

Christ is our Hope

SEPTEMBER 2018
DIOCESEOFJOLIET.ORG

Cristo es nuestra Esperanza

V ENCUENTRO

**Vision for
the future**

COMMUNITY

**Waterleaf
Women's Center**

DIACONATE

**Revealing the
Whole Christ**



The *Harmony* of Spiritual Direction

E Pluribus Plures

I KNOW. The title doesn't look right. The slogan on our money is "*E pluribus unum*": from many, one. Perhaps, though, you have noticed that we are not a very united nation. So, "from many, many" might be more appropriate.



BY BISHOP
R. DANIEL
CONLON

By way of example, at the end of June, I accepted an invitation to lead the opening prayer at a rally in downtown Joliet. The rally was intended to show support for keeping immigrant families together during the initial review process, even though clearly many entered the country improperly. The United States Catholic bishops have spoken out in support of this family-friendly approach.

Now, I am quite aware that immigration is one of the many issues dividing us. But I thought leading a very neutral prayer on behalf of a group of people who were gathered to support family unity was rather "safe." (Part of the prayer was printed in last month's *Christ is our Hope*.) Yet, as I stepped back to the sidelines, a middle-aged man approached me and said that he was going to call his pastor on Monday and ask him to take him off the parish rolls because I had prayed with "those Communists."

We have never really been a united nation, not since about 10 minutes after Lord Cornwallis sur-

rendered to George Washington at Yorktown. We even had a very deadly civil war. Watch the evening news, and surely something will make your blood pressure rise. There is a whole list of topics that is avoided in "polite" company.

Having come of age in the late 1960s, I understand our lack of unity well. Even at the Boy Scout

summer camp where I worked, one fellow staffer, a good friend of mine, was fired for refusing to salute the flag, as his way to protest the Vietnam War. Americans value their right to make up their own minds and speak them — and hold on to them to the death. When is the last time you heard someone say, with regard to one of our contentious issues, "You know, you may have a point there?"

I address this matter, not because I want to live in some fantasy world where everyone thinks alike. My specific concern arises from my role as a shepherd of the Church. We bishops, following the command Christ gave to his apostles, are designated to teach others "all that I have commanded you."

Of course, Christ did not teach everything about



everything. Nor has the Magisterium of the Church tied down everything in its 2,000-year history. This is particularly true in the concrete circumstances of life that we call "politics." But we bishops still have a role and are conscientious about it in addressing contemporary issues.

Most issues are defined by basic moral principles that all of us are expected to accept. The application of those principles, in specific, concrete situations, leaves room for personal judgment. But the guidance of the bishops should not be dismissed lightly.

When people make up their minds about political issues, first and foremost, on the basis of party affiliation or political leaning, they may leave little room for the teaching and guidance of us bishops. Thus, the Church is left just as fractured as society in general. We may literally "sing from the same hymnal" in church but then go out into the world, where, in theory we should give common witness, but instead speak with many and contradictory voices.

What an embarrassment when Catholic politicians and other, high-profile individuals advocate for a woman's right to choose abortion (with no regard for the right of the child or the father), or when ordinary Catholics support the idea of building a wall around the "land of the free."

I have no desire to control your thinking, even where matters of faith are involved. But I do ask: How do you form your political views? The Church and her divine Teacher offer a way to unity — or we can be many. †

"We may literally 'sing from the same hymnal' in church but then go out into the world, where, in theory we should give common witness, but instead speak with many and contradictory voices."



**PRAY!
FOR ALL
OF GOD'S
CHILDREN**



LO SÉ. El título no se ve bien. El eslogan de nuestro dinero es “*E Pluribus Unum*”: de muchos, uno. Pero quizás, usted ha notado que no somos una nación muy unida. Por lo tanto, “de muchos, muchos” podría ser más apropiado.

**POR EL OBISPO
R. DANIEL
CONLON**

Por ejemplo, al final de junio, acepté una invitación a dirigir la oración de apertura en una reunión en el centro de Joliet. La reunión tenía la intención de mostrar apoyo para mantener a las familias inmigrantes juntas durante la revisión primera del proceso, aunque claramente muchos entraron al país incorrectamente. Los obispos católicos de los Estados Unidos han hablado en apoyo de este enfoque amistoso para las familias.

Ahora, soy muy consciente de que la inmigración es uno de los muchos casos que nos dividen. Pero pensé que llevar una oración muy neutra en nombre de un grupo de personas que se reunieron para apoyar la unidad familiar era algo “seguro.” (Parte de la oración se imprimió en la revista del mes pasado *Cristo es nuestra esperanza*.) Todavía, cuando me acercaba al banquillo, un hombre de mediana edad se me acercó y me dijo que iba a llamar a su pastor el lunes y pedirle que lo sacara de los rollos de la parroquia porque yo había orado con “esos comunistas.”

Nunca hemos sido realmente una nación unida, no desde 10 minutos después de que Lord Cornwallis se entregó a George Washington en Yorktown. Incluso tuvimos una guerra civil muy fatal. Mira las noticias



**¡ORAR!
PARA TODOS
LOS HIJOS
DE DIOS**

de la tarde, y seguramente algo hará que tu presión arterial suba. Hay toda una lista de temas que se evita en la compañía “Cortés.”

Habiendo llegado de edad a finales de la década de 1960, entiendo nuestra falta de unidad bien. Incluso en el campamento de verano Boy Scout donde trabajé, un compañero, un buen amigo mío, fue despedido por negarse a saludar a la bandera, como su manera de protestar la guerra de Vietnam. Los estadounidenses valoran su derecho a tomar sus propias decisiones y hablar de ellos — y aferrarse a ellos hasta la muerte. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que oíste a alguien decir: con respecto a uno de nuestros asuntos polémicos, “usted sabe, ¿usted puede tener la razón?”

Me dirijo a este asunto, no porque quiera vivir en un mundo de fantasía donde todos piensan igual. Mi preocupación específica surge de mi papel como pastor de la iglesia. Nosotros, los obispos, siguiendo el mandato que Cristo le dio a sus apóstoles, somos designados a enseñar a otros “todo lo que te he mandado.”

