

# Archways



## HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

*It Starts with a Change of Heart*

***Catholic Health Care on the Front Lines***

ArchCare vs. Coronavirus

***"We're Open for Business"***

Catholic Charities Keeps Up the Good Works

***Dancing to Heaven***

A Liturgical Dance Ministry in Harlem

***Plus:***

Chaplains of the FDNY

What's in a Creed?

Music for Quarantine

Maggi's List of Must-Listen Podcasts





Liturgical dance ministry  
at the Church of St. Charles  
Borromeo, Harlem.

Photograph by Chris Sheridan

On the cover: Arturo Rivera, a resident  
of St. Augustine Terrace in the Bronx,  
where counseling and mental-health  
support services are provided by  
Catholic Charities of New York.

Photograph by Gerri Hernandez

## FROM THE CARDINAL

# HUMBLY HOPEFUL

I don't have to tell you that a lot has changed in our world in the past three months. Back in December, when we were celebrating Christmas – despite some disturbing reports about a virus beginning to spread halfway around the world – none of us could have foretold that by Easter a pandemic would keep us from attending Mass together; that 10,000-plus New Yorkers would have lost their lives to the virus, our hospitals would be overwhelmed, our cities and towns in lockdown.

All around the world, humanity is experiencing widespread sickness, death and deep uncertainty. **And yet Jesus tells us, “Be not afraid.”**

How are we to respond to Our Lord's message? And how are we to reconcile the tragedy of so many untimely deaths with the most joyful time in the Church's liturgical year: the Paschal season of Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven?

*First, let us be humble.* We recognize that many of our plans and assumptions have been upended. It turns out that we human beings are not in control of this world, despite our lofty achievements in technology and business.

We certainly had to change plans for this issue of *Archways*. We had put together a six-page feature story about volunteer opportunities around the region. Then the pandemic hit, and our story became instantly outdated.



Not that these charitable organizations have stopped delivering services to the poor, the homeless, the afflicted. For the moment, however, they are unable to deploy volunteers safely in many previous roles. So we decided to put the story on hold. In its place, we've substituted coverage of the Church's efforts during the health crisis, including in-depth *interviews with Scott LaRue, president and CEO of ArchCare, and Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities* of the Archdiocese of New York.

*Second, let us be hopeful.* When Jesus said, “Be not afraid,” He was reassuring the apostles that, although they were helpless in the face of a storm at sea, He would save them. As He will save us.

That's why we decided not to postpone publication of *“Hope for the*

*Homeless,”* our feature story about a Catholic Charities program that is helping homeless men and women find their way to a new life of stability and purpose. Programs like this will be even more essential in the aftermath of the pandemic, which is hitting the homeless population with particular cruelty. Perhaps the tragedy of Covid-19 will help lead us all to the “change of heart” – remembering to see Jesus in our homeless brethren – that the story calls for.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll find a profile of the *chaplains of the FDNY*, advice on how those who married civilly *can bring their union into the Church*, and a look at some of the *liturgical dance ministries* of the archdiocese.

I certainly feel humble and hopeful when I see the responses of New Yorkers to the current crisis – the dedication and courage of doctors, nurses, hospital staff, EMTs, first responders and other essential workers and volunteers whose sacrifices inspire us all.

And I am grateful for all of you, the faithful, who continue to support your parishes and the archdiocese, help your neighbors, and attend – for now, virtually – our Masses and prayer sessions. Thank you for continuing to hold aloft the light of Christ even in this time of darkness.

When the time comes, I can't wait to welcome you back to church.

Yours in Christ,

+ *Tim. Card. Dolan*

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan  
Archbishop of New York



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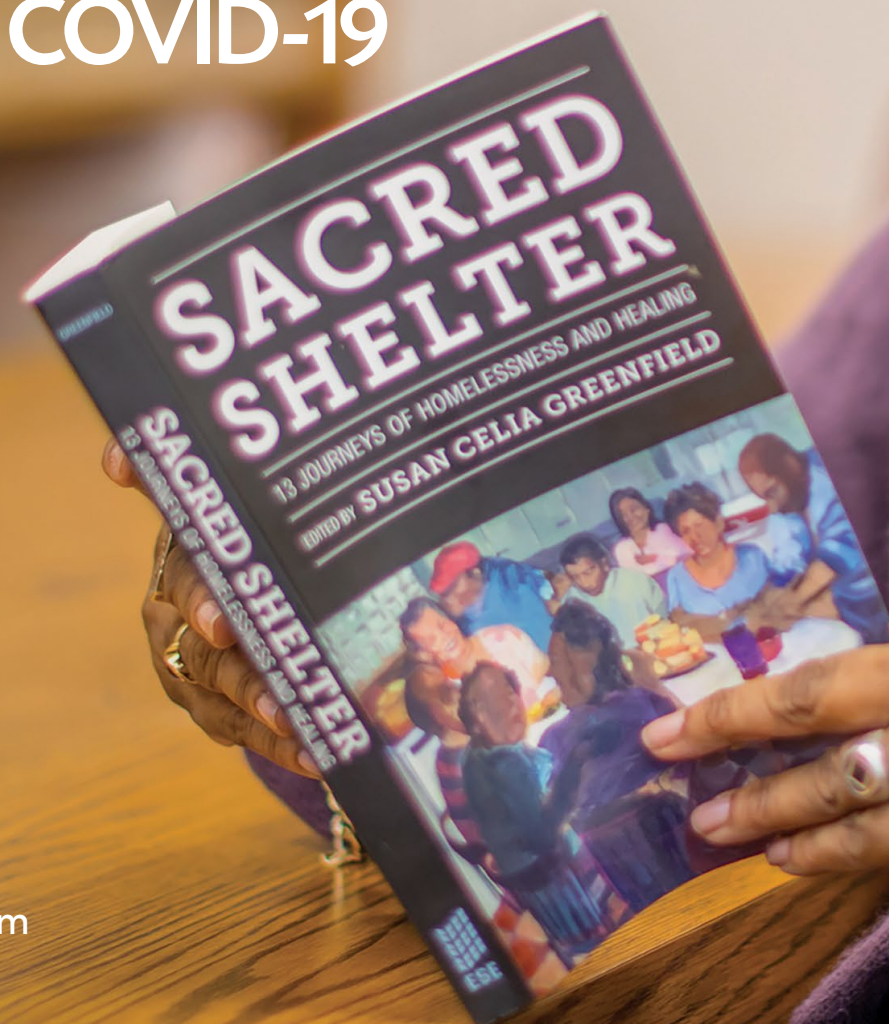
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## ASK A PRIEST

## What's the difference between the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed? Why doesn't the Church just pick one?

The Nicene Creed is arguably the most important non-scriptural text in the history of Christianity. It came about in the early fourth century A.D. as a result of the Arian crisis. In contrast to accepted Christian doctrine, Arianism maintained that the Second Person of the Trinity (God the Son) was not co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father, but had been created by the Father at a certain point in time. In this view, Jesus would not be fully divine, and therefore He would not be able to redeem us fully.

The question polarized the early Church. Many cities had both a Catholic church and an Arian church, and passionate debates filled street corners, taverns and marketplaces. In 325, fearing that the issue would divide his newly united empire, Constantine, the first Roman emperor to embrace Christianity, summoned the world's bishops to the city of Nicaea, in what is now Turkey, to settle the question. This was the first ecumenical (universal) council.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the assembled bishops agreed that the Father eternally generates the Son, and that there was never a time when the Son did not exist. The assembled bishops issued a summary of the orthodox faith, which became known as the Nicene Creed. Every word was carefully debated and chosen, affirming that the Son is "true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father."

That creed was expanded upon in the second ecumenical council, held in Constantinople (now known as Is-



The Council of Nicaea, which took place in A.D. 325.

tambul) in 381. There, the bishops added to the last section of the text, focusing on the Holy Spirit and the Church. Thus, the full name of the creed we recite at Mass every Sunday is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed – but it's generally referred to by its original, shorter name. It is the common statement of faith that all Christians share and agree upon. In fact, it's something of a litmus test for identifying oneself as a Christian.

The Apostles' Creed, on the other hand, is a specifically Western text and lacks the universal character of the Nicene. It has its origins in even earlier statements of belief: According to a pious legend, the Twelve Apostles themselves, before they dispersed to spread the Gospel, each professed one article of faith. Subsequently, in the

baptismal liturgies of the early Latin Church, catechumens – those preparing to be baptized – would be asked to affirm their belief in each of the Apostles' articles of faith. The questions, taken together, formed the basis of the creed as we know it.

The creed's origin story conveys an important truth: This is the faith handed down from the Apostles. While it does not specifically address the many points of doctrine covered in the Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed is more succinct and straightforward, and therefore a popular choice for prayers such as the rosary and liturgies with children.

