



The Open Door

Open wide the door to Christ! - St. John Paul the Great

MARCH 2019

VOLUME 2.6

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"We exist to joyfully worship God and carry out the mission of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit." - Mission Statement of Christ the King



Time doesn't heal all wounds

Time passes, it's true, but in order for time to be healing, other things need to happen, too

After the births of our first two children, I miscarried our third child, Olivia Benedicta, at about 12 weeks. We found out that she had died on our fifth wedding anniversary.

About seven months later, I became pregnant again. Everything seemed fine until the day of John Michael's birth when he died in my womb shortly before delivery.

Too often we don't allow ourselves or other people

the time to heal from emotional trauma—and I do say *trauma* because that is the best word to describe it. I don't agree, though, that "time heals all wounds." We've all heard of people who bury their hurts; they don't seek help and nothing improves or heals. Time passes, it's true, but the hurt gets worse and worse, often leaving lasting damage from bitterness, anger, and even a desire for revenge. In the years since then, I've

learned that, in order for time to be healing, other things need to happen, too.

Progressing slowly is normal

When you lose a loved one through death or undergo some other emotional suffering, consider yourself as being in the hospital ICU. If you had a deep physical wound requiring surgery, you would expect healing to take time and to follow a progression: a hospital stay,

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The entire life of a good Christian is in fact an exercise in holy desire. You do not yet see what you long for, but the very act of desiring prepares you, so that when he comes you may see and be utterly satisfied.

Exercising holy desire



Editor's note: This month we have a "guest columnist," St. Augustine of Hippo. The following article is taken from the Tractates on the first letter of John. It is the second reading in the Office of Readings for Friday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time.

We have been promised that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. By these words, the tongue has done its best; now we must apply the meditation of the heart. Although they are the words of Saint John, what are they in comparison with the divine reality? And how can we, so greatly inferior to John in merit, add anything of our own? Yet we have received, as John has told us, an anointing by the Holy One which teaches us inwardly more than our tongue can speak. Let us turn to this source of knowledge, and because at present you cannot see,

Simply by making us wait [God] increases our desire, which in turn enlarges the capacity of our soul, making it able to receive what is to be given to us.

make it your business to desire the divine vision.

The entire life of a good Christian is in fact an exercise of holy desire. You do not yet see what you long for, but the very act of desiring prepares you, so that when he comes you may see and be utterly satisfied.

Suppose you are going to fill some holder or container, and you know you will be given a large amount. Then you set about stretching your sack or wine skin or whatever it is. Why? Because you know the quantity you will have to

put in it and your eyes tell you there is not enough room. By stretching it, therefore, you increase the capacity of the sack, and this is how God deals with us. Simply by making us wait he increases our desire, which in turn enlarges the capacity of our soul, making it able to receive what is to be given to us.

So, my brethren, let us continue to desire, for we shall be filled. Take note of Saint Paul stretching as it were his ability to receive what is to come: *Not that I have already obtained this, he said, or am made perfect.* Brethren, I do not consider that I have already obtained it.

We might ask him, "If you have not yet obtained it, what are you doing in this life?" This one thing I do, answers Paul, *forgetting what lies behind, and stretching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the prize to which I am called in the life above.* Not only did Paul say he stretched forward, but he also declared that he pressed on toward a chosen goal. He realized, in fact, that he was still short of receiving *what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.*

Such is our Christian life. By desiring heaven we exercise

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Time doesn't heal all wounds

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followed by a rehab facility, then eventually back home for more resting, healing, and perhaps physical therapy. Emotional wounds also take time to heal.

Be patient with yourself and with the grieving process

Give yourself permission to grieve and do it as honestly as you can. If you are feeling sad, let yourself be sad. If you are angry, acknowledge that. You can even shout your anger to God; He's big enough to handle it! If you don't feel anything at all or feel numb, that's ok, too.

A professional counselor is worth it; keep looking until you find a good one

When grief hits, it usually hits us at our weakest links. For me that was in the parenting of my other two children. It was so incredibly hard to deal with any kind of noise or stress. I felt like my whole being as a mother was under attack and my life was spinning out of control. There was a huge black cloud hanging over me for what seemed like the longest time.

