



# mission

## magazine

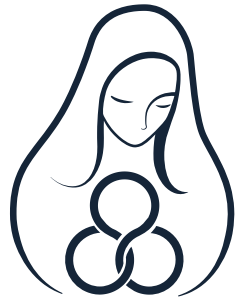
WINTER 2021



**RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD:**  
Sr. Caritas Wendt, SOLT

**WITNESS OF HOPE:**  
Sr. MaryAnn Richwald, SOLT

**SHARE HIS JOY:**  
Fr. John Patterson, SOLT



# SOCIETY of OUR LADY

of the Most Holy Trinity

## A message from the **GENERAL PRIEST SERVANT**



### **The Year of St. Joseph**

*When reflecting on the earthly life of Jesus, it is striking and revealing that despite His intimacy with His Heavenly Father, and the Love shared between them, Jesus was denied at every turn of an easy, comfortable life. He was born into poverty in a cave in Bethlehem; at the Presentation, 40 days after His birth, the poverty of His family was further attested to by the fact that His parents gave the prescribed offering of the poor - two turtle doves; while still in infancy His life was threatened and the family lived as refugees in Egypt for a time; He was eventually despised and rejected by His own people; and, He suffered a gruesome, agonizing death on the Cross, seemingly abandoned by all except His Mother and a couple disciples at the foot of the Cross. None of the above would be what a parent would want for their child! However, despite the extreme difficulty throughout his life, there was one very notable thing Jesus was not deprived of - a loving home with a loving father, St. Joseph, and a loving mother, Holy Mary.*

*It would not have taken much editing of the story for Jesus to grow up in a single parent household. Joseph was after all pondering, at least for a brief time, putting Mary aside. Speculating even further, perhaps the plan of God could have been completely different and Jesus could have mysteriously appeared on the scene as an adult ready to begin His mission immediately. In other words, instead of the incarnation taking place from the first moment of life, it would have occurred later. Of course, I don't say any of that to merely drift off into wild hypothetical speculation. I say it because everything about Jesus' life is a model for us, including His family life with Mary and Joseph. It is therefore highly significant and revealing that the essential role of marriage and family is also attested to in the very life of Our Lord.*

*In the plan of God, the family is called to be a domestic Church - a privileged place of communion where the love of God can be experienced in a tangible way in the love between the spouses and shared with their children. It is the place of introduction into*



*SOLT Lay Members, Matthew and Joanna Moore, praying the rosary with their children*



*Disciples of Jesus through Mary living in Marian-Trinitarian communion, serving on Ecclesial Family Teams in areas of deepest apostolic need*

*prayer and mission to follow God. Together, Joseph, Mary and Jesus comprised the perfect domestic Church. They lived in communion with one another, persevered in faith and prayer, and were totally dedicated to following the will of God! The Holy Family is truly the model for all family life lived as a domestic Church!*

*On December 8, 2020, Pope Francis announced a special year in honor of St. Joseph on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph being named as the universal patron of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius IX. In a world which has grown more and more intent at deconstructing the values of masculinity, femininity, marriage, and family by dismissing any reference to the natural law as it pertains to them, shining a spotlight on St. Joseph and the Holy Family is more important than ever! As Pope Francis points out in his apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*, St. Joseph is a much beloved figure in the Church, a model father and spouse who was*

*tender, loving, accepting, creatively courageous, hard-working, obedient to God, and reflecting the Paternity of God the Father by his careful watching over and protecting of his precious child, Jesus.*

*As we all know too well, marriage and family life often get complicated and children are the ones who suffer the consequences of adult failures. Although we may fall short of the goal, let us pray that all families would truly strive to emulate the Holy Family, and let us pray in a special way that all fathers, husbands, priests, and indeed all men, would look to St. Joseph as a role model and guide to living their God given masculinity.*

**FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT**

Fr. Peter, originally from Burlington, Ontario, is currently serving as the General Priest Servant of SOLT. He resides in Corpus Christi, TX.

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# Receive the Word of God



*Above: Our Lady of Corpus Christi (OLCC) adoration chapel and Marian Garden; Fr. Samuel Medley, SOLT, director of OLCC, gives a homily at daily Mass.*

## *Our Lady of Corpus Christi (OLCC)*

Retreat Center, located in Corpus Christi, Texas, seeks to implement SOLT's mission to bring "all peoples in union with the Trinity through discipleship of Jesus through Mary." Since the outbreak of COVID-19, our online apostolate has grown to meet the needs of our time.

