



# The Open Door

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

JULY - AUGUST 2022

VOLUME 5.6

"It takes a Church 2  
family..."

God makes all 5  
things new

An epic love 7  
story scavenger  
hunt

"Lazarus, come 9  
forth!"

Calendar 11



After Debbie Krainski was baptized and confirmed at the Easter Vigil last April, she and her husband, Kamil, entered the Sacrament of Marriage, while their daughter, Claire, gave an enthusiastic "thumbs up."

## "And a little child shall lead them..."

*The Krainskis' young daughter plays a big role in bringing them into the Church*

**Please describe your backgrounds and faith experience, if any.**

**Kamil** I was born in Poland in 1979 and was raised Catholic "by default." Ninety percent of Poles are Catholic; the Catholic Church kept the resistance to the Communist regime alive. My family moved from Poland to Hamtramck when I was 14.

Around age 12, I went through a rebellious stage. I had all the answers. I thought that there was some-

thing fundamentally wrong with the Church, not realizing that it was something fundamentally wrong with people.

**Debbie** I grew up in the Monroe area. My dad was Baptist, my mother Presbyterian. Neither was deeply rooted in the faith. As my sister and I got older, Mom started sensing something missing, so she took us to a Presbyterian church for about three to four years. My older sister got baptized and confirmed, and I was about to

start the process for getting baptized and confirmed when a controversy surrounding the pastor erupted that resulted in the elders of the church firing him. Mom really liked him, so we stopped going to church.

As a young adult, I started studying the Baha'i faith. I appreciated that faith, but I realized that it wasn't part of my culture, and community was very important to me.

Around that time, I realized that all the real friends that I had

"We exist to joyfully worship God and raise up Spirit-filled disciples." - Mission Statement of Christ the King

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*We must do all we can to ensure that all our folks are choosing the path of being an intentional disciple and to support Catholic family life in the heart of vibrant parish life.*

## "It takes a Church family..."

by Fr. Ed Fride



**Recently, I was reading** a book concerning the appropriate ways that we need to respond to a culture that no longer shares many of our values as followers of the Lord Jesus. It cited some comments by an Orthodox Jewish rabbi in that regard.

In introducing him, the book noted that the members of the Jewish community "have faced horrifying attempts over millennia to destroy their families and communities." The rabbi's advice to Christians was striking: that they need a "roll-up your sleeves dedication to create deep structures of community" and a "laser-like focus and dedication to seeing themselves as the next link in the chain of the Christian story. That sense of urgency, making family come first in your life, strikes me as one starting point and foundational requirement for faithful Christians."

It was interesting to read that as I was reviewing some of the articles for this issue of *The Open Door*. So many of the authors speak of the impact that other members of the Catholic community have had on their lives. The comments on the Easter Vigil

reminded me of what a wonderful celebration it was and how touched I was to witness the joy and encouragement that folks received during the Vigil as they received the different Sacraments and were welcomed into full Communion with His Church.

I recently spent the week at the Pine Hills Catholic Boys Camp, Catholic for the first time this year. To watch as the young men on the staff ministered to the campers was a great delight. To see how many of the campers were actively engaged in receiving the sacraments was particularly encouraging. On average, 50-60 campers attended an optional Mass every day, and Fr. Jim Rolph and I heard 2.5 hours of Confessions during the prayer meeting Tuesday! But, in large part, they came open to Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, in the heart of the Church because they come from families that are choos-

ing to live that reality. Similarly, we were once again mobbed by a host of kids as the Vacation Bible School took place, kids hungry for more and adults willing to serve them. Also the fruit of family life!

**As the book** I was reading and many other "signs of the times" indicators have pointed out, support for Christianity and even for the realities of basic family life are eroding and will probably continue to do so. What is our response?

A new phrase is becoming popular: "intentional disciple." I must admit, I was not a fan at first, because the phrase should be redundant—i.e., what does it mean to be a disciple but to intentionally follow the Lord Jesus? However, the fact that the "intentional" modifier is really necessary these days says something about the actual situation for so many Christians.

So we must do all that we can to ensure that all our folks are choosing the path of being an intentional disciple and to support Catholic family life in the heart of vibrant parish life. In that way, we can do what the rabbi suggested and make sure our kids are becoming that "next link in the chain of the Christian story."



