

Journey to Healing with St. Thérèse, Part 1

There was an irony in Carmelite priest Father Bob Colaresi becoming Director of the Society of the Little Flower, which is devoted to promoting the life, teachings, and intercession of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Back in 1991, when his Provincial insisted he take the job, Father Bob told him, “I don’t even like her.” His Provincial responded, “Well, learn to.”

Father Bob had grown up seeing St. Thérèse’s picture in his grandmother’s home and in church. He had even read her memoir, *The Story of a Soul*, but didn’t relate to her ideas about the importance of performing small acts of love and surrendering to God. Rather, he wanted to make things happen himself.

Writing in the newsletter *Between Friends*, Father Bob noted that his attitude towards St. Thérèse slowly changed after reading the many letters and stories that supporters sent to the Society: “They were evangelizing me beyond the cynicism of my youth. [Thérèse] suddenly seemed so powerful and present.”

But Father Bob still had a ways to go in appreciating St. Thérèse. That occurred during the darkest time of his life.

**Holiness consists simply in doing God’s will,
and being just what God wants us to be.
(St. Thérèse)**

Open my heart to the wisdom of the saints, Abba.

Journey to Healing with St. Thérèse, Part 2

In the early 2000s, when he was serving as Director of the Society of the Little Flower, Father Bob Colaresi, O. Carm., began experiencing severe pain in his lower back. Doctors learned that an infection was “eating away” at his spinal cord, so he required immediate surgery to keep from being crippled.

Recalling this incident in the newsletter *Between Friends*, Father Bob wrote, “It was like a miracle. But I was still bedridden for a long time and impatient...Because I do not suffer well, I did not pray well. I was frustrated and felt God and everyone had abandoned me.”

Eventually, Father Bob cried out in prayer to St. Thérèse, who had also suffered a great deal in her life, asking how she continued to believe in God’s love and mercy in her darkest hours. Father Bob then heard “a female voice from deep within whispering: ‘Trust God!’”

That answer just made Father Bob angry. Two weeks later, he asked the same question and got the same answer: “Trust God!” This time, the priest experienced an epiphany.

Prayer...is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. (St. Thérèse)

In times of trial, Jesus, lead me towards Your light.

Journey to Healing with St. Thérèse, Part 3

In his slow and painful recovery from spine surgery, Father Bob Colaresi prayed for physical healing. But St. Thérèse gave him a spiritual awakening instead (though the physical healing eventually happened as well). Father Bob came to realize that he had felt “inadequate” most of his life due to the negative messages he had received from his family as a young man.

“I spent my life trying to prove I have value and was competent,” he reflected. “I became messianic in my own eyes...I was running over people to make things happen and prove myself... The healing St. Thérèse helped me to experience was that I wasn’t the Messiah—God was still in charge!”

“While it was humbling to learn that, it was freeing and healing. I had to trust God and trust the people God sent into my life...It was not the healing I was looking for, but the healing I needed to live a more faithful and generative life. That was the great gift Thérèse passed on to me: ‘Trust God!’ So basic! So ordinary! So precious. So freeing!”

Jesus, help me to simplify my life by learning what You want me to be and becoming that person. (St. Thérèse)

Remind me to trust in You and Your love, Messiah.

St. Francis on the Spirit of the Lord

The book *Witness of the Saints* quotes St. Francis of Assisi's insights on living a life for Christ. St. Francis said, "Let us produce worthy fruits of penance. Let us also love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us have charity and humility.

"Let us give alms because these cleanse our souls from the stains of sin. Men lose all the material things they leave behind them in this world, but they carry with them the reward of their charity and the alms they give. For these, they will receive from the Lord the reward and recompense they deserve.

"We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh. Rather, we must be simple, humble, and pure. We should never desire to be over others. Instead, we ought to be servants who are submissive to every human being for God's sake.

"The Spirit of the Lord will rest on all who live in this way and persevere in it to the end. He will permanently dwell in them. They will be the Father's children who do His work. They are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

Jesus, help me live the virtues of faith, hope, love, and charity, which You and St. Francis modeled for humanity.

Alexa, Call for Help

There are not many four year olds who can say they saved their mother's life. But with the help of Amazon's Alexa, Lyla Leathem from Bridgewater, England, did just that! Her mother, Leah, who was prone to epileptic fits (i.e. seizures) at night, had just spoken to her grandmother on the phone.

