

DIRECTION *for* OUR TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LAY APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST THE RETURNING KING

The Undefended Life

By Anne, a lay apostle



The Lay Apostolate of Jesus Christ the Returning King is a new movement in the Catholic Church. This movement calls people to greater personal unity with Jesus Christ. As we become more aware of His presence, accepting His love and healing, we are then able to bring His light and love to those around us. By allowing Jesus to love others through us, we call them back into the safety of the family of God. Jesus calls this a rescue mission for souls. It involves people accepting their call to both personal holiness and service in the Church.



*Dedicated to
Mary, Queen
of Apostles*



In order to model ourselves after Jesus, we must contemplate His life on earth.

Imagine Jesus standing on a beautiful beach. He has his arms up and out. He is praying to the Father. He has His eyes closed against the bright sunshine but He feels the warmth and the wind blowing against Him. He absorbs it all and gives back praise to the Father while asking the Father for a benediction on all of humanity.

Jesus was and is involved in a relationship of perfect love with His Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. They were in total union during His life even as the Lord Jesus 'suffered' through humanity, as it were.

Jesus lived an undefended life. He did not spend His time looking around to see what people were saying about Him. He was neither running for office nor participating in popularity contests. He did not conduct daily opinion polls.

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Direction for Our Times

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On January 23, 2012, thirteen young lay apostles travelled to Washington, D.C. and distributed *Heaven Speaks about Abortion* booklets. Our lay apostles were greeted time and again, "Oh, it is so good to see you here." Justin Sofio, young adult retreat coordinator said, "It was a great event, marching side by side with so many people, all there to defend life."

FAMILY WEEKEND RETREAT

Memorial Day Weekend: May 25 – 27, 2012

Circle Lake Retreat Center • Pinehurst, Texas

Phone: 281-392-1342. Website: www.circlelakeretreat.org

For families seeking 'direction for our times' with Heaven as the ultimate destination.

Fun, fellowship, worship, and relaxation for the whole family while discovering how God is calling your family to serve in everyday life and beyond.

- Adult and Teen Group Sessions: Based on the Catholic spirituality of The Lay Apostolate of Jesus Christ the Returning King
- Supervised Faith Activities for Kids
- Reconciliation
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Mass

- Living Rosary and Way of the Cross
- Family Games and Competitions
- Campfire with Music and S'mores
- Free Time: Canoes, Paddle Boats, Fishing Nature Trails, Swimming Pools, and Playgrounds

Check in: Friday, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Check out: Sunday, 12:00 pm

Start time: Friday, May 25, 7:00 pm

Cost: \$350 for the weekend per family. Includes furnished house and 3 meals. \$150 deposit required.

For information contact hosts Scott and Gina Bergeron at 281-392-1342.

Email: srbergeron@aol.com or contact Direction for Our Times at 708-496-9300.

www.directionforourtimes.org



Tracy Stein, member of our first year women's house of discernment, finds her vocation with Colm Banks and enters into the Sacrament of Matrimony. DFOT staff and Anne enjoyed the day immensely.

DFOT TV

Contemporary Catholic Spirituality



Direction for Our Times is proud to announce the development of a new video-based website called DFOT TV. This website www.dfot.tv is designed to make all of our videos easily accessible. We will continue to feature new videos every month on various topics such as marriage, vocations, and spirituality. The videos will feature talks by Anne and other Catholic speakers. Also, all of Anne's monthly prayer group talks will be available to view on this site. Please visit the site and share it with your family and friends. This is an excellent way to introduce new lay apostles to our mission.

School of Holiness

Climb the Mountain of Holiness, as well as Croagh Patrick

Summer Program in Ireland: June 4 – June 22, 2012

Spend Three Weeks in Beautiful Ireland

- Stay at the Direction for Our Times headquarters in Cavan, Ireland
- Immerse yourself in the spirituality of the Apostolate of Jesus Christ the Returning King as given to us through the Volumes and other written works by Anne, a lay apostle
- Grow closer to Jesus and embrace the call to holiness
- Listen to guest speakers and engage in spiritual topics including discernment and the theology of the body
- Develop a better understanding of your Catechism
- Deepen your knowledge of and appreciation for your Catholic faith
- Enjoy a peaceful and joyful atmosphere with other young adults
- Have time each day for prayer, Mass, Adoration, the Rosary
- Recreation with our games, music, and available exercise equipment

