

JESUS IS LORD!

PEOPLE OF HOPE

A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION

**“WERE NOT OUR
HEARTS BURNING
WITHIN US WHILE
HE SPOKE TO US?”**



APRIL 5, 2020

AN EASTER PEOPLE

FR JOHN GORDON

Thank you to Fr. John Gordon for his beautiful Easter exhortation this past Sunday at our People of Hope virtual prayer meeting. We've included the entire talk here so that it may continue to inspire and encourage us.

Good afternoon dearest brothers and sisters.

This is the day the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it Alleluia! Today is the third Sunday of Easter and we find ourselves gathered finally in this virtual way of being together. It's a little odd and peculiar. I'm actually recording this from the chapel of the Holy Spirit at the community office on the grounds of Koinonia Academy. It's Wednesday morning as I'm doing this but I know we're going to be together to do this on Sunday afternoon at our regular prayer meeting time.

I want to preach the gospel message of Easter today and so I want to encourage us to take a moment now, if you haven't already to have some holy water nearby, if you have holy water, and if not, just get a bowl and put some water in it

a because afterwards we want to take in opportunities to bless ourselves with this holy water as a sign of the Easter season that we're in.

Christ is risen Alleluia! He is truly risen Alleluia! In many cultures throughout the world this is a typical greeting during the Easter season. I've been trying for over 30 years to make that what we do here in the northeast of the United States, I am singularly unsuccessful but I'll try it again. Christ is risen Alleluia! Yes he is truly risen Alleluia!

This is good news but it's good news not just now because it's the Easter season but it's good news always. It is St. Augustine who says that "we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song." So it's not merely about a day or even a liturgical season it's about our whole lives oriented to the truth that Christ is risen Alleluia, he is truly risen Alleluia!

and what makes this gospel so compelling is it is absolutely true, that is Jesus' resurrection is an actual historical fact and the Gospels were

written to proclaim this very truth. For example, in Luke 1:1-4 he tells us the reason why he writes the gospel, “In as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have accomplished among us as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word it seemed good to me also having followed all things closely for some time past to write an orderly account for you most excellent Theophilus that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed” or as John says in his Gospel, chapter 20 verses 30-31, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name”. So the historical ground upon which this Easter proclamation of Christ's resurrection from the dead is an historical fact for which the Gospels give evident witness.

What is the evidence that the Gospels proposed? Two primary evidences that they proposed are the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances. The empty tomb on that first Easter several people went looking for Jesus although they fully expected him to be dead, they went to that tomb expecting to find a dead body that they could anoint and care for and show their love and affection. They were totally gobsmacked to find it too empty.

‘What did this mean?’ they must said - they had said to themselves ‘could it all be true?’ Of course the other sign that the Gospels point to is the appearances of the resurrected Jesus. And some people were locked behind doors for fear and yet Jesus appears to them he comes through that door, he comes into that place that is blocked off and locked away. They too were totally gobsmacked to see him. What does this mean? It is all true!

"Christ is Risen, Alleluia! He is truly risen, Alleluia!"

This evidence of the empty tomb and the resurrection appearances is absolutely astounding because the truth of the matter, is the fact of the matter, is that death always wins in the end, or so they thought.

Or so they thought: that everyone would be subject to this battle of death and life in which ultimately life will always succumb, but now we know that in the end Jesus wins! Well actually no, not in the end because if Jesus doesn't win now that he's not gonna win at the end either. So the truth is that Jesus' victory over sin and death is not just something that's going to happen but it already occurred and not just Easter Sunday and the Easter season but always and everywhere! Because as we hear in 1 Corinthians 15:19, “If Christ is not risen from the dead if he's not alive now then of all people we are the most to be pitied”.

But how do we know today that this is all true? How do we know it now? There are no more resurrection appearances of Christ not since ascension Thursday have there been a resurrection appearance of Christ. And the empty tomb is now a huge pilgrimage site. But we look again. Let's look again to the testimony that the Gospels present as I mentioned in Luke 1 and John chapter 20 and that the resurrection story is not just about an empty tomb and about resurrection appearances. The other constant is witnesses, those who witness to the truth of Christ risen from the dead, Christ alive

and not dead. From the Apostles to the Fathers of the Church to the Saints to us witnesses of Jesus witnesses to Jesus not dead, but gloriously alive!

