



FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

New Developments in
Young Adult Outreach

Illinois Pastor Sees ChristLife Graduates
as Future of the Church

Why Are You Afraid?

The Gift of Transformed Life

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Several years ago I met a woman from Kansas named LaDonna, who was a self-described lukewarm, cafeteria Catholic prior to a profound spiritual awakening. She likened her conversion to a special type of glasses that helps colorblind people see the way everyone else sees color. She shared:

"For me, the ChristLife program was like getting a pair of those glasses. It was as though I'd been colorblind my whole life and had no idea. Then I entered a beautiful period of consolation. For the first time I feel like I am seeing everything in full color—the way it is meant to be seen."

Simply wonderful! Her words vividly illustrate the marvelous working of the Lord's grace, bringing one soul completely to Himself. Her story also breathes hope because it reminds us so powerfully that God is still alive and active in our Church and in the world!

Over the last decade, 200,000 people have had the opportunity to encounter the life-changing Good News through ChristLife!

As ChristLife looks forward to 2022, our mission is to continue to equip workers (Luke 10:2) to bring the Good News and the call of missionary discipleship to more and more souls through both in-person and virtual ChristLife courses.

To accomplish so great a mission entrusted to us by the Lord, we need brothers and sisters like you to partner with us.

We have an increasing sense of our need to come together in prayer and intercession, crying out, "Revive us, O God!" (Psalm 80:3) To that end, please include ChristLife as an intention in your personal prayer time or in your parish liturgy. Consider offering up any suffering you may be going through for the sake of the mission.

Once a month on a Wednesday at 12 noon (ET) we've been hosting a 40-minute virtual intercessory prayer meeting. We'd love to have you join us. Visit ChristLife.org/prayerpartner to receive updates.

We also need partners in giving. While some of ChristLife's initiatives provide income for the ministry, most do not. During our fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30, 80% of our income will come from our donors.

This year, we are launching the ChristLife Mission Growth Fund with a goal of \$400,000. This fund will supply the financial support our team needs to fulfill the mission God has given us for the coming year.

God has supplied for all of our needs through many friends in wonderful ways throughout our 25-year history. During the COVID pandemic, God not only provided for us financially, He also opened doors to bring the Good News by way of the internet to people around the world who we would have been unable to reach in person.

We could never have come this far, nor can we continue to call hundreds of thousands of more people to discipleship, without friends like you.

Please consider partnering with us in an ongoing way in prayer and giving. Use the enclosed response card or give online at ChristLife.org/donate. Thank you for your generous support!

By our Baptism, each one of us is called to a life of holiness and evangelization. In the words of LaDonna,

"Everyone deserves a chance to try on these special glasses."



Your brother in Christ,

Pete Ascosi
Assistant Director

PARTNER WITH CHRISTLIFE

Use the enclosed response card or
give online at ChristLife.org/donate
Thank you for your generous support!



NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR YOUNG ADULT OUTREACH

These past few months, we've had some exciting developments in our outreach to young adults, ChristLife Young Adults! We kicked off our return to in-person ministry with a fantastic day retreat, followed by a summer speaker series.

Over the summer, we brought in different speakers to teach on a variety of topics. Talks included: how to deal with suffering; beauty and how it points us to God; the witness of St. Joseph; staying awake and attentive for the Lord; and the power of healing. Talks never failed to prompt wonderful discussions in our small groups. And those discussions would often carry over from the small group into the pub that some of our group would visit after the sessions.

Towards the end of the summer, we hired Michael Dugan, who is currently writing this article (hi!). Michael joined our team as Mission Support for Development and Communications, and is also taking over the position of Young Adult coordinator. For the past few weeks, Michael has been learning the ropes of his position, and is slowly taking on more responsibility.

He just launched the young adult group into our fall series, which is a book study on Fr. Josh Johnson's book *Broken and Blessed*. Each week, a different young adult will present the



main points of a chapter and relate it to his or her own life.

