

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION AT CHRIST THE REDEEMER PARISH



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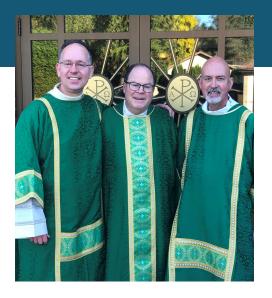
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# From the Pastor: STILL ON THE DISCIPLESHIP PATH BUMPS AND ALL!

Msgr. Gregory Smith

#### Dear friends,

Our recent official Sunday Mass count indicates that about 65% of those who attended before the pandemic have returned. Much as I love that majority, it's the 35% I spend most of my time thinking about.

Although many of you reading this edition of Life in Our Parish have been back at Mass and attended some of the events the magazine celebrates, I want to share some thoughts particularly with those who are still away.

You may be absent from the pews but remain parishioners in every way, invited to continue walking on the discipleship path we charted before the pandemic began. We've encountered a few detours lately, but we still know where we are headed and why – towards "a deep and lasting relationship with Jesus in the communion and mission of the Church."

There are various reasons why the 35% are not gathering with us. Some are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus, while others live with those who are. Some are anxious in the face of constantly changing information about Covid, safety measures, and vaccines.

And some may just have got out of the Sunday routine.

Whatever your situation, Christ the Redeemer is still your parish and still your home. I'm inviting you to come back, as your situation allows, to celebrate with us, and to share the joy of seeing our two new deacons in action. If you are not able to be at Mass, please let us know your needs or how we can help.

I welcome you to reach out to us – please call or email the parish with a request for home visits, reception of Holy Communion (even privately in church if you do not feel it

is safe to come to Mass with others), or simply to talk.

Reading regularly our Weekly Update connects you to parish life and to the parish community itself. We still offer online programs. Faith Studies are the best example, and there are hybrid options such as the Marriage Course currently in progress.

The text of many of my Sunday homilies are posted online at gregorynsmith.blogspot.com. Fr. Lucio and I are also happy to meet you personally. We have made the confessionals safer places by increased ventilation, and especially encourage those who can't attend Mass to go to confession and receive the graces of this sacrament.

The pandemic created some potholes along the discipleship path. But that just means the road's a bit more bumpy: we are still moving forward, with confidence in God's will and his help.

Please stay with us on the journey!



Would you like another copy of the magazine to share with someone you know? Contact the parish office at 604-922-1371 of office @ctrwestvan.ca.



# THE PARISH BBQ IN PHOTOS

Photos by Glen Goh and Rene Burgos





Fr. Jeff returned for a guest appearance





Nick Varelas & Sandra Bitelli's performance was a hit as always



Fr. Lucio's love of fishing made him easy bait for Msgr.'s jokes.









# ST. ANTHONY'S: NO ORDINARY SCHOOL

By Jerome Robles, Seminarian

Laila Maravillas, or 'Mrs. M.' as she is widely known, has been an elementary school principal for thirty-three years, fifteen of which have been at St. Anthony's School (SAS).

Before stepping into the principal's office, I was greeted with a framed mission statement which read: "Be it known to all who enter here that CHRIST is the reason for this school..." It is a message which Mrs. M. strives to instil in the community – students, staff, and parents alike.

St. Anthony's is no ordinary school. It is a Catholic school.

"Not only are we firmly committed to excellence in education and helping each child achieve their individual potential, we are privileged to do so while living our faith. Our faith permeates everything that we do. Jesus is the reason why we're here," Mrs. M. proudly declares.

At the heart of faith is relationship. Mrs. M. makes a distinction between knowing about Jesus and knowing Him personally: "Our goal is that our children have a personal relationship with Jesus, not a 'textbook' relationship but an actual relationship with Him."

Knowing Jesus means conversing with Him in prayer. While formal prayers are taught, students are also encouraged to pray spontaneously from the heart. As Mrs. M. shares, "Sometimes kids will Mrs. Laila Maravillas is a strong advocate for Catholic education. Jerome Robles sat down with Mrs. M. this Fall to get acquainted with the school.

say, 'I don't know what to say. I've said the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be...' And I say, 'Okay, good, now just sit and talk to God. Tell him about your day. What are you working on? What are you worried about? What can you thank God for today?"

