



JESUITS

Central and Southern

Winter 2021

The Women's Issue



In Humble Gratitude for
the Women of the USA
Central and Southern Province



Dear Friends in the Lord,

St. Ignatius believed that ingratitude was “the most abominable of all sins ... for it is a forgetting of the gracious benefits and blessings received.” Gift-giving events are a time when ingratitude perhaps shows itself most clearly. For example, one can imagine

the sacrifices a single mother makes for her children. She cleans other people’s homes for a living in order to put food on the table and pay school tuition. She saves just enough to buy a Christmas present or birthday gift only to have her son turn up his nose because it’s not the name brand he wanted. Such ingratitude can fill us with sadness and anger. I’d like to indict that young man, but I know there is a log in my eye and a speck in his, and that many times I have failed to be grateful for gifts received, whether from friends or from God.

In this issue we take time to be grateful for the “gracious benefits and blessings” the province receives from God through the ministry of our female companions in mission. You will read about a few of the talented women who help keep the mission of the Society of Jesus moving forward. They are just a few examples of the many women working in our province to whom we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. I hope you find their stories as inspiring as I do.

In his recent book, *Let us Dream*, Pope Francis praises the strength of women in the Gospel and notes that Jesus announced “new life” to them first because “they were present, attentive and open to new possibilities.” As we move into 2021 and the hope of a world rid of COVID-19, I pray that our province becomes more grateful for the gifts that women bring to our apostolates and that we might emulate the women of the Gospel by becoming more present and attentive to God, and the new possibilities God is offering the USA Central and Southern Province. To all women in the UCS Province – thank you! May God bless you abundantly for all you have done for the Society of Jesus!

Gratefully in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas P. Greene, SJ".

Thomas P. Greene, SJ
Provincial

Queridos hermanos en el Señor.

San Ignacio creía que la ingratitud era “el más abominable de los pecados... porque es olvidar las gracias y las bendiciones recibidas”. Los momentos de entrega de obsequios son una época en la que la ingratitud quizás se muestra más claramente. Por ejemplo, uno puede imaginar los sacrificios que una madre soltera hace por sus hijos. Limpia las casas de otras personas para ganarse la vida y así poder poner comida en la mesa y pagar la matrícula de la escuela. Ahorra lo suficiente para comprar un regalo de Navidad o un regalo de cumpleaños, pero su hijo se molesta porque no es la marca que quería. Tal ingratitud puede llenarnos de tristeza y rabia. Me gustaría condenar a ese joven, pero sé que hay una paja en mi ojo, mucho menor en el suyo, y que muchas veces no he sido capaz de estar agradecido por los regalos recibidos, ya sea de amigos o de Dios.

En este número nos tomamos el tiempo para estar agradecidos por las “gracias y bendiciones” que la provincia recibe de Dios a través del ministerio de nuestras compañeras de misión. Leerán acerca de algunas de las mujeres talentosas que ayudan a que la misión de la Compañía de Jesús siga adelante. Son sólo algunos ejemplos de las muchas mujeres que trabajan en nuestra provincia a las que debemos una tremenda deuda de gratitud. Espero que encuentren sus historias tan inspiradoras como yo.

En su reciente libro, *Soñemos* (“Let us Dream”), el Papa Francisco alaba la fuerza de las mujeres en el Evangelio y señala que Jesús les anunció “nueva vida” en primer lugar porque “estaban presentes, atentas y abiertas a nuevas posibilidades”. A medida que avanzamos hacia el 2021 y la esperanza de un mundo libre de COVID-19, rezo para que nuestra provincia se sienta más agradecida por los dones que las mujeres aportan a nuestros apostolados y para que podamos emular a las mujeres del Evangelio al estar más presentes y atentos a Dios, y a las nuevas posibilidades que Él ofrece a la Provincia Central y Meridional de EE.UU. A todas las mujeres de nuestra Provincia: ¡Gracias! ¡Que Dios las bendiga abundantemente por todo lo que han hecho por la Compañía de Jesús!

Con gratitud en el Señor,

Thomas P. Greene, SJ
Provincial



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Editor
Therese Fink Meyerhoff

Contributor
Jerry Duggan

Designer
Tracy Gramm

Advancement Director
John Fitzpatrick

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4511 West Pine Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63108-2191
314-361-7765
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Please address all correspondence
about stories to the editor:
UCSCommunication@jesuits.org

Send all correspondence about
addresses, memberships, and
bequests to the Advancement Office:
UCSAdvancement@jesuits.org



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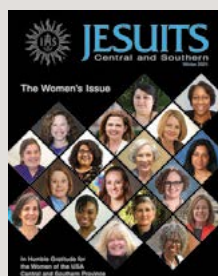
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Some of the women of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province:

Top row: Mirtha Peralta, St. John’s College, Belize City, Belize; Cheryl Archibald, St. Matthew the Apostle Church, St. Louis; **Second row:** Katie Jansen Larson, St. Francis Xavier College Church, St. Louis; Tania Tetlow, Loyola University New Orleans; Sue Weishar, Jesuit Social Research Institute, New Orleans; **Third row:** Maureen Nolan, volunteer, Belize and St. Louis; Julia Vargas, Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Mo.; Joan Gaulene, volunteer, New Orleans; Vindri Gajadhar, Jesuit Tampa; **Fourth row:** Mary Baudouin, provincial assistant, New Orleans; Lisa Shillace, Ignatian Volunteer Corps, New Orleans; Karen Wuertz, Regis Jesuit, Denver; **Fifth row:** Heidi Cerneka, El Paso, Texas; Ella Chevis, St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, La.; Susan Friedrichsen, Ignatian Spirituality Center, Kansas City, Mo.; Ann Sheridan, St. Francis Xavier, Kansas City, Mo.; **Bottom row:** Carol Ackels, Ignatian Spirituality Institute, Dallas; Millie Price, Immaculate Conception Parish, Baton Rouge, La.

Women of the Exercises:

Spiritual Ministers Find Joy in Sharing Ignatian Spirituality

By Therese Fink Meyerhoff

Paula Sapienza didn't know that spiritual directors existed until she was in her 20s.

"The first time I heard about spiritual directors, the thought popped into my head that it would be the greatest job ever," she says.

Of course, people don't become spiritual directors when they're in their 20s, and Dr. Sapienza was busy pursuing a graduate degree. But the thought stayed in the back of her mind as she went on to teach at Fairfield University.

When she moved to Denver, she approached Fr. Stephen Yavorsky, SJ, about doing the Spiritual Exercises. She felt called to become a spiritual director and wanted to confirm that this was a genuine invitation from God. After completing the Exercises, she was sure.

"I have never looked back and thought it was the wrong choice," she says. "I have only been reconfirmed over and over again. It's such a gift. Being a spiritual director is a job made in heaven for me. I know it is what God is asking me to do."

Today, after leading the Ignatian Spirituality Program at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish in Denver, Dr. Sapienza is a spiritual director at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia, Colo.

For Susanne Chawszczewski, director of campus ministry at Saint Louis University (SLU), the seed of her vocation was planted at the graduation ceremony at Saint Louis University, when she completed her Ph.D.

"At my graduation, they talked about the *Magis* (the Jesuit concept of doing more for the universal good), and it really struck me that, with the gifts and skills I had, I really needed to do something more with my life," she said.

"Lay people can be every bit as effective as Jesuits. After all, Ignatius began giving these retreats as a lay person!"

— Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ

She got a pastoral studies degree while working at a Catholic nonprofit in Milwaukee. Then, with her skills in student development and pastoral ministry, when the campus ministry position opened up at SLU, "I knew it was a perfect fit." She has been at SLU for eight years.

Susan Friedrichsen, executive director of the Ignatian Spirituality Center (ISC) in Kansas City, Mo., was

Paula Sapienza, a spiritual director at Sacred Heart Retreat in Sedalia, Colo., enjoys helping people to recognize that they are good as they are, and that God loves them and desires them as they are.

Susanne Chawaszczewski,
director of campus ministry
at Saint Louis University, strives
to create an environment that calls
students to conversions of the heart.



As executive director of the Ignatian Spirituality Center in Kansas City, Mo., Susan Friedrichsen sees her role as a facilitator of freedom and transformation.



introduced to Ignatian Spirituality when the oldest of her three sons became a student at Rockhurst High School (RHS) in Kansas City. Tom Norman, at that time a pastoral leader for RHS faculty and staff, offered parent volunteers a brief introduction to Ignatian Spirituality. Intrigued, Ms. Friedrichsen later made the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life. “I made the Exercises, and two years later, I was guiding,” she says.

She went on to gain her certification as a spiritual director and a master’s degree in Christian Spirituality.

Chawaszczewski, Friedrichsen and Sapienza are just three of dozens of women serving as retreat leaders and spiritual direction ministers in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province. Women serve in these ministries throughout the province, in retreat houses, spirituality centers and schools.

“We have wonderful, capable people throughout the province doing great work,” says Fr. Ron Boudreaux, SJ, provincial assistant for pastoral ministries, who oversees both parishes and retreat centers for the province. “It is really encouraging to see. Lay people can be every bit as effective as Jesuits. After all, Ignatius began giving these retreats as a lay person!”



Susanne Chawaszczewski (in red) attends the province's Colleagues Retreat in 2017.

