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WELCOME TO THE CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY !

OUR PARISH ONLINE NEWSLETTER

Issue 73

June 4, 2021

MINISTRIES TO AND WITHIN THE PARISH, Part 2

Can't God be a great disappointment? The ultimate underachiever? God does not seem to be measuring up to the job. And we have seen the evidence.

Remember how the disciples come to Jesus and tell him the people are hungry. They are not unlike us when we pray, telling God to fill our hunger and the hungers of the world.

Jesus gives a clear answer to them and to us: You give them something to eat. You give them something to eat.

Jesus gives us the task of answering the prayers of the world. Can it be that the problems of the world could actually be solved by us, the disciples of Jesus?

Pope Francis has laid it on the line: *I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. ... If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures... while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat."*



God is not shirking. The answer to the prayers of the world has been given. *We are that answer.* The late civil rights leader, John Lewis, summarized this call from Jesus: *Anchor the eternity of love in your own soul and embed this planet with goodness. Lean toward the whispers of your own heart, discover the universal truth, and follow its dictates. Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness. Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won. Choose confrontation wisely, but when it is your time don't be afraid to stand up, speak up, and speak out against injustice. And if you follow your truth down the road to peace and the affirmation of love, if you shine like a beacon for all to see, then the poetry of all the great dreamers and philosophers is yours to manifest in a nation, a world community, and a Beloved Community that is finally at peace with itself. Amen!*

Christ's Peace...
Father Kevin

[Editor's Note: This is the second of a four-part series describing some of the work of various councils, committees, and other ministries of the parish. The articles are based on summaries requested by Father Kevin as part of a briefing book for our new pastor, Father Peter Van Leishout.]

Faith Formation: Prior to the pandemic, Faith Formation sessions for grades pre-K to 7 were held in Nazareth Elementary School (across the street). Preparation for the first sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Communion was done largely in the home by parents, guided by the Faith Formation director and reinforced by the Grade 2-3 curriculum. Those in grades 8-9 engaged in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Due to the pandemic, when no meeting space was available due to COVID restrictions, we developed an online option for faith formation. Nineteen lessons were created and filmed. They were intended to be viewed by the whole family together, with pauses and questions for family discussion. Each grade level completed their own worksheet online.

However, one of the significant challenges in our program is and has been the fact that at least half of the children we serve are from Karenni (Burmese) refugee families whose parents often don't speak English. The children interact well in person, and older siblings have been helpful in translating in meetings, workshops and with written communications. This, however, can present its own challenges as it puts the parents/adults in a diminished position and can be awkward culturally for both parents and teens.

As we emerge from the summer and the pandemic, we will be looking for new and better ways of serving the religious education of all our children.

The All-Stars Scholars Program: This tutoring program is looking forward to beginning its 18th year, having served Holy Rosary School, Holy Cross School, and now the Maplewood neighborhood at the Cathedral Community. The program serves children in elementary and middle schools, although a few return as high school students. Each student is provided with a primary volunteer tutor. The almost-weekly session begins with assigned homework and/or work on individual grade-level skills. Enrichment activities are planned as well as semester group studies.

The tutors include retired public and Catholic school teachers, faith formation catechists, and those with other rich and varied backgrounds in working with children. All are trained according to diocesan standards for child safety.

There have been (before COVID) two family celebrations each year: a Christmas Party, including a ham and turkey dinner and entertainment provided by the students; and an End-of-Year Pizza Party. We continue our mission of supporting the students and their families who come to us with a spirit of Catholic hospitality and service to our parish and neighborhood.



REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Candice Johnson, Parish Minister

"Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

With grace and in faith, we hope more of our Cathedral Community will be gathering together this weekend. Our communal sacred meal, the Eucharist, is celebrated when we commemorate the Lord's Supper that is proclaimed in today's Gospel from Mark. The Eucharist is the centerpiece of our faith, to which we assent when we receive Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion -- "Amen!"

We are nourished by the Eucharist to respond to the summons for loving service to others in our community, in small and vital ways. Perhaps we can ponder: how does our going forth from our Eucharistic gathering place, after our sacred meal, guide us through each day? How does it help us carry out commission from Jesus to offer Good News to others?