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Dove illustration: Getty Images/ Olga Lubriello

Simplicity. Beauty. Positivity. Finding our way to God



During the pandemic, I made a friend whom I have yet to meet.

Adam Bundy and I talked on the phone in the late spring of 2020, after his stepfather, Sam McKinney, died of COVID-19 at UPMC Hamot. One of our diocesan priests, Father Chris Singer, offered the anointing of the sick to Sam, and the story and photo were published in the August edition of *Faith*.

A native of Kane, Adam told me he had made a pledge to himself to counter all of the suffering brought on by the world health crisis. He would fill social media with pictures of beauty.

How simple, I thought, and how necessary as we all faced the uncertainties and trauma of COVID. We became friends on Facebook, and I was delighted every time I saw Adam's photos, mostly of flowers, sunsets and beaches from where he lives on Shelter Island, New York.

I thought Adam's zeal might stop at some point, but more than two years later, he's still going strong. (See his story and that of our own *Faith* photographer Rick Klein on pages 14-15.) What's even more astounding is that Adam shares his amazing photos with anyone who wants them.



MARY SOLBERG is the editor of *Faith* magazine
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Simplicity. Beauty. Positivity. That's what this issue of *Faith* is all about. On our front cover is WNBA star and Villa Maria Academy grad Kayla McBride, who talks about the fundamentals of her Christian faith.

Any athlete will tell you that without mastering the fundamentals of a sport, you can't succeed. Without mastering the fundamentals of our faith, we can't live an authentic life in Christ. I mean, it takes simple things — like a smile, a heartfelt prayer, love, kindness, appreciation — to bring us close to our God.

A speaker series at St. Boniface Parish in Erie is bringing home this message, too. "Healing Mind, Body and Spirit" has featured talks about mental, physical and spiritual health, with much discussion centering around basic actions like taking more walks, listening more deeply to each other and keeping our bodies and minds free of clutter.

You'll find many ideas like these and more in the following pages. You never know the friends you'll make! †

"Without mastering the fundamentals of our faith, we can't live an authentic life in Christ."

Simplify, declutter to serve others

BY KATHY
SCHRIEFER

Kathy is the
volunteer area
coordinator
of Operation
Christmas Child.

Two quotes — one from Scripture and the other from a great saint — speak to me about simplifying our lives and serving others.

Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap.
— Luke 6:38 (New American Bible, Revised Edition)

Live simply so others may simply live. — St. Elizabeth Seton

If lived out, both of these messages can help us clear out the clutter in our lives, both physically and spiritually.

Practicing simplicity is a personal journey, and every journey begins with a single step.

Your first step could be to look around your home for things you have in abundance. Maybe your child has stuffed animals that only sit on a shelf. Or your closet contains items of never-worn clothing, some with tags still attached. Clear out those



Kathy Schriefer has traveled around the world distributing shoeboxes filled with gifts for needy children. Here, she is pictured at a distribution site in Colombia.

Contributed photo

unused items for the good of others. You will find joy!

There are various ways to declutter and simplify your life, while also blessing and simplifying others. Donate items you don't need to a local ministry that serves the underprivileged in your community. Or fill a regular-size shoebox with items that can be sent to needy children somewhere in the world. That never-worn baseball cap, those never-used fast-food toys, or the Beanie Babies that were collected but never made you a fortune can be invaluable treasures to someone else.

I volunteer with Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of the Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse. As the world's largest Christmas project, we fill simple shoeboxes with school supplies, toys and hygiene items for children. The shoeboxes are transported to more than 100 countries to be distributed by local churches to share the good news of Jesus.

Parishioners at All Saints Parish in Waterford, and St. Timothy Church in Curwensville, along with students at

Ss. Cosmas & Damian School in Punxsutawney, DuBois Central Catholic, and Villa Maria Academy's Interact Club in Erie, have faithfully packed these gift shoeboxes.