Not having a collar can make a difference, these lay women admit, but only for a small percentage of the people who come for spiritual direction.

"I still encounter a few people whose view of church authority may have roots in clericalism, but it's not often," Dr. Sapienza says. These people still want to talk to "Father," an option that will be increasingly uncommon as the number of priests available continues to decline.

Fortunately, this province is blessed with numerous lay people – men and women alike – who are responding to God's call as spiritual companions and retreat leaders.

"Our lay companions are able to reach people who, if we had to depend only on Jesuits, would not be reached," Fr. Boudreaux said.

Lay partners ensure accessibility in another way, too: all three women continued their ministries throughout the pandemic. Sacred Heart Retreat House remained open the whole year, sometimes with only one or two retreatants. The Ignatian Spirituality Center pivoted to offer virtual retreats and spiritual direction by phone or computer. SLU's campus ministry

staff found socially distant ways to offer retreats and one-on-one spiritual direction.

"Our office has a focus on *cura personalis*," Dr. Chawaszczewski says, referring to the Jesuit emphasis on care for the whole person. "Particularly in this time of pandemic and racial injustice, it is more and more important to connect with students one-on-one in spiritual direction and spiritual conversations."

Joy in Ministry

If you want to see someone's face light up, ask one of these women to talk about her ministry. It's clearly more than a job; they are called to do this work.

"I love introducing people to Ignatian Spirituality," Dr. Sapienza says. "Seeing their reactions: 'Wow, you can pray this way! Wow, Jesus is really showing up! Wow, discernment is an awesome tool!' It is a treasure in the church."

"The gift of the Spiritual Exercises ... they're so practical!" says Ms. Friedrichsen. "People can grab onto them right away, and they're so helpful. I love to see the lightbulb go

off when people grasp how simple it is: 'It's as simple as don't listen to that thought; but this thought is definitely from God.' Showing people there's a way to get through life in freedom. It's easier said than done, but it is pretty simple."

Dr. Chawaszczewski echoes the joy of sharing Ignatian Spirituality, specifically with college students. "Students who have gone on our Ignatian silent retreat have had profound experiences," she says. "That's the beauty of Ignatian prayer and the Spiritual Exercises: they appeal to a wider group than just the Catholic students. There's something about self-examination and personal reflection. The Examen really speaks to a lot of those students. Who wouldn't want to look at what your day was like? 'How have I done today? What can I do better tomorrow?' It's very practical."

This practicality of Ignatian discernment has a strong appeal for these three Ignatian women.

"The first principle and foundation ('God created human beings to

Paula Sapienza guides her directees by asking questions to help them recognize God's actions in their lives.



praise, reverence, and serve God, and by doing this, to save their souls ...”) captures it for me in my daily life,” Dr. Chawszczewski says. “It provides a foundation not only for me personally, but for how I do my work, how I supervise others, how I have difficult conversations, how I help people discern things in their lives.”

She loves passing that foundation on to students. “You can’t teach the Exercises; people have to experience them for themselves,” she says. So, the campus ministry office makes sure all of their activities include some form of Ignatian Spirituality. “We hope our students gain some nuggets – ways to pray, etc. – that will encourage them to pursue the Exercises on their own.”

Ms. Friedrichsen says the lessons of the Exercises guide her daily life as well, including her role as a parent.

“As a guide of the Spiritual Exercises, I have learned to help people notice God’s activity in their prayer and in their lives because I trust that God is always present and always active. I trust that God

is there, no matter what,” she says. “This is true, too, with my adult children, especially when they share their worries and anxieties. I trust God is with them and help them to notice those moments when God is drawing them into God’s dream for them. Being a prayer guide has freed me up to move from a parenting role to becoming a companion to my adult children as they journey through life.”

A Call to Conversion

In a letter to the Society of Jesus, Father General Arturo Sosa proclaimed an Ignatian Year to run from May 20, 2021 to July 31, 2022, with the theme of “A Call to Conversion.” He wrote, “Together with our friends and the whole Church, the universal Society wants to remember that privileged moment when the Holy Spirit inspired Ignatius of Loyola in his decision to follow Christ, and to deepen our understanding of this pilgrim way in order to draw fruit from it.”

This message of conversion rings true with these women grounded in Ignatian Spirituality.

“Ignatian Spirituality is all about conversion,” Ms. Friedrichsen says. “That’s what the Spiritual Exercises experience is, to become whole and reconciled with God. And then you are a whole different person in the world. You engage with people differently. People encounter a different way to be when they encounter you. Societal conversion begins with a person.

“The Universal Apostolic Preferences say, ‘Show the Way to God through the Spiritual Exercises.’ That’s exactly what we do,” Ms. Friedrichsen says, “but we are also participating with God in converting our community.”

“I love the image of Ignatius as the pilgrim,” Dr. Chawszczewski says, noting that the motto for SLU’s office of campus ministry is *With you on the Way*. “I think the Ignatian Year can be a pilgrimage for people. If you consider the Ignatian Year as a pilgrimage toward conversion of the heart in the same vein as Ignatius did, it could be a really beautiful part of it.”

“Conversion always starts with love,” Dr. Sapienza says. “Love is what gives me the freedom to ask for forgiveness and to ask for the grace to be freed from disordered attachments. In the end, if I really have experienced that love of God, I know deep in my heart that I want that conversion. I want that transformation.

“Ignatian Spirituality is all about conversion, to become whole and reconciled with God.”

– Susan Friedrichsen

“The gift is that we’re doing it in community,” she says. “Your conversion is my conversion. My conversion is your conversion. As we allow God to wash away those sins and free and transform us, we’re all being brought together, closer in relationship with one another and with God. Start with that love of God, and people open up to its transforming power.”

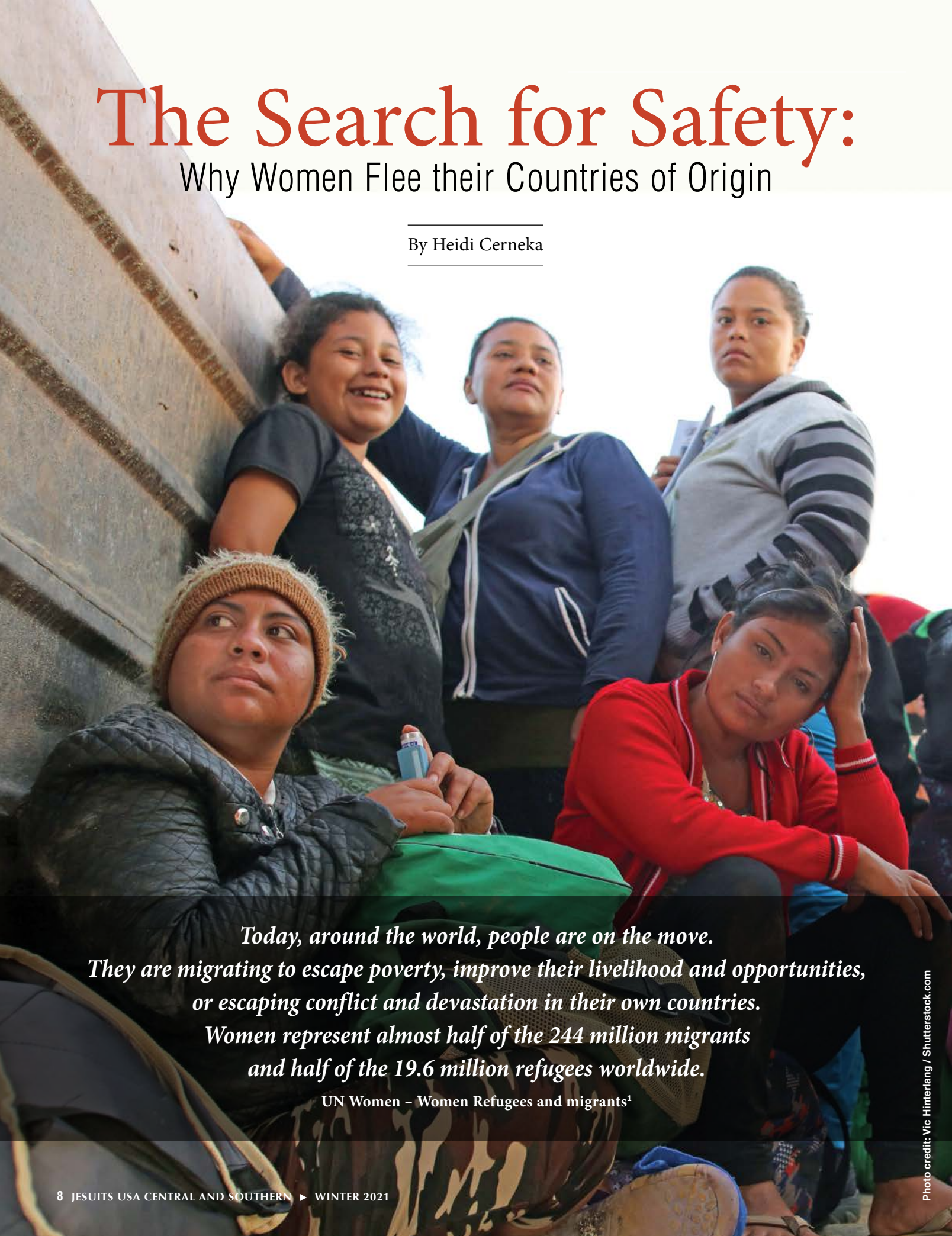
Pope Francis is fond of saying that the Spiritual Exercises are not just for Jesuits. These three women – and the countless other lay colleagues who serve in spiritual direction and retreat ministries – are true companions in this spiritual ministry that gives life and joy and peace to so many people. They are a gift to the Society of Jesus and to the Church. ■



