



# CHRISTLIFE™

CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION

July/August 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently I had the pleasure of fly-fishing for Shad, an ocean run fish that come up the Chesapeake Bay and then up rivers in large schools to spawn before returning to the ocean. What an amazing creature! When the Shad run begins, I can't wait to get into the river and take the first cast!

Well one evening I happened to be catching a lot of Shad and a young man was watching from the bank and asked if he could join me. I gave him one of my flies affectionately named the Nodar nose and tied by one of our Board of Directors, Michael Timmis! Helping this man catch some fish obviously made him happy and as we talked he shared how he hated his job and was constantly stressed out.

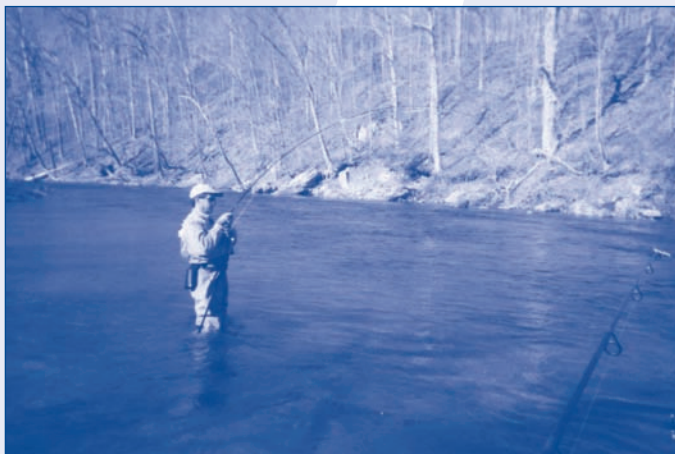
I told him that I loved my job, which prompted the question, "what do you do?" So I shared that I worked for a Catholic organization, ChristLife, which helped people to come to know the meaning of life. That opened up a friendly conversation and before leaving I assured him that if he talked with God about his situation and sincerely desired to draw near to Him, God promises that He will draw near to him (cf. James 4:8). As a result of our time together he has continued to e-mail me, and my prayer is that he will come to know Jesus as Lord and return to the Church (he is Catholic and hasn't been going for some time). I simply sowed seeds of God's love and others must help to water and nurture it (1 Cor. 3:6). Lord, send him servants of your good news!

The Lord wants us to be willing to share our stories of God's love when given the opportunity anytime and anywhere in our daily lives. Pray that the Lord will give us opportunities to share this week!

Let's put out into the deep for a catch!

Your brother,

Dave Nodar



**"The mission entrusted to us ... consists in recalling, in the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, that our Savior 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2:4). This, and nothing else, is the purpose of the Church: the salvation of individual souls."**

*Pope Benedict XVI, May 11, 2007*

# DISCOVERING CHRIST AT THE CHURCH OF THE CRUCIFIXION

by Fr. Erik Arnold

In the days following Easter Sunday the Church draws the readings at Mass from the many different Gospel accounts of the Lord's appearances to the disciples after his resurrection. What we learn in each of these passages is that those who encounter the Risen Christ discover him in a new way – it is not simply a return to

by a teaching and then a chance to meet together in small groups. While the dynamic seems simple, something special begins to happen over the course as hearts begin to open, friendships develop and people begin to see and experience Jesus in a different way than they had before.



As a pastor, *Discovering Christ* reaffirmed for me the important role that small groups have in our work of evangelization. To hear solid, faithful teaching is essential, but following the proclamation of the Good News, an environ-

ment must be provided where the one who heard the message can begin to respond to it, ask questions and reflect on it. In responding to the message, one's mind and heart begins to open in a deeper way, even if initially it is only through questions and doubts. These questions and doubts can often be the beginning of a deep and profound conversion, provided that there are others who offer encouragement, support and love along the way. Without small groups to provide this opportunity, the teaching (no matter how good it might be) can end up being treated like a television show: entertaining, but not life changing.

So there is a need for both solid teaching and an envi-

ronment for it to penetrate the heart. *Discovering Christ* provides both of these and can be used by parishes to offer, as a priest friend puts it, not just information but inspiration. There are many parish programs that offer information about Jesus. *Discovering Christ* is not one of them. It is a relational course designed to bring people into a life-changing encounter with the Lord Jesus. This requires that those who assist in running it also be evangelized themselves and share the goal of bringing others to a relationship with Christ and the Church. For some, this might sound foreign, but it has been a constant theme in the preaching of Pope Benedict. Just recently, the Holy Father, speaking to a gathering in Rome, said "Only those who know and love Jesus Christ can introduce their brothers and sisters to a living relationship

with Him." So *Discovering Christ* is valuable not only for those who participate but also for those who help to run it, calling them to focus their hearts on the great goal of all evangelization: encounter with Christ.

My parish was richly blessed during *Discovering Christ* and I look forward to it being made available to other parishes in the future. The work of evangelization and parish renewal requires much of those who want to make it happen. There is no silver bullet or magic program that will do the work for us, but for those who want to move from information to offering inspiration and transformation, then *Discovering Christ* is it.

Fr. Erik Arnold is the Archbishop's appointed member to ChristLife's Board of Directors. Fr. Erik will be leaving Crucifixion parish this summer to become the new pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Elkridge, MD.

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what they knew before, but there is something different that transforms those who encounter him.