Rev. Brian A. Graebe, S.T.D.  
Administrator  
Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral

## Can a couple who married in a civil ceremony have their marriage recognized by the Catholic Church?

In most cases, if one spouse is Catholic, the answer is yes. The specifics will vary according to your situation.

If you and/or your spouse were baptized in (or received into) the Catholic Church, and you were married in a civil ceremony or under another religious denomination, your marriage is not valid in the eyes of the Church (unless you received a dispensation). That said, the Church enthusiastically invites you to look into the possibility of validating your marriage.

The process, called *convalidation*, is a relatively simple one if neither spouse was married before. If one of the spouses had any kind of prior marriage, and the prior spouse is still living, that marriage must have received

a declaration of nullity (commonly called an *annulment*) from a Catholic tribunal before the convalidation of the present marriage can take place.

In either case, the first step is to contact your parish (or, if you are not currently enrolled at a parish, then the one where you or your spouse currently reside) and make an appointment to thoroughly discuss your situation with the pastor or his delegate. The priest or deacon assisting you will advise you about any documents needed.

Convalidation is not simply a blessing of an existing union, but the true exchange of consent of the spouses. As such, there will be a period of preparation and formation prior to your ceremony to exchange vows in

the Church. Your priest or deacon will guide you in the preparation and/or program he recommends.

Finally, you will need to choose the date and the most suitable type of ceremony. Again, the parish will be very helpful in guiding you.

There will be a wedding ceremony on the day of your convalidation in which you will receive the sacrament of marriage, the presence of God and the many gifts of the Church into your union. So, it's a perfect occasion to celebrate with family and friends!

Dr. Kathleen Wither  
Director, Family Life Office  
Archdiocese of New York

## GOD'S EARBUDS



STREAM THIS

NOT THAT



## Our Kind of Influencer

So you're stuck at home during the coronavirus lockdown and thinking a little podcast listening might help pass the time? Great idea. Your next step: finding something good to listen to. There are a lot of podcasts out there, and not all are appropriate for the Catholic audience.

Where to begin? You could flip ahead a few pages to "*Maggi's List*" and choose among the recommendations of Maggi Van Dorn, producer of the *Deliver Us* podcast on America Media. Or, if you're the adventurous type, you might strike out on your own in search of something

edifying, entertaining and in keeping with your values.

Just be ready for some surprises. Case in point: *Say Bible*, whose title implies a hip, youthful take on the scriptures, turns out to be "a podcast for the Kardashian konnoisseur." Spend a few minutes listening and you'll hear some consistently frivolous and occasionally salacious chatter about the doings of America's first family of superficiality. Whatever you might think of Kanye West's commercialized Christianity, *Say Bible*, inspired largely by the latest shenanigans on *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, is decidedly irreverent.

Download an episode of *Conversation with Cardinal Dolan*, on the other hand, and you'll get exactly what you bargained for: the wit, warmth and spiritual wisdom of our archbishop in conversation with Fr. Dave Dwyer. Excerpted from the weekly Catholic Network radio show of the same name on Sirius XM, the podcasts cover topics of timely concern for New York Catholics, leavened by the cardinal's humorous asides and personal reminiscences. It's relevant and reverent – except when it's hilariously irreverent.

Think of it as *Keeping Up with the Kardinal*. ✱



## SPECIAL REPORT

# KEEPING THE FAITH

## *The Church Steps Up in a Crisis*

At first, it was a faint, if troubling, rumble of thunder from beyond the horizon: an outbreak of a new and strangely named viral disease in China. Months later, when the first case appeared in New York, few realized how swiftly and brutally Covid-19 would overturn so many of our earthly assumptions. On March 8, parishioners attended Sunday Mass in the Archdiocese of New York, unaware that it would be weeks – or months – before they would be able to do so again.

The effects now are felt in every part of the world and every part of our lives. Our best-laid plans – for Easter Mass, family gatherings, first Communions, confirmations – are on hold. Our daily routines have unraveled; the lucky work from home, the unlucky face unemployment, and most face an altered financial future. The poor and vulnerable, and especially those families directly struck by the virus, suffer terribly. And essential workers, particularly those in health care and first responders, put their well-being, or their lives, at risk every day.

In this suddenly transformed world, the Catholic Church continues to carry on its ministries. Some are being delivered remotely, via TV, telephone or digital media: Masses, holy hours, Eucharistic adoration can be attended via television and live stream; telehealth and counseling appointments can be conducted via phone or video conferencing. Innovative concepts such as drive-through reconciliation and parking lot prayer vigils allow the faithful to receive clerical blessings in person but at a safe distance.



Certain ministries of the Church, however, can only be delivered through close contact. There is no virtual option that would allow Catholic Charities to feed the hungry, house the homeless, or care for the developmentally disabled. The doctors, nurses and other workers of ArchCare cannot tend to the elderly, the chronically ill, those suffering from neurological disabilities – to say nothing of actual patients suffering from Covid-19 – without standing beside them, examining them, looking them in the eye.

It's impossible to know how long our lives will be altered directly by the coronavirus, or how the experience

may transform the social contract going forward. For this Spring 2020 issue of *Archways*, we have replaced our coverage of recent news, services and upcoming events from the departments of the archdiocese with this special report on faith in the time of Covid-19: a mix of updates and interviews about how the Church's ministries are responding to the multifaceted crisis along with a selection of recommendations and tools you can use to keep in touch with God, the Church and the archdiocesan community during the time of social distancing, however long it may last. ✂

## SPECIAL REPORT

# BRIDGING THE DISTANCE

## *Staying Close to Christ and the Church*

As we prepare to publish this issue of *Archways*, a stay-at-home order is in effect for all 10 counties in the Archdiocese of New York, and seems likely to continue for at least a few more weeks. The term of the moment is *social distancing*. We don't know how long restrictions will last, but until they are lifted (and in the event that they are later reimposed), the best antidotes are *social connectedness* (which does not require physical proximity) and *spiritual closeness* – to community, loved ones and God. Naturally, we have some suggestions.

## DIGITAL MINISTRIES

There is a growing array of options for the faithful to connect with the Church and fellow Catholics through the Internet. Step one is to subscribe to your parish's Flocknote and to visit its website and social media pages for opportunities to connect and participate at a safe distance, and for words of encouragement and uplift from your pastor and others. If you are not subscribed to Flocknote for your parish, contact the parish office.

Beyond the parish level, the Adult Faith Formation Office of the Archdiocese of New York has put together an exhaustive [listing of dozens of online](#)

[services and resources](#) to help Catholics get through this difficult time – including virtual Masses and prayer sessions, playlists, books and videos, counseling services and more. A few highlights:

- **Sunday Mass** from Saint Patrick's Cathedral (on cable or web via [Catholic Faith Network](#); live-streamed on [saintpatrickscathedral.org/live](#) and [YouTube](#); and on the Catholic Channel of Sirius XM (Channel 129).
- **Divine Mercy Chaplet** daily on Catholic Faith Network; every Friday at 3:00 p.m. from the Office of Adult Faith Formation.
- **FORMED.org**, which offers movies, audio-books, talks, children's materials and more. (If your parish's Formed subscription is inactive, email [formed@archny.org](mailto:formed@archny.org) to get connected.)
- **Family Faith at Home**, a weekly religious education resource from the archdiocesan Office of Youth Faith Formation with activities for younger and older children.
- **Daily Mass readings**, with commentary available, from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops or from the *Word Among Us*.
- **Morning and evening prayers** available free from [Magnificat](#) during social distancing.

## THE ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.*

*I love you above all things and I desire to receive you in my soul.*

*Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally,*

*Come at least spiritually into my heart.*

*I embrace you as if you were already there*

*And unite myself wholly to you.*

*Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.*

## BREAD OF LIFE

When we are unable to receive the Eucharist for any reason, we can receive grace by making an Act of Spiritual Communion (see below). While in no way the equivalent of the sacrament itself, the prayer allows us to experience a lesser form of union with Jesus until the time when we can again receive Him sacramentally. ✂

## A QUARANTINE PLAYLIST

We asked Dr. Jennifer Donelson, the director of liturgical music at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, to recommend some tracks to console and inspire us during this time of confinement. For her playlist of great liturgical selections for the season of Easter, [click here](#). Highlights include:

- Giovanni Gabrieli's 1597 masterpiece, *Jubilate Deo*, recorded in rehearsal by the renowned Voces8 vocal ensemble.
- William Byrd's *Haec Dies*, a magnificent choral setting of a Paschal antiphon ("This is the day which the Lord has made"), sung by the London Oratory Schola Cantorum Boys Choir.
- Arvo Pärt, *Gloria*, from the Estonian composer's 1990 *Berliner Messe*. Paul Tillier conducts Theater of Voices.
- Charles Tournemire's passionate, mystical *Choral-improvisation on the "Victimae Paschali"* (1930), played by Olivier Latry on the organ of Notre Dame, Paris.