The Search for Safety:

Why Women Flee their Countries of Origin

By Heidi Cerneka



*Today, around the world, people are on the move.
They are migrating to escape poverty, improve their livelihood and opportunities,
or escaping conflict and devastation in their own countries.
Women represent almost half of the 244 million migrants
and half of the 19.6 million refugees worldwide.*

UN Women – Women Refugees and migrants¹

18-year-old María ran out the back of her home as local gang members crashed through the front, furious because María refused to accept being the girlfriend of a gang member. They had warned María the day before that they were coming for her final answer. Since the same gang – working together with the police – murdered her brother years before for refusing to join them, she had no doubt they were serious. She and her mother left that day, never looked back, and walked for three months to get from Honduras to the United States.*

On their way through Mexico, local members of organized crime kidnapped them – a frequent occurrence for migrants – demanding money or that they call their family to send money for their release. Since María and her mother had no one to send money, the gang leader sexually assaulted María for three days in “payment,” threatening her mother the whole time. María and her mother finally reached the border of the United States and entered to ask for asylum. They sought protection because their own police and their own country denied them safety.

Every day, women flee their home countries, leaving behind family, culture, language, food and everything they know in search of safety for themselves and often for their children. No precise numbers exist, but in 2012, women comprised 14 percent of the apprehensions at the U.S./Mexico border; by 2017, they made up 27 percent of the apprehensions.²

I work as an immigration attorney at the U.S./Mexico border in El Paso, Texas. I represent asylum-seekers who are exercising their right to ask for protection in the form of asylum, guaranteed by U.S. law and by our legal obligation to the United Nations Refugee Convention.



WHAT ARE THE “PUSH” FACTORS?

What are some of the reasons why women choose to leave everything behind and head into uncertainty, possible detention and even possible separation from their children?

Turning your back on everything familiar takes courage; most often, it is a desperate act. What are the forces at work that “push” these women out of their home countries, leaving everything behind and heading into the unknown and possibly even detention?

“Women are forced to choose between facing certain death or a desperate journey

north—protected by other families in the caravan.³ Women, especially those from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, more frequently cite ‘fleeing violence’ as their reason for leaving home than men do.⁴ The perpetrators of violence know that gender-based crimes routinely go unpunished, and these three countries hold some of the highest femicide rates in the world.⁵ Individuals will not stop fleeing until the root causes of violence are addressed; the use of military troops or scare-tactics will

ENDNOTES:

¹ “In Focus: Women Refugees and Migrants.” UN Women. UN Women. Accessed January 11, 2021. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-refugees-and-migrants#notes>.

² Fix, M., Hallock, J., Ruiz Soto, A. G., “In Search of Safety, Growing Numbers of Women Flee Central America,” Migration Policy Institute, May 30, 2018. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/search-safety-growing-numbers-women-flee-central-america>. Disappointingly, U.S. Customs and Border Protection publishes extensive data and statistics about their apprehensions and deportations, but has no gender demographics.

³ International Rescue Committee, “Crisis Watch: Seeking Safety at the Border,” Rescue.org. Accessed January 11, 2021. <https://www.rescue.org/topic/seeking-safety-border#who-are-the-people-seeking-safety-at-the-us-border>.

⁴ “The Cycle of Violence: Migration from the Northern Triangle,” The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies Task Force Report, University of Washington, 2017. i-56.

⁵ Fix, Hallock, and Ruiz Soto.

not dissuade them, because currently there is no place scarier than their homes.”

An illustrative example is that of Claudia, an Indigenous Guatemalan woman who suffered sexual and physical violence and even false arrest and detention as a minor at the hands of a powerful *ladino* (non-Indigenous) family in her rural community.⁶ Given that the family was supported by the local police and a municipal judge, Claudia knew she would never be safe in her community, so she fled to hide in an aunt’s home in a small city nearby. The same aggressors found her there and threatened her again. Only then did she resolve to abandon her family and leave the country.

Even in the face of threats and imminent danger, a woman is less likely than a man to flee her home country, because women are frequently responsible for the home and the family. If the man has abandoned the home or already fled, she alone supports the family and ensures economic survival. When a man flees, he may bring his family with him, but he often does not, leaving his partner the responsibilities of the home, children or aging parents.⁷

Like Claudia, a woman will more likely attempt relocation within the country first, with the hope that a short-term relocation will resolve the threat of violence and be less disruptive to her family. Should she then choose to flee her country, she will often take her children with her, which increases her vulnerability on the journey.⁸

ON THE JOURNEY

Regardless of whether they travel alone or in a migrant caravan, women fleeing violence and journeying to the



Heidi Cerneka (in blue) joins the pedestrian flow across the Rio Grande to meet with clients seeking asylum in the United States.

safety of asylum risk sexual assault, trafficking and exploitation en route. Already stricken by the trauma that forced their departure in the first place, women face inadequate food and medical care, risk of rape, beatings, abandonment and kidnapping.⁹

Multiple surveys and reports point out that more than half of the women interviewed experienced sexual assault during their journeys north, and many take birth control to avoid becoming pregnant from rape,¹⁰ recognizing that the issue is not “if” but “when” they will be assaulted.

Amnesty International reports that 60-80 percent of female migrants are raped traveling through Mexico on their way north.¹¹

If a woman travels with children, she must protect her children, their few belongings and herself, find enough food to keep them going, and still be able to sleep at least enough to keep moving the next day. In one study, at least 70 percent of the migrants interviewed had at least one family member traveling with them.¹²

Women migrants often feel more protected from smugglers, kidnap-

ping and police violence when they join a migrant caravan and travel together. However, the caravan leaders are usually men who ignore the reality of women, especially women traveling with children. Women with children move more slowly and may need more time at stops to eat, bathe and get food. They often have more medical concerns because of sick children, pregnancy issues, or just the responsibility of caring for others. Furthermore, caravan leaders may hold meetings and make decisions that exclude the voices and needs of women because women are unrepresented due to childcare and even security issues.¹³

Migrant caravan groups advance at the pace of the leaders or those in the front, often single men, frequently leaving behind women and families, further increasing their vulnerability on the journey.^(Ibid.)

In one report, service providers and government officials expressed outrage that whenever a confrontation with authorities occurred on the journey, leaders pushed women and children to the forefront, perhaps

with the expectation that police and military would be less violent facing women and children directly.^(Ibid.)

AT THE BORDER

Once they reach the U.S. border, women immigrants' challenges continue, since U.S. policy has trapped them in Mexico through MPP (Migrant Protocol Protections or "Remain in Mexico") and Title 42 (a public health law that gives the CDC and DHS authority to, in effect, shut the border, denying migrants the possibility of asking for asylum). Shelters run by governments or churches and private agencies host many of the migrants waiting in Mexico. However, women continue to be at risk for sexual and gender-based violence, forced prostitution, kidnapping, forced drug dealing, misconduct and human rights violations by authorities.^(Ibid.)

Women migrants come to escape the violence they have suffered and the deaths they have witnessed at home, to seek the protection their own government does not provide.

Further, family separation still exists, as U.S. immigration authorities only recognize a parent or an adult with legal guardianship papers, and *real* families often include older siblings, grandparents or others as those responsible for children.

In one case, Valeria arrived with her 17-year-old son, Rueben, who was running from gang threats and imminent violence. Immigration authorities held them in a hotel together until he turned 18, at which point they separated mother and now-adult son, sending them to separate detention facilities with no explanation and no means to talk to each other.

At Reuben's first hearing before a judge, he asked for deportation because he did not understand what was happening, could not confer with his mother, and preferred to be home in Honduras rather than in immigration "jail" with no end in sight.

Finally, the vast majority of asylum seekers do not have access to legal representation, including more than 80 percent of those in detention, and they are trying to navigate by themselves a complicated system in a foreign language.¹⁴

If they want a chance at winning protection through asylum, women who have suffered violence, especially intimate or sexual violence, are forced to tell in detail what happened to them.

And yet they come. Women migrants come, to escape the violence they have suffered and the deaths they have witnessed at home, to seek the protection their own government does not provide. They come to protect their children. They come with the hope that the United States will honor its commitment to our own refugee law and the U.N. Refugee Convention we have ratified. And while the challenges of the immigration system are another story, those who arrive at our border are welcomed by community groups, faith-based groups and caring individuals.

María was released from immigration detention and is now in Michigan, supported by community organizations and her church, waiting for the day she can present her case to the judge and be granted asylum. ■

* Note: All names used in this article are pseudonyms.



AUTHOR BIO

Heidi Cerneka is a Maryknoll Lay Missioner and an immigration attorney for Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso, Texas. She was assisted by Jannik J. Eggerman, Master of Philosophy student in economic and social history at the University of Cambridge, U.K.

