

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

CLEVELAND, OHIO

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“Here Am I, Send Me”: *Prison Ministry at St. Ignatius*

You may recall that Pope Francis announced a Year of Mercy in 2015-2016, which officially closed on Nov. 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. In announcing the year at that time, the pope said that he had “thought often about how the Church can make more evident its mission of being a witness of mercy.” Pope Francis speaks and writes often about how we as Catholics can live out and emphasize mercy as part of our lives.

During the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis stated, “In many ways our efforts at mercy are inspired by the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy, which I like to recall because it is important for us to hear them over and over – to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead.”

Much of what we do at St. Ignatius of Antioch Catholic Church follows and fulfills those works, but one ministry focuses on one such work in particular – visiting the



imprisoned. Our parish is proud to have a Prison Ministry involved with the Cuyahoga County Corrections Center, or CCCC, which is under the supervision of the sheriff's office and houses over 2,000 inmates – the largest prison in the county.

Parishioner Jim Metrisin has been involved with this ministry for 10 years.

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“Here Am I, Send Me”: *Prison Ministry at St. Ignatius* continued from front cover

“A number of years ago, I vowed to make an effort to complete all the Corporal Works of Mercy. The last one on my list was to ‘visit the imprisoned.’ I was led to this ministry by that.

During that time, I heard the reading from Isaiah when the Lord said ‘Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And I said, Here am I. Send me.’ I have never forgotten that and think of it often.” — Jim Metrisin

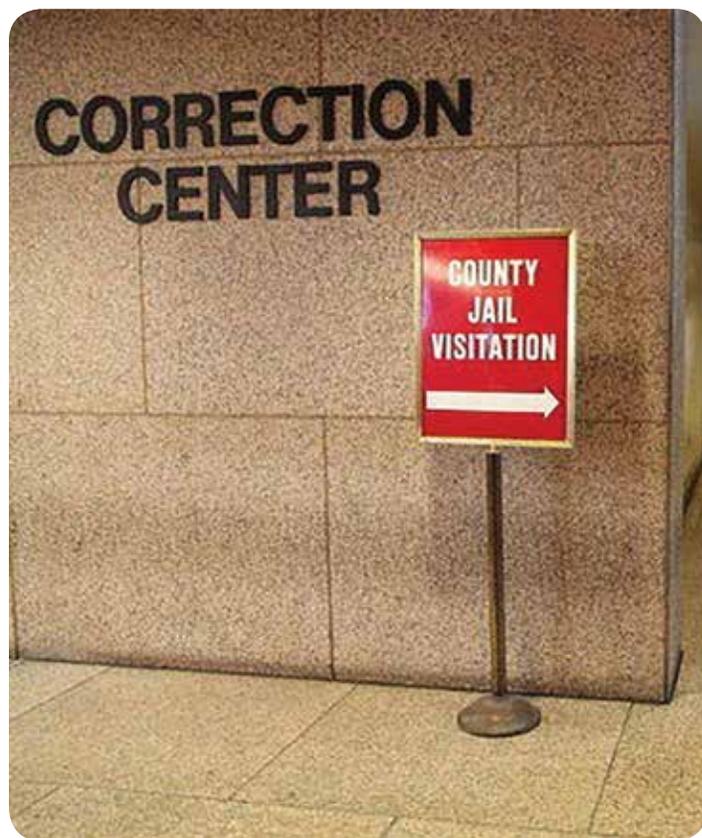
“A number of years ago, I vowed to make an effort to complete all the Corporal Works of Mercy,” he says. “The last one on my list was to ‘visit the imprisoned.’ I was led to this ministry by that. During that time, I heard the reading from Isaiah when the Lord said ‘Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And I said, Here am I. Send me.’ I have never forgotten that and think of it often.”

Although this ministry involves many aspects of prison ministry under the direction of Sr. Rita Mary Harwood, SND, Jim’s work is at the CCCC.

