



OLFF Newsletter-February 2023

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Annual Parish Faith Formation Report



The Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF) has reinstated an Annual Parish Faith Formation Report. In mid-January the pastor/administrator and a parish catechetical leader (PCL) from each parish has received a link to a shared Excel workbook that will serve as the report. Please enter all the requested information in the report no later than February 28th. See the video above for a recording of a meeting OLFF hosted to explain why this report is important for parishes and the diocese and to offer tips on how to fill out the report. This video ends with responses to questions asked by participants.

If you have further questions or need help filling out the report, please email olff@portlanddiocese.org or call (207)-773-6471.

Free Resources for Lent, Holy Week & Easter



These are some of the free resources available to support prayer, reflection, and action for individuals and parishes/schools during the Lenten and Easter seasons:

- [Diocese of Portland The Season of Lent](#)
- [National Eucharistic Revival Prayer Companion for Lent and Triduum English](#)
- [National Eucharistic Revival Prayer Companion for Lent and Triduum Spanish](#)
- [RCL Benziger printable and downloadable activities](#)
- [Catholic Apostolate Center resources for Lent and Easter](#)
- [Diocese of Des Moines Living Lent 2023 Family Faith Resources](#)
- [Team RCIA Initiation Team Resources for Lent, Triduum, and Easter season](#)

Evening for Catechists 2023



[Click](#) to get a shareable flyer.

In-person catechist workshops are back! The three regional Evening for Catechists are times for catechists from different parishes to gather for ministerial development and formation. It allows the catechists to reflect deeply on an area of ministry and listen to how God is calling them to use their gifts to serve learners of all ages. Registration is \$15/person and includes a light meal.

As we are working towards the National Eucharistic Revival, the theme chosen for 2023 Evening for Catechists is "Forming Eucharistic people." Deacon Matt Halbach (sponsored by Wm H. Sadlier) will speak about how the Eucharist should transform everything we do so that we can go out and serve and share the Gospel with others so that they also may be transformed.

Those who attend can expect to:

- Participate in lectio/visio divina experiences focused on the Eucharist
- Identify faith as a way of "sacramental seeing."

- Understand the important connection between Eucharistic worship and our own experience of Christ's love in our lives
- Receive tips for integrating eucharistic teaching in our lives and creating a more vibrant, eucharistic culture with the parish

South

March 16th

St. Anne's Church, Gorham

5:30-8pm

North

March 19th

Holy Rosary Church, Caribou

2:00-4:30pm

Central

March 20th

Notre Dame of Perpetual Secours Church, Waterville

5:30-8pm

Click [here](#) to register for the Evening for Catechists by **March 6th**.

Highlights from LFFA: Practical Family Faith Formation



On February 9th the Lifelong Faith Formation Association (LFFA) discussed different models of family faith formation. Several Parish Catechetical Leaders shared a history of their family faith formation program, what they are doing now, what has worked, what has not worked, and what they have learned. Several resources were shared and are listed below:

- [Called to the Joy of Love: Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life English from the USCCB](#)
- [Called to the Joy of Love: Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Spanish from the USCCB](#)
- [Education in Virtue from the Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist](#)
- [Pathways from Faith & Family Life Catholic Ministries](#)
- [Gospel Weeklies from Pflaum](#)
- [A Family of Faith from Sophia Institute](#)

- [Word of Life by Augustine Institute](#)
- [Forgiven by Augustine Institute](#)
- [Presence by Augustine Institute](#)
- [Ascension Press Bible Timeline](#)
- [Symbolon by Augustine Institute](#)

NOTE: What was shared at the LFFA meeting is part of ongoing conversations and efforts that lay the groundwork toward the final goal of the Diocesan catechetical plan:

Goal C: Parish catechetical efforts are "working" in fostering living encounters with Christ and ripening initial encounters through organic, comprehensive, and systematic catechesis for children, youth, and adults that leads to missionary discipleship (Directory for Catechesis, 75-78)

Objective C.1: Articulate a general framework for outreach and lifelong faith formation efforts aimed toward the living encounter with Christ participating in the mission of the Church that will:

- a) Be applicable in diverse settings (rural, urban, small communities, regional collaborations, differing languages or cultures)
- b) Serve as a guide for parishes and Catholic schools in planning, assessing, and adapting local efforts in making disciples
- c) Foster healthy family life that naturally embodies and forms Catholic faith.

"Family faith formation" is likely to be one of the models that fit in this framework, but there are others as well.

ReConnect with ME



ReConnectwithME is an initiative under the grant ConecMe to Better Mental Health which many of our community members took advantage of by attending the Psychological First Aid (PFA) training with Margaret F. Norbert MSW, LCSW. Quarterly, the grant allows for opportunities for those who have participated in a PFA training from across the state, to connect and share with their own stories along with resources in regard to the practical uses of the trainings.

Let's gather together with other PFA trained people online via this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#). These gatherings will help us create a community that will allow us to share experiences as we move forward with increasing mental health awareness and resources within our communities.

Reflecting on the Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI



On March 27th Saint Joseph's College Center for Faith and Spirituality is hosting an online conversation with Bishop Deeley on the impact of Pope Benedict XVI on the life of the Church. You can register for this free event by emailing the Center at <https://forms.gle/LMCLQz6hJsfayGTaA>.

Registration for the Silver and Gold Anniversary Mass Open Now



Catholics marking milestone anniversaries are invited to participate in the annual Silver & Gold Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert Deeley on June 17th at 4pm at Holy Family Church in Old Town. This will be an in-person event. After the Universal Prayers (the intercessions), Bishop Deeley will offer a special blessing to all married couples in the church. Those who are celebrating 10 years, 25 years, 40 years, and 50 or more years will receive special recognition in the commemorative program and slideshow.

Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

Maine Catholic Youth Convention



2023 Maine Catholic Youth Convention
BREAKING BREAD

**FEATURING:
THE DOUG AND
DAVE SHOW**



**WORKSHOPS
PRAYER
ADORATION
MASS
FUN
FELLOWSHIP**

**APRIL 21—23,
2023**
**HOLIDAY INN
BY THE BAY,
PORTLAND**

Cost:
\$290 Youth (Quad Occupancy)
\$290 Adult (Double Occupancy)
\$400 Adult (Single)
\$200 Current CYLT Members
(Includes 2 nights accommodations 4
meals, Conference costs)

Register with the parish youth
ministry contact

Click [here](#) to register for the Catholic Youth Convention.