ENDNOTES:

⁶ Henry M. Jackson, confirming that "perpetrators operate with impunity due to the police and judges' lack of enforcement of domestic violence laws and restraining orders, instead justifying inaction by citing the need to protect the rights of the perpetrators." (p. 22)

⁷ "Señales de una Crisis: Desplazamiento Forzado Interno Por Violencia en El Salvador, Guatemala y Honduras, 2018," [Signs of a Crisis: Internal Forced Displacement due to Violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, 2018], Sistema de Monitoreo Desplazamiento Forzado en El Triángulo Norte de Centro América (2018), Central America.

⁸ Señales de una Crisis, see also Women on the Run, UNHCR 2015, more than 2/3 of the women interviewed, first tried to find safety by relocating in their own country, but they found that it did not help protect them. (p4)

⁹ "In Focus: Women Refugees and Migrants."

¹⁰ Parish, Anja, "Gender-Based Violence against Women: Both Cause for Migration and Risk along the Journey," Migration Policy Institute, Sept. 7, 2017.

¹¹ Amnesty International, Invisible Victims: Migrants on the Move in Mexico, London, U.K.: Amnesty International Publications, 2010. 1-48.

¹² International Rescue Committee, "Needs Assessment Report: Mexico: Northern Border," Rescue.org, March 25, 2019. <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/3733/ircmexicoassessmentreport.pdf>.

¹³ Brofft, T., "Migrant and Refugee Caravans: Failed Responses to Women and Children in Need of International Protection and Humanitarian Aid" ed. Wolkoff, L., Women's Refugee Commission, May 2019. 1-14.

¹⁴ "10 Things to Know About How Current Immigration Policies will Harm Women and Children Seeking Protection," New York, NY, U.S.A.: Women's Refugee Commission. 1-3.

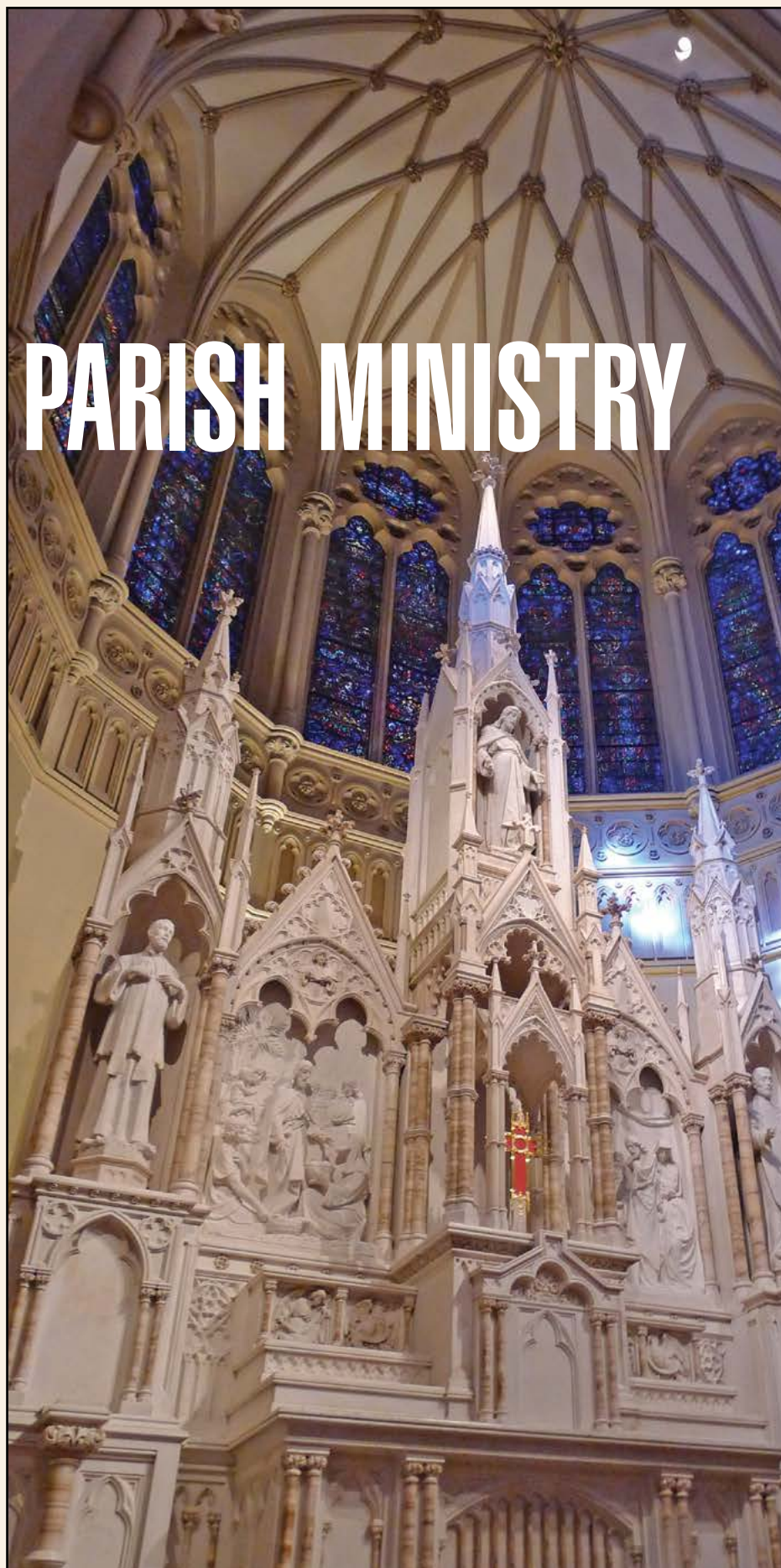
PASTORAL WORK WITHOUT THE COLLAR: WOMEN IN PARISH MINISTRY

By Jerry Duggan

There is so much more to running a parish than presiding at Mass. Managing parish finances, maintaining the physical plant, overseeing committees and instilling a sense of community are just a few of the many other tasks that have traditionally been the responsibility of pastors. But priestly ordination is not required to be a skilled administrator. So, several parishes in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province have transitioned to a more progressive, representational leadership model.

At St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church and St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis and St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kansas City, Mo., lay women are in positions of leadership.

Cheryl Archibald (parish life coordinator at St. Matthew), Katie Jansen Larson (parish administrator at St. Francis Xavier in St. Louis) and Ann Sheridan (pastoral administrator at St. Francis Xavier in Kansas City) are all anchors of their parish communities.





**CHERYL
ARCHIBALD**

Balancing Pastoral Care and Administrative Support

As parish life coordinator at St. Matthew the Apostle, Cheryl Archibald serves as director of the work, meaning the pastor reports to her.

This structure was necessary at St. Matthew's because there was no priest to serve as pastor. The parish has just over 100 households, and therefore had a single priest in residence, with no associate pastors or deacons to share the workload.

All these tasks, particularly caring for the church's 114-year-old physical plant and managing the finances, were too much for one person to handle. As a solution, in 2018, Fr. Ron Mercier, provincial at the time, devised a new, forward-looking leadership model.

Under this arrangement, the priest focuses on the spiritual and liturgical aspects of the parish while all else is done by the parish life coordinator. Father Mercier tapped Ms. Archibald, who had served as pastoral associate for five years before her appointment. Father Mercier received approval from then-St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson; it was the archbishop who formally appointed Ms. Archibald to the parish.

In her current role, Ms. Archibald's responsibilities are many and varied, so she finds the key to a productive day is starting it in a consistent manner: with daily Mass.

"When I listen to the Scripture at daily Mass, I process what God is giving me for the day and use that as my guide," she said.

What comes next varies depending on the day, but there is usually a combination of administrative and pastoral work. Ms. Archibald will spend some days paying bills and attending meetings, while other days are devoted to providing pastoral care for parishioners.

"This role involves a little bit of everything," she said. "I could easily fill my whole day with paperwork and business items, but where I find the most meaning is through my relationships with parishioners. It's easy to get bogged down with administrative tasks and forget the bigger picture. Ultimately, I'm here to serve God and this parish community."

While Ms. Archibald could never have anticipated serving in this role, she is amazed how it fell into place.

"I found that if I put the spiritual legwork in, God opens doors for me in a way that seems almost too good to be true. That's how I feel in this role."

Ms. Archibald believes having a lay person, particularly a married lay woman, in this role, is great for the St. Matthew parish community.

"More than half of our parishioners are women, so for them to feel represented in parish leadership is important," she said. "I think people like me are relatable to women in our parish and help them feel that their voices are being heard."



**KATIE JANSEN
LARSON**

Helping College Church Run Smoothly

While Katie Jansen Larson is not director of the work at St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis, she has a hand in just about everything the parish does.

Much of her job as parish administrator entails administrative tasks such as human resources, facilities management, financial reporting and accounting, but she derives her greatest satisfaction from other areas of the job: more "big picture" work related to the parish vision, which she played a major role in crafting.

Ms. Jansen Larson, along with Pastor Dan White, SJ, and other parish leaders, have a clear vision of what they want College Church to be and do: promote anti-racism, invest in youth and care for God's creation.

Ms. Jansen Larson also ensures the parish embraces its Jesuit identity and distinct location on an urban college campus along the way.

