

Archways



CHARITY NOW

Answering Rising Needs With the Love of Christ

The Community of Mercy

Parish-based Charitable Ministries

The Substance of Mercy

Healing Addiction

Prayers for a New Year

Readings and Songs for Hopeful Days Ahead

Plus:

Synod 2021 - 2023: What You Need to Know

Humble Heroes: Catholic Chaplains of New York

ArchCare and Sheen Center Updates



Cardinal Dolan at Mission Sunday Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, October 24, 2021. Photo by Mary DiBiase Blaiich.

THE CERTAINTY OF MERCY

The English language changes all the time. It has to, because the world changes all the time. Sometimes new words are added, or old words take on new meanings. And every once in a while, a word that used to be able to stand on its own suddenly needs quotation marks to hold it up.

One of the latest casualties is the word *normal*. When you hear it these days, you fully expect to see the speaker raising curved fingers in the air. It seems we're just not sure what it means any more.

To some people, this is very unsettling. If we can't define what's "normal" – see, there are those quotation marks – then maybe the world is not predictable. And if we can't predict what's going to happen in the world, maybe we're not in control. Maybe there's nothing we can count on.

Well, guess what? We're *not* in control, and we *can't* predict what's going to happen – but there *are* some very important things we can count on. *We can count on the word of God and the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.*

And here's something else we can count on: that the good people at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, along with the

many smaller Catholic ministries present in our archdiocese, will do all in their power in response to the Lord's call to feed the hungry, shelter the displaced, clothe the naked, help the sick, visit the imprisoned, welcome the refugee.

The Winter 2022 issue of *Archways* is, first of all, a testament to the way New York's Catholics have stepped up to assist their brothers and sisters during the Covid-19 crisis. In our cover story, "*Charity Now: The Arc of Mercy*," Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, Catholic Charities' executive director, describes in moving terms how area businesses and generous individuals shared their time, talent, and treasure so that our missions of mercy might be sustained through the challenges of the crisis. Thanks to Catholics in our archdiocese, as needs have increased due to pandemic-related unemployment and economic instability, we have been able to keep pace with the demand for help.

In "*The Community of Mercy*," we consider the importance of parish-based ministries in the Church's call to answer the cry of the poor and the marginalized. These programs enable parishioners to identify the needs

in their communities and take action to support their neighbors. And "*The Substance of Mercy*" takes us inside an addiction treatment program operated by Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster, offering a path back to a productive and emotionally fulfilling life for people struggling with substance use disorder.

Elsewhere in the issue, you'll find a report on *how the pandemic affected the work of chaplains* serving the NYPD, FDNY, and hospitals and nursing homes throughout the archdiocese; *updates from the Sheen Center and ArchCare*, the health- and senior-care ministry of the Archdiocese of New York; an inside look at *Encore Community Services, serving seniors on the West Side*; and everything you need to know about *Synod 2021 - 2023, in which Pope Francis has asked us all – including you – to participate.*

Finally, you'll find *recommended prayers, readings, and hymns* from some of our priests, sisters, and ministry leaders to help you prepare for a blessed 2022. It may or may not be a "normal" year – whatever that means – but if you open your heart, you're sure to find it filled with God's grace.

You can count on it.

With prayerful best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year, I am,



Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York

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ASK A PRIEST

What is a Synod?

Two thousand years ago, with the number of the followers of Jesus rapidly increasing, the Apostles met (as we read in Acts of the Apostles) to discuss and clarify important issues faced by the nascent Church.

But the need for clarification didn't end there. In the ensuing centuries, as the Christian faith continued to spread throughout the world, questions of doctrine and discipline had to be addressed often by the shepherds of the Church, gathered together and guided by the Holy Spirit. Such a gathering in the Church is called a *synod* – a word of Greek origin, meaning “meeting” or “assembly.” The most important synods in the Church's history are called “ecumenical councils.”

Historically, synods have taken a number of forms. Some Church leaders have called synods only when there were pressing matters to discuss in the life of the Church. In other places and times, synods were held at regular intervals. Frequently, regional synods have included the participation of all of the bishops of a particular ecclesiastical province or region. On a diocesan level, local synods have sometimes been convoked by a bishop seeking the counsel of his closest collaborators, the priests of his diocese. St. Charles Borromeo, for example, who was the cardinal archbishop of Milan, regularly held synods in his archdiocese after the Ecumenical Council of Trent. The general purpose of a synod, whatever its form, has always been to help the shepherds of the Church in their task of leading Christ's flock according to the truth as revealed in Scripture and Sacred Tradition.



Pope Francis celebrates a Mass for the closure of the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon region at St. Peter's in the Vatican in 2019.

In 1965, in response to the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Pope St. Paul VI decided to establish a Synod of Bishops as a consultative body that could “offer more effective assistance to the supreme Shepherd” (Pope St. Paul VI, *Apostolica Sollicitudo*). Pope Paul hoped that the Synod of Bishops would “promote a closer union and greater cooperation between the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops of the whole world.” Moreover, to assist him in his responsibility of guiding the people of God, the pope desired that the Synod of Bishops would “see to it that accurate and direct information is supplied on matters and situations that bear upon the internal life of the Church and upon the kind of action that should be carrying on in today's world.” Finally, with Christ, who prayed “that all of them may be one” (John 17:21), Pope Paul established the Synod of Bishops “to facilitate agreement, at least on es-

sential matters of doctrine and on the course of action to be taken in the life of the Church.”

Since the establishment of the permanent Synod of Bishops by Pope St. Paul VI, the popes have convoked synods every few years to consider important subjects in the life of the Church. Like his predecessors, Pope Francis has convoked and presided over a number of synods in Rome and is now asking the entire people of God to assist him as he prepares to meet with representatives of the bishops of the world to discuss the topic of “synodality.”

*Rev. Louis P. Masi, PhL, STL
Parochial Vicar, Sts. John and Paul and
St. Augustine Parishes, Larchmont*

For more information on the ongoing discernment period for Synod 2021 - 2023: For a Synodal Church, see “[The Road to Rome.](#)”

ENCORE FOR THE AGED

*In 1977, Sr. Lillian McNamara, Sr. Elizabeth Hasselt, and Fr. George Moore, concerned about a spike in homelessness among the elderly of Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, founded **Encore Community Services** as a modest community center in the basement of St. Malachy's Church on West 49th Street. By the time Sr. Hasselt retired as executive director in 2018, Encore had grown into a multipurpose agency delivering a wide array of services to the elderly on the West Side between 14th and 110th Streets.*

With sponsorship from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, Encore touches the lives of more than 5,000 seniors per year, providing more than 500,000 meals (many home-delivered) and offering an emergency pantry, wellness checks, social and artistic engagement, and case management services. Encore also operates two buildings with apartments for 172 formerly homeless and/or low-income seniors, in many cases overseeing social services and other supports to residents.

*Executive director **Jeremy L. Kaplan** has been leading Encore since Sr. Hasselt's retirement, and will oversee plans to double the number of meals it serves to 1 million annually. Archways asked him to give readers a snapshot of the agency's work and the challenges its clients have faced during the pandemic.*

The staff and volunteers of Encore Community Services work tirelessly to improve the lives of aging New Yorkers, ensuring they have what they need to not just survive, but thrive. Seniors deserve an encore!

The need among seniors is great, and services for them is the lowest-funded line in the New York City budget. Seniors deserve more than one meal a day, five days a week; they deserve to be financially stable; they deserve to be creative, mentally stimulated, and connected to community.

Our greatest challenge is providing what seniors deserve, and finding a way to pay for it.

The need among seniors increased during the pandemic. Encore saw a 45 percent increase in the need for meals and emergency groceries and a 70 percent increase in the need for financial assistance (rent, benefits, financial counseling, budgeting, debt reduction). At the same time, social isolation among seniors became its own epidemic.

While Encore never closed and we never stopped home-delivering meals, our Encore Senior Center was closed to in-person services from the start of the pandemic until June 28, 2021. Now it is open and busier than ever. In addition to seeing 100 to 125 seniors there each day, the center is providing grab-and-go meals and has a robust calendar of virtual programs and friendly calls to keep homebound clients connected to the community. Unfortunately, we still have to limit our capacity for safety reasons, and we don't like the thought of any senior not being able to join us or having to cut their visit short. Encore is their home and they desperately miss it when they aren't here.

One day recently, a man came in for lunch and was afraid about an upcoming surgery. He's alone and has no family. I was able to sit with him and assuage his fears. Our case manager was able to set up meals for when he returns home, arrange for someone to escort him to and from his surgery, and put other supports in place.