I finally decided to seek counseling. The first lady only listened to me. She gave me no homework, nothing to "hang my hat on," no real help or direction. I had to give myself permission to "fire" her and try again.

Thankfully, I found a good therapist who also listened well, but gave me lots to think and pray about and work on, little by little, step by step. It was worth every penny!

There are things that refuse to be violated by speed, that demand at least their proper time of growth...

—Caryll Houselander

Let the Lord into each and every part of your suffering and your "story"

It was already natural for me to include the Lord in whatever I was doing and to talk to Him about life, so when my son died, I was able to turn to Him, beg for His help and tell Him what was on my heart day after day. Even when I was too numb from shock or too exhausted from crying to pray, I knew He was there somewhere.

During that first year, the Lord brought me back through many of the unique and particular moments of my son's death and started me on the road toward healing with each one. Like the three doctors staring me in the face in that dark room, telling me that they could find no heartbeat on the ultrasound, with that odd, worried look on their faces because I was just staring back at them, no emotion whatsoever on my face, waiting for a sign from me to show them that I comprehended their words... The Lord brought that memory back to me one



morning, and it was very clear to me that I needed to enter into that memory more deeply. I gave myself permission to do it, and I was in a safe place to experience that emotion and wrestle with it. I learned later that a friend was at home praying for me just then, and she sensed that I was going through this. That was a grace, a real gift from the good Lord Who wanted to heal that specific memory.

So many more of those experiences followed throughout that first year and beyond. Accept those. Affirm your story. There is no detail that the Lord does not know and care about.

Find meaning in the midst of your suffering

Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the Nazi death camps, discovered a secret to suffering well: find meaning in it. I am not saying that you have to find out why this tragedy happened to you. Rather, ask the Lord to make something about your loved one's life or the situation meaningful.

A seed contains all the life and loveliness of the flower, but it contains it in a little hard black pip of a thing which even the glorious sun will not enliven unless it is buried under the earth. There must be a period of gestation before anything can flower.

—Caryll Houselander

Quotes taken from *The Reed of God* by Caryll Houselander, available from Ave Maria Press. For more information, go to www.avemariapress.com.

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If only those who suffer would be patient with their early humiliations and realize that Advent is not only the time of growth but also of darkness and hiding and waiting, they would trust, and trust rightly, that Christ is growing in their sorrow.

—Caryll Houselander.



Susan Perrier is Assistant Director of Youth Discipleship at Christ the King.

Time doesn't heal all wounds

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Within days of John Michael dying in my womb and then being delivered, my breast milk started coming in; soon I was extremely engorged. The nurses told me to put cabbage leaves on my breasts to suppress the milk. I thought to myself, "You have got to be kidding. That milk belongs to my son, and you are telling me to get rid of it?! No way!" I was bound and determined to find a way to donate that milk.

I found out about Bronson Hospital's milk bank in Kalamazoo, and within two months I pumped and donated 90 pounds of breast milk. I did not want a single drop of that milk to go to waste because I knew it belonged to my son. Every woman has to decide what is best in her situation, but for me that process gave me a glimmer of hope dealing with something that could easily have led to despair instead.



As I have continued over time to deal with my grief, I have found some passages in Caryll Houselander's *The Reed of God* to be very helpful. She relates to the topic of patience and waiting during sorrow to the season of Advent because this was the time when Jesus was growing inside of Mary.

Mary learned the fruitful art of quiet meditation during what otherwise may have seemed like a time of darkness and

worry. Houselander mentions that Christ was shining in that darkness. That very beautiful image really helped me in my grief.

I also appreciated the strong message that it's ok to feel like you are a failure and that there couldn't possibly be a light of hope at the end of the dark tunnel. Yet Houselander doesn't leave you there without hope. She points you

*As we wait for healing,
we allow the Lord
to visit us,
station by station,
memory by memory,
pain by pain.*

to the work of patience in which you first give yourself permission to be in that dark place. You then invite the Lord into it and hang on through the often bumpy ride as He sheds light and brings hope.

