

# *John Paul II Newsletter*

A group of Transition Year students are working towards getting the Saint John Paul II Award. As part of the award, we have decided to create a newsletter to bring some happiness and joy into the Loreto Community during these hard times and staying connected. Be safe and hoping you are well. Enjoy our first newsletter.

This newsletter was created by:

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## ***My Classroom by Rachel Casey***

I sit in the classroom.

Slouched in my chair,

it's plastic digging into my back,

I tap my fingers on the cold treated wood,

Its rhythm the sound of my unrest.

The teacher mouths something,

His words demanding to be heard by my drooping ears.

I can feel the rough texture of the carpet under my tight shoes,

Sense the coolness of the metal under my desk on my skin,

But although I sit in the classroom,

I am not sure I am entirely there.

A current of wind has dominated my body,

Invisible claws teasing my fingers from their grip on my desk.

I am surged upwards and witness below my chair and desk splinter and sink,

The walls surrounding them dismantling easily like a dollhouse.

I am no longer confined,

Basking in warm,

Heavenly light,

Inhaling crisp, syrupy air

My fingers dig into cool,

viable earth and

I rest in a haze of dreams and thoughts,

My back pressed gently against a tree that grants me breath,

This is my classroom.



## **107-Year-Old on a Mission to Tune into Online Masses All Over the Country**



Nancy Stewart from Clonard in County Meath has made history as the oldest woman in Ireland who is still living on her own home. At 107, Nancy refuses to let lockdown stop her and has set herself a new challenge of attending virtual mass in each county of Ireland.

She is well over halfway through her task as she has attended virtual mass two or three times a day in 21 counties so far. Nancy came up with this idea when Louise (one of her 84 grandchildren) moved in with her at the beginning of the March lockdown. Nancy got familiar with Facebook as Louise teaches IT and social media skills. During the lockdown Nancy adapted to Facebook to offer prayers to those in need.

But now Nancy is on a mission to attend online masses in each of the 32 counties before moving on to other parishes outside of Ireland.

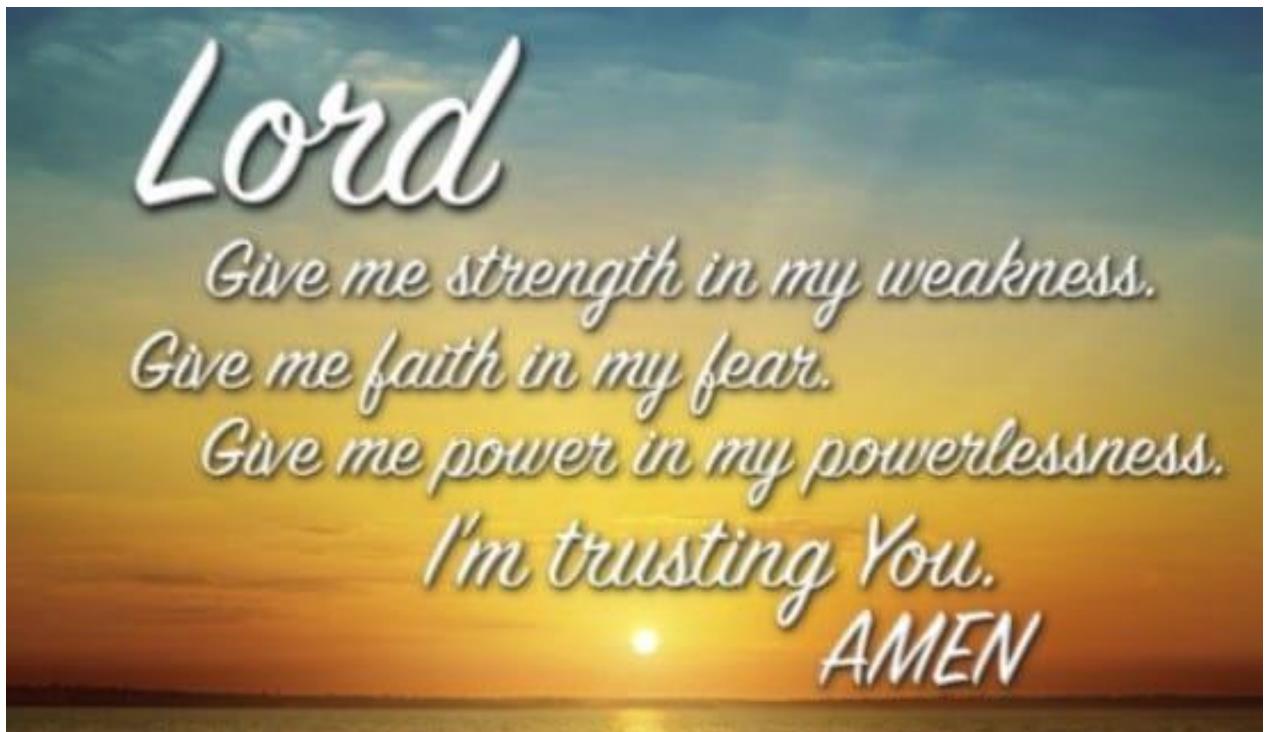
Please click on the link to watch a message from Nancy.

