Dear friends in Christ,  
Welcome to fall and especially to this wonderful time as we prepare to give thanks for all the blessings that God showers on us. While gratitude should always be part of our lives as Christians, this time of year makes it the more pronounced.

In the Society, we have much for which to give thanks, especially for all the apostolates that serve the Church throughout the province. I refer to our schools, retreat houses and the Jesuit parishes scattered throughout the length and breadth of the province. In this edition of the magazine, you will get a taste of the wide range of ministries that flow from our engagement in parish life. You will read of two of our parishes in greater depth, even as the article by Bill Bole sketches out an overview of what makes a parish Jesuit.

In the article about St. Charles Borromeo in Grand Coteau, La., you will learn about how their commitment “to walk with the poor” animates much of the life and ministry of parishes. The homilies, pastoral care and faith formation in each parish all bear the hallmarks of the spirituality of St. Ignatius, seeking to help people grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

While we highlight St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis Xavier College Church in St. Louis, the same kind of outreach to the poor and marginalized, formation in faith, and ministry informed by the Spiritual Exercises characterizes all the others in which men of the USA Central and Southern Province serve. They will provide blessed platforms for responding to the Universal Apostolic Preferences given us by Father General Arturo Sosa and confirmed by Pope Francis.

Thank you for sharing in our mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Lord. May the Lord bless you for your generosity and prayerful support of all the Society does.

God’s Peace to you and all whom you love.  
Gratefully in the Lord,

Ronald A. Mercier, SJ  
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Five Men Enter the Society of Jesus

Five men entered the Jesuit Novitiate of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Grand Coteau, La., on Aug. 9. Giovanni Díaz Jiménez, Jacob Jones, Richard Joubert, Manuel Luna Vega and Joseph Seiter look forward to two years of prayer, study, discernment and service at the novitiate.

Novices study the history of the Society of Jesus, the Society’s primary documents, ways to pray, and the nature and challenges of living a vowed life. They enter the rhythm of the Church, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and gathering for daily Eucharist. By accompanying communities on the margins and experiencing what it means to live and work at a Jesuit institution, novices begin the process of shaping their hearts around “finding God in all things.” Novices grow in their awareness and appreciation for living together and building a healthy community life.

Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House Celebrates 60 Years

Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas, this fall celebrates 60 years of service. Founded in 1959, Montserrat serves as a place for silent reflection and spiritual renewal.

During the past six decades, the lakeside campus has welcomed more than 150,000 retreatants, both women and men. They come to pray, to listen, to learn, and they find peace and encouragement in their faith through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

Last year, more than 6,000 people visited Montserrat for retreats, lectures, classes and meetings. Three members of this province lead the Montserrat ministry: Fathers Anthony Borrow, Ron Gonzales and Roy Joseph.

New Provincial Staff Members

Two members of the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province have recently begun new assignments in provincial staff positions particularly critical to the future of the province.

As the coordinator of vocation promotion, Fr. Edwin Gros, SJ, will be the first point of contact for men discerning a potential call to life as a Jesuit. His service to the Church has been as a missionary and in campus and pastoral ministry, most recently at Holy Name of Jesus Parish in New Orleans. He has been a Jesuit for more than 50 years. Fluent in Spanish, he can be reached via the BeAJesuit.org website or at UCSVocationPromoter@Jesuits.org.

Father Hung Pham, SJ, is the new provincial assistant for formation. His role is to work with Jesuits in the initial stages of formation, the extended period of Jesuit training, both academic and experiential. Father Pham has spent the past seven years teaching Ignatian Spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University. A Jesuit for 26 years, he has also served at St. Louis University High School, the Jesuit Refugee Service and Regis University.
New Advancement Staff in Place to Assist Donors

The province advancement department has grown by two members. Jean Dempsey and Rosalie Tomeny will work with province donors to help them achieve their philanthropic goals, through both current and planned giving.

A graduate of the University of Georgia, Jean Dempsey has significant experience in advancement and community service, serving most recently as director of development for Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Mobile. She has also helped with leadership team and program development for the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. She is based in Mobile.

Rosalie Tomeny has worked for nearly three decades at Holy Name of Jesus Jesuit Parish and School in New Orleans. In addition to serving as director of development, she has also worked in admissions, communications and alumni relations. A graduate of the University of New Orleans, she is based in New Orleans.

Colleagues Retreats Offer Spiritual Refreshment

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province has committed to offering two Colleagues Retreats each year to give more partners in mission a chance to experience the Spiritual Exercises. Seventy people representing the various works of the province participated in two weeklong retreats in July. Father Hung Pham, SJ, presented talks to 32 people at Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas, while Fr. Thomas Greene, SJ, led 38 people at Sacred Heart Retreat in Sedalia, Colo. Reports indicate the retreats were prayerful, grace-filled, rejuvenating experiences for all.

These retreats will repeat next year on:

June 6-12, 2020
Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas

July 18-24, 2020
Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia, Colo.

St. Louis Jesuits Come Home for Sold-Out Concert

Dan Schutte, Tim Manion, and Jesuit Fathers Bob Dufford, John Foley and Roc O’Connor, known as the St. Louis Jesuits, perform at a final “Coming Home” concert Sept. 29 at Powell Hall in St. Louis.
Milestones

Twelve novices pronounced first vows Aug. 10 at the Jesuit Novitiate of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Grand Coteau, La. They are now in First Studies at Jesuit universities in St. Louis, Chicago and Guadalajara, Mexico. Shown here are (front row): John Guerra, Chi Nhan Nguyen, Sullivan McCormick, Bryan Torres. Middle row: Socius to the Novice Director Br. Larry Huck, River Simpson, Justin Kelley, Kevin Kuehl, Hunter D’Armond. Back row: Novice Director Fr. Drew Kirschman, Nicholas Blair, Daniel Finucane, Philip Nahlik, Eric Couto (Antilles Province) and Fr. Mark Thibodeaux, who served as novice director during the novices’ first year.

Father Ángel Rivera-Fals, SJ, pronounced final vows Aug. 15 in the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Jesuit High School, Tampa, Fla.

Father Hanh Pham, SJ, pronounced final vows Aug. 25 at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia, Colo.

David Lugo, SJ, (above) and Matthew Stewart, SJ, (left) were ordained deacons Sept. 21 by Most Reverend Peter J. Uglietto, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, at the Church of Saint Ignatius of Loyola at Boston College.
It was an early evening in March 2013, and the world was learning that an obscure cardinal from Argentina had been elected pope. In Richmond, Va., members of Sacred Heart Church — an overwhelmingly Latino congregation — were sending up cheers. A woman strode up to the pastor of this Jesuit parish, and exclaimed, “Father, Father, one of us made pope!”

“Yes,” replied Fr. Shay Auerbach, SJ, thinking he knew what she meant. “A Latin American.”

“No,” said the parishioner, correcting him — “a Jesuit!”

Fr. Auerbach relates this anecdote about the election of Francis, the first Jesuit pope, and he does so to illustrate something else.

“The parish should be a meeting place for everybody in the district.”

— Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ
Whether they’re serving immigrants in Richmond, young professionals in New York, or others in settings ranging from Toronto’s inner city to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, Jesuit parishes are different. They share a particular sense of identity, stemming from the distinct blend of religious sensibilities and spiritual practices that Jesuits refer to unassumingly as “our way of proceeding.”