“[Leah] said she'd had a big fit in the night, and bitten her tongue,” Leah's grandma said, recalling their conversation to the *Somerset County Gazette*. “She didn't need me to come over...It wasn't long after...I had a call come through Leah's number, and when I answered it, it was Lyla saying, ‘Na Na, Mummy's having a fit.’”

Leah's grandmother rushed over and was thankful they had taught Lyla how to use the Amazon Alexa installed in her mother's room to call for help if she needed it. The proud “Na Na” even reached out to a local Facebook group to find a “well done” certificate for Lyla, later posting a photo of her great-granddaughter cheerfully holding her award.

“Thank you, all, [Lyla] is truly something special,” Leah commented under the picture. “I'm very lucky to have her.”

Every perfect gift is from above. (James 1:17)

Jesus, we give thanks for the precious gift of our children.

Arnie the Angel

Jean Wolf was having a “distressing” day, to say the least. The 74-year-old had just received word that her elderly mother had died.

In Wolf’s haste to get to the hospice in O’Fallon, Missouri, where her mother had been a patient, she left her “phone and important papers on her car’s trunk” as she drove off, scattering them across the highway. “I didn’t care about my phone at all,” Jean recalled to *KDSK.com*. “I cared about the papers. I thought, ‘Where do I start now?’”

Enter Arnie Dienoff, who pulled over after noticing the strewn papers and phone as he was driving down the highway. “Braving the traffic” to retrieve these items, he knew they would be missed by someone planning a funeral.

Then, Jean’s phone, which Arnie had found, rang. He learned it was Jean’s daughter calling and explained that he had found the lost materials. He soon returned them all to Jean.

Arnie refused any monetary compensation for his kindness, but did accept Jean’s “homemade brownies” as a reward. He will forever be known to her and her family as “Arnie the Angel.”

I send an angel...to guard you. (Exodus 23:20)

God, thank You for the everyday angels that walk beside us.

Special Needs at Special High School

There are many students with special needs and learning disabilities who wish to have a Catholic education. The all-girls Regina High School in Warren, Michigan, already includes a number of these young people, but the 2025-2026 school year saw the launch of a new program that offers them even greater inclusion.

Principal Ann Diamond told the *Detroit Catholic* that though there is already a student assistant program in place, “There are students who just need a little bit of a nudge in order to be successful, and it is important that we are able to service all students, regardless of their varying disabilities.”

Approximately 10 percent of the student population has special needs, so this new program will further assist those with Down syndrome, brain injuries, or more significant cognitive impairments. Diamond said her school will continue to “open the doors for any young woman who wants a Catholic education, regardless of the challenges that they face.”

Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me. (Matthew 18:5)

*May all be blessed in knowing Your Word,
Lord Jesus, for all are welcome in Your home.*

‘Dr. Quinn’ Aids Former Co-Star

Actress Jane Seymour, known for her role as *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, invited her former co-star, Joe Lando, and his family into her home when they lost their house in the tragic Los Angeles, California wildfires in 2025.

Lando starred alongside Seymour as Byron Sully, her love interest on the hit show that ran from 1993-1998. “Thankfully, there are angels in this world,” said Lando on Instagram. “We’re left with nothing except each other. My friend Jane Seymour allowed us to come over to her house and opened it up for us without any hesitation and thank God gave us someplace to come and sleep.”

Seymour said that she learned at an early age that in times of great suffering, it is important to help someone. As reported by *TV Line*, she noted, “Welcoming Joe and his family into our home while they try to make sense of the inexplicable is just what you do for family, and the Landos are our family.”

Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of My people...Indeed, I know their sufferings.” (Exodus 3:7)

Merciful God, bless all those who have lost homes and loved ones in natural disasters.

U.S. Blind Soccer Team Defies the Odds

David Brown lost part of his vision as a baby—and the rest as a teen. Despite this loss, he is now playing competitive soccer for Team USA in the first-ever USA Blind International Cup.

“My vision was going in my right eye, and it put me in a deep depression at 13 because I was told I was never going to see the same again,” Brown told *ABC News San Diego’s* Marie Coronel. However, it was sports that helped pull Brown out of that dark place and led him to sprint running, where he became a Paralympic gold medalist.