Think of what we do during Lent: we journey with the Lord through all His sufferings. We often meditate on them one by one, station by station in the Way of the Cross. Or we pray through the sorrows one by one in the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. We experience blessings from meeting Him in all those places.

I came to think of the season of grief—this waiting for sorrow to bear fruit as Houselander writes—as sort of a Lenten meditation in reverse. As we wait for healing, we allow the Lord to visit *us*, station by station, memory by memory, pain by pain. We may stumble around in the darkness, perhaps not able to even see Him there at first. Then gradually, as we get closer to Easter, we begin to see the light of hope emerge. He is the one Who, as the Apostle John describes, "loved us to the end," to His last drop of blood and last breath. But death was clearly not the *lasting* end. Easter morning came and He is still here loving us.

My son is in Heaven now and his presence there beckons me to follow him there. Easter joy and Easter hope mean that we will be together forever. That is the ultimate healing. But as C.S. Lewis aptly states, "The cross comes *before* the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning." John Michael died on a Monday morning. I am still carrying that cross but I have found much help to do so along the way. And I eagerly look for the next Sunday of eternity to roll around and the crown that surely awaits. —Susan Perrier

“Poster kids for late marriage”

After 10 years of friendship, the Barehams married in their late 50s for the first time

Ginny and John Bareham say, “We sometimes think of ourselves as poster kids for late marriage. We were married in our late 50s, both for the first time.” We invited them to share their story with us.

Ginny I grew up in a time when life's end-goal was to be happily married and have a family. My family was a traditional Midwest family. I was the middle child with two sisters, which was not always easy. My parents were devout Catholics who attended church every Sunday and sent their children to Catechism classes. The small town we lived in was mostly Protestant, and they were not very tolerant of Catholics.

Most women of this time got married and lived happily ever after. If a woman chose to have a career, she would be guided into being a teacher, a nurse, or a secretary.

I loved children and thought my vocation was to be a mother. My mother described me as a baby magnet: If there was a baby in the room I would find it. In fact, today you could say that I am a “baby whisperer.”

I turned to nursing as a career choice and left for the big city of Detroit to educate myself in a Catholic all-girls school. Not much of a chance of meeting anyone there. After graduating as a nurse, I began working with mentally-challenged kids in the State Home for Retarded Children. I worked full-time and



John and Ginny Bareham dated other people when they were younger, but nothing ever “clicked.” Then after 10 years of friendship, they realized that they had something more and wanted more.

“By this time I had realized that the family I desired was not going to happen. With the help of God, my work kept me happy. It is not that I did not do some dating; I just could not find an individual who felt as strongly about Christ and the Church as I did. Without this, life was not going to be what I needed.”

—Ginny Bareham

attended college, hoping to meet “Mister Right.”

I moved to Ann Arbor to work with children at the University Hospital. I believe God was telling me that I could have a hand in many children's lives this way, even though I did

not have any of my own. To better help parents with their children and parenting, I returned to school and became a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. It was my way of getting my “baby dose” everyday.

By this time I had realized that the family I desired was not going to happen. With the help of God, my work kept me happy. It is not that I did not do some dating; I just could not find an individual who felt as strongly about Christ and the Church as I did. Without this, life was not going to be what I needed. I felt God was saying to me that I could be perfectly happy serving my extended family and the families in the community.

The realization that I would not have children was difficult, but I also remember

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"At that point, I more or less put [marriage] on the back burner. ... I don't know if I looked at it as waiting on the Lord, because sometimes that just feels like nothing is ever going to happen."

—John Bareham

"Poster kids for late marriage"

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telling my mother I would rather be unmarried than be in a bad marriage. Sometimes that is the only thing that kept me from saying, "What is wrong with me?"

John My parents were churchgoing Lutherans, and most of my extended family were Christian. I had good role models. As an only child, I was quite spoiled, although at the time I just thought that was normal.