Brothers and sisters, isn't that our experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? That the resurrected Jesus is alive within us? We've already had him within us by virtue of Baptism and Confirmation for many of us if not all of us and what happened at the baptism the Holy Spirit is something stirred up, something was awakened that we no longer thought that Jesus would be dead someplace but he is gloriously alive, he has defeated death! Not just for himself but for us, for you and me here and now. We know that Jesus wins. When we experience the power to resist temptation Jesus wins. When we are able to forgive or hurt or an enemy, Jesus wins. When we know the truth in confusion, brothers and sisters, Jesus wins. And when we can find a hint of joy even in the presence of death, Jesus wins. And ultimately when we have hope in the midst of fear, Jesus wins.

So we enter into that great witness, line of witnesses, the great cloud of witnesses, not just something in the past before us but now so that we too are alive and about. And what we witness too is the fact that there has been a real battle seemingly against an invincible foe. And yet we call the words of the Easter sequence "that death and life have contended in that combat stupendous, the prince of life who died reigns alive reigns immortal". Brothers and sisters, Jesus' victory over sin and death at Easter assures it is about a battle that has been gloriously and ultimately and definitively fought and won by Jesus Christ. Again not something that in the end he wins, but he's winning now when I forgive, when I find hope, when I have confidence, when I'm able to do something I could not do in my own, I'm able to

turn the other cheek or go the extra mile or so an act of kindness or charity or even in the midst of my personal struggles whatever they might be I might know that it's not about me but about him. It's not about finding only problems and difficulties, for then I'm looking firmly, I'm looking firmly at myself.

But I know that he who has risen from the dead today here for me we are victorious in Jesus resurrection insofar as we are in Christ. As the Word of God tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation". how did we get to be in Christ dearest brothers and sisters? This has been what baptism has done for us. We realize this victory in ourselves through the grace of baptism. In Romans 6:3-11, the Word of God tells us "that do you know that you who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death and by participating with him in his death we likewise participate in his resurrection" and just as death has no power over him as Romans 6:10 says "so death has no power over those United to him by the great gift and sacrament of baptism", which is what Lent was all about preparing us for this baptismal promise preparing us through this renewal a baptismal grace. And so as we find ourselves in the midst of this crazy situation which we find ourselves there is, brothers and sisters. I want to invite us today to exercise that grace of being witnesses to Jesus risen from the dead. That Jesus victory is alive here and now despite all the things going on about us despite the skirmishes, despite even death, a death that does not last, a death that is not the total package of death that is not victorious.

And so I invite you to get that holy water that I

asked you to get at the very beginning for that bowl of water and we are going to take the opportunity dearest brothers and sisters as a as a body together to renew our baptismal commitment so that we might be witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an empty tomb resurrection appearances but even more he is alive with each of our hearts.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, through the Paschal mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism so that we may walk with Him in newness of life. Now that our Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism by which we once renounced Satan and his works and promised to serve God in the Holy Catholic Church. And dearest brothers and sisters I invite you to respond as vigorously as your faith allows.

“Do you renounce sin so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?”

“Do you renounce the law of evil so that sin may have no mastery over you?”

“Do you renounce Satan the author and Prince of sin?”

“Do you believe in God the Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth?”

“Do you believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord who is born of the Virgin Mary suffered death and was buried rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?”

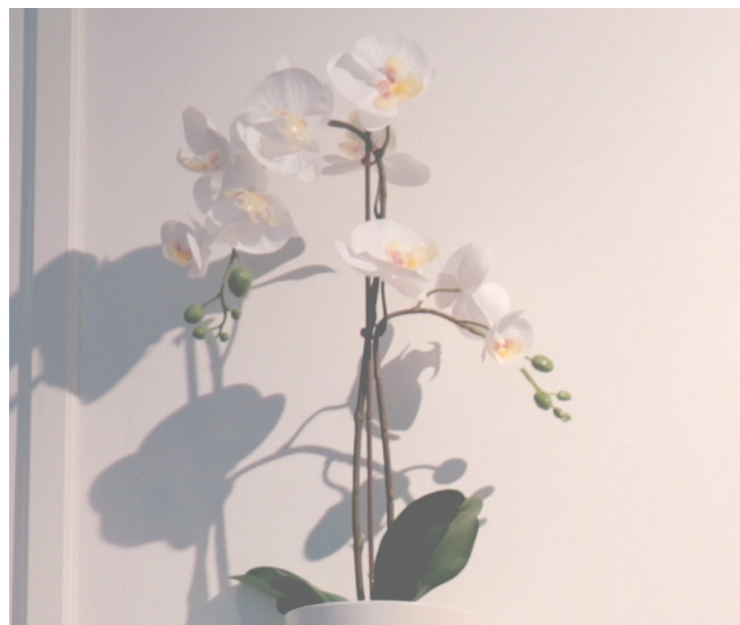
“Do you believe in the Holy Spirit the Holy Catholic Church the communion of saints the forgiveness of sins the resurrection of the body and life Everlasting?”