Fr. Ed Fride is Pastor of Christ the King.

Image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay, pixabay.com.

## “And a little child shall lead them...”

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were Catholic. Catholics have a better understanding of community.

Kamil and I met in 2006 and got married in 2013. Claire was born in July 2015.

**Kamil** My mother was pushing for Claire to get baptized. I was resisting because I was still not accepting the Catholic Church.

**Debbie** I said, “So, if you don’t believe anything happens, what does it hurt to pour a little water over her?” ☺

**Kamil** So we agreed to have her baptized. She was baptized at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Sterling Heights in December 2017.

**Debbie** When Claire was a little older, we started looking at preschool options, more to help her make friends and to find a community to connect with. The first two preschools that we tried were good, but they lacked community cohesiveness. So in February 2020 we signed her up for Fall 2020 kindergarten in the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Then Covid happened. When school was getting ready to start, we were given a number of choices for how to “go” to school. We decided to try the full virtual “Zoom” option.

Zoom school was a blessing in disguise. I was able to see what was happening in the classroom. The underlying philosophy of the curriculum became apparent to me, and it

was diametrically opposed to my beliefs about truth, beauty, love, and respect. The whole experience made Kamil more receptive to alternatives to the public school system.

**What happened next?**

**Debbie** In May 2021, Claire went to the First Communion for her god-sister. Kamil and I didn’t think that they were still doing the whole white dress and veil thing, but they were.

Afterward, Claire said, “I’m so jealous. I want that.” I asked her, “Do you just want a party with a fancy dress, because if that’s what you want, we can do that next week. But if you want First Communion, it will take two years.” She thought for a moment and said, “I want *that*,” meaning what her god-sister had just had, First Communion.

In July 2021, we had a 4<sup>th</sup> of July party on our property near Island Lake. We invited our neighbors, which included the Servants of the Word, whose house, it turned out, is right across the street. I was talking to Stu Ferguson about our efforts to find the right schooling option for Claire. He suggested that I talk to Stephanie Smith, who teaches at several of the homeschool co-ops in the area.

I had been attracted to homeschooling, although initially Kamil wasn’t in favor of it. I realized, though, that even though I could teach my child, I couldn’t provide her with a community.

After I spoke with Stephanie, she said, “I think that the Christ the King co-op might be a good fit for you.” She directed me to Kathleen VanderVeen. When we spoke, Kathleen said that they were full and normally wouldn’t accept anyone else, but she thought that they could fit in one child from one family.

**Kamil** At this point, some things had been shifting in my head. It wasn’t one thing. For example, I started watching some fascinating YouTube videos by Jordan Peterson on Bible stories. They made me look at religion in a way that I hadn’t before.

I then started looking at evolution, science, from different angles. I became more open to things. I started seeing the same destructive patterns in society as a whole that I’d seen as a child in Poland. I started realizing how wrong I had been on so many levels.

**How did you get involved with Christ the King?**

**Debbie** I couldn’t in good conscience just drop off Claire and let her continue her journey as a Catholic while I stayed behind where I was. Where my child goes, I go. I’m all in. I think, too, by that time I had seen enough small miracles—timing things, Claire’s response to her friend’s First Communion, getting into the co-op, etc.—that I was getting the idea of where we were heading.

**Kamil** We also were visiting a

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Debbie Krainski

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## "And a little child shall lead them..."

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Debbie Krainski

*If you are the best version of yourself, other people will notice and you will give them hope.*

Kamil Krainski

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variety of churches to see what we would want to pursue. We started coming here in July. There was something different in this community, something about the people. We could feel it in the people here. Random people would come up and talk to us. They're walking the talk. They're part of something that they truly believe in.

**What was your experience of RCIA?**

**Kamil** The personalized RCIA was great. We met every week with Chris and Mary Salata. They spent a lot of time with us and really became friends.

**Debbie** I met Ethel Fill [her godmother] the very first day of the co-op, and we became good friends. What an amazing, generous, and strong person Ethel is! I am truly blessed to spend time with her.