Por supuesto, Cristo no ejercito todo, sobre todo. Ni siquiera el Magisterio de la iglesia a averiguado todo en sus 2,000 años de historia. Esto es particularmente cierto en las circunstancias concretas de la vida que llamamos “política.” Pero los obispos todavía tienen un papel y son concienzudos al respecto para abordar las cuestiones contemporáneas.

La mayoría de los temas están definidos por principios morales básicos que todos nosotros somos esperados en aceptar. La aplicación de esos principios, en situaciones específicas y concretas, deja espacio para el juicio personal. Pero la dirección de los obispos no debe ser descartada a la ligera.

Cuando la gente tiene una idea sobre cuestiones políticas, en primer lugar, sobre la base de afiliación partidista o inclinación política, pueden dejar poco espacio para la enseñanza y la orientación de los obispos de Estados Unidos. Así, la iglesia queda tan fracturada como la sociedad en general. Podemos literalmente “cantar del mismo himno” en la iglesia, pero luego salir al mundo, donde, en teoría, deberíamos dar testimonio común, pero en cambio, hablamos con muchas y contradictorias voces.

Qué vergüenza cuando los políticos católicos y otros individuos de alto perfil abogan por el derecho de una mujer a elegir el aborto (sin tener en cuenta el derecho del niño o del padre), o cuando los católicos ordinarios apoyan la idea de construir un muro alrededor de la “tierra de los libres.”

No tengo ningún deseo de controlar su pensamiento, incluso donde los asuntos de fe están involucrados. Pero sí pregunto: ¿cómo se forman sus opiniones políticas? La iglesia y su divino Maestro ofrecen un camino a la unidad — o podemos ser muchos. †



GETTY IMAGES

MAKE AMERICA GOOD!

Serious and good-willed people are working to “Make America Great.” We also need to make America good. Greatness without goodness is hollow. Greatness without goodness, will collapse on itself.

CATHOLIC LIFE

If making America great means recognizing and listening to the concerns of all sectors of the country; if it means having a healthy economy, and a safe and secure country — who could object?!

However, making America great does not require causing division in the country. No definition of greatness calls for fraying our common bonds or denigrating particular groups.

GREAT MEN AND WOMEN

My father worked 36 years for the United States government. Our family lived on a government base for 10 years. Our neighbors were military families and the families of other civil service workers. My friends in those days were boys whose fathers were civilian and military, including one father who was a lieutenant colonel and another who was a general.

If any individuals in the country were among those who made America great, my father and his co-workers would have to be on the list. No one would accuse them of being unpatriotic or un-American. My dad even was critical of applauding the National Anthem. You listened to it respectfully, he said. They didn’t call themselves great. They didn’t have to. Their service to the country spoke for itself. Greatness was an assessment for others to make.



STORY BY FATHER JOHN WELCH, O.CARM.,

who is on the Board of Members at Joliet Catholic Academy.

GREAT, AND GOOD

But, they also lived in a way that would make America good. Families on the base, both military and civilian, went to churches of various denominations. Our family went to St. Rose parish in Wilmington. My religious education continued at the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus in Joliet with the Franciscan sisters. We were taught the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes. The Gospels challenged us. Jesus taught, “Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 20:26).

The officers on the base were formed by the principles and ethics they learned in the military. They knew, and their experience in other countries told them, America’s greatness is in its values. One of the officers, Captain Carson, was the leader of our scout troop. In scouts we were guided by the Scout Oath: we promised to “do my duty to God and my country..to help other people at all times... .”

Later, I lived many years in Washington, D.C. The documents maintained in the National Archives and the inscriptions on various monuments were an education in American values. While not perfect themselves, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Dr. King remind us of our higher aspirations. The issues of the country will be pursued, debated, and legislated. At the same time, this process can respect human rights and cultivate the common good. In addition to making America “great,” we also want to continue to make America good. †

“Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant.”

V ENCUESTRO

NATIONAL
V ENCUESTRO
LEADERS
TO GATHER
THIS MONTH
TO DISCUSS

VISION FOR
THE FUTURE

STORY BY
CARLOS BRICEÑO

The V Encuentro (Fifth Encounter/Summit) has been a four-year process of ecclesial reflection and action that has invited all Catholics in the United States to intense missionary activity, consultation, leadership development, and identification of best ministerial practices in the spirit of the New Evangelization. One of the Encounter's aims is to positively affect the fast-growing Hispanic population.

This process began with listening/consultation sessions at the parish level, and it culminates with a call this month, on a national level, for the development of resources and initiatives to better serve the changing demographics in the diocese, parishes, ecclesial movements, and other Catholic organizations and institutions in light of the Encounter's theme — Missionary Disciples: Witnesses of God's Love.

The grassroots nature of the Encounter meant that dioceses across the country gathered data and noticed trends among those Catholics who were listened to. In the Diocese of Joliet, several key areas were identified as the fruits of the listening sessions, according to a diocesan document that was presented to Bishop R. Daniel Conlon at a gathering last November.

AMONG THE FINDINGS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- › Youth/young adults needed “spaces where this generation feels free to identify with their own expectations and where their cultural heritage, experience of faith and life expectations are considered.”
- › Many people see more organized and systemic ways of learning their faith and being formed for ministries they currently serve.
- › The chaotic immigration situation lends to a lack of full ecclesial integration, and more support from churches and pastors is asked for among people in complicated immigration-related situations.

On Sept. 20-23, Encounter leaders from across the country will convene in Grapevine, TX, to share their findings and reflect on the significance of what they have heard in the previous months. As was the case during the last two national Encounter gatherings, in 2000 and 1985, which inspired the National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry in 1988, it is expected that the Hispanic community will be offered a vision of unity and clarity for the future, probably in the form of a document for the U.S. Church.

“We are paving the way of what we need and how we need to go about it,” said Jorge Rivera, the diocesan director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry/Ethnic Ministries.

Rivera's colleague, William Becerra, the associate director of the office, noted that Hispanics are increasingly becoming the majority in many areas, which means it's important to discern, as a U.S. Catholic Church, how to attend to the pastoral needs of the new generation of Hispanics — one of the main goals of the September gathering in Texas.