“For me this is a special way to give back to God in thanksgiving,” Jim says. “This has really become my personal ministry — of course, it is not for everyone. I go to the CCCC 30 to 35 times a year where I work with prisoners and with the chaplains there — Fr. Neil Walters, Deacon Marty Field, and Deacon Carl Toomey. We provide Catholic/Christian services to the men. I think I am pretty much a regular guy on the street, but I am willing to listen, and that is important.”

As Jim notes, he is at the Corrections Center from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on a Friday.

“I have to go through security procedures, and then have a few minutes to set up,” he says. “I conduct a service at 10 a.m. and then another at 2 p.m. The men are with me for one hour. The room can only accommodate between 25 and 30 people. And at most services, I will have 16 to 18 men. They do not have to be Catholic to attend. We have a Service of the Word, do some singing, and sometimes are able to offer a Communion service for the Catholics. The men are happy to be out of their pods where they are housed, but they also understand the spiritual benefits.”



If you are interested in becoming involved with this important ministry of mercy, please contact the parish office at 216-251-0300, or visit the Diocese of Cleveland Ministry to the Incarcerated website at www.clevelandprisonministry.org.

A Letter From Our Pastor

Where Are Our Priorities?

Dear Parishioners,

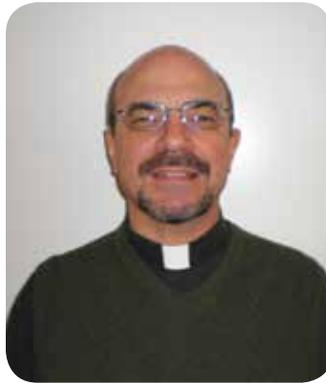
I am hoping that you are aware that we are completing and will continue to celebrate the holiest time of the year in our Church. Easter Sunday, April 1, is the high point of the year for us as Catholics. We will, of course, continue to celebrate this holy time until Pentecost Sunday, which is May 20 this year. That is correct — our Easter season continues until then.

St. Paul provided some sage advice. He said, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Regardless of your opinions on what happens after resurrection, we can agree that it will be something “above” this life. Paul might be asking us if we put God first in all things. Life can become very encumbered with possessions, money, power, and even our egos.

Our goal should be to put God at the top of our lists. If that is not what we do, we may need to adjust our priorities. If we have not moved in that direction during Lent or in the past, now is the time to do it. We must constantly strive to not allow earthly things to become our gods.

It was St. Gregory the Great who said, “God made us to be the gardeners of paradise.” Some stewardship people have maintained that God has given each of us a garden — and when we are judged, we only hear one question, “What have you done with the garden I gave you?”

What have we done? What are we doing? First, we must recognize and acknowledge that we are all gifted, admittedly in different and varied ways. Despite what we see as our gifts or how we measure them, we need to ensure that we are using them in ways that serve God and others — ways that show good discipleship and stewardship on our parts.



Were you aware that the month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit in the Church? The term “spirit” translates from the Hebrew word *ruah*, which means “breath.” Truly, as Catholics, the Holy Spirit has been breathed into each of us, and is part of the garden we have received. Do we turn to Him? Do we rely on Him for strength? Do we even grant that He is part of our very being? We should. We need to, as St. Paul advised,

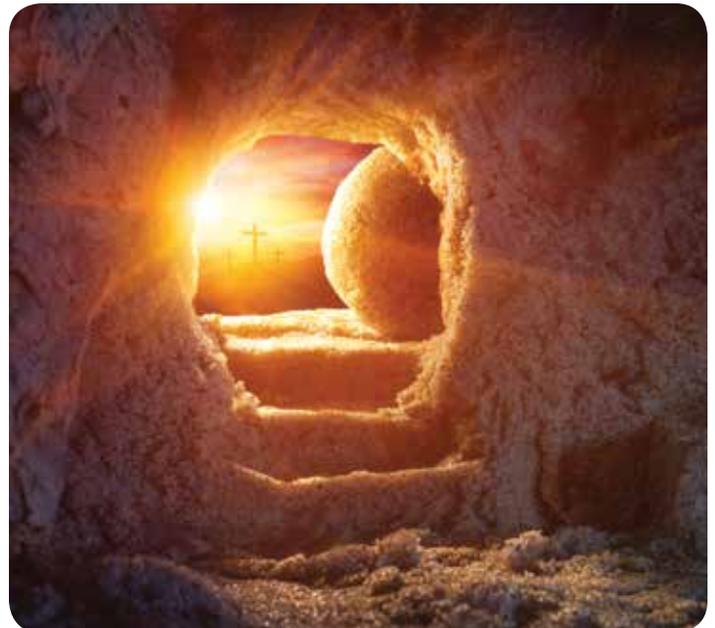
“think of what is above, not of what is on earth.”