“People now realize there’s something unique about being a Jesuit parish,” California parishioner Dino Rufo says of his parish, St. Ignatius Loyola in Sacramento. There, the church has brought parishioners deeply into the treasury of meditations and practices that comprise the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, to the point where these lay persons, Rufo included, are lining up to serve as trained spiritual directors.

The Society of Jesus and its institutions are known widely, but as Fr. Dan White, SJ, points out, “People don’t think of Jesuit parishes. They’re not what we’re known for.” Father White is pastor of St. Francis Xavier College Church, a full-service parish at Saint Louis University with a registered membership of around 850 families. “When most people think about Jesuits, they think of teaching” at high schools and universities, he notes.

Still, there are 67 Jesuit parishes in the United States and Canada, and increasingly, the Jesuit provinces are looking to their parishes as one way to animate the contemporary Jesuit mission. That mission includes, among other priorities, collaborating with the laity, sharing Ignatian spirituality and practicing a “faith that does justice” through solidarity with the marginalized and other advocacy.

Father White has a straightforward explanation of what a Jesuit parish does, and how it’s different from other parishes: “It’s one that is doing the mission of the Society of Jesus in a parish setting. That’s the difference.” In a light aside, he also says the parishes are different from the famed Jesuit universities in this way: “You don’t have to pass a test to get in.” The parishes are open to all.

Conventionality is not in the operating manual of these parishes. In a 1979 document titled “Some
Guidelines for the Parish Apostolate,” the beloved Pedro Arrupe, Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983, stressed that a Jesuit parish “should not merely be a place where sacraments are administered to a small number of practicing Christians. Rather, it should be a center where the Word of God is preached and inspires deep probing; where there is a sense of openness to local social, economic and cultural problems.”

Father Arrupe, whose cause for beatification and canonization opened recently in Rome, added: “The parish should be a meeting place for everybody in the district.”

It’s no surprise, then, that members of Jesuit parishes tend to be parishioners by choice, not by geography. People who go there will often traverse quite a few diocesan parish boundaries along their routes, much like those at St. Francis Xavier College Church — who travel from no fewer than 60 ZIP codes in metropolitan St. Louis to reach their destination parish. Many of these seekers already have some familiarity with the Jesuits, typically as alumni of Jesuit schools rather than as parishioners of other Jesuit churches. And, one thing they’ll notice early on is that Jesuit parishes have a different pastoral feel.

“I think there’s a greater informality in our parishes,” says Fr. John Sullivan, SJ, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes in downtown Toronto, a parish teeming with immigrants from the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka and other lands. “You could see it at Mass, in the relationships between the congregation, the people and the Jesuit priests. We try to be more with the people, rather than having a distance between us and the people. We try to be in the mix.”

Likewise, Catherine O’Hagan Wolfe, of the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City, says that when first introduced to the church close to a decade ago, she felt a pull toward the kind of place “where people introduce themselves to whomever is sitting next to them at the beginning of Mass. Everyone sings — it’s infectious. Folks applaud.” Wolfe, an attorney in Manhattan who graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts and is now chair of Xavier’s pastoral council, referred to these and other qualities as “threshold manifestations of a healthy spiritual community.”

Jesuit parishes are also known for going with the flow of different cultural expressions. Or, in the words of guidelines issued by the U.S. Jesuits nearly two decades ago, liturgical celebrations should be “characterized by a spirit of creativity and a willingness to adapt to the cultural realities of the communities we serve.” That’s the spirit at Holy Rosary Mission, which oversees the full array of pastoral ministries on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Ministering to the Lakota people across a sprawling expanse of 3,500 square miles, Holy Rosary and its smaller parishes offer liturgies that incorporate Native American customs such as solemn drumming and purification rituals involving the use of feathers and smoke.

Then there are the wakes and funerals. They could go on for nearly a week, with a team of trained lay
together regularly for nine months to explore spirituality and learn better how to discern God’s presence in their lives.

In Sacramento, St. Ignatius Loyola Parish took the bold step of launching two years ago the Center for Ignatian Spirituality. The center brings to the laity such robust Ignatian practices as the 19th Annotation Retreat, also known as “the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life,” an eight-month version of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola that emphasizes daily prayer and weekly spiritual direction. Taking a step further, the group is also training lay people to lead such programs at St. Ignatius as well as in other settings such as retreat centers.

This past May, 18 lay people earned their certificates in spiritual direction from the center; Dino Rufo, a retired attorney, was one of them.

A graduate of Saint Joseph’s University, a Jesuit institution in Philadelphia, Rufo recalls that his prayer life “used to be hit or miss.” But then he joined St. Ignatius and signed up for a three-day silent retreat during the mid-1990s.

“For me, it was a new kind of praying — the contemplation and

ministers often presiding over the rituals, at times flanked by a traditional medicine man. This is customary for members of the Lakota tribe, who also receive ritual gifts such as blankets when all is done.

“You feed them after every service during the week. These are full meals. They’re not finger food,” says Joyce Tibbitts, who coordinates ministries on the reservation. As the lead catechist, she has the same job once held by Nicholas Black Elk, the iconic Lakota (Sioux) medicine man whose cause for canonization was launched two years ago.

Tibbitts makes it clear that the cultural accommodations are not really about flexibility. They’re about mission, which includes what Pope Francis calls a “culture of encounter,” a dialogue among cultures. She also invokes Ignatian spirituality.

“Ignatius taught us that we need to see God in all things, in all people and cultures. The principles of Ignatian spirituality definitely intersect with Lakota spirituality,” she explains, citing shared themes such as gratitude and God’s activity in the natural world. “The Jesuits have made it so that our people can embrace Catholicism with an open heart.”

Indeed, the spiritual journey goes to the heart of parish ministry, Ignatian-style. It’s what people are seeking when they find a Jesuit parish. “I wanted to live my faith life with a little more intentionality — that whole magis thing,” explains Wolfe, the parishioner in New York, using the Latin word for “more” or “greater” popularized by Jesuits. Her faith became more intentional in part by joining the Church of St. Francis Xavier’s “Lay Spirits” program, in which groups of parishioners commit themselves to getting

Fr. Shay Auerbach, SJ, pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Richmond, Va. (center), stands with his pastoral team. Sacred Heart has done much to assist and make welcome Richmond’s growing Latino community.
William Bole, a journalist in Boston, writes frequently on Jesuit topics.
200 Years of Community:
St. Charles Borromeo Celebrates Bicentennial

The parish community of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Grand Coteau, La., is celebrating its Bicentennial. Throughout the years, the parish has served a diverse and vibrant community while bearing witness to 200 years of growth and evolution, including name changes and the construction of the current church, completed in 1880.

Bishop Louis William Dubourg founded the parish in 1819, nearly two decades before the Jesuits’ arrival in Grand Coteau in 1837. They came at the bishop’s request to establish St. Charles College, Louisiana’s first Catholic school for boys, and staff the church.

Located in south St. Landry Parish, St. Charles Borromeo is the third oldest parish in the Diocese of Lafayette. Historically, St. Charles Borromeo was the “Mother Church” from which sprang parishes ranging from small, rural churches to St. John the Evangelist, the Cathedral of the Diocese of Lafayette.

