JESUITS
MARYLAND PROVINCE • USA NORTHEAST PROVINCE
SUMMER 2020
JESUITS of the East Coast
Collaborators in Mission
SPECIAL EDITION
PULL-OUT SECTION INSIDE!
Dear Friends,

At the release of our last issue of JESUITS back in January, we could never have imagined the current situation that has changed our whole world. Like so many, we had such hopeful excitement for 2020, only to see our enthusiasm evaporate so abruptly with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our schools and universities closed early, our parishes and retreat centers sat idle, and we mourned the loss of some very close friends and family, including a number of our Jesuits, who succumbed to the coronavirus. It has, no doubt, been a daunting year for all of us.

As people of faith, however, we remain convinced that the light of Christ will continue to shine through the darkness. Although forced to shut down and shelter away, our Jesuit schools and apostolates rose up to find creative ways of assisting health care workers, serving the poor, offering online Masses, providing spiritual direction and leading virtual retreats. Our Jesuits and lay colleagues also moved forward with plans to launch the new USA East Province on July 21. You can read about these many happenings, and more, in the coming pages.

The start of the new province will bring to a close our service as provincials of the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces, respectively—provinces whose rich histories are acknowledged in this issue and presented along with the size and scope of the new province, under the leadership of our successor, Fr. Joseph O’Keefe, SJ. It has been an honor and privilege to accompany you—brother Jesuits, friends, donors, parishioners, alumni, faculty and students. The Jesuits of the East Coast, some 650 of us, will continue to teach, minister, collaborate with and serve the People of God, all for His greater glory.

In a year during which we have given up so much, we remember that St. Ignatius asked only this—for the love and grace of God, and nothing more. We pray for an abundance of that love and grace for each one of you.

Sincerely in Christ,

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From Our Provincials

Very Rev. Robert M. Hossey, SJ Provincial, Maryland Province

Very Rev. John J. Cecero, SJ Provincial, USA Northeast Province

Fr. Joseph O’Keefe, SJ, [center], new provincial for the USA East Province, converses with Loyola Blakefield’s Dr. Maura Mast, dean of the college, at the statue of St. Ignatius on campus.

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Maryland Province: www.mdsj.org

USA Northeast Province: www.JesuitsEast.org

For Advancement:

James F. Keenan, SJ Provincial Assistant to the Provincial

JesuitsMagazine@jesuits.org
New Appointments and Leadership

Susan Baber has been named the associate provincial assistant for secondary education for the USA East Province. A graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, Susan most recently worked as the director of campus ministry and the director of adult formation for the Loyola School in New York City, where she also taught theology and was the department chair. Susan will assume this new role in August 2020. Her predecessor, Susan Baber, will assume this new role and was the department chair.

Christian J. Cashman has been named the next president of Fairfield College Preparatory School, effective July 1, 2020. Previously a teacher in the theology department at the high school, Cashman is returning after a three-year stint as the president and head of school at Northwest Catholic, where he not only acted as the Catholic spiritual leader and chief development officer of the school, but also oversaw all professional staff, budgetary processes, official communications and gift-giving.

Fr. Daniel Corrou, SJ, has been appointed the new regional director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in the Middle East and North Africa region by Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ. Fr. Corrou will assume this role on July 1, 2020. JRS is an international nongovernmental organization with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate for the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people in several regions, including the Middle East and North Africa.

Fr. Brendan Lally, SJ, has been named the USA East Province’s delegate for senior Jesuits, effective January 1, 2022. Fr. Lally is currently superior of the Jesuit Community at Saint Joseph’s University. In this new role, he will hear the account of conscience and be responsible for the cura personalis of senior Jesuits in the province’s health care communities. Fr. Myles Sheehan, SJ, who is currently in this role, will continue to serve in this capacity through December.

Fr. Thomas Benz, SJ, has been appointed the assistant to the provincial for Pastoral and International Ministries for the USA East Province, effective September 1, 2020. Fr. Benz will succeed Fr. Edward Quinnan, SJ, who, after a brief sabbatical, will assume a new position of service in the new province. Fr. Benz has served as superior of the Jesuit Community of Micronesia since September 1, 2013. During that time, he helped foster communication among the members of a widely dispersed community, as well as oversaw and supported their pastoral and educational ministries.

Nativity Preparatory School in Boston has announced that Gadisa Goso has been named the next principal, effective for the 2020-2021 academic year. Mr. Goso is a member of Nativity Prep’s class of 1997 and previously taught at Nativity. Mr. Goso will rejoin the Nativity Prep community from Boston College High School, where he most recently served as director of enrollment. The 2020-2021 school year will also mark the 30th anniversary of Nativity Prep.

Father General Arturo Sosa has approved the appointment of Fr. Edward Quinnan, SJ, as the superior of the Jesuit Community of Micronesia, where he will work closely with vice-superiors in Yap and Fiji and serve as a delegate in Chuuk to promote a sense of common mission across the works. Fr. Quinnan will replace Fr. Thomas Benz, SJ, who will assume the position of provincial assistant for Pastoral and International Ministries on September 1, 2020.

