

# THE POWER OF PRAYER



prayer is about letting God in.

# Prayer changes us.

Sometimes desperation brings us to pray; sometimes it's a gift that awes us – like a new child; sometimes it's a little whisper – an interior nudge – that tells us there is more, and it is for us. Whatever proves the gateway into a life of prayer, once we enter, we don't know how we ever lived without it.

**Why does prayer change me?** Because prayer is about letting God in. Whatever our circumstances, every human heart lives a perpetual Advent pleading “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” When we let down our guard and give Him some silence and space, He answers. He comes. Prayer lets us live the miracle of Christmas everyday.



And the miracle of Christmas, the amazing truth that God became one of us, is exactly what lets God in – into the deepest recesses of our hearts, memories, hopes, sorrows and joys. That Christ became flesh allows us to encounter again and again the truth that “Emmanuel”: God is with us.

**Prayer changes me** because the Light of the world begins to shine within my world, within me. Prayer isn't a way to make things work out the way we think they ought, but rather it makes room for a vision I would otherwise be too small to see. With the light of Christ, I begin to see miracles I would have missed and love I might have dismissed. Letting Jesus in gives me a share in His strength and His Spirit's gifts – and I become amazed at St. Paul's words coming to life in me: “I can bear all things in Him

who strengthens me.” I come to know who I am in God's eyes, and I live out of the unconditional, limitless love He has for me.

Prayer changes me because, as I am set free by the startling reality of God's love for and forgiveness of me, I begin to see others with His eyes. And they, too, are beautiful and precious, unrepeatable icons of the God who has so loved me. Letting Jesus into my heart means that His friends come with Him. As I meet them, I am no longer afraid of their weakness, because I am not afraid of my own: Christ has met me precisely there with His love. I am no longer afraid to give of my time and my heart for these others: I am receiving divine riches and so have plenty to give away. I am no longer afraid to encourage others with a difficult truth: I have carried the Cross in my own life and know that the truth does indeed, set you free.

**Prayer changes us. And prayer changes the world.** Never forget that you are here on earth for a reason. In the unique relationship you have with the Lord, He will work miracles in your life and in the lives of many others. As Christ is born in your heart, He is allowed more room on earth. You never know where He will take you, the lives you will touch, the inspiration you will give, the healing you will bring. As you read the stories in this newsletter, none of which would have ever happened without that first ‘yes’ in prayer of those involved, know that the Sisters of Life keep you in our hearts, with us, at the foot of the manger.

In Christ our Life,

Mother Agnes, S.V.



## A Day in the Life

During a typical day, we will receive dozens of phone calls from the women we are serving, our Co-workers, social workers with referrals, and new women seeking help. One morning Jane called, she had an abortion scheduled for later that day. A friend gave her our number in the hope she would make a different choice. After speaking to us over the phone for close to an hour she decided to come to the Centre to meet with us. After several minutes of talking with the Sisters she took a deep breath and said, "I feel so much peace here." Meanwhile, another meeting was taking place in an adjacent parlor; a young Chinese couple assisted by one of our Co-worker translators was meeting with two Sisters. Jane joined us for lunch and because it was a warm afternoon we sat outside in our back garden. As she became more relaxed, she was able to be more open to what her heart

# AN explosion OF GRACE IN TORONTO

In the spiritual life, as with many things in life, there is a certain amount of labor and commitment that takes place over time often without seeing progress or any results. Then suddenly, there are those gleaming, glorious moments that you don't want to end. June 12, 2010 the opening of our new Centre in Toronto, was one of those moments. What began with a small step in faith, has blossomed into a flourishing mission building a Culture of Life in Canada.

Archbishop Thomas Collins and a dozen priests, celebrated the opening Mass and blessing of the Sisters of Life Centre. Packed with people from many different races and walks of life, baby strollers and laughter filled the halls of the Centre, and the little band of five Sisters currently missioned to Toronto could not help but be amazed at what God had brought together. Gathered was a group of hearty souls who believe that building a culture where the dignity of the human person is respected is possible; they trust that Truth will not be overshadowed by darkness.

For years before our arrival in Toronto, the Culture of Life Team, a group of dedicated pro-life leaders in Ontario, gathered monthly to pray and to encourage one another in their efforts at St. Augustine's Seminary Chapel. They also held Holy Hours for Life at St. Catherine of Siena Church inviting the faithful to pray for a revitalization of the pro-life movement in Canada. In August of 2007, without knowing of any of these efforts, three Sisters headed north to begin our first

*(continued on next page)*

was really telling her, she wanted to choose life but felt so much pressure. While we were finishing lunch, the doorbell rang, a Co-worker dropping off a donation of petite maternity clothes; the timing could not have been more perfect. Jane was able to pick out a few shirts that she liked before we went upstairs to our offices to make an appointment with one of our Co-workers who is a doctor and was willing to see her the next day to begin prenatal care. We then introduced her to a few Co-workers who could encourage her as Handmaids. The real gift of the Centre is that it is a safe place of peace and compassion where women can find help and practical support and in that, come to know the good that they really desire.