The parish has been known by more than one name in its history. The original name — St. Charles Borromeo — was changed to Sacred Heart Church when the new building was dedicated in 1880. The new name reflected the parishioners’ gratitude for the efforts and prayers of the Religious of the Sacred Heart during the 1878 Yellow Fever epidemic that ravaged much of southern Louisiana but left the village of Grand Coteau untouched. The sisters were also instrumental in raising the money for the construction of the new church.

In 1931, African American congregants formed their own parish named for St. Peter Claver, and in 1938, Christ the King Mission was established to serve a farming community about six miles from Grand Coteau in Bellevue, La. The parishes and mission church
reunited into one parish in 1971 under the original name of the 1819 church, St. Charles Borromeo. The former St. Peter Claver Church became St. Charles Chapel, where special Masses are celebrated, and which serves as the parish’s Religious Education Center.

Celebrating 200 Years

The parish is celebrating its bicentennial with several community-building events.

A Bicentennial Choir Concert was held June 9 at Christ the King Mission in Bellevue, La., when all the musical groups of the parish joined together to perform a liturgical concert. The selections included well-known gospel and traditional songs as well as newer Christian songs. The audience happily joined in singing with the choirs.

At a Bicentennial History Symposium on Sept. 8, parishioners from the various historical communities that make up present-day St. Charles Borromeo Parish shared personal reflections and recollections. Many stories involved the church’s vivid artwork and stained-glass windows that captured the imagination of young and old alike. Some anecdotes featured popular figures, like former pastor Fr. Cornelius Thensted, SJ, frequently spotted zipping around town on his scooter.

Before and after the oral presentations, the audience enjoyed a slideshow of historical pictures of the original St. Charles Church and the present church, along with detailed images of the stained glass and artwork of the saints. Included were pictures of Peter Claver Church, St. Peter Claver High School, Christ the King Mission, and some of the people, both lay and religious, who have animated the mission of the parish over the past 200 years.

A Bicentennial Mass is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 3. Current pastor, Fr. Derrick Weingartner, SJ, will preside, assisted by Jesuit Fathers Mark Kramer and Clyde LeBlanc and visiting priests, including former pastors.

A Special Place

St. Charles Borromeo Parish is part of a broader Jesuit presence in Grand Coteau. An elementary school opened in 1890, originally as the Sacred Heart Parochial School. Its name was changed to St. Ignatius School in 1956, in honor of the founder of the Jesuits. St. Charles College closed as a boys school in 1922 and was replaced by the Jesuit novitiate. Currently, the St. Charles College building houses the novitiate, a retreat center and a Jesuit community, including the St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion for senior Jesuits. Another retreat center, Our Lady of the Oaks Jesuit Retreat House, lies just on the other side of the Jesuit cemetery from the church.

St. Charles Borromeo is a unique and beautiful place. As one lover of church buildings wrote, the church is “a library whose text is written in symbols.” By deciphering those symbols and examining their meaning, faith can grow, quality of worship can be enriched, and greater honor and glory will be given to God, who is the source of all the beauty that surrounds this special part of His holy kingdom.

Thanks go to the Bicentennial Committee of St. Charles Borromeo, who sent this story, and to the Jesuit Archives and Research Center, for the photos.

The Photogenic Bell Tower

St. Charles Borromeo Church has two bells. The one in the front belfry was installed at the time of construction in 1879 but bears the date 1817. It is likely this bell is from the original church building and is believed to have been imported from France.

In 1886, Eleanora Millard donated a second bell, weighing 3,104 pounds, in memory of her husband Dr. Edward Millard. Since there was no place to house this gigantic bell (appropriately named Eleanor), the parish built a new tower. The bell tower is now one of the most beloved sights in the area and a favorite subject of photographers. For anyone who has ever lived in Grand Coteau, the ringing of the noon bell is unmistakable.
When I think of Ryan Candice, I picture a tow-headed four-year-old grinning from ear to ear. He and my son Jack shared a best friend, and the boys played together frequently. He was a happy, rambunctious preschooler with endless energy. He and Jack both went on to attend De Smet Jesuit High School in St. Louis and then the University of Missouri. Then, on June 19, 2014, the summer between their junior and senior years at Mizzou, my distraught son told me that Ryan, two weeks shy of his 21st birthday, had taken his own life.

I would like to write that the death by suicide of a young man was unthinkable. But the tragic truth is that Ryan was not the first friend Jack had lost in this way. Carolyn Dolan had died in April 2012. Carolyn and Ryan’s friends were devastated at the loss of two friends to suicide. They were also resolute.

Three months after Ryan’s death, his best friend and fellow De Smet Jesuit alumnus Alex Lindley called together a group of about 20 people who loved Carolyn and Ryan and urged them to keep their friends’ memories alive. His proposal: a documentary, one that would tell Ryan’s story, but would also “start the conversation” about suicide and mental health and
the stigmas that prevent those who are suffering from seeking help.

“Ryan was the last person you would think would take his own life,” Lindley said, describing his friend as loving, warmhearted and outgoing. He had a broad circle of friends. If he couldn't talk about his pain, his friends wondered, who could?

How could his survivors fight the stigma that prevents people from getting the help they need?

“Here was a person so loved, so respected,” Lindley said. “No one who knew Ryan saw it coming. His death sent shock waves through our circle of friends — enough to inspire us.”

And so, Project Wake Up was born in September 2014 to fight the stigma of mental illness, especially among adolescents and young adults, and to keep Ryan Candice's memory alive, with Lindley leading the effort as founder and president.

I was in the audience when the Wake Up! documentary was screened for the first time this summer in St. Louis. There was a second event a few days later, also in St. Louis. These were private screenings for people who had supported Project Wake Up. There were more than 900 people in those theaters. This project, this call to Wake Up, had taken off.

The Issue

The statistics of suicide are startling, depressing, and for parents of adolescents, terrifying. The folks at Project Wake Up want them to be a call to action.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the second leading cause of death for Americans ages 10-24, following accidents.

All these demographics have higher-than-average rates of suicide. Homosexual youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual youth. A shocking 50 percent of transgender people have attempted suicide. Twenty U.S. military veterans die by suicide every day.

Suicide can also afflict the popular, the strong, the seemingly happy, people like Ryan Candice.

“It's not something people want to talk about,” Lindley said. “We don't want to talk about it. But we have to. It took two suicides to get us to act. Now we're trying to wake people up.”

“This is such a widespread issue, we can't afford to stigmatize it,” said Danny Kerth, Project Wake Up vice president and co-executive producer of the film. Danny was just nine years old when he lost his father to suicide. “We try to approach it as positively as we can; we're not trying to bring people down. We just want them to care, to talk about it, to check on their friends.”

Anyone working with young people should learn to recognize and respond to mental health issues like anxiety and depression, and teachers and school administrators in Jesuit schools recognize suicide as a grave concern. In response, the Jesuits USA Central and Southern (UCS) Province will host a conference for high school teachers and counselors in Miami in January 2020.

“We hope to have speakers, resources and a conversation on the struggles kids face today and the subsequent stress, anxiety and depression,” said Ron Rebore, provincial assistant for secondary and presecondary education.