Soccer attracted his attention next. The game works this way: there are four field players who are blind, and they all wear blindfolds because vision loss comes in different degrees. The goalkeepers are sighted. Coaches and goalkeepers guide the players into position for the next play.

This challenge is what drew Brown into the game, and he and his teammates are excited to compete globally playing the sport they love.

**I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.
(Job 29:15)**

Jesus, guide those with disabilities towards caring people who will help them—and activities that will fulfill them.

ICON: A Documentary Film

It has been a five-year labor of love and, above all, faith. Already well-established musicians who formed the band Birds in the Boneyard almost a decade ago, brothers Michael and Pete Condoleon are now also the co-founders of Odd Brothers Productions, a “multimedia company specializing in faith-based programming.”

The perfect project to make their spiritual mission a reality presented itself when Father Aristidis Garinis, a priest from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Flushing, New York, asked the brothers to shoot a video for Dionysios Bouloubassis, who creates sacred images called icons for churches.

The project is titled *ICON: A Documentary Film*, and Michael and Pete soon found themselves on an incredible journey all the way to Mount Athos in Greece, where they were able to film the wonder of this “2,000-year-old art form.”

The Condoleon brothers are still raising funds leading up to the movie’s release, but they view their efforts through the lens of faith. “We... leave all our trust to the Lord,” Pete told *The Tablet*. “If He wants it, it’ll happen.”

**Whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me.
(John 12:45)**

*Creator, may our art serve to better
illuminate our faith.*

Prayer for Peace

In his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, St. Pope John XXIII wrote the following plea for peace:

“May Christ banish from the hearts of men and women whatever might endanger peace. May He transform all people into witnesses of truth, justice, and love.

“May He enlighten the rulers of peoples so that in addition to their solicitude for the proper welfare of their citizens, they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.

“Finally, may Christ enkindle the wills of all, so that they may overcome the barriers which divide, strengthen the bonds of charity, understand others, and pardon those who have done them wrong.

“By virtue of [Christ’s] action, may all peoples of the earth become as brothers and sisters, and may the most longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always among them.”

He will speak peace to His people, to His faithful, to those who turn to Him in their hearts. (Psalm 85:8)

Father, when anger and division seem to have the upper hand, give me the strength, wisdom, and guidance to bring Your divine peace to this world.

Effective Disability Ministries, Part 1

When writer Delaney Coyne set out to explore the Catholic Church's ministries to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, she approached the topic with firsthand knowledge. Her younger sister, Charlotte, has an intellectual disability.

As they were growing up, Delaney witnessed the victories and challenges that Charlotte experienced when it came to learning and practicing her faith. Charlotte is now 21, Delaney said during a *Christopher Closeup* interview, and is "in a transition program through the public school in the state of Illinois."

"She loves going to church. She loves finding community with her peers. She's super social. At our parish, there's a 'special friends' Mass that she loves attending. She's also involved in the community of Misericordia, which is a home for people with disabilities in Illinois. She's not a resident, but she...goes to their events and makes friends there. It's lovely."

**Come in, daughter, and welcome. Blessed be
Your God who has brought you to us.
(Tobit 11:17)**

*May those with disabilities be welcomed by
members of Your Church, Lord.*

Effective Disability Ministries, Part 2

While some of Charlotte Coyne's experiences with the Church were positive, others were troubling because people were not sure how to interact with someone who has an intellectual disability. This left Charlotte's sister, Delaney, feeling bitter for some time. Charlotte, however, provided the theology lesson Delaney needed to find her connection to God again.

"Charlotte reminds me that there's something a lot deeper to faith than just knowledge," Delaney explained. "My background is in academic theology...so much of my life and my engagement with my faith is knowledge-based...It's beautiful, but that's not what faith is, in and of itself."

"[Charlotte] engages with the faith in a different way than I do. She's often a much better Christian than I am. She sees the good in everyone, she shows love to everyone, and she's open to love. It reminds me to break from my own rigidity and see the mystery of God's abundant love...I came to know God through going to church with my family and sitting next to her, and I learned who God is and what love is. It reminded me that there's this real power of unity in diversity."

Have unity of spirit. (1 Peter 3:8)

Jesus, open my heart to the mystery of Your abundant love.

Effective Disability Ministries, Part 3

One of the places that gets disability ministry right is St. Thérèse of Lisieux Church in Cresskill, New Jersey. Its pastor, Father Samuel Citero, O.Carm., was inspired by a trip he took to Lourdes. After seeing the fellowship that people with disabilities experienced there, he started Masses in a similar style at St. Thérèse. Parishioners loved the idea.

