



PARISH OF CHRIST THE KING

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2020

SEPT | OCT | NOV



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

During difficult times, Jeremiah approached God and said, *"If I go into the country, I see those slain by the sword; if I go into the city, I see the ravages of famine. Both prophet and priest have gone to a land they know not. Have you rejected Judah completely? Do you despise Zion? Why have you afflicted us so that we cannot be healed? We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror"* (Jeremiah 14:18-19). The prophet's words are echoed in the prayers of many these days, who are wrapped in the uncertainty of our circumstances and doubt, wonder, and despair.

Being men and women of hope is not an easy task. For many of us, hope is built upon securities. Our need for comfort makes us seek predictable patterns and avoid volatility. However, hope is related to faith and *faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not*



see (Hebrews 11:1). Faith grows in uncertainty and hope is strengthened in the confidence we place not on us but on him who is the resurrection and the life, Jesus Christ!

The current pandemic has moved people through the path of fear. It has also moved people to exercise Christian freedom in finding new ways of preserving, doing, and envisioning the future despite the current factors. Freedom, as Jesus modeled it for us, is to know that we have power to lay down our lives and authority to take it up again (John 10:18). In other words, we may not have the capacity to change some things, but we have the capacity to choose how we respond. Our response can be creative, innovative, and effective. We can move forward if we are willing to leave behind the old sense of comfort and embrace the newness of things.

In the Parish of Christ the King, we have chosen to respond in a way we can preserve the essential and include new ways of accessing the sources of grace. We have formed a task force to safely reopen weekday and Sunday liturgies to the faithful. We have offered virtual opportunities for faith formation, live-streaming Masses, adorations, and other on-campus events respecting protocols of social distancing. We believe that the Church, as the Body of Christ, only exists in communion. Therefore, our task as men and women of hope is to preserve communion with God and one another without letting the subtleties of division and isolation deter our unity in faith and purpose.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Elkin J. González
Pastor



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IN THE DUTY OF THE MOMENT

By Caitlyn Gonya, Mission & Faith Formation Coordinator

One year ago, Fr. Elkin introduced our parish's three year plan: Building the Kingdom of God. He emphasized our task as Christians to strive for Heaven and to allow God to work in our hearts, homes, workplaces, and community.

This first year (2019-2020) was dedicated to Building the Kingdom of God "Within Us." Who knew that at least 20 percent of that year would be spent "within" our homes?

I think it's easy to think that virtue, holiness, and spirituality must include grand works, but perhaps, this year, we've been shown that our essential task is to focus on the duty of the present moment wherever and whatever that moment might be.

St. Gianna Molla was a doctor, wife, and mother. Her life is an exceptional model of what conforming our lives to Jesus Christ's looks like. Although she is most commonly known for her willingness to sacrifice her life for her daughter, most of her life was spent simply making choices to serve God in the everyday. She encourages us: "as to the past, let us entrust it to God's mercy, the future to divine providence. Our task is to live holy the present moment." Every daily task is an opportunity for virtue, and being faithful to God in those moments is what we are called to do.

Last September, my husband and I had our first child. Amidst the joy, exhaustion, and period of adjustment those first few weeks of learning how to care for our son, my father-in-law shared with me some of his experience as a father. He said that when nights were long, and a baby needed another feeding or another diaper change, or another hour of rocking to sleep, he'd look up at the crucifix, and say to Jesus, "I choose to serve You." He explained that by fulfilling our duties set before us with love and virtue, we are choosing to love God.

The conscious choice to pause and love God even through the mundane creates space for Jesus in our hearts--space for Him to build His Kingdom within us.

In prayer and through the Sacraments we are gifted

with the transforming power of God's love that helps us to make the choice to love Him back through those daily moments.

Despite a difficult year, our parish has seen great examples of faithfulness to God in the everyday. Ministry leaders and teachers created online content and innovative solutions to distancing protocols; volunteers sewed masks for ushers to wear while serving at Mass; parishioners led the community in prayers over social media; an entire ministry was created by parishioners for fellow parishioners in financial need; families learned together and prayed together; and our priests worked ceaselessly for our spiritual benefit.

