- c. he called him wicked and lazy

Reflection question: *The image of the master is the Lord. Why do you think he was so harsh on the servant with 1,000 talents? What is the warning?*

The Last Judgement

7. **When the Son of Man comes who comes with him? (Mt. 25:31)**

- a. his heavenly Father
- b. all the holy angels
- c. the Holy Spirit

8. **What shall be gathered before the Son of Man? (Mt. 25:32)**

- a. all the wicked people
- b. all nations
- c. only the saints

9. **What does the Lord say to the sheep on his right? (Mt 25:34)**

- a. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you
- B. Come, see me vanquish the wicked for all time
- c. Out of my sight, you condemned

10. **What does the Lord tell the sheep who care for the less fortunate? (Mt. 25:40)**

- a. They will have a mansion in heaven
- b. They will not have problems on earth
- c. you did it to Me

Reflection question: *Matthew 25 is part of the texts for the Last Things or final judgement. What are the general messages in the three parables?*

Answers from Easter 2019 – Vol 3/Issue 8 edition

1. b – the soldiers
2. b – claiming to be God
3. d – Pilate's power was given from above
4. c – preparation for the Passover
5. d – Golgotha
6. c – Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews
7. b – his mother, Mary Clopas, Mary Magadala
8. b – he took her into his home
9. b – they will look upon him whom they have pierced
10. d – Joseph of Arimathea



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