

Saint John XXIII Catholic Community

*A Vatican Council II Concept of Christian Community and Mission
A Church Dedicated to Saint John XXIII*



**“The true and solid peace of nations
consists not in equality of arms, but in
mutual trust alone.” St. John XXIII**

March 2018

EDITORIAL

It is truly amazing how quickly 2017 has gone by and ending with Christmas on, of all days, Monday. In this and the next several newsletters I intend to write about how we celebrate the Eucharist at St. John XXIII Catholic Community. There are times when we need to remind ourselves of how fortunate we are as Catholics, to have the celebration of the Eucharist as our central act of worship. Quite often, when we repeat something frequently, even when it is important, we begin to take it for granted and then do not fully participate.

Before we can talk about worship I need to address the issue of Faith. Without Faith, Eucharist does not make sense. It would take a large book to do justice to this subject. I will attempt to open us to a more contemporary understanding of our belief in Jesus the Christ. In the next two newsletters, I plan to take us step by step through our Celebration of the Eucharist and provide some explanations of what it truly means. I will begin now, by setting the stage before we do an in depth presentation of the celebration of the Mass subsequently.

I will also reflect about what is happening to our hospitals in Kenya.

Social Concerns has done tremendous work the past several months. Maria Duran will also have an extensive article on all the workings of her department to show how serious this parish recognizes the social gospel in Mt. 25: 31-46 "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers (and sisters) you did to me."

God bless,



Publisher

Saint John XXIII
Catholic Community

Editor

Rev. Arkad Biczak

Editorial Staff

Marina Giannini
Terry Sheehan

Web & Media

Jim Dlouhy

Contributors

Rev. Arkad Biczak
Ray Dukart
Maria Duran
Jude Fournier
Marina Giannini
Steve Herrera
Cecilia Muntz
Terry Sheehan
Sean Williams

Contact Us

We would like to hear from you.
Write to us at
4831 Tramway Ridge Dr. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

Welcome New and Returning

Parishioners

~ Michael Hess and Megan Kamerick
~ Jeremiah and Ellen Neely
~ Karel and Yuneisy Hernandez
~ Gary Thompson and Johanna Elwood
~ Jonathan and Rebecca Owen
~ Brian and Paula Broom
~ Dawn Gerencer
~ Lawrence and Carmen MacErnie
~ Lori Ann Benjey
~ Alan Mendoza and Nicole Martinez
~ Phyllis Bibeau
~ Michael Orick
~ Leroy and Sydney Peer
~ Patrick Moon
~ Karen Lubertazzo
~ Kathleen Lubertazzo
~ Javier and Elizabeth Bonilla
~ Frances Cunzeman
~ Karl Perkins

~ Amy Kaczmarowski
~ Ariele and Evan Overton
~ Louann Grady
~ Lawrence and Holly Filener
~ Joseph Filener
~ George Migl Chavez
~ Carol Delgado
~ Lisa Ortiz
~ Edlin Ricarte
~ Tamara Kodis
~ John and Krista Rivera
~ Paul and Barbara Hurd
~ John Baca-Saavedra and Lisa Alvarado
~ Saudi Herrera



Body, Mind, Spirit

By Cecilia Muntz

The Enigma of Faith and Worship



THERE HE WAS, A PERFECT, LITTLE BUNDLE. He is their second, perfect, little bundle to spark reverence in his parents' souls. The nine months' journey had been rocky and the birth had been difficult, but he arrived despite it all. Now, life was complete. The passage of time began.

As both little boys grew, the immeasurable prayers for their success as human beings were said in devotion to God's will. Life took numerous twists and turns just as life's very nature is wont to do. Problems, changes, transitions—some expected, some not—contoured each boy's perception of the world and where they envisioned their lives in the years ahead. Parental controls were relinquished as these two emerging self-reliant young persons found significance, caring and love in others outside their birth family. As young men, their acumen took them into different fields of work, where both became successful in their careers. It is in this era of a beloved child's life where a parent starts to feel the impact of what it means to differentiate between worshipful prayer and true faith. A parent at this stage learns what it means to surrender hopes and dreams for their children to the will of God in this critical method of veneration when life's crucibles emerge.

