



# mission

## magazine

SPRING 2020



### CREATIVE EVANGELIZATION:

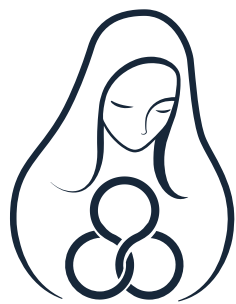
Sr. Maryam Caritas Sparke, SOLT

### THE GOOD NEWS IS CONTAGIOUS:

Fr. Tony Blount, SOLT

### TOGETHER, APART:

Maureen Murray



SOCIETY *of* OUR LADY  
of the Most Holy Trinity

A message from the  
**GENERAL  
PRIEST  
SERVANT**



### **Unique Graces for a Unique Time**

*This past March, much of the Catholic world experienced an entirely new situation when many dioceses announced that Mass could only be celebrated in private. Indeed, it was a very surreal feeling even for me, and I can only imagine for people who treasure being able to go to Mass, and in particular for those who have gone their entire lives without missing a Sunday Mass, sometimes going to great lengths to arrive there. Our involuntary absence from the sacraments also provides an opportunity to reflect on the beauty and greatness of the sacraments that we long for, in particular the sacrament of Holy Communion, and provides the opportunity to reflect on the invitation we*

*have received to open ourselves to the grace of this particularly unique moment.*

*The entire situation reminds me of an important theological axiom which reads: God binds Himself to the sacraments, but isn't bound by them. God binds Himself in the sense that when the sacraments are celebrated properly, according to the proper matter and form, God guarantees that He will do His part and make present the intended effect. For the Sacrament of Holy Communion, when a validly ordained priest celebrates Mass properly by using the matter of unleavened bread and sacramental wine, with the correct form of the words of consecration, God does His part and the bread and wine are certainly transformed into the Body and Blood of*

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

*Christ. God binding Himself to the sacraments provides us with the certitude to know that the intended effect has indeed taken place – this is a great gift!*

*To say that God is not bound by the sacraments means that the sacraments are not the only way that God can communicate His grace and presence to us. As I write this article, and perhaps even as you read it, we are being given a different kind of unique opportunity that corresponds with a very particular moment in history whereby the Shepherds of the Church, out of concern for the physical well-being of the flock, have invited us in faith to receive God's grace in a different way. Namely, by listening to and participating in the Mass online, and making an act of faith and trust to say, "God, despite not being able to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, I believe and trust that you are the true cause of the grace of communion, and that you can communicate this gift to me at this online Mass!" Admittedly, this is a unique mode of reception, and a unique expression of faith, but we are being told by the Shepherds of the Church that it is also an incredibly unique moment we are living*

*through and therefore the exceptional moment leads to an exceptional expression of faith.*

*My brothers and sisters, while disappointed at not being able to receive the Eucharist at Mass, we are invited to respond to the present situation with a heroic act of faith in the power of God to communicate Himself to us in a unique way at this time. Further, it is also an invitation to cultivate our desire for the moment when we can return to the ordinary form of participation in Mass with a renewed and heightened sense of appreciation for the great gift of the Eucharist and Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Please be assured of our continued prayers for your spiritual and physical well-being, and please pray for all of those whom SOLT serves and are struggling through the Covid-19 pandemic.*

**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.



*Fr. Peter livestreams Mass seven days a week on [solt.net](http://solt.net), Facebook Live and Youtube Live.*



# Creative Evangelization



Above: Sr. Maryam Caritas, SOLT hosts an online prayer group.

*I will never forget the image of one of my former students laying sick on his hospital bed. He had surgery on his back which left him immobile for two months. At the prompting of his mother, I was asked to visit him to teach him catechesis. The sight of his pain nearly knocked the wind right of me. He was hurting so much and there was nothing I could do.*

Words cannot express the helplessness I felt at that moment. It was clear he didn't only need a catechism class, he needed accompaniment and direction in this journey of suffering. I first asked him, "How are you doing?" at which he began to pour out his soul. He was suffering and felt utterly alone. As I departed, I handed him a few



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*For every parish, this looks different, yet universally the call remains the same, to make His love known and to love in return.*



videos that dealt with suffering. Days later when I returned, I asked him, “So, tell me, what did you learn?” Tears filled his eyes and he simply said, “I am not alone!”

