



### President's Letter

Dear Friends of WGCC,

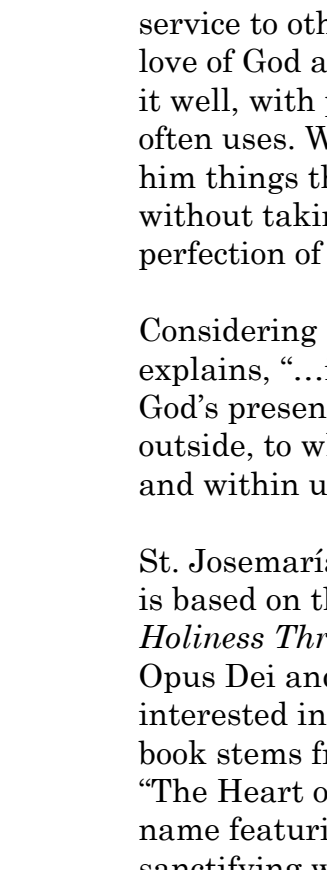
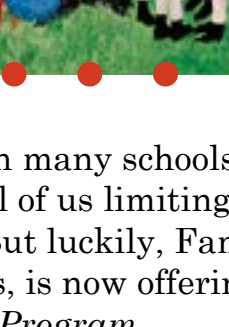
My heartfelt wishes of faith, hope, and love during this beautiful, grace-filled Lenten season. In this time of endless reminders of social distancing, let us look at Lent as a beautiful reminder of our Christian vocation to holiness, a time to renew and deepen our relationship with God by distancing from sin and drawing closer to Him, remaining faithful to the Gospel, spending more time in prayer, and reflecting on His love and mercy. Lent is a time to remove obstacles and dedicate ourselves anew to growing in Christ.

We have always associated Lent with denying ourselves the things we like – chocolates, sweets, margaritas, social chats – so we can offer those denials as penance. Maybe this Lent, we can also look at something positive that we can do, little acts of service that can make our small part of the world a loving place – offering to do the groceries for an elderly neighbor who can't do online shopping, spending time with family and friends who are feeling lonely and isolated, offering to help our friends who are parents deal with the online studies of their children. There are so many ways we can help ease the burden of this pandemic.

When we celebrate Easter, we celebrate the fact that Christ is alive and that he lives in our hearts and minds. What a joyful proclamation that the real meaning and purpose to life lies in God's gift of love! May the joy of Easter find expression, as Pope Francis has reminded us, in sharing with others the good news of Christ's victory over death – the mystery of our Faith.

Happy Easter to all!

Cynthia Abesa



## From the Prelate

The Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocariz, recently worked with author Maria Ferrari to complete the book, *Holiness Through Work*, which delves into the teachings of St. Josemaria on the sanctity of work.

Through a series of reflections, the Prelate explores various aspects of St. Josemaria's call for us to sanctify our work, to sanctify ourselves at work, and to sanctify others through our work.

In discussing the motive for sanctifying work, Monsignor Ocariz asserts, "It can be none other than the love of God and, as an inseparable part of this love, service to others. Sanctifying work is this: doing it for love of God and to serve others, and this requires doing it well, with professionalism, a term that St. Josemaria often uses. We need to work well... We cannot offer him things that are consciously done badly, that is, without taking care of the details, without seeking the perfection of what one is doing."

Considering God's role while we work, the Prelate explains, "...if we speak of the sanctification of work, God's presence is not only that of someone who is outside, to whom we offer what we do. God is with us and within us. We work with Christ and in Christ."

St. Josemaria often said, "The spirituality of Opus Dei is based on the sanctification of ordinary work." Thus, *Holiness Through Work* examines a topic central to Opus Dei and its mission. An essential read for anyone interested in following St. Josemaria's message, the book stems from a 2017 international conference on "The Heart of Work." To see a video by the same name featuring clips of St. Josemaria preaching on sanctifying work, go to <https://opusdei.org/en/video/the-heart-of-work-saint-s-josemaria-s-vision/>

## upcoming events

**Family Enrichment Married Love Program**  
For couples of all ages  
January 2021 – June 2021  
<https://www.walnutgrovecenter.org/family-enrichment>

**Family Enrichment First Letters Program**  
For parents with children ages 4 – 7  
January 2021 – August 2021  
<https://www.walnutgrovecenter.org/family-enrichment>