Never is faith tested as rigorously as when one's cherished adult offspring is becoming emotionally submerged. When that little bundle of perfection to whom you were so devoted is suffering, in pain and exhausted from life's barbs; when the burden of existence has depleted the promise it once contained; when the will to live is too much to muster, and he or she is linked to your soul only through a phone connection; when the excruciating circumstances of the life on the other end of that communication will not relent; when the end to physical existence of one's offspring is real and threatening, and in the pain of watching your child emotionally drowning to the extent that physical annihilation is the perceived solution, it becomes tempting to pray "Your will, not mine be done, except, please, not this."

No longer can you scoop the wounded child into your arms and say confidently, "I will fix this."

No longer can you rock them to sleep, place them under warm covers, and know they are safe.

No longer can you feed them, protect them, and definitely know that on your watch they will survive; you are no longer their watchman. They are out there alone and in despair. Your heart pounds, hurts and bleeds from the helplessness. All you can do is pray—and there it is again. Just how can a parent relinquish that desire for their child's survival in a conversation with God? In our humanity, the answer is: imperfectly.

I envision, imperfectly of course, how excruciating it must have been for the Blessed Mother to watch the horrors of her son's passion. Was Mary tempted to ask for an override of the Father's will so Jesus' pain would cease and He would survive? As a mother, I can't imagine that she wasn't tempted, and perhaps Mary pleaded, "Please, not this!" Even Jesus asked that the cup of suffering pass from him, but immediately relinquished His fate to the Father. As imperfect beings, of course, we will not ask perfectly for the pain of our children to cease while perfectly resigning their fate to God's will. As finite creatures, that ability almost seems an oxymoron.

In our love for others, Jesus promises His light. When the obscurity of fear surrounds our children, we try to be a candle in their darkness because we love them. Our tristful prayers—imperfect as they are—will be answered and light our child's way as well as our own; the answers may not be understood. Hard as it is, that trust is the interstice between faith and worship. After petitioning God, true faith is resignation without complete comprehension. Peace beckons when we learn that reliance.

"Free your mind from all that troubles you; God will take care of things. You will be unable to make haste in this (choice) without, so to speak, grieving the heart of God, because he sees that you do not honor him sufficiently with holy trust. Trust in him, I beg you, and you will have the fulfillment of what your heart desires." ~ St. Vincent de Paul

FROM OUR PASTOR

A few years ago, over a series of Sundays, I explained the different parts of the Mass as we went through them. Because most of us attend Mass each Sunday, it can become routine since the parts, though different each Sunday, are always in the same place. I hope to make this article informative for every member of our parish. But before this, I need to set the stage by discussing Faith as lived now.

We need to understand that much of what we believe requires an act of Faith. Each one of us has different experiences of how we have lived our lives thus far. The faith we had as children, when we could not wait until we could receive Jesus for the first time, has radically changed. As we mature there is a continuum of events, some of which we cannot control. The world we live in continuously evolves, sometimes for good and other times for ill. With all the advances in science, political thinking and human rights, we could logically assume that by now human behavior would have radically changed, and with what we humans know, we should have made the world a better place. There should no longer be selfishness, greed, hatred, destructive behavior, wars, etc. All of humanity wishes for better things and through that longing, that only humans are capable of, there must be an answer. That answer is the gift of Faith. If we choose to respond to it we will discover the wonder of who we really are. There is a choice. If we allow that gift into our lives and respond to it, a whole new horizon opens before us. We are now capable of looking beyond this life and discovering that we are embraced by a loving God. Not that our material existence might necessarily change for most of us, but it puts meaning into our struggles and disappointments; we know we are not alone. Each experience we have as we go through life can lead us away from God or to a closer relationship to him. The perfect example is giving birth to your child and holding her or him for the first time. The physical pain passes but the experience of unconditional love and wonder is unbelievable. Faith does not come easily to most of us. It is a lifetime struggle and endeavor since God is totally "other" than what we can perceive in our material existence. We have Jesus himself to show us the way, by the life he lived. Jesus in whom God took human form, fully giving up the divine nature to become one of us.



In a meditation, G. Lemerrier, in *Dialogues avec le Christ*, puts the following words from Jesus as speaking to him.

Gregoire, one day I said, "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses it will find it." I could just as well have said, "Whoever seeks to save his faith will lose it and whoever loses it will find it." Because faith is like the soul of life.