Earlier this year, Fr. Joseph M. O’Keefe, SJ, stepped down as superior of the Spellman Hall Jesuit Community in the Bronx to prepare for his new role as provincial of the USA East Province. Fr. Christopher M. Cullen, SJ, has been serving as acting superior of the community.

Earlier this year, Fr. Angelo (AJ) Rizzo, SJ, has been named the next president of Scranton Prep, effective July 1, 2021. Fr. Rizzo was ordained in 2017 and currently serves Regis High School in New York as director of Mission and Identity. As a scholar, he taught English, theology and Latin at Scranton Prep and is an alumnus of the University of Scranton. He has also served on the boards at several Jesuit high schools across the country, including Fairfield Prep.
Those steeped in the Jesuit mantra of a “faith that does justice” know what “magis” means. By itself, it is simply a Latin word that means “more.” To the Society of Jesus and their Ignatian partners in mission, it means “doing more for Christ, and therefore doing more for others.” It usually entails reaching out to those on the margins, those struggling to get by—the poor, the lonely, the imprisoned, the sick. The magis is indeed a challenge, a challenge to rise up against adversity and out of our comfort zones so that we can meet the disadvantaged where they are and truly walk with them. Accompaniment is the first step in offering ourselves to others in service.

This year in particular, the call to “do more for Christ by doing more for others” has never been more dire. Who could have foreseen the invisible tempest that brewed against our nation and the world in the form of a highly contagious and often deadly coronavirus? And yet, as the virus made its way into all 50 of our states—closing businesses, social gatherings, schools and universities—the need to serve the less fortunate became more important than ever. To add to the challenge, those in need of help suddenly became more than the poor and the sick. Many self-sufficient people abruptly found themselves without access to groceries. Millions of happily employed Americans one week were jobless and struggling to make ends meet the next. Health care workers accustomed to organized shifts and routine patient care were thrust into a danger zone, often ill-equipped to protect themselves from exposure. But the most troubling aspect was that this was not taking place in some third-world country. These were our neighbors … our friends … our family.

To make matters worse, in a desperate effort to get a grip on the pandemic, stay-at-home orders were imposed throughout the country. Businesses were forced to shut down. Key supply chains were suddenly in jeopardy. Schools and universities closed and sent students home. Jesuits and their colleagues found themselves in unchartered territory—wanting to serve others while under strict guidelines NOT to interact with anyone.

Where there is God’s will, however, there is always a way. Our Jesuit schools and universities stepped up to live and breathe the magis as never before. Without literally a day to spare, many Jesuit institutions shifted gears to meet increasingly new demands quickly. The immediate need for protective gear for hospital staff and health care workers was paramount. Loyola University Maryland joined a host of other Ignatian social enterprises in Baltimore and began using its lab of 3D printers to help mass-produce plastic face shield parts to be assembled for...
government affairs at the University of Scranton, who led the development of the program. “This was an effort to support the well-being of community members in need and help our local economy.”

Students from Jesuit universities who now found themselves suddenly off campus and back at home also discovered ways to help and raise money. Instead of lamenting over her senior year getting cut short at Georgetown University, Ariana Mastrogiannis organized a GoFundMe campaign that paid local restaurants to deliver meals to the emergency departments and intensive care units of New York hospitals, where her cousin is a resident physician. She exceeded her $7,000 goal.

Loyola School in New York City started a fundraiser called Lunch 4 Life that provides hot meals for the staff at Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem. An anonymous donor even stepped forward and gave $20,000 to the program. At St. Peter’s Prep in New Jersey, campus ministry began a “hands-off” donation campaign to get students involved in delivering food and clothing to local community drop-off centers in need of items.

In addition to masks and protective eyewear, another commodity became in short supply for first responders—food. Fordham Prep moved swiftly on this need too, raising $40,000 to help feed emergency room workers. As a way to also assist a local restaurant, the money was donated to a nearby deli that in turn kept the ER fed twice a day, a great win-win for everyone. Similarly, the University of Scranton came together to help struggling area restaurants and low-income families at the same time. It developed a program encouraging Scranton residents to donate money to be used for gift-cards from local restaurants which were then given to families facing a financial burden. The program raised $8,000 on its first day. “The COVID-19 crisis created additional hardship for those who were already experiencing economic insecurity,” said Julie Schumacher Cohen, assistant vice president for community engagement and government affairs at the University of Scranton, who led the development of the program. “This was an effort to support the well-being of community members in need and help our local economy.”

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Creative thinking and fast action became a reflex at these Jesuit schools and universities. Suddenly faced with $60,000 worth of food that would potentially go to waste with students no longer on campus, Fairfield University quickly donated the food to the Connecticut Food Bank. “It was a significant amount of food,” said Duane Gornicki, Fairfield’s general manager of dining services. “She (the food bank coordinator) was so moved, she broke down and cried.”

The examples could go on and on and fill this magazine from cover to cover with stories of how our Ignatian family stepped up to “do more.” That is what living the magis is all about. When we realize that by serving others, we are serving Christ, the drive to “do more” becomes second nature. AMDG.

local hospitals. “First responders and health care workers are today’s heroes,” said Matthew Treskon, technology librarian at Loyola University. “I’m glad my colleagues at Loyola and I could use our skills and technology to support our community.” The university also offered pro-bono business counseling to small businesses fighting for survival during the pandemic.

