

# Reflections

Volume 45

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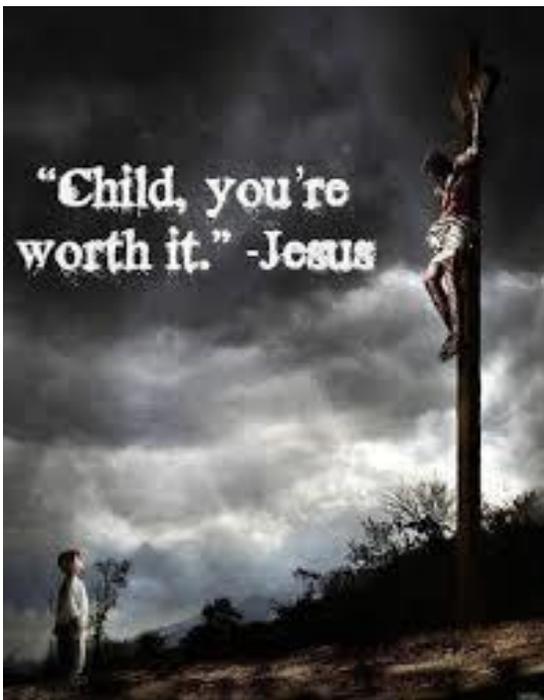
*Catholic Family Newsletter*

May 2019

**Forgiveness Is Freedom**

**Depression-Suicide Thoughts-Help**

## *Blessings to All:*



We are all children of God and His love beckons us to cherish the eternal life He gives us in Jesus Christ.

It is hard to comprehend that God so loves us that He would be born in human form and suffer a horrible death for our sake. He took upon Himself all of our sins.

On the cross Jesus knew my sins and He suffered for me. Take what I just said and apply it to your sins. *Jesus knew your sins and He suffered for you.*

What does that tell you about Jesus?

What He is saying is that "we are worthy in the eyes of God" and Jesus loves each one of us so much, that even in our sins, He wants to die in our place.

My relationship with Jesus is a personal one. We come to Jesus in different ways. But all of us come to Jesus through the Spirit that lives within each of us. Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus? You probably do !

You may ask yourself "how do I know if I have a personal relationship with Jesus?" When you talk to Jesus in prayer or when you thank Him for a favor granted...you are talking to a real person. Our personal relationship with Jesus is unique but we all share in it through the same Spirit that abides in us.

In John 6:65 Jesus says, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." God's spirit is alive in each of us and it draws us to Jesus. It is a mystery, but we believe this through faith.

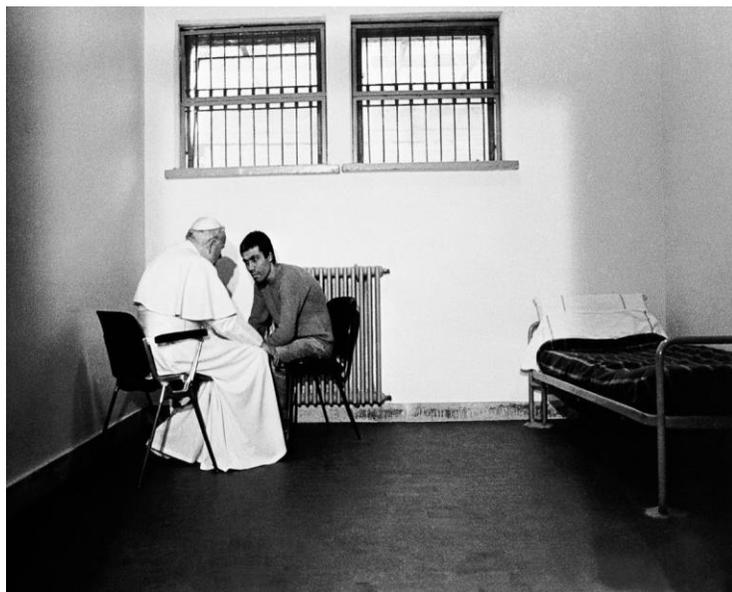
Jesus wants to give us His forgiveness accomplished through His suffering and death on the cross for our sins. Accept His offer of eternal salvation by believing in Him and asking for the grace of forgiveness for sins committed.