Gregoire, you should lose your faith continually, if you want to save it. Not that it is simply to "lose the faith," but you should lose the limits which your belief, which is the support of your faith, bring to your faith the point where belief imprisons faith. This is a task to take up day after day, a task which will make you pass constantly between the feelings of fear and desperation.

Myself, I passed through that great adventure. Otherwise, I would not have been a man, your brother. Remember my cry on the cross, when I confronted my mountain, death, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me."

And do not forget, Gregoire, the disciple is no greater than his master.

Thus he experienced all our doubts, our questionings and difficulties of life. His ultimate sacrifice, through death on the cross, was out of unconditional love for everyone and offered ultimate forgiveness. His sacrifice led to his resurrection, so that the risen Christ, as he is now, is whom we receive in Communion. All the words we associate with his real presence are different aspects of the same thing. Eucharist means thanksgiving and reflects the Jewish celebration of Passover, a reenactment of the Hebrews being freed from Egypt and becoming the people of God; for us, now the people of God, the Eucharist represents freedom from sin and incorporation into the Mystical Body by our Baptism. Communion is more than union with the risen Lord for it also signifies our union with each other. Sacrifice because it is an enactment of his sacrifice for all.

At Saint John XXIII Catholic Community, in keeping with the documents of Vatican II, we attempt to have total participation. We respond to everyone by being an open, caring and welcoming community. It is you, the parishioners, who make this a living reality. In our parish we use the variously approved Eucharistic Prayers (canons) so that the full beauty of those prayers may be shared by all.

As has been discussed in former newsletters, the church building itself was designed as a theological statement. The

sanctuary incorporate our belief in the Trinity. The central wall symbolizes God the Father, which is why our projection system helps us to lift our minds and hearts to God by having our prayers and music projected. To the right of the Father is the Cross and the risen Christ symbolizing Jesus as he is now. To the left is the symbol of the Holy Spirit with one step leading to the Baptismal pool as our first step of faith. The nichos symbolize the sense of spiritual reality as found in the earliest natural faith of the American Indians. We do not have kneelers (standing is also a true sign of respect) because at some of the most important prayers the noise of kneelers being moved is a total distraction and keeps some from fully participating. This is especially true while proclaiming the great Amen before the Communion rite.

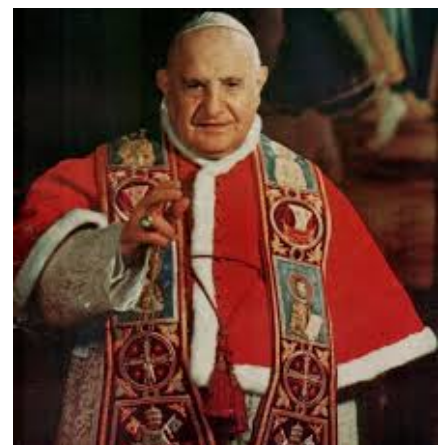


There are two items that I want to mention and expand upon in future newsletters. First, the prayers at the offertory can be recited quietly, and many priests choose to do this. As I mentioned above, there needs to be the connection to our roots in the Passover. The prayers are taken from the Passover celebration with a response from the congregation. Musicians should be aware that the timing of the Offertory hymn should allow it to be completed prior to the start of the prayers over the gifts. This would enable all celebrants to recite these prayer audibly for congregational response.

The second item is the inviting of the children around the altar for the Eucharistic Prayer. Liturgically speaking this should not be done. However, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) document on the Liturgy is very clear about accommodating children when we celebrate Mass. It is my pastoral decision to do this even though some do not like it. By keeping the children from the altar we are depriving them from full participation since all they see is a large person's back. I do not expect other priests to do this unless they choose. After all, in Mark 10:13-16 Jesus says, "Let the children come to me," after he became indignant with the apostles for scolding people for bringing their children to him. By and large, almost all children who have been brought to church as infants are well behaved. Some of the older children who have not come to Mass as infants sometimes carry on and need parental guidance.

“Italians come to ruin most generally in three ways, women, gambling, and farming. My family chose the slowest one.”