Becerra added that what is also significant about the Encounter has been its approach, which models Pope Francis' mindset of encountering people where they are, including the peripheries, and listening to people's needs, rather than making plans first.

So that the result is: “How can the Church respond better to the challenges?” Becerra said, now that it understands what some of the challenges are, based on the grassroots listening that has been going on for several years. “In this culture of divisiveness that we live in this country, it's important that everybody has an opportunity to be heard, and that's what we experienced in the Fifth National Encuentro.”

Rivera noted that the Encounter process will help new leaders who are rising in Hispanic communities with a sense of direction and to respond to the questions that are being asked.

“How are we, as a community, in connection with the wider Church, going to be able to respond to the continued growth of Latinos in the U.S.?” Rivera said. “We continue to be a young Church. How are we responding to the Millennials? This young Church is seeking spaces of identity, and many of them are screaming for attention, if you will, of being part of this Church, and how do we engage those who are disconnected?” †

REBUILDING

St. Jude Parishioners Help Parish in Puerto Rico Rebuild after Hurricane Maria

Parish leaders at St. Jude Church in New Lenox asked a question last year: What can we do as a Lenten project to help others that will give parishioners a concrete sense of helping the poor?

Their answer came in the form of Hurricane Maria, reportedly the worst natural disaster on record to affect Dominica and Puerto Rico. It was the tenth-most intense Atlantic hurricane ever, and when it struck Puerto Rico, it was at a Category-4 level.

The island was still reeling from being struck by Hurricane Irma two weeks earlier. That storm caused more than 80,000 people to be without power. Hurricane Maria had a more devastating impact: it destroyed Puerto Rico's power grid, leaving millions without electricity and having a detrimental impact on cell, and tap water, services. It was estimated that, even three months after the hurricane struck, 45 percent of Puerto Ricans lacked power and fourteen percent of Puerto Rico had no tap water.

At a meeting after Hurricane Maria hit, St. Jude parish staff discussed the needs in Puerto Rico. Sister Sharon Marie Stola, OSB, St. Jude's liturgist, spearheaded the search for a parish, and, after over a month, was given a contact in the Diocese of Ponce, Puerto Rico, at Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal (OLMM) in a rural area in Northwest Puerto, which has around 200 families.

Father Robert Basler, OSA, became the liaison between St. Jude Parish and OLMM and its pastor, Father Enrique Hernandez Lopez. St. Jude Parish then raised money during the weeks before Christmas and were able to send 400 solar-powered lanterns – two per

family – to OLMM.

Then, the parish decided to send OLMM water filters created by Water by Blessings (www.water-withblessings.org/), which helped the parishioners to get clean water.

But, there was still more help that OLMM Parish needed, Father Basler said. OLMM's parish hall was destroyed. It was made of wood and tin. They were quoted \$11,000 to get it rebuilt. Their diocese was going to give them \$3,000, so St.

Jude Parish stepped in to help by raising \$8,000 to get the project completed.

This time, however, the hall will be rebuilt with bricks and cinder blocks to make it sturdier, Father Basler said. There are also plans to send a youth group to help out at the parish next summer and bring OLMM's pastor to St. Jude's Parish, as well, he added.

"Our parish has benefitted in the sense of a tremendous sense of satisfaction that we have concretely done something for people who are in need," he said. "People here really want to help others. It's a very generous parish. When people see concrete results – literally concrete blocks – being built, they are just so happy and excited by it. It's like following a telenovela or a TV series. They see the progression, and they hear about it at Mass



and in the bulletin. It's helped us to rally around something that is bigger than ourselves. It's helped us out, as Christians, as believers. Our whole mission here is to be disciples of Jesus Christ and how can we

"It's helped us to rally around something that is bigger than ourselves."

reach people who are lost or marginalized or suffering. I always tell the people here that they are the primary ministers of this church."

Sister Stola said one of her hopes is that the two parishes continue bonding with each other.

"My hope is that we can start building a deeper relationship with each other," she said.

There have also been discussions to send youth groups to OLMM as part of mission trips and also bring OLMM's pastor to St. Jude's Parish so he can talk about the rebuilding journey his parish has gone through, she said.

Meanwhile, Father Basler said everyone contributing to helping OLMM is part of a missionary discipleship mindset that Pope Francis advocates, and he is proud that his parish has been doing this "joyfully and enthusiastically."

**STORY BY
CARLOS
BRICEÑO**

SPOTLIGHT ON

Waterleaf Women's Center, a Crisis Pregnancy Center

As legislators at the state and federal level continue to argue for and against laws governing crisis pregnancy centers, there are many misunderstandings about what actually occurs at a center. The magazine recently spoke with Kelly Rozanski, co-founder and board president of Waterleaf, a crisis pregnancy clinic that opened in 2009 in Aurora, near the third-largest abortion provider in the country.

Tell us about the women that come to you. What are the demographics?

KR There is a perception that many women that visit our clinic are extremely young and in school. Though that demographic certainly makes up a large percentage of our patient base, there are also many women who are older and have decided that they have enough children and do not want any more. Also, though many of our patients are struggling financially, there are also many who have the resources to raise a baby, but do not have the confidence to raise a child.

What is your approach?

Do you pressure these women in any way?

KR Roughly 65 percent of women that call us are in a panic and seeking an abortion. Our mission is to ensure that each woman avoids rushing into a decision that she later regrets. Most of them face strong pressure from



their community, as well as friends and family. We work to turn her fear into confidence by providing a safe, non-judgmental environment where she can learn truthful, complete information about the life inside of her. By arming her with information and resources, we empower her to make a healthy, life-affirming decision, trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide her. We have no financial motive to pressure our clients and that is not our mission.

Do you present the Gospel message?

KR Similar to modern-day cancer centers, we address a patient's physical, emotional, *and* spiritual needs and offer to pray with her as part of our patient process. In doing so, we hope to *be* Christ to her so that she may know His love for her and open her heart to Him in the future. We are all committed Christians who have built and grown this clinic only through the power of the Holy Spirit.



