

HOLY NAME PARISH – March 2, 2019

We Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, past and present since 1993, greet you and thank you for your ever warm welcome and continued care for each one of us during our time here at Holy Name of Jesus Parish! Being a truly international community of 74 different nationalities, you have met many of us from other climes and cultures who felt so welcome here, almost always locating someone from their own country or continent among you.

Oh, what a joy it has been to serve here, working with the Friars of Holy Name of Jesus Province, beginning with Fr. Jim Hynes, Jerome Massimino, Francis Gunn, Dan Kenna, and now Fr. Larry Ford. We do not forget the many friars who were here to assist and or to reside here, whom we also got to know, especially Fr. Matthew, a regular Sunday Mass presider.

We have worked with many of you, in committee work, assisting in counting the collection each week; Three different sisters were involved in leading the Senior Center program for over 12 years; RCIA team member or guest teacher, Spanish Ministry, Visiting the home bound and bringing Eucharist, Faith Formation Committee and the Lenten Vespers, Organizing and leading Bereavement groups, Care of the Church linens and assisting in the cleaning of the Church when planned, and more recently with Sr. Odile in Eco- Spirituality, and Care of the Earth.

I have been privileged to companion many in Spiritual Direction while here.

Most of us have regularly attended the 7 am Mass and the “regulars” over these years have formed a real community to us and to one another. Fr. Michael McDonnell, of fond memory, served us faithfully for so many years. We mourn those who have served us over these years as well as the four FMM’s who died during our time here, most recently, Sr. Lilian Alam who headed the Business Office until her untimely death.

Our presence and service here fit in so easily with the Charism of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Our Foundress, Bl. Mary of the Passion, had written **“Jesus in the Eucharist sends us out to the people and the people send us back to the Eucharist”**. Adoration of the Eucharist is part of our rule where each of us spends at least a half hour each day in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in our chapel. It is this daily encounter with the Lord which keeps us focused on our being and our presence here and everywhere.

I was recently challenged when one of you asked me “Who is there I can talk with about God when you (the sisters) are gone?” It was an honor to be asked but also very humbling.

Please remember that Vatican Council II placed religious in the Category of laity! No longer is there a category of Religious! Each one of you can talk about God because God is in you and with you and speaks through you, your words and your actions. The more you believe that, the easier it becomes to feel

comfortable with what you might call, “god talk”! And that doesn’t necessarily mean that you become a preacher, telling everyone what to do and to be. Please feel comfortable in recognizing God in all persons and all things, but firstly, in yourself!! It is quite an exercise and challenge. BUT, it will keep you ever humble before God.

One last thought: I think each of us finds something of God in BEAUTY! After arriving here, I knew I wanted to beautify the front of 204 W 97th St. with window boxes. It is one of my minor ministries to bring some beauty to our neighborhood.

I have tried to have flowers which are seasonal and beautiful. The first flowers were REAL. But within 2 to 3 weeks, the pigeons had nested, eaten all the greens and flowers. From then on, the flowers have been imitations (mostly from Michael’s). Can’t tell you how many people have stopped to ask about them; many people passing by gather on the steps to have a picture taken with the flowers in the background. People who see with the eyes and ears of faith, see/hear beauty and consequently see/hear something of God.

With further reflection, you may see yourself as these imitation flowers. When you begin to believe that you, too, are able to share thoughts of God comfortably with others, you will begin to be comfortable with “godspeak”, just as the imitation flowers became real flowers to those who recognized beauty and authenticity. You will have activated your role in the Church and in the world!

Each of you have added some beauty to our lives and we want to thank you. “Do something beautiful for God” – isn’t that what Mother Teresa said? We say it in unison to you and with you!!.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We love this Parish; we love the Friars with whom we have collaborated; and, we love YOU!!! God bless you always! We keep you in our prayers.

The FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF MARY