*"Lead kindly light, lead thou me on...I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step is enough for me." Blessed John Newman*

(An explosion of grace in Toronto cont'd)



mission outside of the USA and were warmly welcomed to reside in the convent attached to that very same seminary chapel.

Without wasting any time, in the first nine months, the Sisters spoke at scores of parishes and Catholic Women's League meetings, at pro-life events, at universities and on radio programs in order to introduce themselves and our Charism of Life to the people of Canada. They traveled to Ottawa for the March for Life and as far east as New Brunswick for the National Pro-life Congress. Through these meetings they were joined by hundreds of people who desire to take part in the transformation of a culture. Many answered the summons to become Co-workers of Life. Parishes and groups began contacting the Sisters, wanting to know how they could get involved. Men and women of all ages and diverse cultural and economic backgrounds approached, looking to volunteer, to lend their support, to offer their professional services. The enthusiasm was outrageous and the responses to simple e-mail requests for diapers or assistance serving women would leave the Sisters inundated.



Archbishop Collins with  
Sr. Catherine Marie (back left),  
Sr. Mary Rose (back right),  
Sr. Shirley Ann (front left),  
Sr. Maria Kateri,  
Sr. Monica Faustina,  
and Sr. Mary Elizabeth

## Our new foundation TORONTO

Some of our Co-workers have served the women indirectly by cooking for events, setting up tables and chairs, and volunteering for projects surrounding the opening of the Centre, such as painting and organizing donations. Others wanted to directly walk with the young women we serve as Handmaids, by becoming St. Joseph's Workers, or interceding as Prayer Guardians. One doctor willingly sees the women immediately, and a lawyer has offered pro bono consultations.

Many of our Co-workers in Toronto are first generation immigrants from the Philippines, India, China and Europe. They are now thriving with their families, while the memory of first coming over is fresh and relevant. Finding themselves in need as they began to establish a life here, they always have eyes for the other. The experience is one of great desire to return the favor they once received by providing the pregnant women who come to us with the warm welcome of a community and family.  
(cont'd on next page)



Who is the first Holy Cross Father to be canonized a saint from Canada?  
St. Andre Bessette!

◀ Where will you find the Maple Leaf, the official symbol of Canada?  
The Canadian flag, military uniforms, badges, coins and on trees all over Canada!

# God's

Did you know that more than 50% of the world's lakes are in Canada? ▼



## So here's a few things you oughta' know about Canada...

1. What does "Double Double" mean?  
Two creams and two sugars in a Tim Horton's Coffee
2. What is a toque?  
(pronounced touk)  
A winter ski hat
3. Who's the famous pro-life priest who is known for his clever card tricks?  
Rev. Ted Colleton
4. What is the nickname given to Wayne Gretzky?  
"The Great One"
5. What is "poutine".  
A french Canadian specialty: french fries and cheese curds smotherd in hot beef gravy
6. Who is St. Andre Bessette?  
The first male Canadian born Saint responsible for the building of St. Josph's Oratory in Montreal and canonized on Oct. 17th, 2010

As we began serving pregnant women, it became clear that we needed a place in the heart of the city to meet with women and our Co-workers. St. Catherine's Church rectory was empty and well located, easily accessible by public transportation. Our friends and co-workers helped convert the building into a warm and welcoming Centre complete with beautifully furnished meeting rooms, kitchen and dining room, upstairs offices and most importantly a chapel with the Blessed Sacrament. Volunteers painted, cleaned, and planted an outdoor garden. They spent weeks organizing donations to stock the downstairs storeroom with everything a woman would need during her pregnancy and to care for a new baby. Everyone worked together to create a warm peaceful environment in the midst of a bustling city block.

We were given a glimmer of the beauty of God's providence when we realized that this opening Mass was being celebrated in the very place where so many prayers for life had been offered. It was at St. Catherine's Church where so many Holy Hours for Life had been held, that we were opening our new Centre. Msgr. Nusca, who assisted with these Holy Hours, marveled: "It's a great consolation and a sign of God's love, that in the very place where so many prayers were offered for renewal and unity in the movement, the Sisters of Life are now serving. We marvel that God's response would be a religious community dedicated to the cause of human life. We are grateful that they have been called to be the Heart of Christ to so many women and men who are in need of support."



*and Unity*



*Ann is the very first woman that the Sisters came to know and love in Toronto. She and her family joined the Sisters at the opening of the centre on June 12, 2010.*

*Renewal*

# hand

They might be a "ton" of fun to look at, but, you wouldn't want one sitting on you...the average weight of a Canadian Moose is over 1,000 lbs. ➤



## Our Friends in Toronto

*There are so many people behind the scenes in Toronto that make our religious lives and outreach to pregnant women possible to whom we are so grateful. Below we highlight just a few.*

### Ronnie Siwak

Ronnie Siwak, a retired school teacher met the Sisters at her home parish when they came to speak. She has been a faithful Co-worker who has done everything from gardening to organizing donations to meeting with pregnant women and supporting them through ongoing friendship. "When I met the Sisters I had been praying that God would lead me to a place to volunteer because I wanted to make my life count for something. I prayed to God for direction, 'Lord what do you want me to do?' and he guided me. When I heard the Sisters speak, I



### Angelina Steenstra

Angelina Steenstra has been a spiritual friend of the Sisters for years. She and Fr. Vince Heffernan began Second Chance Post Abortion Healing Ministry. She says that the work is very simple; it's

listening to another. Led by the spirituality of Catherine Doherty she realized the truth of Catherine's words, "You can listen a person into life." One listens with one ear to the heart of the woman before you and with the other ear to the Heart of Jesus. It's a remarkable work of the Holy Spirit." At the opening Mass of the Sisters of Life Centre, Angelina was asked to bring up the gifts. "I saw this as a moment of many things coming together; I was bringing up the gifts of all of our lives, sacrifices, prayers, and cooperation."