Have further questions or concerns? Contact Shawn Gregory at **(207)-773-6471 x7813**

RCIA Lenten Afternoon of Reflection





1 - Host: Fr. Jean Paul Labrie from St. John Vianney Parish in Fort Kent



2 - Host: Georgette Dionne, Coordinator of Children & Adult Ministries for the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF)
Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland ME



**RCIA LENTEN
AFTERNOON OF REFLECTION**


For Elect, Candidates, Godparents, Sponsors, Parish RCIA Teams

HE ROSE

Ascent and Sent

**The Sacred
Movements of
Holy Week**

*He loved his own in the world
and he loved them to the
end...fully aware that the Fa-
ther had put everything into
his power and that he had
come from God and was re-
turning to God, **he rose...***
(John 13:1, 3-4, 5)



Piero della Francesca, "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1463

Date & Time: Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023, 2:00-4:00 pm
Location: Virtual (Zoom link & guide emailed the week prior to event)
Facilitators: Fr. Jean Paul Labrie, Pastor of St. John Vianney Parish, Fort Kent and
Georgette Dionne, Coordinator of Children & Adult Ministries, Diocese of Portland
Registration: RCIA Coordinator [click here](#) to register parish group by March 28
Cost: Suggested donation to your local parish or the annual diocesan Catholic Appeal

LFFA Spring Retreat





*"My strength returns to me with a cup of coffee and the reading of the Psalms."
(Dorothy Day)*

LFFA Spring Retreat
May 2-4, 2023

PSALMS: MORE THAN A SONG

Marie Joseph Spiritual Center, Biddeford Pool, Maine



Sponsored by the Lifelong Faith Formation Association (LFFA) and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland Office of Lifelong Faith Formation with support from the Catholic Appeal.



Registration Fee (Payable by Check)

Overnight **\$270** (includes program, meals, lodging)

Commuter **\$140** (includes program, meals)

Deadline to register:

Register online or mail in form on the last page

Payment can be made out to **LFFA & name of attendee**

Paperwork and payment can be sent to:

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation
Attn: Hannah Gonneville
510 Ocean Ave
Portland, ME 04103

- The **registration fee is non-refundable** due to site and speaker contract obligations. However, someone else can attend in place of a cancelled person.
- **OVERNIGHT SPACE IS LIMITED** so register early!



Speaker: Judy Michaud

We are excited to have Judy Michaud to lead and facilitate our LFFA retreat!

Judy was raised in Madawaska, Maine and moved to Frenchville in 1977 after her marriage. Judy began volunteering at the Christian Life Center (CLC) in Frenchville and then served as a retreat coordinator, retreat team presenter, gift shop manager, and music minister. She held a position as a Parish Catechetical Leader for Our Lady of the Valley Parish from 1996-2005. She was then hired by the Diocese as the Coordinator of Children and Adult ministries in 2005. Her role as the Coordinator of Children and Adult ministries entailed providing support, formation, and resources to catechetical ministers as well as overseeing their formation and the formation of catechists. Her organizational skills were put to use as she collaborated with the director and other offices staff to plan and implement various workshops and conferences for the benefit of catechetical leaders and other parish staff. Judy retired in 2020 after 23+ years of ministry.

Judy is a faithful practicing Catholic, a wife to her husband Bernard, a mother to four grown adults and a grandmother to three grandchildren. In her spare time Judy likes to read, play Cribbage and Scrabble on her laptop, watch TV, knit, crochet, and cross stitch.

We look forward to gaining from the wisdom, insight and perspective that Judy brings as she presents on the Psalms!

Tentative Schedule

<u>Tuesday, May 2, 2023</u>
ARRIVAL Any time after 3pm
7:00 PM Opening Prayer Gathering & Introductions Evening Session
9:00PM Snacks & Relax Time (bring a snack or game to share)



<u>Wednesday, May 3, 2023</u>
8:00AM Mass in the Chapel
8:30AM Breakfast in the Dining Room
9:45AM Morning Prayer Morning Presentations
12:00PM Lunch in the Dining Room
1:30PM Afternoon Presentation followed by Free Time for Reflection
5:30PM Dinner in Dining Room Evening Free Time

<u>Thursday, May 4, 2023</u>
8:00AM Mass in the Chapel
8:30AM Breakfast in Dining Room Check out of sleeping rooms
9:45AM Morning Prayer Morning Presentation
11:30AM Closing Prayer
12:00PM Lunch in the Dining Room Departure

Name	Parish, City	Parish Position	Email address & Phone #

Full Retreat: (retreat, overnight lodging, meals Tuesday-Thursday)
Total # Attending ____ X \$270 Retreat/Lodging Fee= _____
OR
Commuter: (retreat, lunch Wednesday and Thursday only)
Total # Attending during the day only ____ X \$140 Retreat Fee
= _____
Total FEES Due= _____

Got questions? Contact Joanne Fortier at
joanne.fortier@portlanddiocese.org

Confirmation Mass Dates and Registration Released

Site #1

Friday, May 19, 2023

7:00pm

St. Mary Church, Bangor

Site #2

Friday, June 2, 2023

7:00pm

Holy Martyrs Church, Falmouth

[Click](#) to see the details, including forms, on the Diocesan website

Parishes are asked to submit all candidate information electronically this year as part of registering to participate in a regional celebration. This means:

- You may only register baptized Catholics who are fully prepared to receive these sacraments this spring and you must have copies of their Catholic baptismal records in hand.
- Only someone with a Diocesan email (i.e. already has an Office 365 account as an employee) can access and complete this form since it requires uploading files.
- You **MUST** have a digital copy of the baptismal record/certificate each confirmation candidate ready to upload with this registration. The PDF or scanned image file should be identified by Celebration Location-Candidate LastName-FirstName (Examples of file names: Bangor-Doe-Jane.pdf or Falmouth-Stevens-Bill.jpeg).

Note: Adults or teens baptized in another Christian denomination are to be received into full communion and confirmed by the local pastor so should not be registered as a candidate for this liturgy.

Fruits from the Vineyard



Volume 3: Issue 3 December 2022

Glimpses of God
A Publication of Faith and Sharing
 Sponsored quarterly by All Saints Parish Roman Catholic Community for the Malcoast Christian Community
Your mere glimpse can illuminate God in another's heart or life

The Effects of Sharing Faith

I am sure many of us are familiar with the use of an equilateral triangle as a model for illustrating any number of things: factors that influence our communication, managing conflict, understanding roles and responsibilities, and even the Holy Trinity. There are countless other triangles that we use to explain and understand. I would like to propose a triangle to illustrate what is at play when we engage in sharing our faith or the insights God has given us through our experiences and encounters with Him.