Pope St. John XXIII (the former Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli)



SOCIAL CONCERNS MINISTRY

At St. John XXIII Catholic Community, Jesus's commands to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, cloth the naked and visit the sick and imprisoned, "Whatever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters you did to me," has always been taken very seriously by our parish community. Pope Francis has written in his encyclicals and proclaimed in speeches, that because of our Baptism, we are all called to love as Jesus did. This means loving every brother and sister no matter who they are or where they are. The whole human family should be our concern. As Francis says, in his book *The Church of Mercy*:

"Jesus understands human suffering, he has shown the face of God's mercy, and has bent down to heal body and soul. This is Jesus. This is his heart."

Very early in the history of our parish, even though we were a small community, Father Ark and most of the members of the community believed in the importance of having all members respond to the needs of the unfortunate people of our world, both locally and internationally. The Social Concerns program has vastly expanded over the years and now our parish is totally committed to reaching out to the poor and needy in Albuquerque, as well as in Kenya and Uganda and other parts of the world.

It is sad the New American translation of the Gospels does not fully translate the true reaction of Jesus to the poor and needy. Every place in the Gospels that speak of Jesus having "pity," misuses the actual words given by the evangelists themselves. In the original Greek in which the New Testament was written, the actual word should be "mercy" (eleison) or "compassion" (splangnizomai), the first meaning "heart felt care" and the second meaning "feeling the pain of the other from our gut." Jesus felt the pain of the one or of the group needing care. Father Ark and Deacon John have tried to clarify this distinction about Jesus having "pity" in many of their homilies. Most parishioners in one way or another, truly respond with compassion to each and desire to something about all this suffering.

The Social Concerns Standing Committee and you, the parishioners, are responding to the needs of the unfortunate. The original Social Concerns Standing Committee is now comprised of many sub-committees that work in all aspects of social need and are actively involved in spreading mercy to the less fortunate members of our human family. Tied to this is also a need to promote social justice. The lack of social justice in our world is the major cause of most of the hardships experienced by the unfortunate members of our human family.

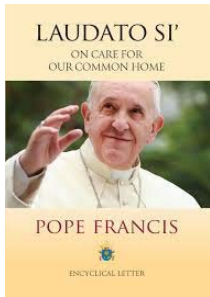
The various Social Concerns sub-committees help to ensure that the parish does its best to respond to each aspect of social need. The name of each sub-committee and a brief explanation of charter of each is provided below:

The **Social Justice Committee** addresses local and worldwide issues of justice. Carlos Navarro heads this committee and the focus has been on hunger both locally and globally. Our parish is a partner with the Interfaith Hunger Coalition which is comprised of a variety of faith communities and focuses on education and legislation in New Mexico confronting hunger issues. The Offering of Letters is a national endeavor of faith communities to write to our national legislators regarding the need for supporting children's nutrition needs that is included in the farm bill.



This Spring, the Social Justice Committee will be focusing on Sharing the Journey which is Pope Francis's initiative of addressing the plight of refugees and immigrants.





The **Creation Care Committee** is headed by Kevin Bean and is part of social justice for our earth and environment. This group has provided informative speakers and films on the environment, as well as initiating a recycling program here at the parish. They will be presenting a program this Spring on St. Francis's teaching regarding protecting the earth and resources.

Community Outreach is led by Maria Duran, who is also the Social Concerns Ministry chairperson. The focus of this program is to support and ease the burden of our neighbors regarding their temporal needs and to support agencies in their work through Sharing and Caring is Our Bag, the Giving Tree and Love Your Neighbor Program.



Sandy Gaudet coordinates the food pantry and puts her heart and soul into her work. She works with many volunteers to stock the pantry, give out the food and track the numbers and clients we serve. Casa de las Comunidades is a Catholic Worker House in the Southeast Heights and teams of volunteers sort food and distribute it to the homeless and needy in that Community.

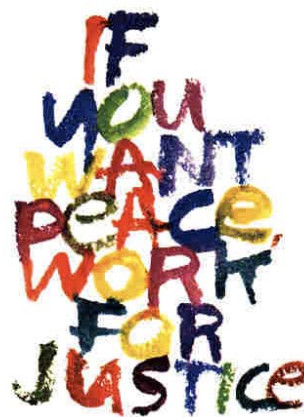
Family Life is coordinated by Siobhan McCoy. This group is focused on family building activities, serving the community through projects and organizing programs for spiritual growth for parents. Programs have included the Love and Logic Parenting Program and the Polar Express Party at Christmas, with more to come.