Rebore taught Lindley at De Smet Jesuit. He's proud of what his former student has accomplished with Project Wake Up. “He is living the ideals of the Grad at Grad,” Rebore said, referring to a list of characteristics Jesuit schools expect their graduates to exhibit. “Especially loving. It's amazing what he's done in the name of friendship.”

Project Wake Up

Project Wake Up exists because a group of college students didn’t want to lose another friend to suicide. Following their initial meeting, they
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launched a crowdfunding campaign with a public service announcement in November 2014.

“We were so naïve. We had no clue how much a full-length, Hollywood-level documentary would cost,” Lindley said. “We set a goal of $10,000 and hit it overnight. We knew we were on to something.”

Over the coming months, Lindley began reaching out to film production companies. He knew he had to find the right director.

“Some of the film companies were willing to take on our project,” Lindley said. “I really, really wanted to do this film,” Townsend said. “I lost my brother in an accident when I was 18. I could identify with their grief, and I wanted to use film to address those emotions. My Jesuit education made me want to do something that had meaning.”

“He knew what it was like to grieve,” Lindley said. “He told me we’d make something great. I knew he was the right guy for this project.”

Townsend gave more certainty to the young leaders of Project Wake Up that their dream would come to fruition. He also gave them a more realistic budget. They realized they’d have to buckle down and do some serious fundraising — a lot of fundraising. But here’s the thing: they were still in college.

Most of Candice’s friends graduated from college in 2015. Some started their first “real” jobs; others, like Lindley, went to graduate school before beginning their careers. In other words, they had a lot going on in their lives. Yet, they stuck to their commitment to Project Wake Up.

Lindley devoted an entire summer just to connecting with mental health experts. My son, who, like Lindley, was in law school at the time, pointed out this wasn’t just any summer. “It was the summer between the second and third years of law school, a time when virtually all professors and advisors strongly urge you to target a position at a place where you’d like a permanent position,” Jack, a Project Wake Up board member, said.

“I was so impressed that he didn’t really seem to think twice about it — he’d probably insist it wasn’t a sacrifice at all. But, realistically, he risked the start of the career he worked his entire life to pursue because he was just that passionate about this cause.” Lindley graduated from Saint Louis University School of Law in 2018.

“For a group of 20-somethings to say we’re working on a feature-length documentary … it’s hard for some people to take us seriously, “ Kerth said. “It was an obligation. We owed it to the donors to see it through.”

For Lindley, it has always been about honoring his friend. “I felt like if I was going to talk about his tragic decision, it would be disrespectful not to see it through. And, it helped me. It kept Ryan close.

“As scary as it can be, you just have to stick with it,” Lindley said.

By 2016, Project Wake Up was a recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and Townsend had produced a short film that focused on Ryan’s story and Project Wake Up’s goals. (That film is available on their website, projectwakeup.org.)

The young people and their supporters continued to raise funds and awareness. Much of the money raised for the documentary came

The Project Wake Up Board is comprised primarily of 20-somethings, young adults who don’t want the stigma of mental illness to take another friend.

but they didn’t seem to really care,” Lindley said. “Then I talked to Nate.”

Nate Townsend is a fellow St. Louisian, about a year older than Lindley, Kerth and Candice. He attended St. Louis University High School for a couple of years before transferring to Clayton High School for the opportunities to work in film that the public school offered. He went on to study filmmaking at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. When he heard from Lindley, he was just beginning his career in film direction.

He went on to study filmmaking at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. When he heard from Lindley, he was just beginning his career in film direction.
Project Wake Up Founder and President Alex Lindley and Vice President Danny Kerth are co-producers of the *Wake Up!* documentary.

from their peers, millennials who knew firsthand the dangers of the stigma.

“It’s amazing how it happens in a conversation,” Kerth said. “As soon as you say we’re trying to fight the stigma of mental illness, the fence comes down. People are relieved to be able to talk about their own anxiety.”

Through trivia nights, golf tournaments and comedy nights, they raised more than half a million dollars, about $300,000 of which went toward producing the documentary. They also established the Ryan J. Candice Memorial Scholarship at the University of Missouri for social work students who want to help people dealing with mental illness and suicidal ideation.

Wake Up! – the Film

*Wake Up!* is impactful, powerful, a bit intense. It took countless conversations to determine the focus of the documentary. In the end, it’s not just about Candice.

“It took me a long time to give up the idea that this film should focus solely on Ryan,” Lindley said. “But then I realized letting go of that meant we can save more lives.”

Townsend, Lindley and Kerth wanted it to be uplifting, not depressing. The film features interviews with Florida State University professor Thomas Joiner, one of the leading researchers in suicidal behavior, and legislators like Rep. Joseph Kennedy III (D-Mass.), among others.

Townsend spent a year tracking down survivors of suicide and skillfully balanced the statistics, facts and science with the human stories.

“We followed the people on the front lines, the people working for change,” Townsend said. “We wanted to show that this is a nationwide issue, and that there are ways to address it.”

*Wake Up!* has been life-changing for Lindley, Kerth, Townsend and many of the others involved with Project Wake Up. Townsend resigned his position with a St. Louis advertising agency and moved back to Los Angeles. The documentary has been his primary project for the past year. This film became personal. He became an expert on suicide, its causes and prevention.

The Project Wake Up team is now moving on to the next stage for the documentary: distributing advanced screeners to people in the film and mental health industries, preparing to submit the documentary to film festivals and hosting additional screenings. They hope a distributor will pick it up. They know it has to go somewhere; it has to be seen. They plan to create an abridged version for use at freshman orientation on college campuses.

“It’s all part of Project Wake Up’s fundamental aim: to get people to care and to talk about mental illness and want to do something about it.”

“My hope is that everyone who watches this is a little more empathetic,” Kerth said. “We’re all going through something.”

“It’s a common misconception that suicide is selfish, but that’s just not the case,” Lindley said. “We know from Dr. Joiner that, in the moment, people perceive themselves as a burden. They think they’re doing people a favor by ending their lives.”

“I want anyone who is struggling to know they are loved,” Kerth said. “They are not a burden.”

Lindley: “We just can’t lose anyone else.”

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7: 1-800-273-TALK.

*Wake Up!* began as a student organization at the University of Missouri: the Missouri Student Suicide Prevention Coalition. Every member receives “Respond Training” that equips participants with the tools they need to facilitate a crisis situation. Project Wake Up hopes to have “Wake Up chapters” on campuses nationwide.

If you are interested in bringing a Project Wake Up chapter to your school, please email wakeupdocumentary@gmail.com.
he 15 young men — all rising seniors — from Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas were a world away from their comfort zones when they arrived at the door of a nondescript nursing home for low-income, elderly people in Antigua, Guatemala, on the second day of their immersion trip in July. They walked tentatively into the home and were immediately greeted by elderly people, some in hospital beds, others tied to their chairs to keep them from wandering off, and others who reached out for hugs. The boys didn’t know it yet, but their lives were about to change.