Here's how I would envision this Triangle of Sharing Faith. Because each of us is a child of God, we have a relationship with God. That means there is a relationship, regardless of how we respond to God in that relationship with Him. So, we would place God at the top of our triangle. Suppose you are talking with someone else about an experience where you received a grace from God or God clearly intervened on your behalf. Then, you would



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become one point on the base of the triangle and your friend would be the other point. As you share your experience with the other person, God is very much connected to you and is a part of what you are sharing. As you share with the other person, God is very much a part of how they are receiving your story. If God is the origin and source of your story, He would, of course, be involved in how the story is received. It might look something like this:



When you share your story with someone else, your experience can profoundly influence their relationship with God; and through your interacting with others about your experience with God, your own relationship is affected as well. Your experience can result in conversation or in other insights or sharing that bring someone back to focusing on their relationship with God.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." **Matthew 18:20**
 -Martha Corkery

A Reflection on God's Gift of Love

First, an admission. I am a slow learner.

One night a couple of years ago, I was awake in the middle of the night (not that uncommon), and as I often do when I can't get back to sleep, I talked to God. And at some point, I went through the Our Father in my head. So, I started through it, but at some point, snapped back to "Our Father". And really considered those two words. God is my father. And all that entails. Kind of blew me away thinking about it. I got through the prayer and said to myself that I truly am a slow learner. How many times have I said that prayer, but never truly taking that concept in and mulling it over completely?

Fast forward a couple of months. Again, I am awake in the middle of the night. And again, I am going through the Lord's Prayer. And I get half-way through it, and out of the blue, I feel this overwhelming love for God the Father. And two seconds later, I feel this overwhelming love in return. It was this incredible moment. I cannot adequately describe it. I get through the rest of the prayer and I think to myself, "Wow, I really am a slow learner. I have heard my whole life the most important commandment is this: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength and all your being. But until that moment, it had just been words". I never felt a connection with God the Father until that moment at 2 or 3 AM that day. With Jesus and the Holy Spirit, yes. But with God the Father, no. God the Father was more a concept or construct (albeit a very good one with the parables of Jesus), but I just did not feel a connection.

Some weeks later, in the middle of the night, and I am starting to go through the Our Father, and I thought of someone that was bothering me. I imagined saying the Our Father with that person: Our Father - to both of us. Thy Kingdom come (not the way I would have it set up, and not the way the other person (a political figure) would have it set up, but God's Kingdom). Thy will be done (not my will and not this politician's will, but God's will). Etc. Etc. By the end of the prayer, I was not having as bad thoughts about this person. And again, the realization I am a slow learner, and greater insight into what love thine enemy means. I have since done this one with other people I am having trouble dealing with at the moment, and it is a very helpful exercise.

A month or two later, around midnight, I had gotten up.



As I was heading back to bed, and walking through my living room I noticed the light streaming in from the recently full moon. I went and took a look out my back door at the deck, and up at the moonlight that was backlighting the clouds, and again was feeling this overwhelming love for God. And as I headed back to bed, I thought to myself, I don't even know where this love comes from. And right away I knew that wasn't true. It is from God, and I am returning it to God; this love for God is gift: what an incredible blessing.

Ever since these experiences, I have spent much more time simply reflecting on the words of the Lord's Prayer, and I feel a relationship with God the Father. What a blessing.

-Bob Lydon (St. Mary's)



Awakened by the Holy Spirit

I was born into a Catholic family, the oldest of seven children. My Mother read to us from the Bible, and occasionally told us stories of God working in her life when she was younger. Every Lent we prayed the Holy Rosary as a family, and we attended Mass every Sunday as a family. We also prayed nightly together during ordinary time.

Even though I participated in family prayer and attended Mass each Sunday, I didn't make the Holy Faith my own until one day at Mass I was awakened with a question that came to mind that startled me and I believe was divinely inspired. I remember this experience so clearly. It was to be one of many teachings and the beginning of my faith journey and awareness of the presence of God and His Love for me personally. I was 28 years old, an RN, wife of eight years, and mother of three children. I was at Sunday Mass thinking, as I had the habit of doing at the time, about the plans for the day and not about worshipping our Lord, the homily, or any part of the

Mass. I believed I was fulfilling my obligations by just being physically present.

I had and have so much to learn and at times relearn! My husband of 51 years can attest to that!

The question that came to my mind that particular Sunday morning in my 28th year of life was a simple one. "Would you be willing to give your life for your faith?" In my mind's eye flashed the Saints who had given their lives, those in the Roman arenas and so many others who had undergone torturous deaths for what they believed in. I honestly answered that question-"No!" Then came other questions: What kind of faith is that, that these people experienced so deeply that they were so willing to give their lives for? How can I have that kind of faith?

I have learned that nothing is a coincidence and everything is part of God's Love and Grace! It so happened that the following Sunday the parish priest announced that the parish was sponsoring a Life in the Spirit Seminar that was to last seven weeks. I attended these classes and began my most beautiful, intimate prayer life! The Holy Spirit taught me so much. Scriptures came to life as I spent time with Him each day. The Holy Spirit showed me the kind of Holy Faith that one can have to be willing to die for!! I have learned that there is no life without The Holy Spirit. God is everything and I can do nothing without Him! I love Him because He first loved me and called me into the Life of Grace. Everything is Grace! "In Him I live and move and have my being" (Acts 17:28).



God is so very good!
"The Almighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His name." (Luke 1:49)

Today, and since my being awakened by The Holy Spirit, my attendance at Mass is very different. I think about the words that I say. I listen. I think about what God is saying to me through His Word, and I actively participate. I am conscious of His presence in the Holy Eucharist!

I embarked on a Faith Journey with my own stories of God's interventions. These interventions are real life stories of loving my enemies, of dying to myself so that Jesus may increase in me, and of loving Jesus more than myself. These interventions also include warnings, returning to health

after cancer, and receiving so many answers to prayers for many others around me. But perhaps the most precious and priceless of all was learning to trust God, no matter what happens-even when facing the death of loved ones! I know what interior locution is. I know that God is Love and I am called to love God in everyone, even in my enemies. It may seem impossible for me, but nothing is impossible for God!

I know that God's Word is a living Word. I have experienced God's Word come to life in my heart, mind, and life many times. One such example of this is a day, 23 years ago. I was 48 years old at the time, driving home from a play practice for my ten year old daughter who was in the back seat. (Her coming to our home and adoption is a miracle and another story!) She was calling to me, "Mom, God is not answering my prayer! I have been praying for 2 years for a baby sister!"

