

In Your Midst

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ARCHBISHOP THOMAS J MURPHY COURTYARD
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In Your Midst

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"I am in your midst as one who serves."

From the great oculus high above the altar of St. James Cathedral, these words of Jesus communicate His abiding presence among us. This inscription gave us the name for our Journal and continues to be our guiding inspiration.

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Banner created by parishioner Kitty Kavanaugh for Archbishop Brunett's Golden Jubilee, July 8, 2008

The Pilgrimage of Faith

Cathedral parishioners offer meditations on the journey

I began the camino de Santiago is search of confirmation. In the early part of 2008, after a long discernment, I applied to enter the Society of Jesus. About the same time, I bought my plane tickets to Spain to make the 500-mile trek to the tomb of St. James in Compostela. Never before had the timing seemed so right. Like many of the other pilgrims along the way, I wanted to reflect on the interior camino by which God had led me. And, as I said, I wanted confirmation. Confirmation that the next step I had planned for my journey was one God had in mind as well.

I arrived in Pamplona on a Friday afternoon with plans to take a bus to the traditional starting point of Roncesvalles on the French border. I asked the clerk at the bus station about the bus to Roncesvalles. She pointed to the last bus pulling away behind me, told me the next bus left Monday, and shut the ticket window before I could ask any more questions. A little crestfallen, I wandered out of the bus station, and stumbled upon what would become a familiar sight in the coming weeks: a squat concrete waymarker with a yellow scallop shell and an arrow. I had found the pilgrim route of St. James, or rather, the pilgrim route found me. I walked in the direction of the setting sun, and a few miles outside of Pamplona found my first *albergue*, an inexpensive hostel for pilgrims. The *hospitalero* welcomed me and gave me my pilgrim's due: a bunk, a stamp on my *credencial* and a "Buen camino" for tomorrow's journey.

Along with millions of other pilgrims, I had been swept up by the current of the camino. The tidal force of that journey gathered "people of every race, language and way of life" (Eucharistic Prayer) into a people oriented toward a common destination and motivated by a deeply human search.

As I write this reflection, my camino is still unfinished. I have not yet set my eyes on the cathedral towers in Santiago from a hilltop immodestly called the Mount of Joy. Until then, I enjoy a much more pedestrian sight, the yellow waymarkers hidden along the way on the sides of buildings, beside wheat fields and tucked between narrow streets. This is the only confirmation I can hope for before I enter the Jesuit novitiate, not an expansive view from a mountain



height, but a waymarker hidden in the brush, a reminder that the path I trod has been walked by many feet before my own and a pointer toward our destination, "that new world where the fullness of God's peace will be revealed."

Curtis Leighton

The dictionary talks about pilgrimage as a journey to a holy place. My journey began when my family moved to a small town in northern Minnesota, where I entered first grade in a Catholic school. Three years later we moved to a place where the closest Catholic Church was ten miles away. When my father became seriously ill, I was sent to live with a great aunt in Iowa, and then to California where I lived with an aunt and uncle. I took the bus to Mass on Sundays, but it seemed lonely. No one said hello, and the priest was never at the door to greet you. One Sunday I decided that I could live a Christian life without a church building. I didn't go back.

Now, fast-forward many, many years to 2007. One day a friend, Renan Jeffereis, invited me to an organ

concert at St. James Cathedral. The beauty of the Cathedral and the music seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Sometime later, Renan told me how he had been raised a Catholic, but had gotten away from the Church. As time went on, he felt there was something missing, and felt a need to get back. He discovered Welcome Back at St. James, attended the meetings, and became a member. He went on and on about the excellence of the program, and suggested it to me.

The last two or three years, I had been thinking about getting back to the Church. Now, listening to Renan, the tugging was stronger yet. Maybe now would be a good time. I could give Welcome Back a try. It couldn't hurt, thought I. Well, it was one of the best things I ever did! First of all, the welcome is for real. TerryAnn Bowen, the program's leader, and her group are so friendly, so sincere, so knowledgeable, so — well — just welcoming! I met so many excellent presenters. Even Father Ryan took the time to spend an evening with us.

Many changes had taken place in the church since I was away, but changes for the better! Many of them to do with a significant shift toward more participation by the people. At St. James, with our dedicated, inspired leadership, there are hundreds upon hundreds of parishioners, in Jesus' footsteps, volunteering to serve others. Among them, educators, counselors, those that feed the hungry, or make beautiful music, or aid the handicapped, or participate in the liturgy. Some are just folks like you and me. Some are saints in the making, but all doing more than their share to keep their commitment to Christ, as one who serves. Sometimes when I come to Mass early, and can sit in the quiet of this sacred place, and think about our parish, and the texture and goodness of our people, I realize how blessed I am. That my pilgrimage is over, and I have reached that holy place.