Prep Students Experience a “Revolution of Tenderness” in Guatemala

By Mary Baudouin

The 15 young men — all rising seniors — from Jesuit College Preparatory School of Dallas were a world away from their comfort zones when they arrived at the door of a nondescript nursing home for low-income, elderly people in Antigua, Guatemala, on the second day of their immersion trip in July. They walked tentatively into the home and were immediately greeted by elderly people, some in hospital beds, others tied to their chairs to keep them from wandering off, and others who reached out for hugs. The boys didn’t know it yet, but their lives were about to change.
“The experience in the home was one of the most challenging things I’ve ever done,” said rugby player Cal Turner. “Finding ways to interact across barriers was tough.”

Barriers were indeed broken, but in the gentlest of ways: by giving hand massages to the residents and painting their nails, not exactly the kind of “work” these young men expected to do on their “service” trip.

Throughout their week in Guatemala, these students and their teachers broke through many other barriers of language, culture, age and gender. Students played soccer and colored with children at Hospicio San Jose, an orphanage for children aged six weeks to 18 years whose mothers had AIDS and had probably passed the disease on to their young children. They held babies and toddlers and got sore from throwing the orphans in the air and sliding them down a hill on pieces of cardboard over and over again.

They sat next to women from Mayan villages surrounding the beautiful, but polluted, Lake Atitlán and learned how to embroider and make tamales with corn husks picked from the fields surrounding the modest houses.

In area schools they danced in circles waving ribbons with five-year-old children. They played with hula hoops together. They worked with mothers to make delicious warm pineapple drinks and then shared the drinks together while trying to speak to each other across two language barriers — Spanish and K’iche’. They sat in on classes of high school students in classrooms where the only visual aids were chalkboards.

At times during the week, and especially during the evening reflections that the students and teachers held every night, the students expressed frustration at not being able to “do” more for the people they were encountering every day and not seeing what difference they were making. By the end of the week, however, they realized that they were the ones who had become different and they had been taught not by using their hands but by opening their hearts. They had experienced the “revolution of tenderness” that Pope Francis often refers to.

“What is tenderness?” Pope Francis asked an audience in 2017. “It is the love that comes close and becomes real. It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen to the silent cry of our common home, our sick and polluted earth.”

Rich Perry, the director of community service and social justice for Jesuit Dallas and the organizer of this immersion trip, described his goal for this experience: “I believe that it’s not important if it’s big or small as long as it’s done with the heart.”

He and Jesuit Dallas have bonded their hearts to one special organization in Guatemala, where the majority of the week’s activities took place: Vivamos Mejor, which translates to “Live Better” in English. The 30-year-old organization is devoted to the empowerment of the mostly Mayan people living in the mountain villages around Lake Atitlán, where maternal and child malnutrition is a chronic health issue. The organization helps people improve their health through nutrition and hygiene education, provision of plants, farm animals and foods to diversify diets, and installation of basic sanitation equipment such as freestanding sinks and vented stoves in homes.

Vivamos Mejor also works to empower women by educating them about their rights, particularly the right to live free from domestic violence and the right to land and community participation. They also teach both the women and their spouses to value the wives’ non-paid work at home.

Located in the highlands of Guatemala, one of the most biodiverse regions of the world, the organization also has a strong environmental mission, carried out through a variety of education and training programs on conservation and research on agroforestry on their farm or, as they call it, their “living lab.”
The relationship between Jesuit Dallas and the organization began in 2008 when biology teacher Jan Jones organized a medical mission trip to work with Dr. Carlos Flores, the medical director of Vivamos Mejor. Each March for the last ten years, students from Jesuit Dallas have joined doctors, nurses, dentists and other health professionals from the Dallas area to do health assessments and provide basic care for people living in five communities surrounding Lake Atitlán.

In addition to their knowledge and skills, the Dallas team brings their own equipment and supplies. Open minds and hearts are important, too, so the volunteers can learn how to provide health care appropriate to the culture. During the medical mission, the days are filled with assessing and treating patients, but evenings are devoted to conversation, often about the cultural differences of medical care in the United States and Central America, particularly in Mayan communities.

In 2017, Perry and Dr. Flores began exploring other ways to connect the school and the organization, paving the way for a new social justice formation trip for students so they could be fully immersed in the lives and work of Highlands people.

In 2018, students and faculty came to the area and stayed in a hotel, rather than at the farm where Vivamos Mejor offers many of its educational programs. In an extraordinary move, one that met the school’s housing needs during their immersion trips and empowered Vivamos Mejor, Jesuit Dallas entered into a joint venture with Vivamos Mejor to build a 15-person cabin and renovated a small complex to house six additional people. Another Jesuit institution, Loyola Marymount University, constructed another cabin for their students who also regularly visit Vivamos Mejor.

In describing the impact this housing has made on the organization, Dr. Flores said “With this housing, we can bring people into the community. Now we can show people life in two directions — people learn about the community and the community learns about people.”

Perry said, “When Vivamos Mejor approached us about constructing housing on site, it was the ideal opportunity to make a direct, long-term impact while at the same time bringing our students closer to the community during each social justice immersion trip.”

Perry and Dr. Flores both emphasize that the social justice immersion trips are not meant to be ecotourism or voluntourism, but rather focused on relationship-building. The women whose homes are visited are part of the Vivamos Mejor organization, and they participate in the planning of the different trips.

“The people feel totally taken into account,” Dr. Flores said. “The visits are a moment for people to feel pride in their homes and in their participation in Vivamos Mejor programs. It is a special honor for people to be chosen to

Cristina welcomes Jesuit Dallas students to her home.

Jesuit Dallas students visit with their new friend Santiago.
receive students in their homes — they even compete a bit for it.”

The women who opened their homes went to great lengths to prepare for the students’ visits. All the one- or two-room homes had either dirt or simple concrete floors, but on the days of the visits, the women spread fresh pine needles over the entire floors, making their homes smell fresh and inviting. Some prepared small tortillas or little snacks to share, and all of them shared warm welcoming hugs.

On their first day in the Highlands, the students met Santiago Pérez y Pérez, a young man just a few years older than they who began using a wheelchair after falling out of an avocado tree. Keith Reese, a teacher at Jesuit Dallas, befriended Santiago and his family during one of his first visits to Guatemala and called upon the school to do so as well.

“Dr. Flores introduced me to the family, and I was immediately taken in by them,” Reese said. “On the initial visit, I came with nothing, but since then I have tried to help out in small ways. Jesuit Dallas bought Santiago a television and cell phone, and now we message once a week.”

Students met Santiago in his room, trying their best to communicate through an interpreter, but eventually resorting to smiles and handshakes as a way of communicating with their new friend.

Moments like this provided opportunities for breaking through boundaries. Eli Steger, a tall basketball player, described another moment at a school that he visited: “When I first walked in the classroom, a little girl named Samantha pointed at me and said, “That is negro.” (Negro is the Spanish word for black.) “She had never seen a black person before. But she still wanted to be around me the whole time we were there, and she wanted to sit on my lap. I’ll always remember her.”

Eli’s friend Caleb had a tougher time breaking through the race barrier, because the Guatemalan students actually seemed afraid of his dark skin. But by the end of playtime, they were hugging him and making silly faces with him.

Another student described a moment of desolation as a breakthrough during his time in the nursing home. “I was struggling with how forgotten they were,” he said. “It was hard for me to see them living with purpose. But then I realized that they were living for that moment when I was tossing a balloon to them, which doesn’t seem like much, but was important to them right then. And that was enough for them. I need to be more like that.”