## SPECIAL REPORT

CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE  
ON THE FRONT LINES*ArchCare vs. Coronavirus*

As the deadliest pandemic in a century sweeps through New York, the caregivers of **ArchCare**, the multifaceted health- and eldercare agency of the Archdiocese of New York, are working tirelessly to protect their clients, most of whom are elderly or suffer serious medical conditions. Almost all of them are at high risk for life-threatening illness should they become infected with Covid-19.

This critically important effort is taking place on many fronts, because ArchCare serves a diverse patient population with a wide variety of needs. Its programs (see “The Many Mercies of ArchCare,” *Archways Spring 2019*) include traditional nursing homes as well as long-term care centers for seniors and others suffering from HIV/AIDS, severe physical and neurological impairments, Huntington’s disease, ALS, late-stage cancer and kidney disease, and other crippling chronic conditions.

To find out how the pandemic is affecting the agency and its clients, *Archways* spoke with **ArchCare President and CEO Scott LaRue**.

**Archways:** How is Covid-19 impacting ArchCare and its programs?

**Scott LaRue:** Covid-19 is impacting every one of our programs. It’s widespread in our community, and if it’s widespread in the community it’s going to be widespread in the programs.

We enacted our disaster plan in the third week of February. We actually implemented procedures before the CDC suggested them: We started

screening all our staff for temperatures and international travel before they came into any of our facilities. We put infection control monitors in each of our program locations to make sure people were following proper procedures, and to answer questions of family members. Eventually, we prohibited visits by anyone who did not work for ArchCare, which the state later came to require.

We set up a special Covid-19 hotline [877-239-1998 or email [info@archcare.org](mailto:info@archcare.org)] for the people we serve. It’s a resource for anyone in the archdiocese. Whatever they might need to get through this crisis, that’s what the

hotline is there for. They should feel free to call it. It’s staffed 24 hours a day.

Currently we’re taking calls from people in need of answers to medical questions and getting resources to people who are sheltered in place and unable to get out – especially the elderly and the chronically ill.

The hotline is also a resource if someone is trying to reach a patient in one of our programs and they can’t get through. If they call that hotline we’ll connect them to the right people so that they can get information about their loved one.

Our agency is caring for people with Covid-19 throughout the

archdiocese. We increased bed capacity at Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center, in Harlem, by 67 beds, all for Covid-19 patients.

**Archways:** ArchCare administers the hospital chaplaincy program for the Archdiocese of New York. Is that program functioning during the crisis?

**Scott LaRue:** We’ve worked with the hospitals to make sure that the priests can continue to visit patients. At the request of Cardinal Dolan, we also

We’re trying to make sure that the people we serve – even though they’re elderly, and they may be immunocompromised – get the same respect and access to care that anyone else in the community is getting.

A nursing home’s ability to prevent the spread of Covid-19 among residents and staff hinges on two things: widespread testing and access to proper personal protective equipment (PPE). ArchCare has remained steadfastly committed to testing as many residents and staff members as avail-

Federal and state guidelines also require caregivers who have been exposed to the virus but do not yet show symptoms to remain at work. Combined with the difficulty obtaining PPE, this made it nearly impossible for nursing homes to control the infection in the pandemic’s first weeks.

We fought for access to personal protective equipment from sources across the entire country, and the situation has improved. We’re trying to do everything that we can to ensure that our staff is able to care for these patients as safely as possible.

**Archways:** What can be done for families of Covid patients who are unable to visit their loved ones?

**Scott LaRue:** We’ve enhanced family communication throughout the crisis. We implemented a text message and email notification system, and I host a live webinar for our community to answer family members’ questions. Our goal from day one has been to communicate transparently. Several families have sent in notes of thanks at how supportive staff has been during this time.

We’re in a circumstance where it’s possible that a family member was not able to be with their loved one when they passed. That adds complexity and difficulty for everyone involved, and I think it requires additional support and caring.

We are working with Calvary Hospital and their bereavement program so that we can offer bereavement services and support to families affected by Covid-19. This bereavement support is virtual at this point. Over time it could become part of an in-person bereavement support group, but right now you’re not allowed to do that.

**Archways:** Anything you’d like to say in closing?

**Scott LaRue:** This is an unprecedented crisis. It’s occurring everywhere in the community. To get through it, we just need to pull together for the benefit of the people we serve. ✱

To donate to ArchCare, visit [archcare.org](http://archcare.org).

*“We enacted our disaster plan in the third week of February. We actually implemented procedures before the CDC suggested them.”*

– Scott LaRue

worked to ensure that patients in the temporary hospitals would have access to a Catholic chaplain. Chaplains continue to make rounds, often risking their lives to give last rites and sacraments to dying patients.

**Archways:** The eldercare programs of ArchCare – the PACE program of community care centers as well as the more traditional nursing centers – serve the populations most at risk for Covid-19. How is the agency dealing with this challenge?

**Scott LaRue:** In terms of our PACE programs, we have closed two of the four centers and consolidated services into the remaining centers; we have also redeployed staff to support participants in their homes.

In our nursing homes, we’ve deployed tablets so that our patients can FaceTime or Skype with their family and friends. We’ve put together individual activity kits so that they can have things to do in their rooms, because there are no communal dining or group activities during the crisis.

able testing supplies will allow, even after new government guidelines were issued that allowed nursing homes to stop or drastically curtail testing.

We took this aggressive approach to testing in order to leave no stone unturned in caring for our residents, including the use of medicines that can only be prescribed to patients who have tested positive for Covid-19.

Unfortunately, nursing homes have been placed in a secondary position in terms of access to personal protective equipment (PPE) – even though we’re treating the same Covid-positive patients in nursing homes that they’re treating in hospitals. The only difference is that hospitals take ventilator-dependent patients and we cannot. If patients become ventilator-dependent, we would have to send them to a hospital.

The state has mandated that nursing homes continue a flow of patients into the homes, and homes may not deny admissions to people with Covid-19. Not that we would, anyway. It’s not our intention in this time of need to turn our backs on people with Covid-19.



Scott LaRue, ArchCare’s president and CEO, delivering personal protective equipment supplies to Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center in East Harlem on March 29.



## SPECIAL REPORT

# "CATHOLIC CHARITIES IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS"

## A conversation with Msgr. Kevin Sullivan

**A**s America battles the coronavirus, the poor and the vulnerable are suffering disproportionately – and the delivery of services to them has become exponentially more difficult. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York serves hundreds of thousands of the underserved – the hungry, the homeless, the addicted, the psychologically afflicted, refugees and asylum-seekers and other victims of social injustice – when there is no one else to help them. In early April, *Archways* spoke with Catholic Charities of New York Executive Director Msgr. Kevin Sullivan to get his take on the plight facing needy New Yorkers now and the challenge of serving them during a pandemic.

*Archways: How is Covid-19 impacting the client base of Catholic Charities and its agencies? How is Catholic Charities responding?*

**Monsignor Sullivan:** Catholic Charities is open for business. The problems that people had before Covid-19, people still have. People who didn't have enough money for food or to pay the rent – they still have those problems now. If they have emotional problems or chemical dependency problems, those problems didn't go away because we've now had this pandemic and this crisis. In fact, they've been exacerbated in many ways. So Catholic Charities continues to provide services to those people – in a number of cases, with severe adjustments in how we do it. And with some challenge.

For example: We still have people who are in residences because of developmental disabilities. They need personal care. They need people to go in and help them to get through the day. You can't do that type of work socially distanced. So our workers are continuing to perform those services. We obviously want to ensure their safety. To that end, we reduced the number of

*"How do we meet the needs that were not there two months ago, the new needs that the pandemic has brought on?"*

*Archways: What other changes are being made in delivery of services?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** Some of the traditional services that we had been providing two months ago are suspended. Some of our classrooms, where we're helping kids with early intervention for learning delays – those are closed. We're still trying to keep in contact

people we are sending in, but you can't reduce that number to zero.

Look at our food pantries: What we have been trying to do in the past four or five years is to make the food pantries "client choice." People come in, they "shop" a little bit, and they choose the particular foods they want within guidelines that govern quantity and encourage good nutrition.

Well... you can't do that now. You can't just let everyone in to look over the selections. So we've closed client choice. At this time, for the most part, we pack the food and put it outside in boxes so people can grab the food and go at a social distance.

with families by reaching out to them and, to the extent possible, providing them with resources where they can work with their children. We have a huge number of in-school and after-school programs that involve tutoring, some counseling, some college-prep programs – those can't be done in the same way, because schools are closed. However, our staff tries to stay in touch with the families.

Many Catholic Charities workers have been reassigned to the enrichment centers, which are providing day care for children of essential workers. That's important work that can't be done remotely. So there's been a

certain amount of reassigning of people, a lot of working remotely. Even though we're open for business, it's certainly not business as usual.