"We are an urban parish, but we are also a predominately white parish in a predominately non-white deanery," she said. "We draw



Katie Jansen Larson makes an announcement at St. Francis Xavier College Church, as Pastor Dan White, SJ, looks on.

from more than 100 ZIP codes across the St. Louis metro area, but we also are situated on a college campus and have a large student population. We have nearly 200 children in our faith formation programs. My job is making sure all those perspectives are heard.”

To accomplish this, Ms. Jansen Larson oversees the rest of the parish’s large staff, ensuring that not only are all ministries successful but that they work together.

“With such a large, diverse parish, it would be easy to just do a lot of different things well and say that that’s good enough,” she explained. “To take our efforts to another level, I make sure that everything is not just done well but works toward a set of common goals.”

Ms. Jansen Larson’s work allows Fr. White to focus on what he is best trained for: leadership and the spiritual health of the parish. The rest of the staff, led by Ms. Jansen Larson, can help the parish live out its faith, and in essence, practice what Fr. White preaches.

“For me, a big part of a Jesuit parish’s identity, that is, what makes a Jesuit parish ‘Jesuit,’ is living out the faith through community outreach, vibrant ministries and engagement as a force for good in the world,” she said.

She believes one way to alleviate the burden on pastors who are stretched too thin, or the priest shortage in general, is to elevate lay people, particularly women who are dedicated servants of the Lord, into roles like her own.

“There are many women who feel called to ministry in parishes who have incredible talents and ideas, and strong relationships with God,” she said. “If we give them opportunities to lead, the Church will be better for it.”

Women in Leadership in the UCS Province

Susan Murphy, Chair, Board of Trustees, Arrupe Jesuit High School, Denver

Debra Pacheco, Assistant Principal for Academics, Jesuit High School of Tampa

Mary Boudouin, Provincial Assistant for Social Ministry

Michele Williams, Assistant Principal of Faculty Formation, Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas

Marian V. “Bo” Mehan, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, Saint Louis University, St. Louis

Cheryl Archibald, Parish Life Coordinator, St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church, St. Louis

Eileen Quinones, Director of Academics/Principal, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston

Carol Atwell Ackels, Director, Ignatian Spirituality Institute, Dallas

Terri Bonebrake, Director of Administration, White House Jesuit Retreat, St. Louis

Tanuja Singh, Provost, Loyola University New Orleans

Annie Etling, Assistant Principal for Faculty & Curriculum, Regis Jesuit High School, Denver

Shari Plantz-Masters, Dean of the College of Business/Computer Science, Regis University, Denver

Ashley Chapman, Principal, Loyola Academy of St. Louis

Sarah Kelly, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Loyola University New Orleans

Tania Tetlow, President, Loyola University New Orleans

Lisa Hager, Division Chair, Spring Hill College, Mobile, Ala.

Cindy Schmersal, Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Mo.

Sue Robb, Pastoral Associate for Justice & Life, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Kansas City, Mo.

Mariann McCormally, Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Kansas City, Mo.

Maria Calzada, Dean of Arts & Sciences, Loyola University New Orleans

Katie Jansen Larson, Parish Administrator, St. Francis Xavier College Church, St. Louis

Jessica M. Evenson, Vice President for University Compliance and Ethics, Saint Louis University, St. Louis

Jacynthe Riviere, Deputy Director, Academia San Ignacio de Loyola, San Juan, P.R.

Vivian Mendez, Assistant Principal for Academic Affairs, Colegio San Ignacio, San Juan, P.R.

Kathleen B. Davis, Vice President for Enrollment and Retention Management, Saint Louis University, St. Louis

Susan Friedrichsen, Executive Director, Ignatian Spirituality Center of Kansas City, Mo.

Kim Anderson, Dean of Curriculum & Instruction, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston



**ANN
SHERIDAN**

Overseeing a Large, Urban Parish

As pastoral administrator and director of the work at St. Francis Xavier in Kansas City, Mo., Ann Sheridan is responsible for “just about everything that goes on at the parish.”

Although she has served in this role for less than a year, it did not take long for Ms. Sheridan to get a feel for the breadth and depth of this position.

“There’s so much going on at our parish,” she said. “We have a number of very active groups, committees and organizations; there’s maintenance, finance, buildings and grounds too. Sometimes it feels like I’m the traffic cop at a very busy intersection, making sure that we are all working together toward our common goals.”

St. Francis Xavier, a large, urban parish, had a traditional leadership structure until 2020, when Fr. Mercier chose Ms. Sheridan, the business manager at the parish, for this role. At that same time, a new pastor, Fr. Jim Caime, SJ, was also installed with the chief responsibility of overseeing the spiritual needs of the parish.

“Fr. Caime ultimately reports to me, but we are partners in everything that we do,” she said. “We collaborate and bounce ideas off each other, with the goal of advancing the parish mission.”

While Ms. Sheridan has many responsibilities, she tries to employ a people-first approach.

“I like to think of myself as a connector and a communicator more than an administrator,” she said.

She tries to prioritize people over administrative tasks. Often this means phone calls, responding to emails, or, in a post-pandemic world, face-to-face meetings with parishioners and groups.

Ms. Sheridan uses the Society of Jesus’ four Universal Apostolic Preferences as a guide in her work and remains cognizant of the fact that everything at the parish must work together. For example, the parish’s justice and life objectives must work in concert with those of the parish’s adult faith formation program.

Part of the reason Ms. Sheridan’s work is so vital is because managing a parish can simply be too much for a pastor to handle.

“Being a pastor comes with many responsibilities, even under our current arrangement,” she said. “Before, a pastor was in charge of everything for the whole parish. It’s unreasonable to expect any one person to handle all that. That’s where I can help: I’m here to support and here to serve.”

Ms. Sheridan believes her appointment as director of St. Francis Xavier says less about her own credentials than it does about the Jesuits as a whole.

“Having a married, lay woman in this role sends a signal to everyone that women’s voices are welcome, lay people’s voices, the voices of people of color, LGBTQ are all welcome,” she said. “God’s Church is for all, not the few, and to be truly committed to social justice, to service, to equality, we have to have a seat at the table for everybody.” ■

Debie Lohe, *Interim Vice President for Student Development, Saint Louis University, St. Louis*

Minda Russell, *Vice President of Advancement, Regis Jesuit High School, Denver*

Tamarie Cintrón, *VP of Operations, Colegio San Ignacio, San Juan, P.R.*

Kathleen Juhas, *Academic Assistant Principal, Jesuit High School of New Orleans*

Ann Sheridan, *Pastoral Administrator, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Kansas City, Mo.*

Darlene Loria, *Administrative Assistant for Discipline, Jesuit High School of New Orleans*

Sheila DeSantis, *Board Chair, Ignatian Spirituality Institute, Dallas*

Myrna Hall, *Vice President, Advancement, Regis University, Denver*

Molly O’Sullivan, *Assistant Principal of Academics, Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas*

Karen Wuertz, *Head, Boys Division, Regis Jesuit High School, Denver*

Linda Osterlund, *Dean of the College of Health Professions, Regis University, Denver*

Eugenia Davila, *Dean of Students, Arrupe Jesuit High School, Denver*

Mirtha Peralta, *President, Junior College Division, St. John’s College, Belize City, Belize*

Solangel Alvarado, *Dean, Junior College Division, St. John’s College, Belize City, Belize*

Janet Houser, *Provost, Regis University, Denver*

Diane Blair, *Director of Pastoral Life, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, New Orleans*

Therese Fink Meyerhoff, *Provincial Assistant for Communications*

Margaret A. “Peggy” Rolando, *Vice Chairwoman, Board of Trustees, Spring Hill College, Mobile*

Cynthia Stotler, *Director of Nursing, Fusz Pavilion, St. Louis*

Dana Bauer, *Assistant Principal for Student Support, Regis Jesuit High School, Denver*

Glorimar Soegaard, *Principal, Academia San Ignacio de Loyola, San Juan, P.R.*

Sheila Manion, *Vice President for University Development, Saint Louis University, St. Louis*

Merideth Feik, *Dean of Students, Girls Division, Regis Jesuit High School, Denver*

Mary Mooney Burns, *Vice President for Advancement, Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Mo.*

Barbara Wilcots, *Vice President for Student Affairs, Regis University, Denver*

Helen Swan, *Director of Student Affairs, Jesuit High School of New Orleans*

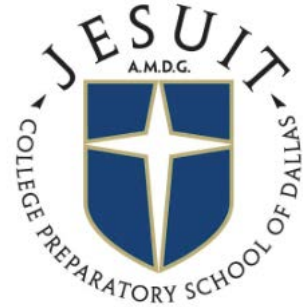
Aileen McCormick, *Chair, Board of Directors, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston*

Maria Isabel Domenech, *Principal, Colegio San Ignacio, San Juan, P.R.*

Inspired by the “Giants:”

Sharing Faith at Jesuit Dallas

By Gretchen Crowder



A few years ago, my husband and I felt super-brave on a Friday and decided to take our two two-year-olds and our four-year-old to a high school football game. It was the first time for our boys to come to Jesuit Dallas for a game. Now, perhaps we could have done this earlier, but we are admittedly homebodies who spent quite some time back then analyzing whether or not the stress of hustling three kids (two of whom were still working on potty training) to a game that started past their bedtime was really worth it. In the end we decided to go for it. During the first ten minutes, I found myself thinking, “I got this. This was a great idea. Look how cute they are in their matching Jesuit

Dallas t-shirts.” The next 20 minutes, however, were a little more stressful as one-liners like the following came out of my mouth for all to hear:

“No, we don’t touch trash cans with our mouths.”