May God bless you in all you do, and strive to do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reverend Michael Troha".

Fr. Michael Troha



For Parishioner Carl Suvak

Spend even a few moments talking with parishioner Carl Suvak, and you will realize that his life seems to center on a theme – connection. In his 33-year career as a letter carrier, Carl’s work centered on helping people from around the country – and around the world – stay connected. And when he thinks about what he enjoys most in life, making connections with the people around him tops the list.

When Carl and his wife, Cynthia, first came to St. Ignatius of Antioch in 1978, they experienced an immediate sense of connectedness.

“The first time we went to church here, the community seemed so warm,” Carl says. “People were hugging each other so sincerely, and it was just impressive to see such warmth.”

Over the last 40 years, the parish has become a central part of the Suvaks’ family life. Cynthia taught at the school for a few years, and their children, Andrew and Flannery – named for Catholic writer Flannery O’Connor – were students there. Andrew still helps out with coaching basketball, and Cynthia has stayed involved with the Bible Study program.

When Carl retired from the United States Postal Service three years ago, he started a part-time job driving children with special needs to and from school.

“It’s a job, but I also feel connected to the community doing this,” he says. “The kids are wonderful. I get to know them and they get to know me, and it’s just a nice way to stay connected and feel like I’m doing something positive.”

Just as community service jobs seem to be a natural fit for Carl – he was in the field of social work before joining the postal service – staying active in the Church has also been a consistent part of his life. His parents sent all four of their sons to Catholic schools, and his mother participated in various parish ministries at Sts. Peter and Paul in Garfield Heights while Carl was growing up.

Ever since joining the Garden Club here at St. Ignatius a few years ago, Carl has loved serving alongside



Parishioner Carl Suvak

a wonderful group of people in this ministry. As they brighten up the church grounds with their plantings and put on spaghetti dinner fundraisers, these parishioners truly enjoy one another’s company.

Carl also finds an increased sense of community in his role as a Eucharistic Minister.

“It’s a nice thing to do, and I feel connected to the church,” he says. “I know so many people there. It’s almost like I’m saying ‘hello’ to these people – but in a spiritual way – as I’m offering the Precious Blood.”

It's All About Connection

Recently, Carl has had the opportunity to reach out and connect with all the listeners within range of Cleveland's Catholic radio station, AM 1260 The Rock. Carl's new venture in the world of radio broadcast comes decades after he first became interested in broadcasting.

"I went to St. Peter Chanel High School, and I was involved with doing the morning announcements on our closed-circuit station," Carl says. "Of course, I eventually ended up in the postal service, but the radio thing was always in the back of my mind. So, after two guys from The Rock came to St. Ignatius for a presentation last December, I filled out the form for volunteer opportunities."

Carl was soon invited to the station, where he read some short inspirational audio clips for the station

and was asked to become their liaison at St. Ignatius. Excited for the opportunity to finally pursue his interest in broadcasting, Carl looks forward to seeing where his volunteer work with The Rock might lead!

For Carl, staying active in his parish and community is a priceless way to continue making connections with the people around him. And here at St. Ignatius, he has found a wonderful place to do just that!

"There are some really dedicated and selfless people here who you really want to help out, and it's an honor to be with that kind of a group," he says. "It just seems like a good fit for me — I'm comfortable with it and make good connections with the people I work with. It's rewarding for me, and I feel good about doing it."

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Stewardship Becoming Fishers of Men

Whether you hold a high-profile position, such as parish council president, or have more of a behind-the-scenes role as a coordinator of a parish ministry, God has called you – as a parish leader – to help build His Church.