If your own church does not currently participate in Operation Christmas Child, you can pack a shoebox (or boxes) as an individual. Bring them to a local drop-off location the third week of November. Go to www.samaritans-purse.org/occ to learn all about how to participate. Local drop-off site details will be listed there in October. You can even pack a box online without leaving your home.

I've been blessed to travel to the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Tanzania to see firsthand how these shoebox gifts bless and bring healing to children. In Tanzania, my friend watched 3-year-old Vanessa listen to the story of God's love as she waited to receive her gift. Vanessa's little sandals were much shorter than her feet and her toes poked out of the holes in her mismatched socks. When Vanessa opened her shoebox gift, guess what

she saw? A brand-new pair of pink Croc-type sandals, with three pairs of new socks. The shoes fit perfectly! God knew which box would bless Vanessa.

Simplify! Declutter! You never know who you may help in the process.

As Mother St. Teresa said, "We can do no great things; only small things with great love." †

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child in Erie is planning to pack 20,000 shoeboxes from Aug. 8-11 and Sept. 12-15. At least 8,000 more stuffed animals that look new and are small enough to fit in a shoebox are needed.

If you have donations of stuffed animals or other new items, or if you would like to volunteer to help pack or need more information, contact Kathy Schriefer at kathyschriefer2@gmail.com.

Illustrations by Heidi Walters/Faith Magazine

Author Amy Mosbacher



Contributed photo

Find peace in the moment



Finding our way
to God

through the seasons

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is an excerpt from the book *Through the Seasons with Jesus and Mary* (Page Publishing, 2015), written by Amy Mosbacher, director of adult faith formation and evangelization for The Epiphany of the Lord Parish in Meadville.

"Summer was too short! ... We've waited so long for drier, warmer weather, and when it finally came, the changing leaves arrived with it. But then that's life, isn't it? We spend so much time waiting for something else to happen. And then, when that something else does happen, it isn't what we wanted it to be, and we wish we could go back. It seems at times that life passes us by so quickly that we can hardly catch our breath. Jesus had it right when he told us, 'Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself' (Matthew 6:34).

We have such a hard time being happy where ... we are, yet this is what God has given us. A story which comes to mind is that of St. Francis. While he was working in his garden, St. Francis was asked, 'What, if he knew the world would end in an hour, would he choose to be doing?' St. Francis replied that he would still be working in his garden because it was where God had placed him in that moment."

THROUGH THE SEASONS WITH JESUS AND MARY IS AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.

Capturing the moment ... *unfiltered*

Photo by Adam Bundy This stunning and nearly translucent picture of a seashell was captured by Adam Bundy on Shelter Island, New York, where he lives.

“Taking pictures is savoring life intensely, every hundredth of a second.”
– Marc Riboud

Life goes by quickly, so what better way to capture a moment — or freeze a joyful feeling — than to take a photograph?

Whether it's with your digital camera or a cell phone, taking and sharing pictures help spread that joy. Social media platforms make it easy. Just ask any photographer, especially Rick Klein and Adam Bundy.

Rick is *Faith* magazine's primary

photographer and a graduate of Cathedral Prep and Gannon University. He owns Rick Klein Photography in Erie. In his work, he waits for the perfect hundredth of a second to show the humanity of the people featured in this magazine.

Adam is a native of Kane who now lives on Shelter Island outside New York City. He was featured in the August 2020 edition of *Faith*, in which

he described the last rites given to his stepfather, Sam McKinney, who died of COVID-19. In an interview with *Faith* Editor Mary Solberg, Adam said he hoped to fill Facebook with beauty, particularly in the midst of the difficult moments of the pandemic.

Since then, Adam's photographs have been printed in New York area newspapers, a telephone directory and a visitor guide, as well as *Sailing Magazine* and *Birds & Blooms* magazine. He posts stunning photographs every day on his social media accounts.



