

St. Ambrose Parish

JUNE 2, 2019
BEEHIVE



Mary Louise Kerich in 1940; Sister Irene Marie Kerich, OP, taken in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 1950; Sr. Irene Kerich on her 75th Jubilee.

All Things Considered

Sister Irene Marie Kerich, OP (1924-2019) A Life in Service to Others

Sister Irene Marie Kerich, formerly known as Mary Louise Kerich, died on Monday, May 27, 2019, at the Dominican Life Center in Adrian, Michigan. She was 94 years of age and in the 77th year of her religious profession in the Adrian Dominican Congregation.

Sister Irene Marie was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Harry and Irene (Dugas) Kerich. She graduated from St. Joseph Academy in Adrian, and received a Bachelor of Philosophy degree in English from Siena Heights College (University) in Adrian, and a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was also certified as a pastoral minister by SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan.

Sister Irene Marie spent twenty-six years ministering in education in Chelsea, Bad Axe, and Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Conneaut, Ohio. She also served in congregational leadership for eight years as Councilor and Co-Provincial in St. Catherine Prov-

ince in Detroit. She was plant manager for the Dominican High School convent in Detroit for one year and served for 23 years in pastoral ministry at St. Ambrose Parish in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan.

The summer of 1976 was a time of great transition for St. Ambrose. The pastor at the time, Fr. Ron Heidelberger and his associate Fr. Ron Cyprys accepted new assignments from Cardinal John Dearden. An experiment in pastoral leadership was tried when Fr. Tom Krell and Fr. Bob Ruedisueli were assigned not as pastor and associate but as co-pastors.

In the middle of this ecclesial and philosophical shift, there arrived on staff a talented, well-seasoned Dominican nun whose job description was printed in the bulletin of September 12, 1976 as being responsible for “senior citizen programs, home visiting and home Communion calls to the sick and invalid members of the parish, and other forms of pastoral ministry, particularly as they relate to our mission of Christian service.”

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Sister Irene Kerich (or Sister Irene Marie as she identified herself in those early days) was welcomed by the new co-pastors on that day with these words: “We are happy to have you with us, Sr. Irene, and pray that your stay here will be joyful and fulfilling. We know that we will be enriched by you and are confident that you will be touched as well by the creative and caring community that is St. Ambrose.”

Could anyone at that time have imagined that these words would have been fulfilled in such a perfect and exact way? By June, 1999, twenty-three years later, she was the sole remaining pastoral staff person from that era. Sr. Irene closed the book on a chapter of this parish’s history as she took her retirement from the active ministry of Christian Service.

During the years Sr. Irene spent here, she raised consciousness regarding the poor in our neighborhood and involved two generations of parishioners in countless worthwhile programs of emergency relief. In addition to work inside our parish, Sister Irene became well known by all the service agencies in the surrounding area. The people at these places all learned to recognize Irene as something of a modern-day Robin Hood. While “stealing from the rich to give to the poor” was not the technically correct description for what Irene did for them, she had become mighty adept at “relocating resources” from those who have them to those who don’t. This is the kind of work that Sr. Irene has done the best. She scavenged the countryside seeking donations, surplus, scraps and castoffs. With these items in hand, she somehow miraculously always found someone who needed what she had obtained.

In later years, Sister Irene’s talent for “recycling” reached epic (occasionally epidemic) proportions and sometimes our office staff had to save Irene from being totally overwhelmed with stuff. I can still hear our former secretary **Gerry Baker** say, “you better throw that out before Irene sees it,” because she knew that Irene would permit nothing to ever leave our rectory with-

out thoroughly scrutinizing it for any possible further use ... however remote. When I first arrived at St. Ambrose, I would often ask out loud what various bags and boxes of stuff were doing in the office. Quickly I learned not to ask, “Whose junk is this?” Inevitably it belonged to Sr. Irene and now I know it was never junk.

Sr. Irene has brightened countless days for the needy with a box of groceries, some new clothes, a neatly packed kit of toiletries, a blanket, a bag of candy or a paid utility bill. And whenever she did, it was usually accompanied by a handmade greeting card or a personally wrapped seasonal favor. Sr. Irene always included a personal touch with her dealings with the poor because she firmly believed that everyone needed to feel special. Charity was never served cafeteria style when Irene was involved. She took the extra time to put a little bow on a gift or to listen to somebody’s hard luck story for the tenth time, or to remember the name of a senior citizen’s dog. It was this attention to detail that endeared Sr. Irene to the hearts of so many and made her St. Ambrose’s best ambassador to the community.