Fordham Prep stepped up to assist health care workers on the front lines as well. As New York’s COVID-19 cases started to spike, Fordham prep’s president, Fr. Christopher Devron, SJ, learned of the extraordinary surge of patients at St. Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx and the increased demand for personal protective equipment. Without a moment’s hesitation, the school immediately donated all of the safety goggles from its science laboratories. “Jesuit education is committed to service and advancing the common good,” said Fr. Devron. “I am so pleased that our resources could assist.”
Finding God on Zoom: Ignatian Spirituality Goes Online

Zoom video calls. Some Jesuits took to social media to offer encouragement and spiritual accompaniment; Fr. James Martin, SJ, for example, introduced “daily faith sharing” to his followers on Facebook, streamed live from his Jesuit residence in New York City.

The Office of Ignatian Spirituality (OIS), a ministry of the Jesuit Provinces on the East Coast, began praying the Ignatian Examen online on Friday afternoons in a twenty-minute prayer service called “Examen Live!” More than 450 people signed on for the first event on March 27. It continued weekly through the Easter season, providing an opportunity for people to pause and prayerfully reflect about how God had been present to them.

OIS’s Ignatian Young Adult Ministries hosted a series of online discussion groups that gathered more than 60 young adults for prayer and conversation. It also hosted an online retreat for young adults during Easter Week; more than 50 people participated.

For the Latinx community, OIS’s Comunidades Hispanas Ignacianas prayed the rosary and the stations of the cross via YouTube. OIS also hosted a series of educational lectures on Ignatian spirituality—the series was called “Finding God During a Pandemic.”

Jesuit retreat houses also moved parts of their ministries online. You did not need to travel to Gloucester, Mass., to make a retreat at Gonzaga Eastern Point Retreat House during Holy Week this year. More than 900 people signed up for their guided Holy Week retreat, organized and facilitated by Fr. Robert VerEecke, SJ. Participants received a daily email with a photograph taken somewhere at the retreat house to set the scene. The email also included other retreat materials: a spiritual reflection, suggested points for prayer, Scripture readings and various creative media to accompany prayer, such as a recording of a dance performance or a musical piece.

The staff of Loyola Jesuit Center in Morristown, N.J., started leading the rosary seven days a week via the center’s conference call line. Phone in to pray—no internet connection required. Adapting to new circumstances has long been a forte of the Jesuits and their companions. The Ignatian spiritual disciplines of daily reflection and discernment, practiced over time, aim to cultivate a sense of detachment in the practitioner. Sometimes referred to as “spiritual freedom,” Ignatian detachment does not describe indifference or a lack of empathy. It indicates an ability to resist undue attachment to the way things are, or to the things one desires, so as to remain open to the movements of the Spirit.

The pandemic has forced dramatic and rapid change in the way people relate to one another. In moving online, the spiritual ministries of the Jesuits on the East Coast have met the moment, recognizing the Spirit of God at work and adapting. Ignatian spirituality ministries look different for the time being, but the mission continues, and there is much consolation in that.
In a typical year, Jesuit provinces across the country celebrate ordinations in early June. This, however, has been anything but a typical year. The planned ordinations for the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces in June at Fordham University were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

As of this issue’s publication date, they have been rescheduled for August 8, 2020, at Saint Joseph’s University, with one of our Jesuits, James Ferus, SJ, being ordained on August 1 with the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Boston.

Factors that contributed to these fluctuating logistics included accommodating vulnerable family members and adhering to possible social distancing requirements still in effect. It has been a challenging few months leading up to this most important day in the lives of these men in formation who have dedicated themselves to serving God and others. Please pray for them as they prepare for their ordinations.

**JASON DOWNER, SJ**
USA NORTHEAST PROVINCE

Jason was born and raised in Rochester, N.Y. In addition to his parents, Jason has two older sisters who are married and have families of their own. He is a proud uncle of five nieces and nephews. He first met the Jesuits at McQuaid Jesuit High School and then continued to be educated by them at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. Jason served for a year with Mercy Volunteer Corps between college and grad school.

After grad school, he worked at Fairfield University in Student Affairs for a few years, Jason loved being a part of the mission and Ignatian spirituality, so in 2008 he began a two-year process of discernment. He entered the novitiate in 2010. As a novice, Doug worked in campus ministry at Georgetown University. After professing his first vows, he studied philosophy at Fordham University. During his time at Fordham, he volunteered at Cristo Rey New York High School, where he mentored students in the corporate work study program. Doug then worked at Fairfield University, where he directed the retreat program for the campus ministry department and taught business law at the Dolan School of Business. Doug most recently received his Master of Divinity from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. He has served as a deacon at St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Chestnut Hill, and worked with the RCIA program there. He will now begin work at St. Peter Church, the Jesuit parish in Charlotte, N.C. He will celebrate his first Mass as a Jesuit priest at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Manhattan.