I explained that God always answers our prayers, and we must trust that whatever happens is His will. Sometimes God says, "Yes." Sometimes God says "No". And, sometimes God says, "Wait." God knows what is best for us.

We arrived home and had not been home an hour when our telephone rang. It was my sister in Vermont explaining about a baby in her husband's family that needed a home. As she spoke, the Words of Jesus came to my mind. I describe this experience as a clear thought: "Whoever welcomes one such child as this in my name welcomes Me" (Matthew 18:5). Without hesitation, I said, "Yes, Lord! I welcome You!" In my heart, I knew that baby was coming to our home, so much so that when my husband came home from work, I told him we were expecting a baby! Within two weeks a beautiful three-month old little girl cradled in my arms! The night she arrived we were having a prayer group meeting at our home. Part of our group's prayer time was listening to a video tape titled The Apostolate for Family Consecration with Pope John Paul's taped homilies.

I saw a car slow down and realized that the car turning into our driveway held this baby! My oldest daughter had agreed to pick up the baby on her way home driving by the child's residence at the time. All of this, of course, had been previously arranged. My daughter had attended a bridal shower for a relative in her husband's family and chuckled as she said to the group as she left the gathering, "You will have to excuse me. I have to

leave early because I have to pick up a baby for my mother!"

I went to the car and welcomed Emily Mary Elizabeth in Jesus's name! When we entered back into the house. Those who had been listening to the tape said, "It was interesting that the scripture read tonight was: "whoever welcomes one such child as this in my name, welcomes Me!"



I said, "I was doing just that out in the car!"

Now, saying "Yes" to God does not mean that everything will go smoothly and there are no trials. We are not promised an easy road, and sometimes it might even be a hard one! We follow Jesus and the Cross! Mary said at Lourdes to Saint Bernadette: "I do not promise to make you happy in this world but in the other."

The trial I was to go through was cancer, surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. I grew closer to Jesus in little ways.

If I had not said "Yes" to God, I would not have lived much longer as I did not realize I had cancer-stage three. Emily's adoption process required that both my husband and I have a physical. It was then that I discovered that I had cancer. The oncologist that I had at the time said, "You don't know how lucky you are! You have come in just in time!" To which I replied, "I do not believe in luck." I explained that God had spared me through giving me a child. I told him my story. It was God's intervention!

There have been many miracles in my life: my husband, all six of our children and their spouses, our 25 grandchildren, their spouses, and 5 great grandchildren, to name a few! I know that I am a sinner, yet I know that Jesus loves me and will bring to completion the work He has begun!

"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

- Ginette Baker (St. Charles)

The Most Important Event in My Life

In January 1972 I had reached the end of my rope. I was depressed and in despair. I found myself to be having thoughts of suicide. I was 22 years old and one miserable young man. I was afraid to go to sleep.

I had been raised in a semi-dysfunctional family, with divorces and emotional betrayals, and a shaky sense of security. I wasn't sure about God—maybe God existed; maybe he didn't. I didn't know and I didn't really care because I was on my own, in effect, believing I was God. My parents each in their own way, paid lip service to God, just enough to keep up appearances for the neighbors. But neither took God seriously; so, neither did I.

But that night in mid-January, 1972, I figure I had nothing left to lose, except my life itself, so I decided to take a chance.

I was sharing an apartment in Boston with four other young people. One night I was the only one in the house (a rarity), and I spoke to God.

"Well, Lord, Jesus, if you're there and if you'll reveal yourself to me, I will change for you." Those were my exact words. Notice the double indefinite (two, "if"s).

What happened next I have struggled to describe, though I have shared this story many times over the years. In short, God, did reveal Himself to me, beginning right there and continuing around the clock for about the next three weeks, until I had gotten the message. And, he has revealed Himself to me at times ever since, right up to recently.



As soon as I finished uttering those words to God, I sensed a presence near me. It wasn't a feeling, but I knew something (or someone) was close by. And then, as I was thinking this to myself, the old steam radiator made a snapping, banging sound, as old radiators do, and it startled me.

My thoughts then turned back to the sense of presence I had just been noticing. And then the radiator snapped again. Loudly. It grabbed my attention again. But I quickly returned to this sense of presence once again.

Then the wall creaked loudly, and again my attention was captured by it. Ordinary, commonplace sounds, usually random and irrelevant, but now seemingly

linked to my pondering this sense of presence, acting like punctuation marks do in writing and reading. It was as though the sounds were designed to highlight and focus my attention onto this one thought. An outside prompting for an inside thought.

And then I wondered, "Could this be God trying to communicate with me?" And then the ceiling made a noise. I was transfixed. Ordinary, commonplace, totally explainable sounds were now synchronized with certain subtle thoughts I was having, always on some God-connected topic.

This sort of thing went on for about three weeks, day and night with many dozens of instances, to the point I began to believe and to look for more examples of this mysterious synchronicity. And they kept coming, perhaps hundreds.

At about the three-week mark, I was fully convinced. God does exist. God is real and Jesus Christ is somehow the key to it all. The entire landscape of my life was changed. I began to calm down and to sleep more normally.

I still had all of my old problems, of course, but now I was looking at everything differently. It was like God had given me a new set of ears to hear with. And, as time passed, my manner of living changed, one piece at a time, to more closely harmonize with the reality that God exists. This began my conscious relationship with God Almighty. God and I had become conversation partners.

I thank God for his mercy and for answering my plea. This was the beginning of my Christian journey which is still ongoing and still full of changes, challenges, and surprises, some half-century later.

I thank God for choosing me to reach over across to me here in the nature of the world and give me the gift of faith unto eternal life. Ever since January 1972, I have known the Gospel promise is totally real.

- Lance Reidy (St. Charles)



A Prayer Asking for Faith

Heavenly Father, open my eyes, not to see the world more clearly, but to see You. Open my eyes to see you working around me and in me. Nothing happens by accident. You orchestrate every day of my life. Allow me to see your hand in the mundane and the fantastic. Help me to trust in what I cannot see, and believe in Your invisible presence.

The Power of the Constant Presence

I have thought about writing for a long time, but I want you to know the story is about the constant presence of God and the Holy Spirit in my life. My awareness of His being near me and guiding me came when I was in 7th grade. I simply could not memorize anything. While doing the laundry and reading, my daily missal God taught me to learn, to concentrate, to focus.



