This week’s bulletin essay comes from parishioner John Green, the Director and vice president for Partner Engagement for the Ignatian Volunteer Corps of Philadelphia/South Jersey. How do we find God in quarantine? This question leads me to definitions as I am a very literal person. In exploring the meaning of quarantine, I am immediately redirected to a word that draws on much more emotion: isolation. Isolation is loosely defined as the state of being in a place or situation that is separate from others. The feelings of loneliness, yearning, confusion and fear all accompany the act of being isolated from my family and friends, the Old Saint Joseph’s family, my IVC (Ignatian Volunteer Corps) community and my neighborhood community.

I am reminded of the time in 1995 when, as a Jesuit Volunteer, I participated in my first silent retreat. I was petrified. This kid who kindergarten teachers tried not to engage in conversation too early in the day was going to need to be quiet for a long period of time. But what happened to me is similar to the experience that I am having now in quarantine. When you clear the noise, the chatter, the distractions, there is a quiet that settles over you and directs you to that center of your being. There’s a warm light that radiates from your heart, that vibrates and grounds you. It’s where I find God.

It’s also where I find others who I call on. The usual suspects are there; my partner, sharing the highlights of the day, my parents sharing about drive by visits with grandkids, my friend passing dinner to her mom through the car window. But more significantly, it’s the other people who come alive in that space that I won’t see even when this (period of isolation is lifted. My grandfather, who died in 1979 when I was seven, is still a strong presence, somehow so gentle and comforting. My grandmother helping me color an Easter card while sitting in her apartment in Atlantic City, telling me she’d never seen someone who could color so well. And my Nana is there, laughing in her unique way that is similar to how my brother laughs today.

It’s a place where relationships can begin. I find myself wondering about my partner’s parents. They come alive in the stories told, and new stories begin as I become more curious about the impact they made, the love they sowed, and the legacy that is so much a part of my current daily life. In my work for the Ignatian Volunteer Corps I am heading up a college/university partnership named after Fr. Charlie Currie SJ, who passed in January 2019. I never met him but find myself coming to know the great impact he made in pairing education and the call to serve others. Strangely enough I’ve been visited by my dog Paco who passed a week after I moved to Philadelphia in August 2015. I credit him with teaching me about love, patience and commitment.

There is also great healing that can occur as we reside in this place in our hearts. I am frequently struck by feelings of regret, missed opportunities
and an inventory of experiences I wished I could “do over.” But there’s a difference: the suffering that often takes place when you ruminate about lost time and sustained regret when the world is so loud and chaotic feels softened when you clear your distractions and go deeply into the space inside. It’s like an elixir that speeds up healing and smooths the jagged edges.

So, let’s be clear about something before I go any further. There is no comparison between quiet, chosen isolation for a period of time and being forced to quarantine. It’s not the same to spend time with friends and family or to bring them to mind when they are not there. Zoom calls with loved ones will never feel like a greatly needed hug.

What I ask you to consider is that tension that exists in between. I’ve often said that it’s hard to find personal space when you are surrounded by people, and it’s just as hard to find the satisfaction of company when you are alone. What I am learning during this time of isolation is that it is in the dichotomy, the polarity, the dialectic, that we find God. That space inside, that warmth of familiarity that provides comfort, where you see people for who they are and feel fully seen yourself, that is where you will find God. Where God speaks to you through your loved ones. Where God enlightens you with passion and creativity. Where God fills you with ideas and plans and answers your questions. Where God is with you, loving you and reminding you that you are not alone.

Learn to understand and embrace this balance. Hunger begets satiation. Rest fuels activity. Loss brings us closer to intimacy. Resistance can bring about great relaxation. Exhaustion can build endurance. Isolation can reinforce the life and love that we carry with us always. That allows those who have passed to live, and those who live and love to reside in us always. All these things are true when you invite God into the process. So, in truth, there is no act of finding God in quarantine, but the act of allowing God to find you in quarantine. And to challenge yourself to be found, continuously, once we’ve moved through this difficult time.

—John W. Green

Front page image: by Valentin Antonucci on Unsplash.

In your prayers, please remember
our sick and homebound brothers and sisters
and our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital.

Announcements

Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl

A message from the Archdiocese

I write to you during this difficult time in our country and our world. So many of our sisters and brothers are being impacted daily by COVID-19. Each day we search for signs of hope peeking through the darkness. Realizing this is a most difficult time for all of us, especially parishes which have been financially impacted by the suspension of Mass, I hesitate to write about donations to Rice Bowl.

Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl is needed more now than ever with our global and local families impacted in so many ways by the COVID-19 pandemic. 75% of the donations will assist Catholic Relief Services in programming to rebuild overseas while 25% will help Nutritional Development Services stock up on food in high demand at the area food cupboards and soup kitchens. The requests from these cupboards in parishes and community centers keep growing as families are impacted by loss of jobs and diminished resources.