During six weeks of the Easter season my parish was blessed to have a similar encounter with Christ as we hosted the pilot sessions of ChristLife's new course *Discovering Christ*. This new course is designed to bring men and women into an encounter with Christ and the Church through teaching, fellowship and prayer together. For six weeks participants hear solid teaching that proclaims the heart of the Gospel message, inviting them to reflect and respond in a small group of friends that offers support and encouragement over the six weeks. Each evening begins with dinner together, followed

## YOUNG ADULTS AT ST. AGNES' DISCOVERING CHRIST COURSE

As part of the development process, ChristLife is running pilot courses in several locations across the Archdiocese. Following the pilot course in the Spring at Crucifixion Parish, ChristLife began working with young adults in Catonsville and is currently running the course for 50-60 young adults at St. Agnes. We expect to complete course development in Summer 2008.



With a special interest in running this course for young adults (18-30s), ChristLife is planning on engaging 1-2 more parish communities with *Discovering Christ* before filming in Spring 2008. For more information, visit [www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org) or contact us at [info@christlife.org](mailto:info@christlife.org) or 410.531.7701.

# A FUTURE SEMINARIAN REFLECTS ON HIS TIME AT CHRISTLIFE

by Chad Zik

I must begin by saying that my experience at ChristLife served as an excellent preparation for my current journey in a seminary formation program. The opportunity at ChristLife to participate in the Church's mission of evangelization pressed upon me the great importance of such work in the life of every Catholic. My internship provided me with great experience working with dedicated Catholics who had profoundly deep relationships with the Lord and whose daily actions directly reflected that heart-felt faith. Furthermore, the beauty of the truth of Jesus is so important to the staff that the mission of evangelization is a natural outpouring of a personal faith.

While at ChristLife, I came to realize the great hunger among average Americans for a genuine faith. I came to see that people had a deep personal need for friendship and love that only Christ could fulfill. The Sharing Christ and Discovering Christ courses, in addition to the mission trip to Slovakia, provided evidence of the Holy Spirit's active guidance of ChristLife's ministry. As a result of these experiences, it was often beautiful to see the changes in people's lives after encountering Christ in a deeply personal way. It is hard to believe that people can grow up so long in the Church and miss the beautiful truth of God's reckless love for them! And yet - it happens, which makes the work of ChristLife's ministry all the more important. Now that I have moved on to parish work, I feel adequately prepared to carry on in ministry. As a result of my internship at ChristLife, I see how the work of the parish in the administration of sacraments is so important in communicating the love of God through Christ. However, without a firm foundation and internal recognition that God is love, such wonderful gifts often fall on infertile ground.



Another aspect of ChristLife's ministry that deeply impacted me was the childlike trust of the ministry on God's providence. Living in an American society where we try to live as securely as possible with retirement funds, insurance, and the like, seeing a ministry that lives month-to-month depending upon God's provision was shocking. However, it is also beautiful to see how when we allow ourselves to take risks with God, we learn to trust Him, and as we learn to trust Him, we also learn to love Him.

As I continue my work in the Church, I will be forever indebted to ChristLife's role in my own formation. The internship provided me with a haven of God's love in the midst of my life as a student at a secular university. I pray that those who follow me as interns at ChristLife may be as profoundly impacted as I was. And of course, I mustn't forget to give God praise and thanksgiving for providing me with such an opportunity to grow closer to Him.

## NEW DIRECTIONS

After six years of very fruitful full-time service as a member of ChristLife's team, Dianne Martin has stepped



down from her full-time position because of our financial limitations. This was, to say the least, sacrificial on Dianne's part. She resigned for the sake of helping ChristLife to continue our mission.

Dianne carried many responsibilities here in our office. Additionally many of you who have had the opportunity to hear her teach and experience prayer ministry with her, know that we are losing a significant member of our full-time team. Dianne will continue to serve in a volunteer capacity.

Please pray that the Lord will open the doors for where He has for her to serve. You can still reach Dianne at [dianne@christlife.org](mailto:dianne@christlife.org)

## CALENDAR EVENTS

*Come and Bring a Friend!*

### **Discovering Christ for Young Adults (18-32)**

Tuesdays, June 19 - July 24th, 7:00-9:00 PM  
St. Agnes Parish

### **ChristLife Missionary Corps.**

July 18 & 25, 7:30-9:00 PM  
ChristLife Offices

## JULIE ASCOSI INTERNS A SECOND SUMMER

Our Young Adult Coordinator, Pete Ascosi, is happy to have his younger sister on board at ChristLife for the second summer in a row. Julie, who is currently a student at Mount Saint Mary's University, is taking a break from studies this summer to apply her experience in communications and her love for Jesus Christ here at ChristLife.

A fresh burst of enthusiasm at the ministry, Julie is working closely with Pete on administrating a young adult version of the Discovering Christ course at St. Agnes in Catonsville, MD. In addition, she is making a great contribution to web communications and podcasting.

If you are or know a college student interested in interning this upcoming semester at ChristLife, please contact Pete Ascosi at 410.531.7701 or [pete@christlife.org](mailto:pete@christlife.org)

CHRISTLIFE is a tax exempt ministry dedicated to equipping Catholics for the work of evangelization. To continue in this work, we depend entirely on the donations of fellow Christians like you. Please send donations to: CHRISTLIFE: 12290-A Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042 USA, *We appreciate your support!*

For more information on our mission and activities visit our web site: [www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)

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