To serve aging New Yorkers is our greatest blessing. They fed us, raised us, nurtured us – they helped to build this city and now it's time for us to give back. Our staff is devoted to our members and on any day, you can see a smile from a senior or get a thank you from someone who is homebound, and it energizes you.

Seniors are the heart of Encore. Every day I find tremendous hope in their resilience and zest for life, in the determination of our staff, and in the devotion of our board, funders, donors, and volunteers.

For more information on Encore Community Services, visit encorenyc.org.



Executive director Jeremy Kaplan greets a longtime Senior Center member and volunteer at Encore's Heart to Heart benefit, June 2021.

SYNOD 2021 - 2023

THE ROAD TO ROME

The Catholic Church has been holding *synods* – locally, regionally, and globally – for centuries. Most often, the term refers to an assembly of bishops convened by the pope to discuss policies and practices in response to earthly realities and in keeping with Christian tradition and doctrine. But **Synod 2021 - 2023**, themed “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission,” represents a brand-new approach. This time, the Holy Father has invited the direct participation of all Catholics in a global synod. Pope Francis wants to hear from *you*.

Not that all the Catholics in the world will be descending simultaneously on Rome for a giant meeting at the Vatican. But when the Assembly of Bishops convenes there in October 2023, its members will come bearing the fruits of a nine-month “listening phase” (formally called the Diocesan Phase), during which the input of everyday Catholics is being gathered for careful consideration. This initial phase of the synod process is going on right now.

The Greek word *synod*, meaning “meeting” or “assembly,” is formed from two smaller words that mean, essentially, “journeying together” – and for this synod, informally termed a “synod on synodality,” the focus is on the journey as much as on the destination. The *road to Rome 2023* is as important as the arrival, and the results of the final meeting will be a reflection of the path that takes us there.

“Synodality is to journey together, to listen to each other,” explains Elizabeth Guevara de Gonzalez, director of adult faith formation and coordinator of



Cardinal Dolan during an October 17 Mass launching the synod's Diocesan Phase in New York.

the synod's listening phase for the Archdiocese of New York. “At all synods, our bishops come together and bring what they have been hearing in their respective dioceses to help determine where the Church is being called to go. This year's synod will be different,” she says, “because the synodal *journey* will occur more visibly, with our people gathering for listening sessions.”

In the words of Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the pope “wants us to join him in praying, listening, discerning, examining ourselves personally, and the Church communally, to see if we're truly on the path Jesus has set for His beloved bride, His mystical body, the Church.”

If you think this doesn't involve you, think again. In April 2021, announcing plans for the synod, Pope Francis specified, “Every one of the baptized should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need.” Casting a wide net, the Vatican's official handbook for the listening phase, the *Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*, specifies, “Special care should be taken to involve those persons who may risk being excluded: women, the handicapped, refugees, migrants, the elderly, people who live in poverty....” Nobody is to be left on the roadside.

The purpose of this synod, according to the *Vademecum*, is as ambitious as its scope is inclusive: “to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people's hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds. ... This synodal process is a journey of growing authentically toward the communion and mission that God calls the Church to live out in the third millennium.”

While this may seem too lofty a mission to be embarked on from humble parish halls and meeting rooms, that apparent mismatch is integral to the goal. This synodal “journey together” starts not in magnificent cathedrals but on the dusty pathways of our everyday lives.

Parishioners should watch for an announcement from their parish leadership or inquire at their parish office about opportunities to participate. In the Archdiocese of New York, listening sessions will be conducted in the spring. Following the end of the Diocesan Phase in September 2022, a subsequent Continental Phase will allow bishops in seven continental regions to assemble the ideas generated in the

dioceses and archdioceses and prepare for the October 2023 Assembly of Bishops in Rome.

Guevara de Gonzalez encourages all to join the synodal journey. “Every person who shares is taking part in this time of discernment for our Church,” she says. “Our Holy Father wants us all to be involved – rich and poor, those in parish groups and those of us who only attend Mass on Christmas and Easter.”

While the listening phase’s exchange of diverse ideas and experiences may ultimately lead to transformations in the Church (not in essential doctrine, but rather in the way the Church carries out its mission), the first and most fundamental effects of Synod 2021 - 2023 will likely be in the process of synodality itself. By emphasizing the journey together and resolving to hear the voices of all Catholics, the Church seeks to enact more completely the message of Christ: that He came to save every soul and that all are welcome in our Church.

For all the novelty of the term *synodality*, Msgr. Joseph P. LaMorte, vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Archdiocese of New York, reassures us that the underlying concept has long been part of Church practice. “During my 40 years of priesthood, mostly in parish settings, I have always relied upon the counsel of parishioners, often through groups like pastoral and finance councils, to guide decisions and planning,” he observes. “This process of examination, discernment, and keen listening, along with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is the very definition of *synodality* – and we never knew we were doing it.”

“The hope is that the experience of the Synodal Process will bring about a new springtime for listening, discernment, dialogue, and decision-making,” the *Vademecum* states, “so that the whole People of God can better journey together with one another and the entire human family, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

“Let us have a good journey together!” Pope Francis said in his October 10 homily. “May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Spirit.” ❀

For more about the history of synods in the Church, see ***Ask a Priest: What is a Synod?***

NEWSFEED

UP MEMORY LANE

Among health concerns faced by aging New Yorkers and their families, dementia and Alzheimer’s can be especially heartbreaking. To address this concern, **ArchCare**, the health- and elder-care ministry of the Archdiocese of New York, has announced the opening in early 2022 of the Center for Advanced Memory Care at Ferncliff, in Rhinebeck, Dutchess County.

The new facility will introduce a cutting-edge Montessori-based program focused on individual capabilities, in which residents engage in productive activities and fulfill meaningful social roles that give a heightened sense of purpose, belonging, and recognition. Utilizing the capabilities of the entire ArchCare system, the facility will be well equipped to care for individuals with multiple clinical conditions.

“The Center for Advanced Memory Care will be a place where we would want our own family members to live,” says Fr. John Anderson, vice president of mission integration at ArchCare, “a home-like environment where staff truly care for each person’s strengths, interests, and preferences.” For more information or for waiting list inquiries, please call 855-951-CARE (2273).

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

As the pandemic continues to challenge New Yorkers, the **Sheen Center for Thought & Culture** has gradually begun reopening for gallery exhibitions and live performances. After a robust series of virtual presentations throughout the pandemic, the center began presenting gallery exhibitions with full health precautions in mid-2021, and in December presented “Christmas on Bleecker,” just the third live event since early 2020 in the usually bustling Loreto Theater.

In the gallery, through January 22, “Genesis: The Creative Act” presents works by physicist and painter Peter Heywood inspired by scripture and the art of dance; and on February 27, a panel discussion entitled “Identity and Migration” will explore the experiences of artists and composers who fled persecution.

Despite the late-December postponement of “A Celtic Christmas Story” due to renewed public health concerns, more theatrical and musical performances remain on the calendar from February into the spring.

For further information about upcoming shows and Covid-19 precautions, visit sheencenter.org. ❀



The new Center for Advanced Memory Care at Ferncliff, ArchCare’s long-term care campus in Rhinebeck, Dutchess County.

CHAPLAINS UPDATE

FAITH RESPONDERS



FROM LEFT: Cardinal Dolan with chaplains Fr. Damian Eketi, Fr. Stephen Okele, and Fr. Akram Javid at the 2021 ArchCare fund-raising gala; NYPD chaplain Msgr. Robert Romano in department uniform; Sr. Jo-Ann Faillace, OP, a chaplain with ArchCare at Home, a certified home health service.

In times of crisis, we rely on first responders for our safety and health, and sometimes for our survival. In the face of natural disasters, acts of violence, and raging illness, men and women who devote their careers to service put their welfare on the line for us. We honor them.

Standing among them, less visible and less recognized, are the faith responders: the chaplains and ordained religious who work to meet the spiritual needs of firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and hospital workers and patients. Catholic chaplains bring the presence of Jesus to the hospital or nursing home, to the precinct or station house, to the sickbed, the crime scene, the funeral Mass. They, too, frequently put themselves at risk in service to others.

In ordinary times, there are joyful occasions on a chaplain's calendar – graduations, promotions, births, christenings – to offset moments of grief and loss. But the onset of Covid-19 in early 2020 brought an abrupt change to the nature of chaplaincy in New York. Most in-person events were canceled; not just the graduations, but even funerals. Access

to hospitals was denied to police and fire department chaplains.