**Online Recollections**  
A monthly opportunity to withdraw and spend quality time with Christ Available at the St. Josemaria Institute website  
<https://stjosemaria.org/category/blog/day-of-recollection/> and at the Murray Hill Place website  
<https://www.mhplace.org/afternoon-of-recollection>

**Mary, Mother of Fairest Love**  
Let us continue to pray for the purchase of land and building of the Shrine of Mary, Mother of Fairest Love. The website is live! <https://www.fairestloveshrine.org>. Here is a link to a prayer card: [https://www.fairestloveshrine.org/prayer-card-1?fbclid=IwAR2B9M0Ljsbo-JvM9HErFDI6wQOLv\\_OBFbh-Kv5yUUVVrVWVl0a0Axyh4](https://www.fairestloveshrine.org/prayer-card-1?fbclid=IwAR2B9M0Ljsbo-JvM9HErFDI6wQOLv_OBFbh-Kv5yUUVVrVWVl0a0Axyh4). The shrine also has sites on Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/fairestloveshrine/about?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/fairestloveshrine/about?ref=page_internal) and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/fairestloveshrine>

### Reaping Treasure from the Opus Dei Website: To Know Him and To Know Yourself

The Opus Dei website, [www.opusdei.org](http://www.opusdei.org), is an extensive resource to help us grow in our spiritual lives and our relations with others, especially since COVID guidelines have restricted access to in-person gatherings. The site offers videos, articles, news, and testimonials on a variety of topics, all aimed at strengthening our relationship with Christ and with those around us.

In this issue, *WIT* explores "To Know Him and To Know Yourself," a series of articles on prayer. Along with scripture and the sacraments, prayer is one of the ways that we get to know and love Christ. The first article in the series, beguilingly titled "Stealing Christ's Heart," defines prayer as "a word that 'steals Christ's heart,'" inviting us to love Him and be loved by Him. Prayer can be the channel for receiving Christ's love, allowing Him to transform our lives. Other articles in the series examine learning to listen in prayer, following the saints' examples of perseverance in prayer, and using scripture to feed our prayer.

One article particularly relevant to the uncertainties surrounding COVID, "Fear Not, I Am with You," delves into the strength prayer can give us during difficulties. Jesus understands the trials we undergo; it is our trust in Him, placing our confidence in His feet, He will lead us through those struggles to a deeper union with Him. Prayer is less about our action, and more about opening ourselves to Christ so He can work in our souls, supporting us through adversity along the path to holiness.

Make time to peruse the articles in "To Know Him and To Know Yourself," remembering that prayer is always effective, and that especially during difficulties, it is one of our lifelines to Christ and His sanctifying grace. These articles and the other resources on the Opus Dei website can be just what we and our friends need to thrive spiritually in today's world.

## Enriching Family Life



With many schools still relying on Zoom, lots of jobs continuing to be remote, and all of us limiting our non-essential outings, let's face it: *family time is all the time*. But luckily, Family Enrichment of Los Angeles, a trusted resource for Christian families, is now offering two new courses: *The Married Love Program* and *The First Letters Program*.

If you feel like your marriage could use a bit of help from St. Valentine's intercession or want to strengthen your already solid bond with your spouse, then *The Married Love Program* is right up your alley. Classes take place from January to June of 2021 over Zoom, and you'll learn effective communication practices, the role of parents in the education of children, the foundation of family life, and so much more. From the comfort of your own home, you and your spouse can participate in monthly classes (only two hours each) covering practical and applicable subjects, all while forming strong communal ties with other couples dedicated to strengthening their marriages. Through analyzing case studies, identifying problems, and acknowledging what you can personally do to contribute to a lasting marriage, your understanding and devotion to your vocation of marriage will surely blossom.

For parents with children beyond their baby years who would like to teach them more than their pleases and thank yous, Family Enrichment's *First Letters Program* may be the answer to your prayers. This course is designed to help parents of children aged four to seven understand their child's personality and help develop their strengths, introduce and implement fundamental human virtues, and establish or redefine your family's teaching style. *The First Letters Program* holds sessions every third Sunday over Zoom, from January to August 2021. Although participants cannot meet in person, joining the program will introduce you to other families while strengthening your parental skills. Raising Catholic children in today's world can be tough, but Family Enrichment can make it easier.