Dick Mueller

We received our faith from our parents. It was different being Catholic back then. Now the Catholic faith is so open—faith is discussed, talked about. Back in Vietnam, growing up, faith wasn't scrutinized. It was so untainted, undisguised. It was matter of life and death. This is how our parents raised us in the faith.



We're both "boat people." We escaped from Vietnam in the early 1980s: Van arrived in the U.S. after a year in a refugee camp in Thailand. The boat she was on was pirated twice. Linh came to the U.S. via Malaysia. He was fourteen years old and almost died on the boat when they went six days with no food or water. It was just Linh and his father; it wasn't until twelve years later that they were reunited with his mother and siblings.

But our parents' faith never wavered through all of this.

We met singing in the youth choir at the Southeast Asian Vicariate in Portland. We were married in 1992, and we have two children, Khoa, 14, and Uyen, 9.

In some ways being Catholic is much easier here. You're free to practice your faith, to go to church. Later on, you realize it's harder. There are so many choices, so many distractions. In Vietnam, your faith is tested daily. Will I eat tomorrow? Will I be thrown in jail? Here, it's so different... there are so many material things, we're so busy all the time. It's a different battle here to keep our faith going strong.

In Vietnam, our families lived in fear, we really had nothing, except trusting in God completely. Here, it's so easy to forget that, we think we can rely on ourselves.

We used to go to the Church of the Vietnamese Martyrs, but once we came to a daily Mass here, and heard Father Ryan preach. That changed everything. He really challenges us to do more, to be better. Our faith is so much stronger because of St. James. We're so strengthened by being in the parish community, and we have a second family in the Children's Faith Formation department, where we teach Sunday School. We feel we really need to be here to support others and to be supported in our faith.

Raising our children in the faith is a big challenge. Sometimes it seems that growing up here is like growing up in Disneyland. When we grew up, we didn't know whether we'd eat... we knew our parents could be taken away at any time. Our parents would always tell us, "If I'm not here tomorrow, you will be OK: God will take care of you." And it was true.

We know we have to teach by example, as our parents did. It should be engrained in our children that everything they have is a gift from God. We pray for our children every day: "Lord, help us teach them the way you want... not the way we want." When they get older, they won't face the same challenges as us or our parents. But their challenge will be to do more for others.

Van & Linh Tran

I have never felt apart from God. Ever since my youngest days, I clearly remember feeling that I "knew" what many others around me didn't understand the same way. I knew my own understanding of God was what was right for me. I have felt the presence in my life throughout all the good and the bad.

In my late teens, and into my twenties I did not give my Catholic upbringing and faith much thought. I felt that I didn't need to go to a building on Sunday in order to have my own relationship with God. I was the typical, "I'm spiritual but not religious" college student and young professional. It was what I thought worked for me. Then, I met a lovely city called Seattle. I had visited Seattle from my home in the Midwest many times in my young adulthood and made a conscious decision that one day I would move there. After completing my teaching degree, I knew it was time. When making the decision to move so far from all of my family and friends, I knew it was the right one for me. I knew God would guide me and help me transition to my new life. Within the first three months of arriving I met my future husband, and got my first full-time teaching position!

After getting married, and working toward starting a family, I knew that I could not do it without

getting back to my religious faith. It was a sensation that had been creeping up on me, gradually but consciously. Upon the birth of my daughter, Lucia, my husband and I took a class about baptism at St. James. We were having her baptized in my childhood parish in Michigan, but we took the class at St. James. Theresa Van de Ven helped us get into the class and paperwork set up, and also informed me about Terry Bowen and the Welcome Back program. I was absolutely overjoyed with my first connection in the church! I attended Welcome Back and decided to continue developing my faith by also taking Confirmation classes. I was Confirmed this spring, and a true blessing from that experience was having our marriage "blessed" by Father Ryan. Words cannot adequately express how much love and joy I have felt throughout this process. I know God has guided me to the right place!

As I continue my journey back to the Church, I am excited to have such a fantastic parish and community in which to raise my child, and future children. I also realize that my religious faith will continue to grow and develop even more as I stay involved with St. James.

Sara-Marie Mader Wallas

When I consider the course of my life thus far, I'm reminded that one can never really know just what God has in store. Despite having always been a person of faith, it was not until about 15 years ago that I began to examine and explore the faith that had lain dormant up to that point. I look back at all that has happened since, and I can confidently say that neither my family, my friends nor I could have anticipated what it all would entail, not to mention what my future might hold: a pilgrimage for sure, unplanned though it was. St. James has been a significant part of this pilgrimage.

