Each year, Old St. Joseph’s takes part in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Missionary Cooperative Appeal. This year, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a religious community of women involved with missionary work in twenty-six countries where they minister to the poor and oppressed through education, retreats and social outreach, will benefit from this special collection. See August Special Collections later in the bulletin for how to give to the Appeal online or by text.

A Whispered Word
By Jessica Kerber acj

For the first couple of months of quarantine, while it was impossible to make any kind of profound statement about reality, I continuously commented to my community about the birds that seemed to be so much louder and more bountiful than I remembered. “Did you hear them this morning?! I feel like we live in a menagerie!” I know I have not been the only one to notice this, as articles have been written explaining that the birds are actually singing more quietly; they just aren’t competing with other environmental noise.

Many of us have such experiences. We are now able to hear, and to receive, what has always been present. We have heard the birds, we are listening more deeply to the human need to slow down, and more of our society is owning what it has always listened to without hearing: the persistent structural inequality of racism.

I think of this as I consider this Sunday’s first reading. God wasn’t in the howling wind or the earthquake or the fire; God wasn’t in the magnificent spectacles that cause fear. God was in the tiny whispering sound that was beneath, within, or following the tremendous happenings. That tiny whisper probably shook Elijah to the core more than all that had come before. He had been listening so hard to all that had made such great noise that that tiny whisper must have gone straight to his soul.

A whispered word does not rise above the surrounding noise; it does not reverberate through a room nor does it linger in a collective memory like an epic speech. Yet a whispered word of love makes us shudder, and a quietly spoken word of truth can calm swirling words and thoughts and clear our vision. A whisper is not always secretive. It can, rather, cut through the muddle and be heard more deeply within.

It might allow us to receive today’s Gospel message differently as well. The boat was being tossed about on the waves. And, even more fear-producing, a ghostlike figure walked toward the disciples over the water. “Frightened” does not go far enough to describe the fear, uncertainty, and the desire to be released from this situation that the disciples

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experienced. Yet one word, maybe a whispered word, gave Peter courage. Maybe, in the midst of the storm and the fear that disturbed the disciples, Jesus had to *whisper* that one word so it could pierce through and be received: “*Come.*” It gave Peter the courage to step out of the boat, as it had given Elijah courage to stand at the entrance to the cave.

What are the whispers that we hear, the surprising recognition of God’s presence, that give us the courage to step out of the boat or to move to the entrance of the cave? I’d like to share a *whisper* from a young boy that was heard by our Sisters in Vietnam a month ago.

*Tha* stood in front of his class, crying as he said goodbye to his classmates. After that, he went to the principal and pulled out of his pocket twenty thousand VND (one US Dollar). He said quietly but very firmly: “Thank you for cooking for me. That’s all I have!”

Because of COVID 19, Tha’s parents lost their jobs. They tried so hard to remain in the city, hoping to find other jobs. They waited for unemployment funding from the government, but months passed and they got nothing! The rent for their house, the meals for their three kids, the water and electricity bills. . .all of these could wait no longer. So they left the city, a place where they had once hoped to find a future. Tha had to drop out of school only three weeks before the exit exam. What will happen to him? Will he continue his studies or will he have to go to work?

COVID changed the lives of our students’ families. Construction sites where their fathers worked only kept a few workers and many did not receive their salary for months. Small factories closed so the women also lost work. No tourism means no service needed! Since Tha’s parents migrated to Saigon from the countryside, they are not considered Saigonese, and in effect, they receive no government support.

We hear about and we see the devastating effects of the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Yet the poor bear the greater suffering. When there is no longer a daily wage, there is no means of providing food and shelter. As our Sisters share from their communities, it is the poverty exacerbated by the pandemic that is killing people.

Each year, the Missionary Cooperative Appeal seeks the support of Archdiocese of Philadelphia parishes for the work of Mission Dioceses and Religious Orders. Missionaries share their stories, and a portion of the parish donation goes directly to their mission. We realize that this year many are feeling the economic effects of COVID and may not be able to contribute as they would otherwise like to do. Yet we also trust that now we are all better able to hear the *whisper* of those in deep poverty that only has worsened during the pandemic.

Our congregation, the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (women of Ignatian spirituality), ask for your prayers and collaboration with our missions. We have a presence in 26 countries. We seek to enter into the brokenness in our world and there allow Christ to heal and to repair. Many of our communities, such as the one described above in Vietnam, minister alongside the poor, who are economically and socially vulnerable. Please help us to respond to these deep human needs, the *whispers* of our brothers and sisters, by contributing to the Mission Appeal collection this week. On behalf of our mission communities throughout the world, we thank you.

We are in a time when a tiny sound does indeed have great potential to stir us. It has the potential to bring us to the entrance of the cave that shelters us, or to allow us to believe that we could trust enough to step onto the water with Jesus. When we hear the whisper, may we have the faith and the courage to respond.