*Archways: What about immigration services and mental-health and addiction services?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** Catholic Charities immigration services continue to be provided, but remotely. Our staff are taking calls and responding to requests for help through the New York State New Americans Hotline, ActionNYC and other helplines. Attorneys are now providing counsel via phone, only meeting in person when absolutely necessary – for example, to get forms signed.

Day laborers served by Catholic Charities, in particular, are acutely feeling the impact of Covid-19, with so many job sites closed. While observing social distancing guidelines, our staff are out there providing bags of food, handing out personal protective equipment and answering questions.

Catholic Charities also continues to operate the *Parish Counseling Network (PCN)*, which offers mental-health counseling to parishioners in the archdiocese – though now only remotely. Given the anxiety that many are experiencing, this resource is more in demand than ever.

*Archways: How have services to the homeless changed?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** Our Holy Rosary Stabilization Bed Program provides temporary, safe housing and an opportunity for people who have been chronically homeless. Some of our residents have been living on streets and subways for two years, others for over 20 years. Most suffer from bipolar, schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorders and have a long history of substance abuse addiction. At the moment, Holy Rosary is fully operational. The site is staffed and sanitized, meals are provided and social service workers coordinate care on behalf of the residents. The most significant change has been the impact of social distancing: support groups are not taking place, clients are eating meals sitting apart from one another and community care is being accessed via telephone.

*Archways: How can the archdiocese's Catholics help during this crisis? Where can they donate? Where are they needed as volunteers?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** We are still taking volunteers. Some of our food pantries need volunteers, because we have to pack the bags of food for our clients.

People can go to our Catholic Charities website and look at the *volunteer opportunities* there. They are not the same as they were before the crisis, but we are still accepting volunteers. Certain types of volunteering just can't go on. But some can.

As for *donations*, we do have an emergency fund and already people have made contributions to it. Individuals and some foundations have indicated they're going to be providing support. And there is the availability – it's a little bit all over the place at the moment – but there is the availability of some government funding, particularly for our support of individuals who have lost their jobs.

Fortunately, as a society, we do tend to be generous in the response when there is an emergency, wanting to help our neighbors in need. But I believe that the extent of the need in this is going to be larger than we have ever seen before. As in any emergency like this, it's always the poor and vulnerable who bear the biggest brunt. Now, nobody – *nobody* – is exempt in this pandemic. But the stress on our poor neighbors, our vulnerable neighbors, and some of those concentrated in certain neighborhoods, is going to be even more acute than on others.

*Continued on page 26*



Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities of New York, introduces a discussion of homelessness and programs to address it at the HOPE 2020 PreCount Panel, January 27.



## FDNY CHAPLAINS

## MINISTRY OF FIRST RESPONDERS

Early on a Wednesday morning, Msgr. Marc Filacchione gets into a car outside St. Mary's Residence, where he says Mass every morning, and sets off for a day of ministry. His "parish," for today, consists of the 11,000 firefighters and 4,000 EMS first responders of the New York Fire Department.

What lies in store over the next 24 hours is not entirely predictable: There may be hospital and home visits to injured and sick firefighters, a scheduled check-in at a fire station, a funeral or memorial service, a plaque dedication for a firefighter who died in the line of duty – and the outside chance of a call to the scene of a fire or disaster. It's a busy day and possibly a busy night, and he'll do it again when his rotation comes up next, in a week or so.

Msgr. Filacchione, who also serves as director of the Society for Propagation of the Faith and director of the Prison Ministry for the Archdiocese of New York, is one of the fire department's seven chaplains, of whom four are Catholic priests, two are Protestant ministers and one is a rabbi. The three other Catholic priests are Msgr. John Delendick, pastor of St. Jude in Brooklyn; Fr. Joseph Hoffman of St. Bartholomew in Queens; and Fr. Christopher Keenan of the College of Mt. St. Vincent in the Bronx (or his replacement; Fr. Keenan has retired since being interviewed for this story).

Msgr. Filacchione and Msgr. Delendick were both present at the event whose aftershock still reverberates through the chaplaincy. "Life changed drastically after September 11, 2001 – everyone in the department's life changed drastically," Msgr. Delendick recalls. "That whole next year, I was working from seven in the morning till midnight most days. I was part of different support groups. Each of us

was doing two, sometimes three memorials a day – in those days we were having memorials because we didn't have bodies. We were taking families to the Trade Center site. It was a difficult year."

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Fr. Keenan was asked to join the chaplain service, taking the spot of Fr. Mychal Judge, his friend and mentor since 1962. Fr. Judge was killed by debris at the World Trade Center, and the photograph of him being carried away by firefighters has become an icon of the day, emblematic of the dedication and sacrifice of the chaplains.

"I used to dig and rake with them on the pile," Fr. Keenan recalls. "We'd go over the bridge and down into the pit. Every night going down the bridge was like descending into hell and seeing the face of God that was on everyone in the recovery operation."

The FDNY lost 343 members on 9/11, and recently buried number 225 from 9/11-related illness. "I'll be honest with you," says Msgr. Delendick, "I thought we were finished after the last funeral from 9/11, and then it keeps coming up all over again. Soon the post-9/11 deaths are going to catch up to the number from the day itself."

The work of the chaplains is not only about sadness and loss, however. They also participate in joyous occasions – offering blessings at graduations, promotions and departmental events, leading department members in prayer, celebrating weddings and other milestones in department members' lives. They form friendships and shoot the breeze with firefighters



during station visits. "Often they need a friendly ear," Msgr. Filacchione says, "They need someone who will listen, who understands the job but is outside the regular department chain of command. We are not trying to replace their home pastor. We always encourage the members to be connected to their home pastor and active in their parish."

"The fire department for me is the best job in the City of New York," Msgr. Delendick says, "even though there are days when it's the hardest. You get to meet so many great families. The greatest blessing is to be associated with this group of people who live out values of generosity, compassion and commitment. It's very uplifting."

Fr. Keenan echoes this sentiment: "When I was commissioned," he recalls, "the firefighters across the street from St. Francis Church called me for a meeting at the kitchen table of Engine 1, Ladder 24. Mychal Judge was one of five who died from that house. And they said to me: 'We know that you're giving your life for us as our chaplain. Whatever you need, simply express it and it will be done. We know you are ours – and don't ever forget that all 11,000 of us are yours.'" ✕

*At this time, most FDNY chaplain services are being delivered remotely.*

## CULTURE CORNER

## MAGGI'S LIST

If you have never listened to a podcast, it's probably only a matter of time. According to the latest surveys, 90 million Americans listen to at least one per month. Not bad for a format that didn't exist two decades ago.

During social distancing, a podcast can also be a great way to connect with family and friends. You can listen together while preparing meals, or set a time to chat with a friend about a podcast you're both listening to.

But with some 750,000 podcasts out there, the hunt for a really good one can seem daunting. We asked Catholic podcast producer **Maggi Van Dorn** (host of America Media's *Deliver Us*, a deep dive into the Church's sexual abuse crisis), to suggest a few that are well-produced, thought-provoking and oriented toward strong faith values.

**ON BEING**

Long before the explosion of podcasts, *On Being* was presenting in-depth radio interviews with great thinkers of our day, from poets to scientists to religious luminaries. Host Krista Tippett combines a background in journalism and religious studies with a thorough immersion in the work of her guests. Each episode is an intimate, deeply personal and intellectually rich conversation about the human experience and our relationship to the cosmos. To sort through a catalogue of interviews by subject area, visit [onbeing.org](http://onbeing.org).

**HEAVYWEIGHT** (GIMLET)

A podcast that will make you laugh and possibly cry in the same episode. Comedy writer Jonathan Goldstein talks to ordinary people about "the moment everything changed." Usually this involves the guest revisiting a conflict, separation or unresolved question with the help and hilarious commentary of the comedian host. It's surprisingly poignant, expertly crafted and a must-listen.

**KIND WORLD** (WBUR)

If you're looking to dip your toes in some heartwarming, day-brightening, short-form podcasts, look no further than *Kind World*. These are short stories of human kindness that can make you cry (in a good way) in 10 minutes or less.



Podcast producer  
Maggi Van Dorn.

**THIS AMERICAN LIFE** (WBEZ CHICAGO / PRX)

The gold standard of narrative reporting in the radio/podcast space, *This American Life* has taken home pretty much every broadcasting award. Each hour-long show elaborates on a unifying theme through a series of true stories – a highly literary form of journalism with fascinating characters and a well-developed plot.

**THE DAILY** (NEW YORK TIMES)

The top news stories explained by *New York Times* journalists in conversation with host Michael Barbaro. The result is 20 minutes of super-focused yet accessible storytelling about the biggest events and issues of the day – a remarkable feat of audio journalism and my favorite way to hear the news.

