

MUSINGS FROM
THE EDITOR,
TIMOTHY P. O'MALLEY



WELCOME, DEAR READERS,
TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF
CHURCH LIFE:
A JOURNAL FOR
THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

This online, quarterly publication, edited by the [Notre Dame Center for Liturgy](#), is a project of the [Institute for Church Life](#) at the University of Notre Dame. The scope of this journal comprises all facets of ecclesial life that contribute to the Church's evangelization, including the proclamation of faith, the celebration of the sacraments, life in Christ, and a spirituality of prayer. In particular, the journal focuses upon the new evangelization of the Church in the United States, especially "the manner in which the Church assumes and fulfills her responsibility and task of transmitting the faith today; and the actual means at the Church's disposal to be utilized, in today's world, to generate the faith (Christian initiation, education) and to meet today's challenges" (*Lineamenta*, XIII Ordinary General Assembly, §4).

"THIS JOURNAL FULFILLS THE INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE'S MISSION [OF]...THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, RESEARCH, FAITH FORMATION, AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT."

Yet, why a journal? The rationale is two-fold. First, the document preparing for the 13th Synod of Bishops (2012) on the new evangelization calls for academic institutes and centers to reflect on the theme of this synod, developing the theoretical and methodological foundations for the Church's evangelizing mission. This journal provides these foundations, at the same time that it serves as a resource for parishes, schools, and dioceses to consider what it means to participate in the mission of the Church. Our publication of this journal fulfills the Institute for Church Life's mission to animate the University's direct service to the Church through outreach in theological education, research, faith formation, and leadership development. And thus, we present to the University (for deeper study) the central concerns and insights that the Church herself is contemplating. Second, the methodology of the journal strives to re-invigorate the field of pastoral theology by considering aspects of life in the Church in light of the well-springs of the Catholic theological Tradition. Pastoral theology is never "theology-light" but a return of theology to its source in the very life of the Church. As Yves Congar notes in his *The Meaning of Tradition*,

...the Church's faith in the mystery of the Redemption is not reached by reading and studying the Gospels or apostolic texts in which the mystery is expressed, just as the apostles' faith was not the result of listening to the few words of formal instruction in which Jesus expounded it. They saw him in the guise of a suffering servant, without, at first, understanding the meaning of what they saw; they saw him on the Cross. The Church saw him—she contemplates him each day—on the Cross: gazing not with curiosity, avid only for information, but gazing with love, eager to understand, as only love can, and bringing her gaze continually back to the object of her love. By baptism, the Eucharist, even the humblest sign of the Cross, ceaselessly the Church celebrates the mystery of our Redemption. While light is shed, by her doctrine, on the reality of this mystery that she transmits, her teaching is illuminated reciprocally by the same reality, believed, loved, celebrated, lived, and possessed.

Pastoral theology is the theological art of analyzing how we believe, celebrate, and live the Gospel in our parishes, schools, and dioceses in such a way that all are called to contemplate the wondrous love revealed in the Christ. It includes a methodological examination of how the Church manifests her faith in Christ through catechesis, liturgy, spiritual formation, and service to the poor, all of these carried out in the context of contemporary culture and society. Thus, the field of pastoral theology encompasses a continued enrichment of our knowledge of Christian revelation (the Scriptures and Tradition), an opening up of our imaginations to the mystery of love revealed through these signs (especially in liturgy), and a re-commitment to the life of self-gift made possible through this intimate knowledge of God (the vocation of mission intrinsic to Christian life). We believe that a renewal of a robust pastoral theology, particularly in ministerial formation among both the ordained and lay, may become a catalyst to the new evangelization.

Thus, the primary audience for this journal includes those charged with developing the Church's pastoral care in light of evangelization, whether as a catechist, director of religious education, a liturgist or music director, a youth and young adult minister, a deacon, a priest, or a bishop. Because of the journal's scope, it is our intended hope that we will also foster a readership among those who teach pastoral ministers in seminaries and universities. The journal also intends to reach those Catholics interested in considering what it means to believe, celebrate, and live Catholic faith in the contemporary world.

The journal will feature the following parts. First, each issue will commence with a series of regular columns based on themes from the four pillars of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. John Cavadini considers how to form the Church in Christian doctrine through the homily (beginning next issue). Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B. comments on a liturgical theology drawn from the *Catechism* (and how this theology might affect liturgical celebration). Deacon James Keating situates morality within the context of life in Christ. And, Larry Cunningham reflects on the heart in the spiritual life. In addition to these four columns, Christian Smith addresses the pastoral implications of his sociological analysis of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NYSR). And lastly, Fr. Virgilio P. Elizondo offers a reflection on the role of Mary in the life of the Church.