As a young man, I supposed I would get married one day, but it was not an urgent goal at the time. I recall even then some family members referring to me as "the old bachelor." In my middle years, I became more interested in the possibility of marriage. There was some dating, but nothing really clicked.

At that point, I more or less put it on the back burner. I loved my work, so I poured myself into it. I don't know if I looked at it as waiting on the Lord, because sometimes that just feels like nothing is ever going to happen. In my late forties, I returned to Ann Arbor to live closer to my aging family.

Ginny I was a friend of John's mother for over 20 years before John returned to Ann Arbor. She worked with me at the University Hospital, and I suppose I met John sometime during those 20

years. His mother would invite me to come to dinner at her house when she knew he would be there. These dinners became very frequent once John moved back to Ann Arbor. (That did get old after a while.)

John and I began talking and spending time with each other, and we realized how much we like the same things.

We have been married now for 15 years and continue to feel very blessed to have each other.

We had a strong faith in God, myself as a Catholic and John as a Lutheran. At the time, I was struggling to find a parish that would meet my needs. I wanted a place where the congregation was seeking God and not attending church because they were going to "burn in Hell" otherwise. It was during this time that John encouraged me to "try on" different parishes in the area.

We both love the outdoors. We are not athletic, but enjoy being in nature, so we began taking long walks in the arboretum. We also have a love for classical music and began to enjoy listening to recordings or live concerts.

I was not interested in marriage at this point and felt my life was good and successful. John and I continued to grow in our relationship.

After 10 years of friendship, we realized we had more and we wanted more. I realized I had met a person with many great qualities, including the Christian background to help this relationship grow. We began to explore this possibility with our friends and the church. We knew the challenges would be great, but with God as our senior partner we would be okay.

We had premarital counseling from both of our churches. I remember how scary that was. What would I do if the churches did not think we were a match for each other? But by this time I was determined not to live the rest of my life alone.

We have been married now for 15 years and continue to feel very blessed to have each other. We continue to grow in our relationship with God by attending church (both at St Luke's Lutheran and CTk) weekly. We attempt to read Scripture daily and pray for the people in our lives. I believe we are grateful every day for the lives we have led and that which is to come.

A hope almost abandoned

Month after month for seven years, we went through a vicious cycle of renewed hope followed by crushing disappointment

Emily and I have been married for over 13 years. At the beginning of our marriage, life was busy. We felt it would be prudent to postpone growing our family (using approved NFP practices) until we were better grounded.

Fast-forward a few years, and we were ready! We figured we would simply stop “avoiding” pregnancy and our family would grow in no time. This laissez-faire approach continued for a couple years without netting any changes in our family size.

Eventually, we decided, “Ok, now let’s really try.” We started using NFP to achieve pregnancy rather than avoid it. We also enlisted prayer support from our close family and friends. Month after month we had joyful anticipation that this was the month our family would grow! Unfortunately, these attempts proved as unsuccessful as all the previous ones, even though we were intentionally trying.

Confused and moderately concerned, we decided to seek professional help. We started with seeing a traditional OB/GYN. When he was unable to pinpoint any issues, we tried a whole lot of different things: a fertility specialist at U of M (who tried to make us feel guilty for refusing IVF and AI); Eastern medicine, including acupuncture and herbs; an anti-inflammatory diet; changing our cleaning supplies and personal care products to ones that were “toxin-free”; a Certified Nutrition



Emily and Jeff Bachelor welcomed their daughter Mia Hope into their family last September after years of dealing with infertility.

We were despondent, exhausted, and unmeasurably sad. ... We had all but abandoned the hope that our family would grow beyond a family of two.

Response specialist and a thyroid specialist, both of whom had Emily boost her diet with extra supplements and vitamins; and a NaPro Technology specialist, who ended up performing two surgeries that diagnosed and removed Emily’s endometriosis.

Each new venture brought a renewed hope, followed by crushing disappointment. Month after month for seven years we went through that vicious cycle. We were despondent, exhausted, and unmeasurably sad. Eventually, we came to a place where we had all but abandoned the hope that our family would grow beyond a family of two.