“No, we can’t eat something we dropped on the floor.”

“No, we definitely can’t eat something we’ve both dropped on the floor and stepped on.”

“I am so sorry, sir, that my two-year-old just bear-hugged your leg, we are working on boundaries.”

At this point, we had not even made it to the field.

We finally did get to the field, and thankfully all three were still accounted for. I paused for a moment to take a deep breath, and I was struck by what I saw. The three little bundles of energy had stopped short at the edge of the field in awe of what was in front of them. They stood quietly, almost reverently, staring at a sea of young men in uniforms on the field. I can only imagine what they were wondering as they watched. Perhaps something like: “How’d those boys get so big? Will I ever be that big?”

Over the past four years, we have branched out and taken our boys to a lot more events. In fact, now they get to walk the halls of Jesuit Dallas daily on their way to their own Catholic school located right next door. During each journey from my office across the parking lot to their school, they get to witness even more of these “giant” teenage boys in action – sometimes as bystanders on the sidelines and sometimes more directly. I have no idea if these young men realize what a profound impact they have on the children who look up to them. I do know, however, that I am blessed to witness the wonderful impact they have made on my little ones thus far.



The author's sons stand in awe of the “giants” of Jesuit Dallas.

These young men who tower over my three little boys are the reason why I love to show up every morning to my job as director of campus ministry. When I was in high school myself, I found my niche in campus ministry. It was where I hung out. It was what connected me to my friends. Back then, campus ministry was a place for religious students who loved being active in their faith to hang out and feel at home.

scenes providing the environment for their faith lives to unfold. I am there to give them the opportunity to explore and grow in their faith in God's time.

In many ways, my job is also to stand in awe of my colleagues because of the way they organically share their spirituality with the students in myriad ways.

I hope that by the time these young men graduate Jesuit Dallas,

- Finally, shine when you are meant to shine and fade into the background when you are meant to let another's light shine instead. The world is big enough for all God intended.

On Aug. 17, 2020, Jesuit Dallas opened its doors for the first time since March to a masked and socially distant flood of young men. I had not realized how much I had missed their presence in these halls. Every day I am thankful for each one of them. I know teenage boys are not perfect. They fall down as much as they rise up, but they constantly surprise me, particularly with their ability to be excellent role models for my sons.

In fact, when my oldest son was six, one of the "giant" teenagers took him under his wing and profoundly changed his year. One Friday night, my son and I took in a high school game together. This time, however, instead of my son standing on the sidelines watching a big sea of uniforms warm up in front of him and wondering if he'd ever get the chance to be just like them ... this time, one of the uniforms walked right up to him and said: "Hey buddy, I wear hearing aids just like you. Thank you for coming to my game."

This simple statement, coupled with a fist bump, lit up my son's face with a huge smile. At the end of the game, my son, who previously had a tenuous relationship with sports (at best), skipped excitedly all the way to the car saying: "Momma, guess what? I can play soccer, baseball, football, basketball ... I can play anything! Can you sign me up?" ■



Gretchen Crowder loves to watch the students of Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas serve and share their faith.

In contrast, here at Jesuit Dallas, campus ministry is more a thread that runs through the daily experience of all of our students. It is the active living out of the Catholic, Ignatian mission in the classroom, on the fields, and even on the stage. The best part of my job is to be a fly on the wall of the lives of these students. I love watching them learn to share their faith and their experiences in retreat talks, mentoring younger students and serving the greater community.

In many ways, my job is not to be at the forefront of students' spiritual experience, but to be behind the

they have learned the following from all of us who are on this spiritual journey alongside them:

- That it is okay – in fact encouraged – to be exactly who God created you to be.
- That it is okay to change your mind. After all, St. Ignatius did every time he prayerfully discerned alongside God his next step.
- That you are never alone. We are all working toward a common mission together, and God is journeying right there alongside us.

Our Call to CARE FOR CREATION

By Vindri Gajadhar

Growing up, I took it for granted that it was everyone's responsibility to take care of the environment. It made sense to me that if humans want to live in a world that has fresh air, clean water, more natural landscapes, resources for the future, and opportunities to truly appreciate the outdoors and revel in God's creation, we all have to do our part to care for the environments in which we live.

I am Canadian by birth and lived in Toronto until I was 27. I grew up in a suburb called Etobicoke. In my community, and especially in my household, I was encouraged to be less wasteful and more conscious of the waste I generated. Growing up in an environmentally conscious culture instilled in me a deep respect and desire to care for the natural world.

When I moved to Tampa in 2000, I experienced a culture shock of sorts. One of the things that immediately

stunned me was the amount of trash people threw away – even with garbage pick-up twice a week! Back in Etobicoke, we threw away very little. In my family, when we collected the household trash for weekly pick-up, we usually had no more than one small grocery bag of waste. We didn't even use the typical trash bags that are sold at retailers for that purpose. We re-purposed plastic grocery bags instead. There was never much to throw away because we recycled,

re-purposed things that could have otherwise been tossed in the garbage, composted in our backyard garden and burned some paper products in our wood-burning stove during the winter. We rarely ate packaged, canned or otherwise processed foods.

This is the world I grew up in; it was all I knew. It was so normal and so easy to do. To say that I was shocked at what Americans were throwing away is an understatement. I was deeply saddened. There was no composting. There was no recycling. Everything either went to the land-fill or was incinerated. I felt like my new home was really lagging in the department of environmental stewardship.

As the years passed, recycling arrived in my Tampa suburb. I was quite excited and felt hopeful for the future. Action to protect our resources and environment was slow in coming, but at least it was becoming a priority.

In 2008, my first year at Jesuit High School of Tampa, I taught a unit in Global Studies on the topic of the environment, and a pair of



Led by Vindri Gajadhar, Jesuit Tampa students pitch in to clean up Al Lopez Park across from the high school.



Jesuit High students use oyster shells to help rehabilitate Tampa Bay's shoreline.



students were motivated to take action on environmental stewardship. Within that school year, Jesuit's Environmental Club was off the ground, and I had a crew of devoted students.

The club partnered with a community organization called Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful. They were instrumental in teaching and guiding us in our new endeavor. We started with launching a paper recycling program on campus. Every week, the students in the club collected from all over the campus recyclable paper products. They did this for no other reason than to care for creation. There were no community service hours to be earned. It was a selfless commitment.

Now, 13 years later, the Jesuit Environmental Club is one of the most active clubs on campus. We have 60 members this year and a dedicated student executive team that manages on-campus recycling without adult assistance. Teachers and students saw these club members quietly going about their business after school and began to ask, "When will the

Environmental Club start recycling cans and plastic bottles?"

It was encouraging to see interest in recycling grow. It was a ground-up expansion. In 2019, the club expanded the on-campus recycling program to include plastic and can recycling. Currently, recyclables are collected in the cafeteria and in certain outdoor areas of campus, but interest is growing in bringing receptacles to every classroom and office.

We are definitely seeing a growth in environmental awareness. Jesuit Tampa also made the move in 2019 to add water bottle refilling stations around campus. Now, students can bring their own water bottles and refill them throughout the day instead of buying single-use drinks. It's beautiful to see how the daily actions of a few devoted individuals can become contagious.

The Jesuit Environmental Club's interests are not limited to caring for creation on campus. Members participate in many community-based environmental activities such as coastal cleanups, tree planting, park cleanups, gardening, community beautification projects, and the rehabilitation of Tampa Bay's shoreline and water quality through the creation of oyster shell bars.

A new project that we are excited to try involves placing stickers on storm drains to remind people to protect our waterways. The club is also considering adopting a park or road to take care of permanently.

My role over the years has been to guide the students and help them organize meetings and events. Up until this year I have supervised and participated in all weekend activities with my students. I have always brought my husband and children

along to the events, and I encourage the students to bring their families and friends. We want others to join in and realize how easy and how enjoyable it is to take care of the environmental health of our communities.

I love to hear the students talk after a community-based event because they are so pumped up and ready for another one. I point out to them that even picking up trash can be fun when you have like-minded people to work with. They always agree.

I am blessed that there is an opportunity to pursue my passion for environmental stewardship at Jesuit Tampa. What's even more rewarding, though, is watching others in both my school community and my wider Tampa Bay community become more motivated to do their part in caring for creation.

I have experienced firsthand the positive changes that can happen when environmentally inspired people are impelled to action. What started with the interest of just two students has blossomed into a major institution at our school. The younger generation is growing up in a world where recycling, waste reduction and resource preservation are facts of life.

I feel like I have come full circle. My own children and my students know the importance of caring for creation, like I did as a child. The seeds of environmental consciousness have been planted in them, and because of this, our future will be brighter and greener. ■



AUTHOR BIO

Vindri Gajadhar is a social studies teacher and the Environmental Club moderator at Jesuit High School of Tampa.

Ella Chevis: Like Family

By Therese Fink Meyerhoff



Before the pandemic, Ella Chevis had a date once a month with a Jesuit. There was no scandal; it's just the way Ms. Chevis approaches her ministry as director of nursing for the St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion in Grand Coteau, La. The Jesuit in question loves to go out to restaurants, so Ms. Chevis took him out to dinner every month. Because that's what one does for family.