Every moment we are given a choice to listen to the Holy Spirit and commit ourselves to the service of our Lord. Let us pray for a renewed sense of docility, fortitude, faithfulness, and generosity to God in the duties of the day.

You can read more by St. Gianna Molla in her diary of love letters to her husband, *The Journey of Our Love*. ■

"Our task is to live holy the present moment."
- St. Gianna Molla

Q&A WITH FATHER BRYAN KETTERER

MEET OUR NEW ASSOCIATE PASTOR



growing in faith and sharing the faith with others. I figured that which most deeply excited me might be a good path to pursue in life. It also helped that almost everyone I knew (and even some people I barely knew) had been asking me if I had ever thought about seminary.

Q: What is one of the biggest lessons you've learned as a priest?

A: Jesus is in charge. I can do my best, but without him, all my efforts are in vain. This means I must pray before, during, and after everything I do as a priest. Otherwise, I might start trying to do things on my own, which never bears fruit.

Q: When did you hear God's call to the priesthood?

A: As I started going to daily Mass and really living out my faith in high school, I started to get a sense that I wanted to serve God in a more radical way with my life, but I really had no idea what that meant or looked like. While teaching Totus Tuus here in the diocese during my summers as a TU student, I started considering the idea of priesthood, inspired by the example of many of the seminarians I met and priests I worked with during those three summers. I started going to adoration several days a week and realized that I was finding a lot of excitement and motivation in

Q: Regarding growth in faith, what is your one piece of advice for our parishioners?

A: Go to Confession—often. I challenge you to go to Confession at least once a month (or more often!) for the next year and tell me your spiritual life doesn't improve. If you do not go to Confession, you will not grow in holiness. It's that simple. Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins and Confession is where we receive that saving grace.

Q: What are you reading?

A: I've been reading "Gone with the Wind" for fun. I've been wanting to rewatch the classic movie for a year or so, but I told

myself I wouldn't watch it until I've reread the book. I've also been reading St. Therese's autobiography "Story of a Soul." I've read it before, but it's a great one to revisit to remind myself that the spiritual life doesn't have to be so complicated. It's simply about loving Jesus!

Q: Any parting words?

A: I look forward to meeting parishioners as we slowly emerge from quarantine and distancing measures. It's a strange time when I can't yet meet many of the people I'm called to serve. Additionally, I ask for your patients as I try to learn everyone's names.

FAST FACTS:

- Hometown: Coppell, TX
- Ordained: May 31, 2014
- Assignments prior to joining CTK:
 - ◇ St. Benedict's Associate Pastor, 2014-16
 - ◇ St. Philip Neri Newman Center Chaplain, 2016-20
 - ◇ Bishop Kelley High School Chaplain, 2014-18
 - ◇ Holy Family Cathedral (Mass/Sacramental help), 2018-19

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON, A WIDOWS MINISTRY



Parishioner Suzanne Sullivan lost her husband, Jim, in 2016. For months she felt alone, sad and hopeless, all feelings foreign to her previously. Turning to God and the church to help her find her way, she found comfort in prayer. And through prayer, heard God's call to help restart the widows ministry to serve fellow parishioners in her situation.

"It really hit me when I attended the Road to Emmaus Retreat last year," said Suzanne. "I had been on several other retreats, but during Emmaus I felt as if God was telling me now was the time to act on my

thoughts of reactivity the widows ministry. Additionally, in the spring I assisted with the women's ACTS retreat where I met several young widows who voiced support for the endeavor when I mentioned it. I immediately went to Father Elkin upon my return."

In no time, Suzanne had Father's blessing and quickly began the legwork required to launch a new ministry.

"The way God heals us sometimes is through helping others heal their own wounds," said Father Elkin J. Gonzalez, pastor. "When

Suzanne came to me with the desire to revive this ministry, it was an answer to my prayers and a sign of God's desire to bring consolation to those who grieve. It proves that the Body of Christ is built up with the gifts and talents of those who decide to multiply them instead of burying them."