Waterleaf Women's Center Has **BIG DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE**

Waterleaf Women's Center has plans to expand. It recently purchased land adjacent to the Planned Parenthood facility in Aurora and plans to build a new facility there.

Since 2009, Waterleaf has been providing free clinic services and support to women facing an unplanned pregnancy, empowering them to make a choice for life and saving them from the physical and emotional effects of abortion. Waterleaf has served more than 3,000 men and women from more than 182 cities and celebrated the birth of 937 babies — and counting.

Due to tremendous growth and the opportunity to intercept an additional 350-to-400 abortion-bound women every month, Waterleaf is building a “Beacon of Hope” in the shadow of the third-largest abortion provider in the country. The new 6,000 square foot clinic will feature four patient exam/counseling rooms, two ultrasounds rooms, a medical lab, office space, an education and resource center, and a chapel.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Waterleaf needs your help in making this dream a reality. Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a significant impact by donating to their \$2.95-million “Beacon of Hope” campaign.

DONATE BY MAIL

Send a check to: Waterleaf
3598 E. New York St., Aurora, IL 60504

HOST AN INFORMATIONAL EVENT

in your home or church. Contact Mary for more information at 630.701.6270.

DONATE ONLINE AT www.onechoiceonelifelife.org/capital-campaign



Do you also provide them with all the resources they need to raise their children?

KR At Waterleaf, we have a dedicated team of resource associates who work individually with each patient to assist her in connecting with the many great organizations in our community, ensuring she has the resources needed to continue in her pregnancy and beyond.

Do you have “real” medical professionals on staff?

KR All of our doctors, nurses, and sonographers are licensed professionals who have many years of experience in hospitals and clinics.

Do you make money from your work?

KR All Waterleaf services including pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STD testing and treatment are free. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit, funded entirely from generous donors in the community.

Why don't you encourage your patients to use birth control? Won't that solve the problem?

KR We believe the widespread use of contraception has exacerbated the need for abortions by creating a culture of promiscuity and by allowing the treatment of women and men as objects for pleasure rather than cherished beings created in God's image. This has resulted in an increase in sexual activity and unintended pregnancy and subsequently increased the number of abortions. Our goal, through our in-school program and STD clinic education, is to empower men and women to see themselves as God sees them, to embrace sexual integrity, and to live a life of renewed chastity.

How can you compete against a powerful abortion opponent and make a dent in their abortion numbers?

KR Like the starfish story, we operate on the belief that every life is sacred and made in God's image. It is estimated that every human being impacts 100,000 others, so we know that, through the grace of God, we have impacted millions.

How many babies have you “saved”?

KR This number is always difficult to estimate, as we frequently do not hear back from our patients due to embarrassment, the busyness of life, etc. We do have proof of the birth of 937 Waterleaf babies and counting! We are confident that God knows the exact number, and our work is for Him.



“We hope to be Christ to her so that she may know His love for her and open her heart to Him ...”



**LEARN MORE
ABOUT WATERLEAF AT
WWW.WATERLEAFWC.ORG/**



The Harmony of Spiritual Direction

WE HAVE THIS DEEP PULL TOWARD THIS MYSTERIOUS SOMETHING THAT WE CAN'T QUITE PUT OUR FINGER ON. A pull that is so strong that we can't ignore it. That mysterious something is love; it's God's love. God so desires to be united with our hearts and our inner-most selves that He literally pulls our entire beings into action. We have this longing to grow deeper in this mysterious love, but how do we go about doing that? The answer is simple: a *fiat*. Saying yes. Saying yes to the pull. Being pulled by God to achieve holiness. Being pulled by God to become aware more and more of His Presence in our daily lives. That is what a spiritual director helps a person do.

Spiritual direction is a matter of heart. It is finding God in the everyday happenings of life, and it is how the Holy Spirit is moving through those things for God to communicate to you as well as the Holy Spirit moving through you so that God can be seen in you. Spiritual direction is not counseling or telling people what to do; it is not sharing advice or giving all of the answers. It is a balance of psychology and of spirituality, a balance of head and of heart. Spiritual direction is allowing others to unearth themselves with the eyes of faith. The whole

purpose is growth in introspection, development, prayer, relationship with God and, in return, others. Then putting that into action.

I was blessed enough to attend a Franciscan university in Indianapolis, Marian University. I studied theology and psychology, but the most significant piece of my college career was being a part of the San Damiano program. This program was academic, but also based on the call that St. Francis received in the San Damiano chapel: "rebuild my Church." We have the same call to serve, so our mission is to figure out how to

"rebuild God's Church" in this world around us. I didn't fully understand this call until the San Damiano program spiritually led me to the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. I cannot fully describe the pilgrimage in words. To be able to make it to Italy on a Franciscan pilgrimage was beyond my wildest dreams. Rome was great, but Assisi, not surprisingly, is the closest I have ever felt to the Kingdom of God. This pilgrimage transformed the way I see, hear, and encounter.

Francis' joyful, compassionate, gracious, simple, and peaceful spirit awakened my heart. Meeting people one-on-one is where I find the deepest conversations and where I feel as though I can get my message across most effectively. Francis met the people of his time where they were because Christ Himself gave us the very same model. I felt as though God met me face-to-face in Assisi, and I am able to do the same for young adults through Spiritual direction. I have

COVER STORY

STORY BY NATALIE RYAN, a parishioner at St. Alexander's in Villa Park, who is also an associate spiritual director at Mayslake Ministries in Downers Grove.

been brought here to find God again in a new way and to share that perspective with others so that they can see God's presence and joy in their daily lives.

After returning to the U.S., I received more and more joy through the process of sharing my experience in Italy. The pattern that I have come to see during the times that I shared pictures, stories, and answered questions is that, when I put myself out there in Christ's name, people reached out to me because they saw Christ in me. Because I told my story, I was able to meet with others and hear their stories. These people just needed someone to listen and to show them where God was acting in their lives to once again get inspired to continue actively pursuing their faith.

All in all, I learned to be a vessel for God to work through. All this led me to work in ministry and to the Sacred Presence Program at Mayslake Ministries to become a spiritual director, which is where I practice spiritual direction. Now, I get the opportunity to listen to the story of others. This art of listening proved to increase and boost my prayer life.