—Anne Ayella, CRS Diocesan Director

You can make your Lenten gift to CRS Rice Bowl through OSJ’s ParishSOFT Giving until May 10, or directly to crsricebowl.org.

Virtual Advocacy Training

As decisions are made in Congress about COVID-19 relief efforts, our vulnerable sisters and brothers need advocates on their behalf. That’s why Catholic Relief Services will host a virtual advocacy training this **Wednesday, April 29 from 2:00-3:00 PM**. Please RSVP to Nancy.Mcnamara@crs.org for more information and a password to the Zoom meeting.

Requiescat in Pace

Fr. Michael Hricko SJ passed away on Friday, April 24, 2020. Fr. Hricko was a member of the Manresa Jesuit Community at Saint Joseph’s University.


We remember Fr. Hricko fondly and pray Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him; may his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Electronic Giving Update

We have upgraded our electronic giving program so that now you can contribute both from your computer and by using your cell phone, whether or not you register as a parishioner. Our new program is called ParishSOFT Giving. Visit the Make A Donation page of our website, oldstjoseph.org, to find detailed instructions on starting out with or upgrading to ParishSOFT Giving. **Please note: everyone who now uses Online Giving will need to upgrade to ParishSOFT Giving by May 15. Thank you!**
INFORMATION

Pastor
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ (pastor@oldstjoseph.org)

Parochial Vicar
Fr. Francis Hannafey SJ (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org)

In Residence
Br. Robert Carson SJ
Fr. Ed O’Donnell SJ (eodonnell@oldstjoseph.org)

Pastoral Associate
BJ Brown (bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org)

Business Manager
Eric German (germane@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Music
Mark Bani (music@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Offices
(office@oldstjoseph.org)

Religious Education (PREP) Coordinator
Christine Szczepanowski (prep@oldstjoseph.org)

Faith, Food & Friends Director
Deborah Hluchan (faithandfriends@oldstjoseph.org)

Director of Hospital Ministry
Tom Volkert (hospitalEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Rectory Office Hours
Monday through Friday: 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Sunday: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Mass Times
Monday through Saturday: 12:05 PM
Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday: 5:30 PM
Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM and 6:30 PM
Holy Days: 12:05 and 7:00 PM

Medical Emergency
In a medical emergency when the need for a priest is urgent, please call the rectory.

Hearing Enhancements
Old St. Joseph’s is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are available in the rear of the church.

Registration
Registration forms are available in the rectory office during normal office hours, on the bookcases in the back of the church and online at www.oldstjoseph.org. They can be returned to the parish office by mail or in person.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
A priest is available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday from 11:30 AM–12:00 PM or by appointment.

Sacrament of Baptism
If you want to arrange a baptism, please contact Fr. Hannafey (fhannafey@oldstjoseph.org) at least two months before the desired date.

Eucharist for the Homebound
To arrange to receive Communion at home, please contact the parish offices.

The Sacrament of Anointing
The Sacrament of Anointing (the sacrament of the sick) is offered during the 12:05 PM Mass on the first Saturday of each month. Homebound or hospitalized persons wanting to receive the Sacrament of Anointing should call the parish office.

Sacrament of Matrimony
If you want to be married at Old St. Joseph’s, please visit our website, oldstjoseph.org and read the material under the heading Weddings. Please call the parish office at 215-923-1766 at least nine months before your desired wedding date.

Rite of Christian Initiation
If you are an adult wishing to be baptized, or to receive First Eucharist and Confirmation, or are a baptized non-Catholic seeking full communion with Catholic Church, please call the parish office or email rcia@oldstjoseph.org.

Mass of Christian Burial
To schedule a funeral or memorial Mass, ask your funeral director to call the parish office.

Parish Pastoral Council
(osjpc@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Finance Council
Paul Shay, chair

Historic Preservation Corporation Board
Fr. Walter Modrys SJ, president

Adult Education
Rita O’Brien and Jeanmarie Zippo
(adulted@oldstjoseph.org)

Eldership
Pat Nelson (eldership@oldstjoseph.org)

Parish Life
Joe Casey (parishlife@oldstjoseph.org)

Ignatian Spirituality and Formation
Len Mancini (osjspirituality@oldstjoseph.org)

Women, Faith and Fellowship
Rana McNamara (wff@oldstjoseph.org)

Young Adult Community
(osjyac@gmail.com)

Altar Servers
Maria Ramirez (altarserver@oldstjoseph.org)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
Bill Stewart (EM@oldstjoseph.org)

Hospital Ministry
Luanne Balestrucci (hospitaleM@oldstjoseph.org)

Homebound Ministry
Neal Hébert (homeEM@oldstjoseph.org)

Lectors
Lou Anne Bulik (lectors@oldstjoseph.org)

Ushers
Nikola Szigorich (ushers@oldstjoseph.org)

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Peggy Connolly (clow@oldstjoseph.org)
For Information ... Call

800.524.0263

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