May Almighty God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestowed on us forgiveness of our

sins keep us by His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord for eternal life now and forever Amen and Amen and Amen.

Brothers and sisters sealed with this grace of the Holy Spirit sealed with this wonderful promise of God the resurrection of Christ is not just some oddity or not just the thing that happened long ago and far away. It's alive because he's alive in us, let us celebrate this, let us acknowledge that even in the midst of everything else that looks like death, Jesus is alive. For Christ is risen Alleluia! He is truly risen Alleluia! God bless you.

"And when we can find a hint of joy even in the presence of death, Jesus wins. And ultimately when we have hope in the midst of fear, Jesus wins!"



APRIL 2020

A REMOTE EASTER

THE JOY OF EASTER AMIDST A TIME OF
ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

*"Easter still came
despite the changes in
who we saw and what
we wore - He is alive,
and that FACT never
changes!!"*

WRITTEN BY JOY TOUHILL

The Touhill Family is alive and well and definitely not taking that for granted! Alleluia! He is Risen!! The one thing we realized as this "very different" Easter arrived is that everything around us is cancelled or shut down but not EASTER!!! It still came despite the changes in who we saw and what we wore - He is alive, and that FACT never changes!! So we tried to embrace that victory with some new changes (possibly new traditions?) and kept some old (thankfully Cadbury MiniEggs were still on sale!)

We usually start our Easter with the Easter Vigil, so instead, we gathered around a campfire on Saturday night. We listened to the "Exultant" being sung as we watched Our Lord dispel the darkness as the fire does! No campfire would be complete without marshmallows, so we roasted PEEPS - mixed reviews! The next morning, we saw the empty tomb and were able to have our traditional candy hunt! Even our oldest son, Jonathan, stepped up, having his own egg hunt for his siblings in place of the ones we traditionally have at the grandparents! Later, attending mass in our living room, we were blessed by the magnificent sounds of the St. Patrick's Cathedral organ and inspired by Cardinal Dolan's words of the glory of the empty tomb! Traditionally on Mary Street, we have an Easter Parade with balloons, singing, and all but this year - we didn't let the COVID-19 virus steal our spirits!



There was singing, balloons, and waves as we all celebrated on our own lawns keeping socially distant but spiritually one!!! With zoom calls and texts for Happy Easter from family and friends, the joy of the Truly Risen Lord was felt and celebrated. Some traditions were the same, some different but as we kicked off this glorious season, we have already felt His glory and experienced His Joy! He is Risen - that never changes! We pray that whatever situation you all find yourself in the season, you can too experience He who is the same, Yesterday, Today, and Forever! Alleluia!

The strife is o'er,
the battle done
Now is the Victor's
triumph won;
O let the song of
praise be sung.
Alleluia!

JOY & HOPE

A M I D S T H A R D S H I P

by Maureen Floyd

I have been trying to make a few calls each day, to stay in touch with family and friends. Today I called Ginny Zipf. She was so very happy hear my voice and greeted me with great warmth. She shared with me how a woman from her church who lives nearby was helping her during this coronavirus pandemic. Ginny told me that her neighbor was buying her groceries, picking up her prescriptions and bringing her a meal every day. Ginny said she had no way to thank this kind woman for all that she is doing. I told her I thought Howie had sent her an angel! She said, YES he has!!

I was so inspired by Ginny's faith and positive attitude at this time. As we know, she recently lost her dear husband Howie and is still adjusting to life without him, but she thanks God every day for His faithfulness to her.