On one of the last days of the immersion, students took a tour of the Vivamos Mejor farm for an opportunity to see how the staff and volunteers there are “caring for creation” and preserving the precious forest and flora of the area. They saw the seedlings of plants and fruit trees, baby chicks and flowers that would eventually be given to families like those they had visited. As they were piling into the vans to leave the farm, they saw women and children in their beautiful embroidered dresses walking toward the Vivamos Mejor educational center. They had walked from their villages, some of them many miles away, to learn about nutrition and planting. Some of the women would stay overnight in the cabins that the Jesuit Dallas students had just vacated, the cabins that the school had built for their own community, but also for this Mayan community.

These two communities, worlds apart, are now bound together in a spirit of tenderness through seeing each other, hearing each other, dancing and playing and sewing and cooking together. A revolution of tenderness had occurred in the Highlands of Guatemala.

Kids both big and small bond during their time together.
Province Schools
Teach Service and Responsibility

Father James Bradley (profiled on page 28), a long-time leader in Jesuit secondary education, says one of the things he's most proud of in Jesuit education is the focus on service. Students in Jesuit schools learn about the responsibilities that come with privilege and find ample opportunities to serve through school-sponsored programs and immersion trips. They know that one can travel to the other side of the world — or out the backdoor. Here's a quick roundup of just some of the work Jesuit high school students did this past summer.

**Colegio San Ignacio, San Juan, Puerto Rico**

Fifty-one Colegio San Ignacio (CSI) students traveled to Arenoso, Dominican Republic with Fr. Alfredo Guzmán, SJ, who is known in Puerto Rico as “the mission priest.” These mission trips teach CSI students about community service and the relationships Fr. Guzmán has built over 20 years. CSI junior Joaquín López García reflected, “The bonds I made with the locals in Arenoso will stay with me forever.”

**Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School, Houston**

This summer, one Cristo Rey Jesuit student helped sight-impaired students travel down the Colorado River through DiscoverU, a nonprofit that enables disadvantaged students with Fantastic Learning Opportunities. With the help of National Park and River guides, Jazmin assisted members of her 18-student team during a two-week boat trip on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

**De Smet Jesuit High School, St. Louis**

De Smet Jesuit’s largest service trip actually happens during spring break. This year, nine seniors spent the week continuing one of De Smet Jesuit’s longest-running traditions — service learning in Belize. The students, accompanied by faculty members Kevin Berns ’87 and John Hawkey ’96, traveled to Punta Gorda to work with the teachers and students at St. Benedict School. They also helped repair the school’s roof.

Photo credit: Kevin Berns
Tampa Jesuit High School, Tampa

Tampa Jesuit students were busy this summer, traveling the world to serve and immerse themselves in local communities and Ignatian spirituality. More than 80 Tampa Jesuit students embarked on five mission trips to Rosebud Indian Reservation, S.D.; Valley of the Angels school and orphanage, Guatemala; Appalachia; and Bogotá and Cartagena, Colombia.

Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora, Colo.

Regis Jesuit High School students undertook four different immersion trips. Students blogged about what they learned during each unique experience of encounter: Co-divisional trip to Anchorage and Bethel, Alaska; Girls and boys divisions trips to Punta Gorda and Belize City, Belize; Girls division trip to Guatemala.

Rockhurst High School, Kansas City, Mo.

A total of 104 Rockhurst High School students participated in one of four Total Ignatian Experience (TIE) trips this summer — over 10 percent of the student body! They served in Appalachia (Tenn.); Tijuana, Mexico; and Jerusalem Farm in Kansas City.

St. Louis University High School, St. Louis

More than 100 students at St. Louis University High School found opportunities to serve both near and far in Santa Cruz, Costa Rica; San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; and in and around St. Louis during “Service of Presence to the Marginalized.”

Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School, Houston

More than 60 Strake Jesuit students participated in mission trips during spring and summer breaks this year; Eagle Pass, Texas; Pachar Community, Peru; Punta Gorda, Belize; San Pedro de Macoris and Hato Mayor, Dominican Republic; and To Do Commune, Vietnam.
Conversing with Jesuit Jubilarians

Don Highberger and Jim Knapp is a bit like watching a tennis match — if both players were allowed to serve at the same time. The companions speak over each other or complete the other’s sentences in their enthusiasm for sharing their stories of 50 years together in the Society of Jesus.

Fathers Highberger and Knapp were just 18 years old when they entered the Society of Jesus at the St. Stanislaus Novitiate in Florissant, Mo., in August 1969. Members of an entrance class of nine men, they are the only two who remain as Jesuits.

They entered together, were ordained together, and were occasionally — perhaps imprudently — assigned to the same communities, as they are now. Both reside at Jesuit Hall in St. Louis, where Fr. Highberger serves as minister, a Jesuit term for the go-to guy in the community. Father Knapp experiences some memory challenges, but more often than not, thanks to their close friendship, Fr. Highberger is able to fill in the gaps. The warmth of their friendship is evident as they tell their stories.

The entrance class of 1969 was the last to enter the novitiate in Florissant. That august institution, established in 1823, included several buildings intended to house and train hundreds of men. In 1969, there were just 12 novices between the two classes. “There was practically a floor per person,” Fr. Highberger recalls.

The following year, the Society experimented unsuccessfully with a combined novitiate in Detroit for the Missouri, Chicago and Detroit Provinces. Under normal circumstances, the second-year novices would have remained at the novitiate, but with the experiment underway, they moved to Kansas City, Mo., with their novice master.

“We bought an old VW van,” Fr. Knapp recalled.

“That was the novitiate,” Fr. Highberger picked up. “We travelled all over the country, but wherever that van was parked, that was the novitiate.”

“It had to be big enough to hold Lena,” Fr. Knapp interjected, referring to the bass he played to back up the St. Louis Jesuits.

Ah, yes, the St. Louis Jesuits. Self-described hippies, Fathers Highberger and Knapp both worked with the St. Louis Jesuits, who composed and performed liturgical folk hymns now recognized as standards. Knapp played bass and sang while Highberger and his brother, a former Jesuit, recorded the music. They chuckle at the fame the group attained as they recall recording in a makeshift studio in the basement of the old First Studies building on the campus of Saint Louis University. The young Jesuits converted an old language lab by hanging blankets on the wall to improve the acoustics.
In this photo from 1969, a young Don Highberger is seated on the left and Jim Knapp is standing in the center of the back row. This year they celebrate 50 years as Jesuits, friends and brothers. Photo courtesy of Arteaga Photos LTD, used with permission.

Beyond First Studies

Despite their different ministry paths, these two managed to spend large chunks of time in the same community. Their tertianship experience in Alaska in 1993-94 generates the most animated storytelling.

“Jim was principal at Regis (Jesuit High School in Denver), and I was at Gonzaga trying to get tenure,” Fr. Highberger relates. “We both applied to go to Alaska without realizing the other was going. And we took off before they realized they shouldn’t send us together!”

The assignment would make a great buddy movie. Their journey to St. Mary’s, Alaska, involved several days on a ferry that stopped at ports along the inside passage. Without cabins, they camped out on the top deck “with the rest of the hippies.” They bused to Fairbanks, Alaska, and fished in Denali Park.