Pope John Paul II was a prayer warrior and sought to bring peace and forgiveness.

On May 13, 1981, Pope John Paul II was crossing St. Peter's Square in Vatican City when an attempt was made on his life. Mehmet Ali Ağca, who had escaped from a Turkish prison after receiving a life sentence for murdering a journalist, fired four shots

with a 9-millimeter pistol. Two struck the pope in his lower intestine, one in his right arm and one in his left index finger. Two bystanders were also wounded.



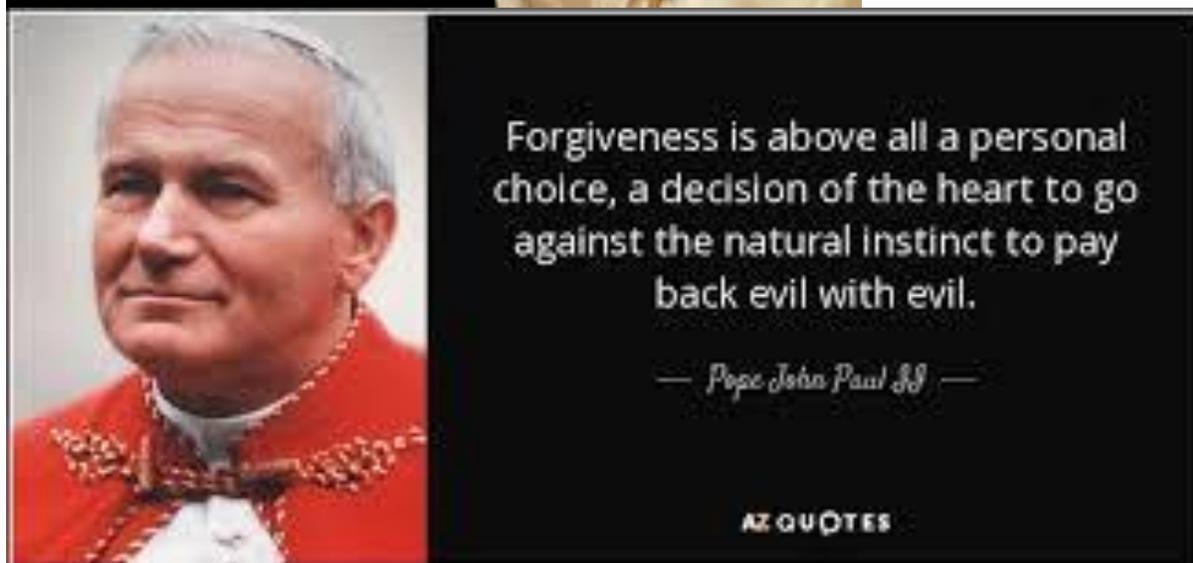
In 1983, John Paul II visited his would-be assassin. They had a private conversation and emerged as friends. The pope stayed in touch with Ağca's family during the latter's incarceration, and in 2000 requested that he be pardoned.

The request was granted. Ağca was released and deported to Turkey, where he was imprisoned for the life sentence, he had fled decades prior.

He converted to Christianity while incarcerated and was finally released in 2010.



In December 2014, he returned to Rome and laid two dozen white roses at the pope's tomb.