As a result, St. Thérèse celebrates a monthly special needs Mass, which welcomes those with disabilities, as well as the wider parish community. People with disabilities serve in all parts of the Mass, from altar servers to lectors to the choir.

Delaney Coyne attended one of these Masses as research for her article for *America*. She observed, “People with disabilities are often marginalized and isolated...This is a way of bringing people together. It’s also led to growth in their parish. They have seen membership rise from people that are joining because of this ministry. It’s focused on personal relationships. They meet in the parish hall after the fact, and it cultivates this relationship between the pastor and community.”

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24)

May we nurture faith through personal relationships, Lord.

Effective Disability Ministries, Part 4

In writing an article for *America*, Delaney Coyne spoke with Lori Weider, chair of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability's Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Delaney learned that there has been "significant growth" in disability ministries in the last 20 years.

"The flip side," Delaney explained, "is that it needs to trickle down to the local level. So much of this work depends on individual relationships because all people with disabilities are different. What is true for someone who might have mobility issues and be in a wheelchair, is not true for someone who might have severe sensory issues, which is not true for someone who might have severe cognitive impairments."

When a diocese has a specific office and point person focused on disability ministry, everything becomes easier to navigate. Another advance is when a parish takes into account people with sensory issues who cannot handle loud organs or lots of incense. By creating sensory-friendly Masses, "this makes Mass accessible to those who might not be able to access it."

**We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
(Romans 12:5)**

Guide us in accommodating people's differences, Abba.

Effective Disability Ministries, Part 5

During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, Delaney Coyne noted that some pastors won't allow children with intellectual or developmental disabilities to receive the Eucharist, believing they don't understand what it is. But with the right catechesis, Delaney added, they can indeed learn and receive "access to that grace that they deserve by virtue of their baptism."

While there is willingness to catechize people with disabilities, some teachers express fear that they won't know how to do it. "We need to trust ourselves to learn how to minister to each member of the body of Christ," Delaney said, "trusting people with disabilities to make decisions about their own spiritual lives and participate in the Church that they belong to, and also trusting the power of the Spirit."

"[People with disabilities are] not doing something different or something lesser or Catholic lite," Delaney concluded. "They are brothers and sisters. They belong just as much as we do as neurotypical Catholics...Disability ministry is...done for the life of the Church as a whole."

**Tend the flock of God that is your charge.
(1 Peter 5:2)**

*Holy Spirit, help me build up Your Church
for all.*

Education Provides Solid Foundation

When Tom Raponi attended St. John's University in Queens, New York, during the early 1970s, he pitched for the school's baseball team, earning a 1.83 ERA one season. Raponi hoped to become a Major League pitcher, and he did get signed by the Detroit Tigers. But shortly thereafter, an old arm injury flared up and ended his baseball career.

As reported by Steve Vivona for *StJohns.edu*, Raponi returned to his alma mater to teach and hold baseball clinics for underprivileged children. He eventually found a career in TV ad time sales, an industry he worked in for nearly 40 years.

Raponi credits St. John's with preparing him to deal with life's unexpected challenges. He said, "They call us student-athletes and not athlete-students, and that is because there will be a day when you take the uniform off for the last time. It's great to have a solid foundation that allows you to move forward...I believe the training that I had at St. John's—the background they gave me, the courses that I took, the teamwork on the field, and the ups and downs—is what allowed me to succeed."

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:6)

When I face disappointment, Abba, guide me to new paths.

Homeless Man's Honesty Rewarded

When a homeless man in Thailand found a designer wallet full of cash, he chose to return it to its owner and wound up receiving a great reward: a job and a new apartment to live in.

Waralop was homeless and sleeping in a subway station when he spotted the Hermes wallet. Instead of keeping the contents for himself, Waralop went straight to the local police station and handed the wallet in. His good-hearted actions were rewarded when the owner, Niity Pongkriangyos, offered Waralop a job at his factory in Bangkok.

As reported on www.metro.co.uk, Pongkriangyos said he was initially surprised that his wallet had been found, and even more intrigued by the homeless man who handed it in: "That shows a good, honest person. Just the kind of staff we need."