Battered and beaten, we recognized that both of us needed to ask forgiveness for our frustration, anger, doubt, and blaming God for our sorrows rather than trusting Him unconditionally. Early in December 2017, we made our way to the Sacrament of

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A hope almost abandoned

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Reconciliation. During Emily's Confession, as she discussed the trials of the past 7+ years, Fr. Mathias Thelen asked if he could pray over her for healing. (Who's going to say "no" to that?) While we certainly appreciated the prayers, this long and tiresome journey included literally countless prayers from countless faith-filled people. And though we always try to have expectant faith, our experiences to date made it extremely hard to trust that these, or any of the previous prayers, would have any effect.



*We knew she would be a
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Well, they did. On September 25, 2018, our family of two became a family of three! We gave our daughter the name Mia Hope – "Mia" as a nod to the Blessed Mother and "Hope" because she inspired a deeper hope in Emily and me and we knew she would be a source of hope to many who have yet to be blessed with the desire of their hearts. Thanks be to God for His faithfulness and perfect timing! — Jeff Bachelor

*Hope, O my soul, hope.
You know neither the day nor the hour.
Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly,
even though your impatience makes
doubtful what is certain,
and turns a very short time into a long one.*

*Dream that the more you struggle,
the more you prove the love that you bear your God,
and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved,
in a happiness and rapture that can never end.*

St. Teresa of Jesus (Avila)

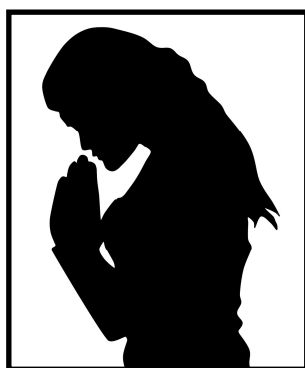
Open to God's love

I had chosen to be a “safe charismatic,” not realizing that the box that I had put the Holy Spirit into was blocking me from His love

I was blessed to grow up in the charismatic renewal here at Christ the King and fell in love with Jesus at a young age. However, as I became a young adult, I decided that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and praying over people were way too messy and emotional for me. I experienced the Holy Spirit powerfully as a teenager, but it felt too unpredictable. It just looks a lot more dignified (and safe) to kneel and pray with hands folded than it does to be weeping on the floor.

So I chose what I justified as being more mature and dignified over the unpredictable fire of the Holy Spirit. For the most part, I was what I called a “safe charismatic.” I would raise my hands and pray in tongues, but I actively avoided being prayed over or praying over others. It had too much potential to get messy, and it felt extremely awkward to me. Essentially, I loved everything the Holy Spirit did... as long as He stayed in the safe box I had for Him.

Then, I came to a point several years ago where the Christian life seemed like a lie. There was no joy and no lightness in my heart. I would read Jesus' promises of His yoke being easy, and of peace and complete joy, and I would feel so angry. Here I had loved and served Him all my life, and I was anxious, burdened, and captive to my



*It was like I hit a wall;
I felt there was a barrier.
I did not realize it was
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fears. I felt a growing hopelessness in my soul.

I began to actively seek a renewed spiritual life. At a certain point, though, it was like I hit a wall; I felt there was a barrier. I did not realize it was one that I had constructed myself.

At the 2018 Encounter Conference, which due to

providential circumstances ended up being hosted here at Christ the King, there was a time when everyone surged forward and broke into incredibly joyful worship, but I could not make my legs go forward. I stood in my pew and tried to convince myself that it was just as good as being up there in the midst of the celebration, but I did not really deceive myself. I had to acknowledge that I was bound by my inability to freely respond to the Holy Spirit. The conference was amazing, and I greatly regained hope, but lasting joy still seemed elusive.

Through an unexpected series of events, I became a student at the Encounter School of Supernatural Ministry this past fall. There, every Monday evening, I am being led and freed in beautiful ways. The Father has been breaking into my heart. I realized that in my attempt to create a nice, safe, and mature environment for my relationship with God, I had placed a box around me that was blocking me from experiencing the true life and love that He had for me.