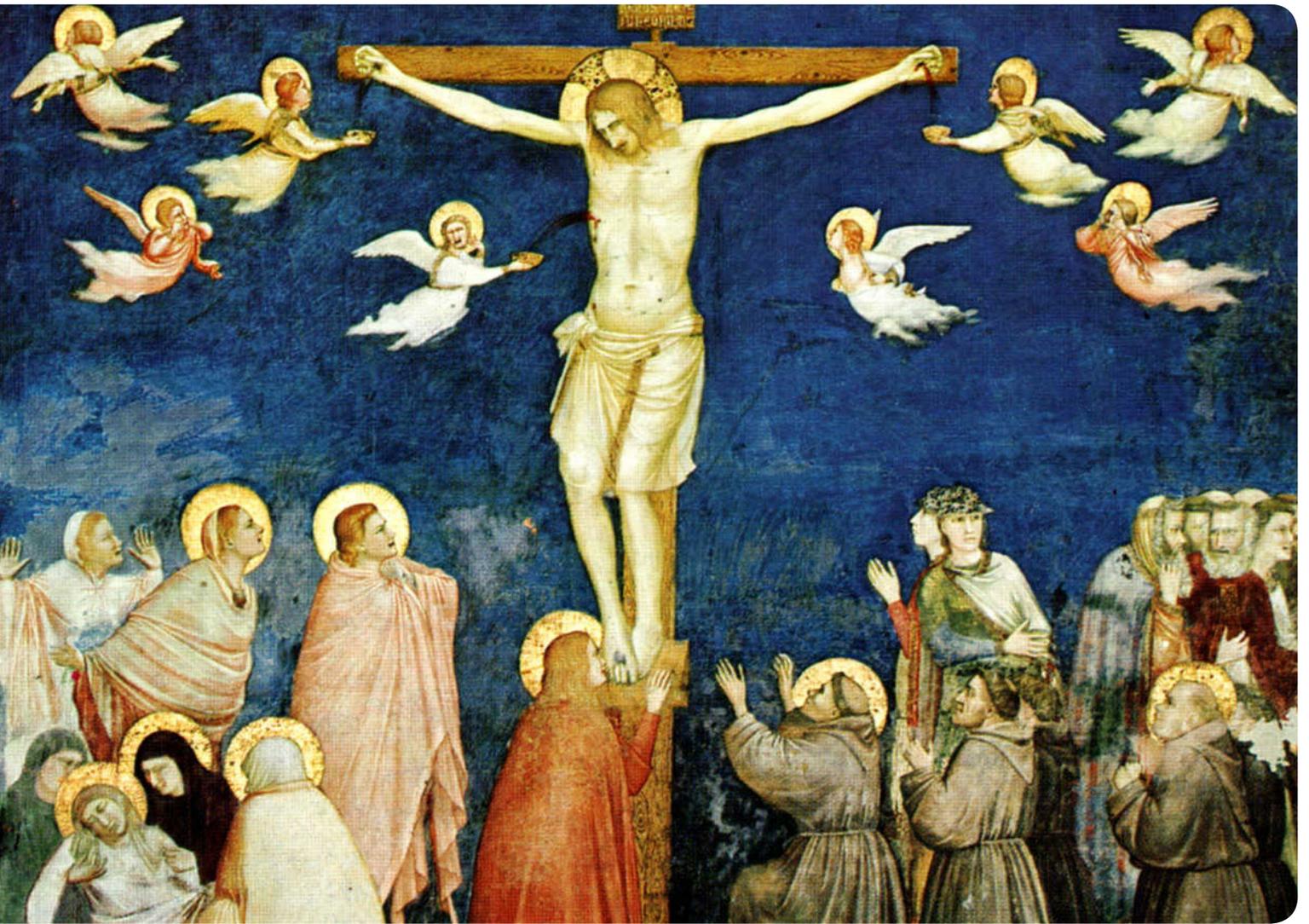
In the second part of the journal, the reader will encounter a sequence of thematic articles on the new evangelization. In this first issue, these articles touch upon the theme of the new evangelization itself. First, John Cavadini, the director of the Institute for Church Life and regular columnist, provides a theological analysis of the catechetical writings of Blessed John Paul II, arguing for the intimate link

between catechesis and evangelization. Second, Timothy P. O'Malley, the (acting) director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy and editor of this publication, considers three obstacles to the new evangelization through a theological, pastoral, and cultural analysis of the American parish. Third, the Cardinal-Designate Timothy Dolan (the Archbishop of New York and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB]) offers five observations on the Catholic doctrine of human dignity. Fourth, the blogger Elizabeth Scalia (a.k.a. [The anchoress](#)) writes about the vocation of the blogger as an evangelist, one who through the art of blogging discovers again and again the call to continued conversion. The first volume of Church Life will continue in the spring with an issue on Evangelization and the Imagination; in the summer with Evangelization and Rites of Return; and conclude in the fall with Evangelization and Catholic Social Teaching.

Each issue of Church Life closes with a book review essay (including classic texts, as well as recent publications) on topics relevant to the new evangelization. And lastly, a concluding word offered by a current or former apprentice of the Institute for Church Life's [Echo Program](#) on the art of the new evangelization in the parish today. Of course, because we abide in a digital age, the themes from Church Life will continue to be engaged through a recent initiative of [STEP](#), the ICL's online program in theological education: ICL Conversations. And, of course, additional articles related to the themes of Church Life will appear on the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy's blog, [Oblation: Catechesis, Liturgy, and the New Evangelization](#).

So, happy reading. And may this new publication enrich your own understanding of the hidden beauty of life in the Church. For when we come to perceive the beauty of a life believed, celebrated, and lived in Christ, we ourselves become living signs of this new evangelization.





ABOVE
Giotto's Crucifixion