

An Instrument of God

Last January in Brazil, 31-year-old Bruno Lobo was “kitesurfing off the coast of São Luís... when he heard someone screaming and went to her aid.”

Lobo, an Olympic kite surfer and orthopedic doctor, just so happened to have his camera on that day and captured this daring rescue on video, which he then posted to Instagram with the caption, “The day that God used me as an instrument to save this young woman, all glory and honor to Him.”

As quoted in *People*, Lobo recalled, “I went in at 17:40 to do the last test on the camera, it was a cloudy day...After sailing a few meters, I heard a cry for help and looked at the girl who was drowning. I quickly approached her with the kite. I tried to calm her down...She was quite tired and powerless. I used the equipment to bring her safely to the sand, where the lifeguards performed the first aid...Thanks to God everything went well.”

“Thank you for all the messages,” Lobo wrote in response to the flood of praise he received on Instagram. “I only did what needed to be done, and what was within my reach.”

The Lord said...“He is an instrument whom I have chosen.” (Acts 9:15)

Abba, may I strive to be an instrument of Your will.

Selflessness at the LAMPcafe

In their efforts to share food and faith with the poor in the New York City area, LAMP Catholic Ministries drives to three different areas in the South Bronx with their food truck, dubbed the LAMPcafe. They offer either a ham and cheese sandwich or peanut butter and jelly sandwich, along with a hot or cold drink.

When LAMP began these visits, people would be so desperate for food that they would jockey for position at the front of the line. As reported in LAMP's newsletter, those days have mostly ended, giving way to civility and selflessness.

Missionary Ellen Cheng recalled a day when a man who doesn't eat meat was disappointed to find the PB&J sandwiches gone. Another recipient, Jim, then gave this stranger his own PB&J sandwich. Since Jim does not eat meat, he gave away his only food for the day. Ellen felt moved by this "loving gesture."

She added, "This attitude seems to be growing at the site as the people we serve are becoming a community...When setting up and closing, the same folks who used to protect their position are jumping in to help us and are also remaining for closing prayer. The Lord's love is...moving among us."

Let mutual love continue. (Hebrews 13:1)

Let Your love work and move among us, Jesus.

A Basket of Encouragement

Tallahassee, Florida science teacher Yennifer Castillo had already become TikTok famous for her “creative classroom makeovers.” For the last eight years, she has also gained popularity for a less flashy, but more heartwarming reason.

In 2018, Castillo started a GoFundMe for a charitable organization she called the “Annual College Essentials Basket Giveaway.” Every year, she uses these monetary donations to put together individual laundry baskets equipped with all the necessary items first-year college students need, including toiletries, school supplies, and of course, laundry detergent.

“I know firsthand how tough it can be to start college without the basics,” Castillo said on her GoFundMe homepage. “When I was preparing for my own college journey, my family couldn’t afford everything on my dorm checklist, but thanks to a few generous people...I made it. Now, I’m paying it forward.”

“With your help,” Yennifer continued, “we can fill more baskets, uplift more students, and make sure no one feels like they’re starting this journey alone.”

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

Christ, may we seek to encourage and uplift our youth.

The Minister's Trick Question

A story went around social media about a minister telling his congregation, “Next week, I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To prepare for my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17.”

As the church service began the following Sunday, the minister asked all the congregants who had read Mark 17 to raise their hands. Most people's hands shot up. The minister then smiled and revealed, “Mark has only 16 chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying.”

Like many good stories, this one is funny, but has a serious message as well. Getting caught in a lie is embarrassing—more embarrassing than if you had just told the truth. In the aforementioned story, the lie hinged on the congregants wanting to appear holier than they actually were.

Lying is wrong when we do it to boost our own egos and reputations. It is worse, however, when we do it to malign someone else and bear false witness. While we can often justify “little white lies” to spare someone else's feelings, we should be careful not to travel too far down the slippery slope of telling untruths that can harm others—and our own souls.

The truth will make you free. (John 8:32)

Help me to speak the truth in kindness and love, Jesus.

The Honey-Do Dude

The husbands of today are all too familiar with the “honey-do” list their wives are constantly updating for them, which mainly refers to items that need to be fixed around the home.

While some men may not relish completing these mundane tasks, 76-year-old widower Danny Chauvin always derived joy at doing these chores for his wife. Following her death in 2023, he said it was “one of the things he missed most [about her].”