Sister Jessica provided the image accompanying this essay. The picture on the first page is from a school in Vietnam where the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus minister. Learn more about their work at acjusa.org (in the US) and [http://www.congregacion-aci.org/?lang=en](http://www.congregacion-aci.org/?lang=en) (worldwide).
Daily Mass Intentions

Monday, August 10
Presider: Fr. Hannafey SJ

Tuesday, August 11: Old St. Joseph’s Memorial Society
Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ

Wednesday, August 12 Edward & Mary Britt & Family
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ

Thursday, August 13: Old St. Joseph’s Memorial Society
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ

Friday, August 14 Benefactors of the Society of Jesus
Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ

Sunday, August 16
7:30 AM Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ
9:30 AM Presider: Fr. Modrys SJ (livestreamed only)
11:30 AM Presider: Fr. O’Donnell SJ

Please remember our sick and homebound brothers and sisters, our ministry at Pennsylvania Hospital and all those who have asked for our prayers.


If you wish to have someone included on the parish prayer list, please call BJ Brown at 215-923-1733 or email bjbrown@oldstjoseph.org.

In Memoriam
The Jesuit community of Saint Joseph’s University will host a Memorial Mass on August 11, 2020 at 11:30 AM for Jesuits who died from COVID-19, including Fathers Michael Hricko SJ and Edward Dougherty SJ. Physical attendance is limited to invited family members and friends, but you may watch the Mass via St. Joseph’s University’s livestream.
Announcements

Rev. Bryan Massingale’s
*Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*

Following up on the July 13 *Parish Conversation on Race*, Old St. Joseph’s Adult Education and Ignatian Spirituality Committees invite all members of the parish to read Reverend Bryan Massingale’s book, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*. Book discussions (by Zoom) are scheduled for **Thursday, September 10 and Tuesday, September 29 at 7:30 PM**. Get acquainted with Fr. Massingale’s work with a video interview with *America* magazine correspondent Michael O’Loughlin: on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com).

New Sanctuary Movement Philadelphia

Old St. Joseph’s has become a member congregation of [New Sanctuary Movement Philadelphia](https://www.newsanc.com) an interfaith, multicultural movement organizing to end injustices against immigrants, regardless of status. This commitment was recommended by the parish Social Justice Committee as a next step building on the involvement of OSJ parishioners in accompanying immigrants to court.

Old St. Joseph’s will be part of the New Sanctuary Movement’s *Driving Philadelphia Forward* campaign, which will shift into high gear in the fall. The campaign seeks to amend state law to broaden access to standard driver’s licenses to people who have taxpayer identification but no social security numbers. This allows immigrants of varying status to obtain legal identification and a small protection against arbitrary arrest and deportation. Much more information will follow!

OSJ’s membership in New Sanctuary Movement Philadelphia is supported by the Barbelin Fund, the restricted fund supporting parish social ministry, including Faith, Food and Friends. In the past weeks, OSJ has received notes of thanks form Nutritional Development Services, Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl, Bread for the World, and the Bethesda project, who all received support from the Barbelin Fund in June (see the [June 28, 2020 bulletin](https://www.oldstjoseph.org) for details).

First Communion Scheduled

First Communion, delayed since May, is now scheduled to take place on three days this fall. Seven first communicants, along with up to three family members, will celebrate on **Saturday, September 26 at 11:00 AM, Sunday, September 27 at 1:30 PM or Sunday, October 4, at 1:30 PM**. Families may indicate their scheduling preferences using this [Google form](https://forms.gle).

A first celebration of Reconciliation is also scheduled for **Saturday, September 19 at 10:00 AM**. Each child may be accompanied by one adult; no pre-registration is required.

PREP Teachers Needed!

PREP, the Parish Religious Education Program, is seeking teachers for the coming year. Classes will meet via Zoom with the possibility of periodic in-person gatherings. Instructional materials and support will be provided. If you’re interested or want more information, please contact Christine Szczepanowski at prep@oldstjoseph.org or 215-923-1733 x123.

August Special Collections

The following special collections are now active on [ParishSOFT Giving](https://www.parishsoft.com) through August 30. You may also contribute via text at 215-929-7151 by using the keywords below:

- **Missionary Cooperative Appeal** will benefit the work of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (as described in this week’s essay). The collection will be taken up in church on August 9. Its keyword is MissionCoop.
- The collection for the **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, keyword Assumption, is open online although there will not be a special holy day Mass because the feast falls on a weekend.
- The annual collection for **Catholic University of America** will be taken up in church on August 16; its keyword is CatholicUniversity.
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

Mass Times
Monday–Friday at 12:05 PM.
Live-streamed at 9:30 AM Sunday; at vimeo.com/osjphl.
Public Mass at 11:30 AM Sunday.

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
Priests are available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Monday through Saturday by appointment; please call the parish offices.

Sacrament of Baptism
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
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)
God Bless America

Please Continue To Pray For

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Military Crisis Line
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