She told me about a beautiful forsythia bush outside her window, and that when she opens the shade each morning she says 'Good morning sunshine!'

I wanted to call Ginny to encourage her and she ended up blessing me!

"I WANTED TO CALL GINNY TO ENCOURAGE HER AND SHE ENDED UP BLESSING ME!"

Our Lord, the Risen One, is caring for us all in this unusual time. Let's press on in keeping faith as our sister Ginny is showing us how to do.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

THOUGHTS ON THE REMOTE CHURCH EXPERIENCE

INTERVIEW WITH PETE
TOMASELLO

Q: WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT PHYSICALLY ATTENDING MASS?

A: We miss receiving Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist. Also, every Sunday, we would attend the same mass as my parents and have brunch at their house afterwards. We really miss this family time.

Q: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO HELP MAINTAIN YOUR FAITH LIFE ON SUNDAYS? HAS THERE BEEN ANY TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED WITH THAT?

A: We use technology to attend our home parish (Little Flower) mass every Sunday. It is so nice to see a familiar setting and familiar faces. Besides the normal homily, our pastor, Father Andy, sends a video with a message every Sunday that warms our hearts. It usually contains "spiritual homework" for the upcoming week.

We've been hosting and attending regular virtual Lord's Days since the quarantine began. We start with the prayers, break for dinner, and come back on for fellowship and entertainment after dinner. It has been an amazing way to use technology to stay connected



**Q: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PRAY FOR A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION?
WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN LIKE WITH PRAYING FOR IT?**

A: We feel that God has provided the grace that has been needed for every moment and every challenge. We've had our breakdown moments like everyone else, but they end on our knees which is where we should have been to begin with. We can only describe this grace as sacramental grace, even with the absence of the physical sacraments. God yearns to be near us more than we could ever yearn to be near Him and so he is breaking the boundaries of time and space to be present in our lives.

**"GOD YEARNS TO BE
NEAR US MORE THAN
WE COULD EVER
YEARN TO BE NEAR
HIM"**



The Tomasello family getting ready for Mass at home

**Q: WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD
TO AFTER THIS "SELF-ISOLATION" ENDS?**

A: Going to mass and confession for starters. Then, hiring a baby sitter and going on date night without the kids! Maybe we could combine both into one date. We also would like to stay at a beach house with the kids for a few days.



HEALTH CARE HEROES

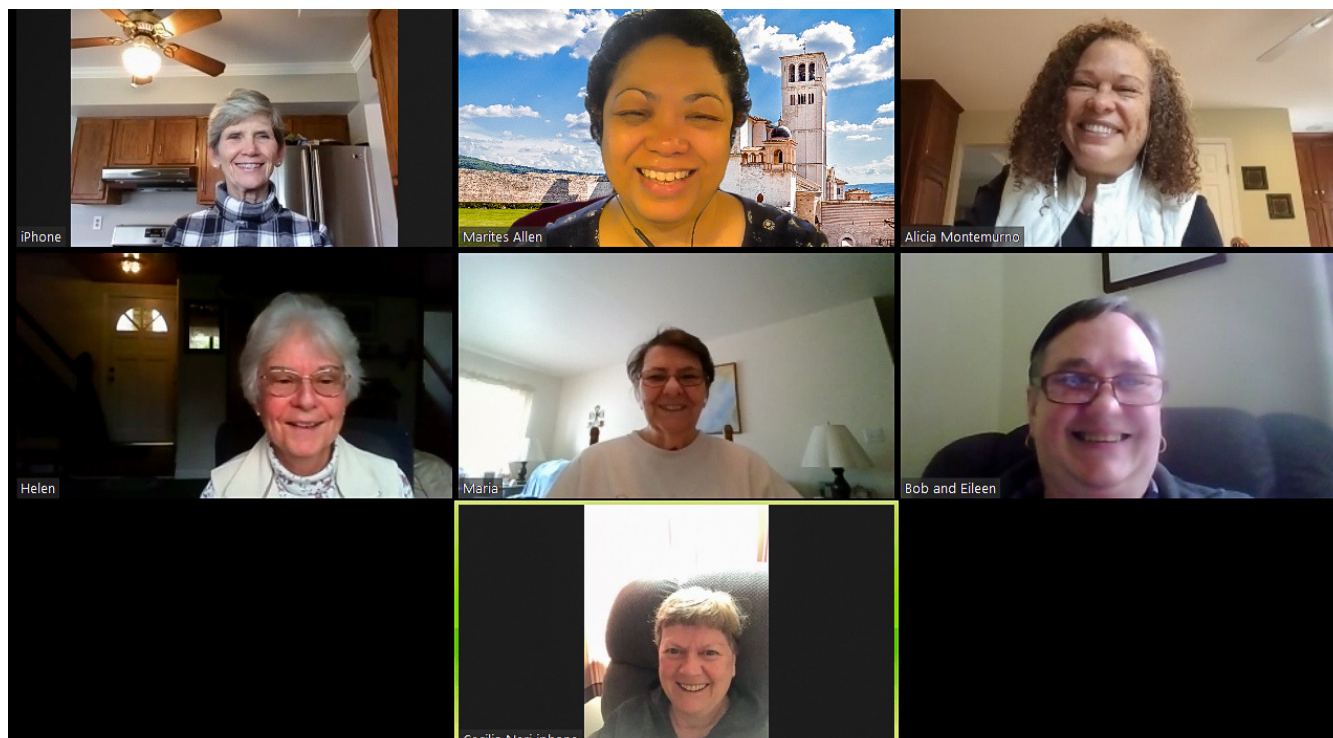
Let's remember to thank and keep in our prayers the following brothers and sisters in the People of Hope, and family and friends, who are on the front lines caring for those most in need during this pandemic.