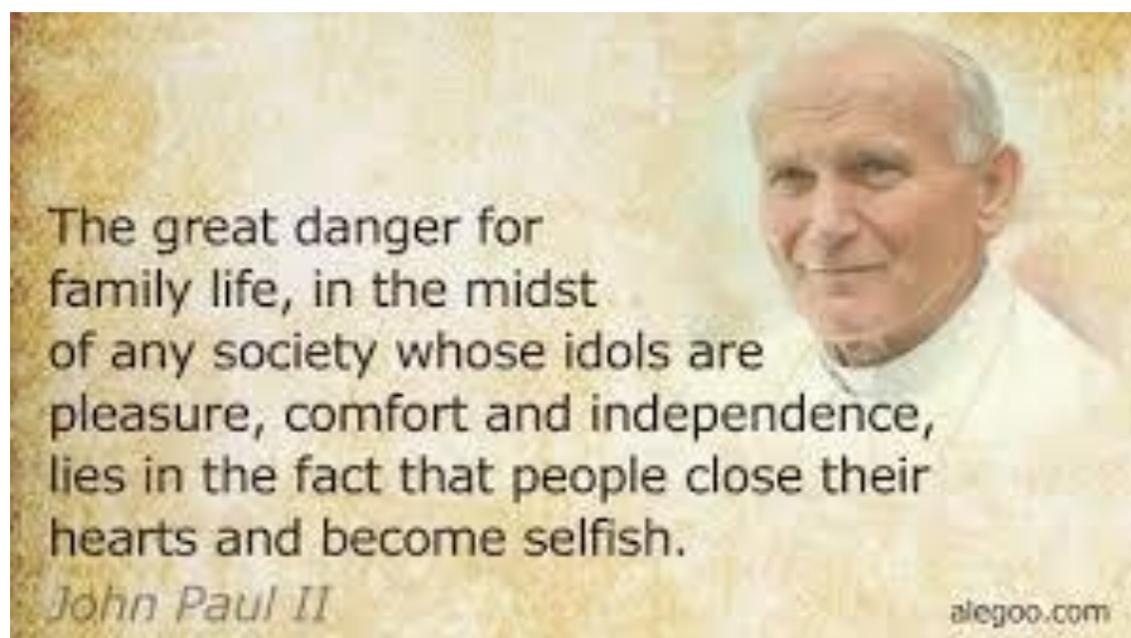


Pope John Paul II uttered a constant refrain of fearless, abundant forgiveness born of love.

“Certainly, forgiveness does not come spontaneously or naturally to people,” he wrote. “Forgiving from the Heart can sometimes be heroic. . . . Thanks to the healing power of love, even the most wounded heart can experience the liberating encounter with forgiveness.”

Forgiveness is especially needed in our Families today. Many of our children have lost their faith and no longer go to Mass. The devil is working hard to distract our children from the spiritual life by enticing them constantly through movies, TV, and certain types of music. Our children need us as an example in a world pulling them away from family values and family love. The world teaches our children to be selfish. Looking out for oneself. This type of attitude causes friction within the family and is the root of many family arguments.

If arguments and bitter feelings are pulling your children further away from you, then you must talk to your children and be reconciled. Don't let the evil one continue to distance you from your children. You can pull them back with love, prayer and patience. Never give up and never stop praying for them.



## Reaching You Ministries

<http://www.reachingyouministries.com/index.html>



Photo of Kristen Anderson

**The True Story of Kristen Anderson Who Attempted Suicide on the Train Tracks and Now Helps Others Find Peace and to Live.**

***We are on a mission to reach the hurting, the hopeless, the***

***lost, the suicidal, and the depressed with the life transforming hope and leadership offered to us in Christ and many are reaching back to us.***

Christian Broadcasting Network.com.... *Every 30 seconds, somebody in the world commits suicide. Six in ten teenagers think about it. One in ten try. 17-year-old Kristen Anderson fell right into that second statistic. She was the one in ten. But unlike many people who attempt suicide and die, Kristen survived...*

### ***Her True Story....***

"Right before it got there, I made the impulsive decision to lay down on the railroad tracks. I wanted the pain to end. I just wanted it to be over," remembers Kristen. "The police report says that 33 freight train cars went over me at 55 miles per hour. 17-year-old Kristen Anderson had been grounded at home and had sneaked out to spend time with a friend that cold winter night. Rather than returning home to angry parents, Kristen impulsively decided to end her life. But somehow, somehow, her attempt didn't work.

"When it was going over me, I felt pain, but more than anything I felt a tremendous weight or wind pushing me down. When it stopped, I opened my eyes and I started to look around to figure out if I was dead or alive. I didn't know what it was like to die. I'd only seen it in movies. I just didn't know what to think."