“We were under order,” recalls NYPD chaplain Msgr. Robert Romano. “Not only was it ordered by the police department for fear that we would get sick – the hospitals and the nursing homes were not open to us. We had a chief who died of Covid – he was in the hospital for weeks – and I couldn't go.”

At the FDNY, the chaplains' experience was similar. “Our EMTs were entering the apartments of highly contagious patients multiple times every day and taking them to the hospitals,” says Msgr. Marc Filacchione, a chaplain for the FDNY as well as director of Propagation of the Faith for the Archdiocese of New York. “But if those same EMTs ended up in the hospital, we couldn't visit them. And the same went for the firefighters.”

Particularly heartbreaking, for both the FDNY and the NYPD, was the predicament of those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses. “Everybody with 9/11 disease was automatically on the vulnerable list for Covid,” Msgr. Romano says. In many of these cases, “The virus coming into their system was the death knell. We lost a lot of people.”

The challenges were different for the hospital and nursing home chaplains of ArchCare. Unlike their uniformed counterparts, they did have access to hospitals and nursing homes – but with significant restrictions. Many worked in quarantine for weeks.

Fr. Jonah Pollock belongs to a community of Dominican chaplains who serve in a number of Manhattan hospitals. “Our ministry changed dramatically,” he recalls. One priest moved in to the Mary Manning Walsh Home, remaining within the grounds for months in order to care safely for residents. Three others, including Fr. Pollock, lived in isolation at their East Side priory, distanced from each other, taking meals separately, and making daily trips to the hospitals. “For several months,” Fr. Pollock says, “we routinely donned personal protective equipment that covered almost all of our bodies in order to enter hospital rooms. . . . We administered the sacrament of the anointing of the sick using plastic gloves and cotton balls.”

In-person visits were eliminated altogether for Sr. Jo-Anne Faillace, OP, a Dominican Sister of Blauvelt who serves as a chaplain with ArchCare at Home, which provides health care

to seniors at home. When in-person visits became unsafe, she switched to providing pastoral care by phone. “It worked better than I expected,” she says. “Being with patients and families is more deeply healing, but I understand the importance of safety.”

As pandemic-related restrictions have lifted, chaplaincy programs are evolving toward a new set of routines. First, there were the memorial services. “When things opened up and we got our shots, we started encountering a big flow of memorials for people who didn’t have funerals. Every day we were going to memorial services,” Msgr. Romano recalls. “It was kind of tough.”

NYPD and FDNY chaplains are once again participating at graduations and other events, but there is a heightened need for caution. “At most of the things that we attend, we have to wear masks,” says Msgr. Romano. “And you have to have a shot to go into a building.”

In the hospitals, pandemic restrictions linger: mandatory mask-wearing, the absence of volunteers (including extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion), restrictions on visitors. Attendance remains sparse at Masses in hospital chapels. With new variants on the horizon, these effects are unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

On the bright side, some technological innovations necessitated by the health crisis are being adopted permanently as tools to enhance the impact of chaplaincy. Just as the widespread use of telehealth seems poised to transform the health-care industry, the use of teleconferencing and Zoom calls to bring prayer and spiritual counsel to patients, connect them with family, and create networks of support among caregivers and even chaplains has proven to have benefits beyond the prevention of viral spread.

Many chaplains also feel the pandemic has led to deepened

relationships with the people they serve. “I think the chaplains have become more of a user-friendly organization,” Msgr. Romano says. “It happened during and after 9/11, and more so with Covid. People became more aware of us. In the past, people were afraid of the chaplains. Now they want to come and talk to us.”

Fr. John Anderson, vice president of mission integration for ArchCare – and a chaplain himself – has noticed a similar breakthrough in the dialogue between chaplains and health-care workers. “Since Covid-19, chaplains have joined meaningful conversations with their health-care colleagues,” he says. “That is good news and a reason for hope, because all of us have discovered things about ourselves – strengths, new or dormant skills, fresh capacities for patience and trust – that we will take forward into our post-Covid lives. Recognizing and giving God thanks for these discoveries is at the heart of our Catholic tradition of finding new life through our suffering.” ❄

CULTURE CORNER

5,000 PIECES ON EARTH

Here’s your chance to solve some challenging puzzles, create a few masterpieces, and contemplate the holy rosary all at the same time. The **Joyful Mysteries Puzzle Pack** from Sophia Institute Press presents five classic paintings related to the Joyful Mysteries of the holy rosary – the Annunciation of the Angel to Mary, the Visitation of Mary to St. Elizabeth, the Nativity of Jesus, the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple, and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple. Artists include Fra Angelico, Raphael, and Domenico Ghirlandaio. Turn off the TV for a few nights and pass the hours watching the rich colors and dramatic scenes take shape beneath your hand. Each 1,000-piece puzzle measures 19 by 27 inches when complete and comes with a poster and an insert explaining the image’s significance. They can be ordered separately or as a set. ❄



For more information, visit sophiainstitute.com/products/item/5-puzzle-pack-the-joyful-mysteries



Parish-based ministry leaders at St. Augustine, Larchmont. ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: At Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster's Residential Treatment Center, Monticello; students packing Thanksgiving pantry packages at Sts. John and Paul School, Larchmont; on the team at Catholic Charities Community Services Bronx Center.



Charity NOW

ANSWERING RISING NEEDS WITH THE MERCY OF CHRIST

In a time of darkness, we look for signs of daybreak. When we are surrounded by suffering – and perhaps suffering ourselves – it’s easy to lose patience and hope.

“Every single one of us is living in the shadow of the pandemic,” says Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities of New York. But he also reminds us that we have the power to shine a light into the darkness.

The light of God’s mercy is abroad in the land, but it can’t be seen unless we are witness to it. We are meant to be its bearers and its facilitators. It shines in the work of Catholic Charities of New York and its numerous affiliated agencies, bringing food, clothing, shelter, financial assistance, and spiritual and emotional support to those in need. At the parish level, it shines in the many ministries, large and small, that offer love and sustenance to the poor and marginalized in their communities. It shines in each of us when we contribute, volunteer, or

just turn a loving eye to our neighbors and ask, “How are you doing? How can I help?”

Human suffering did not start with Covid-19 – but the pandemic, abetted by natural disasters and social upheavals, has intensified many of society’s afflictions. It’s tempting to wish we could solve these social ills through science and technology, the way a disease can be controlled through immunizations and treatments; but there is no vaccine against poverty, no pill to cure homelessness.

As the needs become more vast, do we need to find a new approach to charity? *Archways* went out among the people who have been working these trenches for decades, delivering services to the poor and marginalized – the staff, program volunteers, priests and parishioners – and found them undaunted. They don’t need us to invent some new treatment or app; they need us to support them, and join them if we’re able, in keeping the beacon of Christ’s love shining.

THE ARC OF MERCY

AN INTERVIEW WITH MSGR. KEVIN SULLIVAN

Now in his 21st year at the helm of one of the region’s largest charitable organizations, Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, the executive director of Catholic Charities of New York, has immersed himself in the scope and history of human hardship in New York, and in ways to address it. Archways sat down with him recently to ask how we’re doing, as a Catholic community and as a society, in meeting the challenge of rising needs in a time of uncertainty for the economy, public health, and social justice.

Archways: Back in March 2020, you told us, “Because of the economic impact . . . it’s going to take four or five years for us to get back to any semblance of what ‘normal’ means.” Nearly two years later, how would you characterize the situation for those in need in New York?

Msgr. Kevin Sullivan: Fortunately, we are in a much better place than we were early in 2020, but with the variants and the ongoing issues of vaccinations and boosters, we are still in the midst of this. And even if the latest variant recedes soon as predicted, we still need to deal with the economic fallout – in the utilization of office buildings, in the hospitality industry, in the entertainment industry. The impact is going to continue, I think, for the next three or four years.

We are going to have to figure out how to deal with the new environment. Every single one of us is living in the shadow of the pandemic. Every single one of us is trying to figure out how to negotiate this new world. Obviously some have been impacted a lot more than others, but all of us are trying to figure out how we deal with this.

AW: How do you think we have done in addressing the needs created by the recent crises?