- Jane Apuzzo
- Marianne Benson
- Anne Cantine
- Dr. Joe Clemente
- Daria Moccia
- Mary Kathleen Molnar
- Kate Nordstrom
- Charlie Pepper
- Arlene Peregrin

Heavenly Father, we place in your protective hands all these healthcare workers and their families during this time. Bless their work, the patients they care for, and all affected by this virus. Amen.

'Zoom' Past Isolation

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS IN A TIME OF QUARANTINE



Isolation is a real challenge to the blessings of our Small Group relationships. Technology to the rescue! Besides phone calls, emails and texts, our Share Group has been "Zooming" online. Zoom offers a free online meeting format, allowing a visual and audio opportunity for groups separated by location. Our small group has Zoomed weekly for 45 minute sessions, enjoying each others' faces & voices, prayers, encouragement and updates. Marites Allen patiently guides us through the tech challenges of connecting 7 iPhones or computer screens. We smile and wave as each sister appears on screen.

Many of us shared how our Lent and Easter in isolation has been like a beautiful retreat, especially with so many prayer opportunities online and on TV.

We also have a renewed thirst for Jesus in the Eucharist. We do look forward to celebrating our Baptismal Days in person at some point, but in the meantime it's great to share our ups and downs, our spiritual insights, and encouragement to go back to 'isolation' with renewed hope and joy. We even pray over one another for our needs. The 'virtual' visits can't include hugs, but we feel closer than sitting 6 feet apart with masks on!

Many of us have Zoomed with our separated families as well. My favorite Zoom was a virtual tea party with my granddaughters, complete with fancy hats, tea sets, lace tablecloths, scones, and lots of laughter! Zoom brings our isolated relationships to a whole new level!

**"ZOOM BRINGS
OUR ISOLATED
RELATIONSHIPS
TO A WHOLE
NEW LEVEL!"**

HELEN
O'MULLAN



VIRTUAL LORD'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

A Reflection on Lord's Days during Isolation

It feels strange for me to write about the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day is meant for Christians to come together and celebrate the risen Lord as a "family". However, I live alone and the lockdown restrictions during this coronavirus pandemic have left me further isolated from my fellow Christians. But perhaps it is this very isolation that helps me appreciate more deeply the value of our communion as the family of God. Most of us who grew up in community can have a tendency to take it for granted, or not appreciate just how much of a blessing it is to be in community. This is a blessing that many people do not experience in today's world! It urges us all the more to reach out to these people and invite them into the communion we experience with each other and with the Lord.