(“I still have that fly rod,” Fr. Knapp muses now.) Father James Sebesta, SJ, flew them in a small plane to their destination.

They worked on Nelson Island in the Bering Sea, meeting the sacramental needs of the area’s Catholics. But their stories reveal the “go where needed” mission of the Jesuits, as well as the occasional corollary of “find your own way home.”

The two priests tell the story together: “We were going to build a garage out of packing crates. Jim Sebesta flew us to St. Mary’s, and we helped load up the boat with the crates, then hopped in. Brother Jakes — a taciturn Alaskan Jesuit — pulled away from the dock, stopped, went right back and said, ‘Get out!’ We were weighing down the boat.”

They were in the middle of the Yukon, with no transportation or place to stay. But they figured it out, and now they laugh as they relate the experience.

“My Jesuit life has been a series of journeys,” Fr. Highberger said. “The image of Ignatius as a pilgrim? It’s been like that. It’s like our story of being on the lake: sometimes you get in a boat and never make it to the other side. Or you wind up some place you didn’t intend. You just never know what you’ll encounter.”

“It’s like our floating novitiate: always changing. That’s what I found Jesuit life to be like,” said Fr. Knapp. “That’s what pilgrimage is like, moving from place to place, always relying on God. That’s what our life is all about.”

With a master’s degree in TV and radio, Fr. Highberger worked in media and taught communications in Jesuit colleges. He is now the minister at Jesuit Hall, attending to the practical needs of the community, the largest in the United States. Father Knapp has a Ph.D. in secondary education administration and served in secondary education for most of his ministry, primarily at Regis Jesuit High School in Denver and St. Louis University High School in St. Louis.
One long-held tradition in the Catholic Church is praying for the deceased. Having a Mass offered in memory of a deceased loved one is considered an even more powerful prayer. As a matter of fact, when a Jesuit of the USA Central and Southern Province dies, every member of the province is obliged to offer one Mass for the deceased.

Why is this necessary? We are saved by the passion, death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Recall our prayer at a funeral Mass: “Almighty God and Father, it is our certain faith that your Son, who died on the cross, was raised from the dead, the firstfruits of all who have fallen asleep. Grant that through this mystery your servant who has gone to her rest in Christ may share in the joy of his resurrection.” It is by Christ's passion, death and resurrection that we are saved, so do the dead really need our prayers after they die?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church cites both Scripture and the Church Fathers to support this practice. When responding to the Pharisees, Jesus said, “Whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come.” (Mark 3:29) St. Gregory the Great wrote, “From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.”

So, if we are to accept that they do need our prayers, how do they need our prayers? The Catechism teaches, “From the beginning, the church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.”

One way of thinking about this is to remember what Scripture says: “God is love,” and God wants us to receive his love fully.

The Catechism teaches, “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

We might think of purification as the process of removing all the obstacles that prevent the deceased person from fully receiving God’s love. We all know the poverty of not being able to accept a loving gesture when it is offered. I frequently miss out on love offered because I don’t want to be indebted to another person, or because I don’t think I’m deserving of that love. It is hurtful to the person trying to bless me with their love.

When we pray for our loved ones who have died, might it be we’re helping them be more open to the joy of experiencing God’s love fully?

I’d like to offer another reason to pray for our deceased loved ones. In the Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer at a funeral Mass, the priest prays, “In him the hope of resurrection has dawned, that those saddened by
the certainty of dying might be consoled by the promise of immortality to come. Indeed, for your faithful, Lord, life is changed, not ended.” That's true of our relationships with our loved ones, too; our relationships with them are “changed, not ended.” Even after death, we still want to love them and to let them continue to love and be a blessing to us. By thinking of them and praying for them and remembering the ways they have shown us God's love, we continue to be blessed by them.

Father Anthony de Mello, an Indian Jesuit of the late 20th century who blended the prayer experiences of western Catholicism and eastern religious traditions, introduced a way to contemplate the Sorrowsful and Joyful Mysteries of our lives. He first invites us to recall important moments of great joy. We are asked to re-experience them in our imagination and let that joy be deepened and renewed. He then invites us to revisit painful, sorrowful moments in our lives and to look for the hand of God amid sorrow. In the process, we can discover how God accompanied us and led us from pain and suffering to the joy of resurrection.

I love to pray in this way as I contemplate my loved ones who have died. One blessed memory of my mom was the time I borrowed her car one evening a few months before she died, only to forget to open the garage door before backing into it. She was not pleased! She also was quick to forgive and to reassure me of her love. This remains a blessed memory of love and forgiveness.

I think back to when my father was diagnosed with cancer, and he allowed me to accompany him to an appointment with the surgeon who was explaining his care plan. The surgeon asked, “Would you like to hear your son’s opinion?” My dad responded, “I don't typically invite my children to be involved in my medical affairs, but with Jim I’ll make an exception.”

I was deeply touched by his words and decision to let me be there with him. A subsequent moment of my accompaniment of him took place the day before he died, as he was making his wishes known to the doctors regarding the level of extraordinary care he desired. A blessed memory of being able to be there for him in his time of need.

I recently watched the film Mary Poppins Returns — a delightful experience! Without spoiling it for those who haven't seen it, the Banks family is in crisis. The movie begins shortly after the death of the young Mrs. Banks, mother to Annabel, John and Georgie and wife to Michael; Michael and their three young children miss her profoundly. In addition to their grief, they have another problem: Michael's wife was the one who kept household affairs in order. (Hence, the need for the return of Mary Poppins.) One day, as the four of them are feeling particular grief, Mary Poppins sings “The Place Where Lost Things Go” to the children to comfort them:

A nice secular reminder that relationships with our loved ones never end, and that our loved ones can continue to be a blessing to us long after they've died.

So, pray for your loved ones. God only knows how our prayers help them, but the Church assures us that we shouldn't doubt that our prayers and offerings will bring them some form of help and consolation. We all want to be remembered and cherished, don't we? And in praying for and remembering your loved ones, let those special memories continue to enrich your life, too!

Fr. Jim Goeke serves as chaplain and math teacher at Regis Jesuit High School in Aurora, Colo. He is also superior of the Jesuit community.
James Bradley, SJ: He Who Serves Best Leads Best

Father Jim Bradley, SJ, has taught and served in leadership in Jesuit high schools. He was provincial of the former New Orleans Province and superior of Jesuit communities. But the job he has found most fulfilling is the one he has now: director of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Pavilion in Grand Coteau, La. The Pavilion is one of two communities in the Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province that provide care for senior and infirm members of the province. Father Bradley manages the 22-bed assisted living and nursing facility. He has some of the duties of a superior, but mainly, he’s the director of a health care facility.

“When you become a superior, it’s important to earn each man’s trust,” Fr. Bradley said. “It’s what good teachers do, develop a relationship with each person so that they can learn. I try to do that with every Jesuit who comes to the Pavilion. I want to earn their trust, so they’ll accept the support they need.”

One of the ways he helps both the Jesuits and the community is through repair work. “It’s amazing the number of small repairs canes, walkers and wheelchairs require,” he said. “Maintenance and repair work have always been my therapy.” One of the larger projects he has taken on in Grand Coteau was moving and rebuilding the concrete post and pipe fence around the Jesuit cemetery.