He taught me Latin to become an altar boy. And, over time, I began to think in Latin. Life was good and I began to talk with the Holy Spirit. I didn't think our talks as prayer but more as respectfully seeking guidance. He ALWAYS answered my questions and my thoughts. I learned that if I asked for something, sometimes the answer was no or required a lot more thought on my part. But the Holy Spirit is there to guide me.

I moved on to a wonderful parochial high school. I was happy; I was excited about the classes. I had a paying job operating the telephone switchboard in the rectory of the priests who taught in the school. My parents were both teachers. My mother taught in a Catholic elementary school. We always had "the good life." One of the best times of the year was during the last two weeks in August. That's when we went on family vacation. We went to a lake resort in northern Michigan. That meant swimming, fishing, eating out, and spending money on goodies. It was so much fun.

During the second summer in high school, my life took a major change. I joined a group of kids on the beach near the cabin we rented. They were all fun to play with. Someone suggested a game of tag. I was anxious to join in when one of the kids wanted to tag me. The chase ensued. I decided to run as fast as I could on a nearby dock in the lake. When I reached the end, I




dove like a racing swimmer.

I went too deep. I hit the sandy bottom. My brain was chaos. My eyes were open, but I didn't know where up or down was. I felt a hand grip my forearm as my brother dragged me to shore.

Memory gone. I was in the cabin and unable to move. I asked God, "What happened?" The Holy Spirit said, "Calm down." I did and I waited, talking to Him in silence. This time it was more like prayers with hope in my heart. When I awoke in the hospital, I felt the straps of traction

pulling my head painfully. Where did the pain go? I wondered. "What's next?" My parents were in the room and asked me what I was dreaming. I was making some noise. God was by my side. I spent about six weeks, I think, in the hospital. I had broken C3, C4, and C5. But the spinal cord was not severed. I would be able to walk. At that time, I was told that 2% of those with my injury do. Once again, the Holy Spirit had intervened.


 This major event was followed by the joys of a wonderful life: a career of teaching, lots of travel, a fantastic marriage, and three beautiful children. Every day of that wonderful life has started with, "Thank you, God! I can walk," and has ended with "Thank you, God, for a beautiful day!

-Larry Rakovan (St. Charles)

God's Love

My husband was diagnosed with a tumor on his adrenal gland. At that time we had nine of our twelve children. I was devastated by the news. I remember kneeling at the communion rail waiting my turn - (We still had a kneeling rail then-) and fervently praying to God. I needed John. I couldn't raise the children by myself. I actually heard God answer me in my mind. He actually spoke these words to me, "don't worry, I will take care of everything." A peace came over me - (the peace that passes understanding!)

We were told the tumor was benign - a pheochromocytoma. John was the first person to ever be diagnosed while still alive. Usually, they were found by autopsy. When God says he will take care of everything, he really does!

 The doctor from San Francisco who was a foremost expert on these tumors actually came to be in on the surgery at Loma Linda Hospital, we lived in California at the time. The tumor was the size of a grapefruit and had apparently been developing for about ten years. Some of the symptoms began that long ago. It caused occasional severe headaches as a result of the adrenal gland pumping excessive adrenaline into his system. This triggered painful vomiting. In the beginning it only happened once or twice a year. Since I had experienced pregnancy related vomiting, I thought he was being a big baby complaining about his experiences, so I didn't pay much attention. Over the years, the episodes gradually increased frequency until they happened once or twice a week. That was when we sought medical attention. We first went to get his eyes

examined to see if that caused the headaches, which were severe, but didn't last very long. The eye doctor dilated his eyes and looked in and asked if he was diabetic because blood vessels behind his eyes were bursting. He immediately sent him across the hall to a specialist.

The specialist put him in the hospital for tests; and after a week's worth of tests, the 24-hour urine test found an adrenaline count of 300. (Most people have an adrenaline count of about 150 or so. So that provided the evidence needed to determine the problem. Not knowing which adrenal gland to remove, they opened him in the front to see both. He now has only one adrenal gland.

When God says everything, he means it. During his time in the hospital, all my neighbors helped me by babysitting so I could visit him. We lived 60 miles away from the hospital. We had an old VW bus for a vehicle that occasionally needed a push start. Every day, someone from church called to offer me a ride as they wanted to visit him.

We have experienced God's love many times in our lives. I could tell you many stories. Raising twelve children required a lot of God's help!

Sue Linkel (St. Charles)



Illustration by Tricia Smith

My Faith Journey:

A Story of Conversion and Awakening

Born into a Methodist family, I regularly attended church and Sunday school. Being baptized in the first six months of life was important to my mother, and so I was baptized in May of 1979. Growing up, our whole family was very involved in our church until we moved to Houston in 1989. With the move came the loss of the sense of community we had in Louisiana. The neighborhood we moved to was a new and growing master planned community, and my mom searched for a couple of years before finding the right spiritual home for us. Once again, we became involved in our church community, attending events, volunteering, and regularly attending church services, although at this point, my dad didn't feel the connection and really wasn't involved much with our church life.

When I graduated high school and went off to college, I

felt some distance developing between myself and my faith. This is an age, after all, where you are on your own and begin to challenge the world around you more than when under the wings of your parents. I found myself moving further from being actively involved in my faith. Of course, I still prayed, but that sense of belonging and the sense of spiritual community was gone.

I left school early to co-found a successful internet startup. During this time, money came easy, and so did the temptations. I found myself straying further from my underlying faith. While I didn't go completely off the rails, I certainly was not on the spiritual path in a consequential way. As I struggled to find meaning in some things, my mom suggested I turn to my foundation in faith. I resisted at first, however, when the answers I was seeking didn't come through other means, I recalled this advice and turned towards my faith. Slowly but steadily, the answers began to appear. I could feel the presence of God start to pop up in many different ways in my life, and on one fateful day, God showed himself very clearly. As I was hurriedly driving to a customer meeting that I was late for, I found myself very annoyed to be sitting at a stop light. My mind was running a million miles a minute, thinking about all of the things I needed to get done. When the light turned green, I went to hit the gas and my foot slipped, preventing me from accelerating. At that moment, another car ran through the intersection, ignoring the red light. Had my foot pushed the gas, I would have been side swiped and probably would not be writing this essay.



Pausing and thinking for a moment about what had just happened, I said to myself, "God just showed himself to me." The person behind me began honking their horn, and I pulled through the intersection and pulled into a parking lot where I lost control of my emotions. I prayed, thanking God for sparing me and for giving me a sign that he was watching over me—a sign I very much needed at that point.