**What was the reaction of your family and friends to your decision to become Catholic?**

**Kamil** My mom was relieved and happy.

**Debbie** My family is not particularly religious. They just want everyone to do what makes them happy.

**You entered the Church at the Easter Vigil. Is there anything that stands out for you about that day?**

*There was something different in this community, something about the people.*

*We could feel it in the people here. Random people would come up and talk to us. They're walking the talk. They're part of something that they truly believe in.*

Kamil Krainski

**Kamil** The process of something dying so that something greater can be born really spoke to me. And I personally couldn't ask for a better wedding. 😊

**Debbie** It made me think of the Prodigal Son story, but instead of the other son being upset, everyone was happy for us!

**Now that you have been Catholic for a month or so, what are your reflections?**

**Kamil** I'm just on another journey. It's a journey that will last a lifetime. Something I can help build.

**Debbie** The need for prayer has become a lot stronger in me because I realize how much I don't know. My next thing is getting ready for my First Confession.

**As you continue your lives as Catholics, how can the parishioners at Christ the King best support you going forward?**

**Debbie** Everyone is showing up, they're happy to be here, they're living their lives.

**Kamil** Continue doing what you're doing. Nobody proselytized us. It was just people walking their paths, living their lives.

**Debbie** Pray out loud! I can hear your faith.

**Kamil** If we see people living their lives in the best way that they can, that helps us.

**If you could say one thing to the folks reading this interview, what would it be?**

**Debbie** Spend time asking questions of people like us, and don't lose hope.

**Kamil** People who have rejected the Church completely can change. The "other religion" is penetrating every aspect of our lives. I recognize it from what I grew up with in Poland. "If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it's a duck."

To counteract it, more and more families are realizing that public education is not our friend. The answer in the future is to give people a way to escape. If you are the best version of yourself, other people will notice and you will give them hope. Walk the talk.



# God makes all things new

*Don Stokes has seen God take horrible things and turn them into something good*

## **Please describe your background and faith experience.**

I was raised as a Lutheran and confirmed. We went to church as a family, but I never developed a real appreciation for the faith; it was just something my parents made my brother and I do.

When I was 28, I married someone that I barely knew. We had a son together, but our fragile marriage fell apart quickly after he was born with a temporary health issue. We went through a divorce, but the ordeal was drawn out over four years in a custody battle.

During that time of crisis, I clung to the Lord for strength. My son and I attended a Methodist church where we were very active. On the weekends I had my son, I would volunteer in the nursery there so I could maximize time with him.

When I lost the custody battle, I lost my faith in God and became agnostic with a leaning toward atheism. To fill that hole in my life, I bounced around trying to find meaning in relationships, science, and political movements.

## **How did you first get interested in Catholicism?**

My brother had converted to Catholicism to marry a Catholic woman. After they had been married for ten years and had a son, my brother died from complications during a surgery. After he died, his widow and I became close, and we

decided to marry. I knew almost nothing about the Catholic faith but was willing to convert as my brother did so that we could be married in the Catholic Church.

We met with the priest, and he explained that this would not be simple due to my previous divorce. When he explained the annulment process, it seemed very daunting to me. We decided to have a friend of ours who was a judge marry us instead. I continued on as an agnostic.

## **What started you back to Christianity?**

As a conservative, I had a lot of exposure to Christianity. Almost all my friends were Christian, and some were Catholic. I always admired the joy that they seemed to have.

In May 2020, when my father died in Alaska from heart failure, I spent a lot of time speaking with his friends. One of them was his pastor in Sterling, Alaska. I was really touched by some of the things he shared with me. Out of curiosity, I decided to listen to one of his sermons online. The subject of his sermon was on being a thankful person. He talked about how no one enjoys being around a negative person. As I listened, I realized that I was one of those negative people. I decided to start being a more thankful person.



Don Stokes, shown here with his wife, Marianne, entered the Church at this year's Easter Vigil. When he was younger, a drawn out divorce and lost custody battle led Don to become an agnostic. After his father's death, though, speaking to his dad's pastor started him on the road back to Christianity and eventually into the Catholic Church.

One thing led to another, and I chose to give Christianity another try. When I arrived at this decision, I told my wife about it – much to her shock. About the same time, our middle son decided he wanted to start attending church.

## **How did you find out about Christ the King?**

Marianne searched for reviews of local Catholic churches and decided to see what Christ the King was like. Attending a Catholic Mass was not a natural thing for me, but Fr. Ed's homily had a big impact on me. We started attending Mass regularly.