The job offer came with an apartment as well, so Waralop appreciates the kindness that Pongkriangyos showed him. He said, "I'm so grateful to be given this chance to turn my life around. Having a clean bed to sleep in makes me so happy now."

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness.
(Galatians 5:22)**

May I always choose honesty, Lord.

Baby's Second Chance at Life

Faith and David Helmerich's newborn son, Parker, was in desperate need. Born with critical pulmonary valve stenosis, Parker was fighting for his life just 30 minutes after being born.

Dr. Harold Burkhardt, director of the Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgical Program at Oklahoma Children's Hospital, saved Parker's life by performing CPR during a critical surgery. The physician also recognized that the child had a rare disease of the heart muscle that could lead to heart failure.

Parker needed a heart transplant fast, but getting one would not be easy. It was a race against time when finally, in October 2024, Dr. Burkhardt called Parker's parents with news that a donor had been found.

After the successful transplant, Parker was expected to go on to live a normal, healthy life. As reported by *Good Morning America*, his parents are "eternally grateful for the family of his heart donor, who gave [Parker] a second chance at life."

God added His testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles. (Hebrews 2:4)

Thank You, Lord, for medical miracles. And please ease the grief of families who donate their deceased loved one's organs so that other lives may be saved.

Chef Corps to the Rescue, Part 1

In the fall of 2024, several states endured the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene. The Western North Carolina town of Asheville experienced both power outages and severe damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure.

Enter José Andrés, chef and founder of World Central Kitchen, an organization that provides freshly-cooked meals to areas “following natural disasters and other crises.”

They collaborated with a network of cooks—known as the Chef Corps—as well as 16 restaurants to serve more than 20,000 meals to residents in the first few days following the storm.

Molly Irani, co-founder of Asheville’s Chai Pani Indian restaurant and member of the Chef Corps, told the *Asheville Citizen Times*, “We have heard stories of people whose houses were washed away or completely demolished, and they’re standing on the hill...Some are hiking to get help...We wanted to provide a space for people to come...and be part of the solution.”

**Look...to the interests of others.
(Philippians 2:4)**

Abba, may we seek to provide relief to those in need.

Chef Corps to the Rescue, Part 2

Hurricane Helene left many people in the Southern states reeling in its wake. That is when organizations such as World Central Kitchen, along with the international Chef Corps, stepped up to offer aid. They provided meals and clean drinking water to those who needed it.

According to the *Asheville Citizen Times*, World Central Kitchen deployed “five 6,200 gallon-water tankers,” benefiting not only Asheville’s citizens, but its fellow restaurateurs as well. Susan Aplin, CEO of Katie Button Restaurant and Lifestyle brand, oversees two different Asheville restaurants. She gratefully noted, “[World Central Kitchen has] been bringing us ingredients to allow us to do what we are doing.”

“To be of some use, it’s like oxygen,” Asheville restaurant owner and Chef Corps member Molly Irani concluded. “It’s saving me tremendously. It’s helping us all survive...It struck me...during one of the many times I was holding people and crying tears of sadness...there were also tears of absolute connectedness and love. At the end of the day, how we’ve shown up in crisis has restored my faith in humanity.”

**In one body we have many members.
(Romans 12:4)**

Lord, may we unite and uplift one another in times of crisis.

A Farmer Who Dared

In 1979, Pope John Paul II spent four hours in Des Moines, Iowa, partly because an Iowa farmer sent him a handwritten note asking him to visit America's Heartland during his trip to the United States.

The note was written by Joseph Hays, who ran a small 90-acre spread in rural Truro. In it, he said, "I don't want to be presumptuous, but we would love to have you visit Iowa."

Hays said he wrote the letter spontaneously upon learning of the papal trip. "I had a spark, a thought, and I asked myself, 'Why not?'"

His wife added that she thought the pope might be interested in visiting a rural area because he visited such areas in Mexico and Poland. The couple were thrilled to be on hand for the pope's visit.

A little daring frequently goes a long way. So, dare to be different; dare to risk making friends; dare to forgive; dare to achieve; and dare to believe in yourself, your values, and your God. Maybe even dare to write a friendly letter to the pope asking him to visit your hometown.

Be strong and of good courage. (Joshua 1:6)

Father, let me not hold back when there is good to be done.