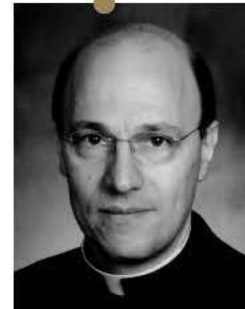


### Archbishop Thomas Collins

Archbishop Thomas Collins was installed as the Archbishop of Toronto in January of 2007, just months before our arrival. Along with many young adults in Toronto, the Sisters attend his monthly Lectio Divina at the Cathedral where the Archbishop leads his flock in prayer and meditation on the Scriptures. Archbishop Collins is also a great advocate for the cause of life, joining in prayer at the 40 Days for Life campaign outside of a downtown abortion facility.

## who's behind the scenes?

immediately felt very connected to their mission and signed up right away to be a Co-worker of Life. I was not sure if I had anything to offer but they called me up. I see the women come into the Centre under so much pressure; the outside influences to have an abortion are so strong. But, the women are strong, and with the help of the Sisters they become stronger and it changes them and they choose life which is what they really want to do. They are asking for help and God guides them. I love going to the Centre. I have put my heart and soul into helping the Sisters and it's really given me so much more than I have ever given. It has completed my life.



### Msgr. Robert Nusca

More a spiritual Father than a landlord, Msgr. Nusca, rector of St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto, has graciously welcomed the Sisters to live at the convent on the seminary property. Msgr. Nusca has a heart for life and commented, "I really believe that the Sisters are a light in a culture that is at times bent on values that will lead to its own destruction. They are the Heart of Christ pastorally to men and women who are in need of support in difficult situations."



← Name five winter sports in Canada.  
Hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, and hockey.

An interview with

# Camille &

## Going *in haste* to meet her.

What is it about the scene of the Visitation that is so moving?

Is it the warmth of the exchange between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth? The infant John the Baptist leaping for joy? The mysterious amazement of the known presence of the unborn Jesus, hidden in the womb of his Blessed Mother?

We glimpse anew the joy of this mystery in the story of one Co-worker of Life and a young pregnant woman who contacted us. When Camille first “went in haste” to meet Julia\*, to her surprise, it was her own heart that cried out, “Who am I, that you should come to me?” In giving of herself, she shares that she received more than she could have asked or imagined.

Camille, who was pregnant herself when she met Julia for the first time, began with a laugh, “We went through our pregnancies together. It was such a good match, and that had everything to do with the Holy Spirit. Julia’s crisis came at the time when I had everything to give to her. God had readied my heart when she needed someone the most. And I needed her too! To walk with her, yes, we walked together.”



**What first drew you to become a Co-Worker?**

**Camille:** I was attracted to serving women in conjunction with the Sisters, knowing I would be carried by grace and have their support. At the first Co-worker training, we learned to receive women by first delighting in them. This seemed so fitting. I wanted to be able to develop a relationship that progressed naturally. A woman in crisis needs a steady voice, someone in her life who is willing to be present. In the moment of crisis, there can be no agenda, it’s not the time to engage in a logical argument. That’s not what she needs. We meet her where she is.

**Can you tell me about your experience serving Julia\*?**

Sr. Shirley called and asked if I’d be willing to reach out to a young woman in the area; I agreed and gave her a call. After we had spoken on the phone a couple of times, it was natural that we meet. I wanted to make her feel comfortable. I am a high school teacher and she was a student. And what’s more—we were both pregnant! We were able to share week by week what was happening.

**What surprised you?**

I didn’t know how it would work. How do I fit into her life? She became like family. I called her once a week at least, and we would meet for coffee. She may not have many relationships with other women. This is an opportunity to willingly be that person. It’s a wonderful thing. I wasn’t solely concerned with the baby’s birth; I wanted her to experience God, and the fullness of life! I encouraged her to consider God’s plan for her life.

**What are the benefits of being a Co-Worker?**

I enjoyed talking to Julia immensely. I could recognize God’s presence in our conversations. God was orchestrating everything. The Lord knew that I could understand her and that I had the tools to help her get a diploma in her graduating year. God gave me everything I would need. It was such a gift just to get to know her. She is very resourceful and hard-working. She was determined to give life to her baby, regardless of the personal cost to her and the pressures.

**Any recommendations for a future Handmaid?**

You don’t have to do everything all at once. Let the relationship evolve naturally, over time. The first time you call her feel at ease. Find a couple things you have in common and listen. Let her do most of the talking, and guide the conversation to make her comfortable. It doesn’t have to be about the crisis! You don’t have to talk about how things have gone wrong, although, she may need to talk about that before she can see clearly. It is an encouragement just to say, “It will work out; I’m here for you.”