## **What was your reaction to the fact that we're a charismatic parish?**

My father belonged to a Pentecostal church, and I had heard him speak in tongues a few times. I was familiar with the Biblical scripture describing it,

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Photo courtesy of Don and Marianne Stokes.

## God makes all things new

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After finishing,  
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so it did not come as a shock to me.

### What happened next?

Marianne began investigating the annulment process and arranged a meeting between me and Dcn. Larry. He told me that the process would probably take at least a year. I met with him many times to assemble the paperwork required. In April 2021, Dcn. Larry sent the paperwork to the diocese and we waited. In September, the annulment was granted.

In late September, I got Covid. After a week, I wasn't getting better and my oxygen level kept dropping. On Oct. 1, I was admitted to U of M Hospital and placed on oxygen.

After being there for two days, I remember thinking, “If I die, who is going to take care of my family?” I had a Rosary with me, but it had always been kind of a novelty to me. For the first time, I seriously prayed the Rosary. After the second decade, I started to feel better. After finishing, I felt a *lot* better.

When my doctor came in later to see me, I showed him that I could remove my oxygen and do exercises without my oxygen dipping dangerously low. He told me that if I could do that the next morning, he would arrange for me to be released. I was released on Oct. 4.

Dcn. Larry married my wife and I at Christ the King on Nov. 7. The

graces God has given us allow us to be more patient with each other.

The Covid experience caused me to be honest with myself about living the kind of life Jesus was asking me to live. As soon as my quarantine ended, I made a sign that said, “Ask me about Jesus,” and went to the Diag on the U of M campus. I sat on a bench in the middle of the Diag, but all the students ignored me. Later, a young man named “Justin” sat next to me with a guitar; he was trying to raise money to finish his trip from California to New York. I spent the whole morning explaining the story of the Bible to him, and we prayed together. After that, I spent my Mondays at the Diag until it became too cold.

### What was your experience of RCIA?

Marianne and I went through RCIA together with Dcn. Larry. We spent lots of time with him; he was a great teacher.

The *Symbolon* series they use for RCIA is great. It does such a good job of explaining the Catholic faith and where it comes from.

### What was the reaction of your family and friends to your decision to become Catholic?

My mother told me, “Your dad would be very proud of you.” My best friend, whom I've

known since 7<sup>th</sup> grade, was raised Baptist and always had a strong faith. We used to argue about Christianity. When I told him that I was ready to try Christianity, he said, “That's great!”

### You entered the Church at the Easter Vigil. Is there anything that stands out for you about that day?

I'm kind of shy, and I don't like to get up in front of large groups of people, but God gave me the grace to do it.

### Now that you have been Catholic for a month or so, what are your reflections?

It's such a relief. I felt bad about not being able to receive Communion.

### As you continue your life as a Catholic, how can Christ the King's parishioners best support you going forward?

They already have helped me immensely. The important question is, what can I do for God and the Church?

### Do you have anything else that you'd like to say in closing?

For the people in this community, thank you for accepting me.

# An epic love story scavenger hunt

## Please describe your background.

I grew up in Loveland, Colorado, the second of five kids. My parents homeschooled my older sister and I through high school; the rest of my siblings were homeschooled partially. We attended a non-denominational church every Sunday and spent two hours a day during school hours reading and memorizing the Bible as well as reading stories of influential Christians and missionaries. So I had a solid education in the Christian faith.

I've felt like I have always had a relationship with God. I was dedicated as a baby, and at about three years old, I asked Him into my heart, following the example of my big sister.

As I got older, though, I was very aware of the "shoulds" of Christianity. I struggled with reading the Bible, being kind to my siblings, etc. So at 14, I decided in my heart to no longer be a Christian. It was too hard and the weight to attain the standard was too heavy. However, I never told anyone this; I knew my parents would not be happy. So I kept up the motions and hid the truth. Praise God, this lasted only for a few months.

I was a lonesome teenage girl and didn't have many friends. One Sunday afternoon when I was lying on my bed listening to Christian radio, the song "Held" by Natalie Grant came on. This was the moment when I decided to give my life to Jesus. I told Him that if He

would just hold me, I would live my life for Him. I then chose to get baptized at age 16.

