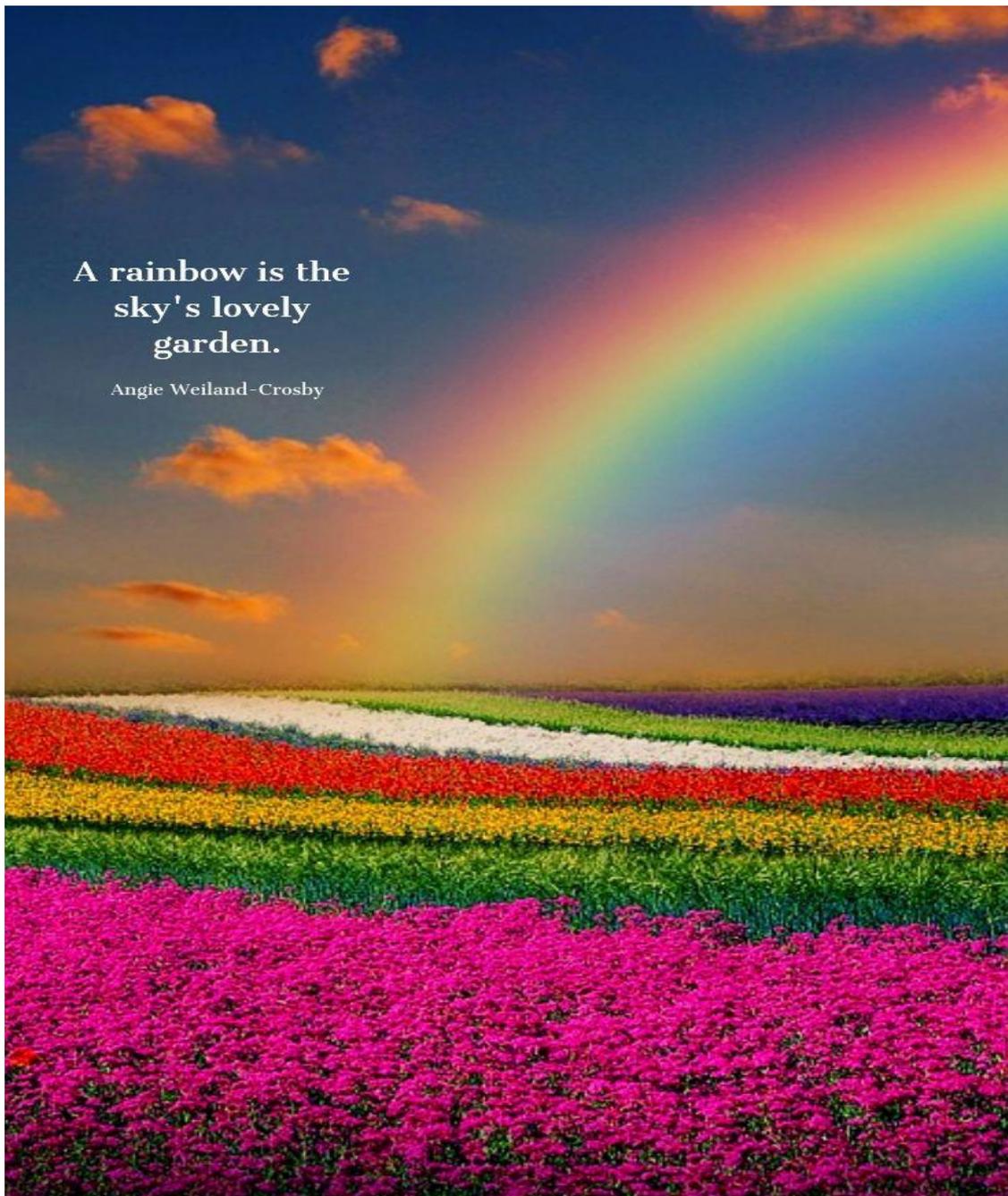


# Christ's Troops Magazine



A rainbow is the  
sky's lovely  
garden.

Angie Weiland-Crosby

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are living through turbulent and delicate times. I guess most of us are happy that 2020 has passed; for some this year has left some scars. We can describe this year as “*annus horribillis*”. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and society are unprecedented.

While the evolution of the pandemic is uncertain, there is hope of a better 2021 thanks to the vaccination now being made available.

The recent Christmas festivities, particularly the nativity stories, fill us with great hope. The history of salvation shows us clearly that God intervenes in His own time and not ours. So, let us take courage that God is with us, *the Emmanuel*, even in these troubled times.

As we look back at 2020, we also see signs of a heart beating with solidarity as well as signs of new approaches thanks to technology. We hope to learn from this year too to appreciate life, and all we have, with gratitude.

Let us continue to safeguard others and ourselves by taking all necessary precautions while hoping for better times ahead.