(Interview with Camille and Julia cont'd)

### How did you first hear about the Sisters?

**Julia:** When I found out I was pregnant, my doctor told me about the Sisters and I went to meet them right away. I was in shock. I didn't know what the Sisters could do for me, and I didn't know what to expect. I thought Sisters were quiet...! And found out that they are actually down to earth, and outgoing.

### Why was having a handmaid attractive to you?

When Sr. Shirley told me that Camille wanted to speak with me, I thought it was great. It's one thing to be pregnant and it's another thing to have someone willing to go through it with you. She was like a mentor to me. She called and we set a date to meet. We started to talk, usually over a meal.

### How did your relationship grow?

She helped me through a lot. She was the one person I could always turn to. Camille helped me look for places to stay, and set me up as a volunteer to finish my community service hours for school. I really appreciated her for that. Camille would come to take me out to eat. I know she recognized that even though I was pregnant, I still needed to get out of the house. That helped me so much.

### What would you say to a young woman who finds herself in crisis?

I would say that there are so many people and places that support young mothers. Even with the obstacles, if you put your mind to it, you can do it. People told me to have an abortion. I knew I didn't want that. Life is sacred and a baby is a gift of God. My daughter is a blessing; she kept me going.

### What would you say to someone who is thinking about becoming a Handmaid?

I would say be yourself and be really supportive. By being there, you are helping her so much more than you could ever know. Camille stepped in as a friend to help me through my situation. Whatever problems I had, she was there to talk.

### What has been your greatest joy?

Watching my baby grow, and seeing all of the amazing things she can do. Little babies are so smart! Becoming a mother has changed everything. I came to realize you need to fight for what you believe in. I learned that I can achieve my goals, and make new ones, like becoming an obstetrician. My child has put my life in a different perspective. It has made me realize what is truly important.

\*Julia's name has been changed for anonymity.

...for a soul united to Jesus is a living smile that radiates Him. *Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity*



#### **Karen Williams**

**Age:** 22  
**Siblings:** 4  
**Hometown:** Ann Arbor, MI  
**College/ Major:** Hillsdale College, English  
**Fun Fact:** I've been to six foreign countries.  
**Thoughts on Prayer:** Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament has been an incredible encounter of and with Love.



#### **Nicole Severin**

**Age:** 22  
**Siblings:** 3  
**Hometown:** Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
**College/ Major:** University of Alberta, Biological Sciences  
**Fun Fact:** I lived in Australia for a year.  
**Thoughts on Prayer:** Pray, pray, pray.



#### **Joan Solomon**

**Age:** 23  
**Siblings:** 6  
**Hometown:** Wilmington, DE  
**College/ Major:** Catholic University of America, Nursing  
**Fun fact:** I aspire to be a unicycle-riding-juggling sister. Short term, I want to be juggling three clubs by Christmas.  
**Thoughts on prayer:** Just sit back and let God love you.

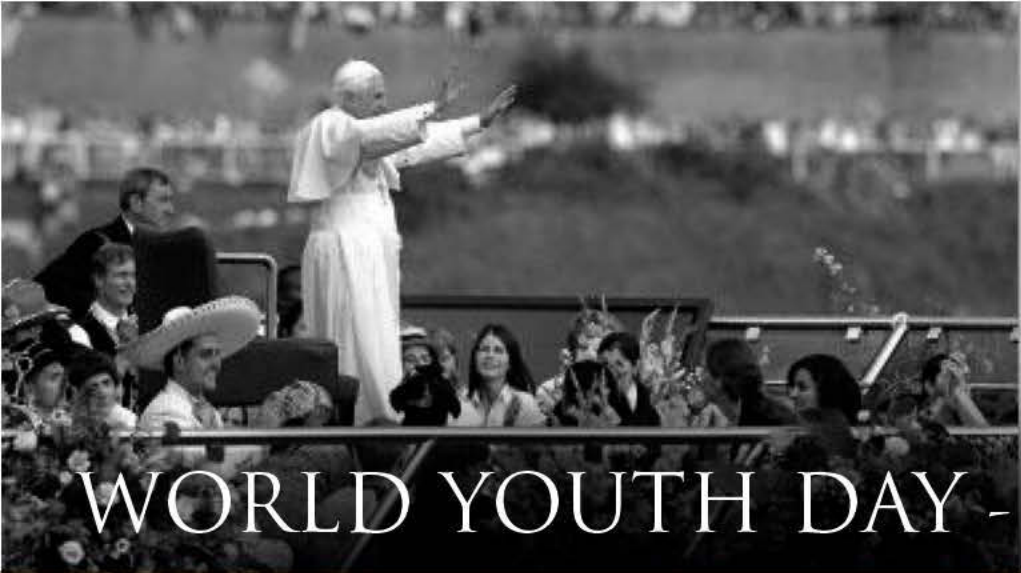


#### **Maureen Smith**

**Age:** 23  
**Siblings:** 4  
**Hometown:** Cranbury, NJ  
**College/ Major:** University of Maryland, Dietetics/Nutrition  
**Fun fact:** I have an identical twin sister.  
**Thoughts on prayer:** Attend daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration as much as possible, and read/pray with Scripture, the Liturgy of the Hours, and spiritual books...God will speak to you in one of these ways so this will cover all your bases!



THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY - **Our Postulants!**



# WORLD YOUTH DAY - MADRID 2011!

**Picture One Million young English speaking pilgrims at our Love and Life Site next summer! (August 16th-21st, 2011)**

Join the **Sisters of Life** in a unique evangelization opportunity. In August 2011 over 2.5 million young people will descend upon Madrid, Spain for World Youth Day with Pope Benedict XVI. With the Knights of Columbus the Sisters of Life will co-sponsor 4 days of major events at WYD '11. This "Love and Life Site" will be an opportunity to touch the hearts of hundreds of thousands of young people, proclaiming to them the liberating truths about the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of all human life, marriage and family.

**Can you help** the Sisters with this missionary journey to evangelize the young pilgrims of the U.S., Canada and other English speaking countries? Contributions to fly a Sister to Madrid can be sent to: St. Paul's Convent 586 McLean Ave Yonkers, NY 10705



## **Kaileigh Currie**

**Age:** 23  
**Siblings:** 6  
**Hometown:** Anmore, BC, Canada  
**College/ Major:** Saint Francis Xavier University, Nursing  
**Fun Fact:** I've jumped out of a plane! Don't worry there was a parachute attached.  
**Thoughts on Prayer:** In the silence of the heart, may you pray with reckless abandon and endless hope!



## **Anne Carpentier**

**Age:** 24  
**Siblings:** 3  
**Hometown:** Faribault, MN  
**College/ Major:** University of St. Thomas, Psych. & Catholic Studies  
**Fun fact:** I have never broken a bone.  
**Thoughts on Prayer:** The Lord speaks in the silence.



## **Theresa Zettel**

**Age:** 25  
**Siblings:** 5  
**Hometown:** Formosa, Ontario  
**College/ Major:** Mohawk/McMaster University, Nursing  
**Fun fact:** I grew up on a dairy farm, I helped to deliver a calf and I like eating lemons straight up.  
**Thoughts on prayer:** What could be better than spending time with the One who loves you so much He died for you? Just pray about it! Put everything in the Lord's loving Hands- He makes all things new.



## **Teri Rockenhaus**

**Age:** 25  
**Siblings:** 2  
**Hometown:** Broomfield, CO  
**College/ Major:** University of Dallas, Chemistry and Spanish minor  
**Fun fact:** I am fluent in Spanish and I have been to 16 different countries.  
**Thoughts on prayer:** To steal from St. Jane Frances de Chantal: "The best method of prayer is not to have one, because prayer is not obtained by artifice, but by grace."

O.K., just the "bear" necessities: ➤  
 Canadians pride themselves on their rugged resourcefulness and ability to bear the ice & cold.



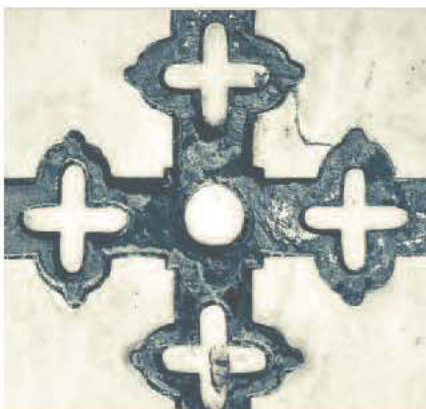
# PRAYER CHANGES

“Moved by profound concern for the destiny of every man and woman...a great prayer for life is urgently needed, a prayer which will rise up throughout the world.

**T**hrough special initiatives and in daily prayer, may an impassioned plea rise to God, the Creator and lover of life, from every Christian community, from every group and association, from every family and from the heart of every believer. Jesus himself has shown us by his own example that prayer and fasting are the first and most effective weapons against the forces of evil (cf. Mt 4:1-11). As he taught his disciples, some demons cannot be driven out except in this way (cf. Mk 9:29). Let us therefore discover anew the humility and the courage to pray and fast so that power from on high will break down the walls of lies and deceit: the walls which conceal from the sight of so many of our brothers and sisters the evil of practices and laws which are hostile to life. May this same power turn their hearts to resolutions and goals inspired by the civilization of life and love.” (John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, #100)



# THE WORLD.



## NATIONAL PRAYER FOR LIFE ON BENDED KNEE

**W**e invite you to join the Sisters of Life and Knights of Columbus in participating in a National Prayer for Life Campaign. Beginning on March 25th the Feast of the Annunciation through Christmas Day 2011, we will be united each day in lifting up to Almighty God a great prayer for life so that the people of our time may see and respond to the incomparable dignity and value of every human being. For more details and to order prayer cards for your parish, family or group, visit: [www.nationalprayerforlife.org](http://www.nationalprayerforlife.org).

In all of God's creation, the human person is the summit, made in the Divine image and likeness, with a capacity to reason and reflect and to love in freedom. The human person is a mystery, an icon of the living God, created through a loving embrace and for communion. Pope Benedict XVI stated: "We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."