Prayer fosters one's friendship with Jesus. "If you don't have a relationship, it's a lot easier to walk away," she says.

Knowing Jesus also means encountering Him in others. Throughout the year, students participate in various outreach initiatives by providing food and clothing for patrons at The Door Is Open, fundraising for the Holy Childhood Association, visiting seniors in care facilities, writing cards for the sick and Prison Ministry, etc. Mrs. M. apprecia-

tively notes that some students, rather than asking for gifts on their birthdays, ask for donations to a charity of their choice.

While students are the primary focus at SAS, knowing Jesus and living the faith begins with parents, grandparents, and then their teachers. As Mrs. M. reminds me, "The children are our parishioners of tomorrow and as a community we are responsible for igniting a strong faith foundation so that they will continue to go to Mass, pray for us, and know that they are loved by God."

Over the years, the staff have participated in programs to further their faith through Alpha, Discovery and Search Faith Studies, Bible in a Year, and The Wild Goose Series and more.



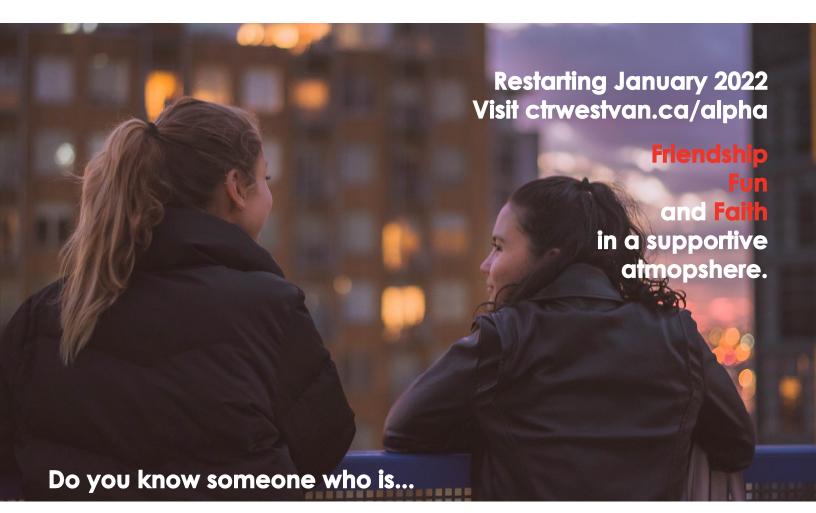
This September, a group of parents have been journeying together with SAS Alpha on Tuesday mornings. Parents meet virtually or in-person, helping one another grow in their understanding of the faith, fostering friendships, and building community. Everyone is at different places in their faith journey and the supportive relationships formed in these settings help in other areas of life such as sharing parenting tips and funny anecdotes and building friendships.

"When our children see us at Mass or hear us talking about different activities we are involved with, we are leading them by example," says Mrs. M. of spiritual leadership. When asked what she values most about St. Anthony's, Mrs. M. smiles and without hesitation, responds, "Everything."

"We are very fortunate because we are supported by our pastors, Msgr. Smith, Fr. Gary and Fr. Lucio ... I'm working with an exceptional dedicated staff, I'm proud of the students, I'm honoured to work with the administrative team both at the parish level and school level, and with the parents who are very supportive," she adds.

St. Anthony's School is part of the parish family and shares in the parish mission to bring families closer to Jesus.

St. Anthony's School shares in the mission of the Church to proclaim and build the Kingdom of God. As a faith community, St. Anthony's School is committed to excellence in Catholicism and in all areas that promote the development of the whole child to his or her potential. To learn more about SAS, please visit www.saswv.ca or email office@saswv.ca.



Feeling lonely?
Struggling with why there is so much suffering?
Wondering whether God exists?