"The atmosphere here (at the Pavilion) is so beautiful. We try to be a family," Ms. Chevis says.

St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion is one of two facilities in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province where senior and infirm Jesuits receive care. Ms. Chevis oversees a staff of 20 who care for about 11 men. This care goes beyond meeting physical needs. "I do a lot of little things," she says. "We have 11 guys, and sometimes there's 11 different toothpastes. I try to make their lives a little easier, because they have a hard time accepting that they have to be in a care facility."

"When I came to the Ignatius Residence in New Orleans as the director in 2009, Ella was already the director of nursing," Fr. James Bradley, SJ, recalls. "But she was much more than that. She was the manager of the facility, the personnel director, the primary caregiver of the Jesuits assigned there, the purchasing agent – to name

a few of her varied activities. She showers tender, loving care on the Jesuits under her care. In my ten years as director, we have helped more than 50 Jesuits climb the Stairway to Heaven, and Ella has been with each one of them as nurse, comforter, special friend and companion."

Ms. Chevis grew up in New Orleans, but her parents are from the Grand Coteau area in southwest Louisiana. They were married, and Ella was baptized, at St. Charles Borromeo, the Jesuit parish in Grand Coteau. "I bleed Jesuit," she says with a laugh.

changes that indicate a change in needs," Ella explains. The doctors trust the staff's judgment, including whether the man needs to be placed on hospice.

"The final transition can be heartbreaking, but the staff doesn't give up on the men during the final stages," Ms. Chevis says. "It can be tough on

"The final transition can be heartbreaking, but the staff doesn't give up on the men during the final stages. It can be tough on the staff, but we know that's when the men need us the most. So, we act as counselors for each other."

– Ella Chevis

She first came to work for the Jesuits 18 years ago, when the infirmary was the Ignatius Residence in New Orleans, and has now served as director of nursing for about 15 years. She clearly regards her job as a vocation, a ministry.

The nursing staff cares for the men under the direction of their doctors. "Because we know the men so well, we recognize the small

the staff, but we know that's when the men need us the most. So, we act as counselors for each other."

"We have been most blessed to have Ella as our Companion in the very special ministry we have at the St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion at Grand Coteau," Fr. Bradley says. "I hope she is still around when it is my turn to mount those stairs." ■



Sue Weishar: Guided by Encounter

By Mary Baudouin

Sue Weishar knew as a young girl that she wanted to experience cultures other than the one she knew growing up in the Midwest. That desire led her around the world – to Samoa as a Peace Corps Volunteer and to Guatemala as a teacher – and to Louisiana as coordinator of international students at the University of Louisiana Lafayette and director of Immigration and Refugee Services at Catholic Charities New Orleans. Ten years ago, it led her to the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) in New Orleans, where she serves as a policy and research fellow focusing on issues of immigration and criminal justice.

JSRI is a joint project of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province and Loyola University New Orleans.

In every role, Dr. Weishar has based her work in what Pope Francis calls “the culture of encounter.” Her friendships with immigrants, refugees and incarcerated people inform her work as an advocate and researcher.

“Accompaniment really resonates with me. It is so important to keep me grounded as I try to understand

issues from the way they impact individuals,” Weishar says. “I have developed such enriching friendships with people with life experiences and from cultures totally different from my own.”

Weishar’s research and advocacy on criminal justice issues, including solitary confinement, human rights and mass incarceration, led her years ago to attend a “Day of Compassion” at Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola). During this event that brought together for dialogue incarcerated people and outside stakeholders, Weishar befriended Robert, a 47-year-old man who has been in Angola for 27 years, convicted of second-degree murder after a fight with a friend turned deadly.

More than all the books and research studies Weishar has read, it is her friendship with Robert that has helped her understand the experience of imprisoned people – both the good and the bad.

“I talk to Robert once a week,” she says. “I have learned so much about faith from him. His faith allows him to live a life of love, mercy and forgiveness. Our lives are so different, but we share a common humanity. This grounds me and has been an incredible grace.”

Weishar believes that creating a culture of encounter is key to both breaking down walls and building

stronger advocates. She is the creator and organizer of JSRI’s Teach-Ins on Immigration and Mass Incarceration, during which immigrants and formerly incarcerated people share their stories with students and parishioners. The relationships of trust that she has built with immigrants and formerly incarcerated people have given them the courage needed to tell others about their experiences.

Many of those who attend the Teach-Ins go on to join Weishar and JSRI in advocating for more just legislation, policies and practices for undocumented immigrants and people impacted by the criminal justice system.

Working directly with immigrants by teaching English as a Second Language, organizing food drives for families whose primary breadwinner has been deported and conducting legal services intake interviews after Immigration and Customs Enforcement workplace raids, have fired Weishar’s passion for speaking out for justice in her writing, research and advocacy with law and policy makers. She speaks and writes from her heart, formed by those on the margins she counts as her friends. ■

PRAYING, WORKING, LOVING:

Women's Witness of Faith Points to God

By Aric Serrano, SJ

In order to experience meaningful spiritual growth, people of faith need a spiritual support system.

While I hope that, as a Jesuit, I have supported many on their faith journeys, I, too, owe a debt of gratitude to many who helped me along my way. My aunt, Sr. Teresa, played a significant role in my spiritual development and vocation. I learned about myself and where God was leading me through my relationship with Sr. Teresa. She entered the Discalced Carmelites in Lake Elmo, Minnesota, in 1993. As a result, my awareness of the austere lives of the nuns began my formation toward my own vocation. Over the years, my family formed a bond with the community through visits and letters. The sisters supported my family through prayer and food donations. As my family grew to 13 children, we could always use it.

The idea of being a religious came to me in high school. Whenever we went to visit the Carmelites, the odd sense of peace and stability that the sisters exhibited interested me. I wanted that peace, so I thought: "I should be a Carmelite." However, five days with a group of monks taught me that God was not calling me to contemplative life.

After that experience, I remembered reading some stories about

St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier from a children's book of saints. The stories of their lives sparked something inside of me. But my family lived in Clayton, N.M. at the time and there were no Jesuits for miles. In my correspondence with Sr. Teresa, she told me her spiritual director was a Jesuit and put me in touch with him. Thus, I began my discernment with the Society of Jesus.

Sr. Teresa has always been a spiritual authority in my life; "spiritual authority," as in someone I continually look to for trusted advice. She is one of the many insightful women who deepen my own vocation.

During first studies in New York, I had the gift of meeting various women religious. I taught music to elementary students at St. John Chrysostom Elementary School in the Bronx and got to know the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill. I was moved by the fierce love the sisters gave to the students and the wider Bronx community. I also worked with the Sisters of Life and was touched by their love, generosity and devotion to living out their mission of protecting life.

Similarly, my time teaching at Regis Jesuit High School also



brought me into contact with numerous administrators, teachers and parents; women praying, working and loving. It is my opinion that Jesuit apostolates would not be able to function fully without women leading and sustaining them.

Pope Francis affirms that men and women need each other in order to grow. In his words: "Experience teaches us: in order to know oneself well and develop harmoniously, a human being needs the reciprocity of



Aric Serrano, SJ, is grateful for the prayers of Sr. Teresa, shown at her profession of solemn vows in 1996.

man and woman. When that is lacking, one can see the consequences. We are made to listen to one another and help one another.”

From his General Audience on April 15, 2015, Francis continues: “We can say that without the mutual enrichment of this relationship – in thought and in action, in affection and in work, as well as in faith – the two cannot even understand the depth of what it means to be man and woman.”



Aric Serrano, SJ, prepares to lead music at a Mass in the Bronx with two Dominican sisters and students.

Indeed, the mutual enrichment of men and women through relationship allows for the flourishing of both. This flourishing allows for God’s love to be known, as the history of the Society of Jesus reflects. St. Ignatius himself corresponded with many women throughout his ministry. Women were significant in helping the Jesuits establish colleges and charitable works.

Through the work women do in the Catholic Church and beyond, they demonstrate that they love much. Jesuits are spiritually impacted by the women that we meet; the many faithful women we encounter inspire us and offer us direction. They inspire by following Jesus’ example and imitating his self-emptying love. Like the Blessed Virgin, they hear God’s word, and they keep it by

Jesuits are spiritually impacted by the women that we meet.

Women have held spiritual authority throughout the history of the Church. St. Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus and announce it to the disciples. St. Hildegard of Bingen was incredibly influential through her letters to people seeking her advice. Dorothy Day helped form a movement dedicated to caring for the poor. There are numerous examples of women throughout Church history; women within religious orders as well as single and married life. Many have led quiet lives of little notoriety while impacting those around them in profound ways.

St. Ignatius writes that love is shown more in deeds than in words.

making space in their hearts for Jesus; no cost is asked, and room is freely given.

Their witness of faith encourages me to follow Jesus more closely and allows my relationships to point directly to God. Without the guidance and inspiration of the many women of strong faith that I have encountered throughout my life, I would not be where I am today. ■



AUTHOR BIO

Aric Serrano, SJ, is in the first year of theology studies at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif.

IN MEMORIAM

*Lord, have mercy on these men, for they believed in the resurrection of the dead.
Grant them a place of refreshment, light and peace in your presence.*

Father Carlos J. Lavergne Seraballs, SJ

December 22, 1929 – October 11, 2020



Father Carlos J. Lavergne Seraballs, SJ, died Oct. 11, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was 90 years old, a Jesuit for 69 years and a priest for 55 years.