**AMERICA MEDIA**

The digital media arm of *America* magazine produces an array of podcasts, including *Plague*, a narrative-driven series that tells the complicated story of AIDS and the Catholic Church in the 1980s and '90s; *Inside the Vatican*, a weekly roundup of news and analysis from Rome; *Jesuitical*, which offers a smart, young take on faith and culture; and *Deliver Us*, my own podcast about the Church's sexual-abuse crisis, seeking hope in darkness by facing the issue head-on.

For more podcast ideas, check out the podcast networks *Radiotopia*, *WNYC* and *Gimlet*. If you find a show you like, chances are you'll find podcasts of similar style and production value on the same network.



# HOPE FOR THE HOMELESS

## A Change of Heart

**Editor's note:** At the time of publication, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced temporary adjustments to the Education Outreach Program. This feature does not address those temporary adjustments or the devastating effect of Covid-19 on the homeless community. For coverage of Covid-19's effects on those in need and Catholic Charities services during the pandemic, see *"Catholic Charities is Open for Business,"* page 10.

Illustration by Vinny Bove | Photographs by Germ Hernandez

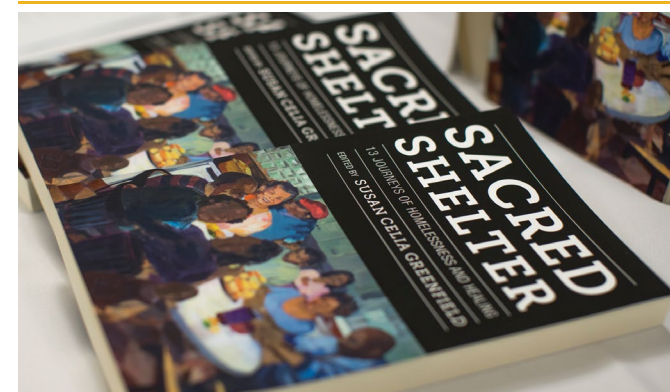
**A**LL OVER THE UNITED STATES, the number of people living without a fixed residence is growing, driven by low wages, scarcity of affordable housing and a culture that celebrates the wealthy and marginalizes the poor. Throughout the 10 counties of the Archdiocese of New York, the numbers have risen steadily in recent years. In New York City alone, there were more than 62,000 people living in shelters in December 2019 – 67% more than a decade ago. And that doesn't count the many adults and families living on the streets or "doubled up" in the homes of friends or relatives.

In the face of such a large-scale tragedy, it's tempting to blame it all on the politicians and the plutocrats – and the homeless people themselves – and wash our hands of the matter. We need to resist this temptation, says Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. "As a society we need to commit to policies that reduce homelessness; as Catholics we need to do our part to help individuals and families," he says. "When we pass people on the street we can do at least a little – even a smile. We can also volunteer or donate to help organizations like Catholic Charities and the agencies it sponsors to alleviate the problem."

Catholic Charities is a key component of a social justice coalition offering our homeless sisters and brothers secure housing, life skills training, and a pathway out of trauma and into new lives as functioning members of the community. At the heart of these transformational efforts is the Education Outreach Program, launched 30 years ago by Catholic Charities and the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, and now replicated in similar programs offered by an array of religious and community groups throughout the region. In the following pages, we'll introduce you to some people who turned their lives around with the help of the program. The first step: remembering to see Jesus in all our fellow humans.

"GETTING OUT OF HOMELESSNESS IS HARDER THAN GETTING INTO HARVARD."

SUSAN CELIA GREENFIELD  
EDITOR, SACRED SHELTER



in which homeless participants write their life stories and present them to their peers.

In the decades since, hundreds of homeless people in and around New York have graduated from EOP and the other life skills programs that were modeled after it, and gone on to lives of stability, self-sufficiency and community engagement, each according to her or his own abilities. The success of the EOP is "entirely due to what they – the homeless participants – have put into it," Horton says. The narratives of their lives sit at the center of the program, a deep well of lived experience that enables the storytellers to share the pain and celebrate the triumph of their journeys.

In 2019, Empire State Editions, an imprint of Fordham University Press, published several of these narratives in *Sacred Shelter: 13 Journeys of Homelessness and Healing*, sensitively edited and introduced by Fordham English professor Susan Celia Greenfield. The brief excerpts on the following pages (further edited and shortened to fit the space and themes of this story) are taken from this compelling volume – a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the human tragedy of homelessness and the courage of those who transcend it.

### THE POWER OF STORIES

Thirty years ago, George Horton of New York Catholic Charities and Marc Greenberg of the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, inspired by a movement of homeless people that coalesced around Manhattan's City Hall Park in the late 1980s, came up with the idea for a program to help unlock the gifts and talents they had witnessed in the members of the park movement. In collaboration with Joan Minieri, Sr. Ann Murray SHCJ, Sr. Agnes O'Grady RSM and others, they launched the Education Outreach Program (EOP), a 12-week curriculum consisting of life skills workshops, mentoring sessions and a storytelling process





## CHILDREN OF GOD

As a boy, **James Addison (EOP graduate 1993)** experienced domestic violence at the hands of a stepfather. As a teen, he fell into the South Bronx drug scene of the 1960s. He was further traumatized by the suicide of his mother. “My 20s and 30s are a blur,” he says in Sacred Shelter. He drifted between relationships, fathered a son and a daughter. By his late 30s, he was living in shelters and regularly hitting up his father for drug money. Then God stepped in.

**T**hings really started to change for me one day when I went to see my father at his job to get some money to get high. I went with a scheme. But my father said, “Arthur, I have something to tell you. You’re going to be a grandfather.”

That knocked me off my feet. He was talking about Tara, my oldest daughter. I thought, “Oh, my God!” It just did something to me. I took the money from my father for drugs, but I was changed a little bit. I wanted to get my life together. I was saying to myself, “I’m 39 years old, I’m about to be a grandfather, I don’t know where my son is, I don’t know who my daughter is. Something has to give.”

This time, when I went back to Fort Washington Men’s Shelter, I did something different. There were two nuns, Sr. Dorothy [Gallant, SC] and Sr. Teresa [Skehan, RSM], who came to the shelter every Tuesday evening. Sr. Teresa was very short, with gray hair. We thought she was crazy at first. Here was this very little white lady in a shelter with a thousand men. We would look and say, “What’s wrong with her?” Both she and Sr. Dorothy would try to get us to go into these groups called Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates (LEFSA, sponsored by the Sisters of Charity) where we could talk about our experiences. Usually I would avoid the sisters.

But that Tuesday, when Sr. Teresa said, “Would you like to join us for our meeting?” I said, “Yes, I’m going to join.”

Right away I liked LEFSA. The meeting felt equal. Sr. Dorothy and Sr. Teresa didn’t call themselves leaders. This was *our* group. Everybody who wanted

to could share. I found it fascinating that people in the shelter I never heard talk before – people who I thought couldn’t even talk – were sharing in this group. I liked it that everybody was heard – that made us feel like we were important. If Sr. Dorothy and Sr. Teresa had preached at us, it would have turned me off. I met Ernesto and Jesse in that group, and we’ve become lifelong friends.

From my early years, I’ve always felt a closeness to God. Even during my times of homelessness, even during the times of the abuse, I would talk to God, and pray, and ask God to help me, to help my mother, to help us. When I look back today, I believe that I was led to LEFSA. I believe that a force much greater than myself led me there. Pretty soon I started working part time for LEFSA, and by 1995 I was working there full time. Twenty-one years later, I’m still here. Now I’m the Operations Manager.

One day Sr. Teresa said, “There’s a life skills empowerment program, and I would like to recommend you for it – you and your friend Ernesto. It would be perfect for you, James. It’s a three-month program where you can grow and set some goals for your life.” ...

So my friend Ernesto and I said, “Let’s just do it.” Now all of a sudden, we were getting this wide range of different supports. I had LEFSA, I had an outpatient drug program, I had Narcotics Anonymous, and I had the life skills empowerment program, which was a fabulous program for me. Imagine you have an old car, and it has a hard time cranking up, so you have to give it a boost. Then all of a sudden it cranks up. That’s what the program did for me. It got me going again.

I met people in the life skills empowerment program that I’m still friends with today. And I got to share my story in the group in a way that I never did before. I could feel myself being put back together a little bit. I could feel the bones coming together and the sinews coming together. The program was really a liberating experience for me. All this darkness that I had inside me became light. And that’s where God is – in the light. ...

I cannot walk past any person, especially a homeless person who may be laid out

on the street, without acknowledging him or her as a child of God. I can’t do it. I try to love every person I come in contact with, because love was so freely given to me. I know there are a lot of people like me that are still out there. People are grieving. I want them to know that it doesn’t matter how far you’ve gone – God can bring you back. And most of the time, God works through people, through a loving and healing community.

## LEARNING TO TRUST

To be homeless is to experience a great trauma, and it often comes atop previous traumas in the homeless person’s life. Recovering from it is a long process that requires much work on the part of the individual and support from the community.