One specific way we are fulfilling our mission is through a daily Liturgy Preparation video based upon the readings from Mass. These videos are accessible on our social media platforms (OLCC Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and on our website, [ourladyofcorpuschristi.org](http://ourladyofcorpuschristi.org). Liturgy Preparation, similar to *lectio divina*, is a practice of prayer wherein the readings from Mass are reflected upon and the Holy Spirit is asked what He is teaching us through them. Each video is a fruit of prayer from the person featured and helps viewers to dive more deeply into the Scripture. Liturgy Preparation is a powerful way to pray, because it helps a person to prepare for

Holy Mass. Fr. Jim Flanagan, the founder of SOLT, would often say, "We must live from Communion to Communion." This means we are called to spend half of our time in preparation for the Eucharist and the other half in thanksgiving for past receptions of the Eucharist. What better way is there to prepare to receive Jesus than by praying on the Word of God in the Liturgy for that day?

Liturgy preparation is a gift to the Church, because we are joining Catholics throughout the world who will be hearing the same readings at Holy Mass. "The Word of God is living and effective" (Hebrews 4:12). Christ speaks to us in His Word in the present moment, and we offer these videos in the hope that others will follow Jesus more closely as His disciples.

*Below: Fr. Samuel Medley, SOLT celebrates Mass for Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.*



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*Liturgy Preparation is a powerful way to pray, because it helps a person to prepare for Holy Mass.*



**SR. CARITAS OF THE CROSS WENDT, SOLT**  
Sr. Caritas Wendt, SOLT professed first vows in 2009. She serves at OLCC in online ministry and as retreat coordinator for SOLT retreats.



# Witness of Hope

*It is Jesus that you seek when  
you dream of happiness; He is waiting  
for you when nothing else you find satisfies you;  
He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is  
He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness  
that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He  
who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it  
is He who reads in your heart your most genuine  
choices, the choices that others try to stifle.*

*-Saint Pope John Paul II*

Eighteen years ago, I arrived in North Dakota to begin my Aspirancy with the Society of Our Lady and to serve at St. Ann's Mission to the Chippewa and Metis people of the Turtle Mountains. I had no idea what to expect, but I was amazed by the beauty of the mission. The native people welcomed us and shared their culture and unique blending of Native American and French traditions. The SOLT Family Ecclesial Team and the way the priests and sisters loved and served the people with such joy and a familial spirit had me falling in love with our SOLT community. There was another unique aspect to the mission and the team: the lay missionary volunteers who came with such enthusiasm, love, and generosity of spirit. They brought tremendous joy and witness to the people and to the team. The lay missionaries prayed, served, ate, and recreated with us.





Three years ago, when I was again assigned to serve in the Turtle Mountains, it felt like coming home. What a blessing to be back, but sadly there was a change in the atmosphere. Something seemed to be missing in our volunteer program. It had grown thin with only a couple of veteran volunteers holding the line during most of the year. During the summer we still had an amazing Summer Camp with many volunteers, but only a few could commit to a year of service. Several people remembered the “good old days” with affection and many were praying for a renewal of the Volunteer Program.

Our wonderful bishop, Bishop John Folda, instituted a Marian Year of Grace for the people of the Turtle Mountains from October 2019-October 2020, and during this time many people consecrated themselves to Our Lady. Sr. Caritas Sparke was sent by SOLT to

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*They brought tremendous joy and witness to the people and to the team.*







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*The joy we experience and the friendships we have all formed are founded on our love of God and on our faith. So many different personalities and gifts, yet one family in Christ.*

*Above: SOLT Missionary Volunteers with SOLT Ecclesial Family Team in North Dakota; St. Ann is the partron saint of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Belcourt.*

help us renew the Volunteer Program. In the midst of the pandemic, God chose this time to send us the great gift of young people willing to serve. During the last week of the Marian Year our new volunteers began to arrive and there are now ten of them serving.

The volunteers' first few weeks started with a retreat led by Sr. Caritas and Fr. Dave Brokke, SOLT. Deep friendships and a strong community were forged during that time of retreat, and this group is exceptional in their prayer, joy, and graced friendships. They are a tremendous blessing, serving in our Catholic school,

development office, food pantry, youth ministry, Summer Camp preparations, and parish ministry.