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, A Widows Ministry aims to provide widows of the CTK parish an opportunity for fellowship, mentorship and Bible study while drawing inspiration from the lives of widowed saints. With the goal to foster an environment of both support and faith formation, Suzanne's

outreach has been met with both interest and sincere gratitude.

"I have had a wonderful reception so far," she added. "From widows young and old, including those in assisted living, there is an appetite for support among this community."

She also prays it will meet a need that is less easily discussed—dealing with death.

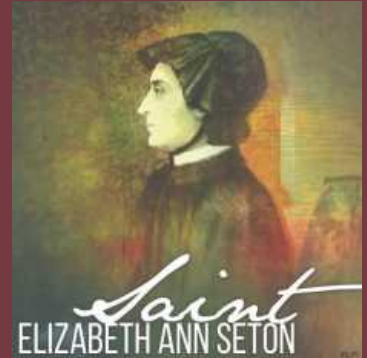
"Many times we are fearful to address the tough subject of death so we brush it off," commented Suzanne. "My hope is that we can address the real issues and then grow and learn from one another. Widows often feel it is a burden to others to discuss their personal loss or pain. This ministry of women can be a needed shoulder to lean on for one another."

While parishioners will certainly feel support through participation, Bible study will play an important role through the study of widowed saints for inspiration and wisdom. Full of lessons learned and guidance, Suzanne hopes to share how the Bible can be a source of encouragement and provide

insight via the saints on overcoming the difficult realities of being a widow.

"Being a widow is difficult in many areas, but life goes on," she said. "People have to raise kids, go to work and are left with many responsibilities. What I've learned in my journey is that you are really not alone. God has led me to learn about different saints and lessons from the Bible that have taught me that I am His. As a widow it is a different mindset. Even though I trusted Him before, God is all I have to lean on. I want our church to experience that and for other widows to know they aren't alone."

With outreach ongoing and the logistics of when, where and how often to meet still being fleshed out, one thing is certain—people find comfort in shared experiences and this ministry is yet another example of God's remarkable work in our parish. ■



LEARN MORE

If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about or joining the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, A Widows Ministry, please contact Suzanne Sullivan at:

Email:
jrssullivan84@gmail.com

Phone:
918-694-0062

About St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, A Widows Ministry

In the New Testament, widows flourished in their ministry as they drew closer to Christ and to Christ's people. This ministry provides widows of our parish an opportunity for fellowship, mentorship, and Bible study while drawing inspiration from the lives of widowed saints.



BACK TO SCHOOL *By Pepper McGough, ECDC Executive Director*



Every fall, parents prepare to send their children back to the classroom. While this fall's return looks different across our country, state and city with various learning models in place, regardless of the format going back to school is an adjustment for all. Add a world-wide pandemic and what normally poses challenges may seem impossible! By implementing a few intentional strategies, the return can be a smooth and even enjoyable transition.

Adopt a schedule

Summer is full of late bedtimes, sleeping in, and flexible schedules. It doesn't take long for children (and adults) to fall out of routines

we normally embrace during school months. Setting a regular bedtime and wake time is the first way to rebuild routine. If possible, consider adopting a similar schedule at home as the one at school. Try to set lunch and nap times around the same time your child will have them at school.

Reduce anxiety

Many adults today are feeling stress due to the uncertainties surrounding health, finances, and jobs. It is important to keep in mind that this stress is easily transferred to our children. Finding ways to reduce your own anxiety is an important part of reducing your child's anxious feelings. Additionally, children may carry stress of their own about going back to school. Adults often try to minimize a child's stress with phrases like, "don't cry, you are fine," or "school will be so much fun." While the child will be fine and school is fun, these are difficult realizations for children who feel stress about returning to school. Instead try asking your child, "what worries you about going to school?" Having a clear understanding of specific worries

will help you work together to find practical solutions.

Practice saying goodbye

Being quarantined for several months required many families to spend unprecedented amounts of time together. To help you and your child, practice a healthy goodbye routine. This routine may include a hug, a secret handshake, a high five, or another special connection. Give reassurance that you will return at day's end, say goodbye, and leave promptly. Linger makes the actual separation more difficult for you and your child.