This young man taught me what it means to meet a person right where they are, for him that was his hospital room. Most recently, with the outbreak of COVID-19, that place of meeting has become cyberspace in most cases. The Church finds herself in a time in which physical distancing has not allowed her members to gather for learning, for fellowship and above all for liturgical celebrations. Therefore, the question becomes, “how do we meet the needs of the people?”

For every parish, this looks different, yet universally the call remains the same, to make His love known and to love in return. This type of isolation is unnatural to the human heart, and each person experiences a struggle in the midst of it. What does ministry and evangelization look like during this time? The Holy Spirit doesn't remain at a social distance. He resides in our hearts and continues to help us in the ministry of prayer, presence, and evangelization.

At Christ the King Catholic Church this has been lived out in a variety of ways. Connecting with teens first through an online youth group was contagious and spread to other ministries. Not only did the teens need a forum, the faithful parishioners needed a way to connect and minister and so from there an online prayer group began, along with online meetings for catechists. Through these meetings, outreach began to take shape through phone calls and cards sent to families and homebound parishioners. For those in faith formation classes, take home catechesis was prepared, and daily “COVID-Challenge” videos were created for the parishioners, as well as videos for religious education, and live streamed liturgies.

Through these avenues, technology was used with the desire to meet the people where they are. The sufferings and trials of this time present isolation, confusion, hopelessness and so much more, yet the same Holy Spirit resides in each of us, enabling us to “be His witnesses throughout the ends of the world.” (Acts 1:8) Let us be His witnesses, even in this time of suffering.

*Above: Christ the King Church has had to suspend public masses and gatherings since March 19th.*



**SR. MARYAM CARITAS SPARKE, SOLT**

Sr. Maryam Caritas Sparke is the Director of Religious Education for Christ the King Catholic Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. Sister is originally from Troy, Ohio and professed her first vows in 2009.

# Where SOLT Serves...

## AMERICAN REGION

### BELIZE

BELIZE CITY-  
BELMOPAN

### GUATEMALA

APOSTOLIC VICARIATE  
OF EL PETEN

### MEXICO

NUEVO LAREDO  
QUERETARO



### UNITED STATES

PHOENIX, AZ  
PUEBLO, CO  
ATLANTA, GA  
SIOUX CITY, IA  
DETROIT, MI  
KANSAS CITY—  
ST. JOSEPH, MO  
SANTA FE, NM  
FARGO, ND  
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX  
CALVESTON—  
HOUSTON, TX  
SEATTLE, WA

## ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

### CHINA

MACAU

### AUSTRALIA

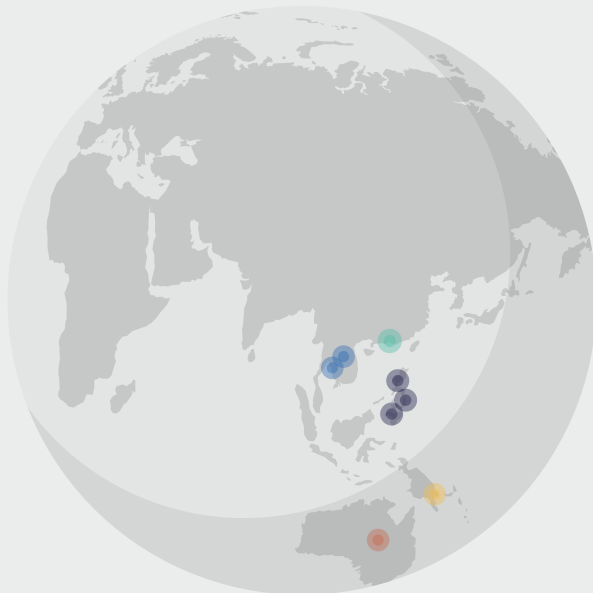
BROKEN BAY

### PAPUA, NEW GUINEA

MT. HAGEN

### THAILAND

RATCHABURI  
CHANTABURI



### PHILIPPINES

CACERES  
LEGAZPI  
SORSOGON  
DAET  
NOVALICHES  
LIBMANAN  
SAN JOSE IN  
NUEVA ECIJA



*After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” (Luke 5:4)*





# The Good News is Contagious



*Above: Most Holy Redeemer Parish hosts a social distancing Holy Hour in the parking lot.*

## *What should Catholics be doing at this time*

when the coronavirus pandemic has so drastically altered our lives? I would suggest that our basic task remains exactly the same as it has always been, and is perhaps still more urgent. That is, "Go out to all the world, and tell the Good News!" (Mark 16:15) But how can this be done, precisely when none of us can "go out?!"