Through the School of Ministry, Upper Room, and other encounters, as the Father has been touching me, I have seen Him punch holes

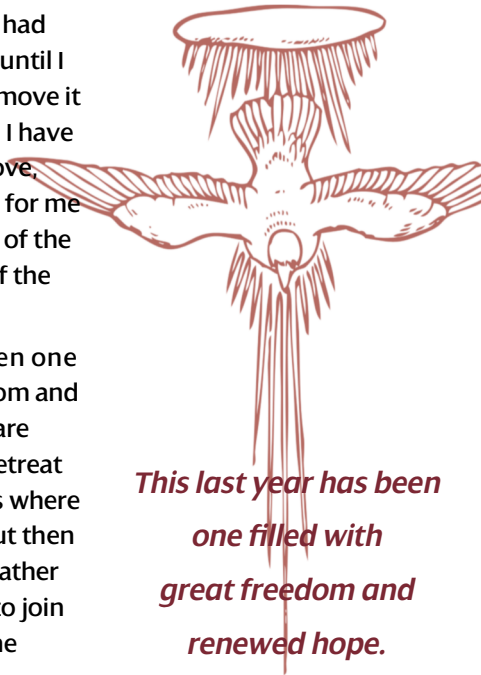
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Open to God's love

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through the box that I had placed around myself until I allowed Him to just remove it altogether. As a result, I have experienced the life, love, and joy the Father has for me and a new outpouring of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in my life.

This last year has been one filled with great freedom and renewed hope. There are times when I start to retreat back to the safe places where I can be in control... but then I look up and see the Father gently beckoning me to join Him and experience the



fullness of life He has for me. No, it is not always neat, tidy, or predictable, but I can say that my heart is in the midst of a transformation that has brought a deeper and abiding peace and a greater openness and confidence to love and minister to those around me than I ever thought possible. I am so grateful to the Father for the work He is doing. — Amy Randolph



Amy (Graulich) Randolph and her family were founding members of Christ the King. She and her husband Jeff have been married 22 years and have seven children.

Exercising holy desire

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the powers of our soul. Now this exercise will be effective only to the extent that we free ourselves from desires leading to infatuation with this world. Let me return to the example I have already used, of filling an empty container. God means to fill each of you with what is good; so cast out what is bad! If he wishes to fill you with honey and you are full of sour wine, where is the honey to go? The vessel must be emptied of its contents and then be cleansed. Yes, it must be cleansed even if you have to work hard and scour it. It

We may go on speaking figuratively of honey, gold or wine—but whatever we say cannot express the reality we are to receive. The name of that reality is God.

must be made fit for the new thing, whatever it may be.

We may go on speaking figuratively of honey, gold

or wine – but whatever we say we cannot express the reality we are to receive. The name of that reality is God. But who will claim that in that one syllable we utter the full expanse of our heart's desire? Therefore, whatever we say is necessarily less than the full truth. We must extend ourselves toward the measure of Christ so that when he comes he may fill us with his presence. *Then we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* — St. Augustine of Hippo



St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), bishop and doctor of the Church, was converted to the Faith through the prayers of his mother, St. Monica, and the ministry of St. Ambrose of Milan. His many writings explaining and defending the truths of Christianity continue to guide Christians today. His feast day is August 28.

Artwork: *Saint Augustine* by Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674). From Wikimedia Commons.

Schedule of Major Events

- 2/24; 3/1: Start Week for Sunday & Friday Winter Alpha
- 3/1-3: A1:8 High School Retreat
- 3/2: First Saturday Rosary
- 3/6: Ash Wednesday
- 3/8, 22: Upper Room
- 3/10: Daylight Saving Time begins
- 3/13: Start week for Young Adult Winter Alpha
- 3/16: St. Patrick's Day Party
- 3/23: Fuel Retreat
- 3/29-30: CTK Men's Retreat

For more information about these and other events, check the bulletin or go to www.ctkcc.net.