KS: Our governments, federal, state, and city, responded in an extraordinary way to mitigate a potentially devastating financial impact. In my estimation, they prevented a tremendous amount of human suffering. The provision of additional food, in which Catholic Charities played a major part, enabled many to have nutritious meals for themselves and their families. Eviction moratoriums kept people in their homes. The extraordinary development and production of vaccines and testing made them available almost universally. I believe we did a very good job trying to make sure that vaccines and tests were widespread, even for people who, in other circumstances, might not have access to certain necessities of health care.

Unfortunately, the pandemic also highlighted some of the issues we face as a society. It’s well documented that the health impact of the pandemic was particularly devastating in poor communities and communities of color. Often members of those communities had no ability to work

remotely. They needed to travel back and forth to jobs that enabled us all to go to the grocery store, and to buy food or to take the bus where we needed to go. Those communities were impacted more than the people who could work remotely, who didn’t have to travel, who could easily keep themselves distanced and safe.

As we moved through the pandemic, some other fault lines in society were raised as well. Fights over masks, fights over curfews – they took on a very difficult and often tense atmosphere. Then there was the division in who wants to take the vaccine and who doesn’t. We’re still not as far along as we might have been, had these divides and tensions not developed among us.

AW: Do the divisions in our society exacerbate the problems of the needy?

KS: Divisiveness helps almost no one and hurts the poor and the vulnerable more than anyone.

AW: What does our approach to charity need to be as we face increased needs over the next few years?

KS: As human beings, we have a responsibility to try to make our world caring and fair. When there’s an earthquake, we need to respond to the people who have been impacted by that earthquake. When there’s a fire, we need to respond to the families who have lost their homes and family members. We need to respond to them.

There are crises that are small and devastating to a family or individuals, and then there are the ones that are global, like the pandemic. We have to figure out how to respond to all of them in a way that is caring and just. How do we put order back into a world that has been so disordered by these disasters?

There is a critical role that philanthropy plays, and obviously a more robust philanthropic effort is necessary. However, philanthropy can’t do it alone. Government has a role in responding to disasters, local and global – and in response to this pandemic, as I said, the government did respond in a very strong way: by accelerating the timeline of a vaccine, by making testing available, and in the provision of economic supports for families and individuals and businesses.

Msgr. Kevin Sullivan addresses a January 2020 conference on homelessness. BELOW: Food pantry preparations at Catholic Charities Ulster Community Center in Kingston.



The third area is each of us as individuals. We can't divest ourselves of our individual responsibility to respond to the needs around us. So you need philanthropy, you need government, and you need individuals in order to respond to the multiple crises that we are facing as individuals, as communities, and as a whole world.

I do a radio show called *Just Love*, and one of the things I say every week is, "Just love God, just love your neigh-

“If we as individuals act responsibly, then collectively we create a society that is more just and compassionate.”

– Msgr. Kevin Sullivan

bor, just love yourself, and our world will be more just and more compassionate.” What individual Catholics can do is to act responsibly to fulfill our own obligations to God, to ourselves, and to others. To be responsible members of our families and of our neighborhoods. To be responsible in our work. If we as individuals act responsibly, then collectively we create a society that is more just and compassionate.

AW: *Have contributions to Catholic Charities been affected by the downturn of the economy?*

KS: Catholic Charities does its work because of the generosity of its benefactors and because of a strong partnership with government. In midst of the pandemic, foundations and individual donors have been incredibly generous to Catholic Charities in enabling us to meet the needs of our neighbors who are hurting. Government has stepped up to the plate, as well, and we've been able to increase our partnership with them in the work of meeting basic needs.

AW: *Do you see light at the end of the tunnel? What gives you hope?*

KS: It's very hopeful that at our darkest times, when everybody was losing their jobs, and there was so much that was problematic, our government stepped up with some really important help so that people didn't lose their apartments, people didn't go hungry, people could provide for their families. It's hopeful that we were able to meet many of those needs and that so many of our institutions were able to survive. Yes, they "hung on." And we lost some of them, and that's not hopeful, but a number were able to survive.

As we walk around our city, it's not back to where it was, but it's not the ghost town that it was a little over a year ago. Housing is changing. People move out, people move back. There is the beginning of restoring a certain rhythm, like before – not the same – but there is hope. There is light.

We've seen that there is a tremendous capacity for people to act in the best interest of others and of themselves to foster the common good. It is almost unfathomable to me how, in the course of a day or so, New York shut down, and the overwhelming majority of people complied with what were very intrusive protocols. We did it – not without tremendous sacrifice, pain, and, let's not forget, the hundreds of thousands of people who died, were in hospital, et cetera – but we were able to respond and to do that. The way New York responded is, to me, an indication of the image and likeness of God in us.

For more information about Catholic Charities of New York and/or to make a contribution, visit [catholiccharitiesny.org](https://www.catholiccharitiesny.org).



Stay Healthy with S

Contact your local

Catholic Charit

Volunteers and clients at a July 2021 event marking the 10 millionth meal provided by Catholic Charities during the pandemic.

Catholic Charities' Broad Reach

To meet the needs of people in crisis in a region that spans 10 counties with a population of 5.8 million, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York mobilizes donations, staff, and volunteers, in collaboration with other Catholic and non-Catholic organizations, to address a broad spectrum of issues: housing, hunger, poverty, immigrant and refugee needs, addiction prevention and treatment, mental illness, disability, and much more. No one group or agency can solve all these problems, but Catholic Charities has taken a place at the forefront of efforts to bring help to those in need in our area. **The map below offers a sampling from its many programs and offices;** for information on accessing services, volunteering, or donating in your locality, visit catholiccharitiesny.org or click on the links in the map.



THE COMMUNITY OF MERCY

A TALE OF THREE PARISHES

The love of Jesus, like water on its steady descent from source to sea, will use every available channel to find its way to the people who need it. Thus, Christian charity has a single source and countless delivery systems, from mega-agencies coordinating aid for tens of thousands, to the compassionate individual who offers his neighbor a coat or a coin or a cup of soup. In the middle ground is the central unit of Catholic service: the parish- or community-based ministry.

Ultimately, all charity comes down to the individual. A person who is able gives – in the form of money, goods, or time and effort; a person who is in need receives. At their best, large charitable institutions aggregate the contributions of many generous individuals and pass them on, amplified through economies of scale, to an exponentially larger number of needy people. In terms of numbers – important numbers such as healthful meals served, housing units constructed, warm coats delivered, perhaps even lives saved – the benefits of these institutions are very real.

A parish-based ministry may deliver impressive numbers, too, but the sense of connection is what sets it apart from most institutional charities. The donors and workers and volunteers are neighbors. They attend church together. The people served by the ministry are also neighbors. For all the many social and economic forces that may be driving them apart, the love of Jesus draws them together.

There are 284 parishes in the Archdiocese of New York, and virtually every one has at least one charitable parish ministry – a food pantry, a soup kitchen, a community closet. Many parishes are home to multiple Christian service programs. Often these ministries are supported by Catholic Charities of New York, but their missions are defined by the parishioners who create and coordinate them on behalf of their community.

In the next few pages, Archways offers profiles of three parishes in eastern Westchester County, on the shore of Long Island Sound, where a robust set of community-based ministries makes a significant difference in the lives of poor and vulnerable residents. St. John Bosco parish in Port Chester and the parishes of St. Augustine and Sts. John and Paul in Larchmont embody beautifully the spirit of all our parishes in the loving and generous ways they witness to Jesus' mercy. We are inspired by their example.

Does your parish have a charitable ministry you find inspiring? Tell us about it at archways@archwaysmag.org.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Volunteers and students at Don Bosco Community Center's pre-K program, Port Chester, packing bins at St. Augustine, Larchmont, in preparation for a Midnight Run to New York City distributing food and clothing to the homeless; a sunny morning at Our Lady of Mercy in St. John Bosco Parish, Port Chester; a statue of St. John Bosco next door to the Don Bosco Community Center. PREVIOUS PAGE: Signing in participants at the Fuller Center Walk for Housing Justice, St. Augustine parish, Larchmont.

PORT CHESTER: DON BOSCO COMMUNITY CENTER

At a little past 7:30 a.m., Don Bosco Place is already starting to buzz with Catholic action. On an otherwise unremarkable block a few steps from Port Chester's downtown business district, a line of people is growing along the facade of the Don Bosco Community Center. Inside, Carmen Linero, the center's coordinator, is neatening the breakfast array of coffee, juice, and bagels near the entry, signing in clients, and directing them to a large gymnasium where a food pantry and community closet have been set up. At the back of the cafeteria, staff and volunteers of the center's soup kitchen are starting to prepare today's hot lunch. And back outside on the sidewalk between the center and the Church of the Holy Rosary, Pedro Peña of the Don Bosco Workers program is assisting day laborers who have gathered in hopes of finding a job for the day or the week.