Fast forward several years, and I met my wife, Heather. She was a "cradle Catholic," and both of her parents were Catholics as well. I had gone through a bad relationship, and God brought me exactly who I needed. As we started dating, I started attending Mass with her and her family weekly on Saturdays. We would then have dinner together. After asking her to marry me (getting her father's permission, of course), we sat down with her parents to discuss the wedding. She wanted a destination wedding since I wasn't Catholic. Her parents were not pleased. Eventually she convinced them to

support this idea, however, I could tell they really wanted her to be married in the church. We got married in the Cayman Islands with our closest family and friends in attendance, and shortly afterwards, as I continued to attend Mass, I longed to receive the Eucharist, as I watched everyone go up one after another while I stayed, kneeled in the pew. At the end of Mass, someone spoke about the RCIA program and offered up ways to get more information.

I reached out to the Adult Faith Formation Coordinator about RCIA and learned of the process. Feeling God pulling me this way, I sat down with Heather to prayerfully consider if this was right for me in my spiritual journey, as well as for her and hers. She supported my decision to go down this path, and I jumped in head on. I quickly became very involved in the process, attending the retreats, asking questions, and soaking up all of the information. As I learned many new things, I thirsted for more. When I received my First Reconciliation, the priest, who we all think moonlighted as a comedian, made the process very comfortable. I spent a while preparing for this sacrament, as I had never gone to confession before, so I had a lot to

confess. At the end, he said very seriously, "Is that all?" I paused, looking at him, trying to determine if he was really looking for more or not, and then he said, "My son, I'm kidding. If you have much more, I won't have time for the person after you!" We both laughed.



While going through RCIA, we began trying to have a baby. We had various issues and feared we would never be blessed with a child. After trying fertility treatments and other options, we prayed and finally surrendered and looked to adoption. We did the application, paid the fees, and were waiting for a birth mother to choose us. The nursery was ready. All we needed was a baby. Weeks went by, which turned into several months. Heather started to despair, and it was hard on our relationship. I did my best to support her.

I was traveling a lot for work. I happened to be in Corpus Christi, Texas at our office on a very dreary, cloudy day. When I travel, I always seek out old Catholic churches, as I love to look at the architecture, the stained glass, the art. A block from our Corpus office was a beautiful old Cathedral. I took a break from the busyness of the day to go say a prayer. I walked into the church—no one was there. The lights were off. Only faint light was coming



through the stained glass windows due to the clouds. I walked to a pew, knelt down, and started praying. I prayed to God that while Heather and I very much wanted a child, if that wasn't his will, we would come to be at peace with it. After several minutes of deep prayer, I felt a presence. When I opened my eyes, the altar was brilliantly glowing from sunlight that had appeared through the clouds and was coming through one of the large stained glass windows. I knew this was God telling me that he had heard my prayers and to be patient. The sun soon faded and the clouds returned to dominate the sky. I went back to the office and back to the business of the day.

I returned home the next day, and Heather's demeanor was very different than it had been. I sensed something was different for sure. She then told me we were pregnant. Tears of joy came to my eyes, and I told her about my experience in the cathedral in Corpus Christi, where I prayed so hard and where I had felt the presence of God.

After coming into full communion with the church, I immediately got involved by becoming a Eucharistic Minister. I was also a sponsor for 2 candidates going through RCIA. As God showed me the signs, I did my best to follow them where they took me.

Heather and I did ultimately receive the Sacrament of Marriage in the church after I became Catholic. This brought us fully into the church as a couple.



After we had our first child, Heather was promoted, I was still traveling a lot for business, and the Adult Faith Formation Coordinator at our Parish left to pursue other endeavors. This left a hole in my spiritual life that I didn't know how to fill, and it became harder for us stay consistent with going to Mass. We didn't leave the church, but our consistency was gone.

We had a 2nd child and built a new home. We enrolled both of our children in a Christian school, and while our faith was there, it wasn't as strong as it was before we had children. On Sunday, November 6, 2016, we were debating on whether to go to Mass or not. Heather had lots of things to do, as did I. I started setting up to paint our game room, and as I moved the coffee table, I felt massive, crushing pain in my chest. I couldn't find my phone, and I could barely make it down the stairs. I told Heather something wasn't right. She told me to go lay down. I told her this was something bad and to call 911. I chewed a couple of aspirin, remembering that it can be lifesaving. She argued about calling 911 and then

realized I was dripping with sweat. She rushed to grab her phone and soon had the operator on. They prepared her for me to lose consciousness, telling her they would walk her through CPR. She was beginning to panic. My children were both looking at me and could see something wasn't right. The ambulance arrived about 5 minutes later, and as they rushed to do an EKG, my son was terrified seeing the paramedics hook me up to the EKG machine. He started crying. The paramedic said I needed to get to the hospital immediately, as I was having a massive heart attack. (Side note: My doctor says I am in excellent health and have made all the right choices post cardiac event and should live a long and normal life.)

Heather put the kids in the car and took them to her parents' house as the ambulance rushed me to the hospital. Her parents lived only a few minutes away from the hospital, so she quickly came over. By the time she got there, they already had me back in the cardiac procedure room. The cardiologist worked his magic, and soon the crushing pressure I felt was gone. He then asks me, "Mr. Martin, are you a man of faith?" I replied, "Yes, although it hasn't been very strong lately." He said, "Well, let me tell you... You were 1mm away from not having this conversation with me. If I were you, I would thank God that you are still here." (The doctor was a devout Catholic I learned later in one of my visits with him.)

As I lay in the hospital bed for the next 12 hours (you must lay flat and still for this time), his words started to hit me hard. I started examining my life. I started looking at the choices I had been making. I started to realize just how off the spiritual path I had gone.

My best friend is a doctor, a Professor of Neurology, and I called him that day to talk to him about what had happened. He asked for a copy of my scans, which I had sent to him. He called me back and said, "God isn't finished with you yet. We shouldn't be having this conversation if I am being perfectly honest. You should be dead. Less than 15% of people survive what happened to you. Take notice." He is a very spiritual person, and he and I have had many spiritual discussions over the years. Here he was being dead serious, and the tone and his choice of words really made me deeply continue my reflection.

Once I got home, I started talking to God. I prayed like I had never prayed before to thank him for another day on this earth. I prayed for Him to help me in my spiritual journey and walk with him. I prayed for him to



help me be a good spiritual pillar for my wife and kids. I prayed, and I prayed, and I prayed.

This event was the sign of all signs for me. It was the "shock" my system needed to see the direction for me. God could have let me die, and he didn't. God had other plans for me, and the moment I surrendered to this and really took it in for what it was, was the minute my faith became stronger than ever before. My spiritual journey to that point had been important, but not as important as what lie ahead.