Prayer is vital for one's relationship with Christ to be sustained; it's like a continual conversation. Think of how you stay close with your mom. You talk with her every day and share in those daily life experiences, good and bad, and we wait for her feedback and direction. That is the same way we are supposed to pray. There are so many ways to share in life's sorrows and joys with God. There are the daily readings, spiritual books, Adoration, music, walking in nature, reading blogs, watching DVDs on the lives of the saints, YouTube videos, silence, Lectio Divina, rosaries, Mass, prayer

services, reconciliation, devotions, and much more. Prayer gives your heart a chance to slow down to recognize God in the present moment. It is all about finding the beauty in the little things.

To deepen my spirituality, I need that silence and solitude — that time where I get to nurture my relationship with God by turning inward. In those moments where I feel so small, I can begin to see the bigger picture again. I see that I am a part of something bigger than myself, and what an honor that God chose me for that role. This grateful attitude leads to overflowing joy that allows my true inner-self to feel God driving me to grow further into His Presence. Prayer calls us to come together to pause so that we can connect with Christ.

Directors and directees work together in and through faith. There will be things that I say that will stick out to them, and there will be things that they say that will stick out to me. That is the give-and-take of the Holy Spirit flowing through both of us in each session together.

This faith journey is like the Walk to Emmaus.

Two people are walking and talking about the events of Jesus' life. When a stranger approaches, they invite him to walk with them and begin telling him about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. When He broke bread in their home, they realized who He was. The two walking to Emmaus are the directees in spiritual direction. They know Jesus on some level, and they have this time of being present, storytelling, silence, and prayer. They want to push themselves ever higher to come to know Jesus more in their own lives.

The stranger who approached was Jesus, who is the director in spiritual direction. The director

meets the directee where they are and wants to know more about these pilgrims' lives so that he or she begins to walk with them in their faith journey. The director is enlightened by the common threads that are found as they walk, and the directees are enlightened when they see Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Spiritual direction is a pilgrimage of unplugging from this world to walk with, and to see, Christ in each other.

Spiritual direction is that finding of awareness. When you take these moments to pause with your director, you're going to become more aware of God in your surroundings. Most importantly, you're going to become more aware of God inside of you. God is at our deepest core, and He is waiting for us in our souls to call out to Him. One way to get to the God of our souls is to discover our soulfulness.

What fills your soul? Solitude, a walk, playing music, making art,

playing a sport? Where do you go, and what do you do, to feel most like yourself and to re-

Resonance is harmonizing life to the true self. In that true self, you are most aware of who you are at your core, and at your core is where God rests in you.

God rests in you.

charge your batteries? This is your soulfulness. It doesn't have to be one thing you do, but soulfulness takes on many forms. It is finding all that resonates with your soul. Resonance is harmonizing life to the true self. In that true self, you are most aware of who you are at your core, and at your core is where God rests in you.

As St. Francis of Assisi most humbly prayed before the San Damiano crucifix, "Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your Holy and true command." Amen. †



READ MORE
ON NATALIE'S BLOG AT
[HTTPS://PNRYAN16.WIXSITE.COM/THEJOYFULTAU](https://PNRYAN16.WIXSITE.COM/THEJOYFULTAU)

**YOUR STORY
BIBLE STUDY**



**STORY BY
ZARA TAN,**
*a parishioner
at Our Lady of
Mercy Parish
in Aurora*

A Bible Study Journey

Since graduating from the Biblical Institute of the Diocese of Joliet (BIDJ) in 2016, my Scripture journey has since become somewhat unpredictable but definitely exciting thus far. When I signed up for the program in 2012, I didn't go into it thinking I would become a Bible study facilitator. I signed up for personal reasons; simply put, it's all God's fault, really.

He planted this desire in my heart from a long time ago, and I suppose there was really no avoiding it. You see, after many years of wanting to go to one of our yearly parish Bible studies, I actually finally signed up for my first one during Lent 2012. When that ended, I felt like I was left hanging for one thing — like I needed more. And then the other is, I knew I had to have a closer, and better, relationship with Jesus, and Scripture study was a tried-and-true way.

I say “finally” because, for as long as I can remember, whenever I would see the ads for Bible study in my parish’s bulletin, I’d always feel this longing to go, but just felt like I could never find the time because of the many demands on time: I am a wife, a mother of an 11-year-old and six-year-old, whose schedules were getting busier the older they got. I am also a daughter to an ailing father and am a full-time operations manager at a boutique investment firm located in downtown Chicago. So, my time was tied to a train schedule as well.

So, on paper, it probably did not make the most sense for me to go — and what about those “what ifs” that a commitment entails (time, energy etc.) But, praise God, I did! So, when that ended, and I saw the preview ad for BIDJ, I attended with a friend I made at the parish Bible study and ended up enrolling in the program. It was a wonderful experience. I learned so much, but, more importantly, my faith and love in Jesus just grew. Ever since, my relationship with Him is very different.

Fast forward to June 2018, and I am now part of the meet Jesus in Scripture Bible Study at Our Lady of Mercy ministry. My parish’s humble Bible study beginnings started right after our parish was blessed with our amazing priests, Father Don McLaughlin, pastor, and Father Mark Bernhard, parochial vicar. Their prompting for a stronger Bible study

ministry has increasingly made the program more robust thanks to their openness, guidance, wisdom and prayers for it has made the ministry flourish.

We offer a year-round study during which we invite graduates from BIDJ to assist in facilitating the table discussion. An email goes out to the graduates inviting those who have the time to facilitate a table in the upcoming session. So, who knows, for those of you who are contemplating joining the program or are part of it now, perhaps God may make it possible for us to meet and hang out one day here at the Bible study ministry at Our Lady of Mercy.

We’re always going to need trained facilitators, and the BIDJ program equips you to be one so well. Being a facilitator at Bible study has been fun and deeply moving. In learning about God’s deep love for you, you also learn so much about yourself — who you really are as a child of God and where you’re going (full union with Him one day). So far we’ve been on an awesome Bishop Robert Barron study program streak. We started with “Conversion” in the fall, “David the King” during Lent, and currently are on the “Eucharist” study program for the summer. The Holy Spirit has been on the move because attendance has just grown rapidly with each succeeding study: 40+, 50+ and 60+ attendees at each Bible study. The first evening of this summer’s session we had 72 souls attend. Truly, it’s just been a humbling and amazing journey thus far.