## How did you first get interested in Catholicism?

I had been discerning being single for the Lord in my church in Colorado. My pastoral leader, Laurel, had been asking God to provide support for me in this unique call. Through a mutual connection with the Sword of the Spirit, an ecumenical community, she learned about the Servants of God's Love. The Holy Spirit prompted her that I was to move to Michigan and discern my call further with these sisters. Their fourth vow to common life and their charismatic expression of worship were two things that ran parallel with my spiritual life.

At the time, I was part of a charismatic church that is a covenant community and has roots in Evangelical Orthodoxy. So the idea that God was now pointing me in the direction of a Catholic religious order was very strange to me. I had no intention of becoming Catholic! When my pastoral leader suggested I start attending Mass and look into the Catholic Church because the sisters are Catholic, I asked God what in the world He was doing! I heard this response:

"I have you on an epic love story scavenger hunt, and you have just found the next clue."

## So did you find out about Christ the King through the Servants of God's Love?

Yes, I reached out to the SGL vocations team and got in contact



with Sr. Rachel Benjamin. She connected me with Jessica Dudek, who invited me to come out for a weekend to visit before moving permanently. That was a splendid idea. I was hosted by her and my future catechist, Allison Barrick, for four days in February 2021. Allison and I stayed up past 11pm the first night we met, and she gave me my first introduction to the Rosary.

The charismatic aspect of the parish is very important to me. On that weekend visit, I attended Upper Room and had my first experience of in-person Adoration. It was a stunning experience. I experienced the Holy Spirit a lot that weekend. I am grateful to be a part of a parish who loves and values Him and His ways.

## What was your experience of RCIA?

I had a very wonderful experience of RCIA. I received a full nine months of catechesis—the full gestational period of a human baby—and that is the exact word that I sensed the Lord wanted this time to be

When Harmony Bird was discerning living single for the Lord, her pastoral leader at her church in Colorado sensed the Holy Spirit saying that Harmony should move to Michigan and discern her call further with the Servants of God's Love. This was a surprise to Harmony, who had no intention of becoming Catholic—but God had other plans!

*On that weekend visit, I attended Upper Room and had my first experience of in-person Adoration. It was a stunning experience. I experienced the Holy Spirit a lot that weekend.*

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Photo courtesy of Harmony Bird.

*With all the fresh zeal of a Catholic convert, I want to encourage you to keep going deeper in your relationship with Christ. The Eucharist is His real Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, and this changes EVERYTHING!*

## An epic love story scavenger hunt

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defined by. My catechist, Allison, was very much led by the Holy Spirit. God did a lot in my heart through this time.

For the most part, RCIA was one-on-one with me and Allison, which was no problem because we easily filled our two-hour time slot every week. At one point early on, though, I wanted to meet with others who were at a similar stage of the journey with me. A little later in the year, Jessica did a great job putting on special sessions where all those in RCIA gathered to learn about things such as Marian doctrine, different forms of prayer, and Fr. Ed's testimony.

**Was there a point in your discernment process when you "got cold feet" and ran away from Catholicism?**

Nope. It was 0 to 100 for me. I jumped in with both feet after I moved to Ann Arbor. The first purchase, besides gas, that I made as an Ann Arbor resident was my first Rosary at Our Lady of Grace Bookstore. Soon after that, I signed up for shifts in the Adoration chapel.

I didn't always know how God was going to "make me Catholic." I had reservations about the Pope, since that is the main point of contention between Catholics and Orthodox. I also felt the pains of the lack of Church unity, wishing that it wasn't necessary to have to convert to be Catholic. But the Lord showed me that these are areas for me to have greater trust and faith in Him.

**What was the reaction of your family and friends to your decision to become Catholic?**

I've been extremely blessed to be supported by my family and friends. My dad disagrees strongly with the Catholic Church; during a respectful conversation, he gave me his fatherly advice. But he trusts God is at work in my life and encourages me in the decisions I make for myself. He was sitting right behind me at the Easter Vigil and squeezed my shoulder with fatherly pride when I came back to my seat after being confirmed. I realize this support is a gift from God; He knew what I needed. I'm not sure how well I would have done if I'd faced much opposition since I struggle with conflict.

**What stands out for you about the Easter Vigil?**

First, God worked a miracle with relationships in my family and the peace He gave us to be together that weekend. Half my siblings and both my parents made it to the Easter Vigil. It was the first time in six years that my sister and dad had seen each other, and there was absolutely no drama. They all came out for me and showed their love for me so well.