Enjoy trips to:

Lady of Knock Shrine | Clonmacnois | Croagh Patrick Mountain
Surfing in Rossnowlagh | Glendalough Forest Park | Attend part of
the Eucharistic Congress 2012 in Dublin

Cost:

- Tuition fee is \$1000 plus the cost of your flights to and from Ireland
- Those attending are responsible for purchasing their own plane ticket to and from Ireland (about \$1000)

\$1000 Tuition fee will cover the following expenses:

Meals | Accommodation | Ground Transportation | Entrance into the
Eucharistic Congress | Entrance into Clonmacnoise | Surfing Rental

If you cannot afford the fee, we have limited scholarship money available.

CONTACT: To register for this retreat, to request more information or to make a donation, please contact Justin Sofio, Young Adult Retreat Coordinator at justin@directionforourtimes.org or call the Irish office or Justice office.

The Viruses of Our Time

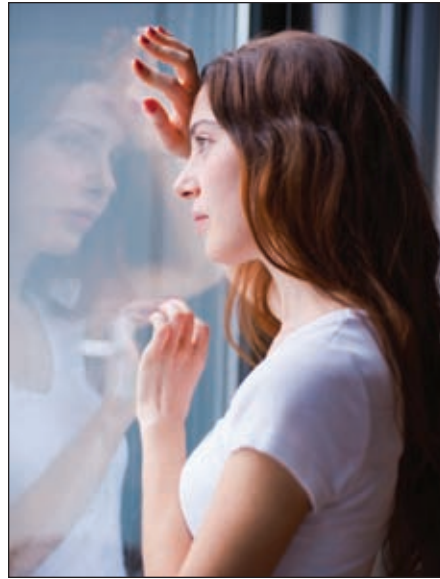
Taken from a Homily by Father John Murphy, Pastor, St. Anne's Church, Bailieborough, Co Cavan, Ireland

It is customary when people celebrate their 100th birthday that they are interviewed and asked, "To what do you attribute or ascribe your long life, your longevity?" One man said, "I never wasted time or energy in resisting temptation." So, I suppose that is one approach, to regard temptation as the healthy option.

Another approach might be to stand in front of the mirror some morning and look at yourself and say, "You can be so easily fooled," because evil always presents itself as good. And don't all of us want to be good and to do well?

In a way, we could say that there are three or four viruses that can invade and attack the human spirit. And any one of them can cause immense harm or mischief.

Take the virus of power. 'Wouldn't I love to have power? Think of all the good things I could do if I had the power ... move things



about here and there.' But as we all know, power is a tremendous drug; to get it, to hold on to it. Just recall the blood on the carpet in

the presidential election campaign. And to think back over history and to think of the crimes, the terrible things that have been done by people in power. Not just political power, but indeed, in the smallest organizations you can get someone who likes to be boss, and then be bossy and make life miserable for everyone else. And then, having become boss, to stay that way. Blessed are the meek.

And then there is the virus of possessions and wealth; to get, to have, and then to get more. Not to be content with enough. Not even to know when you have enough. Isn't that the history of the last ten years in this country? Seen now in the ghost estate in the stylish kitchen that is never used in the mountain of debt? Blessed are the poor in spirit.

And there is also the virus of pleasure. What is it that makes me feel good? Well

Monthly Message

As given to Anne, a lay apostle

March 1, 2012

Jesus

My dear apostles, you remain faithful to Me and I guide you through every change. Can it be said that the Lord devised a plan for you yesterday and again today but that the Lord will fail to make His plan for tomorrow known to you? Will I hide My needs from you? Will I abandon the work and the workers? You know that this will never happen. My friends desire a relationship with Me and truly I make Myself available to all who sincerely seek Me. And those who know Me,

through a desire to know Me, understand that My ways do not always look the same as the ways of the world. Therefore, true followers must be alert to the desires of the Lord when events around them alter earthly plans. I am constructing an edifice of humility in the world. I am committed to My Church and it is My desire to bring an abundance of grace into the world through My Church. Dear apostles, do you see that this cannot be accomplished through the ways designed by humanity? Which human being can embrace the scope of change necessary to bring God's children into humility and into love for the Father? Only God can do this and only God understands the ways of both earth and heaven. It will always be a heavenly directed plan which brings individuals back to