A parish-based ministry with the scope and scale of a much larger charitable organization, the community center was founded in 1928 by the Salesians of Don Bosco, who administer the parish of St. John Bosco. The center's mission, originally focused on assistance to Italian immigrants, evolved as priests and parishioners saw the changing needs of the surrounding population. "The charism of St. John Bosco was all about serving children and the poor," says the pastor, Fr. Pat Angelucci. "The center is very much a community and a parish enterprise."

Linero, the center's coordinator, is a parishioner. "The priests support us completely," she says. And associate director Margaret Diaz agrees: "We're all connected. The priests come down to visit and to do services. We are very much a part of the parish." Formed out of a recent merger of four different Port Chester parishes, the St. John Bosco ministry has six parish priests, who offer weekly Masses in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish.

The center's daily schedule is very full. "We start off serving breakfast, of course following Covid protocols," Diaz says. "It's either packaged and brought out to people, or they wait in line to come in. We have our clothing closet two mornings a week and we also give them shopping bags of food to take home." The Don Bosco Workers program advises its clients, makes sure they return safely from work assignments, and advocates for them when employers sometime fail to pay their wages.

After lunch, the center prepares to welcome dozens of children in its after-school programs. "We open the boys and

girls clubs at three o'clock in the afternoon, Monday through Friday," Diaz says. Following Covid protocols, the children remain in pods and within their age groups. In good weather, one group at a time walks to a nearby park for some outdoor activity. Inside, the kids do homework and arts and crafts, play board games, and occasionally watch movies. "We've been averaging 40 to 60 kids per day," Diaz adds. "At six o'clock they get ready to go home, and they leave with a hot, healthy meal for their dinner. In normal times, we would remain open until 7:30 and they would eat in the building, but right now we are trying to keep everything safe."

On weekends, the center runs more programs: a pre-K class for toddlers, read-aloud mentoring for older grade-school kids, and computer training for their parents.

During the pandemic, there have been many challenges for the center and its clientele. Because so many other ministries in the region closed down during the worst days of the health crisis, the Don Bosco Center served many new people who came from miles away by train or bus. The clientele for the food pantry and hot lunch rose to twice pre-pandemic levels, even as the majority of volunteers had to stay away because they were seniors, at high risk for Covid-19 infection. Many clients lost jobs, and multiple families sharing apartments found that their children could not participate in remote education because of inadequate space and bandwidth for home studies.

There is little sign of burn-out among staff and volunteers at the center, however. Fr. Angelucci marvels at their spirit of community and service, and he cites an example: A couple of years ago, a woman came to the rectory on a Saturday

A parish-based ministry with the scope and scale of a much larger charitable organization, the community center was founded in 1928 by the Salesians of Don Bosco.

morning in the middle of winter. "She was just arrived in the country, had no housing, no food, no employment, and several children. Walked into the office and said, 'I need help.' I called Carmen [Linero] at the center, and within a couple of hours the woman and her family had food, warm coats, and a community looking out for them."



At Don Bosco Community Center, Saturday morning pre-K. ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The center's coordinator, Carmen Linero; volunteers assembling burritos in the soup kitchen; fresh fruits and veggies at the food pantry.

LARCHMONT: ST. AUGUSTINE AND STS. JOHN AND PAUL


On a Friday night in November at the Church of St. Augustine in Larchmont, 10 miles south of Port Chester, a crew of a dozen parishioners is preparing for a Midnight Run. In a large meeting room on the ground floor of the parish center, adult ministry leaders work alongside student volunteers to sort items into portable bins – food, toiletries, socks, underwear, coats and scarves, all

“It’s a collection of individual efforts to support need in the community ... a tapestry of service that reflects the people of both St. Augustine and Sts. John and Paul.”

– Fr. John Bonnici

collected from the parish in the previous weeks. Once the bins are filled, the crew packs them into vans parked outside the parish center and heads off to upper Manhattan. There, they will distribute the much-needed goods, along with a Christian greeting, to people living on the streets.

Two days later, across town at Sts. John and Paul parish, Deacon Jack Shea stands in the parking lot behind the church with a cluster of parishioners loading donated food into the back of cars, to be delivered to local food pantries. One by one, parishioners pull up in their cars and hand over bags full of cereal, pasta, canned goods, and other non-perishables. This scene has played out one Sunday per month since early 2020, when Deacon Shea became aware of dramatically increased



St. Augustine parishioner John Feuerbach organizes food pantry donations.

LEFT: Clothing items sorted by size for the St. Augustine Midnight Run.



Volunteers at the Sunday morning food drive, Sts. John and Paul.
BELOW: Pastor Fr. John Bonnici.



demand for food aid at the Hope Pantry in New Rochelle. With the members of the parish's existing food ministry, he put out the call for Sunday morning food drop-offs.

"The response was astounding," he recalls. "The first Sunday we did it, it was like a carnival. People were just driving in here, car after car after car. . . . The first trip, we had about 12 SUVs loaded with groceries." The SUVs bring the food to Hope every Monday, and additional groceries, donated directly by Stop and Shop or bought and trucked from a nearby grocery wholesaler, are delivered later in the week to a variety of local pantries. "It's grown week after week and month after month," Deacon Shea says.

Welcome to the Catholic community of Larchmont, whose two parishes are served by a single pastor but retain their separate identities. Each sponsors an unusually robust array of charitable ministries – modest parishioner-led programs which, taken together, add up to an impressive campaign of Christian service. At St. Augustine, these include the Midnight Run group, a food pantry, a clothing drive, aid to refugees, collaboration with the Fuller Center for Housing to help build and rebuild housing for people in need, and an Angel Tree, providing toys and gift cards to families and children at Christmas. At Sts. John and Paul, efforts include multiple initiatives to battle food insecurity, clothing drives, Christmas giving programs, and much more. Students of the Sts. John and Paul School also participate in service projects throughout the year.

"One of the first things I noticed when I arrived here, one of the things that bring the two parishes together, is this desire to be of service to others," says pastor Fr. John Bonnici,

who was assigned to head both parishes in July 2021. "It's a collection of individual efforts to support need in the community; but beautifully, it does come together. It creates a tapestry of service that reflects the people of both St. Augustine and Sts. John and Paul."

Fr. Bonnici becomes animated when he describes the ministries he has witnessed in the parishes. "We had a clothing drive in the fall at St. Augustine, and there was so much donated that the truck that was sent to pick up the stuff was too small. They had to send a second truck. And it wasn't only hand-me-downs, there were new products. And people went out of their way to dry clean some of the items. That was very nice to witness," he says.

Then he starts in on the monthly Sts. John and Paul food drive. "The cars literally just pass by and deliver bags and boxes of food," he says. "It's both encouraging and inspiring."

THE SUBSTANCE OF MERCY

HEALING ADDICTION WITH THE POWER OF LOVE

The pain of drug dependency radiates through society like a shock wave, starting with the user and working its way outward to family and loved ones, to the community, and beyond. It's a vast problem, and to fix it requires a major effort aimed at counteracting the social, economic, and public health conditions that lead to addiction.

For those who have been hooked, however, the focus is different. Theirs is an individual agony, and getting unhooked requires an arduous process of self-examination and the will to overcome personal demons. The choice – between the temporary, self-destructive relief of getting high and the positive but at times painful journey of recovery – must be lived every day. Overcoming addiction calls for immense courage and determination.

It also calls for help. Substance dependency is a medical issue with deep psycho-emotional implications. Virtually no one can beat it on their own, and in addressing the problem we can't afford to hang onto myths – such as the notion that substance abuse is chiefly an urban problem. The opioid explosion of recent years has corrected that stereotype. In suburban and rural areas, far from the urban centers, the sense of isolation for an addict can be crippling, and social services may be hard to find. A remote, idyllic landscape can look hopelessly bleak through the lens of addiction.

In just such a place – the Sullivan County village of Monticello, in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains – the Residential Treatment Program of Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster (CCOSU) shines a beacon of hope.

HARD TIMES, CHRIST'S MERCY

Decades ago, Sullivan County was at the epicenter of a thriving tourism mecca. Dozens of sprawling resorts brought thousands of visitors to the region each summer. In the second half of the 20th century, however, the area's big resorts began closing one by one; the local economy has never recovered. In Monticello, more than a quarter of the population – and almost half the children – live on incomes below the poverty line. Overdose deaths in the county have increased more than tenfold in the past decade.

