

# Are we living life through a Christo-centric lens?



I've been employed by the Church in some capacity or other for 20 years, and I know I'm not the only one who can witness to the life-giving nature of such work. Frequent availability to the sacraments, opportunities to grow in the spiritual life, and a healthy workplace culture can make "Church work" an ideal vocation.

But we all know that there are times when, sadly, this ideal can fall short. The Body of Christ is made up of regular people, and regular people, well, sin – even badly. My entire two decades of work in campus ministry followed by work in Catholic media has overlapped with the clergy sexual abuse crisis, which came to light in a widespread manner exactly 20 years ago this spring. By June 2002, the Dallas Charter outlining universal protections for young people was being rolled out by the U.S. bishops. In the spring of 2022, the Church continues to find its way forward.

Because of this ongoing challenge, I was especially grateful to Dominican Father Patrick Mary Briscoe, editor-in-chief for the English edition of [Aleteia.org](http://Aleteia.org), as he recently offered members of the Catholic Media Association a [presentation](#) with the theme "How to work in Catholic media and keep your faith." His presentation, though directed to those of us in the Catholic press, had underlying relevance for each of us who are dedicated to our Church, but who find some aspects of it frustrating, wearisome or even detrimental to our spiritual lives. And what I loved most is that he put the onus back on each one of us – because the only individual we can control, after all, is ourselves. Rather than moaning and groaning about the way things sometimes are within the Church, Father

Briscoe redirected our energy, calling us to a deeper contemplative life. Contemplation, he said, is “an interior possession,” which is good news because, “if it’s inside of us, no one can take it from us.”

And to be contemplatives, Father Briscoe said we need some key things: we need truth over propaganda; we need freedom over insecurity; we need to work together, not break into silos; we need to embrace crises as opportunities rather than give into doubt; we need to choose charity over polemic, and forgiveness over brooding on injuries; we need to opt for prayer over the busyness of life; we need to practice self-knowledge over anger; embrace awe over acedia; and finally, we have to be willing and ready to, as Pope Francis says, “go back to Galilee” – meaning “to re-read everything through our own relationship with Christ and particularly Jesus’ victory on the cross.” For those of us in Catholic media, this last point is a directive for us to go back to the moment when we first embraced our vocation to this work, and look at it all through the lens of the Lord. But of course it is an invitation for each of us to examine our lives through a Christo-centric lens, to ensure that we are pursuing virtue and not giving into temptation.

Why did I like Father Patrick’s talk so much? Well, aside from referencing “The Office,” “The Lord of the Rings” and the singing of humpback whales all in less than an hour, he used it to call us to be better – not just better at our chosen profession, or vocation, but better Christians. He invited us to take charge of the things that we were able to control – our own behaviors, our own choices – rather than bemoan the things out of our control. And he invited us back into the heart of what it means to be people of faith, living for the good of others, in Christ.

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