### FROM UNBELIEF TO REASONABLE FAITH

Interview with Alexandria and Jake O'Sullivan

Alex and Jake O'Sullivan began attending RCIA at Christ the Redeemer in 2018. At the time, Jake was a cradle Catholic who went to Mass occasionally, while Alex had no faith upbringing at all. Alex found herself becoming more and more compelled to explore Christianity after encountering persuasive intellectual arguments for Jesus in the most unlikely of places: her secular university campus. Alex sat down with Glen Goh and her husband Jake to share her story.



# Glen Goh: As I recall, both of you came into the parish through you, Alex.

Alex: I guess so, because Jake was a cradle Catholic and I was interested in RCIA. We went [to Mass] once or twice when I was pregnant. I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a Catholic but I was happy to go with Jake while expecting Rosie.

Jake: We saw the Archbishop at a solemn high Mass and Alex wasn't Catholic at the time. She was like, "What's this?" and "What's that?" and "Why are we standing up again?"

Alex: (Laughs) I was heavily, heavily pregnant and I was trying to kneel down and kept thinking, "This isn't practical!"

The first time we went to Mass though was because it was the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas. I really liked St. Thomas Aquinas. I read him at school and studied his work so I was open to going.

Glen: Alex, can you talk me through your interest to seek God through philosophy? I believe you were studying Philosophy at UBC.

Alex: Yes, it's a long story. I didn't grow up with any kind of religion. My parents weren't religious so I had assumed my whole life that there was no God. I never really thought about it until I was older.

"I really liked St. Thomas
Aquinas. I read him at
school and studied his
work, so I was open to
going [to Mass]."

I had some issues that I felt strongly about which got me arguing against Christians. I'm not proud because I was

the opposite of where I am now, but over a few years, after debating and arguing with people, reading and exchanging ideas, I started to come around on a couple issues.

For example, I used to be very prochoice. After taking some ethics courses in college, I realized that I was wrong. I completely, one hundred percent, changed my mind. That was a big turning point for me because the only people I knew at the time who were

people I knew at the time who were pro-life were Catholics. I thought, "They're right about one thing."

I also took a Philosophy of Religion course. At the beginning of the semester, I read all these arguments for God and thought, "These are really bad. I'm going to be able to move through these no problem." But as the semester went on, I realized they were much more complicated than I thought. I'd been arguing against people all these years and never understood properly what was being discussed.

That led me down a rabbit hole of studying St. Thomas Aquinas. I ended up switching my major to Philosophy after taking more and more courses to help explain gaps in my understanding. Before I knew it I was so deep in Philosophy that I made it my major.

Glen: I get the sense that while you were studying Philosophy, your faith developed one step after another. It wasn't so much a 'one moment' thing where everything made sense. Is that right?

Alex: For sure. By the time I got to UBC I was studying the History and Philosophy of Science. One of the things that smacked me in the face was the point in university when I realized that Science in general doesn't make any sense unless God exists. The philosophical underpinnings that are required for that kind of thought just wouldn't be around if it wasn't for Christian thought.

I started to see that [Christian thought] is baked right into our language of Biology in general. We talk about everything as if it's designed, but we turn around and say it's not designed. And if you take away the language of design, you can't say that anything is good or bad anymore. You can't even practice Medicine because you have to say, "There is no such thing as having a bad heart," for example. "It's just a different heart."

That threw me because I was heavily leaning on Science before that. I thought, "Science has the answers. Science is the alternative." This was the first time I saw that I had it all backwards, that science was relying on all this. It didn't necessarily tell me the answer was Catholicism, but it pointed me very strongly in that direction.

Glen: Many who have grown up Catholic leave their faith when they go to university – especially UBC or SFU. Many people say that the environment at universities is very anti-Christian.

Alex: I can definitely see that. I did meet a lot of resistance to these ideas.

I had many moments when I thought, "I could stop [seeking] and not have people get angry with me." But there was always something in the back of my mind that said, "The truth is the truth no matter what people say about it." I just made a decision at a certain point in my academic career that I was going to make bold claims about what I believed was the truth. Some teachers were super supportive, and some were very unsupportive.

"Before that I thought,

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alternative.' This was the

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it all backwards."