A Vietnam war veteran who previously suffered from “depression and post-traumatic stress disorder,” Chauvin found too much time on his hands was a dangerous luxury for someone who had seen as much as he had. So, he decided to put his hands to better use, posting a message on Facebook that read: “If there’s any honey-do jobs you can’t handle, I’m here to help.”

Chauvin was dubbed the “Honey-Do Dude” by the “single or widowed” women of Waveland, Mississippi, whom he assists and does not charge for his carpentry services. As reported by *CBS News*’ Steve Hartman, “The only thing he takes is a picture with his customers as a reminder...he is not alone in his struggle.”

**Whatever your hand finds to do, do.
(Ecclesiastes 9:10)**

Lord, may I utilize the talents You have given me.

Adult Adoption is Testimony to Love

Singer-songwriter Sarah Hart's biological father was not a part of her life growing up. So, when she was a child, she prayed that God would send her mom a new husband who loved her. It took 12 years for that prayer to be answered, but when it was, God got it perfectly right.

"My mother remarried when I was a sophomore in high school," Sarah recalled on *Christopher Closeup*. "He jumped into a household with two teenage daughters...That was a lot of bravery and love. As the years went on, we got to know each other better, have a deeper relationship."

Though the topic of officially adopting Sarah and her sister had come up through the years, the timing of everyone getting to court at the same time never worked out.

Recently, however, Sarah and her family realized that if their father suffers a medical problem, they would not be legally able to take care of him because they are not listed as his next of kin. "So, we finally did it," said Sarah. "The courtroom was amazing. The judge was crying, our lawyer was crying, we were all crying. It was an amazing testimony to love."

**You have received the spirit of adoption.
(Romans 8:15)**

*May adoptive families love each other deeply,
Messiah.*

Refugees Seeking Safety Enrich America

In 1975, after the war in Vietnam ended, Lincoln, Nebraska, was named a “Refugee Friendly” city by the U.S. State Department. It welcomed Vietnamese people fleeing their homeland in boats, refugees bringing little with them but hope.

Chuyen “Alex” Tran, then age 10, felt confident “the Americans would save us,” he told the *Southern Nebraska Register*. After all, U.S. Navy sailors rescued his family. Then, Lincoln nurtured them with help from Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS).

CSS supported the refugees on their way to becoming Americans, providing English and citizenship classes, cultural and community orientation, and jobs.

Over time, the Vietnamese families adjusted and have given back to the communities that welcomed them, enriching everyone in the process.

The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:34)

Holy Spirit, inspire us to appreciate the ways the diversity of our people contributes to the whole.

Herod and Mary, Part 1

A paranoid ruler, desperate to cling to power, feels so threatened by the manipulative forces around him that he comes to suspect his children are trying to overthrow him, leading him to torture and execute them.

No, this is not the plot of a TV show. It's a piece of history about a man most people know little about: King Herod, the one who ordered the murder of all boys under age two after hearing from the Magi that the king of the Jews was born in Bethlehem.

The gospel of Matthew only gives a taste of the evils Herod committed. But now his story—as well as a contrasting one about a model of holiness—is being told by an unlikely source: Kathie Lee Gifford. Though known for her upbeat, positive personality on morning TV, Kathie Lee has long been a student of Judeo-Christian history.

She is sharing what she has learned in the book *Herod and Mary: The True Story of the Tyrant King and the Mother of the Risen Savior*, co-authored with Dr. Bryan Litfin, and she discussed it on *Christopher Closeup*. More tomorrow...

Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy Him. (Matthew 2:13)

Guide us in learning from history, Creator.

Herod and Mary, Part 2

Kathie Lee Gifford has always been fascinated by biblical history, but a trip to Israel with her husband, Frank, more than 10 years ago changed her understanding of Scripture. She said, “Unless we study what the original languages of the Scriptures were and are—meaning Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek in the New [Testament]—we are not hearing the word of God.”

During that trip, Kathie Lee first heard about Herod’s background. She became so intrigued by him that she sought out books about his life and the politics of his era, including his relationships with Mark Antony, Cleopatra, and Julius Caesar.

Herod was evil, murdering anyone who he thought might work against him. Yet he was also a talented architect. “He built that marina at Caesarea Maritime,” Kathie Lee noted. “This man was so genius, he found a way to pour concrete 150 feet into the Mediterranean Sea and build a marina for Caesar’s ships.”