This challenge is just as important as the call of any other Catholic leader, including the earliest disciples.

When Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He urged a group of fishermen, “Come follow me.” Jesus promised if they laid down their nets and followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. These men were among His original disciples, and they knew Christ’s call was so important that they left their secular occupation to follow Him.

Just as He did with the fishermen, Jesus calls each of us today. He is not necessarily asking us to leave our secular careers, but He is asking us to put Him first in our lives and to share His message of love with others.

God truly wants us to serve Him and to build His Church through the secular occupations we have chosen. It is through the Church that new disciples are born, and it is in the Church that disciples continue to mature. Forming disciples of Christ is the most important work that can be done on earth, and each of us has been called to play an active role in this work.

So, how do we go about building the Church? Where do we find the plans?

Some people mistakenly think that building the Church – in particular, building our own parish or diocese – is no different than building a successful business. Indeed, the purpose of building the Church is to change hearts – a goal that only God can accomplish.

Secular society has not prepared us for this work. However, the Holy Spirit – sometimes referred to as the “Architect of the Church” – has the plan. In order to implement this plan, we must become good listeners. We must open ourselves to the workings of the Holy Spirit as He transforms us and guides us to carry out God’s work and to serve as His instruments on earth, building the Church together with Him.

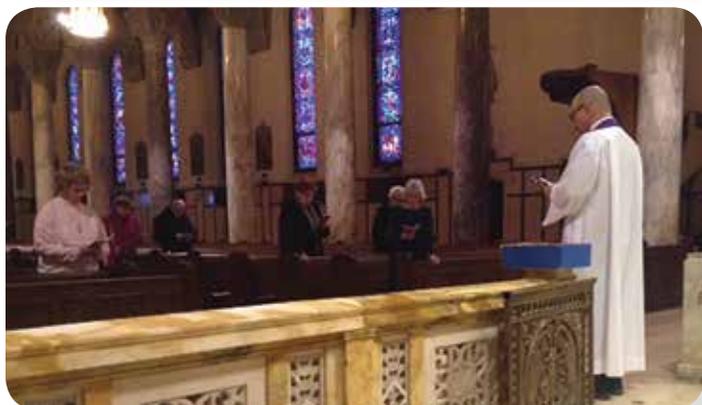
This is where spiritual exercises, such as retreats, come into play. A retreat offers the individual an opportunity to spend time alone with the Lord, allowing God to draw the person deeper into the mystery of who He is, who we are and what He is doing in our lives. Stewardship retreats can offer parish leaders the opportunity each year to spend time with the Lord as He directs them in the ways of discipleship. As leaders, we must take time to meditate on the Scriptures and allow Jesus to open up His Word to us. Then, as we grow deeper in our understanding of what God wants of us, we can exclaim, just as the first disciples did on the road to Emmaus, “Our hearts are burning within us” (Lk 24:32).

God has placed an extremely important call on the lives of all parish leaders, no matter how big or small the role. It is vital to understand how we, as parish leaders, can best answer His call. What, in particular, is the Lord calling each one of us to do? He most likely is not asking us to drop our nets, but to pick them up and become “fishers of men.” We must discern how we can most effectively cast our nets for Him.



Faithfully Entering Into the Season of Lent at St. Ignatius of Antioch

As we entered the solemn Lenten Season this past February, members of our St. Ignatius of Antioch family gathered in Lenten observance, such as during Stations of the Cross and on Ash Wednesday.



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Mass Schedule

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

HOLY WEEK SACRED TRIDUUM 2018

Passion Sunday, March 25

Palm Sunday 5 p.m. Vigil; 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.
(Solemn Blessing and Procession with Palms)

Holy Thursday, March 29

School Children Liturgy of the Word, 10 a.m.
Mass of the Lord's Supper, 8 p.m.

Good Friday, March 30

Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 31

Blessing of Food in Church, 2 p.m.
The Easter Vigil, 8 p.m.
Service of Light, Service of the Word
Baptism
Eucharist

Easter Sunday, April 1

Renewal of Baptismal Promises
9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Mass