# Glen: So what was it about St. Thomas Aquinas that piqued your interest?

Alex: I loved him right away. I had heard his Five Proofs before but hadn't studied formal logic yet and didn't understand deductive reasoning. At first I thought [the Proofs] were pithy but didn't prove anything. When I actually studied them with proper background knowledge, I realized that they are elegant and powerful. People love to say, "Look at this four-line argument that Aquinas made, it doesn't prove anything." Now I say back, "That wasn't designed to prove anything. You have to read the five volumes that he wrote on this topic." You can't accuse him of not backing up his arguments, that's for sure!

I'm drawn to philosophers who are analytical and willing to see the possible holes in their arguments to offer a rebuttal. That's the way [Aquinas's] works are structured. I loved that because he thought through everything and then walked us through the steps.

# Glen: How did Jake help you in your faith, apart from bringing you to Mass?

Alex: I've been called a fence-sitter by some because I'll think about an idea for a long time. I want to do all my reading, all my thinking, to make sure that [I'm convinced and] not just in an emotional state. I like to give myself lots of time to make sure that there's nothing muddying my thoughts.

I hit a point where I was wondering if God exists, and was Jesus who he said he was, and Jake kept saying, "You have an answer for everything, what are you waiting for?"

I guess one thing that was stopping me was the fact that it's hard to believe. It all sounds kind of preposterous. It's one thing to sit in your armchair and think about metaphysics and that there must have been something [at the beginning]. It's another to actually believe that Jesus is God and he resurrected and there's a heaven. There were a few

points where Jake pushed me to get out of my comfort zone and go to Mass or go to RCIA. I would tell him, "I'm not ready," and he would say, "You'll never be ready, so just go." And that's what I did.

Jake: The whole point of RCIA is that you're not ready.



Alex was baptized into the Catholic Church at Christ the Redeemer in May 2020 on the feast of Pentecost. To inquire about RCIA at CTR, please visit ctrwestvan.ca/rcia.



# Project Advance 2021

OVERALL GOAL: \$180,000 PARTICIPATION RATE: 50%

**KEY PROJECTS:** 

♦ \$20,000 towards the Archbishop's Campaign for Healing and Reconciliation

 Updating parish meeting spaces as gathering spaces

The updated spaces will be used for faith study meetings, Alpha, Young Adult ministry dinners, receptions, a place for SAS parents to gather, coffee after Sunday Mass... and more!



In the next phase, an outdoor deck will be constructed as a safe meeting place where parents with young children can meet without worrying about cars in the parking lot. Youth and young adults will be able to gather here after Adoration nights.



# PILOT PRAYER COURSE TEACHES CONVERSATION WITH GOD

By Elizabeth Krump with Daniel Rodriguez

Christ the Redeemer is known for offering many evangelistic programs and opportunities for re-discovering the center of our Catholic faith: Jesus. After years of focusing on foundational programs such as Alpha, Discovery, the Search and The Chosen, many in the parish have come to know Jesus for the first time or in a new way. But walking with Jesus is a life-long journey. What next?

Dialogue with God is a brand new prayer course developed by Domenic Inneo of Renewal Ministries, intended to fill that need. As the name suggests, the eight-week course unpacks various prayer methods and practices from spiritual greats like St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Ignatius of Loyola and Thomas à Kempis, helping teach conversational prayer with God.

This summer, seminarian Daniel Rodriguez led the course for the first time as part of a pilot project across the country. His experience of prayer may be relatable to many mature Catholics: "My years of seminary formed me to develop some prayer habits of my own; the Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, and so on. What was missing, I think, was a deep sense that God wanted to speak with me on a more familiar level."

Reciting "rote prayers" passed down through the tradition of the Church (such as Liturgy of the Hours or the Rosary) is different than conversational prayer which focuses on how to hear God's voice. Jesus wants to speak to us individually: "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27)

Feedback from the nearly 20 parishioners who finished Dialogue with God was that the course was both intensive and rewarding. Each week, small groups watched a series of short videos together followed by take-home work that helped them apply the techniques that were being taught.