The joy we experience and the friendships we have all formed are founded on our love of God and on our faith. So many different personalities and gifts, yet one family in Christ. I enjoy the time I get to spend with them and Fridays have become a favorite day in the convent as we serve with volunteers in St. Mary's Mission Store, preparing toys for Christmas and cooking together. They radiate joy during this time when many are struggling with uncertainty and unbelief. They are a true witness of hope.

*Opposite page (from top): Belcourt, ND residents, Dan and Bridget Jerome, recieve communion from Fr. Dave Brokke; Sr. MaryAnn Richwald baking with SOLT Missionary Volunteers at the convent in Dunseith, ND. Missionary Volunteers form graced friendships in the mission; St. Anthony's Church is one of three SOLT run parishes that serves the people ofthe Turtle Mountains.*



**SR. MARYANN RICHWALD, SOLT**

Sr. MaryAnn Richwald, SOLT is originally from Newton, New Jersey. She has been a professed Sister since 2007.



# Share His Joy!

## ***In a bold movement of the Holy Spirit***

Pope Francis has declared a Year of St. Joseph which began on December 8th, 2020. How does the Pope describe the love of St. Joseph for Jesus? He loves him with the heart of a father! By his virginal marriage to Our Lady, St. Joseph goes to Jesus through Mary so profoundly that Jesus calls him dad. St. Joseph was privileged to live in the presence of Jesus and Mary for many years. In a time when the world needs to rediscover the gift

of fatherhood, the successor of Peter turns our gaze to the man closest to Christ.

In *Patris Corde*, the letter released by Pope Francis to announce the Year of St. Joseph, he highlights that St. Joseph loved Jesus with a creative love. He is a great problem solver. On that first Christmas Eve, he kept knocking on doors with courage and patience looking for a place where his wife would give birth. With no room to be found, St. Joseph chose the stable for shelter that night. Little did

he know, as the baby Jesus was laid in the manger, that many years later Catholic homes everywhere would have a manger scene. It is a witness of the love of God made present to us and the quick thinking of a father caring for his Child.

Want to be closer to Jesus and Mary? Go to Joseph. Pope St. John XXIII was convinced that St. Joseph himself greeted the shepherds and wise men and led them to Jesus and Mary. St. Joseph is the protector of the Holy Family and the first minister of Catholic hospitality. What he did for them he does for us. Would you like to have a baby? Need financial help? Need healing or help in relationships? Go to Joseph.

Jesus shares everything He has with us. At Calvary, He gave us His mother when he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" (John 19:27). In that same spirit of total self-giving, St. Joseph becomes our spiritual father. We are one in the Body of Christ with St. Joseph, because in Baptism, we are made one with Christ. St. Joseph continues even now to humbly serve the whole Church with joy.

In general, a father cares for his children in many hidden ways. St. Joseph is our spiritual father who desires to help us if only we draw near to him and ask. If we consecrate ourselves to St. Joseph, we are drawn deeper into the Holy Family, our imitation of Jesus and Mary becomes more perfect, and St. Joseph will take care of us as he took care of Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother. Imagine Mary telling Jesus the story of how St. Joseph persevered and found a place for His birth, Jesus can say with deep joy, "That's My dad!" Let us remember that we, like the child Jesus, are also in the care of St. Joseph and we too, can share His joy!

*Clockwise (from opposite page): Statue of St. Joseph at Our Lady of Corpus Christi in Corpus Christi, Texas; Fr. John with confirmandi at St. Anthony's in Robstown, Texas; SOLT Novices share their joy at the parish in Robstown.*

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*In families, a father does much for his children before they are aware of him. How much more will St. Joseph help us if we draw near to him and ask for help.*



**FR. JOHN PATTERSON, SOLT**

Fr. John Patterson, SOLT is originally from Lebanon, Ohio. He was ordained a priest in 2002 and is currently serving at St. Anthony of Padua parish in Robstown, Texas.



**Above:** Celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Robstown, Texas.



**SOCIETY of OUR LADY**  
of the Most Holy Trinity  
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**On the front cover:** Students in San Pedro, Belize, Spring 2020.

**Right:** SOLT Missionary Volunteers with the SOLT Ecclesial Family Team in Belcourt, North Dakota.



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