peace through holiness. Together, we are accomplishing this, person by person. I am pleased that our efforts are securing fruit, which we offer to the Father as evidence of a true desire for holiness in His children. Please, dear apostles, remain faithful to Me. Allow Me to direct your contribution and you will be blessed and consoled. Through your fidelity, others will also be blessed and consoled. When we are finished with your work on earth, you will come to Me in fullness and you will understand all that I accomplished through your willingness. I will not steer you into what is bad for you but into what is good for you. Continue on in trust and be grateful that I have chosen you to serve God's renewal.

“Jesus’ goals were perfectly in union with the Father’s goals, always. And so must our goals be united with the Father’s goals.”

The Undefended Life (continued)

He held his stance: feet on the ground, arms raised in prayer, eyes on the Father and the Father’s goals.

Jesus would say to us, “Do it like Me. Hold your stance.” Jesus would say to us “Live an undefended life.” Because, dear apostles, if we are working with Christ, He, Himself will defend us.

We strive to allow Christ to live His resurrected life in us, involving ourselves in an exquisite relationship with the Father, from Christ, through the Spirit praising the Father and asking for a blessing on all of mankind each day.

Jesus’ goals were perfectly in union with the Father’s goals, always. And so must our goals be united with the Father’s goals. This is very important, lay apostles. So think of the stance: feet firmly planted, arms up and out, absorbing all adversity, attack and temptation but never pausing in praising the Father and petitioning Him for blessings for all of God’s children.

This is the undefended life. It looks very different from a defended life. A defended life always seeks to justify itself. A defended life talks, and talks and talks about how it is right. But it will never be satisfied or gain the justification it seeks. And the sad thing about this is that it will exhaust others, because it refuses all healing and in doing so it furthers the goals of the enemy, instead of the Father.

Lay apostles, we ask ourselves at this moment, ‘Where in our life are we refusing God’s mercy or God’s healing?’

Picture Jesus standing on the beach. Think of the temptations and challenges we face, like little waves coming in and swirling around our feet one after the other. It will never stop. It is not supposed to stop. It can be uncomfortable at times, to endure persecution and uncertainty but if we hold our position, arms out, eyes up to Heaven, we will remain in an undefended life, even unto death.

Jesus on the cross held His position even unto death. If we look at His form, His arms are extended in cross form. Yes, even while He was fastened, He was committed to asking God for graces for all of us. We must do the same. Give praise to God and beg for his children.

Because you see, when it is all boiled down to its purest form, the only important thing is God’s children, each of us and every other human being created. The Father created us so personally. His hopes for each one of us are so tender, so important. The undefended life is possible, dear apostles, and we must all contemplate how to make it possible for ourselves because only in living an undefended life will we experience liberation.

As lay apostles, we can expect our share of struggles and opposition, from both within and without. Given this, it is crucial that we strive to live an undefended life.

whatever makes me feel good, that is what I want. That is what I need. That is what I have to have. Whether it be a drink or chocolate cake or driving a fast car. These are the things that I’d like. And if we pursue that road, just looking for and getting what we’d like, further down that road then are all the addictions which plague the human race; addiction to a food or drink or pornography.

And also down that road there is a side road. But we keep off it because down that road there is everything that is difficult, everything that involves sacrifice, everything that involves inconvenience. And, of course, all great things in life involve some of those things. But I shun those things because I only pursue what I like. Blessed are those who mourn.

And there is the virus of popularity; being well thought of, being approved. And here we enter the world of celebrity, of A-lists and B-lists, the world of polls and popularity. What gets me noticed? What gets me admired? What makes me honored? What gets me the approval of my friends, companions and neighbors?

And we think especially of the world of the young who fear rejection by the group, who are trying to resist peer pressure, who try to have the courage to do the right thing even in the face of ridicule and mockery. Blessed are you when people persecute you.