The CCOSU campus in Monticello, on a quiet street near the center of town, consists of a modest cluster of wood-frame houses and two-story brick buildings housing administrative offices, a crisis center, a residential treatment unit, a separate “halfway house” for clients re-integrating into the community, and a large outpatient clinic. When the weather is good, a small yard affords clients fresh air and space for outdoor recreation.

At the edge of the alley outside the entry to the main intake building, a chain-link gate, suspended from a horizontal two-by-four and spray-painted blue, is hung with an array of padlocks and blue ribbons. Beside the gate, in black lettering, a plywood sign says:

PLACE A LOCK ON THE GATE
FOR A LOVED ONE LOST
DUE TO OPIOID ADDICTION.

At the bottom of the sign is a stylized cross with a single word written inside: PRAYERS.

This is no posh rehab facility. You won't be reading about celebrities detoxing here. What you will find is a caring staff providing medical treatment, social and emotional counseling, and post-release support to people afflicted with

substance use disorder, regardless of ability to pay, insurance status, or religious affiliation. You'll also find an abundance of love and respect for the dignity of every individual who comes through the door. In this quiet way, without proselytizing or excluding anyone, CCOSU bears witness to the mercy of Jesus Christ.

FROM CRISIS TO HOPE

Typically, clients enter the Residential Treatment Program via the crisis center. Some simply walk in and ask for help; others come at the suggestion of a friend or acquaintance, or on referral from a hospital emergency room. One of the CCOSU mobile teams may refer (or bring in) someone from the community for care; and some clients arrive with a parole- or probation-related treatment mandate, usually stemming from an arrest for possession or sale of narcotics.

“Somebody might need detox,” says Karen Milazzo, clinical director of residential services for the program, “or somebody might be in crisis, where they feel they might be at risk of relapsing. They don't have to actually have used recently. They could just be saying, ‘You know, I feel like I'm going to start drinking again, or I'm going to use drugs again.’ That's a situation where definitely we're going to take them in. We take people with or without insurance, so there's no turning anybody away. We're looking to really help the community.”

On arrival, clients are tested for Covid and then assessed by a clinical team. “We use various assessment instruments to see what level of care we need to put them into,” Milazzo says, “whether there's any depression or anxiety, what substances they're using, how severe their use is. This tells us if

we need to maintain them at a supervised level or if we can just put them right into our stabilization unit.”

Clients at the supervised level remain in the crisis center, where the medical team helps them through the process of withdrawal. Once withdrawal is complete – or in cases where it’s unnecessary – clients move into stabilization as outpatients or in the Residential Treatment Program.

“When they come in to the residence, we try to address their needs and help them with whatever struggles they’re having,” Milazzo says. “We get them busy and engaged right away in structured groups, structured programming. On the front end, our groups are geared toward education about the drugs, what it’s doing to their bodies, and motivating them to continue treatment. Mostly it’s the other clients,

their peers, that help them feel comfortable so they can start to open up.” Later on, groups and counseling sessions focus on the personal issues that led to substance abuse, and developing habits and attitudes that will help with staying clean in the future.

“We have a complete continuum of care,” says Amy Kolakowski, chief clinical officer for CCOSU – “from medically supervised detox to the situational crisis where a client needs someone to give them a little bit of help and a safe place to work it out.” In addition to the residential program, outpatient options include daytime rehabilitation, which patients attend five days a week, as well as evening care. Mobile teams consist of a clinician and peer advocates who reach out into surrounding communities to offer counseling or help connect people to needed services.

CCOSU also works collaboratively with one of the area hospitals to serve emergency room patients in need of follow-up substance use therapy. “Say someone goes in and they have overdosed,” Kolakowski says. “We can send a mobile team to help them come into our detox unit, or we can set up medication-assisted therapy, where they’re referred to one of our physicians to provide for their medical needs while we work to support the individual or their family in the community.”

REBUILDING LIVES

The clients at the Residential Treatment Program range in age from young adult to septuagenarian. They represent all races, cultures, and religious backgrounds, but they share the challenge of substance use disorder.



At Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan and Ulster’s Residential Treatment Center, a gate hung with padlocks is dedicated to loved ones lost to opioid addiction.

“My drug addiction started when I was 31 years old,” says Joseph P. “I was a business owner in Newburgh. I owned five auto repair shops, and I smoked them all up. Smoking crack. I wound up on the streets of Newburgh using for 10 years.”

Now 70, Joseph has been in and out of jobs between time served for drug possession charges over the past four decades. In the 1990s he opened another car repair business, only to lose it when he succumbed to addiction again.

Most recently, he relapsed in May 2021. “I couldn’t go on anymore the way I was doing. I was using drugs every day after I relapsed,” he says. Fortunately, he had a neighbor who told him about Catholic Charities in Monticello. “He saw how I was living, and he approached me one day. He says Joe, call this number. And when I called the number I spoke to Rodney [in the crisis center], and I packed a bunch of clothes and took a cab up here the same day.”

Joseph feels hopeful now. “I learned a lot about myself in here. A lot of why I was doing what I was doing.” He hopes

to stay in the program until March, and after that he plans to look for a part-time job. His dream is to go back into business someday. “But first I have to address my addiction, make sure I’m stable and ready to go out there.”

For now, he’s going to church every week and praying for success finding a network of sober friends. He has applied for housing in Monticello, Newburgh, and Kingston – but he’s hoping he can stay in Monticello, near his supporters at the Residential Treatment Program. “If I stay up in Monticello, it would be good for me,” he says. “Catholic Charities has helped me a lot.”

LEARNING TO FEEL

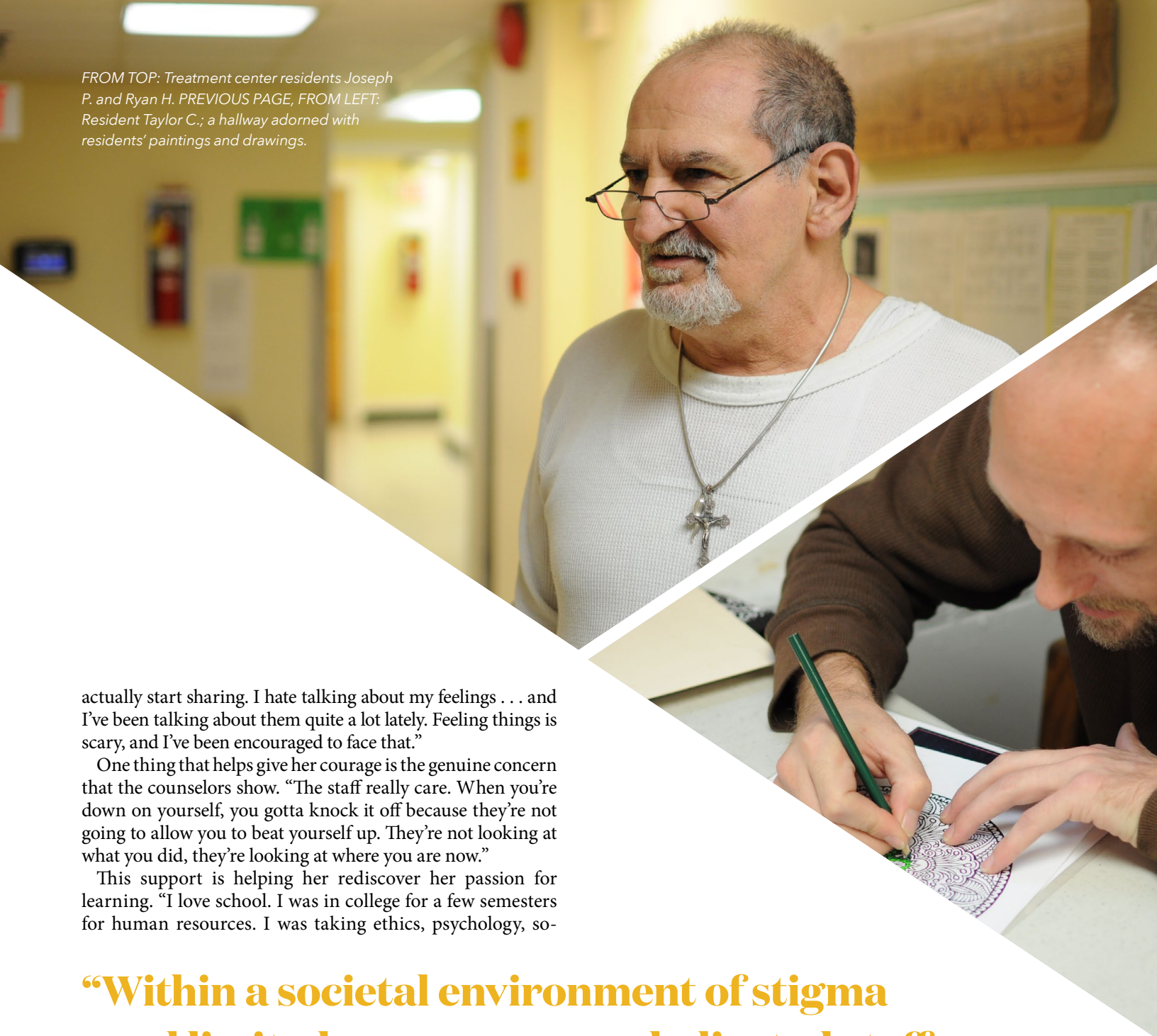
At the opposite end of the age spectrum, Taylor C. is 24 years old. She grew up in a nearby town and had only been in the program a couple of weeks when we spoke to her. She came in because she was using cocaine and heroin and couldn’t seem to stop on her own.