Second, people are not meant to come into the Church alone. God taught me that lesson all through RCIA. The Church is a divine-human organism, not an organization. I needed to be in relationship with other Catholics; I needed their help to enter the Church.

I shared a precious moment with Debbie right after we were confirmed that was the culmination of this nine-month lesson. I was standing in front of the congregation, trying to hold it together, to be composed. But when Debbie, who was full of joy, grabbed my hand and shook it up and down in tangible excitement, I couldn't help but bubble over with laughter myself. It was a special moment we had together. With her, I was able to respond fully to the beauty of the moment.

**Now that you have been Catholic for a month or so, what has been your favorite part? Has anything surprised you?**

I was surprised at how much it changed my experience of Mass to receive Jesus. I was attending daily Mass for months before the Vigil, and I participated as much as I could, bringing as much faith as I could. But nothing is like getting to receive Jesus.

For years I had tried to believe that Jesus was in my heart. I knew I was supposed to believe that I am a temple of the Holy Spirit, but I wasn't convinced. My experience was that Jesus and I were close, skin to skin, but not inside each other. Getting to "taste and see" changes everything!

**How can CTK parishioners best support you going forward?**

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# "Lazarus, come forth!"

*We all knew that only God could bring Mark through*

by Juliet Pressel

**In March of 2020**, less than 10 days after the president declared a national emergency, my brother Mark was hospitalized with Covid. At that time, he had endured a week of worsening symptoms, but despite being deemed "high-risk" – over 60 and a diabetic with kidney failure requiring regular dialysis – he was not yet sick enough to warrant hospitalization.

It was not until his lungs were failing that the EMTs agreed to take him to the hospital. Within hours, he was admitted to the ICU and placed on a ventilator to compensate for his now-severe respiratory failure. My brother, like many Covid patients with major lung impairment, was heavily sedated to avoid disrupting the breathing process and to allow his lungs to heal. In effect, he was in a medically induced coma.

It was a frightening time. The relief we all felt when Mark was admitted to the hospital was only temporary. Mark lives in California, and the state's health and hospital systems were already overwhelmed with sick and dying Covid patients. My sister-in-law, Patricia, who got sick the same week as Mark did, was herself overwhelmed by significant symptoms. They both knew that I was praying for them along with other friends and family members, but we all knew that only God could bring Mark through.

**Over the next** several weeks, I asked everyone I knew to pray. I experienced not only great comfort, but an astonishing awareness that when God's people on earth join to do what they are called

to do here, the heavenly hosts join us. I have never experienced that resonance before, but I understood that our prayers, along with the angels themselves, were lifting my brother up to the Lord. Yet I did not know whether he would recover; I only knew that he was completely in God's hands.

Reports from the doctors were minimally encouraging. Hydroxychloroquine did not improve my brother's condition; in fact, it induced cardiac arrhythmia and had to be discontinued. Mark was still alive and breathing, but as time passed, multiple attempts to wean him from the ventilator failed. His lungs still could not supply adequate oxygen on their own, and he was facing a tracheostomy.

Worse, he did not come back to consciousness when the sedation was reduced. He was not responding to sound, touch, or pain; his eyes did not focus or follow anyone's movements. By early April, his doctors were wondering if he had suffered a

stroke. Although an initial test showed no evidence of a stroke, they felt his continued lack of any response to stimuli warranted further tests.

**On Palm Sunday weekend**, I learned from Patricia that the hospital where my brother was being treated was initiating a "virtual visit" program by which relatives could connect with their loved ones by Zoom. Patricia, who was still too sick to participate for long, asked me to be Mark's first visitor. So I "entered" his ICU via an iPad held by a nurse in a HazMat suit, which is how these medical heroes themselves survived day after day. My first contact was disheartening; my brother was visibly unresponsive. My only hope was that he could hear me and recognize my voice, even if he gave no sign of that.

My husband, Jim, joined me for the second visit, and again, it was challenging. We both realized afterwards that offering cheerful greetings and messages

**Jim and Juliet Pressel** (center), shown here on vacation with Juliet's brother Mark (far left), Mark's wife, Patricia, Mark's son Alex, and two other friends. When Mark became critically ill with Covid, Juliet sensed that she and Jim should pray, expecting a "Lazarus moment."



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Photo courtesy of Jim and Juliet Pressel.