"I looked behind on my right and about ten feet behind me on my right, I saw my legs. And I knew they were my legs because I had these new bright, white tennis shoes on them that I had just gotten for Christmas, and it just seemed unreal to me. It seemed like it was a horrible nightmare."

Even before her suicide attempt, Kristen thought her life was a nightmare. Everything looked fine on the outside. In fact, people were shocked she'd tried to take her life. She'd grown-up with a good mom and dad. She was smart, popular, and successful. Up until her first year in high school, she was the friend others came to for help. Then, her world started falling apart. She lost four of her friends—one had a brain tumor, two died in a car accident, and one hanged himself in a cemetery. Later, her grandmother died.

"I just started to think life was horrible—this world was horrible, and I was going to be miserable the rest of my life. I started to become a lot more introverted, I think at this point. When people would ask me how I was doing, like if I came into work or something at school, I would be like, 'I'm here. Isn't that good enough?' I started to just lose hope."

After that night on the train track, Kristen felt worse than ever. She was in the hospital for three months. Doctors tried to re-attach her legs, but they were unsuccessful. After a number of surgeries, Kristen was told she'd probably be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life.

"I just started to cry out to God and for the first time, I asked Him why He would keep me here, why He would want me, even without my legs," she says.

Part of her was mad she hadn't died on the train track. But in the back of her mind, she was a little glad she didn't. She had questions about what happens when you die.

"A woman came up to me, who I didn't know, who had heard about what happened to me and told me that I would have went to hell if I died," she recalls.

This sent Kristen searching for the truth. She'd grown up in the church, but God always seemed far-off. The concept of a "personal relationship with Jesus" and a loving God was totally foreign to her.

Then a friend of Kristen's showed her God's Word. And that explained everything."

**"John 14:6** was the verse that stood out to me the most. And when Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. There's no way to the father, but through Me.' And so, I knew that the Father was in Heaven. Heaven was where I wanted to know I would have went. But I came to the understanding that I would have been sent to hell if I died. So, I realized at that moment that God had given me a second chance to go to Heaven and spend eternity with Him. So, that night is when I became a Christian—I decided to give my life to the Lord. And I prayed. I just realized that my life wasn't mine to take that night, and I asked Him to forgive me for that and everything else I'd done wrong in life."

Even with a second chance on life, the next three years were tough. There were more surgeries—more medicine, more depression, and still more thoughts of suicide.

"I didn't realize how important it was to have Christian friends or be a part of a Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching church. And another thing I didn't understand was how important it was for me to be in God's Word every single day."

It all started to make sense when Kristen met a Christian woman in the parking lot at her local college.

"She just shined with the love and light of Christ like no one I'd met before that point, and I just had the greatest conversation with her. And when I went home, I was like, 'God, I want to know You the way that lady knew You.' And He basically just told me, 'Kristen, you have to let me be your best friend.' I was still going to all my friends and my family with my problems before I would go to Him."

"Overnight I was like, 'Okay, I'm going to let You [God] be my best friend here.' And I just really learned what it meant to follow Him as my Lord and keep Him number one in my life," Kristen says.

Kristen started attending church on a regular basis – and helping with both the high school and young adult groups. She enrolled in Moody Bible School and then started *Reaching You Ministries*. That's where she works today. Her goal is to keep people from the deep despair that can sometimes lead to suicide.