World Life is coordinated by Charlie Joerg and has focused on our missions in Africa. There will be a refocus of our involvement with the change that Fr. Ark has shared with the parish regarding the cessation of our hospitals due to political reasons. This committee also researches new opportunities to grow in our involvement in Africa.



Most Importantly, thank you to all the volunteers and we pray that other parishioners will step up to the call to serve in the capacity of social concerns. We need you!

For more information, please contact Social Concerns at 293-0376 or check out our website at SocialConcerns@JohnXXIIIcc.org.



News from Kenya

We have some very sad news from Kenya. I have recently been informed that since both St. Mary's Mission Hospitals were under the same management, the closing of the Nairobi hospital by Cardinal Njue and the Assumption Sisters means all assets had to be turned over to the sisters. This now affects over 350,000 poor patients annually. I am heartbroken over this unethical and immoral behavior; in addition, this is a violation of Church Canon Law which states very clearly that church funds specified for a given use cannot be used for any other purpose other than that for which the funds were donated or given. I will write a detailed letter to every household in the parish to give a full history of our parish involvement in this important project. The Cardinal has friends in high places, namely the Roman Catholic Curia in Rome and the federal government of Kenya, which has enabled him to commit such a heinous crime. The only positive information we have is that from 1999 to the present, 4,035,000 extremely poor persons had healthcare that they would not have received otherwise.

Liturgical Ministries at St. John XXIII

Pope Francis says serving as a Liturgical Minister “is a privileged way to draw closer to Jesus, which in turn enables you to open yourselves to others, to journey together, to set demanding goals and to find the strength to achieve them.”

“It is... of the greatest importance that the celebration of the Mass ... be so ordered that the sacred ministers and the faithful taking part in it... may draw from it more abundantly those fruits, to obtain which, Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood and entrusted it as the memorial of his Passion and Resurrection to the Church, his beloved Bride.” (From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal – GIRM)

It takes over 150 ministers each week to bring liturgy to life. These are the ministries in which you can contribute and celebrate!



Greeters – A major component of the Evangelization and Welcome Committee. At Mass, greeters serve as the “Ministry of First Impressions.” Their presence provides the opportunity to express God’s love through Christ and help set the tone of the upcoming time of worship. *Coordinator/Trainer: Steve Herrera*



Altar Servers - Servers of God and the community. Both adults and children who have received their First Communion are invited to serve. Children are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to be altar servers and to be close to the presence of Jesus. *Coordinator/Trainer: Barbara Braun*

Lectors – Proclaimers of the Word. Not performers trying to captivate an audience but servants of God and God's people. *Coordinators/Trainers: Ardell Fitzgerald, Jim Lozito*



Eucharistic Ministers – To give what we receive. Jesus’s priestly action feeds his people, both body and soul. *Coordinator/Trainer: Doug Feery*

Ushers - Guards of the House of the Lord. Ushers remind us that we are entering a set-apart place for this hour every week. *Coordinator/Trainer: Candy Lozito*



Music – On the frontline of worship. Music imparts a sense of unity with the assembly and sets the tone for celebration.

Directors: Sat. 5:30pm, Steve Herrera
Sun. 7:30am, Pei Pei Chu
Sun. 9:00am, Gene Ayala
Sun. 11:30am, Steve Herrera
Sun. 6:00pm, Julie Keating Ehrhart

Audio/Visual Techs – The Lighthouse. To illuminate and make clear every aspect of liturgy and keep us attentive to the sacred works. *Coordinator/Trainer: Dan Bibeau Graphics: Loretta Guidarelli*



Banners and Environment - A silent witness in ministry that speaks volumes to anyone who looks at them. These are artists and builders. *Coordinator: Pauline Torres*

Flowers - Accentuate the beauty of our church and enhance worship. Flowers remind us of the everlasting freshness and beauty of God’s love for us. *Coordinator/Trainer: Charlene Kauzlaric*



Altar Linen/Holy Water – Engagement in the preparation of the altar table allows one to share in the Mass serving the Lord in a unique “in-home” ministry. *Coordinator/Trainer: Steve Herrera*

Scheduling – Setting the plan into action. Logistical preparation for having every minister in place and on time. *Coordinator: Sarah Feery*

The Assembly – YOU! ...