Adam Bundy

Follow on Instagram
@adambundyphotography

My mission to fill social media with beauty for one full year morphed into two years and running. About six months into it, many people started thanking me for all the beauty I found in nature and the sunrises and sunsets. I was asked to contribute to the local paper and my images were on the front page 15 times in the *East Hampton Star* and *Long Island Newsday*. My images now hang in several local

businesses and have hung in many galleries. They've been published in multiple magazines, too, like *Sailing* and *Birds & Blooms*. I just love that my photos are enjoyed by so many people and that I can bring joy and beauty into so many lives. My mission is not over. I will continue to share my images with everyone on social media because it has brought so much joy to this world, in a time we need to bring people together.



The Andromeda Galaxy

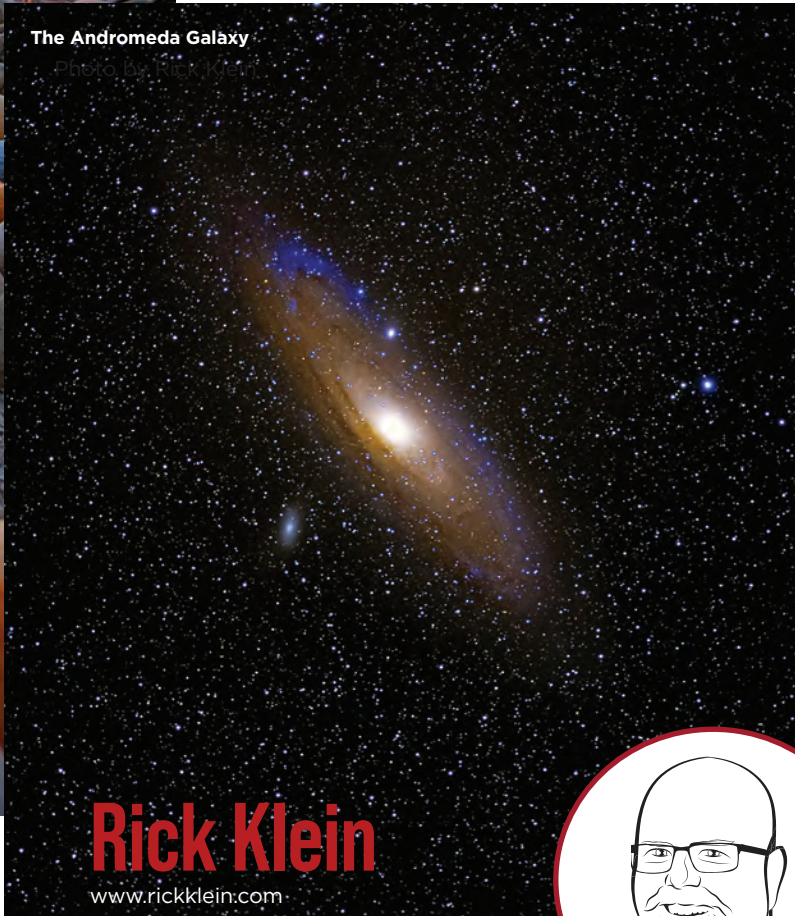


Photo by Rick Klein

Rick Klein

www.rickklein.com



I try to find something beautiful in average everyday things, like soap bubbles in a kettle in the kitchen sink. Most people would look at it and say, "Oh, those are just dirty dishes in a sink." But if you look at it closely, it's really beautiful. I love taking pictures of the heavens, too, like the Andromeda Galaxy or Pinwheel Galaxy, in late summer. I kind of look at the whole universe as God and I guess me taking pictures of the heavens is a way of maybe finding God. Beauty is all around us, but we rarely take the time to notice it. Andromeda is a great example; you can see it if you look for it. †



Photo by Rick Klein

In July 2020, during the first summer of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rick Klein took this photo of the comet Neowise from his backyard. The greens and light blues of a summer night are captivating to the eye.

POINTERS ON SEEING THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY:

- To the naked eye, in a very dark sky, the Andromeda Galaxy looks like an elongated smudge.
- It's the spiral galaxy next to the Milky Way.

***"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."* — Psalm 19:1**



Finding our way
to God through smiles



Contributed photo

John Schlimm of St. Marys is pictured at the installation of his SMILE participatory art mural at The Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

THE SMILE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (is yours)

In 2014, I created a participatory art mural installation titled THE SMILE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (is yours). A long canvas filled with circles and dotted eyes, I invite participants to choose their favorite colors and add their smiles.