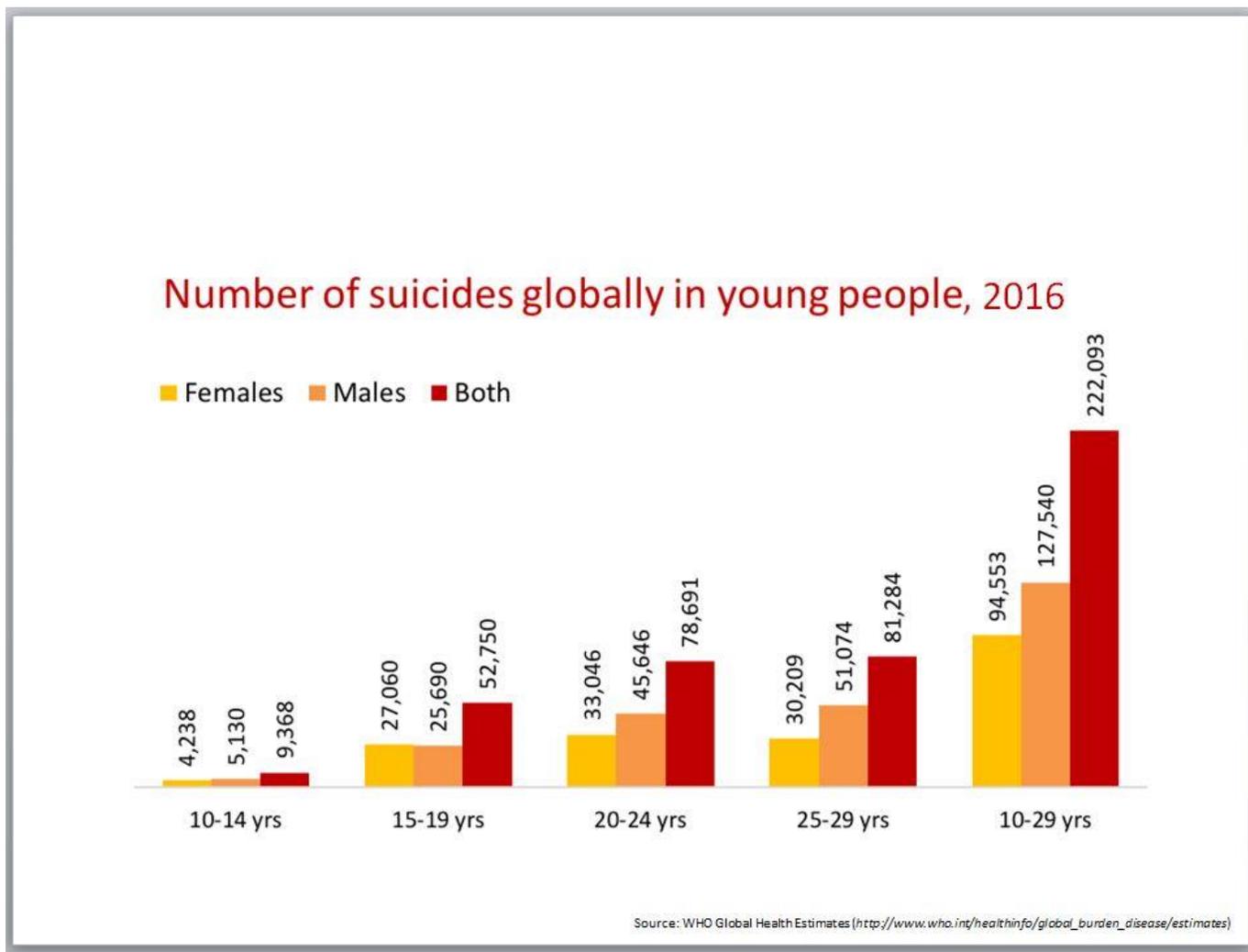
Now, despite her disability, she never contemplates taking her life...

"I realized that I needed to choose life. I learned how to not be so extreme when something goes wrong. I know it's not the end of the world. I ended up getting off all my antidepressants and all my pain meds that they told me I was going to have to take the rest of my life. My life has never been better. I just really try and find my value in God every single day, and I really try to seek Him with everything in me and live for Him completely." Kristen Anderson says that a train took her legs, but God gave her a new life. For anyone who feels like giving up like she once did..."I just wanted them to know how real God is, and if they live like He is real, He will transform their lives. And there's so much more than they see. They just need to open their eyes, and they need to open their hearts. His plans and purposes for them are much greater than anything they could ever dream of. And I know this to be true. Not only because the Bible says it, but because I've seen it to be true in my own life."