"As with any habit or exercise, these methods take time to develop and master. We also must take initiative to be with God and have a desire to know him," Daniel shared. Many said that this was exactly what they were looking for (below).

The imagination techniques and learning how to listen to His voice truly helped me converse with the Lord. I wish I had known and used these tools a long time ago! – Eileen

I have always struggled with prayer, both in terms of "finding time" and making it "meaningful". I found the course packed with information and very process oriented. I am thankful to God for making Himself more present in my life through this course! – Alessandro

The desire to draw closer to God is like an ongoing hunger and I wanted more. Overall thanks to this course, I am now much more at ease with dialogue prayer! Domenic is experienced, knowledgeable, transparent, credible and easy to listen to. - Victoria

# Invitation to Mission

### A MARRIAGE MINISTRY MEANT FOR EVERYONE

By Glen Goh and Elizabeth Krump

Every marriage has a unique mission, a call to share their love in a fruitful way. For newly ordained Deacon Marty Cayer and his wife Lora, that mission had its inception when they met and became friends at five years old. The couple dated throughout high school until at 19, Marty felt the Holy Spirit calling him to marry his sweetheart. They were married some years later.

As a young altar server, Marty met someone else who would have an im-

pact on the mission of his marriage: a young priest named Fr. Gregory Smith. That original connection with Msgr. Smith led the two men to reconnect decades later at an Archdiocesan

event. Msgr. Smith invited Marty and Lora to lunch and suggested that Marty consider the diaconate program.

Marty felt an immediate attraction to the call. He and Lora had struggled to have children and he was confident that the Lord had used this cross to prepare him to serve others in a different way.



Lora was also open to this spiritual journey. She faithfully attended the discernment sessions and, with the help of the wives of other deacons, she came to understand that while being a Deacon was his call and not hers, her supporting Marty's decision was a 'yes' to her vocation – her mission – in marriage.

Just before his ordination this year, Msgr.

"CTR believes that

vibrant marriages are a

vital foundation for the

life of the parish."

asked Marty and Lora if they would lead marriage ministry at Christ the Redeemer. They both felt that this ministry was a great way to start their life

at the parish – something meaningful to them as a married couple that they could share in together.

CTR believes that vibrant marriages are a vital foundation for the life of the parish and the best way to support marriages was to start a marriage ministry.

The most effective way to support mar-

riages is to be proactive – to strengthen marriages with tools before obstacles/problems arise – to have a stronger foundation to weather a future storm. Too often by the time couples admit to having a problem, it has become a major obstacle and overcoming it without proper help and care may be too much. Utilizing The Alpha Marriage Course can help build this foundation.

The Course is also able to help couples who are experiencing issues. It provides a safe space to talk about relational matters and gives couples the practical tools they need. If couples feel they need more help in certain areas, the Archdiocese has further resources available. This holistic way to support marriages is ever-evolving.

This past Spring, the Archdiocese hosted the Alpha Marriage Course and some married parish leaders were invited to attend. The idea was simple: healthy marriages make better ministry leaders. The response was incredible – CTR made up more than one-third of the participants.

The feedback was also overwhelmingly positive. People were surprised that even

with a mature marriage, they could learn new things. Some who were initially skeptical stayed to the end and reflected that they were pleasantly surprised how much they enjoyed it.

With a successful trial run and Marty's ordination in October, it was a perfect time to launch our parish's first marriage ministry by hosting the Alpha Marriage Course ourselves. The first course is being conducted in a hybrid format: the first and last sessions are in-person and those in-between are online. Couples are encouraged to make the sessions a

special date night, rather than a study session.

The aim of hosting the course is to reach every married couple in the parish, even those parishioners whose spouse is not Catholic, because is is relatable to all marriages.

Eleven couples are currently attending the inaugural course with marriages ranging from under 5 years to some over 50 years. We have some young couples yet to have children, one with a baby, and grandparents too! If you didn't sign up this time, look out for the next Alpha Marriage Course by CTR!

For more information please visit: ctrwestvan.ca/marriage-course.