First of all, it would be good for us to recall the beautiful truth of Divine Providence. St. Augustine wrote, "For almighty God...because he is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his work, if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil." (CCC 311) There is no doubt that Divine Providence is at work in the present time, bringing good out of this difficult situation that we are currently experiencing.

It is common knowledge that when a person is impaired in one faculty, that of sight for example, that person's other faculties often become stronger. In the case of losing sight, the sense of hearing might be enhanced. This reminds one of the expression that "when God closes one door, He opens another."





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*What should Catholics be doing at this time when the coronavirus pandemic has so drastically altered our lives?*

In the present situation, one could say that doors have been shut, but that others have been opened, and this is part of the working of Providence. In regard to evangelization, in particular, new doors are being opened. Because of the current pandemic, one might say Catholics are being “forced” to evangelize by using all the methods of technology available to us, and these methods are very effective indeed. St. John Paul II called for a new evangelization, “new in its ardor, methods and expression.” (Address to Celam, March 9, 1983, #9) During this time of the coronavirus, this vision of the saintly pope is being realized in an amazing way. Here are a few examples.

Here at Holy Redeemer Church in Detroit, we are livestreaming the Mass daily on the Facebook page of the parish, something unimaginable when the pope spoke those words. Last Sunday, for instance, the livestreamed Mass had over 8,000 views. We even have comments about the Mass coming from England and Thailand. Would such a thing have happened had it not been for the coronavirus? On April 4 there were several online Catholic conferences taking place, precisely because no one can leave







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*Divine Providence is also at work now, brothers and sisters, as each of us is “scattered” to our homes to spread the Good News of Christ, joyfully and well, by every means we can, even to the end of the earth.*

their homes. One of these conferences, in which SOLT’s own Sr. Miriam James will be speaking, already had, as of the time of this writing, 30,000 participants registered. There are virtual bible studies popping up everywhere, virtual retreats and countless livestreamed talks now available, which were not available before, and they are being well attended.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read, “On that day, there broke out a severe persecution of the Church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered... Now those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 8:1,4) It is often noted that the

persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem, which led to their being scattered, brought about the spreading of the Gospel, for the first time, beyond the confines of the Holy City, and that Divine Providence was clearly working through this difficult situation in order to fulfill the words of Jesus, “...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Divine Providence is also at work now, brothers and sisters, as each of us is “scattered” to our homes to spread the Good News of Christ, joyfully and well, by every means we can, even to the end of the earth.

*Clockwise (from the left): Holy Hour during the coronavirus pandemic draws a crowd, Fr. Tony livestreams daily Mass from the chapel in Detroit, Michigan; SOLT sisters pray outdoors with parishoners; Fr. Tony shares a homily with parishoners in their homes.*



#### **FR. TONY BLOUNT, SOLT**

Fr. Tony Blount, SOLT, was ordained to the priesthood on May 25, 1996 and is currently serving at Holy Redeemer Church in Detroit, Michigan. He is the Vicar General of the SOLT Clerical Society.



# Together, Apart

***Zoom? Be honest, how many people even knew Zoom was a thing back in January?***

The coming of the novel coronavirus has fast-forwarded us into the “Jetsons” age communications.

The SOLT Ecclesial Family Team in Kansas City, an urban mission, continues to stay in touch and to evangelize, and much of our work and many activities have been moved online. We are encouraged to be “together, apart.” Social media offers a number of online sites for reflection and faith formation and have options for livestreaming Mass, including Masses presided by Fr. Peter Marsalek, SOLT General Priest Servant, in Corpus Christi. In addition, watching the Sunday Liturgy Prep weekly video is a great habit to cultivate.

