

Monthly Media Monitor



A Media Apostolate Newsletter of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

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OMV Media News Rings in the Last Month of the Year



St. Mary's Parish in Alton, IL, USA during a snowstorm. Image by Tricia Conrad.

Americans have a saying that time flies when you are having fun. This year must have been a lot of fun, then, since we are already beginning the month of December! Here is the latest media-related news from the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.

Fr. Tim Gallagher's new series, *Discerning the Will of God — An Ignatian Guide to Christian Decision Making*, was telecast on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) earlier last month. The premiere episode aired on October 31, with other episodes airing on November 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

There will be a Christmas Concert held in Rome on December 9. Fr. Pierre Paul, OMV is organizing and conducting this event. The plan is to capture this concert on video so that everyone will be able to view the concert very soon on OMV Internazionale, the international YouTube Channel of the OMVs.

Our very own Fr. Paul Nguyen, OMV, serving at St. Mary's Parish in Alton, IL (USA) was on a radio program a few weeks ago.

"I participated in an ecumenical pastors' panel on local radio WBGZ," Fr. Paul told us recently. "It was hosted by Mike Rayson and coincided with Pastor/Clergy Appreciation Week during the

month of October. We talked about our callings and major influences as we got started in ministry. We have planned some short radio spots on the same Monday morning show during Advent, to give some little reflections of the lived experience of Advent, or the expectation of the coming of the Lord, each week of December. Among the denominations/communions represented: Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, and non-denominational Christian."

Speaking of St. Mary's in Alton — the Catholic Times (the diocesan magazine for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois) featured a beautiful photo of the church during a snowfall — an image taken by parish secretary Tricia Conrad.

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The Monthly Media Monitor is published in English by the Oblates of the Virgin Mary on the first day of every month, except for June, July, and August (summer break in the northern hemisphere). This publication is not a monthly summary of OMV life in general. Instead, it is an instrument to disseminate news concerning the work of Oblates of the Virgin Mary in the apostolate of social communications. Part of the OMV apostolic work is to propagate the truth through the mass media. This newsletter celebrates the works of this important media apostolate.

— Fr. John Wykes, OMV, Director of Communications, OMV General House, Rome

OMV Media News... (continued)

Over in Boston, the diocesan publication there, called The Pilot, ran a story on the OMV-staffed St. Francis Chapel located in the Prudential Center. The article, entitled “St. Francis Chapel Marks 50 Years of Ministry,” was a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Chapel, started by Richard Cardinal Cushing in 1969. The Franciscans staffed the Chapel until the OMVs took their place in 1983.

As is their annual tradition, St. Rita magazine from our St. Rita Shrine in Nice, France has once again provided a calendar. The November issue, “Calendrier 2020 — Tous Saints!,” provides a beautiful portrait of a saint for each month of the new year. The tradition dates back to the time of Fr. Alessandro Volta, OMV (+ 1989), who edited the magazine for 15 years.

That’s about it for OMV-related media news...but be sure to read the following article on a strange and perhaps disturbing media trend called “DeepFake.”

Blessings for a Happy and Holy Advent and a Merry Christmas!

Special Report: The New DeepFake Technology

Filmmaker George Lucas watches a new Star Wars trailer, mocking (in a very funny manner) the upcoming film as a betrayal of his original vision. The face and voice are unmistakable. But the man in the video is not George Lucas. Instead, it is a very funny impersonator whose face has been digitally replaced with the face of Lucas. The technology is called “DeepFake” and has been getting a lot of attention over the last year.



On the left is an image of filmmaker George Lucas (esquire.com). On the right is a DeepFake image of George Lucas (mindovetv.com). The DeepFake image is a still taken from a video made by Collider Videos, in which the fake George Lucas reacts derisively (and comically) to the new Disney Star Wars film.

DeepFake is actually an algorithm which can take a real image of a person (let’s say, George Lucas) and “map” it onto the face of another person (let’s say, a clever impersonator). The

technology that is used to perform facial recognition on still images can bring this information to networks which can learn given characteristics of the image/face. Encoders then take this information and change a second image so it looks just like the image/face of the first image. Because video is merely a series of still images, it becomes possible to make entire videos of a person, “making them” do things that they never did in real life. The resulting videos are called DeepFakes.

Some DeepFakes are very funny, and because the face is clearly placed on a body that does not quite match the body of the original person, the technology seems quite humorous and harmless enough (at least for now). However, ethical concerns have arisen over other uses, such as mapping celebrity faces into pornographic films, or manipulating videos of former U.S. President Obama or (current) U.S. President Trump. As the technology gets better there will be an inevitable increase in attempts to use it in a way to deceive the public on some very serious issues. Even now there is a similar rise in technology that can detect DeepFakes, letting us know what is fake and what is real. It is hoped this other technology will continue to improve, allowing us to detect devious and potentially damaging attempts to manipulate images and videos.