Irene claimed that her credo “let nothing be lost” had its roots growing up in the Great Depression. That may be true, but her tremendous faith also played an important part in making her special. Irene and Jesus had walked together for a long time, long enough that they tended to think and act alike. Jesus loved the poor and wanted everyone to know that they had value, no matter what their condition or station in life. Sr. Irene lived and loved like her longtime companion, Jesus.

When asked how she got started in all this, she would tell you the story of a strong-headed young lady who insisted that her parents allow her to join the convent. Even if her mom and dad might not have approved of their daughter’s crazy ideas, they knew that she would not be dissuaded. So they took the young teen to the Dominican Sister’s Motherhouse in Adrian, Michigan. At that time, Adrian was nestled in corn

fields. It was as distant as the dark side of the moon for the city kid whose dad worked for Detroit’s classiest hotel. But Irene will tell you that the Dominicans and she were a good fit right from the start. Come this August it would have been 78 years since she completed her novitiate and received the white habit of St. Dominic!

Back in 1941, a woman’s role in ministry was limited, and high on the approved job list was education. So Irene, as did many of her sisters, began her religious life teaching, first in Chelsea and later in Bad Axe, Michigan. She had other teaching assignments in New Mexico, Ohio and Illinois. In the process she earned a masters degree in English from the University of New Mexico. After 21 years out-of-state, she returned home to Michigan in 1961 to teach at Dominican High School.

The 1960s were a time of tremendous change in our Catholic culture and in religious life. It was during that time that Irene’s sisters in the Adrian Community asked her to leave teaching and to assume an administrative role as Co-Provincial for the St. Catherine of Siena Province. They seemed to sense Irene’s ability to relate on a personal level and to treat everyone with equal respect and kindness. When her five-year term of office was over, Sr. Irene sensed that she had come to another fork in the road. Although the lure of returning to the classroom was strong, she decided instead to embark on a new career path, that of Pastoral Minister. It was former pastor **Fr. Ron Heidelberg** who invited her to join our staff and then quickly moved on himself! I often wonder what it was that made Ron so certain that this hire was absolutely perfect for the place. Well, his instincts proved correct as evidenced by the long, grace-filled record of happy service that Irene enjoyed here.

In her own words written on her retirement:

In my 23 years at St. Ambrose, I have learned many things. It was a gift to be involved in the founding of People in

Faith United. I had never worked with members of other Christian churches and I came to realize how committed and good these people were.

We have wonderful agencies in our area, and every one of them is making a difference in people's lives: Crossroads, Women Arise, Pregnancy Aid, Wolverine Human Services, Eastside Emergency Shelter, Lakewood Manor, Reverend Ann's Soup Kitchen, St. Columba's Thrift Shop, Meals-At-Home, St. Vin-

cent dePaul Society and Services for Older Citizens (SOC). My relationship with each one of them has brought mutual respect and support. Any help that I have given to them was the fruit of your goodness.

I have learned a great deal from the poor in our midst. Their faith has been an inspiration to me as I have so often wondered how they are able to face another day. Grandmothers are the most self-sacrificing women I have ever met. They struggle to keep their grandchildren out of foster care against great odds.

And finally, I can't begin to tell you what our parish family has meant to me. You have supported every project I ever took on and have always affirmed my ministry. Please continue to pray for me, and I promise to carry you in my love and prayers.

Sister Irene Marie became a resident of the Dominican Life Center in 2003. She was preceded in death by

her parents and two brothers, Douglas and William Kerich. She is survived by loving nieces and her Adrian Dominican Sisters.



Sisters Helen Duncan, left, and Irene Marie Kerich working for homebound seniors at a Christmas party/

I visited and anointed Irene the week before she died. I offered the Mass of Christian Burial for her in St. Catherine Chapel last Thursday. The Rite of Committal was in the Congregation cemetery. Memorial gifts may be made to Adrian Dominican Sisters, 1257 East Siena Heights Drive, Adrian, Michigan, 49221.



If you have been holding back giving to the Catholic Services Appeal because of some discomfort with the Archdiocese, let me solve that for you. Since we have already met the required target amount for the Archdiocese, as a bonus, we now keep all the excess funds for the operation of our parish. And, like at Christmas, those funds are not subject to the regular 7% tax on donations or contributions. Giving to St. Ambrose through the CSA is a smart move and quite frankly, we could use the extra cash! We've got some back bills to catch up on, and collections have been less than stellar. Give St. Ambrose a nice little boost. Let me suggest an entrance-level gift of \$100, paid all at once or in ten installments.