No Greater Love

Her name was Belma Feild, and she died of a heart attack in 1979 at age 66. Shortly after her death, she was selected to receive the Spirit Award, sponsored by No Greater Love, a nonprofit organization in Los Angeles.

The group's name comes from Christ's standard for measuring love: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). The purpose of the Spirit Award is to salute those who care for others. Those that Feild helped were the veterans of the Vietnam War, who came to the Los Angeles VA Hospital for treatment.

The widow of a disabled World War II veteran, Feild managed an apartment house across the street from the hospital. She provided apartments for some of the patients, lent them money if they needed it, and fed them when they were hungry.

Among those who remembered her was David Carter, who said, "She gave up her money, her time, her privacy—everything about your life you want to protect. Why? Because she thought no one else would do it—and someone had to."

**Through love, be servants of one another.
(Galatians 5:13)**

Father, when I see a need, help me to fill it.

Measuring Success

Nearly 50 years ago, the Young Voices column in *The Catholic Standard and Times of Philadelphia* asked the question, “How do you measure happiness and success?” The newspaper’s inquiring reporters visited a boys’ high school to get answers, and these are some of their timeless responses:

- Stephen Melcher: “I measure happiness and success by what God has given me and how I use it.”
- Kevin Beck: “Success...is learning your own abilities and sharing them with others.”
- Mark Hakowski: “If you feel that you are satisfied with who you are and what you have done, then you are successful.”
- Dominic Pacitti: “If you reach the goals that you have set and have done the things you want to do, then I think you can be happy and consider yourself a success.”
- Mark Salerno: “To be happy and successful, you must like what you are doing and do it wholeheartedly.”

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

Holy Trinity, help me to be successful in Your eyes.

Take Time to Enjoy Creation

In Sterling Quinlan's book *Inside ABC*, he quoted a letter written by the broadcasting company's then-president, Leonard Goldenson, following a heart attack he suffered in 1971. The recipient was Goldenson's 92-year-old mother.

Almost against his will, Goldenson was forced into painting as a form of relaxation. In the letter, he details his feelings about this endeavor: "I now look at objects with a completely different point of view. As an example, I always thought the bark of a tree was grayish black or brown, but in the sunlight, if you look closely, you can also see reds and yellows."

"I suppose all humans have taken nature for granted," Goldenson continued, "and I probably more than anyone. But now I watch flowers and trees and their relationship to each other, so that, in the back of my mind, I am building up a storehouse of knowledge I should have started 40 or 50 years ago."

The Creator's wonders are there for all of us to enjoy. Make it a point to notice them today.

God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

Slow me down, Lord, so I may appreciate Your creation.

Use Every Bit That You Have

At 90 years of age, Borghild Dahl was still one of the spunkiest people you could ever meet. In the early 1980s, she lived at Ebenezer Ridges, a Lutheran institution in Minnesota. She wrote her 16th book there with the help of volunteers because she was blind and partially immobile due to breaking her hip in the New York apartment where she had lived by herself.

Ms. Dahl lost her sight completely in 1958. But she always had severely impaired vision and didn't let that keep her from studying and writing. "If you use every bit that you have," she said, "you find you have quite a bit."

Dahl once told an interviewer, "When I lost my sight, my surgeon wanted to put me in a home for the blind where he said I'd be taken care of. I said, 'I don't want to be taken care of; I want to be independent.' Of course, I've had to accept help from people, but as much as I can do, I think it's my business to do."

Each of us needs to find the right balance between independence and interdependence. Doing things ourselves boosts our self-worth, while accepting help from others reminds us that we all need each other to create a fulfilling life.

I am not inferior to you. (Job 12:3)

Jesus, guide those with disabilities towards fulfillment.

From Prison to Redemption, Part 1

By the time Nancy received a six-year prison sentence for robbery and drug possession, she had already been an addict for 14 years. This troubled young woman with three children prayed, “Lord, please help me, because I can’t do this to myself anymore.”

After being sent to Coffee Creek Correctional Facility near Portland, Oregon, Nancy began attending church services where volunteers from Prison Fellowship reflected Jesus’ love to her.

“Nobody wanted anything to do with me before I went to prison because I was so far out there on drugs,” Nancy told Prison Fellowship’s Emily Andrews. “I wanted to have a new life and be a new creation. That’s why I wanted to start going to church...I just wanted to know [God].”

