



# Reflections on 'The Greater Things'

December 2021  
Volume XXXV Issue No. 11

*"Amen, Amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)*

## God Is Everywhere We Let Him Be by Michael H Brown—Used with permis-

Do you sometimes feel like you're hanging from a thread, that at any moment disaster could strike, that there are a million hazards out there and sooner or later one of them will get you? Are you afraid that genetic factors or exposure to carcinogens or the wrong diet is going to lead — inevitably — to cancer? Does every ache and pain cause fear? Do you figure that an accident of some sort, a breakdown, a heartbreak is just down the road?

It is not. Much bad does not have to be. We all die. There is redemptive suffering. But at most points in our lives all forms of the above can be prevented by closeness with God.

*There is no darkness in Him.* Scripture tells us that. He pervades all. He is there for the intricate working of every cell in our bodies. And He can reverse damage and renew us both spiritually and physically. Without Him, there is entropy; things fall apart; there is doom. With Him there are blessings. We tend to think of Him as Someone Who created everything and then has let it spin on its own — tick like a clock.

That's not the way it is. The Lord is what vivifies us. He is throughout our beings. And He can affect anything in our systems — if we let Him (if we don't think life is mechanical). It is like the appliances in our homes: the fan that whirls, the refrigerator, the TV: we tend to think of them as units that are independent but they would not work without the force of electricity that is hidden behind them.

God is our power and it's up to you to start thinking of Him that way. Begin seeing Him everywhere all the time, start seeing Him in the ordinary, start seeing Him in the *extraordinary* (knowing He can do that as readily) and you now are under the control of a being Who can erase all negativity to which you have been exposed and reverse any damage.

How's that for hope! And it's true: God is everywhere and does everything. Have you noticed how subtle most of His miracles are? He will cause a candle to drip in just such a way that it could be seen as an angel. He will slightly inflect light. He will cause bark on a tree to grow in a fashion that resembles the Face of His Son.

These are His little miracles, and they extend to our own bodies. His slight touch causes our cells and tissues and organs to go in the right direction.

We all age and we all grow ill and the body will eventually break down, but we do not have to speed up the process by stress. We are not destined for cancer. We are not destined for Alzheimer's. With faith, we are destined for the fullness of life. If the time comes when we need a doctor, we pray for God to come through the physician.

*When God is on the scene* — when He is in control, instead of our "selves" — we are no longer at the mercy of the capricious. The Bible says that the weapons of spiritual warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God. Let Him into every part of you. Let Him take over. Let Him permeate every cell in your body.

# EMMANUEL—GOD IS WITH US

BY JACI PHILLIPS-SABOL, PHD

I recently read an article by Michael H Brown of Spirit Daily [See: [God Is Everywhere](#)]. The article is a repost from 2005. I felt this article captured the fear that is afflicting so many right now so I am also putting the article in this newsletter.

Once again, I am attempting to put this newsletter together after losing a dear friend. My apology that this is edition is late. This time the death was a result of this devilish virus. Erie violinist Louis Nicolai was likely the most gentle and humble man I have ever met, along with one of the most talented. We typically played together a couple of times a month. He has played more and more consistently with Harmony's House, especially over the last 2 years. He has played for Word of Life events for the past 4 years. For several years, Louis and I, along with organist Corey Spacht, have played for First Saturday Mass in honor Our Lady at St. Gregory's in Northeast. I don't have the words right now to express how much I will miss his quiet presence or his beautiful violin 'singing' beside me. I was humbled every time we played together and I was also so very blessed to call him a friend, along with his beautiful wife, Diane.

So many of us have lost people recently. If not to the virus, then to other things. For unknown reasons serious health issues in people who are not sick with the virus are also skyrocketing. This issue was recently reported by

nationally by NPR and has been verified by local medical professionals. I have heard so many stories of people who are devastated by unpredictable deaths of loved ones. Cancer, auto-immune issues, heart issues, suicide, mental health issues, and neurological issues are all high, pushing further limits on already stressed medical facilities. It seems like a pandemic of *everything!* **Many trials for many people.**

While all of this is potentially a spiritual sign that should not be ignored, we also cannot be controlled by fear or by making an idol of the virus. Have you noticed that the virus or its prevention seems to be 75% or more of all anyone talks about? Have you noticed families who have had vitriolic splits over opinions? How about marriages? Friends? Have you cut people out of your life? Have people cut you out? ***Is any of this of God? No.***

The word 'devil' is literally translated from Greek as 'divide' or 'separate', or even more appropriate, 'to throw against'! God is the God of unity and love, not division.