Each person’s path is unique, but in general the journey can be divided into three phases: *stabilization*, during which an individual gets into shelter and begins to address underlying issues like addiction or mental illness; *empowerment*, attained through training in life skills and self-knowledge; and finally, freedom and *responsibility* – the move to a residence of one’s own, usually with a job or volunteer role, and an appropriate level of support.

To start the first phase of recovery, the homeless individual has to believe that it’s worth the effort. “People who are homeless feel that they have no hope. They are disconnected from society,” says Allison Kelsick, outreach program director for Catholic Charities of New York. “Trust is a big issue. If we are able to instill trust, through the work that we do, people begin to get hope. That’s the beginning.”

Often it is formerly homeless volunteers or staff members who are able to create trust in others and show them that there is indeed cause for hope. “Groups like the Life Experience Faith Sharing Association, whose members



Rachel Haddock,  
a resident of the Holy Rosary  
Stabilization Beds Program.

have experienced homelessness, are uniquely able to reach out and help people who are on the street,” George Horton says.

Once an individual has been placed in a Safe Harbor shelter – which offers security, dignity and access to services to address his or her underlying issues – they can work toward qualifying for an empowerment program like the EOP. For the first time in years, they are methodically working toward a goal.

“The trauma in the homeless person’s life freezes them,” Kelsick says. “We try to help them to unfreeze themselves.”

Not that Kelsick is taking the credit. “It’s not us,” she says. “It’s them, their own gifts and their own hard work. Because they trusted us, they felt that they had somebody on their side. And that’s what it is. We are on their side.”



George Horton

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

**T**o transform the lives of the homeless, our society has to build an infrastructure – physically, economically and politically – to support them. But what can we do as individuals? We sat down with George Horton, director of social and community development for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, to get the perspective of someone who has worked this beat for more than four decades.

**Archways:** *What’s the most important thing we can do to improve the lives of the homeless?*

**George Horton:** We’ve got to put resources into affordable housing and increase services for mental illness and drug rehab and helping people when they come out of prison. We also need to have a fundamental change in our hearts. We have to discard all of our preconceived notions and really listen to the stories of the people who have been through the wringer. Pope Francis has been strong in telling us to go to the margins and engage in dialogue with people. Unless we change our hearts we are going to live with these problems for a long time.

One of the things we do in this office is support the cause for sainthood of Dorothy Day. She was a model of openness to others. She also said we each have to do what

*Continued on page 19*



# BREAKING GOOD

*A bright student and exceptional athlete, Michelle Riddle (EOP graduate 2003) became homeless at 9 or 10 when her alcoholic parents separated after a house fire. Eventually, her mother found an apartment – with a boyfriend who sexually abused Michelle. By the age of 16 she had left school. In her mid-20s, addicted to crack, she found stable homes with relatives for her three children as her own life spiraled into homelessness. At 36, HIV-positive, she went to prison for selling drugs.*

When I went to prison in 1998, I was considered the world's smallest drug dealer. I weighed all of 88 pounds. My hair was so matted that they had to cut it all off, because we couldn't even comb it. They told me that if I did the prison's substance abuse treatment programs, I would get work release and then I could do parole. The prison treatment programs were good. Narcotics Anonymous helped me realize that I had a disease, that the driving force to get the next hit was my disease. When I came home from prison, I had been clean for four years. Today I have been clean for 16!

In prison, I became a Christian. I started going to church, and I became an usher. That's when I came back to God. After I got out, I was baptized at a Baptist church. It took going to prison for me to get my life together. I always say I was rescued, not arrested. ...

In 2000, I got out of prison and went to the Department of Corrections' Phoenix House. After I left Phoenix House, I did everything I could to recover and get help. I joined the Women's Prison Association. No matter what my counselor there asked me to do, I did it. I might gripe, but I did it. She said I was one of her best clients and gave me a Phenomenal Woman certificate. After that I went to Women in Need, where I was tutored for my GED. I worked hard, and when I got my diploma, I was so freaking happy.

People at Women in Need told me about the life skills empowerment program

[EOP] at New York Catholic Charities, run by George Horton and Ms. K [Allison Kelsick]. In 2003, I joined the 29th class of the program. My mentor was named Lucille, and we connected spiritually. She was Catholic and I wasn't, but God is God no matter what religion He is under. The program gave me the opportunity to hear stories from different people. When they shared their lives, I felt their pain, and that response told me that they were telling the truth.

On Speakers' Night, I got picked to tell my story. I was really nervous, but God helped me. I shared about what I had done. I shared about prison, and I shared my experiences coming back home. After I finished, I got a standing ovation. My class had 16 people, and we didn't lose anybody. We all graduated December 1.

When my mother died, I was afraid of idle time. In the past, I always dealt with death by getting high. I got in touch with Ms. K. at New York Catholic Charities, who told me, "Come on in and help with the EOP's 15-year anniversary." That was 10 years ago and I'm still volunteering at Catholic Charities. On any given Tuesday, you can find me there; after that I go to my NA home group. It's like tea before the cake. You can bank on it.



## LEARNING TO STAND

Before a homeless individual can enroll in the EOP, she or he must achieve stabilization. Usually this means residence in a "safe harbor" shelter such as one of the Beacon of Hope facilities created by Catholic Charities. The EOP candidate also must be in consistent treatment to address any mental health issues – and those with substance abuse issues must have remained "clean" for 60 days. They have to be ready to become serious collaborators in the process of their own recovery.

Those who are invited to join an EOP "class" embark upon a 12-week program meant to give them the skills to live in their own homes as responsible citizens. They take part in workshops on subjects ranging from conflict management and communication skills to increasing self-esteem and overcoming trauma. "Sometimes people come to us and don't understand that you have to pay the rent at the beginning of the month – because no one in their life ever modeled that for them," Allison Kelsick says. "They were never taught certain very basic things."

In addition, the participants are assigned mentors to walk with them past milestones large and small – filling out forms to apply for housing or food assistance, filing taxes, preparing for a court appearance and eventually perhaps a job interview. "Unfortunately, the only way out of homelessness is to kowtow to a tremendous amount of bureaucracy," says Susan Greenfield, Fordham University professor, editor of *Sacred Shelter* and a volunteer mentor for an IAHH life skills empowerment program.

"There's a level of submission required to find your way to ser-

vices. People have to be willing to accept that, and it's hard. It comes from this mentality that there's something wrong with people who are homeless."

For mentors, who help participants through these steps, the process is fulfilling but also humbling. "I could never do what they have done," Greenfield says. "Getting out of homelessness is harder than getting into Harvard."

The third part of the EOP, and in many ways its culmination, is the storytelling project. "The storytelling is so important because they've never told their stories before," Kelsick says. "First of all they didn't have anybody to listen. Nobody listens to them. Does anybody even see them?"

In writing down and sharing their life stories, the participants come to terms with the pain of their pasts but also learn to recognize their own strength and take possession of their destiny. "Stories of suffering are painful, but when the people who have suffered have moved to a place of healing, they are also full of wisdom," Greenfield says.

After 12 weeks, participants graduate and most go on to achieve independent housing and some sort of self-sufficiency. The vast majority of them find a calling – through work or volunteer assignments – helping others in need. To Greenfield, these people are heroic. "What if we were to recognize the incredible characteristics that go into recovering from homelessness?" she asks. "When those who have experienced injustice and suffering find their way through to a certain kind of generosity – which is true of everyone in *Sacred Shelter* – there is a wisdom that can be of enormous benefit to everyone, including those who consider themselves more fortunate."

## MAKING CONNECTIONS (CONT.)

we can. A handout is good. If people are on the street, we need to urge them to go to a shelter. But that's not the end of the story. We need to be sure those shelters are safe and that they help people get into permanent housing. And most importantly, we have to think about how we can restore people to community, to a place where they feel connected.

**AW:** *Why is it so hard to come back from homelessness?*

**GH:** So many people live paycheck to paycheck – becoming homeless is a threat to many more people than we imagine. Still, most of us never experience the kind of suffering that goes on when somebody doesn't have a place to lay their head. It's suffering on top of suffering. At some point a person becomes disconnected, they become unable even to avail themselves of the services that are available.

**AW:** *What can we do as Catholics to help our homeless neighbors?*

**GH:** We have to read the sermon on the mount again and understand the compassion of Christ as our starting point. We need to think of the scriptures, the gospel, and see Jesus reaching out to people who are in need of healing, who are suffering, who are on the margins. When we receive the Eucharist, are we thinking about how we can love people who are left out?

Recently, when Cardinal Dolan dedicated new housing units built by Catholic Charities up at St. Augustine's in the Bronx, he thanked the audience of builders, contractors, and state and city officials for applauding, but then said of the project: "It's our duty. It's what we are required to do."