Make your contribution this week and then join us and the other Catholic Services Appeal donors for our CSA/MOT Opera Breakfast which will be held next Sunday, June 9th after either the 8:30 or the 11:15 liturgies. This is our way of thanking those who con-

tribute to this year's Catholic Services Appeal. Get your contribution in before then so that you can enjoy a wonderful morning of uplifting music!



Our St. Vincent de Paul Society will be accepting donations of your good and/or gently used clothing and household items in our church parking lot Saturday, June 8th from noon until the 4:00 p.m. mass, and on Sunday, June 9th, from 8:00 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. mass. Follow the advice of St. Ambrose, "If you have two shirts in your closet, one belongs to you and the other to the man with no shirt." Do it for Irene!



The Second Vatican Council envisioned the celebration of Pentecost with a ritual opportunity closing the Easter season with a vigil – much the same way that we opened it on Holy Saturday night.

While this is still beyond the scope of most parishes, celebrating the Vigil for Pentecost makes pastoral sense when marked in cathedrals and shrines, as a unique opportunity for Christians – as in centuries past – to assemble like Mary and the Apostles in prayer in the Upper Room, to expect again and anew the Father and the risen Son to send the Holy Spirit upon us, upon the whole Church.

This coming Saturday, **Archbishop Vigneron** will be the celebrant at a Pentecost Vigil beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral. This will include Mass at 7:00 p.m.

At the introduction to the vigil, the Archbishop will direct the people to "listen with quiet hearts to the Word of God." Also, he will invite the faithful "to meditate on how many great deeds God in times past did for his people, and, on this day, completed that mystery with the sending of the Holy Spirit."

Gather to hear the Word at this extended form of the Vigil with confidence that this same Holy Spirit "may bring to perfection his work in the world."

The Pentecost Vigil

Join Archbishop Vigneron for the Vigil of Pentecost this Saturday, June 8th, at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament. This liturgy allows for an extended period of time with the Holy Spirit and is also when Archbishop Vigneron will give an update on our movement to unleash the Gospel.

All Catholics from throughout the Archdiocese are invited to attend this special liturgy and join with their brothers and sisters in thanking God for the many graces with which we, individually and as a local Church, are so blessed.

The vigil begins at 5:30 p.m. with Praise and Worship

Mass for the Vigil of Pentecost begins at 7:00 p.m.

A social follows mass beginning at 9:15 p.m.

The Cathedral is located at 9844 Woodward Avenue just north of Chicago Boulevard in Detroit. Secured and lighted parking is available.

Religious Ed Reminder

REL. ED. REGISTRATION for 2019-2020: Be sure to check your email in late May for information on registering for Religious Education for next year; we are hoping to have an online registration form set up to make the process easier for families. We will once again offer an early-bird tuition discount incentive for families who register by July 1st.

Kelly Woolums

Theology on Tap will meet at 54 West in Clawson on Wednesday, June 5th from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Being just days before Pentecost, Fr. Joe Horn will share insights about the Holy Spirit and how it can be active in your life. Come learn about the Spirit who lives in you and how a relationship with Him can change your life. You're welcome to come early to enjoy food, drinks and time with friends. Fr. Joe is currently the Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Detroit and a spiritual director for Sacred Heart Seminary.



Motor City Makeover

There are big changes ahead for Detroit and the area immediately surrounding St. Ambrose Parish. Author and parishioner John Gallagher will be with us to bring us up to speed on three important development projects that will change the face of this part of town. This session will be held on Sunday, June 23rd from 9:45 until 11 a.m. in the ARK

Jefferson /Chalmers : A Strategic Neighborhood

A new development with a grocery store and affordable housing is expected to anchor a revamped Jefferson Avenue in east Detroit. The project is a part of the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, a city of Detroit initiative seeking to reinvigorate areas in the city outside downtown and Midtown with the help of philanthropic dollars. Jefferson-Chalmers is one of seven neighborhoods the city is targeting to attract investment. Plans presented to residents seek to attract investment to return East Jefferson to the walkable, thriving retail corridor it once was.

The Transfiguration of Mack Avenue

On Mack between Connor and Cadieux, approximately 41 percent of the lots are vacant. While the majority of those vacant lots are between Connor and Alter, there are still many empty on the south side of Mack in Grosse Pointe Park. The Eastside Community Network has stepped up to try to stymie disinvestment and redevelop the area. To further reinvest, ECN hired VENTRA Group and Hamilton Anderson Associates to develop a strategy to improve Mack Avenue from Connor to Cadieux.