These are the great viruses that attack the human spirit. Even Jesus, Himself, was subject to their onslaught. Lent offers us the antidote for these viruses through things like prayer, fasting, generosity, and familiarity with God’s word which urges us to be satisfied with nothing more than God Himself. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all other things will be yours as well.

Changes

By Margaret, a lay apostle

Globally, we are in a time of change. Our Western culture is increasingly impacted by these shifts, perhaps most evident in the economic state. We have all been either directly impacted by this downturn or have watched as friends or families lost jobs, houses, cars, businesses, or savings. As we are collectively being stripped of some of our previously held certainties and lifestyles, we can see changes in attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. Some of the changes are good and some are not. And while downturns in the economy do present us with concrete challenges which feel threatening, there is another more fundamental layer, which is that, as human beings, we struggle with transitions, particularly the ones we deem bad.

Rationally, we know that life will contain these intensely difficult pockets. Spiritually, we know that we are asked to suffer sometimes, at times with understanding and at times without understanding. Emotionally, however, we struggle. It is our nature. We experience anger, sadness, despair, sorrow, bitterness, disappointment, powerlessness, and fear. Transition is hard for us and yet transition is a certainty in itself.

At times of transition, we can find ourselves bouncing between the poles of outrage and collapsed resignation. We do not always look our best when faced with change. We tend to fixate on the external, stomping our feet and insisting it be different until slowly we realize that our situation is really demanding an internal change. Because Christ is asking that we change and transitions are the points at which we can really hear His request.

To be specific, births, illnesses, marriage, deaths, college, midlife, moving house or losing a home, job loss, divorce or loss of a relationship, are all examples of transitions. Some of these we view as positive and some negative; however, sometimes women do become depressed after having a baby, sometimes young adults going off to college go off the rails, and sometimes midlife can feel disillusioning rather than meaningful. Conversely, sometimes the more 'negative' transitions bring about profound insight and growth.

Regardless of the details, all transitions are invitations to growth and greater intimacy with ourselves, with one another, and with Christ. Does this mean that we should be expected to celebrate the loss of a loved one or rejoice in losing a job? No, of course not. But we should be open to the opportunity of coming closer to Christ and more willing to cast ourselves more completely into His providential care.

We remember that transitions can be very unsettling emotionally. They represent figuratively, and sometimes literally, the moving from one place to another. This is not easy. We can come to feel secure in the place we are, even when these places are unhealthy. And at the root of all transitions there is a sense of 'not knowing', of heading into unfamiliar



territory without a compass. This is why we can experience things like anxiety, fear, and lower self-esteem, a loss of identity, low mood, irritability, and physical symptoms around these times. We say things like, "I'm just not myself," or, "I'm not sure what's wrong with me." These are all signs that internally we are being prepared for growth. Old ways of being will need to be outgrown. We will need to become a slightly newer version of ourselves by submitting to the process of change.

There will be pockets of grief because transition and grief go hand in hand. As we say 'yes' to the new way of being, we are leaving behind others – other behaviors, other memories, other people, other understandings of what life should be. We can be tempted to be critical of ourselves during this time, sometimes saying things like, "I can't believe how stupid I was." Or, "Why did I do that?" Or, "I was such a mess then." Or, "What is my problem." While this is often part of that grieving process, it can also become a distraction from the fact that we have indeed said 'yes' and are doing our best to change.

Coping skills for transitions may include the following:

1. Check in with yourself. Ask yourself how you are honestly feeling about whichever change you are experiencing. Remember that you can be having negative feelings about a positive change and positive feelings about a negative change. Ask yourself questions like "Am I feeling overwhelmed?" "Why am I anxious?" "What do I need to manage this?"

2. Say it out loud. Let family and friends know if you are having a difficult time.

3. Listen to other people's experiences of transition. Ask questions.

4. Implement structure and routine where you can, as this offers a sense of security and consistency. Use daily lists, timelines, schedules, etc.

5. Identify what and who you need to help. Make sure the expectations are realistic.

6. Challenge any unhealthy coping mechanisms you may be using (alcohol, food, procrastination, etc.) and replace them with positive ones. Ask yourself what you are doing right now that may not be helping your process and then find an alternative. Do not take anything away without offering yourself a substitute. Coping mechanisms develop because we need them.

