

Our lives make an impact on others. It's just a question of what that looks like. Whether we move about in isolation in the midst of others, whether we receive from them, and/or whether we give of ourselves. The health of every community depends on how many fall into that latter category, and that includes the Church. Our parishes are filled with parishioners who offer their gifts to foster our life of worship, prayer, growing in and sharing faith, community and service to others. These things don't happen on their own – but only because parishioners respond to the call of Christ and share their time and talents. Our community is better because of it. I am grateful to them, and I know others are as well. We recently received a note of thanks at St. Joseph from one of those served by the generosity of others:

“I am grateful for the Homebound Ministry. I look forward to seeing Joel and Nohora. They bring a lot of comfort, joy and peace of mind to those of us unable to attend Mass. Nohora always brings the bulletin and today the Northwest Catholic magazine. She also shared these hand-crafted rosaries – made by a parishioner. Please convey my appreciation and respect to this kind woman. She has shared her love for Mary in a tangible way – one that delights others. What a truly beautiful ministry. It was a delightful surprise and something that I will treasure. I know that the Homebound ministers sacrifice their time to provide this comfort. I had done it for years and wouldn't want anyone to think that it went unnoted. I say a special prayer for them each morning. Blessings to the Church family.”

It's one of those ministries that most never see, and yet makes a profound impact on the lives of those who can't come to Mass, bringing the Eucharist to them, and so much more. Our community is better when we live more fully for the Lord, and one another, in love. The lives of others are enriched, and our own lives, too, as we live in a more authentically human way and build one another up. That only happens, though, when we are willing to give of ourselves.

During the next two weeks, I am asking EVERYONE to fill out a Time and Talent pledge card – to share the gifts God has given you with our community of faith, to make a difference. Make the lives of others, and your own, better. Every parish within our family could use more laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. We have more than enough, as the Lord has told us, but only if each of us responds in faith. For Jesus, it's never a question of who is called to serve, but in what ways. What will your own 'Yes' to the Lord look like for the year ahead?

In Christ,

Fr. Matthew Oakland