Very recently Erie made international news when a local teacher put a post on social media suggesting that people with a different opinion should be murdered. It is unbelievable to me that someone felt justified to post this. What is possibly more

Continued on Page 4

*"I Will Never Leave You"*

Holy Rosary Chapel  
Erie PA

2022  
Day of Adoration

*"I will never leave you  
nor forsake you"*

Worship: 11pm with Harmony's House  
*Midnight Eucharistic Procession*

3pm Chaplet of Divine Mercy-Worship - Prayer - Rosary-More  
Proper Covid Guidelines to be followed

Exposition Friday 1/28- 10am & Benediction after Midnight Procession



*Life is not a roulette wheel for those who invoke Him with faith*, and that means realizing that there is not a single illness or handicap that He can't correct. There is nothing He can't do. He created the physical laws; He can suspend them.

The Lord is above all the forces of nature *and when we let Him* into our lives, He can reverse any physical damage. He will watch over the functioning of every cell. He will repair what needs to be repaired.

*What if that sharp pain in my arm is a symptom of a heart attack?*

*What if that pain in my abdomen is caused by an abdominal aneurism?*

*What if that flutter in my chest is a dangerous arrhythmia?*

*What if that occasional abdominal discomfort is a tumor?*

We all go through this, and when we do we need to invoke the good Lord to take total control of the circumstances. Theoretically, with enough faith, we need nothing else. He can halt anything bad. He can correct any situation. He will direct you if you need a physician.

In prayer, if something feels really serious, naturally, we should take advantage of God's gift of the medical community. But it is time to stop surrendering to stress. What causes stress? Wanting more and more — more respect, more money, more prestige. Not having the time for anything. Trying to do too much. Whining. Complaining. Fretting. Receiving insults from others (instead of ignoring them).

As pointed out in an extremely useful book called *Stress Less*, by a Christian doctor named Don Colbert, we bring many maladies upon ourselves. Stress is deadly. It's a vicious cycle!

"So many people today are far from experiencing 'perfect peace' because they do not trust God and their minds are not fixed on Him and His ability to protect them, provide for them, and guide them into every good path," writes Dr. Colbert (in a book packed with information, much more extensive than his previous). "They spend their days and nights worrying about the past or fretting about the future."

Dr. Colbert gives countless ways of attacking stress — from what we eat to how we sleep, act, and pray — but the bottom line is always trusting in God.

"Anytime I see a patient whose health is deteriorating because life is spinning too fast, I explain to him that life is not a sprint, but a marathon," says the physician. "He or she needs to slow down and enjoy the slow jog through life. Those who race through their days at a breakneck speed are 'striving' — they are in hot pursuit of things temporal that they believe they personally must own, accomplish, or make happen."

Are you on a treadmill? Are you too "busy" to enjoy life? Is it affecting you?

*"I'm afraid I'm going to lose my job..."*

*"I'm worried about my children..."*

*"I'm worried I won't be able to pay the bills..."*

Get off the treadmill of stress — of fear — and know that God is everywhere that we let Him.

surprising is that there were/are a number of people who agree with the teacher. Pray for mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters, whatever your opinion on anything, please recognize that this kind of hate is not new, it was the common opinion held in Nazi Germany. Some people were worthy of living and some people were viewed as something less than how we view our pets. But with much less love or respect. Danger. Very. Serious. Danger.

There is a virus of humanity that is more eternally fatal than the physical virus. Long after the physical virus is somehow controlled, the effects of the spiritual virus will remain. The hate. The division. The vitriol. There is plenty. And it's not limited to one side or the other.

One time God asked me to do something hard and I didn't want to because I was right! (I really was). After I did what Jesus asked (it took me two weeks!), He clearly told me that *it was more important to Him that I was righteous than that I was right*. Whoa. That really hit me between the eyes, allowing me to see my ugly pride and reminding me that, Jesus was also right! Yet He died for me being wrong! For my sins. It was a lesson. He also told me *that, in this case, the relationship itself was more important than the fact that I was "right."* Once again... a lesson! I don't always succeed. But I hope I am getting better and better compared to what I was before this *school of the Holy Spirit* lesson several years ago.