**JAMES FERUS, SJ**
USA NORTHEAST PROVINCE

James was born and raised in the coastal city of New Bedford, Mass. He is the only child of Nancy and the late Paul Ferus. James’s Catholic faith was nourished by his family, parochial schooling, and years as a altar server. While he didn’t attend a Jesuit school, his interest in studying the Bible and asking many questions of parish mentors likely suggested his future life as a Jesuit and educator. James began to seriously consider priesthood through his involvement in campus ministry as an undergraduate at Harvard, where he met many Jesuits from around the world who were studying theology nearby. Eager to continue his discernment while living a life of service, James spent two years in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, first at Cristo Rey New York High School and then at Operation Nightwatch, a community center for the homeless in Portland, Ore. When his first Jesuit spiritual director pointed out how much James loved his students and community, he felt Jesus nudging him to make a lifelong commitment to religious life. James entered the novitiate in Syracuse in 2009, God has always been gracious and resourceful with James’s prayerful desires and talents. Gifted with music lessons as a boy, James taught violin to students in the Bronx while studying philosophy at Fordham and later played with the inmate choir at San Quentin State Prison while studying theology in Berkeley, Calif. In between, he greatly enjoyed his years in Maine teaching students and accompanying them and their families at Cheverus High School. Most recently, James served as a deacon at both San Quentin and Our Lady of Lourdes in Oakland. Next year he’ll continue in these ministries as he completes a Licentiate in Sacred Theology. James will celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving at his home church, St. Lawrence Martyr in New Bedford.

**KEVIN HUGHES, SJ**
MARYLAND PROVINCE

Kevin grew up in Cherry Hill, N.J., with his mom (Marianne), dad (Edward), and sister (Kathryn). He attended the local parish grammar school. His grandmother suggested that he explore St. Joseph’s Prep for high school, which was a wise suggestion because this was where he first met the Society of Jesus. Kevin always loved science and throughout high school aspired to do some kind of research in the field of biology. High school was a difficult time for him, as it is for many, and he didn’t put much effort into developing a relationship with God. After graduating he attended LaSalle University, where he majored in biology. As a freshman, he had what he called “my experience of God.” He always struggled to adequately describe this experience, but regardless, in the moment of encounter, he felt and knew that he was deeply loved by God and called to a relationship with Him. Kevin wanted to understand his experience and what it might mean to be loved and called by God, so he went to talk with one of the Jesuits he knew and trusted from his high school, Fr. Tom Clifford, SJ. Over the next four years, he examined what it meant to be loved by God, and he began to discern how best to respond in love to the God who loves him. He decided that he would give back with a life of service to God and God’s people. By the end of his senior year, he had applied and been accepted to the novitiate, and he has loved continuing his journey of discerning how best to respond in love to God’s love and Christ’s call to follow Him.

**DOUGLAS RAY, SJ**
USA NORTHEAST PROVINCE

Douglas was born in Yonkers, N.Y., and grew up in the Bronx and Manhattan. He met the Jesuits in kindergarten at his grammar school, St. Ignatius Loyola, before attending Regis High School. Doug did his undergraduate work at Princeton University, where he earned a degree in medieval history before studying law at Harvard. He practiced securities law in New York, first at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, and then at AXA Equitable Life Insurance. Doug began discerning a call to the priesthood soon after graduating from law school, but was uncertain how to answer that call. His experience as the third generation of his family to be taught by Jesuits helped attract him to learn more about the Society. After several years of spiritual direction, he entered the novitiate in 2010. As a novice, Doug worked in campus ministry at Georgetown University. After professing his first vows, he studied philosophy at Fordham University. During his time at Fordham, he volunteered at Cristo Rey New York High School, where he mentored students in the corporate work study program. Doug then worked at Fairfield University, where he directed the retreat program for the campus ministry department and taught business law at the Dolan School of Business. Doug most recently received his Master of Divinity from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry. He has served as a deacon at St. Ignatius Loyola Church, Chestnut Hill, and worked with the RCIA program there. He will now begin work at St. Peter Church, the Jesuit parish in Charlotte, N.C. He will celebrate his first Mass at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Manhattan.
Due to the safety concerns presented by the coronavirus, the 2020 Jesuit GALA—which was scheduled to take place on Thursday, May 7, 2020—was cancelled. The gala has been taken not only an opportunity to honor the works of the USA Northeast Province but also a chance to honor the Jesuits themselves.

During this pandemic, we have seen and experienced trials and tragedies, but we have also witnessed great hope. This hope is evidenced through our Jesuits, who have provided countless hours of online spiritual and educational services and authored moving testimonials of courage during this time.

In these challenging times, we must celebrate those who continue to give of themselves For the Greater Glory of God. In keeping with the tenets of St. Ignatius and his followers, our Jesuits and dedicated lay colleagues will continue to educate and work selflessly in the field of social justice to the best of their ability. We will also continue to honor humble and outstanding men and women who exemplify our values and invite others to join them in these endeavors.

We would especially like to recognize our 2020 Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam Award recipients, John V. and Kathleen Murphy.