Sadly, Herod allowed his evil tendencies to overshadow his capacity for good. He eventually died miserable and unloved. The other figure in *Herod and Mary*, however, serves as an ideal model of holiness. More tomorrow...

Pride goes before destruction. (Proverbs 16:18)

*Help me choose love and humility over pride,
Abba.*

Herod and Mary, Part 3

Despite Herod's many sins, he believed he was virtuous and favored by God. In reality, God's presence in Kathie Lee Gifford's book *Herod and Mary* comes from the second of those two names.

Kathie Lee contrasts Mary, the mother of Jesus, with the self-absorbed, power-hungry, violent way that Herod lived his life. During a *Christopher Closeup* interview, she said, "I want to give people hope, and nobody represented hope more than a little Jewish virgin, growing up in a village of maybe a couple of hundred people called Nazareth."

"[She was] born into poverty...certainly not born into what the world would say would be greatness. But she found favor with God. Why? Because of her pure heart, because of her spirit, because of her goodness."

Whereas Herod was willing to lose his soul to gain the world, Mary's example of humility reflected God's own choice to humble Himself and become human. And Kathie Lee notes that Mary remains a role model for all of us.

All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another. (1 Peter 5:5)

May I look to Your mother, Jesus, as a role model.

Herod and Mary, Part 4

Kathie Lee Gifford emphasizes that Christianity originated with the Jewish people. She feels profound sadness that this truth makes some people uncomfortable and has often led to—and still leads to—antisemitism.

“Jesus’ first followers were all Jews,” Kathie Lee said. “His whole family was [Jewish]...Jesus was a rabbi...He was a Jew. And people recoil sometimes that this is the story. Well, you either believe it or you don’t, and that’s your right. But you disbelieve it or you’re cynical about it at your loss. It’s such a rich history...Jesus said we’re supposed to love, this is our family...‘Bet’ab.’ Bet’ab is Hebrew for ‘the father’s house.’”

Kathie Lee hopes that people who read *Herod and Mary* find it enlightening from a historical perspective, but that it also offers them light on the best way to live their lives. Citing Micah 6:8 (“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”), Kathie Lee concluded, “God Himself became one of us so He could walk humbly with us. We’re all sinners saved by grace.”

**By grace you have been saved through faith.
(Ephesians 2:8)**

Open my heart to Your grace, Jesus.

Billboard Saves a Life

Lily Woo, a retired New York City principal and 9/11 hero, had been waiting seven years to receive a life-saving kidney transplant. With nothing left to lose, she put an advertisement on free outdoor billboard spaces throughout the city, including Times Square.

In 2025, Woo's prayers were answered. Samantha Marks told *ABC News* that she was driving into the city when she saw the billboard. It read, "Lily Woo needs a kidney. Do you have type O positive blood?" Sure enough, Marks did.

Marks felt it was a sign, so she got tested and was a match. She felt even more drawn to help Woo after hearing of her actions on 9/11. When parents could not pick up their children that day, Woo, principal of P.S. 130, waited until every child was picked up by other relatives, then helped convert the school into a triage center.

Post-surgery, both Woo and Marks are doing great and feel bonded like family. "I'm forever indebted to her," said Woo.

You have shown me great kindness in saving my life. (Genesis 19:19)

Loving Lord, bless all those who are organ donors and generously give of themselves to help others.

Cancer Survivor Offers 'Road to Recovery'

Cancer survivor Julie Spangler feels blessed to have survived two bouts with the disease, so she made a commitment to help others in similar circumstances.

Specifically, she became a volunteer for the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Road to Recovery program, which has provided millions of rides to patients who don't have transportation to get to their appointments.

Dr. Arif Kamal, ACS's Chief Patient Officer, told *NBC News'* Anne Thompson, "Lack of transportation is the number one barrier to people accessing...cancer care."

Julie not only gives patients a ride, she offers them friendly conversation and an understanding of the fears and challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis. Rachel, a patient who needed 30 radiation treatments, expressed gratitude to Julie and the other volunteers who drove her to and from her appointments.

One of Julie's patients calls her an "angel." Anne Thompson concluded, "Some angels have wings; Julie Spangler has wheels."

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:16)

Abba, help me be an angel to someone in need.

A Priest's Radical Mercy

Most people wouldn't view getting stabbed as a blessing, but that's the case with Irish Army chaplain Father Paul Murphy. As reported by Sarah Mac Donald for *OSV News*, Father Murphy was in his car waiting for the barracks' gates to open when he was approached by a 16-year-old male. Father Murphy partially rolled down his window, and the teen began stabbing him with a knife until one of the soldiers subdued him.