The celebration of Mass is a corporate act, an act of the whole assembly gathered for worship. All the particular ministries serve this corporate function (GIRM, no. 27). We are joined to this divine action through baptism, which incorporates us into the risen Christ. This action, which lies at the center of the whole Christian life (no. 16) is not initiated by us but by God acting in and through the Church as the body of the risen Christ. It becomes our action only to the extent that we give ourselves to this mystery of redemptive worship. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/the-worshiping-assembly-at-mass.cfm>

Are you called to one or more of these ministries?

Ministries Training Coordinator—Xan Porter

Steve Herrera
Director of Worship
293-0086 Office
Worship@JohnXXIIIcc.org

Whom God Has Joined Together

- ~ Eddie Lopez & Janel Herrera
- ~ Diego Ibarra & Annette Martinez
- ~ Tim Lowther & Claire Parrulli
- ~ David Wagner & Alexandra Sniegowski

Baptized in Christ

- ~ Fiona Lane Andujo
- ~ Sophie Elise Garcia
- ~ Armando Leo Jacquez III
- ~ Chloe May Newcomer
- ~ Noah Alan Mendoza
- ~ Charles Douglas Boniface Lyle
- ~ Caleb Glenn Lardy

In Loving Memory

- ~ Linda Sorenson
- ~ Lisa Marie Polito Baker
- ~ Olivia Duda
- ~ Kathryn Palmer
- ~ Gerald Piech
- ~ James Brendan O'Hagan

- ~ Daisy C. Armenta
- ~ Elizabeth Jensen
- ~ Rich Wing
- ~ Kameron Simmons
- ~ Margie Trujillo
- ~ Joseph Demba
- ~ Isidoro Paz

- ~ Joseph McDermott
- ~ Sylvestra S. Luna
- ~ Amadeo Martinez
- ~ Raymond Martinez
- ~ Dennis Shelley
- ~ Missy Rosson
- ~ Bob Hocker

Poetry from the Fall 2017 5-week Bereavement Support Group:

**My passion
my beauty and my love,
be happy.
Ever on the earth
friends.
Glimpses of my beloved,
my peace
expressions of you.**

**Sounds of you
always, in beauty
in spirit and in
sunshine. Your wisdom
bright and beautiful.
Awaken my forever
friend.**

**Beloved
song of my heart.
Growing in earth in
winter,
always and ever.
In the kitchen light
my living.**

Jesus: The Greatest Evangelizer



Mark's Gospel begins, "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1) These words are the earliest Gospel testimony to Christ. They tell us that Jesus himself, God's Good News, is the first and greatest evangelizer. He came to proclaim the Kingdom of God, at the center of which is salvation; we are liberated from all oppression, especially from sin and Satan, through the death and resurrection of Jesus. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #8-9: 27)

Early in his ministry, Jesus initiated us into evangelizing activity when asked by two disciples of John the Baptist, "... where are you staying?" In response, Jesus invited them to "come and see" (Jn. 1:38-39), thus inviting them to get to know him in the personal setting of his home.

Jesus' hospitality in bringing them into closer relationship with him sets the stage for his subsequent calling them to follow him as disciples. Jesus did not begin to preach to them or discourse about the kingdom of God immediately. His approach helps subsequent evangelizers recognize the vital importance of the personal dimension in dealing with those who search for God or life's meaning.

In a world, focused on individualism and geared toward the impersonal, to welcome someone into a closer

relationship with Christ by how we treat them is a powerful witness to the designs of God. In meditating on Jesus' approach, we learn that God is love through the love of others, not through formal doctrine.

Jesus set the stage for how he communicated God's Word by his everyday encounters, like his meeting the Samaritan woman at the well, forgiving a woman about to be stoned, healing a paralytic dropped through the roof of a house, and raising a dead child to life. His life set the stage for his preaching. It created a culture of faith that those around him desperately needed.

After witnessing his kindness, forgiveness, focus on his Father, and compassion for the poor, Jesus' credibility grew, and people flocked to hear him. They accepted his preached Word, because they witnessed his Words in the flesh. His personal life and miracles combined with his words set the stage for accepting his message of salvation as coming from God.