The message: simple gestures, such as smiling, can make your home, school, work, community, and the world a better place. Or, as my dad says, “The quickest way to make a friend is to smile at a stranger.”

THE SMILE and I have traveled cross-country — Iowa, Washington, D.C., Sandy Hook Elementary School (site of the

BY JOHN SCHLIMM

horrific 2012 mass shooting), and The Westmoreland Museum of American Art. I've witnessed joy, reflection and letting go. I realized the power of lines and paint — of creativity — to bring people together; and to provide spaces where folks can rejoice or release whatever they're holding onto in order to let the light back in.

This journey grew into my work as a mental health advocate. My career paths as author, artist and educator provide me with unique platforms to encourage people of all ages to think about their smiles, feelings and brain — that mysterious three-pound organ in our heads. These experiences opened doors for me to sit down with mental health experts across the country and learn from them.

Two of my newest national public art works are The Smile Zine and The Brain Zine — images of the brain



I've witnessed joy, reflection, and letting go. I realized the power of lines and paint — of creativity — to bring people together."

and one question: "How often do you think about your brain?" These projects are my way of advocating, and contributing, with the gifts I've been given in this life. I'm also co-creator of The Kindness Rocks & Smiles Community Project with Megan Murphy, founder of The Kindness Rocks Project. Our KRS Community Art Murals have been installed throughout the U.S., and as far away as Kenya.

My own lifelong struggle with anxiety is a platform of experience from which I can speak, as is the fact that the Straub side of my family tree has endured five suicides across three generations and ripples of generational trauma. A former student recently died by sui-

cide, as has one of my greatest mentors, renowned country singer Naomi Judd, for whom I was once a publicist in Nashville.

My work with Generation Z — people born between 1997 and 2012 — taught me the courage and unprecedented impact these young people are having in speaking aloud words like "anxiety," "depression," "suicide," and "I need help." They've emboldened my public voice where once stigma and trauma triggers stifled it.

We each have gifts and talents, we face joys and sorrows — all are platforms from which to help others.

If you're searching for direction or a mission-driven platform, I suggest you start by simply smiling, and then watch what happens. †

John Schlimm, a lifelong Catholic from St. Marys, is a Harvard-trained educator, artist, advocate, and the author of such books as *What Would Gen-Z Do?* and *The Star Jumped Over the Moon*. For more information about his work, visit www.JohnSchlimm.com.

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Heavenly Helpers

LET PEACE SETTLE CHAOS OF MOTHERHOOD

BY ELAINE SINNOTT

Nothing has brought me to my knees in prayer more than motherhood. Raising my six children for heaven is surely the most challenging job, especially in a world overwhelmed with the kind of anger, division and worries we see today.

So how do we nurture our children with gentleness, mercy, patience and love in this environment? How do we provide our little ones with a sense of peacefulness when living with them can sometimes be chaotic?

In my 10 years as a mother, especially these last couple of difficult years through COVID, I've turned to two main sources of support.

A MOTHER'S FIRST HELPER

First, I reach out to our Blessed Mother. She has been an incredible person to talk to as I begin my days, especially now that I am a home-schooling mom of six, ages 1 to 10. Mary, after all, mothers the entire world!

More and more, I lean on Mary for help and guidance as my husband, Luke, and I raise our children. I wake up before the kids to seek out some much-needed stillness. (It's been a game-changer for the way I parent and, to be honest, I simply like my kids better if I am awake before them.)

I begin my day by saying the rosary, sipping a (HOT!)

cup of coffee, and talking with our Blessed Lady. Talking to her from my heart fills me with the graces she distributes from heaven. I feel her joy in those quiet morning moments and it fuels me. I always ask her: "Mother, please help me to serve my family with your gentle spirit today."