I was curious about this course, initially worried about lack of privacy but was quickly dispelled. I enjoyed every session! – Rolando

We have attended marriage enrichment courses before but one can never know everything and I wanted to learn new things to improve my marriage. I learned many new things that I will use to improve our marriage – Marianella

The course allowed us to discuss matters that were very intimate in a manner that made us feel comfortable to discuss privately with our spouse because it was a very safe space. – Ricardo

The course reminded us to put our marriage as a priority and gave us simple tools to do that. – Mili

I was unsure, but went in with an open mind – I loved it found it so useful –the course should be for all married couples, not just Christian marriages! – Americo

I learned so much from the topic "love in action" about how to give and receive love. Even for strong marriages, the discussions allowed us to go even deeper with each other and to grow from that. – Claudia

#### Newly ordained Deacon Marty Cayer and Deacon Steve Whan with their supportive spouses after celebrating their first Mass at CTR







# GOD WANTS YOU TO BE FULLY ALIVE

By Fr. Lucio Choi

"Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way He brings youth to our world. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive, and He wants you to be alive!"

These moving words are the opening of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation, "Christus Vivit," which was published shortly after the 2018 Synod on "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment." In my nine years of involvement in youth ministry (four years before my ordination and five years as a young priest), my message to our young friends has been the same: "Christ is alive, and He wants you to be alive!"

Young people truly wish to be alive, not just in a shallow or superficial way. I've observed this hopeful and sincere desire for authentic joy every time I have had the opportunity to speak with them in a deeper level.

Knowing this beautiful reality, I am thrilled to be involved with CTR Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry this year. Yes, a re-launch of these two important ministries has its challenges as we readjust to more gatherings in-person, but I'm confident knowing how fertile and rich the soil is here at our parish.

"Young people truly wish to be alive, not just in a shallow or superficial way."

The creative connection and ongoing discipleship of these ministries to continue meeting over Zoom during the worst of the pandemic has clearly borne fruit.

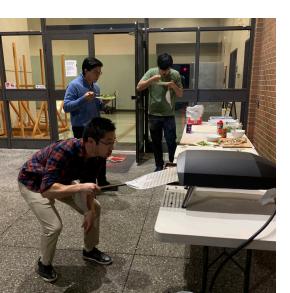
Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry are very special to me. I am passionate about them because I can candidly say that I encountered God's radical love for me in a deeply personal and powerful way during my own teenage years.

A big part of my priestly ministry has been, and is, to let our young people know that they are not too young to respond to His amazing love for them. I know that the desire they have to feel alive will be realized when they take those steps closer to Jesus. As St. Irenaeus famously said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive; and to be alive consists in beholding God."

It is always a great privilege and honour to accompany young people in their spiritual journey. But the ministry reaches its purpose and mission when we observe young people becoming authentic disciples of Jesus. What we need to do is to create a safe environment where they can dive deeper into their search for God, and to assist them in encountering His loving interest and guidance for them.

Once they have had an experience of Jesus' good news, they will want to share it with others, wanting their friends to know who God really is. If they are convinced that they are not too young to say "Yes" to Jesus, they will also know that they are not too young to say their own profound "Yes" to discipleship. We can trust them to make this significant decision.

I'm encouraged to see that the CTR Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry are very aware of the parish vision,





best effort to live out "the Life in Our Parish" that makes sense to our younger disciples. In return, we ask for your

> continual prayers and support of this vital part of the parish community. I look forward to seeing where the Lord leads us this year!



Our Young Adult ministry is now on Instagram! Follow Fr. Lucio's posts at @ctryam for the latest news. Youth Group updates continue at @ctryouthmin.

#### **MASS SCHEDULE**

#### **SUNDAY MASSES:**

SATURDAY 5:00 PM SUNDAY 9:00 AM SUNDAY 11:00 AM SUNDAY 5:00 PM

#### **WEEKDAY MASSES:**

MONDAY 8:15 AM TUESDAY 8:15 AM WEDNESDAY 9:15 AM THURSDAY 8:15 AM FRIDAY 8:15 AM SATURDAY 9:00 AM

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 9:00 AM