**Fr Paul Mizzi**

**Altar Servers Director**



I would like to thank George Saliba who has been giving a sterling service throughout so many years in the parish towards altar servers. George is now moving to Gozo, and therefore is no longer able to offer his service. Furthermore, I thank the core-team for their time and efforts whenever I ask for their help, particularly Claudia who co-ordinates this magazine as well as Bertha who proofreads it.

I thank you all (parents and altar servers) for the commitment you have shown despite the adversity and let us continue our spiritual journey together in solidarity.

On behalf of Fr Claude and the clergy serving this parish I wish you a healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2021 filled with Christian hope and solidarity.

## Getting to Know Erika Micallef

### **Can you tell me something about yourself?**

My name is Erika Micallef and I am 10 years old. I have lived in St. Julians all my life. I play the clarinet with Banda San Giljan and I also go to drama lessons.

### **How long have you been an altar server and what does it mean to you to be an altar server?**

I have been an altar server for the past three years. To me, being an altar server means getting closer to Jesus.

### **What convinced you to become an altar server?**

After I did my First Holy Communion, the parish church gave us a form if we wished to become an altar server. A few days later my mum asked me if I wanted to and I told her that I'll give it a try and if I'm not happy I will stop, but after three years I'm still serving as an altar server.



### **Is there any experience as an altar server that you will never forget?**

I have had many different experiences, but the one I will remember most is when I spent an entire mass holding the book the priests read from and since I was holding the book all the time they forgot to give me Holy Communion!

### **What would you like to say to the other altar servers?**

I would like to say thank you for accepting me as a part of the team and always being friendly to me.

### **Would you like to say anything to children who want to join the altar servers?**

Go for it! It's a lovely experience and it's fun too! You need to try new things in life and the more you try, the more you learn about yourself and it doesn't matter if you're 7 or 18. You will also make new friends.



**Wishing all the best to:**

Stefano Mifusd Bonnici	– 19 <sup>th</sup> January	– 9 years
Erika Micallef	– 4 <sup>th</sup> March	– 11 years
Rihanna Babiker	– 4 <sup>th</sup> March	– 11 years
Matteo Mamo	– 4 <sup>th</sup> March	– 10 years
Christine Siegler	– 17 <sup>th</sup> March	– 9 years

# FROM OUR DIARY

**Due to Covid-19 restrictions the activities were kept to the bare minimum; however, we did celebrate Christmas together with the parish community.**

## **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 – Prize day**

At 6:30pm we celebrated Mass with the participation of all altar servers. Siblings served Mass and helped with the homily and the rest prayed the prayers of the faithful. After Mass we went to the parish centre where we watched a film and each altar server was presented with a gift of a book as well as some packed sweets to be taken home (in view of the restrictions). We hope that next year we will have a different atmosphere.



## **Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December – End of Year Thanksgiving Mass**

All altar servers available were rostered for the end of year Thanksgiving Mass. During Mass Matteo Mamo, on behalf of all the altar servers, presented Fr Claude with a donation in aid of *Dar tal-Providenza*. The Mass was followed by the old traditional prayer *Te Deum*, in thanksgiving to God who was present in our midst in spite of the pandemic, and then we all received Eucharistic Benediction.

## **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Midnight Mass**

This year we celebrated the Midnight Mass at 10pm. The altar servers available were all rostered and on Christmas day all Masses were served by altar servers. A big thank you to all.



## THANKING YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

## JANUARY – MARCH 2021 PROGRAMME



### **Liturgical feast of St Julian - Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 at 6:30pm**

Although the liturgical feast of St Julian is celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> January, as a community we celebrate it during the 6:30pm Mass on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2021. The altar servers are encouraged to take part in this Mass. Kindly inform me so that I will list the services required.

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February – Solemnity of St Paul’s Shipwreck**

Mass times will be as on Sundays but there will be no 12:15pm Mass. The 6:30pm Mass on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> will be the vigil Mass. Altar servers will be rostered as usual.



### **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February – Ash Wednesday**

6:30pm – Mass followed by a short adoration of the crucifix.

### **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March – Our Lady of Sorrows**

6pm – Pilgrimage with the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows. All altar servers are invited to take part.

After the procession, a Mass will be celebrated. This programme is subject to restrictions imposed by the civil and church authorities.





### Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March – Palm Sunday

All altar servers are encouraged to take part in the procession from the parish church parvis to the church. Time 9:15am. This is also subject to restrictions.

**A full programme for Holy week will be published in due course.**

## DATES FOR MEETINGS / REHEARSALS

**Hereunder are the tentative dates for online lessons and rehearsal every fortnight on Thursdays:**

**14<sup>th</sup> January** – Rehearsal at Parish Church between 4:15pm and 5pm

**28<sup>th</sup> January** – Online lesson at 6pm (till 6:30pm)

**18<sup>th</sup> February** – Rehearsal at Parish Church between 4:15pm and 5pm

**4<sup>th</sup> March** - Online lesson at 6pm (till 6:30pm)

**18<sup>th</sup> March** – Rehearsal at Parish Church between 4:15pm and 5pm



## How to stay hopeful during these difficult times

Hope is being able to see that there is a light despite all the darkness. – Desmond Tutu

Unemployment, sickness, financial struggles, loss: we all experience hardship at one point or another. In times of overwhelming uncertainty and struggle, it's natural to feel discouraged.