“My mom is a user,” she says. “She had moved out of my current house. I ended up having to clean everything, and unfortunately I just was not strong enough to say no.” A friend who had been in the program at CCOSU and has now been sober three years recommended the program to Taylor. “So I called here, actually, asking if it was OK if I came, because I needed a little help, and I couldn’t do it on my own. And they were really great. They were very nice.”

After a week in the crisis unit, Taylor was moved into the residential program. At first, she found the counseling and group sessions intimidating. “When I got here I didn’t want to participate, I didn’t want to share anything. A lot of what helped me was the acknowledgment that some staff had also had an issue at one point. They’re not just here saying one thing as a counselor. They’ve experienced it themselves. That encouraged me to



FROM TOP: Treatment center residents Joseph P. and Ryan H. PREVIOUS PAGE, FROM LEFT: Resident Taylor C.; a hallway adorned with residents' paintings and drawings.



actually start sharing. I hate talking about my feelings . . . and I've been talking about them quite a lot lately. Feeling things is scary, and I've been encouraged to face that."

One thing that helps give her courage is the genuine concern that the counselors show. "The staff really care. When you're down on yourself, you gotta knock it off because they're not going to allow you to beat yourself up. They're not looking at what you did, they're looking at where you are now."

This support is helping her rediscover her passion for learning. "I love school. I was in college for a few semesters for human resources. I was taking ethics, psychology, so-

“Within a societal environment of stigma and limited resources, our dedicated staff treat all who enter our care with the dignity inherent to their personhood.”

– Shannon Kelly, Executive Director, CCOSU

ciology. Those things interest me a lot, and I've been reading about them a lot here. After 90 days of being sober, the vocational ed counselor is going to help me get access to VR [vocational rehabilitation], and that way I can go back to school. I love learning things, I love knowledge."

She also draws encouragement from the fact that the staff at CCOSU – and *Archways* – really believe in the clients’ potential. “When it comes down to it, a lot of us feel like because we’re addicts, we don’t necessarily mean as much as the ones that aren’t. I know I created the label for myself by picking up what I did – but now I’m a grateful, *recovering* addict. I’m not just what I did. I think it’s cool that you guys are looking at the bright side of it and realizing that we can recover. Not a lot of people have that belief in us.”

SEEING THE LIGHT

The first time Ryan H. came to the CCOSU Residential Treatment Program, in January 2021, his participation was mandated by the terms of his parole. The second time, it was mandated by the loving concern of the staff.

“I started using when I was 11 years old, shooting heroin,” he recalls. “Imagine shooting heroin at 11 years old. I’m 34 now and I’ll be 35 in January 2022. I’ve got a long history under my belt.” That history includes a career as a mason that was on-again off-again due to drug use, and a six-year stint in prison for possession and sale of narcotics. It includes dozens of times in treatment.

“I’ve been to a lot of treatments. At the times it was kind of being forced into treatment, because of parole, probation. . . .

“I was in this program from January to July of [2021], and some negative behaviors got me in trouble.” Once his program ended, Ryan relapsed again quickly.

But this time, it’s different. After his previous release, something unusual happened. He stayed in Monticello, living homeless on the street in a tent, and the staff of CCOSU kept running into him.

“We were seeing him again and again, and begging him to come into treatment,” Karen Milazzo remembers. “We were unbelievably worried about him. To see somebody that we know has so much potential, could be so much in his life, and he’s out there holding a sign – it’s shattering. I don’t know if Ryan knows how much we care about Ryan.”

“I do now,” Ryan says. “When I was here before, I didn’t realize it. But now that I’m here, sober, and on the right path instead of the wrong, I actually see it. Daily.”

Now Ryan works toward the day when he will be ready to leave Monticello and return to his hometown in Pennsylvania. “Once I complete the program, parole is willing to put in my transfer to go back home with my family and my kids. I have everything set up already in Pennsylvania, where I have housing, which I haven’t had in a long time. I have work, too. I haven’t worked since 2014. Then I can gain my life back with my kids and focus on what I need to. I have a lot of friends who are clean many years, like my boss, who I worked for probably 12 years, doing masonry. I’m hoping that he’ll be my [12-step] sponsor.”

Ryan gestures to a window across the room, remembering his days on the street. “I walked past here every day,” he

Northwest Charities

Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster serves the northwest quadrant of the Archdiocese of New York. In addition to its substance use disorder treatment services, it administers or supports programs to meet the full range of needs in the region. Programs include:

- **Social and Human Services** Helping people meet basic needs through the Ulster Community Center Food Pantry in Kingston and pop-up pantries around the region; the Housing Resource Center, with offices in Newburgh and Middletown, to address housing insecurity or homelessness; and case management services to assist those in need of help meeting basic expenses or dealing with other personal or family crises.
- **Immigration** Paralegals and attorneys provide legal consultation and services for documented and undocumented immigrants, whether newly arrived or long-time residents, regarding naturalization, work authorization, asylum applications, deportation proceedings, and more.
- **Addiction Prevention** CCOSU promotes and implements early intervention strategies to prevent alcohol and drug abuse through school curriculums, community outreach, and training for parents, educators, and young people.
- **Counseling** The Parish Counseling Network of 120 professional counselors is available to help parishioners through issues such as marital problems, eldercare, job loss, or bereavement.
- **Employee Assistance** A program offered through employers to help workers deal with issues that may impact them in the workplace.

For more information about programs administered or sponsored by CCOSU, visit ccsos.org.



Care team members at the Residential Treatment Program. LEFT: Resident Ryan H. at a window overlooking a courtyard he frequented while living on the streets.

says, looking down at a courtyard with a motel on the far side. “Every day I would see somebody that works here, for probably two and a half months. Now I use that window to remind me of what I was putting myself through.”

A LIVING MISSION

While clients are dealing with their substance issues, they may also need assistance with other aspects of their lives. One advantage CCOSU offers its residents is the tie-in to a panoply of Catholic Charities services, including case management offered on-site.

“A person comes in, they’re in need of treatment,” Amy Kolakowski notes. “Maybe their family’s also struggling. Maybe their lights are about to be turned off. Maybe they’re hungry. Maybe they have a child that needs Pampers. Maybe they are undocumented and need help with their immigration status. Our case management services can wrap around the family while we’re meeting the individual’s unique needs in treatment.”

For people struggling with substance use disorder, this “wraparound” integration of services can be life-saving – and it’s inherent to the philosophy of CCOSU. “Everyone here lives our mission,” Milazzo says. “Providing help and creating hope.’ When people leave, we make sure they know we’re here to service them whenever they need it. And hopefully with a warm meal in their belly if they’re hungry. We meet people where they’re at.” ✨

For more information on Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster’s Residential Treatment Program, visit ccsos.org. To make a donation, visit ccsos.org/donate-now.

PRAYERS and TEXTS for 2022

The beginning of a new calendar year – a month after Advent signals the start of the liturgical year – can seem dark and difficult. As we take down the tree, put away the crèche, and make our winter preparations for the months ahead, it's easy to forget the joy of the Christmas season.

To help us through, we asked some notable Catholics from around the Archdiocese of New York to recommend some words (or songs) of wisdom and inspiration to remind us of the light that lies beyond the gray skies. Here is an assortment of readings, prayers, songs, books, and meditations that your fellow Catholics find helpful. (*For more recommendations, visit archwaysmag.org.*)



In the Adoration Chapel at Sts. John and Paul, Larchmont.