One of my favorite thoughts is from St. Gregory. He said, “Find the heart of God in the Word of God.” The ultimate goal of studying the Bible is to know the heart of God but also because it is nourishment. Our Lord Jesus gives us His Word. He gives everything, so we can understand and assimilate to nourish our souls. The truth is we all need spiritual strength.

Whatever barriers we may have

in our lives that prevent us from strengthening the spiritual discipline of meeting Jesus in Scripture more fully through Bible Study, once one starts with an open heart and make the commitment, the Spirit then works the miracle for them. Oh, the spiritual miracle of the multiplication of the Word! And, it is in some ways a miracle for me, would you believe that I was — and at one point in my life — a debilitatingly shy kid growing up?

And in some ways, I still am, I still get nervous being in front of many souls and get plagued with doubts. But thank God for what I learned at BIDJ, the awesome leadership and support of our amazing pastors. I’m also grateful for His Love, because, through His grace, I understand that it is His ministry and not mine. It’s actually a relief because you realize it’s really God in control. He equips you.

My life has never been about me anyway, and as a good friend once said: “Our assignment has never been about what we can do for God, but what God can do through us.” That’s a way of saying, essentially, always be striving to be open to God’s plan and purposes for you, to be able to cooperate with Him for peace and for good so that you can turn your life into a gift, with which you can bring joy to others and lead them to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So, for those of you who have felt a desire to attend a Bible study, I encourage you to listen to it. In fact, enkindle it and pay closer attention to it and submit it to Him in prayer, asking the Lord to help you listen to it more fully. You won’t regret it, and, who knows, you may just find yourself being a vessel for the Lord by leading a Scripture study at your parish one day because if I can do it with all the “what ifs,” perhaps my small story will encourage you to see that you can absolutely do it, too. †



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THE DIACONATE TODAY: *Revealing the Whole Christ*

I think it's fair to say that, for many, laity and clergy alike, the diaconate is a bit of an enigma. We see deacons at Mass, in various ministries, at the supermarket and with their families, but they don't quite fit into the typical church categories we know. Are they glorified altar boys, junior priests or some form of religious brothers? Are they clergy, laity or perhaps a kind of hybrid?

In Latin, the word *novus* means both "new" and "strange," and that's because that which is new seems quite strange to us, rather out of the ordinary. To be sure, the diaconate is as old as the Church herself, but, by the 8th century, it shifted from a permanent to a transitional order, being a preparation stage to the priesthood. With the restoration of the diaconate to a permanent rank within the hierarchy as a result of the Second Vatican Council, that which is ancient seems new and, for many within the Church, strange.

Part of the challenge, even as the permanent diaconate celebrates the 50th anniversary of its restoration, is that it suffers from an impoverished theology. This is simply a way of saying that, while the Church's understanding of bishops and priests has evolved over the centuries — being deepened and enriched by the Holy Spirit — the theology of the diaconate remained stagnant. Moreover, its placement as a final step in the path to priestly ordination for over a millennium has led, in the minds of many, to see it as an incomplete order. This, in turn, has given rise to the perception of the deacon as a "half-baked" priest. Lost in such a misperception is the beauty and grandeur of the order itself and, perhaps most regrettably, a diminishing witness of Christ the Servant to the Church.

One of the most significant contributions to a better understanding of the diaconate comes from the Australian scholar, John N. Collins. Some 30 years ago, Collins conducted extensive linguistic research on the biblical term *diakonia*, from which we derive the word "servant" or "deacon." Out of his findings, he argues that much of the New Testament scholarship has misinterpreted the term to mean "service to the poor." This misinterpretation later influenced Catholic theology before and after the Second Vatican Council. As a result, in many cases, the deacon was reduced to a kind of spiritual handyman, dispensing corporal works of mercy to the community.

Collins concludes that, far from simply helping the

needy, the term *diakonia* was used as a "code word" for the special apostolic mission to take the Word of God abroad. Here, the deacon is primarily seen as an envoy or emissary of the Apostles and acts with boldness in the exercise of his ministry as exemplified by the first deacons, St. Stephen (Acts 5) and St. Philip (Acts 8). This was a common understanding among the early Church Fathers as exemplified by St. Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Trallians. Writing in 108 A.D. on his way to Rome to be executed, he says:

Deacons, too, who are ministers of the mysteries of Jesus should in all things be pleasing to all men. For they are not mere servants with food and drink, but emissaries of God's Church; hence, they should guard themselves against anything deserving reproach as they would against fire. Similarly, all should respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, just as all should regard the bishop as the image of the Father, and the clergy as God's senate and the college of the apostles. Without these three orders you cannot begin to speak of a church.

Of course, none of this precludes the deacon as a minister of mercy to the poor. That too is part of the apostolic mission. Nonetheless, the diaconate cannot be reduced to this ministry without doing violence to the scriptural witness.

Properly understood, the diaconate is revealed through the sources of revelation and therefore expresses the will of God for the life of the Church. Consequently, it is part of the sacred deposit of faith and has its own distinctive and unique contribution to God's plan of salvation. Precisely because the order is unique and distinctive, it can't be swallowed up by the



STORY BY
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episcopacy or priesthood. While they too share in the order, having been previously ordained deacons, their subsequent ordinations mean they express this diaconate, this servanthood, as bishops and priests.

Only the deacon, by virtue of his unique vocation, can manifest Christ the Servant in a way the others cannot. In this respect, the deacon acts in the person of Christ the Servant, bearing an essential witness and fulfilling an essential role. In his address to the deacons of Detroit in 1987, St. John Paul II observed, “The service of the deacon is the Church’s service sacramentalized. Yours is not just one ministry among others, but it is truly meant to be, as Paul VI described it, a ‘driving force’ for the Church’s diakonia. By your ordination, you are configured to Christ in His servant role. You are also meant to be living signs of the servant-hood of His Church.”