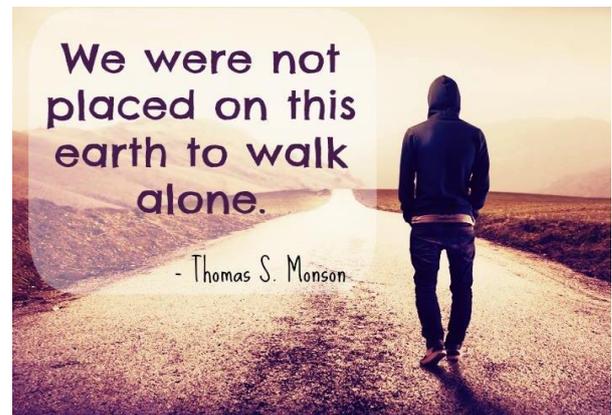
### Reach Out To Others (Virtually)

No matter what's on your mind or causing you to struggle, it's nothing you should have to face alone. Turn to family, friends, or a trusted counselor via video-chatting services. Engage in an online community around you and create space for meaningful connections.



But having hope and doing your best to stay positive can see you through seemingly impossible situations. Research has shown that people who are hopeful often cope more effectively with obstacles, while more pessimistic individuals tend to shut down.

Curious? Here are a few simple ways to stay hopeful during hard times.



### Express Gratitude

Listing what you're thankful for may seem difficult when you're struggling. But there's always something to be thankful for. Whether it's your health, your family, or even the sky above, take strength from that which is good and solid.

## Be Kind

Kindness not only feels good, it is also good for you. Performing good deeds for others takes your mind off of your own troubles and fosters relationships with those around you and in your community. You may even make a difference for someone else who is struggling. This could be as simple as sharing hopeful thoughts and quotes on Facebook or Instagram.



## Have Goals

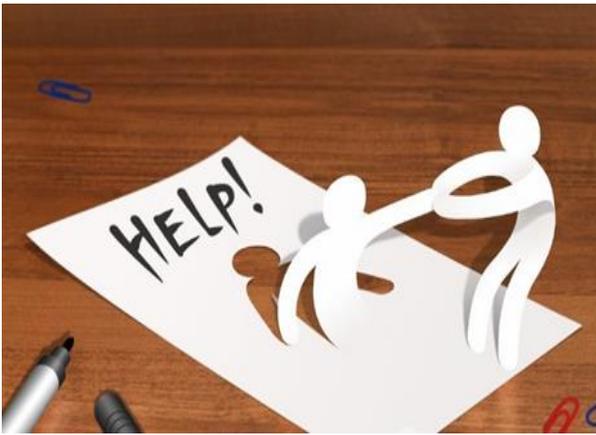
Think of something you'd like to work towards. Big or small, it doesn't matter, as long as it's meaningful and gives you a sense of purpose. Having a tangible goal will help you get up and face the day, even when all seems pointless. As Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."



## Take Care of Yourself

Get sleep, eat right, and do indoor activities that restore balance. When you feel stressed or overwhelmed, take breaks and engage in self-care. You can't foster hope if your body is spent and your mind is failing.



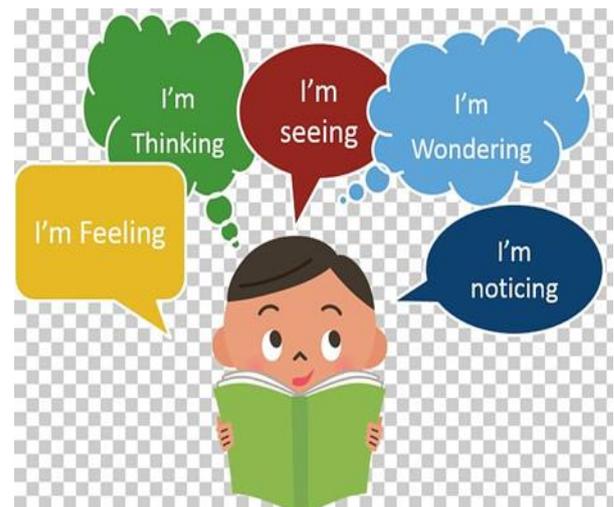


### Ask for Help

Asking for assistance can be scary, but it can also make a world of difference. You may be surprised at the solutions and ideas others can provide. Even if they don't have the answers, they can give you the help and support you need to make it through a rough time.

### Engage in Meaningful Action

You can't control everything, but you can control some things. The antidote to despair and anxiety is action. Focus on the things that you can change for the better, no matter how small. Work with what you have one step at a time.



People survive and thrive in all sorts of scenarios, they always have. Take inspiration, knowing that **this too shall pass.**