Nancy’s mood noticeably changed to the point that others commented on it. She told them, “I’m happy I’m alive. I made it out of almost death, and I’m the Lord’s child now. I’m His daughter.” More tomorrow...

**The one who was seated on the throne said,
“See, I am making all things new.”
(Revelation 21:5)**

Help the incarcerated find Your hope and healing, Lord.

From Prison to Redemption, Part 2

Nancy was released from Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in 2010 and went on to live in a couple of halfway houses while seeking work with the help of an employment agency. Due to her criminal record, however, nobody would hire her. Thankfully, her brother, Joseph, supported Nancy through every challenge, which allowed her to attend college and graduate with a business degree.

As reported by Prison Fellowship's Emily Andrews, Nancy "began working at a call center and became the top member of her sales team." Then, she and Joseph opened a gym franchise together, which they still co-own. Nancy also helped found Opportunity Oregon, an agency that finds jobs for people with criminal records—and she is rebuilding bonds with her children.

Nancy concluded, "I was at my most vulnerable, darkest, worst, hardest part of my life, and I was just looking for somewhere to turn...I was able to have that start inside of the walls because of Prison Fellowship, and I am forever grateful."

Bring me out of prison, so that I may give thanks to Your name. (Psalm 142:7)

May caring people guide former prisoners to new life and opportunities, Lord.

Carpenter's Quick Thinking Saves Life

Two years ago, East Peoria High School freshman Stephanie Paluska was riding the bike she had recently repaired—although, evidently, not well enough. The rubber cap at the end of one of the handlebars was missing, leaving the hollow metal pipe exposed.

As Paluska rode down Marquette Hill, near her home in Creve Coeur, Illinois, she lost control and was thrown off the bike. “[The] pipe drove itself into her right groin area and struck her femoral artery,” reported the *Peoria Journal Star*.

That was when carpenter and former Boy Scout Brad Kupris arrived on the scene. With a nearby nurse’s assistance, he staunched the bleeding from Paluska’s wound until paramedics arrived.

Kupris said, “I’ve always had a will to help... I’m so glad I could be there for Stephanie.”

Paluska’s half-brother, Donnie Van Winkle, said, “We thank the doctor and everyone who cared for [Stephanie]. And Brad...words can’t thank him enough for being in the right place at the right time. He knew what to do to save her life.”

**Honor physicians for their services.
(Sirach 38:1)**

Creator, may we seek to build up our life-saving skills.

It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's a Window Washer!

It has been said that “not all heroes wear capes.” While this is certainly true, the window washers of UPMC Children’s Hospital do in fact wear them as part of their “superhero” uniforms, which they don for the benefit of their young patients every fall and spring.

This tradition has been going on at UPMC for more than 10 years, and it’s especially popular on Halloween. While these aerial cleaners may be “fighting grime instead of crime,” they are no less impressive in the eyes of these youngsters, who are battling their own enemies: namely, the formidable illnesses that attack them from inside. As reported by Pittsburgh’s *KDKA-TV News*, the goal is to bring these kids a taste of happiness.

One of the window washers, costumed as the iconic Superman, concluded, “As a father—and other people can agree—when you see a child happy, it’s a wonderful thing...Even if it’s for a couple of minutes out of the day, today, we put a smile on their face[s]. We love it, and we hope they do, too.”

Whoever gives even a cup of...water to these little ones...none of them will lose their reward. (Matthew 10:42)

Father, may we always seek to uplift our youth.

Heroes of the Faith

As Gary Jansen was preparing for Confirmation when he was 13 years old, his mother gifted him a book about the saints that she found at a garage sale.

He quickly embraced this collection of the Church's holiest figures because they reminded him of the comic books he enjoyed. Only in this case, the leading characters were not Batman or Green Lantern, but rather "the superheroes of my faith," he said.

Gary grew up to become a Christopher Award-winning author (*Remember Us with Smiles*) and editor of spirituality books, often focusing on the Catholic faith. He also never forgot that childhood gift. So, when an opportunity arose for him to write a similar book for the modern era, he jumped at the chance.

Featuring nearly 400 profiles, Gary's book is titled *Saints, Angels, & Demons: An A-to-Z Guide to the Holy and the Damned*. He discussed it on *Christopher Closeup*, and we'll share more tomorrow...

He has raised up a horn for His people, praise for all His saints. (Psalm 148:14)

May I look to the saints for guidance and wisdom, Lord.