Tragically, over 3,000 human beings, little growing baby girls and boys, are lost to abortion each and every day in the United States. Have we become so dull, so blinded to reality, and the beauty hidden within, so hopeless, that we are willing to consider death as a solution to life's problems? Women deserve better than abortion. They deserve love, respect, and true Christian solidarity. This crisis within humanity calls forth a response; demands a gospel response of prayer, self-giving, sacrificial love and support for each mother in need.

Join us in praying the Prayer for Life each day!

### PRAYER FOR LIFE

*Eternal Father, Source of life  
Open our hearts to see and desire  
the beauty of your plan for life and love.*

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit so that our  
love will be generous and self-giving  
and we may be blessed with joy.*

*Grant us great trust in your mercy.  
Forgive us for not receiving your gift of  
life and heal us from the effects of the  
culture of death.*

*Instill in us and in all people a sense  
of the sacredness of every human life.  
Inspire our efforts to protect and care  
for the most vulnerable,  
especially women who are pregnant  
and their unborn children,  
the sick and the elderly.*

*Strengthen us with the hope that  
with you nothing is impossible.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
who by his Cross makes all things new.  
Amen.*

**Our Lady of Guadalupe,  
Mother of Life, Pray for us.**

*One of our guests at Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent, Gulnara, was baptized with her son Daniel this past Easter. Gulnara, in her sensitive and gentle way, shares how she has grown to a deeper relationship with God through prayer:*

## A FAMILY BIGGER THAN RUSSIA

I grew up in Russia during Communism. All religion was prohibited and people were criticized or mocked if they believed in God because it was seen as foolish. As a teenager, I read the Russian classics, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Through these writings, I understood that God exists and that he is One and that he is good and I began to believe in him. There were no churches and I had no instruction in the faith. In my heart, I would just make simple prayers. I would ask God for help with things or I would pray 'Oh God please forgive me' when I sinned. I began to see the power of prayer and I knew deep down that God was forming me so deeply in my heart. I realized when I pray about even small things I am showing that he is almighty and he cares about all of our needs.



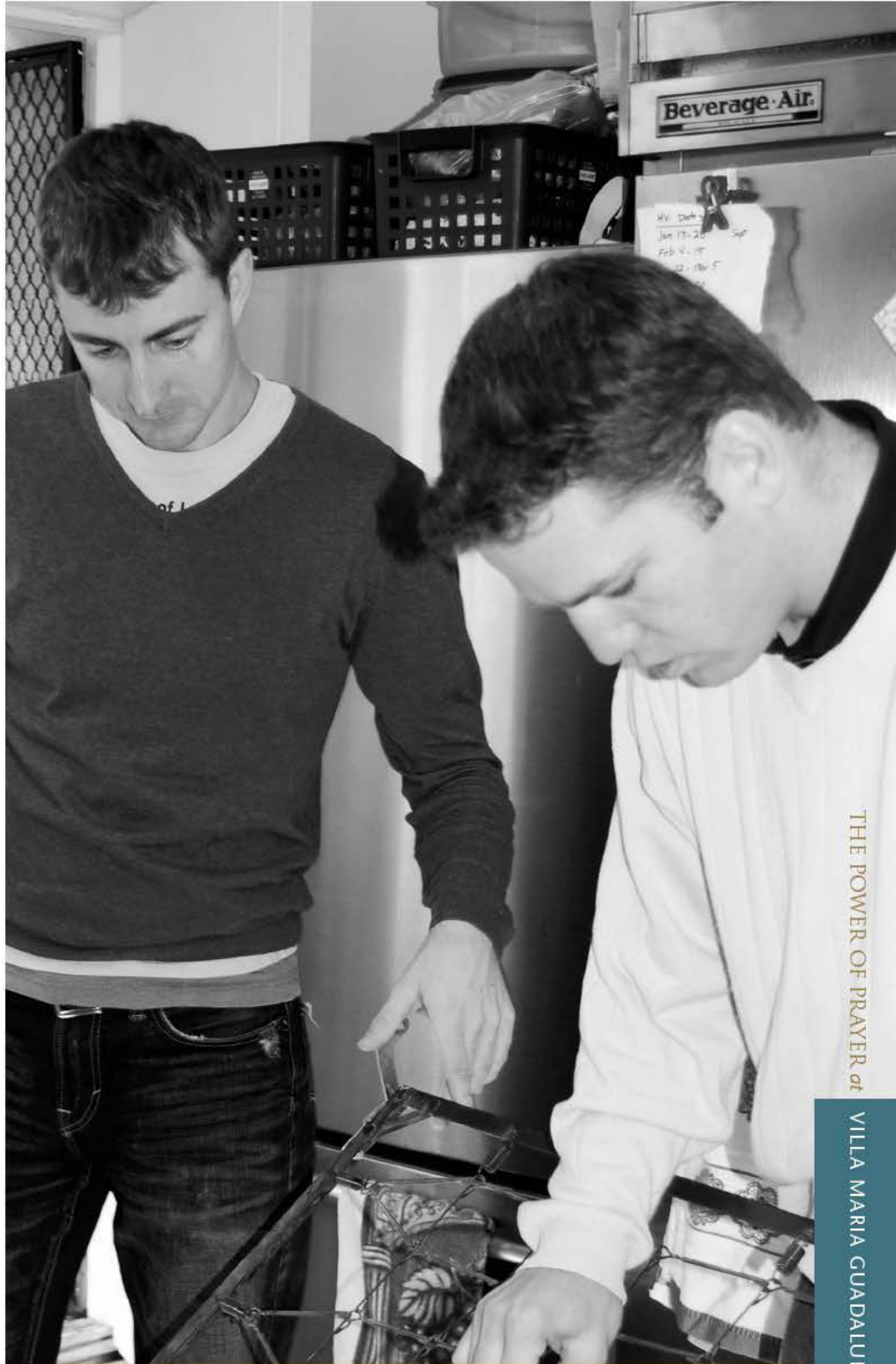
I can see that it was God's providence that brought me to Sacred Heart Convent. When I became pregnant, I was introduced to the Sisters. At the time, I didn't need any help, then everything changed. I was alone here in the US, I had no family and no place to live. Then one of the Sisters *accidentally* called me meaning to call someone else! This was a great moment of hope for me, I knew the Sisters were praying for me. I moved into Sacred Heart and I began to attend RCIA classes out of curiosity. In the beginning I didn't have any plans to become Catholic, I just wanted to learn. Father explained many things about faith and I decided to baptize my baby. I started to pray about my own conversion and I knew I wanted to be a good example for my child. We were baptized together on Easter Sunday. I have no family here, they are all in Russia, but since I have been baptized I realized I have a big family, the Church. I am learning much more about prayer, I love the rosary and simply speaking with God.