Given the unique role of the diaconate in God’s plan of salvation, to say that, “we don’t need deacons” is to say that we don’t need Christ the Servant. It fails to recognize what our Lord is saying to us in, and through, the ministry of the deacon.

Grounded in the revelation of Jesus Christ, deepened by the Holy Spirit through the Church’s tradition and Magisterium, the distinct and unique role of the deacon gives rise to another critical observation. In terms of clergy, the complementary nature of the three grades of Holy Orders (bishops, priests and deacons) represents the “whole Christ,” the *totus Christus* to the world. This is not to suggest that, prior to the Second Vatican Council, the whole Christ was not present. Beyond the presence of transitional deacons, those who are ordained priests retain their diaconate. Consequently, while I am a permanent deacon, priests and bishops are deacons permanently. This is why, when a permanent or transitional deacon is not assisting

at Mass, a priest reads the Gospel. As priest, he is performing a diaconal function because he is still a deacon, albeit expressed in a priestly way. This means that, in some form, a deacon is always present at Mass.

Given the understanding of the *totus Christus*, what then is the role of the deacon? Quite simply, it is to bear witness to Christ the Servant. Just as all the faithful participate in the one priesthood of Christ, each in their own way; so too all are called to participate in the one diaconate of Christ. That said, the deacon is called to bear witness in a particular way expressed in ecclesial ministry and his own personal life. He is, by virtue of his ordination, an envoy or emissary of the bishop through the three-fold gifts of liturgy, word and charity. In this way, he inspires the laity, priesthood and episcopacy with a zeal for service by his life and ministry.

This service, rather than being reduced to any one single ministry, can best be described as, “a gift-of-self that wills the good of the other for the sake of the other.” What the deacon witnesses to the world is that authentic ministry is not something we do, but rather someone we give — our very selves. This is precisely the example of our Lord expressed most beautifully on the Cross. Of Himself He says, “I came not to be served, but to serve and give my life in ransom for the many” (Mark 10:45).

Following our Lord and inspiring others, the deacon does not merely function in a cold and dispassionate way, but relates to those he meets such that he not only brings Christ to them, but sees Christ in them. In the exercise of his ministry, in the living of his life, he gazes at the suffering Christ before him and is transformed in love. This contextualizes his ministry as a participation in the divine love begun in an encounter and deepened in accompaniment. In this way, along with bishops and priest, he makes his own unique contribution to the whole Christ, to the *totus Christus*, so that together, the saving love of God can be known to all.

Box of Joy Program Brings Boxes Full of Love to Poor Children

Christmas is still months away, but the giving spirit associated with Christ's birth is front and center on the minds of the Joliet Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (JDCCW) and its various members at parishes throughout the diocese.

Their aim this Christmas is to continue a program sponsored by Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO), a non-profit organization based in Boca Raton, FL. According to its website (www.crosscatholic.org), CCO mobilizes "the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ."

The program that the JDCCW has adopted is called "Box of Joy." In 2016, Carlotta Lawton, a former JDCCW president and CCW member for 42 years, attended a national CCW convention. A video, produced by CCO, was shown to stir interest in the Box of Joy program.

This video illustrated how many children in poor countries around the world have little to look forward to when Christmas comes around. Their homes can consist of dirt floors, and many do not have shoes to wear or toys to play with. Christmas usually doesn't include an exchange of presents in these poor places. The Box of Joy program was conceived as a way of sharing love and joy from those who can afford to send some



STORY BY
CARLOS
BRICEÑO

simple gifts to those whose parents can't afford to buy them.

Lawton, moved by the project, and trusting in the Holy Spirit, recommended that the JDCCW embark on this campaign to spur CCW members in the diocese to buy gifts, pack boxes and mail them to CCO for them to ship overseas.

Last year was the first time the JDCCW participated in the campaign. As a result, 1,822 children were blessed by the boxes of joy mailed to CCO.

"People were so happy," Lawton said, referring to the CCW members who participated last year. "Parents took their children shopping, and, together, they experienced the joy of giving while shopping for the poorest of the poor."

One parent was Emily Koehn, from Visitation Parish, Elmhurst, who participated with her three

children, Natalie, Joel and Max. She shared something her kids had written:

"Last year, our family packed two boxes of joy. We packed one for a boy and one for a girl. It was fun picking out the toys for children who might not otherwise get a Christmas gift. We filled the boy's box with cars, dinosaurs and coloring books and crayon. We filled the girl's box with dolls and puzzles and coloring books and crayon. We sent them both a little bit of candy. We hope they really liked our gifts. It made us feel good to help children in need and to share a little bit of our blessings," they wrote.

Cathy Salata, the current JDCCW president, said she was "moved" by people's generosity.

Visitation Parish acted as a regional drop-off center for the project last year and will serve

again in 2018.

"We had adults and middle schoolers alike rolling up their sleeves and dedicating their time during many weekday evenings and weekends," said Kim MacGregor, the 2017-18 Visitation CCW president. "It was truly a team effort."

CCW members from St. Mary's Parish, Minooka, also participated.

"I immediately thought what a wonderful way to have my grandkids get involved," said Kathy Williamson, a CCW member from St. Mary's, who took her two granddaughters and grandson shopping with her to a dollar store. "Their parents have already done many things for the kids to be aware of those less fortunate, so the concept wasn't new to them. ... And, of course, being a grandma, I told them if they all listened and behaved, they could also have an item or two themselves! They really enjoyed doing this, and I look forward to doing it again next Christmas."

The timeline for the project works like this: The planning and organization by parishes, schools and groups occurs from August through September. A kickoff event happens during sometime in September or October. Materials are handed out to participants by Oct. 30. These include passing out flat boxes to parishioners, who then assemble and pack the boxes with age-appropriate items. Participants can choose a box for either a boy or a girl, ages 2-4, 5-9 or 10-14.