I was very happy to see many families from our People of Hope community gather together for the virtual Lord's Day on the 4th of April, 2020. Even though we couldn't see each other, the chat section was very much alive with a lot of members participating. It was also very pleasant to see families sharing that they are praying for other families in the community. As members of Compass, we too recently had an informal Lord's Day with quite a few houses participating. It was nice that we saw each other and could actually speak to each other through video conferencing.

The current lockdown situation surprisingly reminds me of Acts 2:44 - "And all who believed were together and had all things in common". It seems to me that the suffering caused by this pandemic is common to all of us now, and is one more

factor that unites us. I am thankful to the Lord for this time. Personally, it has been a time of tremendous spiritual growth, especially during the past season of Lent when I reflected a lot on the death of Jesus and how it saves us. The lockdown meant I found more time to think and reflect and spend more time with the Lord as well.

I miss in-person gatherings a lot. But God gives us different seasons in our life, so let us make the most of this isolation while it lasts. I believe and hope that this isolation will generate a greater desire in us for communion with one another. That means you are going to have to invite me for Lord's Day some time soon :) and I'm gonna have to buy a dining table to start hosting a few myself!

- Wesley Falcao

"I believe and hope that this isolation will generate a greater desire in us for communion with one another"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please visit our website for a record of all of the digital resources we have featured in our bulletin during Covid-19.



PRAISE & WORSHIP ADORATION

Our own Tim Margiotta leads a weekly praise & worship Eucharistic Adoration for St Bartholomew parish in Scotch Plains, NJ.

ST BARTHOLOMEW PARISH ADORATION LIVESTREAM

SATURDAYS after 5:00 PM MASS

- [More info on St Bartholomew's website](#)
- [Past livestreams on Youtube](#)

DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET

**FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE
RENEWAL**

[Youtube Link](#)

PODCAST

**"LET LOVE" A PODCAST FROM
THE SISTERS OF LIFE**

[Link to podcast](#)

**IMMEDIATE
NEED**

- Paul Giegerich
- Jackie Donnelley
- Don Campbell
- Judah Miklosovic
(grandson of John
and Mary Quense)

**SERIOUS &
ONGOING**

- Eleanor Benson
- Dick Birmingham
- Margaret Fierro
- Laura Greey
- Shannon Hardy
- Danielle Neri
- Lee Scarfone

**AROUND THE SWORD
OF THE SPIRIT**

- Steve Clark - Servants of
the Word, Chelsea, MI
- Jan Munk - Work of
Christ, Lansing, MI
- Mike Luea (Father in
law of Cristin Touhill-
Luea) - Work of Christ,
Lansing, MI
- Peter Smith - Triumph
of the Cross, MD

Please visit our website peopleofhope.net/prayerintentions to see our complete list of our prayer intentions and to add to our list.



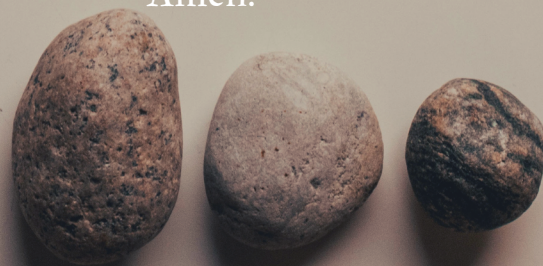
**2020 PRAYER
PETITION HIGHLIGHT**
THE CALL & MISSION OF THE
PEOPLE OF HOPE:

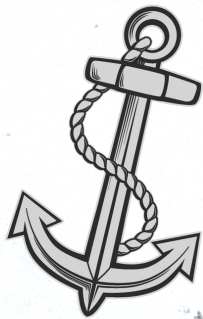
Help us to fully embrace our call from God as a Catholic, Charismatic, Covenant Community and our mission of prayer, family life and evangelization. May we live out our covenant and essentials of good membership. Bless our full membership in the Sword of the Spirit, a community of disciples on mission.

*"Dismiss all anxiety from your minds.
Present your needs to God in every form of
prayer and in petitions full of gratitude"*

PHIL. 4:6

Amen.







THE PEOPLE OF HOPE

A COMMUNITY OF DISCIPLES ON MISSION

908.222.9722

info@peopleofhope.net // www.peopleofhope.net

1040 Plainfield Ave, Plainfield, NJ 07060

 @thepeopleofhope  @peopleofhopenj