

We need to be zealous in sharing our overwhelming paschal joy



I can't be alone, can I? Are you overwhelmed with [paschal joy](#), too? We had to wait a year to be present for the Holy Week and Easter liturgies. I know I am not the only one who had tears in her eyes. Even the light of the Easter Vigil seemed to be a summons. There is [such darkness](#). Maybe it's most obvious in a place like New York City – but we have addiction everywhere, homelessness, despair, anger. And we are called to be living monstrances in the midst of it – and wherever we find ourselves.

I was amazed, too, to watch young [people become Catholic](#) of their own free will – in this day and age and at a time of restrictions. They miraculously heard and responded to Jesus' call to them, even as there are so many obstacles, some of the Church's own making. I witnessed the sacraments of initiation being administered at St. Joseph's Church in Greenwich Village, just down the block from the Stonewall Inn and National Historic Landmark on Christopher Street. If you're not familiar with the 1969 riots, suffice it to say that talking about marriage and family and the fullness of God's plan for love and life might be considered fighting words in this neighborhood.

And yet, Jesus draws young people to himself in the Church. I have to believe it's because, even during the pandemic, the Dominican priests at St. Joseph's provided what they could. I have to believe it is because of a spirit of humility in the midst of a hostile environment.

Not too far away from St. Joseph's is an [abortion clinic](#) that

I've written about. On one recent Saturday of sidewalk counseling, a number of women mentioned to me how they were not going in for abortions, but birth control. I tend to believe what people are telling me, but maybe especially when they are saying it while provocatively dressed. If you pray outside the clinic later in the day, especially on a spring Thursday, Friday or Saturday, you'll see women who didn't seem to finish dressing.

Is it a sign of age when you want to go over to a young girl with a plunging neckline at best and want to tell her that she deserves better than a boy who will view her as an object for his pleasure? It's the same instinct I have when I'm outside the abortion clinic and see a gal under the heavy-handed influence of a boyfriend who is most likely going to break up with her even though she had the abortion he pressured her to have.

I'm haunted by what I overheard while in line for a slice of pizza after Easter Vigil Mass. At 11 at night in New York these days, you have limited options. The city that never sleeps had had to adjust to the pandemic. And yet, in line were many drunk young people seemingly oblivious to coronavirus. A young man was cursing at the young woman with him. She was, in fact, intoxicated, and so she could only laugh and kiss him, and he touched whatever he wanted on her. Have none of these young women ever been told that they are worth waiting for? How many of them were violated at so young of an age that such a thought is as foreign as things get? And yet, what the Catholic Church teaches about human life and sexuality is their liberation. If they could only get past the obstacles to hearing about it. We must be creative.

On Easter Monday evening, I saw some young evangelicals who had set up shop at Union Square with a prayer station. It's about the last thing I ever thought I'd see there. They have the right idea. God will work miracles and get some young people to the church down the block from the Stonewall riots.

But we must reach out with the beauty of the truth, too. Not judging or lecturing, but loving, overwhelmed with paschal joy.

Kathryn Jean Lopez is a senior fellow at the National Review Institute and editor-at-large of National Review.