From that point forward, I have been much more in tune with the signs of God's presence all around us—we just have to look and see. My spiritual journey brought my family to Maine, where I found All Saints Parish and Father Tom Murphy. Father Murphy was so relatable, so kind, and so wise. He inspired me to get involved in many different ways with the Parish community, even when we were only summer parishioners (we had a summer home in Maine until we decided to relocate permanently from Texas a few years ago).

I lector, and I have encouraged my 10-year-old daughter to be a part of this ministry as well. It's something we do together to further strengthen our faith, and for me as a spiritual role model for her. Most recently, I have worked to start a technology ministry. We focused on bringing digital content to our parishioners during the pandemic time, as well as into the future, to help them feel more connected to their faith.

While my spiritual journey has not always been easy and straight, it has been what God has laid out for me. I needed to experience temptation and heartache to find my wife. I needed to go through the painful fertility issues to strengthen my bond with Heather and to be prepared for what God had in store. The heart attack was God's wakeup call that he had bigger plans for me. The signs of God's presence are all around us; we just have to be willing and open our eyes to see them.

-Jared Martin (St. Charles & St. Mary's)

A Mother's Celebration of God's Special Gift -- Her Daughter

NOTE: During the summer, one of our families' daughters passed away. The following is the letter the mother shared with family and friends about her daughter, and she wanted to share this piece about her daughter with us as her glimpse of God in her life.

August 15, 2022

Dear Friends:

Mary Catherine was a wonderful daughter. She was full of energy, talented in sports, music, cooking, needlework, dramatics. She was the best Winthrop Paradoo (the ten-year old with the lipg) in *The Music Man* in the Boothbay High School Production.

She was thoughtful, kind and generous to a fault. She saw good in everyone and was not averse to helping those along the way. She was a *spitfire!* The *blond bomb* in field hockey! A whirling dervish... and a rascal!

From the letters I have received: she made a difference in school, at work and in the community. She was helpful. She was comical. She made people around her feel important.

One of the letters told of how helpful and upbeat she was at Hannaford and that their future visits will be diminished by not seeing her there. Another letter told of going in Dunkin Donuts and seeing her manage several tasks at the same time with a great smile.

Not everyone knows that she worked for the Dell Corporation at one time as a High Conflict Resolution Manager! She went beyond the upset and found satisfactory answers for their customers.

Her children were the light in her life. She adored them. She went to as many open houses, games, recitals, and 1st days of School that she could. She made special things for the children: Crocheted soccer balls, old fashion wooden toolboxes, and more. She played with them especially Easter Egg toss with fresh eggs (dozens of them). She wrote to them often and bragged about them more often.

MaryCatherine came back to live with me several times as an adult. Those last few months were a joy to us. She pampered me with foot soaks after I was out in the garden. We watched Melissa McCarthy movies and "Pollyanna" over and over. I have not quite figured out what she loved about that movie - and now wish I had asked her. I believe it may have been Pollyanna's outlook on life - "find something to be glad about: The Glad Game." Once Pollyanna received a pair of crutches and was "glad" she did not need to use them!

I had surgery on my eye in early June. MaryCatherine put herself in charge of the nightly regime: eye drops

and reapplication of the eye patch. She took great pride in "taking care" of me.

MaryCatherine had more than her share of "issues" as someone said to me a few weeks ago, "MaryCatherine was a handful!" she said to me. "Yes, she was my handful!" I replied.

MaryCatherine had been complaining of headaches and being exhausted. She had been to the doctor's office for tests. She had a positive Covid Test a few weeks before her passing. Nothing could have prepared me for finding her unconscious just minutes after she prepared a bath, with epsom salts and bubbles for me after I had come in from working in the garden...she had said we would have dinner after I got out of the tub.

At Miles, the doctor said she had a brain bleed - ruptured brain aneurysm. They could not treat her there; she needed to be air lifted to Maine Medical Center. She was not breathing on her own, so she was on a respirator.

It is here that the miracles started to happen. The air transport nurse's name was Veronica! I have a special devotion to the Sixth Station of the Cross - Veronica Offers Her Veil to Jesus.

I felt at that moment that MaryCatherine was in good hands. When I left the hospital, I remembered that MaryCatherine had a helicopter ride on her Bucket list! I looked up to see the sky clearing and the moon coming out. I prayed that MaryCatherine was in no pain; and I hoped that she had some understanding that she was riding in a helicopter.



So much of this is a blur. The doctor told us early Saturday that there was substantial brain damage and that they would try to lower her body temperature and raise it slowly, administer medications and watch her closely. She was anointed with the Sacrament of the Sick. By Saturday afternoon, the doctor told us that her pupils were not reactive to light. We were told that she could not survive.

We made a phone call to her birth mother, Mary Elizabeth, and she was at her side within a half hour. Mary Elizabeth made a phone call to her son, Peter, MaryCatherine's half-brother who is serving in the US Army. He said his goodbyes by video chat. A phone call to her half-sister on her birth father's side had Jenn at her side in short order.

On Sunday, with both her biological and environmental family, God parents and longtime friends she passed

from this realm. The room lit up! We drew back the curtains to see the most glorious sunset over Portland. Sarah grabbed her phone and got a photograph which was used on the cover of MaryCatherine's funeral program.

MaryCatherine wore her white gown from the Grand March. She designed it and I made it for her. It had hundreds of pearls and white satin ribbon roses. She had a white sweater (she was always cold), St. Patrick's Day socks (she was of Irish ancestry) and warm slippers that

Madaline insisted on. She carried a Rosary with green stones that our friend brought back from a trip to Rome and a gold necklace that spelled out MOM. She was buried with handwritten notes written by friends and family on lacy heart-shaped paper.



We love in the light of His love!

Wilma Tatlock (Our Lady Queen of Peace Church)

A Potted Plant

What does a potted plant have to do with God? How can a plant in a six-inch pot teach us anything about faith?



The plant, a colorful Gerbera daisy, arrived as a gift one late winter day. Healthy and green with two bright orange yellow flowers, it was dutifully placed in a sunny window where we hoped it would thrive. And it did for a time but then some of its leaves began to turn brown. Too much sun, not enough water? Nothing seemed to help but spring had arrived so we decided to put it outdoors hoping it would recover. But the browning continued and, in addition, two flower buds which had emerged began to wilt. It appeared to be dying.