For more information on Family Enrichment and to register for courses, go to <https://www.familyenrichmentla.com/>

~ Anna Livia Brady



## Las Vegas Mom on Parenting COVID-Style

Maria Ros, who recently moved from Europe to Las Vegas, shared her thoughts with *WIT* on parenting amidst COVID.

**How has COVID affected your experience as a parent?**  
For moms who stay at home, feeling lonely and tired is a big challenge. The best solution for that is solidarity with other moms – playdates and meeting other moms for prayer, either in person or using Messenger or Zoom. I think in the last months I have had deeper and longer conversations with other moms who shared their feelings with me than I would have had in normal times. Usually, everybody is busy-busy, and people don't pay attention to how other people struggle. During the pandemic, I have learned some very deep lessons about motherhood: its joys and its difficulties. I am grateful to other moms for that.

**What are struggles you have faced?**  
After we moved from the Europe to the United States, my husband lost his job. Being alone with two small children and pregnant with a third is challenging, but reaching out to other moms and trying to build new friendships has helped us. We are thankful to more experienced parents and families for their care and encouragement. Although we are fortunate to now be living in America, we are missing our families and grandparents back home.

**How do you feed your family spiritually?**  
It's difficult not being able to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist. For me, this time of pandemic is like a "dark night of the soul," to quote St. John of the Cross, but other people help me a lot by their support and prayers. We try to pray with our kids, and we were able to teach them prayers to Guardian Angel. The older one loves this prayer, and he can say it by himself.

**What has been the bright side of the pandemic?**  
I am learning new things, like how to make home-made bread, pizza and pasta! I've also learned a lot about raising kids from Opus Dei podcasts.

**How do you refresh yourself?**  
Playdates and outings with other moms and dads are the best! The Las Vegas Girls' Club has been meeting outdoors with the girls' families, so we are able to get together with other families. And the virtual day of recollection for moms gives me quiet time every month to replenish my spiritual energy and strengthen my friendship with God.

**What makes you smile?**  
Smiling is sometimes an effort, but it is worth it! I learned to smile for my beloved, beautiful children.

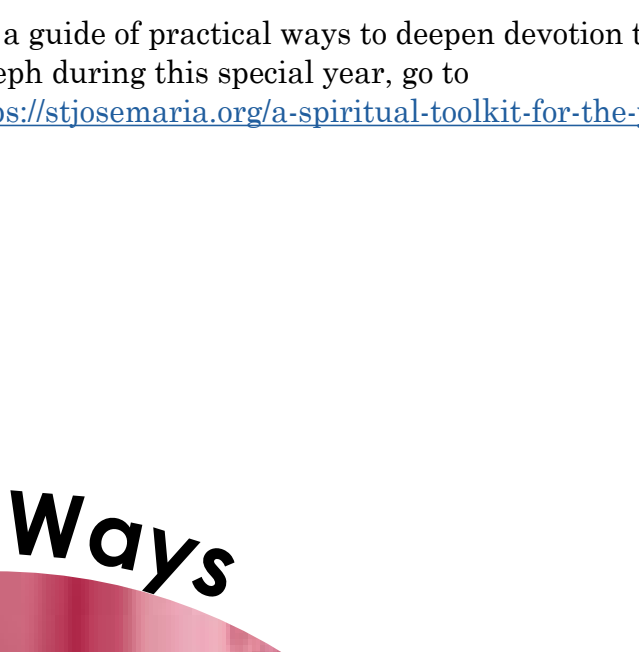
**What are the bright spots of your day?**  
Going outdoors, being at the park, saying the rosary with my husband, and meeting with our friends.

**Do you have any closing thoughts for our readers?**  
I think this is the most challenging time in our generation's life. Our kids reach out to us to seek the meaning of life. They want to live in joyful homes with energetic, smiling, and motivated parents. But Mom and Dad may be facing so many challenges now, like losing jobs or health insurance, or being far from family. We have to seek out new, deeper sources of HOPE, FAITH, and LOVE. We need to find HOPE in new kinds of activities and learn how to carry each other's burdens, as Jesus taught us. We are learning solidarity with other families through sharing experiences with them and trying to pray together.

~ Maria Ros

## Year of St. Joseph

In honor of the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being proclaimed patron of the Universal Church, Pope Francis announced a Year of St. Joseph beginning on December 8, 2020, and ending on December 8, 2021.