**2020 A M D G HONOREES**

**JOHN V. AND KATHLEEN MURPHY**

John and Kathleen always had a special affinity for the Jesuits, one that dates back a generation. Kathleen grew up in St. Ignatius Parish, Chestnut Hill, and attended Newton Country Day School. Her father is a Georgetown University graduate, and John’s father, like John himself, is an alum of both Boston College High School and Boston College. Kathleen graduated from Trinity College in Washington, D.C., and has a brother and sister who both went to Georgetown University. John’s two brothers are BC High graduates as well, and one of his brothers also continued on to Boston College.

John and Kathleen’s son, Christopher, is a Georgetown graduate and their daughters, Beth and Carolyn, are both proud Boston College alumnae. John and Kathleen have seven grandchildren, ages 1-13, and John’s cousin, Fr. John P. Spencer, SJ, served as vice president at Emmanuel College.

John is the retired chairman and CEO of Oppenheimer Funds and is currently an independent director of Legg Mason Global Asset Management. He served 2 years on the BC High board, including two years as chairman. Additionally, he served as a trustee of Boston College for eight years. Kathleen has served as a volunteer and supporter of various organizations, including Nativity Prep of Boston.

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Please continue to visit www.JesuitsEast.org for updates on future donor gatherings.

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The Evolution of Our Province

July 31, 2020 marks the beginning of the Jesuits’ USA East Province. This province is a testament to the faith of Jesuits, lay volunteers, and the tireless support of our donors, parishioners and friends.

Thank you to everyone who made this event possible and to all those who have supported the Jesuit mission over the years.

THE JESUITS OF THE EAST COAST
Together... again.

In 1833, the Maryland/New York Province was the first large Jesuit province in the United States. It was founded by Fr. John Carroll, SJ.

Le Moyne College is founded in 1921.

The Buffalo Province is established and assumes responsibility for all of New York and part of northern New Jersey.

In 1926, New York, New England and Buffalo joined to form a new, single province—the USA East Province.

This province will be the largest province in the Society of Jesus.

July 31, 2020 (the Feast of St. Ignatius), marks the beginning of the Jesuits' USA East Province. This new province is a true companion in Christ, referring to those first Jesuits as his "companions in all things trifling or great, in all things present, past, and to come, in all things, and in all places."

The Jesuits have been, and continue to be, a presence in the USA East Province.

Teaching, Ministering and Living the Jesuit Mission

In 1540, the Jesuits arrive in the Americas.

Georgetown University is founded by Fr. John Carroll in 1789.

The New York Province is established. The former provincial of the province, Fr. Michael Dwyer, SJ, is appointed the first provincial of the New York Province.

St. Aedan’s Church
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Loyola on the Potomac
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Loyola on the Potomac
Loyola House of Retreats
Ignatius House
Gloucester, MA
Campion Renewal Center
Washington, D.C.
Teaching, Ministering and Living the Jesuit Mission

In 1540, the Jesuits arrive in the Americas.

Georgetown University is founded by Fr. John Carroll in 1789.

The New York Province is established. The former provincial of the province, Fr. Michael Dwyer, SJ, is appointed the first provincial of the New York Province.

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“Both daunted and excited!”

This is how Fr. Joseph M. O’Keefe, SJ, explains how he first felt after hearing he had been selected by his fellow Jesuits and approved by Father General in Rome to become the first provincial of the newly formed USA East Province of the Society of Jesus, the largest in the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S.

“My feelings,” he adds, “first, I am extremely aware of my own weaknesses and imperfections, in terms of our mission, I am also aware of the large commitments we serve on the East Coast, and the religious and social contexts we find ourselves in are indeed challenges, especially in regard to our new Universal Apostolic Preferences. The decline of people practicing religion, especially in regard to our new Universal Apostolic Preferences.

Fr. O’Keefe quickly adds, “But this is also such an exciting time. The greater our challenges, the greater our opportunities. We may well be at a juncture in history where new possibilities will come from the pain of pandemic. Is this a moment when we can help people find meaning through faith in Christ? How can the Jesuits and lay colleagues of USA East help people become more thoughtful, charitable, and faithful to family and friends, more committed to justice? The Ignatian mission is embraced by so many women and men from a variety of backgrounds; we all share as equals in the ministry of reconciliation.”

Born in Salem, Mass., just north of Boston, Fr. O’Keefe entered the Society of Jesus from the English Province of the Society of Jesus on October 15, 1977, and professed his first vows on October 15, 1980. He is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and received his master’s in French from Fordham University in 1984.

Fr. O’Keefe taught for many years in Roman Catholic schools in the Washington D.C. area, including St. Albans School, an all-boy school in Chevy Chase, Md., and Seton Catholic School, an all-girls school in Silver Spring, Md.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 1986, and served in parishes in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. He received his master’s degree in secondary school administration from Sacred Heart University in 1990 and his doctorate in educational administration from Northern Virginia Comm. College in 1999.

Fr. O’Keefe taught English at Old Dominion University in Virginia and, later, at the University of San Diego in San Diego, Calif. He was a professor of history and philosophy at Marymount University in Arlington, Va., and served as a consultant in the administration of Catholic schools.

He was named superior of Jesuit community and college houses in New York City in 1996 and in Washington, D.C., in 2011.