It was soon discovered that the teen had been radicalized online by the Islamic State. Despite sustaining lasting injuries to his left arm, Father Murphy believes that the way things went down was a blessing because he would hate for one of the soldiers to have been killed in the attack.

When the teen plead guilty to his crime, Father Murphy appeared in court to forgive him, saying, "My only desire is that you would learn to see the error of your ways and, when the time comes, return to society to make a positive contribution to the world." The teen apologized to the priest, and the two hugged before leaving the courtroom.

**If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
(Matthew 6:14)**

*Grant me the grace to sincerely forgive others,
Jesus.*

Chinese Catholics Honor Mary

Beginning in 1949, Catholics in China were only allowed to practice a state-run version of their faith due to communist rule. This led to the creation of an underground church in which people engaged in Catholic rituals secretly. For the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary, for instance, they snuck into the woods after midnight to hold a candlelight procession.

As reported by Jeffrey Bruno, Chinese Catholics began contracting with human smugglers during the 1980s, selling themselves into slavery in the U.S. for the chance to escape the country. Many of these refugees ended up in New York City, where they ultimately gained their freedom and citizenship.

In 1994, this group approached Father Raymond Nobiletti, pastor of the Church of the Transfiguration in Chinatown, known as “The Immigrants’ Church.” They asked if they could have an Assumption procession, like they had in China. He agreed, so “they took to the streets rejoicing in the freedom to celebrate their faith... and thanking the Blessed Mother for their answered prayers.” The procession continues to this day.

**For freedom Christ has set us free.
(Galatians 5:1)**

Guide refugees to faith and freedom, Paraclete.

Cabbie was Good Samaritan

Robert Nugent was a New York City cab driver with a strong sense of honor and compassion. One weekend, back around 1980, he befriended two visiting Nigerians who were wandering around Kennedy Airport, trying to cash a bank draft and find a cab.

Aware that some unscrupulous drivers prey on strangers, Nugent showed them a special kind of hospitality. Not only did he take them to a hotel, he paid for their room and lent them \$20, returning the next morning to drive them to a bank that would cash their draft.

Nugent didn't want to discuss the incident, but a newspaper reporter tracked him down. "There are a lot of sharks out there at the airport," Nugent said. "I stop them at every opportunity I get."

Nugent's act recalls the story of the Good Samaritan, who bound up the wounds of the man beaten by robbers and then paid the innkeeper to take care of him until he was well. In telling the story, Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

**To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.
(Proverbs 21:3)**

Father, may I do a good deed for a stranger in need.

Crippling Hot Sauce

Wheelchair-bound due to cerebral palsy, 14-year-old Drew Davis struggled with his 300-pound weight. Dietary changes, including low-calorie hot sauce, led to him losing 150 pounds. When Drew got a school assignment to draw up a business plan the following year, he turned to his favorite condiment again.

He believed that his well-detailed plan for a product he called “Crippling Hot Sauce” would earn him a perfect grade. Instead, he received a B-minus, with the explanation that it was a “good idea” but “unrealistic.”

Undeterred, Drew set out to prove his teacher wrong. In 2023, at age 18, he used \$3,000 in savings to create the product Crippling Hot Sauce. By the end of 2024, more than half a million bottles had been sold, generating two million dollars in sales, with five percent being donated to cerebral palsy research.

“We’re on a mission to show that no matter your situation, anything is possible,” Drew told *Entrepreneur* reporter Amanda Breen. “[We’re] rewriting people’s perceptions around the disabled through humor and breaking down stereotypes.”

**All things can be done for...one who believes.
(Mark 9:23)**

Lord, grant us the persistence to pursue our dreams.

Be a Befriender

Many years ago, Ruth Smith held the position of pastoral minister at St. William's parish in Fridley, Minnesota. But Smith knew that this sort of ministry is really the responsibility of everyone and that, in certain cases, it is best carried out by one's peers.

So, she involved as many people as possible in her work and called it the Befriender program. It led the senior citizens of seven Catholic and Protestant churches to minister to other seniors.

In her own church, Smith broadened the Befriender concept to include teenagers and the middle-aged. "A Befriender is a person who believes we are all called to share our gifts in caring, sharing, and ministering to each other," she explained. "I'm not able to reach out to everyone. I can't do it alone."