## God's Work!

**T**im Judge, a FOCUS missionary serving at Temple University in Philadelphia recently attended the Working Men's Retreat at Villa Maria Guadalupe, aimed at leading men to a deeper knowledge and love of Christ through the example of St. Joseph. The idea of incorporating manual labor with prayer initially attracted him to the working retreat. It was a "real joy... doing the Lord's work there," said Tim, who brought four young men from Temple University with him. The weekend of fixing up garages, tearing out cabinets, cleaning, demolishing and painting, was tied together by prayer, daily Mass, and conferences, led by Father Joseph Koterski, S.J.

Father Koterski, "turned our attention toward St. Joseph being a decision-maker. As men the decisions we make are important," he said. St. Joseph's decisions, "kept Jesus alive," referring to the Holy Family's escape into Egypt and subsequently their return to Nazareth. Pondering on St. Joseph's role led Tim to ask himself, "What decisions am I making to keep Jesus alive?" He noted the importance of fidelity to daily prayer, frequenting the Sacraments and responding to God's will.

He looks forward to the next St. Joseph's Working Men's Retreat and hopes to bring more students with him. "We were physically serving God," Tim said, describing the retreat as "time of rest, a time of prayer, but also a time of work." Ultimately, he said, it's a time, "for men to come and be men."



THE POWER OF PRAYER at

VILLA MARIA GUADALUPE

### A St. Joseph's Working Men's Retreat:

Growing as men of prayer who will lead in  
the work of love, service and fidelity.

Check out the schedule of retreats at Villa Maria at: [sistersoflife.org](http://sistersoflife.org)

## THE VISION TO SEE THROUGH PRAYER

**Tom Kolenberg shares his experience acting as a Co-worker:**

One day after daily Mass, a friend asked me to keep a woman who was pregnant in my prayers. I'm on the board of a maternity home, and offered to call and encourage her. So I did, and we met for coffee. She was open, but her family and boyfriend were pressuring her to have an abortion. I contacted the Sisters of Life, and that's how I got started.

Through this experience, I quickly learned the importance, not so much of words, but of prayer. It is crucial to be caring and compassionate, but most of what we "do" is pray. As Co-workers, we try to pray that the woman we serve will see her own beauty, and the beauty of the child within her womb. Only the Lord's grace can do that. This has allowed me the experience of being an earthy intercessor.

Jesus healed some people because they asked... but others he healed when their friends or relatives made the request. Through our prayers we also cooperate with the Lord's plan to help these women open their eyes, ears and heart to the gift of life. We pray for the graces that will remove the blindness, the deafness- just like in the Scriptures.

It doesn't take any time to pick up the phone and talk with a woman in need. We can share life experiences, some commonality. I want to help her see beyond the fear. I tell her, "God chose you for this! God finds a way to bring us closer to Him if we let him, even when we make mistakes. And guess what? You just helped me get closer to God too."

I stay close to our Lord through prayer, by being open and listening. I say, "Jesus, my insignificant hands can't do anything without Your touch." I pray the rosary every day for her intentions. Also, going to confession regularly has allowed me to see with more clarity. For me, being a Co-worker is being on the path to holiness, and that is what we all desperately need.



Tom Kolenberg became a Co-worker of Life a year and a half ago. He is married to Olga and has two daughters, Isabella 3 yrs. old and Sarah 2 months old. He is a full-time financial advisor.

The family that prays together, stays together.