7. Transitions can be re-stimulating. This means they can remind us of previous times of distress. Ask yourself if this time in your life is reminiscent of any other time, does it feel similarly to another transition?

8. There are usually two layers of meaning to a change—the concrete and the symbolic. If you are losing your house, concretely it draws up questions like, “Where will I live?”, “Will we be able to find a new place

with enough bedrooms?”, “I will miss this house.”, Symbolically, it may represent things like, “I don't have a choice.”, “I have failed.”, “I didn't see this coming.”, “I'm losing my security.” Equally, it may represent a sense of freedom or a fresh beginning.

9. Get a role model. Think of a person you either know personally or a public figure who you admire. Ask yourself how they have handled change, or how they would be handling your situation. There are unacknowledged potentials in us that we often recognize in other people. Begin to acknowledge them and act on them.

10. Do not be critical of yourself or allow anyone else to be. It's distracting. Replace negative and distorted thoughts with, “I'm doing my best. This is a difficult time.”

11. Set realistic goals for yourself. For example, if you have been diagnosed with a serious illness, it may be unrealistic to expect that you will be able to continue to work as you did previously. Unrealistic expectations result in feelings of either failure or disillusionment.

In all of the changes that we are experiencing, one thing will remain the same. Jesus is with us and He wants to keep us on the course that leads most directly to Him.

Monthly Message

As given to Anne, a lay apostle

February 1, 2012

Jesus

Dear apostles, your faith makes you beautiful. I am watching you as you receive graces from heaven. Your heart is transformed, little by little, and your service to Me is purified and becoming more unblemished by self-interest. Your life is changing in many ways. Perhaps you are leaving one type of service for another or completing a task that has held your attention for a long time. Perhaps you

are laying down a heavy cross of suffering and being released from it so that you can serve more freely in another way. Perhaps, dear apostle, you are awaiting your next heavenly assignment and you are eager to move on to it. Or you are simply serving faithfully as best you can in the work that is yours each day. Regardless, you believe, and you are trying to live that belief. This makes you beautiful to Me. Yes, faithfulness to Me consoles the world. The little pocket of faithfulness you contribute is like a sign that directs the eyes of others to the next life. Others look at you and understand that not everyone lives for this life. They understand that even if you are wrong about eternity, hope in eternity exists. My friends, you do not

realize the value of that hope for someone in a moment when all hope seems lost. Poor humanity. We must bring hope to the world through our committed service to the Father. And if you find your hope challenged, then you must explain to Me the source of your pain. Come to Me in the silence of your heart and I will listen to your grief. I will console you. I will show you that the power of heaven can heal the gravest hurts and the cruelest sufferings. I will restore you. Please believe Me. It is in the interest of all of humanity that you possess the hope needed for others. Yes, you are beautiful to Me, dear apostles. You are beautiful.

Serve On!

By Crystal Sullivan, lay apostle

How many times have you heard the phrase, “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans”? As the staff at Direction for Our Times sincerely try to serve Christ in this apostolate, we sometimes find that the work we think needs to get done isn’t as important as the work *God* needs to get done. We were reminded of this just recently when we were planning our first Eucharistic

Day of Renewal in a prison. Months of careful planning were spoiled when the whole prison went on lockdown. Soon this change highlighted a seemingly smaller plan to have a retreat at Rosary Hill in Justice, Illinois. The result of God’s intervention was a beautiful weekend of inspiration, prayer and friendship. As usual when we follow His lead, it’s always a win/win – He’s laughing and we’re joyful!

Lay apostles from all around the country attended a weekend of prayer, talks, and sharing on how they have played a significant role in spreading the messages of this apostolate.

Approximately one hundred lay apostles, including about twenty-five young adults, were able to attend.

As is the case for many pilgrimages, it started with a tremendous personal effort to attend, as Chicago witnessed its first major snowstorm of the year. Travel-weary retreatants endured snow delays, plane cancellations, and ice-packed roads. But the hard work ended as soon as they walked into the Rosary Hill Dominican Retreat Center.

Even though a majority of the attendees had never met each other, the atmosphere was that of a family reunion- we all are different and have different gifts, but the family resemblance is there in our love for Christ and the zeal to spread the messages of the Apostolate of Jesus Christ the Returning King.