These are found on the website: [SOLT.net](https://www.solt.net)

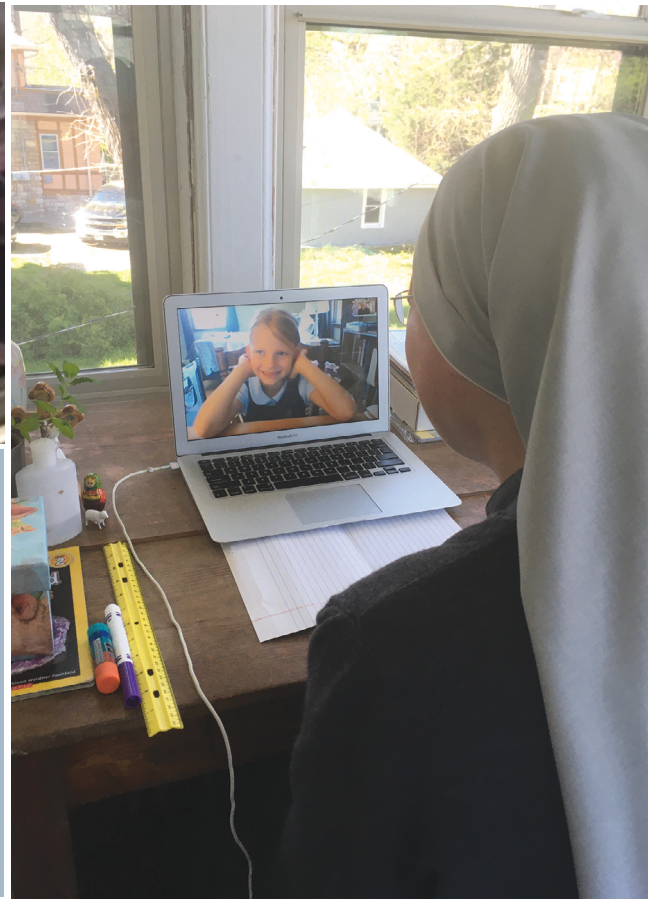
Evangelizing “together, apart” looks like walking, talking, texting, and listening. The practice of spiritual communion has become very important to the lay faithful as we profess our desire to receive the Eucharist sacramentally but beg the Lord to visit us spiritually. “Zooming” to reach out to small group Bible studies and formation groups is second nature now. Through email we can share a little more deeply than through some of the social media platforms. The telephone is still used for phone calls, in addition to texting, to check in on friends, family, fellow parishioners, students---both former and current, as well as vulnerable people. A person’s voice offers a little more human connection. Through video, one team member leads a nursing home rosary group.





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*Locally, SOLT priests hear confessions and continue to serve parishioners. They have hosted watch parties, livestreamed Mass, and even lead several retreats online.*



Locally, SOLT priests hear confessions and continue to serve parishioners. They have hosted watch parties, livestreamed Mass, and even lead several retreats online. The sisters reach out to the families of Our Lady's Montessori School by phone and internet. Families have become more visibly the domestic church, encouraged by resources to celebrate the liturgies from homes. Other times, we need to get outside. Whether we are walking together while social-distancing or going solo and appreciating the unfolding of nature this spring, evangelization includes inviting the Lord along as a companion. Coming to know and encounter Jesus Christ more deeply in His works, words, and relationships, brings hope. Praying together helps overcome the isolation that can feel imposed by this quarantine.

Our team even met via Zoom for spiritual exercises. We were blessed with special time together, apart. One of the sisters here told us they receive Our Lord in the Eucharist each day on behalf of all of us who cannot receive Him sacramentally. It is a great consolation. It was as if I were detained from my appointment with Our Lord and sister stands in my stead. She receives the Lord and waits on Him. She is keeping Him company until I can arrive, and they do this for each of us.

Together, apart. We remember that Jesus isn't bound to stay-at-home. He is with us even until the end of time. We are an Easter people. Evangelization is spreading His message of hope. This quarantine, like our mortal life, will end and we will be together, together.

Jesus Christ: yesterday, today, forever.

*Clockwise (from top left): SOLT Kansas City team members get together online; Sr. Holy Hope, SOLT hosts an online organ recital; Sr. Maria Mater Dei, SOLT hold class online with her students from Our Lady's Montessori School in Kansas City.*



#### **MAUREEN MURRAY**

Maureen and Michael Murray have been lay members of SOLT since 2010. They have raised seven children and live in Lawrence, Kansas. Maureen serves on the General Lay Council.



**Above:** Fr. Jim Mulligan, SOLT hears confessions in the parking lot of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Belcourt, ND.



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**On the front cover:** Fr. Dennis Mary Dugan, SOLT processes with the Blessed Sacrament in Belcourt, ND.

**Right:** Students from Our Lady's Montessori School in Kansas City participate in Mass, livestreamed from SOLT headquarters in Corpus Christi, TX.



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