Keeping our foot on the Gas

Detroit will get a Jeep factory, the Motor City's first new auto assembly plant in a generation, as part of a \$4.5 billion manufacturing expansion in southeast Michigan by Fiat Chrysler that will mean nearly 6,500 new jobs. FCA said it would convert the Mack Avenue Engine factory to an assembly plant for the next-generation Jeep Grand Cherokee and a new, large Jeep SUV.

First Friday Holy Hour

In honor of the first Friday in June, the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a holy hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament will be held on June 7th following the 8:30 morning mass. It will conclude at 10:00 a.m. This is an extension of the First Friday Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To those who show him love and who make reparation for sins, our Lord made a great pledge through Sr. Margaret Mary Alacoque: *"I promise you in the unfathomable mercy of my heart that my omnipotent love will procure the grace of final penitence for all those who receive Communion on nine successive first Fridays of the month; they will not die in my disfavor; or without having received the sacraments, since my divine heart will be their sure refuge in the last moments of their life."*

The purpose of this devotion is to draw a person closer to the heart of Christ. If a person fulfills nine successive months of these obligations with sincere faith, it is natural for him or her to be closer to God and better prepared for death.

The Buzz

What a wonderful month we have begun! June is certainly my favorite month for a whole list of reasons. First, this weekend gets us back to childhood as we all get a chance to play at the (Saturday) annual Playscape Birthday Party. Hopefully the weather forecast will be pleasant and mild for the work of making safe and ready the structures and equipment that serve the children of our parish neighborhood throughout the year.

This week also begins Fr. Tim's 45th anniversary of his ordination. This year the observance spans a whole week since in 1974 June 2nd (today) was Pentecost (next Sunday in 2019) on the liturgical calendar, and he learned from a former staff member how to stretch a celebration! So say an extra prayer for him this week, and when you see him, offer him some best wishes. If you want a gift idea, make sure your pledge to CSA is in this week, and thus really lighten his worry load. It is pretty incredible to realize that just about 3/4 of Fr. Pelc's priesthood (33 years) has been spent on us as pastor of St. Ambrose!



Speaking of Pentecost coming up next weekend ... as has been our tradition here at St. Ambrose for a good number of years, we celebrate that solemn day at each mass by having readers do portions of the Acts of the Apostles passage in many different languages. If you can read a few lines in another language, please contact me early this week at 313-332-5631 so I can answer any questions you may have and provide you with a text and thankful support.



Today's celebration of the Ascension has one of my all-time favorite lines from the Bible. In Acts of the Apostles, just as Jesus was taken up into heaven, "two men dressed in white garments stood beside them [the apostles and asked] '...why are you standing there looking at the sky?'" In effect, the apostles were being asked if this is the appropriate response to what they experienced.

Well, we know that with Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would get them moving in a new direction. All of us are given that same Spirit. What will we choose to do about this . . . look for Jesus up in the heavens... or live with Him right here and now in the Spirit? The right answer appears to be biblically obvious.



In a small way, this is why we annually use this opportunity to invite an active involvement by parishioners in liturgical ministries for the coming year. We are always open to potential new lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, altar servers (must have received First Communion), ministers of hospitality (ushers), musicians, singers, etc. Stop me after mass, or give me a call at the rectory (313-332-5631) and I'll be happy to discuss the possibilities with you.



Next weekend, Pentecost, offers us some other opportunities to actively respond to the risen, living Christ among us in the Holy Spirit. Besides wrapping up the 2019 CSA with getting all our pledges in (and celebrating this achievement next Sunday morning in the ARK with the annual Opera Breakfast), we are invited to donate clothes and household items for the poor through our St. Vincent de Paul Society who will be staffing a collection POD out in the parking lot.



And finally, speaking of an active, Spirit-filled love of others ... I have to mention and offer thanks to God for the shining example who taught me how to do this in a special way at St. Ambrose – from the day I arrived here, until she retired, and even after that through phone calls asking me to look in on people she was worried about – Sr. Irene Kerich. This past week, word came to us that she went home to God. I have the strongest impression that she would not want me or anyone else to waste time looking up to heaven for her. That would be looking for her with the Lord in all the wrong places!