Finally, the young adults wanted to make sure that I mentioned we went to trivia together one night and ended up winning first place!

Please continue praying for this wonderful ministry!



Get to know Michael better by reading his blog post, "A Faith Born Out of Jealousy" at <https://christlife.org/blog/a-faith-born-out-of-jealousy> or scan this QR code:

ILLINOIS PASTOR SEES CHRISTLIFE GRADUATES AS FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

INTERVIEW WITH FR. JAMES DVORCAK



Why did you decide to bring ChristLife to your parish?

After a long search, we discovered that ChristLife introduced people

to the person of Jesus within the community of His Church. The tipping point for us was how it presented the Scriptures, the Sacraments, and the Tradition of the Church as vital parts of our personal encounter with Jesus. Within that meaningful relationship, developing a Catholic Christian lifestyle is convincing, and our spiritual outreach to others is compelling.

The ongoing offering of ChristLife is

transforming our core parishioners.

They know their faith, love their faith, and live their faith in ways that attract others. ChristLife also appeals to prospective parishioners who sense we have something they long for, a life filled with meaning, purpose, and love. Jesus can truly deliver these blessings to those who embrace Him personally in the community of His Church.

As we present ChristLife for the third time, a spiritual difference is apparent in our liturgies, ministries, and daily lives. New people are showing up at Mass and at ChristLife. Something wonderful is happening. The Spirit seems to be working in our midst through ChristLife. Other parishes in our diocese are also catching the ChristLife spirit as part of a great spiritual reset of the Church in our day.

As a priest, how has ChristLife helped to broaden your understanding and practice of evangelization?

As a perpetual student, I usually promoted the 'what' and the 'how' of our faith. After taking ChristLife, I am focusing more on the 'who' and the 'why' of faith as the foundation for everything else. In my forty-fifth year of priesthood, ChristLife is like a new pair of glasses that highlights spiritual treasures which have been hiding in plain sight. The faith story I composed at ChristLife has also been a helpful tool in my evangelization efforts.

When I share my story about how Jesus is real to me, it motivates people to search for that unique part of themselves that can help them bond with Jesus. When I relate how

Jesus makes a difference in how I understand my life and how I live my daily life not just as a priest, but as a Catholic Christian, people seem more inclined to explore what differences Jesus can make in their own personal lives as well.

As a pastor with many competing priorities, why is running ChristLife so important to you?

In my opinion, the “creative minority” church, predicted by Pope Benedict, is already here. The age of cultural religion is history, and the prospect of intentional faith is now upon us. Just like the Apostles who were engaged in the old evangelization, we are embarking on a new evangelization today. What does this Church of the

future look like? For me, I think it looks a lot like the graduates of the ChristLife process today.

A ChristLife graduate is someone who wants to know Jesus better because they are already in a meaningful relationship with Him. They want to spend more time with Him in prayer, Scripture, and the Sacraments, because they know that is what Jesus likes. They so identify with Jesus, they want to share the Good News and help those in need, just like Jesus did. Thus, I regard ChristLife graduates as being the future of the Church right now.

Please join me in our parish

ChristLife prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. Fill me with your Spirit so that I may live a new life. Help me to know you, to love you, and to serve you in this world, so that I may be happy with you both now and for all eternity. Thank you, Lord! Amen.”



WHY ARE YOU AFRAID?

BY DAVE NODAR

Why are we afraid? I want to take a moment to speak to you about the fear that is so pervasive in our society: the fear of death, of losing control, of the future and what it holds, of persecution and martyrdom, and of COVID. This fear is all around us, all the time.

In my prayer time one morning, I remembered the words Jesus tells His disciples as the storm rages around their boat in Mark 4:40 “Why are you afraid, have you no faith?” In the middle of a raging storm, Jesus, as calm as can be, asks the disciples, “Why are you afraid?” Well, they had very good reason to be afraid!

It is worth noting that not everyone in the boat was a fisherman, and so they were less used to rough and stormy waters, and would’ve been really afraid. And those who were fishermen and more familiar with stormy seas knew that they were in trouble, and quite likely going to drown! All of these people had different reasons to be afraid.