The format of the retreat was a simple one: there were a few talks by Fr. Darragh and Anne; a few opportunities for lay apostles to share their evangelization methods; time for prayer; and time for hospitality and sharing.

Anne was in the audience as a panel of lay apostles shared on some of the major evangelization efforts that have taken place over the years. Matt Karp spoke about his experience organizing Eucharist Days of Renewal. Gerry Keymer shared his success with an organized method of bringing Heaven Speaks Booklet display cases into churches, hospital and medical centers. Mary Carter, with Octavio Torres, presented the many inroads that have been made into the Hispanic community. Susan Baker summarized the successes of the new Prison Ministry.



A panel of our lay apostles speak about their ministries based on these writings.





Anne commented later that she was very much in awe of the work that Christ was doing through the efforts of these lay apostles and all others throughout the world. She felt “very calm” knowing that the Lord has the apostolate covered by sending us such great laborers.

Suzanne Siadat from Arizona described what many of us felt during the retreat: “I was so moved by the priests that attended, the young families who brought their beautiful children, the love and zeal the young adults displayed as well as the many other lay apostles from all over the country. At one point, after

meeting so many people who expressed their love of the Lord and in seeking to do His Will ... I had such a deep love of everyone in that room as I gazed out!”

The opportunity to be with like-minded lay apostles and priests was just the boost many of us needed to refocus on the work ahead of us. It was a weekend of living in the presence of Christ, shining from each lay apostle present.

In fact, it was so successful that Direction for Our Times is organizing a follow-up retreat this summer for all Prayer Group Leaders. The format will be the same. Anne and Father Darragh will attend giving everyone a chance to learn about the latest news in the Rescue Mission.

Denise Faugot from Louisiana summed it up the best: “When those mystical storms arise in your life, remember we are all praying for each other, and (as Anne told us) lifting our hearts in praise to our Father and begging for graces and mercy for others. This is what living the apostolate is all about! May our Lord bless you all and open your hearts as we hear Him say, “Serve On!”

Monthly Message

As given to Anne, a lay apostle

January 1, 2012

Jesus

May the peace of heaven continually surround each of my beloved apostles. My friends, there are times when the peace of heaven must pursue you, because, despite its best efforts, you elude peace. My peace then follows you, waiting for you to pause long enough to accept it. When you bring yourself into My presence, then My peace can absorb you and saturate you so that where you go, it can follow. If you are alert to Me, you will

see that others are blessed by Me through you. Dear apostles, please accept that this is happening and be reverent about what I am seeking to do. Are you with Me in this effort of renewal? Do you seriously consider that I am determined to bring light to others through you? If you will accept this more fully, I can work more freely. If you move too quickly through your days, convinced that you are not achieving as many actions and tasks as you would like, then you may be missing what is obvious to heaven, that is, that you are surrounded by grace and protected by light. When you rest into this reality, you will see how effectively I am serving the world through you. Truly, I am loving people and comforting them through your soul because each

day, Heaven moves into the world through the souls of those who are willing to serve. Allow Me please, to continue, and allow Me please, to sustain you personally. It is not My plan that you become dispirited and hopeless. It is My plan that if you suffer, you suffer peacefully, confident about My presence in your cross. I want you to work calmly, confident of My effectiveness in your work. You must be brave enough to love completely, confident of the benefit the world feels because of your decision to serve Me in whatever place you have found yourself on each day. Rejoice, dear apostles. Look forward with Me to greater holiness. I will protect My plan for you, but you must make a decision to accept heaven’s peace.

A Happy Time in Ireland!

By Justin Sofio, Young Adult Retreat Coordinator

“27 students! Wow, that’s more than we have room for. We’ll have to call the army to see if they have some extra cots.” That was the initial reaction of the Irish office when I informed them we would have twenty-seven college students from Franciscan University of Steubenville joining us for a three day retreat in Ireland.

A bigger than expected turn out is a great problem to have! Our staff in Ireland showed their resourcefulness and pulled together accommodations and meals for every single one of our guests.

This group of students was a blast to have around, each contributing their joy and personality, kind words and love. It made for a memorable time together. We (DFOT staff) felt so loved by the students. It was a gift.

The retreat itself consists of three days.