Chuck Dropiewski

2	0	CSA
1	9	Box Scores

Number of Families	900
Returns in 2018	262
Returns to date	153
Average Gift ('18).....	\$463
Quota for the Archdiocese	\$85,267
Property/Liability Insurance ...	\$52,000
Parish '19 Target.....	\$137,267
Received as of 5/28/2019.....	\$100,481

- The 38th Annual Catholic Services Appeal is now underway. We experienced a strong opening with our Archdiocesan quota already achieved!
- Remember that now, all gifts to the CSA in the name of the parish are exempt from the regular 7% Archdiocesan tax. It's a great time to help your parish. All overages go to paying our property and liability insurances.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc
Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski
Religious Education: Kelly Anne Wooloms
Minister of Music: Dr. Norah Duncan IV
Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –
 Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.
 Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230
Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838
Email address: stambrose@comcast.net
Religious Education: (313) 332-5633
Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631
Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814
Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, June 3

St. Charles Lwanga & Companions, martyrs

8:30 a.m. - Morning Prayer

Tuesday, June 4

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Ray & Rosanna Tessmer

Mary Kay Linne

Wednesday, June 5

St. Boniface, bishop & martyr

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Thursday, June 6

St. Norbert, bishop

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Fr. Ron Heidelberger

Fr. Ron Cypres

Friday, June 7

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Sr. Irene Kerich, O.P.

Saturday, June 8


4:00 p.m. - Mass - For All People

Sunday, June 9

The Solemnity of Pentecost

8:30 a.m. - Mass For All People

11:15 a.m. - Mass For All People



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Scriptures for 7th Week of Easter

Monday, June 3

- Acts 19: 1-8
- Ps 68: 2-7b
- Jn 16: 29-33

Tuesday, June 4

- Acts 20: 17-27
- Ps 68: 10-11, 20-21
- Jn 17: 1-11a

Wednesday, June 5

- Acts 20: 28-38
- Ps 68: 29-30, 33-36c
- Jn 17: 11b-19

Thursday, June 6

- Acts 22: 30; 23: 6-11
- Ps 16: 1-2a, 5, 7-11
- Jn 17: 20-26

Friday, June 7

- Acts 25: 13b-21
- Ps 103: 1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab
- Jn 21: 15-19

Saturday, June 8

- Acts 28: 16-20, 30-31
- Ps 11: 4-5, 7
- Jn 21: 20-25

Sunday, June 9

- Acts 2: 1-11
- 1 Cor 12: 3b-7, 12-13 or Rom 8: 8-17
- Jn 20: 19-21 or Jn 14: 15-16, 23b-26

The Feast of Pentecost

June 8th and June 9th

4:00 p.m. - Celebrant: Fr. Bede **Lector:** Cathy McPherson
Eucharistic Ministers: Karen McShane, Elizabeth Puleo-Tague
Altar Servers: Julianna & Kiernan Tague

8:30 a.m. - Sunday - Celebrant: Fr. Bede **Lector:** Norman Cure
Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Drummond, Colleen Gatzke, Christopher Harrison, Maggie Jackson, Colleen Jogan, Bob Jogan, Steve Linne
Altar Servers: Alyssa Flores, Dailey Jogan

11:15 a.m. - Celebrant: Fr Pelc **Lector:** Roger Playwin
Eucharistic Ministers: Pat & Michael Mocerri, Sue Playwin, Janis Ramsey, Darryl Swiatkowski
Altar Servers: Shea Vatalaro, Liam O'Byrne

Your Envelope Speaks . . . the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, May 26, 2019

in envelopes we received \$7,181.00
in the loose collection \$388.00
in other donations..... \$1,390.00
for a total of..... **\$8,959.00**

Under budget for the week..... **\$1,141.00**

Number of envelopes mailed 900

Number of envelopes used..... 135

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelations 22:13)

This is a reminder of how we should live our lives 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – putting God first in all that we do. Not only when I am at Mass and parish activities, but when I am in the world, at work or at school. Living gratefully and generously is a lifestyle; it should influence how I make all my daily decisions.

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Darby O'Toole, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Frank Gregory, Alex Billiu, Gladys Bogos, Wayne Wallrich, Lupe Davila and Fr. Phil Naessens.

CSA/MOT Opera Breakfast

Commitment Weekend for the Catholic Services Appeal takes place next Sunday, June 9th following the 8:30 and 11:15 a.m. masses when we will host our Ambrosian Opera Breakfast in the ARK. We will be celebrating all those who have made a commitment to the 2019 Catholic Services Appeal – and the achievement of our goal. We've invited the **Director of the Resident Artists Programs at the Michigan Opera Theatre, Richard Leech and a group of performers from the Michigan Opera Theatre to be on hand to regale us with a selection of operatic highlights.**

In gratitude for your support of the Catholic Services Appeal, come join us for this uplifting musical breakfast celebrating St. Ambrose. There is no charge for those who have made a commitment to this year's CSA. Reservations are requested so that we can make adequate arrangements. RSVP by June 6th. Email stambrose@comcast.net or call (313) 822-2814.