To me, that's a core message. This is not just a "nice thing to do." We can be altruistic and we can be nice to each other, but we are *required*

*Continued on page 21*



## AMAZING GRACE



*In 2002, at the age of 47, Deborah Canty (EOP graduate, 2005) checked herself into a rehab center. After an upbringing marked by sexual and emotional abuse, followed by years of alcoholism and horrific nightmares of a suppressed childhood trauma, she finally realized she desperately needed help. In rehab, Alcoholics Anonymous helped her come to terms with God and forgive the people who had hurt her. When she left rehab, she tried living with her daughter but the relationship was too volatile, so she wound up at a shelter.*

I used to put down homeless people. “Oh, they homeless because they don’t want to work,” I said. “They lazy.” So God said, “Let me put you in a shelter so you can see what’s really happening.”

Living in a shelter was hard. For the first three months at New Providence, I didn’t want to know any of the women because I saw a lot of arguing and fist fighting. The residents called you the “b” word and never used your real name. I signed myself out for the day as much as I could. I went to my AA meetings or to my doctors’ appointments. I visited my daughter. Then one day I was signing out and I heard some people singing “Amazing Grace.” My mother and grandmother used to sing it when they were in some of their harder times. Pen in hand, I looked at the security guard. She said, “Go back there, Miss Canty, you’ll like them.” So I went back, and this lady came up to me.

“Hi, I’m Sister Dorothy. Would you like to join our Life Experience and Faith Sharing (LEFSA) group? We’re not church. It’s about your lived experience and your faith, whatever that is.” Sister Dorothy’s presence made me feel so welcome. In the group, the people shared their real names, and everyone said, “God loves you and we love you too.” From then on, I started hanging out with the LEFSA women. In there, I met some friends that I still have today.

Before in my life, I always thought things were black and white. I never saw the in-between. But the shelter and LEFSA changed me completely.

Sister Dorothy suggested I attend the life skills empowerment program at New York Catholic Charities. So I met George Horton and Ms. K. Ms. K was tough and no nonsense. I respected her for that.

George says, “Everybody has a story worth hearing.” I wrote about how I had been sexually abused. I told my story at graduation, and I told it at other places after that. Sometimes when I finished, I heard people say, “I can identify with that,” or “Something like that happened to me,” or “Thank you for bringing the monster out of the closet.” Maybe my words were setting them free to tell their stories. What they thought was their shame was not their burden to hold onto. We think the sexual abuse was our fault, and that’s what keeps us quiet. But what does a child have to say about a grown person taking advantage of him or her sexually or mentally? Get the guilt back to where it belongs.

I also started seeing a therapist once a week. That was because Ms. K. told me I should. My therapist allowed me to express myself, to let the anger come out. I had to get it out, whatever it took, screaming and cussing or hitting things. I had to do that until I was too exhausted to be angry anymore. It took a long time.

In the past, I was a nasty, mean drunk. I couldn’t even look myself in the eye in the mirror. I would never look into my soul because I didn’t like what I saw. I would fight at the drop of a hat. If you said two or three words I didn’t like, I was going to swing on you. During recovery I started asking, “Why am I so sore? Why am I hurting so bad?” I put myself in other people’s shoes, and I became the first to apologize. People who knew me before were shocked.

For a long time, I had been trying to get housing. Some of the places were so scary and run down. I wouldn’t allow my dog to live there. Finally, an organization called SUS – Services for the Underserved – offered me a room in an SRO called New Life Homes, only six blocks from

“WE NEED TO  
DISCARD ALL OUR  
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REALLY LISTEN TO  
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BEEN THROUGH  
THE WRINGER.”

GEORGE HORTON

my daughter’s apartment. When I first went to see it, I wasn’t sure. It was a little studio, and it had a stove but no oven. At the shelter that night, I got on my knees. “God, let your will be done ’cause you know what’s best for me.” The next day I looked in the paper, and Macy’s was having a sale on toaster ovens. So I went and bought one, and I also bought three nonstick frying pans – small, medium and large. I gave the large frying pan to my daughter. And I said, “I’m claiming that apartment in the name of Jesus.” That’s where I’ve lived ever since.

After I got my apartment, Sister Dorothy called me. “Debbie, we have been talking, and we want to give you a job on our LEFSA team.”

I said, “I can’t do what you’re doing.”

Sister Dorothy was feisty. “Weren’t you homeless? Of course, you can do it.” That was nine years ago and I’m still working for LEFSA today. Two days a week, I go to the shelters to sponsor hope. I let people know that what God did for me, he can do for them. ✱

*For a list of Catholic Charities homeless services, [see page 27](#).*

## MAKING CONNECTIONS (CONT.)

to reach out to people on the margins. Our faith demands it. Building a building is not easy, and building a community in that building is not easy, and building relationships to the surrounding community is not easy – but it’s our duty, and duty in the deepest sense.

**AW:** *What can we do when we see a homeless person on the street?*

**GH:** I would see them. I wouldn’t walk by. I would see them. And then I’m going to say to myself, well, maybe once a day I’m going to stop, and maybe I choose who I stop and talk to, and I give them money for coffee and I ask them how they are. I make some change in how I encounter a homeless person on the street. Just some change. Many of the stories I’ve heard from people who were homeless were of moments when someone stopped and expressed some care for them. How are you doing today? Where are you staying? Are you getting the help you need?

It was the philosophy of Dorothy Day: You encounter this person one on one, face to face, and see them as a child of God. See them as made in the image and likeness of God. And see Christ in them.

And what is the Christ you see in them? You see their ability to love. One thing I’ve seen is the incredible capacity for love among those who have been left out, disenfranchised. I have never encountered one who, in recovery, is not about asking, How can I give back? Because God has been good to me, how can I give back? And that’s a lesson for all of us.

We’re not asking everyone to become social workers. But in our mind we should say, Let me see this person. Maybe that’s the starting point. You don’t pass a homeless person on the street without seeing. You don’t just look the other way. You engage, you look, you encounter. That may be the starting point. It could be a smile, it could be a wave.

Once you see that human being, once you hear the stories, you will be changed. You will see the world differently. Jesus calls you to see that person. By the activity of trying to know them, you will change.



*In the office at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, left to right: George Horton, Allison Kelsick and James Addison.*



# BODY & SOUL

*Liturgical dance ministries teach us to praise God with every fiber of our being*

**I**t's that quiet moment late in the Mass, after the Communion hymn has ended and the faithful are seated or kneeling to receive God's blessings. With a whisper of flowing gowns, eight dancers – members of the liturgical dance ministry of St. Charles Borromeo, Harlem – glide up the aisle to the altar, where they stand facing the cross as the piano comes quietly to life.

The voices of the choir well up into a hymn of praise, and the dancers join the song in steps and gestures sweeping and subtle. In time, they move back into the aisle and, surrounded by the congregation, make visible the spiritual experience – receiving thankfully the grace of God and lifting the heart in thanks and joy. As the hymn comes to a close, the dancers recess back down the aisle and the priest rises for the closing of the liturgy. “Let us pray,” he says.





There are many ways to pray. When we are young, we are taught to “say” our prayers, and there are many powerful prayers in the Catholic tradition that we speak in church and in everyday life. But not all prayers are made up of words.

“For me,” wrote St. Thérèse of Lisieux, “prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.”

Prayer can take the form of silent meditation or wordless music. It can be contemplative, sorrowful, joyful. A painting or sculpture can be a prayer by the artist, and its contemplation a prayer for the one who sees it. Liturgical dance, too, is a form of prayer, engaging the mind, ears and eyes, but also the whole body.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2562) tells us, “Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays.”

“**T**he celebration of our Catholic Masses is steeped in ritual, and movement that focuses our attention on the spirit of the Lord in the liturgy,” says Nina Klyvert-Lawson, director of the liturgical dance ministry at St. Charles Borromeo. “From the opening procession, to the sweep of the arm sprinkling the holy water on the parishioners or blessing the altar with the holy incense, to us bowing before receiving the Eucharist... all these are movements of prayer. Why not extend that movement to the celebration of a dance ministry – a ministry that might just provide another opportunity for God to touch someone’s soul?”

Klyvert-Lawson, an accomplished dancer, teacher and choreographer who studied as a scholarship recipient with Alvin Ailey and the Boston Ballet and danced professionally with Ailey II, has led the liturgical dance program at St. Charles Borromeo since 1997. The ministry, whose style mixes the idioms of classical ballet, modern and African dance, rehearses twice a week and per-



The liturgical dance ministry of St. Charles Borromeo at the Harlem Central Deanery Revival, 2019.

forms several times each year, notably at the Christmas Midnight Mass, Holy Thursday Mass and the annual Central Harlem Deanery Revival. They have also performed at the Black History Month Mass in St. Patrick’s Cathedral.