Many people try to do everything on their own, only to run out of energy or enthusiasm before any real goals are reached. Try to avoid that mistake in your own life. If you see a need, move to fill it. But try to interest others in helping, too.

**We are members of one another.
(Ephesians 4:25)**

Jesus, bring me to a realization that I can accomplish more with the help of others.

Quicksand Cements Couple's Commitment

Michigan residents Breanne Sika and Mitchell O'Brien had been friends for two years, ever since they first met at "a training session for addiction recovery counselors." Little did these two know it would take a walk on the beach of Lake Michigan to make them realize the depth of their true feelings.

As they were searching for rocks along the shore, Breanne spotted "an area of sand that concerned her." Mitchell misunderstood her warning and wound up stepping right into a patch of quicksand. He had encountered quicksand before, but instead of dropping down flat and rolling "away," he reached first to dig out his phone and keys—and that's when he sank.

As described to Nil Köksal, host of *As It Happens* on *CBC Radio One*, Mitchell tried to extricate himself for 20 minutes before he and Brianne both decided to separately call 911.

"That's the first time we referred to each other as boyfriend and girlfriend," Mitchell recalled. He was soon saved by an emergency crew with the aid of a "lasso" and "life jacket." Sitka and O'Brien are now in a committed relationship and happier than ever!

Two are better than one. (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

Lord, may we never take the love of others for granted.

UPS Driver's Quick Thinking Saves Life

On a swelteringly hot August day in Valdosta, Georgia, UPS driver Raheem Cooper was on his daily rounds when he spotted an older woman lying in her driveway, grocery bags scattered around her. He and a nearby young woman rushed to her aid.

Upon finding no one in the lady's home, Cooper called 911, and within minutes, an ambulance arrived. He gave paramedics his name and number in case this woman's family needed to call him. But what really astonished him was a Facebook post that came out the next day, which praised him for his heroic actions.

Cooper's mother, whom he had told what transpired, was at a local furniture store shopping for her son, when she heard some employees discussing the Facebook post. After mentioning that the Raheem Cooper in the story was her son, the store gifted her with whatever Raheem needed, free of charge.

"It feels so great," Cooper declared to *WALB News*. "But I have to give all the glory to God because if it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't have been there, so I just thank God."

The Lord directs the steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

God, guide me to be in the right place at the right time.

Special Needs Student Joins Fraternity

Clemson University in South Carolina offers students with intellectual disabilities a chance to learn life skills for independent living through the ClemsonLIFE program. However, this wasn't enough for junior Charlie McGee, who wanted the full college experience, prompting him to join the fraternity Phi Kappa Alpha.

McGee, who has Down syndrome, told *CBS News* that he yearned to join a fraternity in order "to have a great time and experience the brotherhood and more joy."

At first, many brothers were skeptical about having someone from the ClemsonLIFE program pledge their fraternity, since it would be the first time this happened. However, that changed once they got to know McGee. One fraternity member said, "The joy and light that we were missing in our chapter, that we didn't know we were missing from the beginning, is unreal."

McGee said this type of acceptance was "magical." He added that when he's with his fraternity brothers, "My disability, it doesn't really exist."

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. (1 Timothy 4:9)

Jesus, may all Your children find acceptance in this world.

A Media Nun's Mission, Part 1

Sister Nancy Usselman approaches modern media not as a scold but as a fan, having grown up loving books, films, and TV programs. The fact that the Daughters of St. Paul use media to teach about Jesus and communicate gospel principles is what drew her to the order. “We need to be able to look at our media culture and integrate our faith with it,” she noted.

The film which awakened Sister Nancy to the moral and spiritual dimensions in secular storytelling was *The Shawshank Redemption*. She explained, “I was a novice when I watched it, and I remember [thinking], ‘This has a lot...to say about life, the human person, the possibilities for redemption, for hope.’”

“That was the turning point for me, wanting to study...media education, media literacy, and...integrating theology within our popular culture... We review...secular films and try to look deeply at: What does it say about the human person? Does it support human dignity? What are the theological themes that are being drawn out regardless of whether Christ is mentioned or not?...What are the values that it communicates?”

**He told them many things in parables.
(Matthew 13:3)**

Open my mind to what stories say about human dignity, Lord.

A Media Nun's Mission, Part 2

Our media consumption no longer consists solely of going to a movie theater, watching TV in the living room, or popping a CD into the stereo. These things are now with us 24 hours a day through our phones. When you add social media to the mix, our behaviors can become addictive.