Observing that the contemporary world needs examples of true fatherhood, the Pope noted that St. Joseph was "courageously and firmly protective" in obeying the angels' command to take Mary as his wife. Describing St. Joseph as loving and tender, Pope Francis pointed out that the saint was also "a working father," reminding us that that work is one way that we are called to participate in God's work of salvation.

Pope Francis has long promoted devotion to St. Joseph. In a charming, oft-repeated anecdote, in 2015 he said, "On my table I have an image of St. Joseph sleeping. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church! Yes! We know that he can do that. So when I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath St. Joseph, so that he can dream about it! In other words, I tell him: pray for this problem!"

The Pope has granted a plenary indulgence to Catholics who recite approved prayers in honor of St. Joseph, especially on his feast days, as well as on the 19th of each month, and on Wednesdays, a day traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph.

For a guide of practical ways to deepen devotion to St. Joseph during this special year, go to <https://stjosemaria.org/a-spiritual-toolkit-for-the-year-of>

### Heroic Verse Out of the Prose of Each Day

Hannah Laurence, a wife and mother, seeks the heroic verse in ordinary life, in a much more literal way than most of us. Inspired by her everyday family life, Hannah writes poetry, capturing the beauty of words, ideas, and daily life.

#### Home-less

When you're tired, but you can't lie down.  
Where could you lie down?  
None of this is yours.  
The benches have "arm rests"  
Strategically spaced.  
The walls have eyes and call security.  
So many walls.  
It's the lack of place to rest your head.  
You will be like God.