*We told Covid to leave and told Mark to come back. Jim especially was pretty emphatic. I kept wondering about that Lazarus moment, but I also knew it wasn't up to me.*

Jim and Juliet Pressel serve on Christ the King's Third Sunday prayer ministry team. They invite all who seek prayer for healing to come and see what the Lord will do!

## "Lazarus, come forth!"

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of support fell far short of what we needed to say. So, the plan was to pray with him and not be shy in the presence of others.

In anticipation of the third visit, I wrote down some prayers that I thought would especially speak to my brother's spirit: Psalm 23; the Aaronic blessing that our parents had spoken over us when we were young; the Our Father; and even a Hail Mary, to honor Patricia's wish to pray what for her was a long-forgotten prayer from her past.

As I did this, I began thinking about Lazarus, and the thought continued: I should expect a Lazarus moment. Sure, my brother wasn't actually dead, but he needed to come back to life. Revival would certainly qualify as a Lazarus moment!

On Holy Thursday, Jim and I spoke first with the nurse on duty, a man who had already seen his share of lost battles and who tried to warn us away from too much optimism. "I had to do a lot of things to

him today that should have hurt him but he didn't react at all," he said. "They are talking about another test for stroke." Jim and I plunged ahead.

We began with the prayers I had prepared but then went freestyle. We told Covid to leave and told Mark to come back. Jim especially was pretty emphatic. I kept wondering about that Lazarus moment, but I also knew it wasn't up to me.

**On Holy Saturday**, Mark started to respond. He began moving in response to discomfort and other stimuli, and his eyes followed staff around the room. On Easter Sunday, he started talking. The tracheostomy surgery was cancelled. Within another day or two, he was sitting up in bed, virtually visiting with Patricia and Jim and me, instructing Patricia on disability paperwork and paying taxes, and trying to remember his

passcode so that Patricia could access his home computer. Like Lazarus, my brother had come forth. What a wonderful Easter gift!

I did not know until several days later that Holy Saturday in the Western Church calendar is "Lazarus Saturday" in the Eastern calendar. I was amazed. God brought my brother back to us on Lazarus Saturday!

Mark "stepped down" from the ICU and was subsequently discharged to a rehab hospital within the next week. We saw a video afterwards of the hospital staff celebrating his "victory march" on a gurney to the elevator. It was another month before he was able to return home, but he has come through with a renewed faith and revived energy for life. And he knows, beyond any doubt, that his Redeemer lives!

## An epic love story scavenger hunt

Continued from page 8

Pray for me! Thank you so much for the prayers you have already prayed! I continue to need them. Becoming Catholic has opened up a whole world for me. It's been encouraging to meet so many Catholics who keep their faith at the center of their lives. I look forward to

continuing to meet inspiring Catholic families, single lay persons, religious, etc.

**What would you like to say in closing to those reading this interview?**

Thank you for the church body that you have built that I

have become a part of. It is truly rich soil. With all the fresh zeal of a Catholic convert, I want to encourage you to keep going deeper in your relationship with Christ. The Eucharist is His real Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, and this changes EVERYTHING!

**Schedule of Major Events**

For the Mass schedule, check the bulletin  
or go to [ctkcc.net/Mass-times](http://ctkcc.net/Mass-times)

- 6/26: Celebration of the Anniversary of the Dedication of the Church
- 7/4: Independence Day, Parish Offices closed
- 7/8, 7/22, 8/12, 8/26: Upper Room
- 7/8-10: Teens at Steubenville Conference
- 7/16: Growing Up events
- 7/26, 28: Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist Profession Masses
- 7/29-30: Men's Retreat
- 8/7-13: Pine Hills Girls Camp
- 8/15: Assumption of Mary, *not* a Holy Day of Obligation this year

For the latest information about these and other events, check the bulletin or go to [ctkcc.net](http://ctkcc.net).

## MAJOR EVENTS JULY-AUGUST 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	Jul 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	Aug 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	Sep 1	2	3



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### Coming in future issues...

- Supporting LIFE!
- Eucharistic Revival!
- Parishioner testimonies

Look for this and more in future issues of

## The Open Door

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We welcome your comments. Please send them to Theresa Hofer at [thofer@ckkcc.net](mailto:thofer@ckkcc.net).

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

And Jesus said,

*"Come, follow Me."*