At St. Charles, “We are fortunate to minister with live music from our Gospelites Choir under the musical direction of Dr. BrVon Neal and choir director Karen Blake. Sometimes it feels like I’m witnessing a ball of energy that keeps growing.” Br. Tyrone Davis, director of the Black Ministry Office of the Archdiocese of New York, describes it as “the spirit in motion – the spirit of joy and sadness, the spirit of longing and receiving, the spirit of petition and gratitude; the spirit of life and death; the spirit of the party and the worship; but above all the spirit of the living God.”

**T**here are several other liturgical dance ministries in the Archdiocese of New York, including Mater Dei, headquartered at the Hispanic Catholic Charismatic Center at St. Anthony of Padua in the Bronx, and The Moving Prayer, which has collaborated with numerous parishes and organizations throughout the archdio-

cese to bring liturgical and sacred dance to Masses, youth ministries, religious ed classes and other settings. Both of these groups have contributed performances to Mass at New York Catholic Youth Day in recent years.

“Sacred dance has been around since the beginning of time – that’s how people worshipped in early history,” says Jessica Abejar, founder and director of The Moving Prayer, which performed at New York Catholic Youth Day in 2016 and 2017. “Dancing has been part of Jewish tradition for centuries. In Old Testament times the dancing was done in temples. In early Christianity, since the religion was underground there was no space for this. In the U.S., sacred dance began to take off in the early 20th century as modern dance began to emerge, and became connected to Catholicism around the time of Vatican II.”

Abejar started doing liturgical dance at 7 or 8 years of age, and in 2013 had the opportunity to dance at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. She was mentored by Carla DeSola, a pioneer in the liturgical dance movement who worked with Dorothy Day in the Catholic Worker movement. The Mov-

“  
Let them  
praise His name  
with dancing  
and make music  
to Him with  
timbrel and harp.”

”  
PSALMS 149:3

Photograph by Chris Sheridan

Prayer movement. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Nina Klyvert-Lawson with the dancers of St. Charles Borromeo, rehearsing in the church hall; praising God in the center aisle at St. Charles Borromeo; Mater Dei at New York Catholic Youth Day 2019; looking to heaven.





**Archways:** *What have your days been like during this crisis? What's it like for Catholic Charities staff and volunteers out in the field?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** First, I want to say a word of incredible gratitude and appreciation – can't say enough – for our health care workers. They are doing heroic work to treat people who have been made sick by coronavirus.

But in addition to the thousands of sick people, there are so many others who are also in need. Even many of the sick, when and if they recover, are going to have other needs. Catholic Charities workers are working to meet some of those nonmedical needs.

My days have been busier, our staff has been busier – because the ordinary stuff that we do needs to go on, and we have to figure out how to make adjustments to the way we

The new circumstance this time is: We don't have face to face meetings with the people who need help, we distance from them as much as possible and we do a lot of stuff remotely on the phone. But we're providing the same type of assistance.

Let me go back to 9/11 for a moment. The one thing that changed for everybody after 9/11 was your ability to get on an airplane, your ability to walk into a building. A heightened concern for security and safety became necessary. That changed the way that everybody does business.

What is going to change after this is: Everybody has to adjust to figuring out how much work can be done remotely, how much needs to be done in person. How do you deliver services in a way that doesn't create a serious risk to everybody's health? That's going to impact the way that Catholic Charities does our work, our services. Some of it may be for the good, some of it may not.

*“People will say, ‘It's over. Why don't we just go back to normal?’ Well, we don't go back to normal – in this one particularly – because of the economic impact, the loss of jobs. It's going to take four or five years.”*

*– Msgr. Kevin Sullivan*

do it. Making adjustments often requires a lot more energy than just going on as you usually have.

And the other issue is: How do we meet the needs that weren't there two months ago, the new needs that the pandemic has brought on? People who may not historically have been Catholic Charities clients may now find themselves in need of assistance. Making sure people have emergency financial assistance takes on more importance during disasters like Covid-19. We are also starting to hear about people who need assistance with unanticipated expenses such as funeral costs. That is something we are paying attention to, and thinking about how best to address.

**Archways:** *How else will the work of Catholic Charities be affected by the coronavirus? Will the core mission change in any way?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** Since September 11, 2001 – sadly – Catholic Charities has been in the business of being at the center of responses to community tragedies, community disasters. We don't do it every day because, thanks be to God, there's not a community-wide disaster every day. But in New York, every four to seven years out of the past 20, we've experienced a major disaster: 9/11, the 2008 recession, Superstorm Sandy.

When that happens, Catholic Charities resurrects what we have done in the past and adapts it to the new circumstances.

**Archways:** *Is there anything you would like to say in closing?*

**Msgr. Sullivan:** It is in times of crisis like this that all of the ministries of the Church come to the fore. We see the importance of our parishes – which still exist, even though there are no services. Many churches are still open, people are coming in to pray. Some parishes are doing remote services. Our schools – while the physical buildings are closed – are still doing remote learning. Catholic Charities is very, very proud to be part of that body of the Church, whose presence in New York is absolutely at the center of our communities, our neighborhoods. We all do different things, but together there is that incredibly important, essential, and life-giving work of the Church, which is called to be even more in the forefront in times of crisis and times of challenge like this Covid-19 pandemic. ✕

*For the full interview with Msgr. Sullivan, [click here](#).*

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York represents a network of agencies that work to prevent evictions and support the homeless. Through Catholic Charities Community Services, it administers programs in New York City and also provides services in the upper counties of the archdiocese. Services and programs directly and indirectly administered include the following.

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES COMMUNITY SERVICES

#### **Housing Preservation**

Legal counsel and housing court advocacy, comprehensive case management, and financial literacy and tenant education for individuals and families who are at risk of losing their housing. Prevents thousands of evictions annually in the Bronx and Manhattan.

**Phone: 646-794-2405 | Website: [Click here](#)**

#### **Emergency Case Management / Crisis Intervention**

Working with New Yorkers in need when they are in crisis (facing rent or utility arrears) to develop solutions that keep families housed and strive to lead them toward longer-term stability. Direct relief is provided when appropriate. Prevents 600 evictions annually.

**Phone: 646-794-2022**

#### **Beacon of Hope**

Provides a continuum of housing opportunities to people struggling with serious mental illness, including Licensed Community Residences, which provide 24-hour supervised group living arrangements; Apartment Treatment Programs, which operate in either a congregate setting or throughout the community; and Supported Housing Units, which provide the most independent form of housing. Case managers work closely with residents to help negotiate the tasks of daily living, cope with psychiatric and medical crises, seek employment and recover from addiction. Serves 450 individuals annually.

**Phone: 646-794-3608**

#### **Holy Rosary Bed Stabilization Project**

In collaboration with the Bowery Residents Committee (BRC), Holy Rosary provides case management services to chronically homeless individuals who are being transitioned from street homelessness to shelter. Serves 35 individuals.

**Phone: 646-794-3608**

#### **Catholic Charities of Orange, Sullivan and Ulster Counties**

Case management and emergency relief funds assist those facing eviction. One-time financial assistance may also be available to individuals that have emergency basic needs, such as utility bills, furniture, funeral assistance, prescriptions, etc. Emergency relief funds are limited by availability.

**Phone: 845-568-5150 | Website: [Click here](#)**

#### **Catholic Charities of Putnam County**

**Phone: 845-279-5276 | Website: [Click here](#)**

#### **Catholic Charities of Dutchess County**

**Phone: 845-452-1400 | Website: [Click here](#)**

#### **Catholic Charities of Rockland County**

**Phone: 845-942-5791 | Website: [Click here](#)**

#### **Catholic Charities of Westchester County**

**Phone: 914-476-2700 | Website: [Click here](#)**

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES AFFILIATED AGENCIES

#### **Covenant House New York**

The largest shelter program for homeless youth in the Americas, providing food, housing, counseling and employment training to more than 6,000 homeless teens and young adults annually.

**212-613-0300 | [covenanthouse.org](#)**

#### **Dwelling Place of NY, Inc.**

Offering shelter to 13 women, along with hot meals and programs to help the transition to stable housing.

**212-564-7887 | [thedwellingplaceofny.org](#)**

#### **Nazareth Housing, Inc.**

Providing transitional shelter, homelessness prevention services, self-sufficiency education and supportive housing to persons in need.

**212-777-1010 | [nazarethhousingnyc.org](#)**

#### **Part of the Solution (POTS)**

An award-winning multi-service agency in the Bronx designed to move guests from crisis to stability and self-sufficiency. Services include a community dining room, a homeless prevention and transitional residence program, food pantry, clothing program, haircuts, health care, mail service, family club, case management services and a legal clinic.

**718-220-4892 | [potsbronx.org](#)**

#### **Xavier Mission**

Operating a shelter, soup kitchen and clothing pantry as well as six community outreach programs that provide a continuum of services to those facing difficult times. Its LSEP life skills program, modeled on the EOP, has been empowering homeless people to transform their lives for 23 years.

**[xaviermission.org](#)**

## Archways ✕

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