What the CCO team hopes people pack into the boxes as gifts are the basic necessities, said Tessie O'Dea, the organization's Relationship Development Manager. This means items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, bars of soap, school supplies, pencils, notebooks, highlighters, erasers, toys, dolls, pencil sharpeners, socks, underwear, t-shirts, or flip flops. Liquid items, and chocolate are not accepted. Rosaries and coloring books about Jesus, written in English, Spanish or Creole, are also included in

each box by the CCO staff and volunteers at the screening center. Before they are shipped, blessings and prayers are offered for all involved.

The boxes are collected during Nov. 3-11 and delivered to the drop-off center by Nov. 11. They are then sent to Miami to be screened by CCO to make sure all the gifts in the boxes are safe and appropriate for all the children.

Last year, once the truck was loaded with all the boxes, all the volunteers were elated, MacGregor said. "It was wonderful to see our parish community embrace this effort to help others," she said. "People had fun and got really creative about what they could fit in a box the size of a shoebox. We just wish we could see the kids' smiles when they received our gifts."

The team work, collaborative spirit and the generous giving really energizes people, O'Dea said, especially for those in need of service hours or preparing for confirmation who participate with their friends.

"We have CCW who were empowered because they were able to lead their communities into service," O'Dea said. "What this has done is that it has engaged many people who didn't think they could play a role, by bringing a faith-in-action, beautiful project into their parishes. The members play a crucial role in the success of this ministry. That was our vision to begin with: to not only transform the lives of the children who receive this beautiful little box of love, but to also transform the hearts of those who are acting as project leaders, as coordinators of drop-off centers, and those who are packing the boxes."

The boxes are delivered to countries where CCO has existing Mission partners: Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. CCO is praying that the growth of the program will allow them to extend it to El Salvador in 2018.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR TO GET YOUR PARISH GROUP OR
CCW INVOLVED, CONTACT CATHY
SALATA AT 815.221.6249 OR BY EMAIL AT
JDCCWPRESIDENT@DIOCESEOFJOLIET.ORG.**

Last year, 46,360 boxes were distributed as part of the Box of Joy program, with 476 parishes/schools/groups participating. There were a total of 126 drop-off centers across the country. CCO's goal is to one day have each diocese engage in this project, O'Dea said.

The impact of the boxes is huge, she said. Many of the children receiving the gifts are orphans. One girl who got a doll looked at it and asked: "Is it really mine? Do I have to give it back?" Another boy got a toothbrush and toothpaste and asked: "What do I do with this?"

There is some fundraising involved. A \$9 donation per box will cover the cost of shipping and help support the outreaches of the priests and nuns ministering to the children.

Salata, the JDCCW's president, summed up the project this way: "The Box of Joy program has opened people's eyes to see how other people in different parts of the world live. These small items and toys, things that we take for granted every day, bring such joy to the children in these poor communities. The people who have donated their time and gifts with such kindness and generosity have made this project possible." †

THE ORIGIN STORY OF Chesterton Academy of the Holy Name in Downers Grove



CHESTERTON ACADEMY
OF THE HOLY FAMILY

As the father of five children, my wife and I wanted the best for our children's education and have ventured through the whole gamut of diocesan schools to independent schools. My wife was a practicing Ob/Gyn who discerned to quit her job and stay home and raise the children. We were blessed with three more children after that decision.

One year, my wife attended a symposium on the Common Core curriculum at the University of Notre Dame. She heard how bad the Common Core was in relation to the educational process. Expert-after-expert said the antidote was homeschooling. So shortly after that, we discerned to pursue homeschooling.

Homeschooling opened up our eyes to the beauty of educating them with a classical curriculum. The thought of homeschooling for high school seemed daunting. The subject matter is a little more intense, especially the sciences and the math. Socialization and interactions with peers are important. We looked around at different high schools, and some of them were, geographically, too far away or not just meeting our needs in the whole picture. Then we heard Dale Ahlquist, the co-founder of the original Chesterton Academy in Minnesota, speak on Relevant Radio about the idea of an integrated classical curriculum in Minnesota. They started with 10 kids in 2008 doing exactly that.

How our school came about to be is that my wife and I went to a fundraiser for another Chesterton Academy that was going to be started on the north side of Chicago. It was too far away for us to travel, even though we liked the concept of the curriculum. My wife and I were talking in the car, and I jokingly said, "What if we started one of those?"

When we walked into this event, this priest we hadn't seen in a year, said, "You have to start one of these in the southwest suburbs." He was asked to say grace, and he went up the microphone and said, "I can feel the Holy Spirit working in this room. I want to bless the Tierneys on their new endeavor, and let's pray grace now." And there it was. It was out there. It really resonated with my heart. This is something I'm

truly called to do. We then met with our great friends, the Bowles, who had an education and finance background, and from there it became a truly parent-led, grass-roots organization.

Chesterton Academy of The Holy Family is an integrated classical curriculum where you have the basic humanities, read great works and discussed topics in the classroom using the Socratic method. In addition, everybody has to take art class, sing in the choir and act in a play. You just create a well-rounded student who is a complete thinker and not just a good test taker. God is at the center of that education. You are really passing on what is true, good and beautiful. If you really think that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist, why wouldn't we start every day with Mass? We do that at Chesterton: every day starts with Holy Mass.

Students are not focused on what *they* want to do or be but are asking: what does God want me to do and how can I best use my gifts and talents to give Him glory? What's going to be the ultimate plan for my life? This education truly helps a child discern God's will, along with building up the family. Ultimately, our main goal is to get children to heaven, along with their families.

The school provides four years of philosophy and four years of theology. The theology curriculum keeps it simple in a complicated world. They read the Old Testament the first year and the New Testament during the second year. They study the *Catechism of The Catholic Church* in the third year; the fourth year they learn apologetics, so they can go out and defend their faith in the public square.

As we enter into our 4th year and welcome our largest student body yet, I can only give all the glory to God. In a world full of darkness, our goal is to be a source of hope and a ray of light to a modern world and that is why our motto is *Cultura Vitae*, which is Latin for Culture of Life.



**STORY BY
SEAN TIERNEY,**
*a co-founder of
the Chesterton
Academy of the
Holy Family, a
private Catholic
high school
in Downers
Grove that,
earlier this year,
was officially
recognized as
Catholic school
affiliated with
the Diocese
of Joliet.*



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