MAJOR EVENTS—MARCH 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Feb. 24	25	26	27	28	Mar. 1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Apr. 1	2	3	4	5	6

Save the Dates!

Holy Week and Triduum of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Sunday, April 14, through Sunday, April 21
Liturgy schedule to be announced soon.



Confirmation Mass with Bishop Earl Boyea

Thursday evening, May 9
Please pray for our students as they prepare to be sealed with the Holy Spirit!



Pentecost Vigil Mass

Saturday evening, June 8
Make plans now to join us for this awesome celebration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, both 2,000 years ago and today!



Check future bulletins for more details about these and other great events!



Christ the King Catholic Church

4000 Ave Maria Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
734-665-5040
www.ckkcc.net
[Facebook.com/ckkcc](https://www.facebook.com/ckkcc)

Senior Leadership Team

Fr. Ed Fride, Pastor: fr.ed@ckkcc.net
Ken Bogan: kbogan@ckkcc.net
Sr. Dorcee Clarey, SGL: srdorcee@att.net
Dcn. Dan Foley: dcndan@aol.com
John Hoving: jhoving@ckkcc.net
Bill Pressprich: wpressprich@comcast.net

Deacons

Dcn. Dan Foley: dcndan@aol.com
Dcn. Gerry Holowicki: dcngerry@ckkcc.net
Dcn. John Ozog: dcnjohn@ckkcc.net
Dcn. Larry Randolph: dcnlarry@ckkcc.net
Dcn. Lou Russello: dcnlou@ckkcc.net
Dcn. Wayne Slomiany: dcnwayne@ckkcc.net

Parish Pastoral Council

Fr. Ed Fride, President: fr.ed@ckkcc.net
Bill Pressprich, Chair: wpressprich@comcast.net
Veronica Cherney Betty Meredith
Pete Cooney Greg Stout
Christian Fenton Colleen Vermeulen
Nuala Holowicki

Newsletter Contributors

Theresa Hofer, Editor: thofer@ckkcc.net
St. Augustine of Hippo Susan Perrier
Jeff & Emily Bachelor Amy Randolph
Ginny & John Bareham

Coming in future issues...

- The Resurrection Power of Jesus
- The Blessed Virgin Mary
- Arts and the Church

Look for this and more in future issues of

The Open Door

Parish Staff

Dorothy Babcock, Facilities Manager: dbabcock@ckkcc.net
Ken Bogan, Director of Operations: kbogan@ckkcc.net
Martin Doman, Director of Worship: mdoman@ckkcc.net
Jessica Dudek, Director of Evangelization: jdudek@ckkcc.net
Caroline Gambale-Dirkes, Upper Room Coordinator: cdirkes@ckkcc.net
Rosalia Guza, Clerical Assistant: youthdiscipleship@ckkcc.net
Aimée Godfrey, Director of Adult Discipleship: agodfrey@ckkcc.net
Theresa Hofer, Communications Coordinator: thofer@ckkcc.net
Bruce Hohnke, Maintenance
Cathi Horning, Janitor
John Hoving, Director of Youth Discipleship: jhoving@ckkcc.net
Peter Kadeli, Choir Director: pkadeli@ckkcc.net
Tirienne Leonard, Assistant to the Director of Worship:
tleonard@ckkcc.net
Sharon Messiter, Parish Secretary: smessiter@ckkcc.net
Susan Perrier, Assistant Director of Youth Discipleship, sperrier@ckkcc.net
Lauren Sauter, Youth Discipleship Administrative Assistant:
lsauter@ckkcc.net
Hannah Stroup, Clerical Assistant: hstroup@ckkcc.net
Mark Zielman, Liturgical Coordinator: mzielman@ckkcc.net

We welcome your comments. Please send them to Theresa Hofer at thofer@ckkcc.net.

The Open Door is the monthly newsletter of Christ the King Catholic Church.

*They who wait for the LORD shall
renew their strength;
they shall mount up with
wings like eagles...*



Isaiah 40:31