Fr. O’Keefe served on the Board of Directors of Jesuit Education USA, which oversees Jesuit high schools and colleges in the United States, from 2005 to 2016.

Fr. O’Keefe was named executive director of the Jesuit Community and College Houses in New York City in 2016 and rector of Ciszek Hall at Fordham University in New York City in 2019.

He was named provincial assistant in 2019.

Fr. O’Keefe was named provincial of the USA East Province of the Society of Jesus in July 2020.
In 1920, Pope Benedict XV asked the Society of Jesus to care for the people in the areas around Bombay, India. Fr. Joseph Rockwell, SJ, provincial of the Maryland-New York Province (which also included New England) asked for volunteers. The province, which was founded in 1879, had reached the point where it had enough men and resources to start mission work around the world. Ten Jesuits readily responded to this call.

By PJ Williams

While the men were preparing their paperwork for India, they ran into problems with getting visas from the British government. Instead of waiting, Father General Wlodimir Ledóchowski, SJ, directed the American Jesuits to go to the Philippines, where Jesuits from Spain were working. Those Spanish Jesuits would go on to serve in India. This arrangement proved to be a better fit. The Philippines was a United States colony at that time, meaning that English was prevalent enough for American Jesuits to start working effectively right away. The following year, 22 Jesuits from the Maryland-New York Province finally arrived, eager to serve the people of the Philippines.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Fr. Rockwell first sending Jesuits from the United States to the Philippines. Over the years, the province boundaries shifted, and the Maryland-New York Province was divided into several smaller provinces. Only one of them, the New York Province, retained the Philippine Mission. Coincidentally, on July 31, 2020, the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces will unify and create the USA East Province. In honor of this anniversary, and in the interest of advancing collaboration...
The Philippines became its own Jesuit province on February 3, 1958. In the time since becoming an independent province, the Society of Jesus in the Philippines has flourished. The province is home to 238 Jesuits as well as numerous schools and works. One of the most prominent schools is the Ateneo de Manila, which can educate students from pre-kindergarten through their doctorate. At 205 acres, the campus of the Ateneo is nearly twice the size of Georgetown University. “The Philippines is really the major center for the Asia-Pacific region,” said Fr. Cecero. This is due in part to its status as the home of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific, also known as JCAP.

The Jesuit conferences help Jesuit provinces further their collaboration efforts and international work. JCAP is one of the six conferences in the world, each made up of multiple provinces. In addition to the Philippines, the Australian, Chinese, Korean and Indonesian are just a few of the provinces that make up JCAP. The conference also works with Jesuit communities that are not full provinces.

“As another reason for my visit was to continue to form collaborative ties with JCAP in the service of our mission in Micronesia,” said Fr. Cecero. While the USA Northeast Province no longer works in the Philippines in any official capacity, it does have Jesuits and apostolates located in the Pacific. As the name suggests, the Jesuit community in Micronesia, is spread throughout the Pacific islands of Micronesia and also includes Guam and Fiji. They staff two schools and provide pastoral care to the people of those islands.

Despite being part of the USA Northeast Province, these Jesuits and works in Micronesia are much closer to the Philippine Province geographically. Most of the Micronesian-born Jesuits have done some of their formation in the Philippines. “For a Micronesian, it makes more sense for him to study there because that’s the region of the world that he’s most likely to minister in,” said Fr. Cecero.

Additionally, Xavier Micronesia, the Jesuit high school located on the island of Chuuk, has benefited from its proximity to the Philippines. This has mainly come in the form of Jesuit-educated lay teachers and administrators from the Philippines. “They were directed to Xavier by aging New York Jesuits at the schools in the Philippines,” said Fr. Tom Benz, SJ, superior of the Jesuits in Micronesia. “They’ve made significant contributions to Xavier and have been working here for the better part of the past 10 years.”

One of those Jesuit-educated Filipinos, Rovan Agad, is the current dean of students at Xavier Micronesia. Rovan has taken on numerous roles at the school, teaching algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and visual arts as well as serving as a basketball coach. While at Xavier, he has been able to help continue the mission of providing a Jesuit education to the people of the Pacific. “Throughout my years as an educator, I have seen what impact Xavier does to its local community here in Chuuk and beyond,” said Rovan. “Just this school year, I had a co-teacher who was once my student when I came here years ago. Now she’s an inspiration to the youth of Micronesia.”

Fr. Cecero’s trip provided him with an opportunity to visit the novitiate in the Philippines. Unlike the United States, where novitiates are usually used by only one province (or provinces in the process of unifying), the novitiate in the Philippine Province serves novices from several of the regions in JCAP. This means Jesuits from the Philippine Province, the Japan Province, the Chinese Province, and the Malaysia-Singapore Region learn, eat and live together. “It’s a very dynamic kind of place in terms of formation, having more international and diverse formation programs,” said Fr. Cecero of his visit to the novitiate.