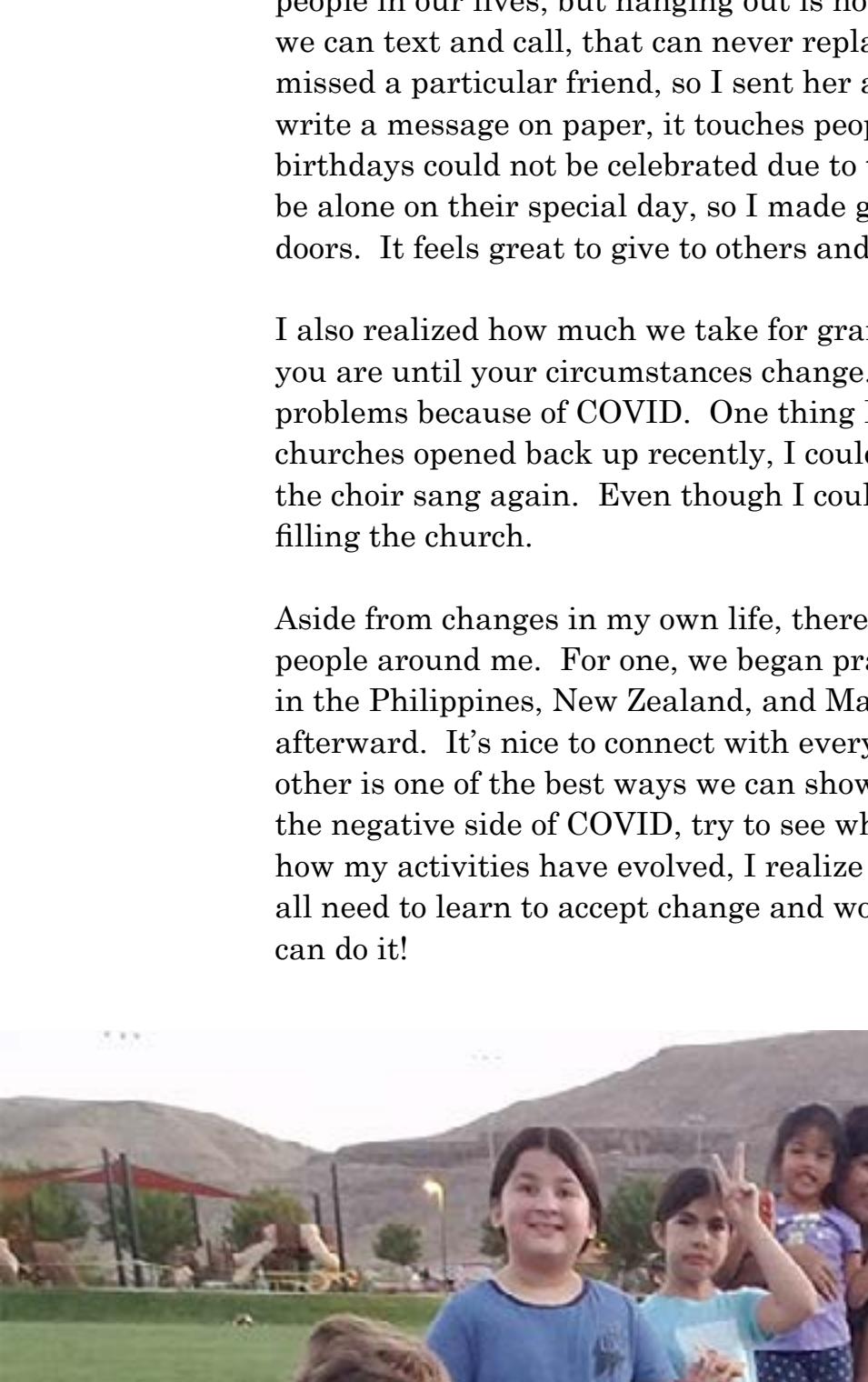
~ Hannah Laurence

For more of Hannah's poetry, go to <https://www.outoftheprose.com/>

## Ten Novel Ways to Deal With a Novel Virus

- 1 Write a play about the virus that wouldn't go away, featuring the roles of COVID, Hand Sanitizer, and Mask.
- 2 Spend an afternoon baking your favorite cookies and drop them off at the doors of elderly neighbors.
- 3 Embellish your face masks with whiskers, a moustache, or ferocious teeth.
- 4 Have a COVID scavenger hunt.
- 5 Set up a party art day to make cards and stationery, and use to write weekly to shut-in relatives and friends.
- 6 Tell COVID jokes – "Knock, knock... COVID who? COVID Dad. I can't come right now."
- 7 Sing songs adapted to COVID – "If you've sanitized and you know it, clap your hands..." or "You are my face mask, my only face mask. You make me happy during quarantine..."
- 8 Organize a family COVID talent show.
- 9 Teach your kids how to blow bubbles while they are washing their hands – With hands very wetly lathered, make a fist. Slowly relax the fist so you make a tube with your fingers. Gently blow through the tube to make a big bubble.
- 10 Say a family rosary and pray one Hail Mary for the victims of COVID in each of the 50 states.

### Girls' Club Corner



## Covid Through a Teen's Eyes

**Editor's note:** This issue's Girls' Club article is written by Kateri Peralta, an 8th-grader from Las Vegas. Kateri and her older sisters attended girls' clubs when they were younger. Now, the three sisters share running a club for younger girls.

When a disaster strikes, and the daily workflow gets interrupted, our first instinct is to worry, complain, and think negatively. However, there is no time for that. Instead of being pessimistic, we should pray and put our trust in God. Maybe there is a deeper meaning behind the quarantine. God may want to give you a message. Many people lead busy lives and have no time to rest, but now God has given us students all the time in the world.

A lot has changed in my life. For one thing, I started home schooling. Making that switch has let me work at my own pace and even ended up giving me more time for other things. I wanted to deepen my passions, so I started an art journal. As an artist, the best way for me to express myself is through my creativity. I'm also learning a new language, and I'm following a study routine for it that I made for myself.

As a teenager, being with people is crucial. Our friends are some of the closest people in our lives, but hanging out is not so convenient anymore. Although we can text and call, that can never replace physically being together. I really missed a particular friend, so I sent her a letter. When you take the time to write a message on paper, it touches people a lot more. I also had friends whose birthdays could not be celebrated due to the quarantine. I didn't want them to be alone on their special day, so I made gifts and dropped them off at their front doors. It feels great to give to others and put a smile on their faces.

I also realized how much we take for granted. You never know how fortunate you are until your circumstances change. So many people are facing great problems because of COVID. One thing I appreciate more now is Mass. When churches opened back up recently, I could not help but smile under my mask as the choir sang again. Even though I couldn't see people's faces, I could sense joy filling the church.

Aside from changes in my own life, there are also positive transformations in people around me. For one, we began praying the rosary with our relatives in the Philippines, New Zealand, and Macau, and sometimes, we have games afterward. It's nice to connect with everyone and bond again. Supporting each other is one of the best ways we can show we care. Instead of concentrating on the negative side of COVID, try to see what good has come out of it. When I look how my activities have evolved, I realize that the good outweighs the bad. We all need to learn to accept change and work with it – if we help each other, we can do it!

~ Kateri Peralta, 8th grade