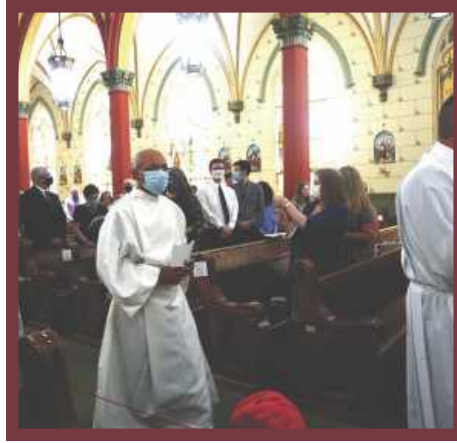
The start of school brings with it many emotions for parents and children. Your child may experience changes in sleep or eating habits, or exhibit uncooperative behavior. These changes usually subside in time and are not cause for concern. If behavior changes linger for a long period or your child's teacher raises concerns about his transition to school, a discussion with your pediatrician may be warranted. ■

CALLED TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD

By Pius Devasahayam

The Call:

The first principle and foundation of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola states, "God created human beings to praise, reverence, and serve God, and by doing this, to save their souls." Often getting caught up in the hustle and bustle of daily life, we fail to reflect on the purpose of our creation until there comes a time when the urge to do so is irresistible and our



hearts become restless. In those times, the Spirit of God, which resides in our inner most being, urges us to act in a decisive manner leading each one to a vocation suitable to their calling. My call to be a deacon was no exception. It was a call that came from deep within. Discerning the call, encouraged by my wife Ellen and out of gratitude for all the blessings God has bestowed, I answered yes.

The Foundations:

Coming from a traditional Catholic family in India, converted to Christianity in the 17th century, the first seeds of my faith were sown by my parents at a young age and included daily Mass and family rosaries. As was the family tradition for over four generations, I was sent to Jesuit schools and colleges where I studied accounting and finance and also learned the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius and recollection prayer encouraged by Teresa of Avila. While in college in Calcutta, I was drawn to serving the poor and volunteered every evening for three years to serve in the "home of the dying destitute," the first home started by St. Mother Teresa. I was blessed to know her personally, and I enjoyed being in her presence on a regular basis at Mass.

The Journey:

I immigrated to Ontario, Canada, became a citizen, and worked for multi-national corporations. Ten years ago, I met my wife Ellen and moved to Tulsa. God works in ways we do not understand. I began hearing a call to discern to serve as a permanent deacon, and entered the diaconate formation six years ago. Additionally, three years ago I also heard the call to take up spiritual direction after completing a 30-day silent retreat on the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. It was during this retreat that I heard the call from God through my retreat director Fr. Ed. Kinerk SJ. Inspired by St John of the Cross's quote in CCC 2690 that a spiritual director should be learned, discreet and experienced, one year ago I enrolled at Creighton University in their Masters in Ministry program. I also enrolled in their Spiritual Direction and Preached Retreat certification program and completed the academic portion of the program in July.

The Culmination:

The six years of diaconate formation was a blessing as it transforms a person into leading a life of prayer and service. The topics of study included philosophy, theology, Church history, liturgical practices, homiletics, counselling, Canon Law and practicum. Upon completion, I was ordained a deacon on July 18 of this year by Bishop David Konderla. Currently, I serve as a deacon in the Parish of St. Bernard of Clairvoux and work as a business analyst here in the CTK Parish Office. As I begin to realize my own spiritual growth as a result of the diaconate program, I'm happy to share my experiences and answer questions for any parishioner considering the program (piusdev@christthekingcatholic.church). ■



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SAVE THE DATE!

FR. ELKIN'S MINI SPIRITUALITY SERIES

Join Father Elkin on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. for his virtual Mini Spirituality Series. Each month features a new topic and includes prayer, discussion and reflection. All events take place via Zoom. This fall, he will cover the Holy Trinity:

- **September 2:** The Father
- **October 7:** The Son
- **November 4:** The Holy Spirit



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Thank you for your support!