DAY ONE: Orientation Day: That is the fancy name we use for our friendly pick up at Dublin Airport, followed by a nice warm meal and then a chance for our jetlagged friends to get their bearings back. (i.e. NAP) For most of the students this trip is their first experience with international travel that included a 5 to 6 hour time change.

DAY TWO: We hit it hard with a mission spirituality day. Students heard a talk from Anne, a lay apostle, and Fr. Darragh Connolly. We celebrated Mass, had the opportunity for Confession, and did a Holy Hour of Adoration. Volunteers from Irish lay apostle prayer groups cooked and served up meals and hospitality.

DAY THREE: Field trip day to Knock Shrine, Clonmacnoise and Galway. Now, I love retreats and have always enjoyed travelling on pilgrimage, but I was totally surprised by the fun that erupted on the bus rides as this



group went from one site to the next. It reminded me of the singing I heard on the trains at World Youth Day in Spain this past summer. It’s a joy you just can’t contain. It spills out of you in laughter and song.

The students’ reactions to the retreat were priceless. So many of them felt blessed to be with us, constantly thanking us for everything we had done for them. Their gratitude was evident each day.

Casey Boerner, a sophomore at Franciscan University said, “The retreat was great! It was so good to hear from Anne directly, how she receives her messages and listen to her speak about her own spirituality. The atmosphere, the DFOT volunteers and staff were so loving. Being able to attend daily Mass and Adoration were so great and now traveling to these holy places (Knock, Clonmacnoise), I’m just so thankful to be here. I know I’ll be reaping the fruits of this for a long time to come.”

Alan Bay, a sophomore shared with us, “I really enjoyed this retreat; the pace of it I thought was perfect. Time to relax, explore

outside, and pray. It helped having the Chapel right down the hall from where we were staying. A big thanks to everyone who made this possible!”

We accept feedback like this as heaven’s way of saying, “Well done!” We consider that salute extends to all lay apostles who pray for us and this mission. Thank you!

Because of the success of these three-day retreats and following heaven’s directive we are hosting a three-week summer session School of Holiness. Our first session will be held this summer June 4th – 22nd. We are asking for prayers and financial assistance to support this effort.

Please see page 3 of this newsletter for more information on attending or supporting this School of Holiness. For more information contact Justin Sofio, Young Adult Retreat Coordinator, at Justin@directionforourtimes.org or call him at our American office at 708-496-9300.

If your University hosts a study abroad program and would like to offer a weekend retreat for the students, please contact Justin!

Serving in Marriage

Inspired by Larry and Mary Sue Eck

By Kevin Sullivan, lay apostle

Shortly before Christmas, I had the privilege of attending the funeral of a Catholic man, Larry Eck. My wife, Crystal, and I had met Larry and his wonderful wife, Mary Sue, when they led a married couples retreat to Medjugorje in 2000 (many may know them as the editors of *Medjugorje Magazine* and founders of the DuPage Marian Center in Chicago, Illinois).

On that trip and through the few visits we had with Larry and Mary Sue during the years of his declining health, we came to know them as a devoted Catholic couple.

But it wasn't until I heard the powerful eulogies delivered by two of their children during Larry's funeral Mass that the true glory of their lives came to life.

During these testimonies to Larry, I saw the powerful impact of two people trying to live out their holiness with others. I could see the Sacrament of Matrimony come alive and

remain active in the lives of their children; how their work together in Marriage Encounter and their service to thousands in our Church through their efforts to share the good news coming through Medjugorje could have a permanent impact on the world. I could almost feel the flow of the graces they had earned in service to their family and the Church.

As I reflected on the power of living a sacramental marriage, I was reminded of something I had heard Anne share just a few months earlier – that the major responsibility of spouses is to help each other grow in holiness and get to heaven.

Yes, that is what it is to be a spouse, but that is also the call to apostleship. Whether married, single, priest or religious, our responsibility is to lead others to heaven.

That day, as I reflected on the lives Larry and Mary Sue had together, it was so obvious to see how they served the Lord by helping



Creators and editors of *Medjugorje Magazine*, Larry and Mary Sue Eck.

each other and so many others come closer to heaven. It struck me that this is what living out the Rescue Mission is all about: devoting one's life to growing closer to Jesus and serving Him by sharing the experience of His love, as well.