From Jesus, the greatest evangelizer, we learn that our life witness and the words we teach or preach meld into one for those who strive to follow Jesus. This challenges us to strive to be a model of faith for our families, friends, and neighbors. We do this every time we show good example and proclaim the Word of God to children, youth and adults.

Jude Fournier
Director of Religious Formation
293-7796

A Reflection on Miracles and Faith

By Ray Dukart

One thing that has struck me when I read the Gospels is the number of miracles that Jesus performed while he was with us as the Son of Man. Wherever he went there were sick and lame people in need of his healing. He encountered them as he walked through crowded streets. They were brought to him as he spread his good news of salvation.

He did not simply miraculously heal those he encountered. It was an act of faith in his healing powers on the part of those in need of his compassion that he responded to.

At the start of his public life at the wedding feast at Cana it was the faith of his mother Mary that he could solve the problem of the lack of wine to complete the wedding feast.

A woman who was suffering from hemorrhaging believed that if she could just touch his cloak she would be healed. Jesus called out her act of faith as an example for all of us.

Jesus was teaching in a house that was overflowing with those eager to hear him. So a group of people who believed in him lowered a paralytic through a hole in the roof that the paralytic might be healed.

The centurion, who was a pagan, had faith that Jesus could heal his servant by simply saying the word. Jesus did so because of the centurion's faith.

Jesus cured the daughter of a woman who was a member of the outcast tribe of Canaanites because of her faith in his healing powers. His compassion is open to all.

You Are Welcome

Greetings St. John XXIII Family!

As we move into the Lenten season, I find myself reflecting upon my first eight months as J23 Youth Director.

I'm happy to say that Youth Ministries is going strong—the Monday evening meetings of Emberescent, our High School Youth Group, have been spiritually fulfilling (both for the youth and myself) and well-attended. Our Middle School Youth Group (Torch) has also grown exponentially and is a blast for both me and the youth. As an ex-Middle School teacher, I'm overjoyed to see so many Middle Schoolers coming to join us in both fun and deepening their relationship with God.



Another large undertaking that Youth Ministries is taking on is our service trip to Nashville, TN this summer. Twenty youth, young adults, and adults have answered the call to serve and organized various fundraisers toward this goal. We can't thank the parish enough for its generosity thus far. We are already well on our way to completely funding this trip—keep a look out for a poster showing our progress in the Gathering Space soon.

I would also add that if you were one of the unlucky few that didn't get one of our delicious breakfast burritos (400 burritos went in a flash!), make sure to pick one up at another sale we'll be doing March 10-11!



Next, our Youth Leadership Team (FLAME) has been planning out our year and electing officers for this semester. We have a new Chairperson (M'Adele Little), Secretary (Celia Giallanella), and Directors of Social Media (Sarah Dakofsky and Baylei Peters), Outreach (Jacob Dakofsky), and Events (Duncan Hernandez, assisted by Eduardo Rivera and Mackenzie Guidry). I am so blessed to have a team that is dedicated to their faith and who are creating a stellar program.

Finally, I want to also give some attention to our Young Adult group here at the parish. This group, dedicated to ages 18-35, has grown and evolved greatly in the past months. We have seen numerous new faces join us and we have discussed topics as wide ranging as our vocations to Just War Theory to our place in the Church. We encourage any young adults to join us!

Something I always tell the youth is that, in my teenage years, I would not have been caught dead at a Youth Group (my love of heavy metal music and black t-shirts always seemed to clash with any Church youth activities), but this Youth Group? I wish I would have had it when I was going through the trials of my teenage years, and I don't just say that because I'm the director. The true welcome and abundance of Christ's love that I see overflowing from each and every youth here is something I hope every young person, whether you are Middle School, High School, or Young Adult, in our parish takes the chance to partake in at least once. I think you will find an energized community of like-minded, down to earth young people and a space wherein you can make friends and connections for life—both with others and with God. So I issue this challenge: come check us out. Answer the call and know--you are welcome.



In Christ,

Sean Williams, Youth Director
St. John XXIII Youth Ministries
(505) 323-2750
youth@johnxxiicc.org
www.j23youth.com