

Created In Christ Jesus for Good Works



Christopher News Notes

*“We are what He has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for
good works.”—Ephesians 2:10*

WHERE DO YOU SEE JESUS?
As Christians, we may think of how we see Him on crucifixes in our churches, at Mass and Eucharistic adoration, or in artwork meant to draw us closer to God. This is where we physically see Jesus. But there is a question which goes deeper: where do we *experience* Jesus?

We experience Him in the smile of our local food pantry volunteers, who wake up early to distribute food to those in need. We experience Him in the cup of coffee the young couple shares with their elderly neighbor. We experience Him in the warm hugs our friends give us when they sense we're feeling down.

Simply put, we experience Jesus through acts of love and the good works of other people. And when we do something to help others, they can experience Jesus through us. As humans, we can't help but make mistakes on occasion, but as Christians, we are called to be better, to be created in Christ Jesus. It's a goal we can slowly inch towards, one act of goodness at a time.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
—John 15:12

Catholic Man of the Year

If you're ever looking for Henry Szabo, there's a good chance he's at St. Brendan the Navigator Church in Hilliard, Ohio. Now in his 70s, Szabo spends around 30 hours a week volunteering as a sacristan for the parish. If that wasn't enough, he also assists at 16 scheduled weekly Masses, helps out at the parish's food pantries, trains altar servers, and assists as a Eucharistic minister, lector, and usher.

In honor of his faithful service, Szabo was dubbed 2024's "Catholic Man of the Year" by the Diocese of Columbus. In an interview with the diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Times*, Szabo explained he does so much for his church simply "because I can."

Szabo noted that he draws inspiration from other people in his church taking time out of their day to perform good works or feed their faith: "A mom or dad bringing their five young children to a Saturday Mass; a wife assisting her husband into church every week and back to the car, regardless of the weather; a gentleman with stage four cancer coming to Sunday Mass; a non-Catholic wife bringing and picking up her husband for daily Mass; teenagers coming to the 6:30 a.m. Mass; [and] my best friend, Don, who gave up every-

A Secret Hero

Hody Buford Childress was a farmer in rural Alabama—and also a secret hero for hundreds of people. When he died at age 80 in 2023, the truth about his actions was revealed, and locals learned of his hidden kindness and fierce faith. For almost a decade, Childress secretly paid the pharmacy bills of people in his community. At the start of each month, he would enter Geraldine Drugs, hand \$100 to the owner and pharmacist, Brooke Walker, and instruct her to use the money for anyone who couldn't afford their prescriptions. And he did not want any credit for doing this.

"He said, 'Don't tell a soul where the money came from. If they ask, just tell them it's a blessing from the Lord,'" Walker recalled to the *Washington Post*. He only told her to use her judgment as to who would receive the help. Some of the money Childress donated helped pay for Epi-Pens, cover costs for those without insurance, and help people just leaving the hospital. Friends and family set up a Hody Childress fund to continue the practice.

thing to be the caretaker for his ailing wife."

Despite his surprise at receiving the award, Szabo is frequently complimented by people at St. Brendan who comment on his small gestures of reverence, from his neckties that carry faith-filled art to his heartfelt greetings before Mass. "God always seems to put me in the right place at the right time with the ability to handle the situation," Szabo concluded.

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
—Matthew 5:16

Love Springs Eternal

"I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."
—Luke 6:27-28

Sister Marie-Paule Willem, FMM, has been dodging death—and displaying bravery—for more than 90 years. Growing up in Belgium during the Nazi occupation, she sometimes had artillery cannons parked outside her home. She remembers putting sugar in the gas tanks of Nazi vehicles to cause malfunctions. And once during a bombing, she ran to a neighbor's house for shelter, only to be left to crawl out of the rubble with her family.

Years later, as a missionary sister serving in South America, she was named on Paraguay's "kill list"

three times while working to save poor farmers targeted by brutal regimes. During her efforts, she risked her life to help innocent people placed in internment camps by military dictatorships.

Despite years of facing evil head-on, Sister Marie-Paule has never been deterred from her mission to bring peace, compassion, and justice to those in need. "I won't look towards the dangers," she said in an interview with *Catholic Extension*. "I just look towards what has to be done, the needs that are there, and find a way."

Her hope for humanity is grounded in her immense faith, she said: "Without prayer, I become deaf to the voice of love. Prayer is the discipline of listening to the voice of love, the voice of Jesus, who is the creating love of God."

Today, she continues her work leading a growing church in New Mexico, where she works with immigrants, tutoring and teaching English as they prepare for citizenship. "Without prayer, I cannot see my brother and sister as God sees them," she said. "Without prayer, I cannot be attentive to them as God is attentive to each of us."

Project Cover Up

On a frigid winter day in 2022, 10-year-old Chase Pinheiro was heading home from baseball practice with his family when he noticed a woman on the

side of the road asking passing drivers for food and money. He couldn't shake how cold she looked standing outside in the January weather.

Though only a fourth grader at St. Joseph School in West Warwick, Rhode Island, Pinheiro decided to do something to help. He approached the Dean of Students, Julie Capirchio, and asked to organize a schoolwide clothing drive to help those less fortunate stay warm during the winter. "I think this would have been what Jesus would have done," Pinheiro said in an interview with the diocesan newspaper, *Rhode Island Catholic*. "I hope this will help them and bring them comfort."

"Project Cover Up," as it was called, collected new or gently used coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, scarves, and boots. The items were donated to the local St. Vincent de Paul Society to be distributed to those in need.

Capirchio hoped that Pinheiro's efforts would inspire the school's students, while also giving them something to participate in that does good for their community. "Part of our mission is service, and these children are just amazing," she said. "I love that he's a role model."

Help on the Checkout Line

"Do to others as you would have them do to you."
—Luke 6:31

Jason Boudreaux was checking out at his local grocery store when his debit card got declined.

Having just deposited his paycheck at the bank, Boudreaux didn't realize it would take a few hours for the money to clear, leaving him with a cart full of food and no means to pay for it. That's when an angel stepped in to help. Kevin Jones, a stranger behind Boudreaux in line, offered to pay for his \$30 of groceries. "I got you," Jones told him.

Recalling the incident to *USA Today*, Boudreaux gave Jones his business card, insisting on paying the young man back, but forgot to get his name. He later posted about the generous moment on Facebook, which went viral and eventually got back to Jones, connecting the two again.

Boudreaux, who works in sales for churches and cemeteries, was recently told by his priest friend that he was going to "find his ghost," referring to the Holy Ghost. The two spoke on the phone about it right before Boudreaux left to go to the grocery store.

"Not having the right amount of funds to pay for groceries, I know that feeling," Jones said. "I see a lot of people going through that, and not a lot of people are willing to make a sacrifice and step up and help the next person."

Jones and his wife later met up with Boudreaux and his family for one of their weekly cookouts. The two still keep in touch and plan fishing trips and other outings. "He's honestly one of the most sincere souls I've met—and I've met many," said Boudreaux.

Some good deeds require a major sacrifice. Others only involve a simple gesture of kindness. No matter how big or small our efforts, we are fulfilling the purpose of our creation whenever we help someone else because we are all "created in Christ Jesus for good works."


**"It's better to light one candle
than to curse the darkness."**

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*"Do not neglect to do good and
to share what you have, for such
sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

—Hebrews 13:16