With Gratitude and Blessings

*Sr. Mary Catherine Redmond, PBVM
New Windsor*

Every year on New Year's Eve, I thank God for the year that has been and ask for God's blessing and presence for the upcoming year. Below is my prayer for 2022. I invite each person to make their own list of gratitude and blessings, and I pray you experience a loving God in the midst of your list.

I am grateful for the gift of life.

Bless all with abundant life – physical, emotional, spiritual – so we can be a sign of your love in our world.

I am grateful for the gift of family.

Bless all whose families are fractured by addiction, illness, migration, lack of resources. Bless all those I love. Gift them with the life they give me.

I am grateful for the gift of community.

Bless all who continue to shape my life by their challenges, diversity, friendship, forgiveness, and care.

I am grateful for transition.

Bless all who are experiencing change in their lives this year. May those who are unsure be graced with new life, awareness, talents, and skills.

I am grateful for all that has been.

Bless all who have helped to shape who I am. Keep them safe, give them strength, healing, and peace.

I am grateful for fragility.

Bless all who are fragile this year; fragility has gifted me with insight, new awareness, courage, and strength I never knew I had.

I am grateful for life's gifts.

Bless those who will be without home, food, companionship, and those who suffer abuse of any kind.

I am grateful for God's presence.

Bless all who strive to know you more deeply, especially those who stand on the margins of our world. With your presence, may I be a living sign of your love in the world.

During 2021, Sr. Mary Catherine Redmond, PBVM, retired as a physician assistant in the Bronx to accept a leadership role in her congregation.



A Prayer for Peace



Deacon Jack Shea
Sts. John and Paul, Larchmont

I have been saying this prayer every morning since the early 1990s:

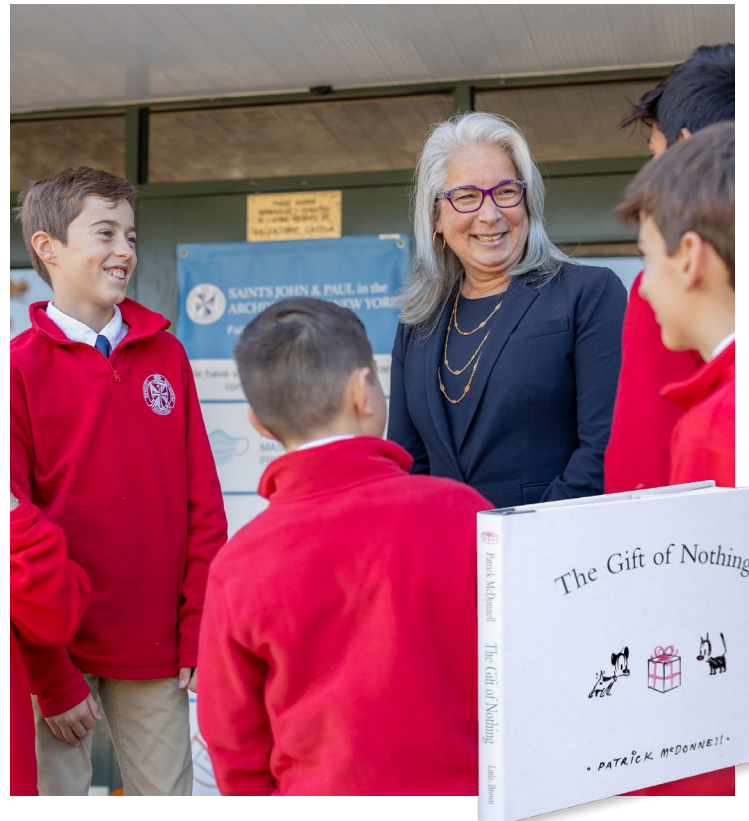
*Father in Heaven, we are all your children.
Please give us peace throughout the world.
Help us to love you and one another, as Jesus has taught us.
Help us to share the gifts you have given us with others,
so that no one has to go without food,
clothing, or knowledge of your love for us.
Let us be your helping hands in our communities.
Amen.*

The Gift of Nothing – and Everything

Fatima Carvalho-Gianni
Principal, Sts. John and Paul School, Larchmont

At the turn of the new year, following the Christmas season of love and hope, we search for a renewal of life and perspectives. I go back to a book I read to my children when they were young: ***The Gift of Nothing*, by Patrick McDonnell**. Its pages are simple but powerful, and the words are ironically truthful. Mooch the cat wants to give his friend Earl the dog a special gift. He is at a loss for what to give him, since Earl already has everything. In the end, Mooch finds the perfect gift of “nothing but us.”

An excess of worldly things cannot satisfy the heart. Mooch and Earl are different from each other but still make an unbelievable friendship. They teach us to appreciate each other through being still and enjoying “nothing and everything.” What a great way to start the new year by spending time with the people you love, reaching out to people who may be different but alike in spirit, and enjoying the simple things in life together.



Songs of Comfort

Sr. Carol De Angelo, SC

As we endure the dreary dark days of winter, I invite all to listen to two songs on the album *Gentle Night*, by St. Louis Jesuits: “Patience People” and “The People That Walk in Darkness.” The Advent and Christmas seasons might be over, but the words and melodies of these two songs offer comfort and inspiration as we live through cold and barren days.

*Patience, people,
till the Lord is come.
See the farmer await
the yield of the soil.
He watches it in winter
and in spring rain.
Patience, people,
for the Lord is coming.
Patience, people,
till the Lord is come.*

St. Louis Jesuits,
“Patience People”

*Unless the seed falls
to the ground and dies,
it remains a seed.*

John 12:24



In the winter and spring of 1992, I lived in Jerusalem for four months. That winter the snow and cold broke records. With the arrival of spring, the Judean desert was alive with multicolored flowers. Newspaper articles reported that flowers bloomed that had not been seen for a hundred years. May winter be a time we water and nourish ourselves and the seeds of God’s love within and among us, hidden though they may be. Let winter days be an invitation to unwrap God’s gifts of patience and hope, two virtues sorely needed today.

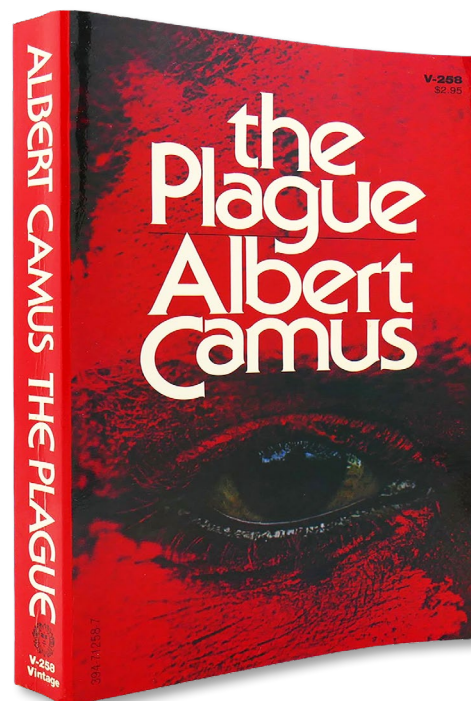
Living Through the Pandemic



Msgr. Kevin Sullivan
Executive Director, Catholic Charities of New York

In the past year and a half, many New Yorkers have rediscovered (or discovered for the first time) *The Plague*, by Albert Camus. It tells the fictional story of an outbreak of bubonic plague in an Algerian city in the 1950s, but in many ways it speaks directly to us today. It's well worth reading (or rereading) as we continue to live through the epoch of the coronavirus.

“Dr. Rieux resolved to compile this chronicle, so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness in favor of those plague-stricken people . . . and to state quite simply what we learn in time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise.”



St. John Bosco Parish, Port Chester.

Archways 

is published four times a year by the
Archdiocese of New York Marketing Office
Rachel Sheehan | Director of Marketing

Michael Cain | Managing Editor

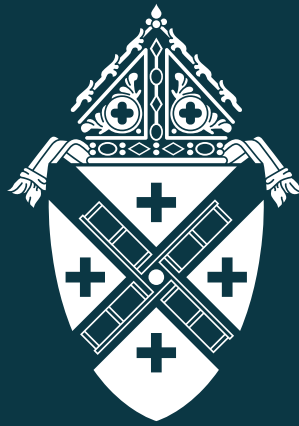
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