-Rev. Patrick Peyton

# CONVERSATION WITH GOD

## HOW DO WE PRAY?

### Prayer is "conversation with God."

This may seem unattainable, but by taking on flesh, Jesus makes Himself accessible. He comes close to us. He reveals His Face and His Heart to us. Amazingly, He thirsts for us.

The funny thing is, in coming to know Him, we actually come to understand ourselves. When we begin to speak with Jesus in prayer we begin a friendship, one that takes us to unexpected places.

But how is this possible? We must quiet ourselves. Most of us will never hear an audible voice when we speak with God, but we will come to recognize His voice deep within, if we listen.

■ Why not start by simply inviting Jesus to be part of your life? Tell Him that you desire to hear His voice, to experience His presence, to become His friend.

■ Scripture is God's love letter to us. We can take one verse and allow it to sink in. The Lord will speak to us in a personal way that applies to our everyday lives.

■ A simple, "Jesus help me," or "Have mercy on me, O God" can bring peace.

■ He waits for us in the tabernacle. We can cast all our burdens, cares, joys and sorrows before our Eucharistic Lord.

■ Remember to listen! Don't do all the talking, wait to hear what the Lord desires to tell you.

In prayer, we reach out from the depths of our hearts to God, who alone can fulfill our infinite desires. And through prayer, we are changed. And so with fervor and humility let us ask for the grace of hearing His voice.



### Hope & Healing Retreats

*If you or a loved one have suffered an abortion, do not wait any longer to experience God's love and mercy*

*Come to one of our a Hope and Healing Retreats*

*Jesus waits for you.*

Give us a call at:  
866/575-0075

## How do you know God loves you?

### Healing after abortion

Nearly 20 years after experiencing an abortion, Cecilia\* came face to face with the mercy and love of God... literally. She found herself in front of Jesus in the Eucharist during a Hope and Healing Retreat. By the end of the weekend she knew she had an encounter with the Living God and was on the path to receiving the forgiveness and healing she desperately sought.

"How do you know God loves me and forgives me?" Cecilia asked a priest, who simply said, "Because I know Him." His response resonated in her heart. "I knew I wanted to get to know the Lord better, but I didn't know how..."

"I was able to sit there and pray and cry," she said. It was an effort to return to the chapel, but ultimately, she had a longing

in her heart. "I just wanted to be with Him." Spending an hour in Adoration is now a part of her daily life. It's where "all of my healing happens. If I'm going to know Him, I have to spend time with Him. Prayer is conversation with Him. I didn't know that."

"Before the retreat I didn't know who He was and how beautiful He is and how much He loves me. I just didn't know that." Describing the retreat as a "grace from God," Cecilia said, "All I ever hope for is that people understand that prayer equals getting to know Jesus and getting to know Jesus equals getting healed." Pausing for what seemed like a sigh of relief, she said, "I met Him for the first time that weekend."

\*Cecilia's name has been changed for anonymity.

"Prayer is, for me, an outburst from the heart; it is a simple glance darted upwards to Heaven; it is a cry of gratitude and of love in the midst of trial as in the midst of joy!"  
-St. Therese

## Sisters of Life Directory

■ **St. Paul the Apostle**  
(Generalate)  
586 McLean Avenue  
Yonkers, NY 10705  
914/968-8094 Fax: 914/968-0462

■ **St. Barnabas**  
(Postulant House)  
445 East 240th Street  
Bronx, NY 10470  
718/708-6742 Fax: 718/708-6744

■ **St. Frances de Chantal**  
(Novitiate, Vocations)  
198 Hollywood Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10465  
718/863-2264 Fax: 718/792-9645

■ **Villa Maria Guadalupe**  
(Retreat House)  
159 Sky Meadow Drive,  
Stamford, CT 06903  
203/329-1492 Fax: 203/329-1495

■ **Sacred Heart of Jesus**  
(Holy Respite)  
450 West 51st Street,  
New York, NY 10019  
212/397-1396 Fax: 212/397-1397

Web Site: [www.sistersoflife.org](http://www.sistersoflife.org)

■ **Dr. Joseph R. Stanton**  
Human Life Issues Library  
1955 Needham Ave., Bronx, NY 10466

■ **Visitation Mission**  
to Pregnant Women  
320 East 66th Street,  
New York, NY 10021  
Pregnancy help call:  
212/737-0221 toll free: 877/777-1277  
Co-workers of Life call: 347/843-8900

■ **Toronto Visitation Mission**  
to Pregnant Women  
St. Catherine of Siena 1099  
Danforth Avenue,  
Toronto, ON M4J 1M5  
Pregnancy help call:  
(416) 463-2722 Fax: (416) 463-1687

■ **St. Augustine Convent**  
2661 Kingston Rd., Scarborough, ON  
M1M 1M3 Canada  
416/261-7207 (ext. 266)  
Fax: 416/261-0923

■ **Post-Abortion Retreats**  
toll free 866/575-0075  
[hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org](mailto:hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org)



Beginning on Christmas Day  
a Novena of Masses  
will be offered for you  
and your family.

\*Printed through the generosity of the Knights of Columbus. Written and designed by the Sisters of Life.

### Sisters of Life

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Yonkers, New York 10705

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