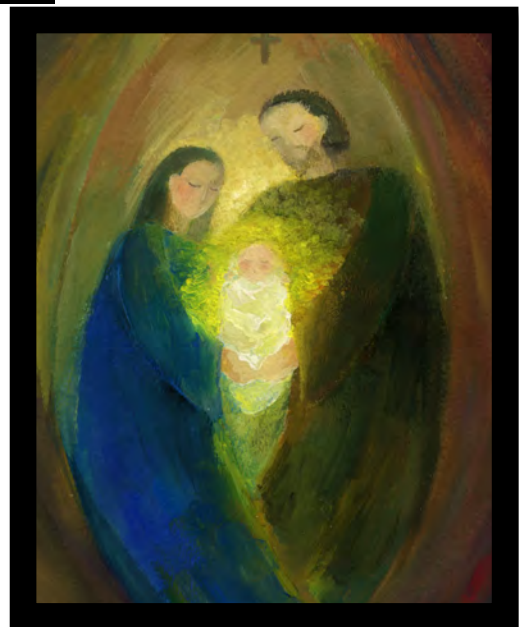
Can you imagine if a worse virus occurred? How much worse would the hate become? Would it be enough, as in other countries, to view some as unworthy to buy food? To work? Or how about to access their own hard-earned money in order to live? How about to attend religious services or the Sacraments? Once again, danger.

This virus can be a ravager of the mind and soul, as well as the body. The Word says not to fear those who can put to death the body, but the one who has the power to judge us for eternity. This is a time when we must continue to love each other, to be kind to each other, to help our neighbors in need, and to carry one another's burdens. It does not mean that we avoid difficult conversations, but it means that, if we can't have them without becoming angry and verbally attacking, then we probably should not have them at all.

Prudence is good, but then we walk in trust of the

divine providence of God. The devil uses fear. To divide. To conquer. To kill. To steal the peace, joy, and happiness that God offers us. And to make us isolated. Individual sheep, separated from their flock are much easier for wolves to pick off. God did not make most of us to be isolated, even if it was prudent for a time. Stay connected! Even if it is over the phone, or better yet video calls.

I do not completely comprehend the goodness of God that He somehow arranged for Louis to play with Harmony's House as his last public performance in November. We got to see him, to worship God together, to love each other with the love of God, to laugh together, to play an awesome new Bluegrass song that Louis could just cut loose on. I just can't comprehend it and I am in tears even as I write. I also cannot comprehend that my friend, this husband, father, and light, is gone from this earth so rapidly. I prayed so hard. So many people did. I don't comprehend him being gone. But I do comprehend that there are no accidents and that God is in control of when we leave this earth. Louis went home during Advent, season of light and season when we joyfully await and recall the coming of Emmanuel – God with us. Louis IS with God. And – after honoring Our Lady for years by playing First Saturdays – Louis went home on December 8<sup>th</sup>, arguably the most significant Marian feast day of the year, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. There are no accidents. God is in every detail. Let us focus on HIM, Who is Light and Love and Peace and Joy, in the midst of darkness and chaos. Focus on Him! Bring Emmanuel to everyone! God IS with US. **Never doubt it.**





# ADVENT: A WALK WITH THE HOLY FAMILY

By Kathryn Wilcox

*In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. Luke 2 1-5 NRSVCE*

I know the story well. But when I read this passage recently, the reality of the journey was stark.

Here was a young couple, who, because of a government directive, had to travel 65 miles to register with a government office so that they could be taxed. Not only did they have to walk, but the young woman was in the last month of her pregnancy.

As I contemplate our current situation, and often lament the difficulties our world is experiencing, I turn to scriptures and realize that the world has always been in turmoil and tyrants and taxes are nothing new.

So, this advent, I will spend the days walking with Mary and Joseph, comparing their days to mine, and praying for a renewal of my faith and appreciation of how blessed I am that Jesus came into our world through this humble couple.

**Mary had to prepare for the trip, packing food and supplies, since there were no stores along the way.**

*Lord forgive me for complaining when the stores do not have everything on my list and thank you for reminding me that food shortages have occurred many times in history.*

**Even though they had a mule on which Mary could ride, she chose to walk as much as possible to spare the animal who also carried all their supplies.**

*Lord forgive me for whining when I can't find a handicapped parking spot, if I walked more, I would be healthier.*

**Mary and Joseph slept on the ground every night of their journey. Were they even able to build a fire to cook and warm themselves?**

*Thank you, Lord, for a warm house and soft bed and blankets.*

**Mary and Joseph were vulnerable to attack from highway thieves, or wild animals. Yet they continued on towards Bethlehem.**

*Why do I allow myself to fear going out because of a virus? Mary and Joseph had much more to fear, yet trusted God.*

**Mary and Joseph likely had no way to bathe along the way; was it even possible to find water to cook and wash their hands every day?**

*Forgive me Lord for not appreciating the plentiful supply of water for cooking, bathing, and cleaning. Thank for providing for all my needs.*

**Mary had to be already experiencing pre-labor pains, and sore muscles from all the walking ten miles a day.**

*Thank you, Lord, that my body still gets me wherever I need to go to do whatever I need to do.*