In all his various assignments, Fr. Lavergne gave 100%, whether that entailed preparing class, keeping accounts, maintaining buildings, attentively listening to students or preparing homilies and celebrating the liturgy. He was dedicated and generous in serving his brothers in community and in preaching the Gospel to God's people.

Father James J. Costello, SJ

July 9, 1931 – November 3, 2020



Father James J. Costello, SJ, served in a variety of ministries, ranging from education to retreat and parish work as well as hospital chaplaincy and campus ministry. He was trusted and beloved by generations of students, parishioners, retreatants and patients from St. Louis to Sedalia, Colo., to Belize City, Belize. He was a legend as a confessor, known as the kindest, gentlest person one could hope for when going to the sacrament of reconciliation.

Father Jim Costello died Nov. 3, in St. Louis. He was 89 years old, a Jesuit for 67 years and a priest for 54 years.

Father John D. Arnold, SJ

May 26, 1940 – November 15, 2020



A former principal, president and rector of De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis, Fr. John D. Arnold, SJ, died Sunday, Nov. 15, in St. Louis. He was 80 years old, a Jesuit for 60 years and a priest for 47 years.

A St. Louisan to his core, Fr. Arnold began his long association with De Smet Jesuit in 1967, teaching English and then serving as assistant principal. A victory in a charity poker tournament 33 years ago was the seed that sprouted the legend of Fr. Arnold as a formidable poker player. He continued playing until the pandemic made poker games unsafe. Despite his cringe-worthy corny jokes, he was a cheerful companion until the very end.

Father Paul W. Schott, SJ

November 1, 1923 – November 26, 2020



Father Paul W. Schott, SJ, died on Thanksgiving, Nov. 26, in Grand Coteau, La. He was 97 years old, a Jesuit for 70 years and a priest for 60 years.

Father Schott was an innovative and successful president of two province schools: Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas and Jesuit High School in New Orleans. He also served in retreat and pastoral ministry, as well as administrative service to the Jesuit province. Although his early ministry had been in schools, Fr. Schott came to love parochial work deeply, and his parishioners reciprocated with their attachment and appreciation for him.

Father Michael A. Bouzigard, SJ

May 29, 1964 – December 1, 2020



Father Michael A. Bouzigard, SJ, was a quiet man and loyal friend. He was proud of his Cajun roots in south Louisiana and enjoyed

telling stories and commenting on the foibles and absurdities he noticed around him. He served in a variety of ministries, most recently as formator for priests and deacons of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, where he was a sought-after spiritual director and confessor.

Father Michael Bouzigard died Dec. 1, in San Antonio, Texas. He was 56 years old, a Jesuit for 29 years and a priest for 19 years.

Father Robert D. Voss, SJ

June 18, 1941 – December 9, 2020



Father Robert D. Voss, SJ, died Dec. 9, in St. Louis. He was 79 years old, a Jesuit for 61 years and a priest for 48 years.

As a priest, Fr. Voss worked exclusively in the Yoro, Honduras Mission. He loved people on the margins: the poor and prisoners, the poorest of the poor. He understood and supported initiatives that flowed from liberation theology; but he also respected the more traditional piety of simple people. Over time, his own devotion became one with the people's devotion, his heart one with their heart. After he left Honduras, the people continued to ask, "How is Padre Roberto?" We can answer with confidence, "Now, he is fine."

Father Daniel C. O'Connell, SJ

May 20, 1928 – December 21, 2020



Following many years of study, Fr. Daniel C. O'Connell taught psychology at Saint Louis University for five years before becoming school president, serving in that position from 1974 to 1978. After leaving SLU, Fr. O'Connell taught or did research at the University of Kansas, Kassel

University in Germany, Loyola University Chicago, Georgetown University and the Technical University of Berlin.

Father O'Connell, SJ, died Dec. 21, in St. Louis. He was 92 years old, a Jesuit for 75 years and a priest for 62 years.

Father Hervé Racivitch, SJ

September 16, 1928 – January 8, 2021



Father Hervé Racivitch, SJ, died Jan. 8, in Grand Coteau, La. He was 92 years old, a Jesuit for 70 years and a priest for 58 years.

A native of New Orleans, he is best remembered for his time as a teacher at Jesuit High New Orleans, 1965-71, where he was an engaging instructor who inspired his students to go above and beyond. His chronic, debilitating depression interfered with his ability to serve in ministry, but when it occasionally lifted, flashes of his true self emerged through insightful, witty and articulate commentary.

MORE For complete obituaries, visit the province website:
ON THE WEB www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/in-memoriam.

VIRTUAL LENTEN RETREAT

Fall in Love with Jesus - Again



CONVERSION OF HEART

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Directed by

**Hung Pham, SJ, and
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Contribution: \$50



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Next President Named for De Smet Jesuit

De Smet Jesuit's board of trustees has chosen Daniel Zepp to serve as the school's next president. His selection follows a national search process. He will begin his tenure on July 1, 2021.

"Daniel Zepp is a visionary and charismatic leader, with a solid background in Jesuit education," said Board Chair Greg Pohlman '78 and Search Committee Chair Chrissy Nardini in their announcement to the De Smet Jesuit community.

"I have been formed and transformed personally, academically, professionally, and spiritually through Jesuit education and Ignatian spirituality," said Dr. Zepp. "It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I take what I've learned throughout my career in secondary schools, Jesuit education, and my doctoral research on the faith development of young men, to deepen the already outstanding work that occurs at De Smet Jesuit each day."



Louis R. Hotop, SJ, (fifth from right) was ordained to the diaconate on Oct. 24, 2020, in the Church of Santa Maria, Orinda, Calif. Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, SJ, Bishop of Oakland, was the ordaining prelate.

Daniel A. Mora Arenas, SJ, was ordained to the diaconate on Nov. 27, 2020, in the Church of San Ignacio, Bogotá, Colombia. Most Reverend Luis José Rueda Aparicio, Archbishop of Bogotá, was the ordaining prelate.



Dear reader,

I have been the editor of this publication for more than five years, but this is the first time I have written directly to you in this way. But as we've all been hearing for the past 12 months, these are unprecedented times. Case in point: an issue of *Jesuits* magazine featuring only the work of women.

When Fr. Provincial Tom Greene decided to create a Women's Advisory Committee, I was impressed and pleased. When he invited me to devote an entire issue of this magazine to women, I was excited. This was a chance to do something different.

I approached this issue with the apostles in mind. Not the 12 or 13 you immediately thought of just now, but the female disciples who surrounded Jesus, attending to his needs, and, on occasion, challenging him. It was women who remained at Calvary to the end. And for a brief moment on the day of Resurrection, the Church was made up of only women – one woman, to be precise, Mary Magdalene, who immediately shared the Good News.

These apostles served as my inspiration for this issue of *Jesuits* magazine, as I sought to tell the stories of women at work in this province, faithfully caring for the mission of the Society of Jesus as though it were their own. Because it is.

When I speak of the Jesuits – specifically the members of the USA Central and Southern Province – I tend to use the pronoun “we.” I am not – cannot be – a Jesuit. For some women, that truth causes real pain. But for me, and I think for many of my female colleagues, it is not necessary for me to be a member of the Society of Jesus to support its mission of justice, reconciliation and the promotion of the Faith.

In our province schools, women make up a high percentage of the faculties and staffs. In every parish and retreat house in this province, there are women steadfastly ministering to the needs of the People of God. It is mostly women who care for senior Jesuits in our two infirmaries.

But. Of the 12 high schools in this province, eight serve only male students. One of our retreat houses serves only men. There is a clear disconnect: women are serving with generosity and commitment, but are they being served at the same level? How might this province improve its ministry to women and girls?

I am grateful to Fr. Greene for inviting me to focus on women in this issue of *Jesuits* magazine. I am even more grateful that he recognizes the contributions of women in this province, and that he is open to the possibility of expanding province ministry to become more inclusive.

Finally, this seems a good time to thank Tracy Gramm, our talented graphic designer. This year marks her 30th anniversary with the Jesuits. She is the artist who pulls everything together and makes my humble words and ideas look professional. I am grateful to have her as my partner in mission.

Thank you for reading this magazine, which is always a labor of love for me.

Peace,

Therese Fink Meyerhoff
UCS Provincial Assistant for Communications



“A woman
is harmony,
is poetry, is beauty.
Without her the
world would not be
so beautiful,
it would not be
harmonious.
And I like to think
– but this is a
personal thing –
that God created
women so that we
would all have
a mother.”

– Pope Francis

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ALUM SERVICE | IGNATIAN VOLUNTEER CORPS | SOCIAL SERVICE

Many Calls, Many Ways to Serve

We are each called to respond to God's invitation to serve in our own way.

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province is blessed to have people serving through the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, alumni service programs and parish and school social ministry programs. Alum service opportunities are for new college grads; IVC is for adults 50 and over.

What is God calling you to do?



Alum Service
Ken Luecke, Director
asc@jesuits.org
www.alumservicecorps.org
(314) 758-7151

Ignatian Volunteer Corps
Sr. Amy Diesen, OSF
IVCSTL@Jesuits.org
(314) 361-7765