Meanwhile Jesus is asleep! Jesus, in his union with the Father, is able to peacefully sleep even amidst the storm, the rocking boat, and the terrified yells of those around Him. When the disciples come to wake Him, instead of letting their fear infect Him, His own peace spreads out from Him—a peace that stills the wind and the sea.

Now let us take a look at the mission Jesus was on. At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus told His disciples, “Let us go to the other side.” Later we see that when they get to

the other side, Jesus heals a possessed man (Mark 5:1-20). Now we see that this storm is the beginning of the enemy’s preemptive attack, trying to prevent Jesus from reaching the man to heal him.

One of the last things I will say is that we need to recognize that fear is a fiery dart that the enemy uses to distract us and sow distrust in our relationship with God. As Paul says in Ephesians 6, we need to take up the shield of faith. I have personally been praying for greater faith in the Lord’s faithfulness, even when I don’t know what’s going to happen. I encourage you to take a few minutes in prayer, identify your fears, recall who the Father is and who Jesus is, and renounce and repent of the mistrust you have. Then, ask the Lord to give you the grace to trust Him more, praying, “Jesus I believe, help my unbelief.”

Here is a verse you can memorize for when you feel afraid: “Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.”

1 John 4:4b

Watch a video of the full teaching on our YouTube channel or scan the QR code.
youtube.com/ChristLifeMinistry



THE GIFT OF TRANSFORMED LIVES

BY JENNIFER KING

As Holy Spirit-St. Joseph Catholic Community in Penfield, New York was entering the fourth week of their third year offering Discovering Christ, the pandemic shut down all activities. Recognizing the importance of evangelization and building community, their team made the decision to pivot and offer the entire ChristLife process virtually.

Discovering Christ began in September 2020, after several months of planning. Those who were previously signed up were invited to come back, but an invitation was also extended to the larger community. Approximately 70 people signed up to participate.

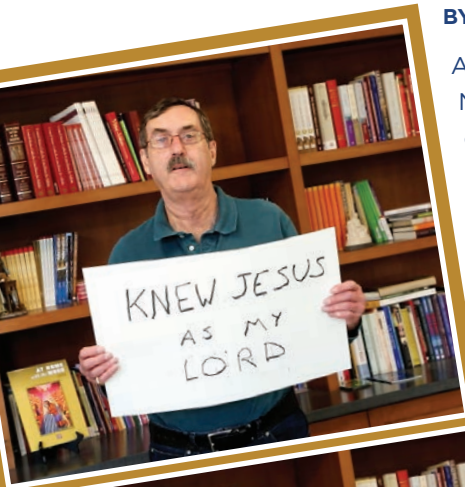
Team members stepped up in creative ways to bring the in-person experience to the virtual setting—from the worship team continuing to lead praise online in the weekly sessions, to the hospitality team creating welcome bags for each guest that included a participant guide, candle, and snacks!

As they moved through Discovering Christ, Following Christ, and into Sharing Christ, they witnessed many people being transformed by the power of the Gospel. “Many shared how they pray more frequently, feel closer to God, have a personal relationship with Jesus and participate more fully in the sacraments,” Mike Nesbitt, the leader of the volunteer team, shared with their local Catholic paper, the Catholic Courier.

As they neared the end of Sharing Christ and prepared for the retreat, the team discussed how they might do the cardboard testimonies given their limitations. They wanted the experience to be as authentic as possible, so people in small groups were invited to come to the parish, prepare their cardboard testimony, and be filmed to share with the rest of the group. Testimonies ranged from:

“I felt like an outcast -> I feel loved and chosen” to “Lukewarm and Disinterested -> Awakened and On Fire”

Praise God for the gift of seeing lives transformed and sent forth on mission!



ChristLife is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are gratefully accepted in support of the essential mission of evangelization. All donations are tax-deductible. www.ChristLife.org/donate

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