The weary couple finally arrived in Bethlehem finding it crowded with others, all there to register with the census. The Innkeeper informed Joseph that there were no rooms available. Joseph likely asked for any accommodations due to Mary's condition. Under the inn were stalls for travelers' animals. It was all that was available, so our Holy Family thanked him and found a tiny corner with a small amount of privacy and were thankful it was out of the elements and there was dry hay to on which to rest. How difficult was it for Mary to give birth in this place? Did God provide heavenly assistance? Some writers suggest that was the case? All we really know is that a child was born, and the world was changed forever. Mary knew this and repeated her song of praise first said to her cousin Elizabeth:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*

Luke 1 47-55 NASVCE

Lord, I thank you for the examples of humility and holiness you gave us with Mary and Joseph. I can only hope to follow in their footsteps and learn to trust you as they did- to be strong, courageous, and uncomplaining. Thank you for sending the world your son, Jesus Christ.



# 2021 Giving Appeal

"Give and gifts shall be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." Luke 6:38

## We rely completely on your generosity.



Word Of Life seeks to evangelize every Catholic into a more full and living relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We evangelize the same way that Jesus commanded the Apostles and early Christians to evangelize. "You shall receive POWER when the Holy Spirit comes to you *AND THEN* you shall be my witnesses." Possibly more than ever before, we need the power of the Holy Spirit to sweep through the Church again and ignite faith. Faith isn't boring. It's a supernatural relationship with a supernatural God through the supernatural love of the Holy Spirit.

When you give to Word Of Life, you are providing funding for Word Of Life to continue to evangelize your own diocese. We know how to do it. We love it. And like the Apostles, we will never stop or give up and we are successful because God goes before us and we follow after Him. But we absolutely cannot do it without your help. We just can't. When people come into personal relationship with Jesus and experience the power of the Holy Spirit they are changed forever. I know, because this is what happened to me over 50 years ago. Here's how you can help:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, *T.A. Walkiewicz, Chair*

*Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!*

**Contributions can be made by check, text, Tithe.ly app, and on the website.**

**Checks can be made payable to:**

**Word of Life Charismatic Renewal Center**  
St. Mark Catholic Center  
429 E. Grandview Blvd  
Erie, PA 16514



**Contributions via text:**



Text the word "give" to our dedicated giving number: **(570) 536-9187**

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**Website contributions:**

<https://www.eriecd.org/wordoflife/donate.html>  
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*Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!*

# 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Word Of Life Catholic Charismatic Renewal!

*Dear Friends – Word Of Life has prayerfully and enthusiastically served the Diocese of Erie for 35 years, since October 6, 1986. We love bringing Christ alive to people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Since 1986, there are now over 40 organizations in Pennsylvania that use the name “Word Of Life” and there is also a large international organization with a ministry office in Erie. After much discussion and prayer, the Board of Directors of Word Of Life decided that, to minimize the increasing confusion with other organizations, we will be adopting a new name of **“FAITH ON FIRE!” Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center.** Although a name change was not in our plan, we have actually become excited about it and we hope that you are too! We believe the new name accurately represents the fire of the Holy Spirit that brings faith to LIFE! You will still be able to access our website using our old address and new address, but please get used to the seeing the new name with our same distinctive Flame.*



Holy Father, look upon this humanity of ours that is taking its first steps along the path of the Third Millennium.

Its life is still deeply marked by hatred, violence, and oppression, but the thirst for justice, truth, and grace still finds a space in the hearts of many people, who are waiting for someone to bring salvation enacted by You through Your Son Jesus. There is need for courageous heralds of the Gospel,

for generous servants of suffering humanity.

Send holy priests to Your Church, we pray, who may sanctify Your people with the tools of Your grace. Send numerous consecrated men and women, that they may show Your holiness in the midst of the world. Send holy laborers into Your vineyard, that they may labor with the fervor of charity and, moved by Your Holy Spirit, may bring the salvation of Christ to the farthest ends of the Earth. Amen.

May the Lord of the harvest provide many holy priestly and religious vocations for His Church!

—John Paul II—

# Word Of Life

Catholic Charismatic  
Renewal Center

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## Reflections on 'The Greater Things' December 2021

NO LESS THAN  
"A NEW PENTECOST"

### WORD OF LIFE APPEAL

THAT IS OUR GOAL  
WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOU



True conversion through the love and power of the Holy Spirit is the only thing that could ignite the early Church. And it is the only thing capable of re-igniting it. Thank you for supporting WOL CCRC!

#### Reflections is published monthly by:

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The office is generally open limited hours.  
Please call before coming.

The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide teaching, news, and calendar of events, which help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal throughout the Diocese of Erie.

**This newsletter may be copied to put in churches or shared with others.**

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#### FORMATTING

Loretta Laufer

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