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. **1-800-273-8255**

**International Suicide Help Phone Numbers:**

<http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html>



## Youth Suicide Statistics<sup>1</sup>

- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease, **COMBINED**.
- Each day in our nation, there are an average of over 3,041 attempts by young people grades 9-12. If these percentages are additionally applied to grades 7 & 8, the numbers would be higher.
- **Four out of Five teens** who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs

<sup>1</sup> <http://prp.jasonfoundation.com/facts/youth-suicide-statistics/>

## Signs & Concerns

Four out of five completed suicides give clear warning signs of their intentions. This means that, if we learn the signs and know how to respond, we have an opportunity to assist 80% of those teens who are contemplating suicide.

Many times, signs of concern mimic “typical teenage behaviors”. So, how can we know if it’s just “being a teenager” or something more? If the signs are persisting over a period of time, several of the signs appear at the same time, and the behavior is “out of character” for the young person as you know him/her, then close attention is warranted.

The following are some signs of concern that you may see. This is, by no means, all of the signs. Anytime you have a concern about a young person’s actions and/or behaviors, be proactive – have a conversation with the child. Seek professional help, if necessary.

### **Suicide Threats: Either Direct or Indirect Statements**

People who talk about suicide, threaten suicide or call suicide crisis lines **are 30 times more likely than average to kill themselves**. Take suicide threats seriously.

- “I’d be better off dead.”
- “I won’t be bothering you much longer.”
- “You’ll be better off without me around.”
- “I hate my life.”
- “I am going to kill myself.”
- Suicide threats are not always verbal.
  - Text messages
  - Social networks
  - Twitter

### **Previous Suicide Attempts**

- One out of three suicide deaths is not the individual’s first attempt.
- The risk for completing suicide is more than 100 times greater during the first year after an attempt.
- Take any instance of deliberate self-harm seriously.

### **Preoccupation or Obsession with death or suicide**

- Essays, writing about death
- Poems about death
- Artwork, drawings depicting death

### **Depression**

- Sudden, abrupt changes in personality
- Expressions of hopelessness and despair

- Declining grades and school performance
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Increased irritability and aggressiveness
- Withdrawal from family, friends and relationships
- Lack of hygiene
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits

### **Final Arrangements**

Once the decision has been made to end their life, some young people begin making final arrangements.

- Giving away prized or favorite possessions
- Putting their affairs in order
- Saying good-bye to family and friends
- Making funeral arrangements

### **Other Signs**

- Experiencing a recent loss – a loved one, relationship, job, etc.
- Increased use or abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Recent separation or divorce of parents
- Feelings of loneliness or abandonment
- Feelings of shame, guilt, humiliation or rejection
- Emotional stress and difficulties may result in physical complaints, such as head-aches, stomach-aches, loss of energy, etc.
- Taking excessive risks, being reckless
- In real or serious trouble, especially for the first time
- Problems staying focused or paying attention
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**Remember:** This is not an all-inclusive list of signs of concern. Anytime you notice behaviors that concern you, don't hesitate or be afraid to ask questions.



## Highest Number of Male and Female Suicide by Country

Males	Country	Continent
Rank		
1	Russia	Europe
2	Lithuania	Europe
3	Guyana	South America
4	Kazakhstan	Asia
5	Belarus	Europe
6	Suriname	South America
7	Ukraine	Europe
8	Ivory Coast	Africa
9	Equatorial Guinea	Africa
10	Latvia	Europe
11	South Korea	Asia
12	Zimbabwe	Africa
13	Cameroon	Africa
14	Uruguay	South America
15	Kiribati	Oceania

Females	Country	Continent
Rank		
1	Lesotho	Africa
2	Uganda	Africa
3	Nigeria	Africa
4	India	South Asia
5	Guyana	South America
6	Sierra Leone	Africa
7	Chad	Africa
8	Ivory Coast	Africa
9	Liberia	Africa
10	Cameroon	Africa
11	South Korea	Asia
12	Zimbabwe	Africa
13	Suriname	South America
14	Togo	Africa
15	Equatorial Guinea	Africa

**Pray for Those Thinking of Suicide by saying one Hail Mary each day for 30 days.**



**St. Paul Ministry, Cypress, TX**

**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**

**[www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com](http://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com)**