“Many of us come from distinctively different cultures, but the challenges make us more creative in our response,” explains Fr. Christopher Dumadag, SJ, one of the two directors at the novitiate. Fr. Dumadag himself has a connection to the East Coast provinces since he completed his Master’s in Theology at Loyola University Maryland. This model for a novitiate has only been in place for the last few years, and they are always looking for ways to improve it. “The whole novitiate framework is about how to give a better, if not the best, formation the novice could undergo,” said Fr. Dumadag.

While the Philippines has been its own province for more than 60 years, its relationship with the East Coast Jesuit provinces remains strong. Perhaps part of the reason for this can be best explained by one of the men who stayed to work in the Philippines. “We saw the work we were doing as valuable and consider the Philippine Province as home,” said Fr. Abbott. “These Jesuits love the people and have found it very rewarding to be able to work and be with them for so many years.”
Saving lives AND jobs. A fast-moving collaborative kept area hospitals stocked with needed protective gear and kept local workers on the job during the pandemic.

Rev. Chester A. France worked for six years to launch his clerical robes company—only to see it stalled by COVID-19 and its space taken over by another social enterprise cranking out desperately needed face masks and face shields to protect caregivers.

But the 80-year-old minister is philosophical about that. “The Lord works in mysterious and miraculous ways,” he says.

The “miracle” behind both his companies, Lifting Labels Inc., and the personal protection equipment (PPE) effort by Sew Lab USA, is no mystery. It’s traceable to Innovation Works (IW), a one-of-a-kind Jesuit-inspired organization working minor miracles from Baltimore’s scrappy entrepreneurs to hospital executive suites.

In the last two years, the social enterprise development initiative has helped launch or support dozens of small companies, including both Lifting Labels and Sew Lab. IW taps the talent, creativity and energy of people in economically distressed neighborhoods to help rebuild Baltimore—from the inside out.

“The key difference between our entrepreneurs and more mainstream ones is simple: our entrepreneurs often lack resources more readily available for others. So, IW provides the training, hands-on mentoring, financial support and network connections that fill the gap,” says IW President Jay Nwachu.

Although IW usually works quietly at the grassroots level, COVID-19 has showcased the organization’s creative muscle. The pandemic initially idled several of its entrepreneurs, but then IW brought them and others together to make face masks and protective shields at Open Works, a maker’s space closed by the crisis. It was an instant entrepreneurial ecosystem—where some would have seen only shuttered buildings.

“We organized a Tuesday afternoon conference...
call with the heads of several hospitals, and they all agreed to buy the protective shields,” says IW Founder and Board Chair Frank Knott, a graduate himself of Loyola Blakefield and Loyola College in Maryland. “Now they tell me they prefer our protective shields to the ones they used to buy.”

“This has been truly an impressive project serving a great need,” says Maryland Province Provincial, Fr. Robert Hussey, SJ, who engineered the Jesuit seed money that gave IW its start. “Not only is this outstanding social enterprising, but it’s an opportunity for everyone in the Jesuit family to support what will be a powerful national model.”

Rev. France’s story is more typical of an IW social entrepreneur. “I spent six years spinning my wheels to pursue my God-inspired vision before I discovered Innovation Works,” he explains. Since then, IW has provided him with business development advice, executive mentors and financial support. It even helped him produce a pitch to potential investors. Today, he’s much closer to his vision of a company that provides jobs to returning citizens. “IW made all the difference in the world,” he says.

On the surface, IW is swift and sleek. “We’re way ahead of where everybody thought we’d be,” says Knott. But “under the hood,” IW boasts a solid, sustainable system based on a methodology pioneered by the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Jesuit Santa Clara University.

The Miller Center approach has been accelerating entrepreneurship in developing countries for almost two decades, all around the world, but never before in the U.S. IW is the “test bed” and perhaps the first of many such programs in American cities.

What makes IW so unique—and promising—is its “in-it-for-the-long-haul” philosophy fueled by Ignatian values, Knott explains. It’s not enough to “start” companies; they have to grow and scale. “Our goal for the next 10 years is to launch 250 sustainable enterprises, attracting $100 million in capital, employing 5,000 people. It’s not a 10-year vision with six months of support.

“We’re accompanying these entrepreneurs for years,” To support that effort, IW has already recruited about 50 volunteer mentors—experienced businesspeople who provide advice and support—and plans to recruit hundreds more. IW’s transformative strategy goes beyond helping local leaders build strong companies. “Our work starts in the neighborhoods. By building strong relationships and infrastructure, we are able to honor neighborhood identity, connect and share. Without this, we couldn’t achieve our mission,” Nwachu says.

“The race-based wealth gap is deeply connected to Baltimore’s challenges—we’re helping to address these challenges with sustainable neighborhood economies,” Nwachu adds.

As an example, Nwachu is already planning to reorganize the PPE-making efforts to put it on firmer, longer-term footing to serve the health care sectors’ needs. And that’s just fine with Rev. France. He wants his robe-manufacturing space back.

For more information about Innovation Works, go to www.iwbmore.org or email info@iwbmore.org.
A Spiritual Morning in Naples

The Naples Yacht Club provided the perfect venue for friends of the Society of Jesus to catch up with the Jesuits and each other.

Dear Friends and Benefactors:

On behalf of the Jesuit priests and brothers, men in formation, lay colleagues, and all those who benefit from the ministries of the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces of the Society of Jesus, thank you.