As someone who teaches media literacy, Sister Nancy Usselman finds this trend concerning. "Twenty years out from social media's invention," she said, "we're considering now, especially for children and teens, that it can lead to greater depression or...isolating ourselves. It can lead to sadness, to anxiety. It's time to...question, 'How am I using these media?'"

In her book, *Media Fasting: Six Weeks to Recharge in Christ*, Sister Nancy shares ideas on taking a break from media consumption and becoming more intentional about what we spend our time doing. She encourages "inviting Christ into our media experience...It's not only for health or emotional reasons, but because we want to deepen our relationship with God."

**God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but...
of power and of love and self-discipline.
(2 Timothy 1:7)**

*Teach me to control my media consumption,
Lord, rather than letting it control me.*

A Media Nun's Mission, Part 3

Sister Nancy Usselman doesn't approach the topic of social media as an outsider. She admits that her weakness is Instagram reels that tell clever, funny stories. "They're amazing technology," she said during a *Christopher Closeup* interview about her book *Media Fasting*, "but they can be a time sucker." To keep her viewing from getting out of hand, she creates daily time limits for herself.

Everyone's digital fast will differ according to their individual needs. "Try to eliminate that one element that's causing you the most trouble," Sister Nancy recommended. "Then...consider, what will you replace that time with? Can it be more time for prayer?...Ten minutes of prayer a day can be truly transforming...Also, how do I reflect upon my media use, so that when I go back to it after the fast, I do so in a different way?"

"By inviting Christ into our media experience, it's going to challenge us to think about, 'What am I watching? What am I engaging with and why?' So that's what the book is. It's offering the spirituality for a media experience."

**Test everything; hold fast what is good.
(1 Thessalonians 5:21)**

Lead me to honestly reflect on my media usage, Abba.

Shall We Dance?

Why do people around the world dance? Why do babies kick their legs out before they can talk? Questions like these intrigued Troy Aidan Sambajon.

“The best I’ve come up with,” he writes in the *Christian Science Monitor*, “is that...all of us kick and wriggle not only to stretch the body’s muscles, but also to feel the thrill of being alive. Dance reminds us of that—of our pulse, our presence, our possibility.”

People the world over dance to feel a sense of belonging with others. Professor Sara Hook at the University of Illinois told Sambajon, “The way a culture dances is really expressing their values, their ethical moral code...their ways of defining an enriched life.”

“What I’ve concluded,” writes Sambujon, “is that we dance to connect—to ourselves, to one another, to our ancestors.”

**Let them praise His name with dancing, making
melody to Him with timbrel and lyre!
(Psalm 149:3)**

*God, help us appreciate the many different
ways we can communicate and connect.*

A Church's Open Doors

The Church of the Holy Family in Grand Blanc, Michigan, was vandalized four times in two years. As reported by Caleb Wallace Holm for the *Michigan Enjoyer*, the perpetrator had no ax to grind against the church. Instead, he was a “disgruntled drunk,” who had wreaked havoc in other parts of town, too.

To avoid further vandalism, police suggested to the pastor, Father Joe Krupp, that he should lock the church after daily Masses. Father Joe refused, noting, “The church is a place of prayer and worship. A place where we can meet God. No vandals will stop that work.”

As Holm was leaving Holy Family after looking into this story, he encountered a disheveled, homeless man with a rosary around his neck. This man started expounding on the lives of the saints, the Virgin Mary, and theology.

Holm found himself fascinated and understood why the church should remain unlocked. He wrote, “It might seem unreasonable to leave the church vulnerable, but that is the radical work of love and mercy that the church teaches. The commitment to open doors allows for the lost to find hope.”

**I have opened my doors to the traveler.
(Job 31:32)**

May Your church help the lost find hope, Jesus.

The Life He Didn't Want

Sometimes the life you want isn't necessarily the life you need. Consider actor Billy Flynn, who played the role of Chad DiMera on the soap opera *Days of Our Lives* for more than 10 years. It wasn't a job he wanted when it was originally offered to him.

In an interview with *TV Guide*, Flynn recalled, "I lived on a sailboat, and I had no money. I could barely eat." His goal was to be a film actor, so when the audition for *Days of Our Lives* came up, he pursued it for financial reasons despite not wanting to work in soaps. The job was offered to him, so he decided to take it for a couple of years to pay some bills, then move on.