Nov. 1 will be Fr. Bradley’s tenth anniversary in this assignment.

Early in his ministry, he taught at Jesuit high schools in New Orleans and Shreveport, La., and served as principal in Shreveport and Tampa and president in Tampa. He was the associate director and, later, director, of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association’s Commission on Research and Development (CORD). CORD’s principal mandates from the U.S. provincials were to develop training programs for leaders of Jesuit secondary schools and to help the schools develop curriculum, especially to reflect Jesuits’ concern for faith and justice.

Father Bradley was instrumental in developing the Profile of the Graduate at Graduation. The Profile is a list of the qualities Jesuit schools hope their graduates exhibit: Open to Growth, Intellectually Competent, Religious, Loving and Committed to Justice. Later, CORD developed the Curriculum Improvement Process to help schools develop a curriculum that would impart the qualities described in the Profile. CORD eventually developed an instrument to help Jesuit schools evaluate their community service programs. Many other Catholic schools have used this tool.

After 11 years at the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA), Fr. Bradley returned to Jesuit High School, Tampa, as president, but he continued to be involved in work that benefited all Jesuit schools. In addition to his work with CORD, he served on the JSEA board of directors on three occasions and served for six years as the chairman of another JSEA commission that worked with the presidents and principals of JSEA schools.

And yet, he says, “My current assignment is my favorite as I accompany my Jesuit companions along their final pathway to Heaven. Shortly before Jesus began to walk the path that led to his death on the Cross and Resurrection, he effectively told his apostles, ‘He who serves best leads best.’ So, I focus on serving the men in the Pavilion, trusting that the leadership will fall into place.”
Aric Serrano, SJ: It All Points to God

By Claire Peterson

A
cic Serrano, SJ, appreciates deep thinkers who integrate their intellectual, artistic and spiritual lives. “When the mind, body and spirit are working together,” he noted, “it’s the human person fully alive.”

In his current assignment as a third-year regent at Regis Jesuit High School in Aurora, Colo., Serrano embodies this balance.

He juggles prep work, planning and grading with a ministry of presence. “I like to be with people. I make it a point of walking around the hallways. I’ve learned that you have to be out there, not just sitting behind a computer screen at your desk.”

Serrano has learned that his role in the school is not all about teaching. “To have meaningful conversations about their struggles and what they hope for is wonderful,” Serrano said. “Fostering community and ultimately, hopefully, drawing people closer to Jesus is my main ministry, and the one I find most transformative.”

The oldest of 13 children, Serrano grew up Catholic in New Mexico. His family prayed the rosary together a few times a week. He didn’t know any Jesuits growing up, except through a children’s book of saints. He was struck by how Saints Ignatius and Francis Xavier lived their lives.

Serrano’s personal connection to the Jesuits came through his aunt, a cloistered Carmelite nun with whom he exchanged letters. When asked if she knew any Jesuits, Sr. Tracy of the Eternal Father mentioned to her nephew that her spiritual director at the time happened to be a Jesuit.

Driven by curiosity, Serrano began visiting Jesuit novitiates. In 2007, he made his first discernment retreat, contemplating his vocation through silence over the scriptures.

Sharing a meal at the Jesuit novitiate in St. Paul, Minn., “I realized these are honest, real, simple, holy guys.” The curiosity that was piqued as a child reading about Jesuit saints continued to compel him: “I only had one dinner with those novices, but that had a really profound effect on me, and it made me want to enquire more.”

After stays with Jesuits in Albuquerque, N.M., and New Orleans and graduation with a degree in music education from Eastern New Mexico University, Serrano entered the Jesuit novitiate in Grand Coteau, La., in 2012.

His current role as a theology and music teacher suits him. In high school, he imagined he’d like to be a music teacher of some sort because his experience in band was so impactful. “I love making music in that kind of community, friends that come together and create music that has real meaning.”

Art also informs his faith life. “I find God in the beauty of well-crafted, well-made works of art. Especially with music, I have had some of my most profound experiences of prayer.”

To those discerning their own path, his advice is simple: “Find a good spiritual director. Pray a lot. Sit in silence, and trust that the Holy Spirit is going to lead you and guide you.”

Silence and music alike can be “disarming,” he noted. “Simply being — that prepares the soul for contemplation.”

For Serrano, the act of “gazing on truth and on beauty is one of the most fulfilling things in life; it all points to God.”
Father Paul Osterle, SJ

Father Paul Osterle spent most of his first 12 years of ministry working in education, serving at the University of Scranton, St. Joseph’s Prep, Bishop’s Latin School in Pittsburgh and at Scranton Prep. From 1965 to 1968, he was assistant to the master of novices for the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, of which he was a member. During that time, he also served as a chaplain for the Berks County prison and hospital. Perhaps those three years of direct pastoral ministry spoke to him, because he returned to school to earn a master’s degree in pastoral studies. For the rest of his life, he ministered as a pastor, assistant pastor or chaplain of some kind.

He served in diocesan parishes in Austin, Texas, and Ft. Stockton, Texas, and in Jesuit parishes in Miami, Houston, Albuquerque, New Orleans and Tampa. He also was chaplain at University Medical Center in Lafayette, La., for five years.

He was born in Union Town, Penn., on April 5, 1928, to William H. and Margaret Fletcher Osterle. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, J. Fletcher Osterle and William H. Osterle, who was a Jesuit for 39 years. He is survived by his sister-in-law Jean Osterle.

He died June 14 in Opelousas, La. He was 91 years old, a Jesuit for almost 73 years and a priest for 60 years.

Brother William Dardis, SJ

Brother William “Billy” Dardis spent nearly his entire active ministry at his alma mater, Jesuit High School New Orleans. He first returned in 1963 and remained in ministry there essentially for the rest of his life, more than 55 years in all, serving in such diverse capacities as plant engineer, school bus driver, cheerleader moderator, event coordinator, alumni director and constant presence.

He was remembered by the school as “the super glue that has helped hold Jesuit together for more than five decades.”

Born in New Orleans on May 11, 1940, he was the son of William J. Dardis, D.D.S., and Mary Katherine Schwab Dardis. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one brother, Francis X. Joseph Dardis. He is survived by his brothers John and Joseph Dardis, his sister, Mary Katherine Dardis Nunemacher and many nieces and nephews.

Brother Dardis died July 10 in the residence at Jesuit High School New Orleans, where he had lived for 55 years. He was 79 years old, a Jesuit for almost 61 years and in final vows for 45 years. He is buried in the Jesuit cemetery in Grand Coteau, La.

Full obituaries are available on the province website: www.jesuitssoutherncentral.org/in-memoriam.
You do so much to create a good life and make the world a better place. Some of that takes hard work. Leaving a lasting legacy isn’t one of those things.

A simple, flexible way to ensure the future of the Society of Jesus is through a gift in your will or living trust.

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You can do it – no sweat!
Nov. 2: THE COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

The Jesuits of the USA Central and Southern Province invite you to send the names of your deceased loved ones so that we may pray for them.

If you missed our recent mailing, please feel free to write the names of your loved ones on any piece of paper and send it in the envelope found in the center of this magazine. Or you may submit their names on our website at:

connect.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/holysouls

We thank you for all the prayers and support you send our way. Please allow us to pray for your beloved family and friends who have gone before us.