Thank you for your support this past year—especially during these recent months of uncertainty. You are our partners in carrying out the Lord’s work through your gifts, your thoughts and your prayers.

Please continue to remember us in prayer and be assured that we will do the same for you.

With gratitude,

James F. Skurka
Provincial Assistant for Advancement and Communications

Fr. James F. Keenan, SJ
Director of Donor Relations

If you would like information on future events such as these, please contact jim.skurka@jesuits.org.

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In March 15, 2020—literally a day or two before the coronavirus pandemic forced many states to end public gatherings—friends, benefactors and alumni of the Jesuits and their East Coast institutions came together at the Naples Yacht Club in Florida for a special Mass and brunch to catch up with each other and hear updates about the Jesuits’ mission and the new USA East Province. Mass was concelebrated by Fr. John Cecero, SJ, provincial of the USA Northeast Province, and Fr. Brett McLaughlin, SJ, who was ordained in 2017 and missioned to St. Ignatius Church in New York before returning to his studies in Christology.

Following Mass, brunch was served in the yacht club’s dining room, where Fr. Cecero updated everyone on how the Jesuits are focusing their missions and how they relate to the Society’s Universal Apostolic Preferences. He also spoke about the launch this summer of Jesuits USA East that will canonically bring together the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces as a new province that stretches from Maine to Georgia.

“We were fortunate to have been able to gather with our friends and benefactors in Naples for Mass, food and fellowship just before the pandemic swept in,” said James Skurka, provincial assistant for Advancement and Communications. “Those in attendance will always remember this event as a beautiful service and time spent with our father Provincial, but also as the last opportunity many of us had to attend Mass with others before safety measures closed all religious services. It will remain a dear memory for all of us.”

I will consider how all good things and gifts descend from above, from the Supreme and Infinite Power above...just as the rays come down from the sun.

— St. Ignatius of Loyola, The Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises

James F. Skurka
Provincial Assistant for Advancement and Communications

Fr. James F. Keenan, SJ
Director of Donor Relations
Where do you find pastoral joy and spiritual fulfillment in the day-to-day duties as provincial?
I find great joy in hearing the accounts of conscience of individual Jesuits, particularly in hearing about the gift of themselves to the work they are doing. I find it spiritually fulfilling when a Jesuit feels that he has been heard well by me as his provincial and when that gives him a sense of affirmation in his life or of a good discernment when we need to make a decision about his mission. I also find real joy and gratitude in the wonderful people I get to work with, whether on our province staff, or superiors of local communities, or leaders of our apostolates.

What were a few key moments over your six years as provincial that you’ll remember as truly blessed occasions for you?
The list is long: moments that particularly mark our vocation, like receiving the first vows or final vows of Jesuits or celebrating ordinations; participating in General Congregation 36; being present on two occasions when Pope Francis spoke directly to us as Jesuits; moments of gratitude for new initiatives that are flourishing, such as the Office of Ignatian Spirituality, or taking on the parish in Atlanta and the expanded Jesuit community there, or the new Jesuit community in Philadelphia visiting JRS refugee camps. I also feel in awe at the excellent work our apostolates are doing. I feel blessed, too, in how we have been able to come together to put so many things in place in preparation for the new province, particularly in the way those things are allowing us to better accompany and support our apostolates.

As the last provincial of the Maryland Province, what are your hopes and prayers for the new USA East Province?
I hope we will deepen our communication of the good news of Christ through our works and by our particular charism. I hope the new provincial and those who lead with him will be blessed with a sacred wisdom in the choices they make. I hope our apostolates will continue to flourish in their service of God’s people. And I hope that many young men will be attracted to this very meaningful life as Jesuits and that more people will be drawn into sharing the life-giving spirituality of Ignatius and the labors of the Society.

July 31, 2020, the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola, marks the start of the USA East Jesuit Province. Coinciding with the start of the new province is the launch of the new province website. Our communications team is in the process of revamping our web presence. We hope this cleaner look will make it easier for you to navigate and be even more engaging.

Visit our New Website for the USA East Jesuits

Please visit www.JesuitsEast.org on July 31 to view the new USA East Jesuits website.

Follow the Jesuits on Instagram

Earlier this year, the Maryland and USA Northeast Jesuit Provinces launched a shared Instagram page. Instagram is a photo- and video-sharing social network that is best viewed on smartphones. We look forward to using this new platform to highlight the good work of our Jesuits and apostolates throughout the East Coast.

Please follow us on Instagram at www.instagram.com/JesuitsEast. Please note that an Instagram account is required to follow us.

Will you consider a gift to the Jesuits?
To make a gift that supports the Jesuits and their work, please contact:

LaSalle oad, Suite Towson, MD
James Skurka skurkaJesuits.org

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New York, NY
James Skurka skurkaJesuits.org
The Jesuit Mission Continues

The Society of Jesus—serving at the heart of the Church and at the margins since 1540 AMDG

To learn more, visit BeAJesuit.org

Above: Fr. Adam Rosinski, SJ—First Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Cecilia Church in Philadelphia