Flynn's attitude has definitely changed in the past decade. Now married with children, he says, "It's the best job in the world. I get to make a living, and I get to be around for my kids. I think over 10 years, there has just been an evolution of gratitude. The life I didn't think I wanted has turned out to be this really fruitful thing and one of the best learning experiences in a lot of different ways."

The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

*Guide me towards the life that's best for me,
Holy Spirit.*

The Tip of a Lifetime

Tamie Konzier was dining at an Eat n' Park restaurant in Pittsburgh with her son, Leo, when she overheard her 81-year-old waitress, Betty, telling another customer that she struggled with "chronic back pain," but still "needed...[this] job." Betty's monthly Social Security check only totaled \$910, which didn't even cover all her bills.

Moved by this server's plight, Tamie shared Betty's story on TikTok. "If I can make one video go viral, let it be this one," Tamie declared in her initial video, as quoted in *People* magazine. Tamie's post was soon flooded with comments, asking where money could be sent for Betty, so she set up a GoFundMe page to accommodate the outpouring of donations.

Within a day, \$110,000 had been raised, and the total kept climbing! In April 2025, Tamie presented Betty with the "tip of a lifetime"—a whopping \$328,739.18!

"Thank you for your generosity!" Tamie told her TikTok fans. "[Betty] is a sweet, deserving woman...I'm so glad we were put in this place at a certain time, and we raised this money for her to enjoy the rest of her life."

**Be...a restorer...a nourisher of...old age.
(Ruth 4:15)**

Abba, may we strive to take good care of our elders.

Young People Need You

For the first time since Hurricane Katrina, an important youth mentorship program in New Orleans is back in business.

There are tens of thousands of youngsters in the area who face enormous adversities and, therefore, need wise and compassionate guidance from adults.

As a result, said Kalli Christ, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Acadiana & Greater New Orleans, to WGNO, tens of thousands of volunteers are needed who are ready to “commit to spending time with a young person.”

Opportunities for mentoring come in two forms. An adult can meet with their “little brother or sister” in their school once a week. Or they can spend casual time (basketball, pizza, coffee) together, which “makes an incredible impact on young people.”

Mentors can foster hope and inspire resilience in a young person, Christ notes. She adds, “What I would tell someone is you don’t have to be perfect to be a mentor, you just have to be present.”

**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.
(Proverbs 22:6)**

Remind us, Lord, that young people need guidance on their way to healthy adulthood.

Disciples of Galilee Doing God's Work

Jesus called on us to “feed the hungry,” so that’s what the Disciples of Galilee do. The Disciples of Galilee is an organization founded by three men who work with volunteers to feed hundreds of people out of their Bronx, New York pantry.

Founders Max Acosta, Guillermo “Gil” Santos, and Segundo Lopez met in support programs for drug addiction. Together, they leaned into their faith and decided to do something to support their community. Santos told *NY1 News*, “We give back because we’ve been blessed—and we’ve been blessed that we’ve been saved.”

The Disciples of Galilee hand out sandwiches to the homeless, provide a food pantry service, and connect with people who are experiencing homelessness and living with addiction.

“We suffered, we’ve been rejected, and we embrace them,” said Lopez, who handles the organization’s community affairs. He added, “There’s something about you doing God’s work, and you’re feeding His people. The void is full.”

**If you follow out the words of your servant,
God will accomplish something through you.
(Judith 11:6)**

*Jesus, help me lean into my purpose, today
and always.*

Nurses on Horseback

After the winds and rains of Hurricane Helene devastated some of North Carolina's mountain communities in October 2024, many response agencies were overwhelmed by the enormous calls for aid. That's when a group of nurses on horseback took it upon themselves to help their neighbors.

"There's always a strong network of neighbors helping neighbors up here," Steve Marks, fire chief of Cove Creek Volunteer Fire Department, told *Southern Living*.

The Cove Creek Fire Department gave the nurses directions to Avery County, where the road in front of the fire station got washed away, preventing any trucks from helping. "We were able to establish some radio contact with them and started sending resources once the severity became clear," said Marks.

These nurses put themselves in a perilous position, but bravely disembarked on horseback to help their fellow residents with lifesaving needs during this disastrous storm, showing that old-fashioned modes of transportation can still save lives.

O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid! (Psalm 22:19)

Merciful Jesus, instill us with the courage and selflessness to aid those in distress.