Another powerful gift from God is that I have renewed my consecration to Jesus through Mary for many years. It changed my motherhood, but it also healed my marriage in a big way! I cannot recommend enough how valuable it is to consecrate yourself to our Lord through his mother. I use the book *33 Days to Morning Glory* by Michael E. Gaitley.



Despite the chaotic moments of mothering, Elaine Sinnott is surrounded by the love of God and her six lively children: Caleb, Micah, Jacob, Benjamin, Abigail and Isabella.

Photo by Mary Solberg

"A prayer pledge taught me the following words that have been incredibly effective in calling the Holy Spirit into the situation: 'Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work may be holy!'"

OUR INSTANT HELPER

These quiet morning moments with my heavenly Mama do not last forever. Thankfully, the Lord gave us instant help through another source: the Holy Spirit. I think of the Spirit as the instant Nanny 9-1-1.

I need help — and I need it fast — when I hear my children screaming, "Mom, he looked at me!" or "Mom, she was breathing on me!" A prayer pledge taught me the following words that have been incredibly effective in calling the Holy Spirit into the situation: "Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work may be holy!"

When I say this prayer, God's responses to my children come front and center instead of my own human responses. Through this prayer, the Holy Spirit heightens my awareness of each situation. I quickly have learned that yelling only makes situations worse.

I am also thankfully convicted of things I need to change, like putting my phone down. By doing so, my children get my full attention (as they always should) and, in turn, their behavior is better. Previously, when I was interrupted while on my phone, I became too irritable with my kids.

Finally, I am able to see my babies through God's eyes and feel even more love for them, a love that conquers the exhaustion of mothering a sick child or handling every little fight that breaks out. The Spirit is a breath of fresh air — the breath of the living God!

HEAVENLY MENTORS

Let's never forget the help of our creator, God. Although we cannot physically see him, he is as much a part of us as our next breath. This faith and the Lord's love for us will carry us through even the most chaotic days of parenting. God wants us and our spouses and our children to come home to him someday.

And, of course, he will send help whenever we ask! †

Elaine Sinnott is the mother of six children, ages 1 through 10. She and her husband, Luke, are members of St. Francis Xavier Parish in McKean. A lifelong Catholic, she had a major conversion experience in 2017. She writes for CatholicMom.com and BlessedIsShe.net. She loves family gatherings and her Lady American Ninja Warrior classes.

TAKE a WALK...

with Father Gallina BY MARY SOLBERG



Finding our way
to God through physical exercise

On June 6, Father Leo Gallina's Fitbit told him he had walked 6.8 miles, or 15,229 steps.

"That was a good day," he says.

Retired and living at the Bishop Michael J. Murphy Residence for Retired Priests in Erie, Father Gallina, 83, walks at a good clip through the neighborhoods and byways of Erie's upper eastside, near his home.

"Sometimes, someone toots their horn when they see me. That means a lot," Father Gallina says.

But in his self-deprecating manner, he adds, "I'm just an old man trying to keep busy."

He accepts the car honks as a compliment, though. They encourage him to keep trucking. In his retirement, he also keeps active by assisting at local parishes when needed.

On any given day, he walks a half-hour or more. Usually, he begins by doing several circuits in his basement before morning Mass, then he ventures outside later in the day.

"I like walking. I find it relaxing, and it's good for my health, too," he says.

Aware of his age, he now uses a cane for

support. But that doesn't stop his even, fast stride. He keeps his eyes on the path before him, making sure not to stumble over any obstructions, and he always brings his cell phone and identification.

Father Gallina says taking daily walks helps him stay sharp physically, mentally and spiritually. He adds, "Walking gives you time to think and a time to be grateful for what you're able to do." †



Photo by Mary Solberg

Nothing stops Father Gallina from taking a brisk daily walk.

DR. JAMES COWLES, an Erie physician and a member of St. Boniface Parish, Erie, encourages people to walk at least 15 to 30 minutes a day, or more, if possible.

"Walking is simple, easy and free," he says. "You can do it anywhere — in the city, the woods or around your yard — and it gives you time to think and escape everything. It's good for your health."