The challenge for me now is to live my life each day in such a way as to move along the path to holiness and to help others to climb up their mountains of holiness.

Monthly Message

As given to Anne, a lay apostle

December 1, 2011

Jesus

Dear apostles, it is with hope that I come to you today, speaking these words to your heart. I am hoping that the plans I have for your life will come to fruition. Do I require that you be powerful? Important? Do I need you to be people of great wealth or great influence in the eyes of the world? Will My plan be threatened by your imperfection or your difficulty maintaining holiness in every moment? Do I need only angels? Or do

I need apostles of good will serving exactly where I have placed them? You were created to persevere and even flourish with limited understanding of all that is happening around you and through you. Yes, dear apostles, I am filled with hope. I am hoping that you accept My love. I am hoping that you allow Me to bring you healing, daily. I am hoping that through you I can love and heal others whom you will encounter in your daily experience. I bring you so many gifts of knowing Me, both directly and indirectly. Sometimes, I bring these gifts directly into your soul. Sometimes I send these gifts to you through the soul of another. I am saying that sometimes you will be the recipient of My gifts and sometimes you will be the one

delivering My gifts. We are so united, you and I. We are together now and when you are finished on earth you will understand how closely I worked with you. You will be so happy when you understand the extent to which I blessed others through you. Dear friends, I come at Christmas as an infant in a manger and you rejoice. Truly, understand, that each time you cooperate with Me in your day, you are bringing Me into the world. When you see how others were blessed through your fidelity, you will understand the fullness of rejoicing. Yes, today, your Infant King comes to you with heavenly hope. Beloved apostles, I instruct you to bring this hope to others, regardless of the circumstances around you.

Mission Information Packet Available

DFOT makes free information resources available for clergy who are interested in knowing more about the Lay Apostolate of Jesus Christ the Returning King. Our Mission Packet is available to any priest or bishop, and includes background information, a letter from Anne's bishop, plus Volume One and Volume Four books.

Send us the name of the priest or bishop who is interested in reviewing these materials, and we will send him the entire package at no charge. **Contact the DFOT office for more information.**



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Circles of Service

*An excerpt from
Whispers from
the Cross*

By Anne, a lay apostle

Yes, we are involved in circles of service with others and those who will bring the most from their circles are those who possess a vertical commitment to Jesus Christ. It is for that reason that it is in the best interest of heaven, and the Returning King we serve, to lift others up to their vertical relationship with Jesus.

We can be patient and kind, loving and tolerant, all the while returning love for hostility and setting an example and praying that the other will heed God's promptings for the service destined to be performed in the circle. If, as happens, there are times when another will not accept the example, the love and the grace-prompted duties of the circle with us, then perhaps the circle evaporates and we part company from someone. This is not to be confused with the sacramental union of marriage, although that is of course a circle of service but marriage carries the vocational commitment that other relationships do not.

I believe there are many lost opportunities in life, many instances

when one or the other refuses to serve as Jesus wants him to serve and the result is a circle of hope dissolved. I say circle of hope because each circle of service carries with it heavenly hope. Heaven connects two people, sending grace for the goals. The reason the lay apostolate is so important is because Jesus is sending unique graces for this period of mankind's spiritual history and this period of the development of His bride, the Church. He hopes that each apostle will allow heaven to flow through him with graces of clarity which will direct him to the heavenly goal in each circle of service. What heaven can then achieve is exponentially advanced in terms of effective outcome.

I believe we will see shorter and more abrupt conversions with deeper commitments, calling more people into the religious life and priesthood, and, equally, if not more importantly, in terms of perfecting the model of Church, a laity who are truly co-responsible, as committed to the coming of God's kingdom as the clergy and religious. These groups, working alongside each other, will be cells of holiness and purity of intention ready to be instantly 'deployed' for a heavenly purpose.

People working in cells of holiness can protect each other better than people working on holiness alone. What one cannot see jumps out at another. Perhaps we will see groups of people, cells or even prayer groups, advancing up the mountain of holiness together, tethered as it were, for safety. God is so good to not only send these graces, but to name them for us so that we can make the most possible use of them.