So in July, we moved it to a spot with more sun and moisture and, remarkably, by September it had recovered. The brown leaves were gone, vibrant new ones had taken their place and new flower buds were emerging. It brightened our Thanksgiving with four colorful blooms and healthy green foliage.

But what does this have to do with God? As I thought about it, it struck me that here was an example of why we cannot go it alone. Although it could do nothing by

itself, that ailing plant was saved by the grace of others. Paul makes the same point in his letter to the Ephesians. "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith," he writes, "...and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph 2:8

We don't have a lot in common with plants but how many of our "brown leaves" are caused by trying to be self sufficient? By foregoing the help God offers in the form of faith, we place ourselves at a disadvantage and, unlike the plant, fall short of who we are and what we can accomplish.

In his miscellaneous writings, Martin Luther describes the magnificent power of faith. "Faith cannot help doing good works constantly," he says, "Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire!"

In a plant that was dying but is now everything that it can be, God offers a glimpse of what is possible if we just ask him to work faith in us.

Arn Besier (Good Shepherd Parish & St. Charles)

A Reflection on the Season of Advent

In these weeks of Advent, we are invited to make room in our hearts for our Lord and Savior, the Christ Child. Let us look at the world with new eyes, eyes that see the many blessings God has bestowed on us. It is so easy to yearn for what we don't have and wish for our lives to be different., to be better than they are. It is so easy to wonder why God has not blessed us as he has others around us? We might even think that it is possible that God offers no blessings to us, His own children. I wonder if we feel that way if it is more a matter of how we do (or don't) see God, or how we see ourselves? Are we focused on our deficits, the deficits of others, and the pain we have experienced in life at the hand of others? Do you suppose our focusing on those perceived deficits interfere with our ability to see and relate to God? Might we and our hurts sometimes be the very cause of our own separation from God?

I wonder what would happen if we could shift how we see things for even a few minutes a day, so we consider those things in our life God has blessed us with? What

blessings has God placed in our lives? Is this a bit of a which came first, the chicken or the egg situation? If we continue to become closer to God, I wonder if we might see blessings we may never have considered before. And conversely, if we begin to look more carefully at the blessings in our lives, might this bring us closer to God?

Blessings need not be earth-shattering events. A blessing may be a smile from a stranger as we pass them on the street, a friendly person behind a counter at a store, a family member, or a friend who calls us on the phone, or someone holding a door open for us. And for some of us, it may even be God's whispering softly in our hearts. Sadly, our complaining, self-pity, and pain can drown out that gentle whisper and cause us to totally miss God in our lives. If we immerse ourselves solely in pain, self-pity, and sorrow, we can be overtaken. With all of those things taking up residence in our hearts, there is barely any room for God to have even a tiny space.

My prayer is that this Advent, we can make room in our hearts to experience the Love and Joy that the Christ Child brings to us, and to relish in the blessings of our lives. May this Advent prepare us to see Him in our lives and to hear His loving whisper in our hearts.



Would you like to contribute an article or some art work to Glimpses of God in All Saints Parish in the March issue?

If so, send your article along electronically as a Microsoft Word document to:

Martha.corkery@portlanddiocese.org

Paper copies for March issue by Feb. 15 to:

Martha Corkery
132 Mckeen Street
Brunswick, Maine 04011

For any additional information, please call 207-725-2624.

At All Saints Parish in Brunswick parishioners have been learning to recognize glimpses of God in their ordinary everyday life. A quarterly publication (which is distributed within the parish) entitled *Glimpses*

of God chronicles these intimate encounters with God. Martha Corkery, the Pastoral Life Coordinator for All Saints Parish, explained how the publication came to be by saying that multiple discussions centered around encounter and witness in several social spheres. Following the prompting of the Holy Spirit Martha pitched the idea for *Glimpses of God*. It took off slowly and eventually changes and transitions in the life of the parish forced it to be discontinued for a stint of time.

In June of 2022 the parish staff discerned it was time to revive the *Glimpses of God* publication. The new volume of *Glimpses of God* has been successful, and two bonus issues were published in September and December. "Through this publication parishioners have recognized that God whispers to some and moves mountains for others," mentioned Martha. This is something that can be troubling to some as they ask "why is God doing so much for them when He does nothing for me?" Martha tenderly encourages and reminds them that "we may not recognize our Father's hand, but he is helping us though we may not have noticed or given Him credit.

Martha stresses that anyone interested in doing something like this should introduce the importance of people sharing their faith stories with each other. Martha has accompanied and challenged parishioners who have felt like the process of sharing these faith stories feels like bragging. She emphasizes that these stories are shared with humility and are shared to show how God has worked in or through the person submitting a story or through someone else. Often times that has been enough to encourage people to submit their own stories.

However, Martha is honest about the fact that sometimes it is hard to find people to submit their stories. She's found that offering the option to remain anonymous while it has not often been used, has helped people feel more comfortable submitting their story. "People need to see how others will react to the publication before they dare to put themselves out there," observed Martha.

A new issue of *Glimpses of God* will come out in March. It can be accessed electronically on the [All Saints parish website](#) or by picking up a hard copy at Mass, or by requesting a hard copy from Martha Corkery.

A big thank you to Martha Corkery and the staff of All Saints Parish for sharing Glimpses of God with us and allowing us to feature it in our newsletter.

Inspiration



As I (Hannah) was scrolling through social media one day I came across this poem about gratitude. It flows well with the message of inspiration shared in last month's newsletter. Without further ado here is *Drinking from the Saucer* by John Paul Moore.

*I've never made a fortune
And I'll never make one now
But it doesn't really matter
Cause I'm happy anyhow.*

*As I go along my journey
I'm reaping better than what I sowed
I'm drinking from the saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

I don't have a lot of riches

*And sometimes the going's tough
But with kin and friends to love me
I think I'm rich enough.*

*I thank God for the blessings
That His mercy has bestowed
I'm drinking from a saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed.*

*He gives me strength and courage
When the way grows steep and rough
I'll not ask for other blessings for
I'm already blessed enough.*

*May we never be too busy
To help bear another's load
Then we'll all be drinking from the saucer
When our cups have overflowed.*

Prayer



In a spirit of collaboration we envision what our people need from us. Bring our vision in line with yours, Lord God of all the people. Open our ears that we may hear their needs and your solutions. Open our eyes that we may see their concerns and your touch. Open our hearts that we may welcome their input and your inspiration. Bless the work of our hands, Lord, and guide our parish. Give us a common heart and unity of purpose; and may all we do be done according to your will. Amen

(Taken from [Prayer Services for Parishes](#) by Karen Berry O.S.F.)