It's gonna be alright!

Graduation is a time of great joy, relief, and celebration. But amid the donning of cap and gown, of taking pictures with friends, and doing a lot of “last” things, there may be a bittersweet feeling, a nervousness about a future that has not actualized itself yet. You’ve probably been asked a million times already, “so what’s on for next year?” and whether the answer is starting a job, going on to get a master’s degree, or not knowing what the heck the next few months will bring, I hope these one-line speeches from a “veteran” of the undergraduate graduation, will encourage you, especially if you’re one of those Type A individuals who might be freaking out about “the future” right about now.

1. It's okay if you don't know what you're going to do with the rest of your life.

This may be common sense, but if the friends around you are figuring out their next steps, you might be feeling the pressure to have a plan. If it’s any consolation, on my graduation day, I did not know what I was going to be doing any further than the summer. Honestly, I’m still trying to figure it out. But as a wise professor once said, “the word, graduation, means to take the next step.” It does not mean “I’ll have everything figured out.” It’s not like a game of chess where the really good players are able to see a few moves into the future to secure a win. The game of life is far less predictable. But that’s what makes it wonderful.

2. Failure can be good.

So you don’t land the first job you apply to. Or the graduate program which you had your heart set on turns you down. I remember the commencement speaker at my graduation ceremony telling us that we needed to be “prepared to fail” as we made our way into the world. Sitting in the folding chairs with a couple of honors cords around my neck, I was a bit worried. I definitely didn’t want to fail at anything, especially when it came to achieving my goals. What I’ve discovered since I’ve entered “the real world” is that failure has been helpful. It’s helped me to see that some things were not meant to be for a reason. My first year in the working world was spent trying to get into a grad school and to gain a Fulbright Scholarship. I did not get the scholarship and was not accepted into the grad school. But I’ve come to realize that if I had been accepted to the grad school, it would have been for something I’ve recently discovered I’m not cut out for. I would have been unhappy. Without that failure, I wouldn’t have been motivated to find what I actually like doing.

3. Treasure the adjustment year(s).

It’s true that leaving college (or even moving from undergrad to grad school) marks a time of transition. Sometimes it’s like you’re on a boat that’s being rocked by strong waves, and you’re trying really hard to keep your balance. You’re



learning the ropes – perhaps how to cook, how to work a 9-5 job, how to budget, how to keep in contact with college friends you don’t see anymore. The beauty of all this newness is that you have ample opportunity to grow as a person. I entered the working world after college, and took on a job that I now know I do not want to do for the rest of my life. Though it may not be my cup of tea, I’ve learned a lot along the way about patience, and loving the people with whom I work. These years have also brought me the opportunity to slow down, to do things I love without the burden of homework. I know that at every stage of life I will be learning and growing, but this transition between college and after college has been fruitful in helping me realize that value of patience and that the next step will become clear in time.

4. Find a new community.

John Donne was right when he said that “no man is an island.” One of our basic human needs is other people. Wherever you’re going after college, whatever you’re doing, look to make new friends, to find the people who build you up and inspire you to be the best version of yourself. Join a young professional group, a bible study, or a service organization, to start making connections. For me, it has been leading a middle school youth group that led me to friends — people I might never had met otherwise — who share my desire for serving youth. From spending time with them outside our ministry, I’ve gotten to know them as people, to see life from their perspectives. It is through community that you can better navigate this time of transition. It has reminded me that I’m not alone.

5. Keep in touch with old friends.

This goes hand-in-hand with #4. With friends going every which way to start new jobs, begin grad school, or perhaps even to get married, it’s important not to lose touch with those you want to keep from college. It’s true that a little post-undergrad Facebook pruning may be in order and that some college connections will necessarily come to an end. But there are probably a few special people that you don’t want to lose contact with. A few months after graduation, I had a friend move from the Midwest to Colorado to do service work for a year. We kept up via letters, and an occasional phone call. For the friends who lived closer, I tried to get together with them every so often. Though life after graduate school can be busy, keeping in contact with good college friends will keep you grounded through this transitional time.

*By Lindsey Weishar, University of Illinois, for
newmanconnection.com.*