<https://youtu.be/6u9aGq0xAoY>

Weekly Inspirational Quote



Prayer for Strength



## **Change and its challenges**

Sometimes we can feel bombarded with change from every direction in this world. Especially now with these challenging times during the coronavirus pandemic we can feel stressed and overworked with too little time to appreciate life because we are busy trying to keep up with so many different things we need to do. Everyone can feel like this. Our rapidly changing world is stressing us out and constantly making abrupt changes to our lives. So, what can you do to cope? Here we have some things that we feel could help you cope with the changes the pandemic has brought:

- 1) Set limits on your negative news consumption. This doesn't mean shutting yourself off from all news, however. Make sure what you're reading is real news not just hysteria or speculation.
- 2) Focus on what you can and can't control. The future is something we can't control so why worry about it?
- 3) Realize that as quick as covid-19 steamrolled into our lives it will end one day and our lives will morph back into the way they once were.
- 4) Set goals for this period in quarantine. Don't put yourself under pressure with too many goals, or make goals that are currently impossible, i.e., to climb Mount Everest. If you reach reasonable goals that challenge you, you can feel much better about yourself knowing you accomplished something.
- 5) Take care of yourself. This is the most important. We all need to take a few minutes or hours to relax and take in the changes and look back and admire what we have all got through.

### **A Story from the Gospels**

Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Matthew 8:23-27

## Meditation

Meditation is a practice where an individual uses a technique such as mindfulness to train attention and awareness. Some benefits of meditation are building skills to manage stress, focusing on the present and reducing negative emotions.



### **Short Script or Mantra for Building Focus**

I am present.

I am here.

I am breath.

*(Repeat for the duration of your meditation practice.)*

### **Short Script or Mantra for Health or Wellness**

I am strong.

I am healthy.

I am whole.

*(Repeat for the duration of your meditation practice.)*

### **Short Script or Mantra for Positive Affirmation**

I am happy.

I am worthy.

I am capable.

*(Repeat for the duration of your meditation practice.)*

### **Short Script for Mental Clarity**

Bringing awareness to the right hand.

Notice each finger of the right hand.

Touch thumb to index finger...thumb to middle finger...thumb to fourth finger...thumb to pinkie finger...thumb to fourth finger...thumb to middle finger...thumb to index finger.  
Relax the hand. Relax the fingers. Notice the left hand.

Notice each finger of the left hand.

Touch left thumb to index finger...thumb to middle finger...thumb to fourth finger...thumb to pinkie finger...thumb to fourth finger...thumb to middle finger thumb to index finger.

Relax the hand.

Relax the fingers.

## Good News Story: '*Pathways for Promise*' educational program



Many women in Bangladesh dream of continuing their studies and exploring different career paths. Unfortunately, they quickly face the harsh reality that it is essential that they become a seamstress to support their families who would not survive without this paycheck.

An educational divide between the men and women resulted in the women working in unsafe conditions with low wages as they had no other choice. A new program launched by the Asian University for Women known as the *Pathways for Promise* hopes to change this. This program strives to find and offer women an education for free with the hope that they too can go to college.

It is estimated that over 70% of the garment workers in well-known companies such as H&M, Next, GAP and Marks and Spencer are women. Unlike the men in their households, the majority of these women have been robbed of the opportunity to educate themselves, until now.

The Asian University for women has put in place 'The Pathways for Promise' program which enables the academically talented women of Bangladesh to receive a full education. As well as the opportunity to get educated, the university helps these women financially so that they can afford to avail of these wonderful educational programs.

While the program was initially met with skepticism, the program is now being accepted with increased enthusiasm due to the success of the many women who have participated in it. "*The impact they can have on being an example in the community and propelling others to follow suit is much more impressive and persuasive*" said the university co-founder Kamal Ahmad. The first class of 25 undergraduates graduated in May of 2020.

A good news story is heartwarming at the best of times and during times like these it is even more vital to spread good news. On the news lately it has been COVID story after COVID story, without telling us any of the good news, but there are still good, positive things happening in the world. A story like this is inspiring and proves that anything is possible and sometimes change is for the better.

*Thank you for reading our newsletter!*