Like a considerable number of St. James parishioners, I am a convert to Catholicism. But oddly, even before I began my first RCIA class at St. James, I had some undefined idea of a religious vocation. I remember well my experience of RCIA and my anticipation of entering the Church, still not having the fullest sense of the rich tradition into which I was entering and still yet contending with thoughts of a religious vocation. I recall unloading on Helen Oesterle about these thoughts swarming in my head and her prudent response, that I should "for the time being, focus on the sacraments of initiation that were only weeks away"! But the idea wouldn't go away. Perhaps most influential in initiating my call were priests whom I observed and admired. I couldn't fully understand it, but somehow I knew that they

embodied what I felt drawn to be. But it was Fr. Peter Chirico who asked me if I had thought about being a priest and a few weeks later I asked him to tell me how to go about exploring what seemed like an unrealistic pursuit.

Seminary life has been also been a significant part of my pilgrimage. After a lengthy process, applying with the Archdiocese and Archbishop Brunett's acceptance, I began seminary studies in the fall of 2003 at Sacred Heart School of Theology. In addition to the academics, the community life and spiritual formation, I don't think I could have anticipated all the experiences seminary would bring, such as opportunities to learn from and work with Catholic Relief Services in Nicaragua and opportunities to study in Mexico. I could not have foreseen the rewards my pastoral year at St. Anthony's in Renton would bring, nor the powerful experience of being at the youth/seminarian rally with Pope Benedict XVI in April. Seminary life has been full of many such life-shaping rewards.

I have a full school year remaining, although my ordination to the diaconate is scheduled for November. I greatly look forward to my life as a priest—a pilgrimage in itself, I suppose—and to have the opportunity to be part of the important moments that mark people's lives, as well as the more ordinary spans in between. I have already had some taste of the profound privilege it is to be invited into the lives of others and be a part of their pilgrimage. Through this year, I ask for your prayers. In turn, you the people of St. James, the community of which I am part, remain in mine. I can't sufficiently express my gratitude for your support which most certainly has helped sustain my vocation, my pilgrimage. Thank you.

Todd Strange

On June 11, 2005, I left St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, an attractive walled town in the French Pyrenean foothills, and began walking across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain.

My pilgrimage couldn't have had a better start. It began after a simple breakfast of bread and coffee with 5 people from France and Germany. And it couldn't have had a more glorious conclusion! It ended a few weeks later when hundreds of pilgrims joined together to celebrate the Eucharist at Santiago's magnificent cathedral. We joined the countless people over the centuries who have made their way here from all parts



of the globe to visit the place where the remains of St. James are allegedly buried. We came together to give thanks to our God for helping us complete the journey, and we came together at Eucharist to pray for God's grace to continue the journey when we returned home to our daily lives.

Along the way I met people from 18 different countries. Some walked, some biked, some walked and rode a bus, and some flew. Every day, rain or shine, rested or exhausted, alone or with others, our life consisted of this: we kept our eyes focused on Santiago and directed all our efforts to that one ultimate purpose.

When I think back on the experience, I'm filled with much more awe, wonder, and gratitude than I felt in those weeks. Now I understand much more clearly that each of us, whether we wanted to admit it then or not, were hearkening to the cry of God's love in our hearts. It was the Holy Spirit who was the source of the inspiration for each of us. It was the Holy Spirit who gave us the energy we needed to make the arduous and often monotonous journey. It was the Holy Spirit who helped us recognize God's beauty in the beauty of the landscapes of Spain, the Romanesque churches and Gothic cathedrals, the daily liturgies, and the Spaniards who extended such generous hospitality to everyone. It was the Holy Spirit, through the care and friendship of those walking with us every day, who provided us with much needed nourishment.

My marriage to Karen, raising our family, caring for Karen's mom in the final years of her life, and my work with students at Bishop Blanchet High School have all been sources of God's grace in my life. My

pilgrimage to Santiago was another profound and humbling experience of God's transforming love.

Leo Genest

My eldest son watched in bewilderment as I packed my china, closed my Chicago business and sold my car. I was off to Seattle, where I would celebrate my retirement by serving as a Jesuit Volunteer. As an advocate for the homeless, I would earn an eighty-dollar monthly stipend, while living with five strangers between the ages of 55 and 80.

I was on a pilgrimage, and I trusted that things would work out. I might even find some treasures along the way.

I did. One Sunday I walked into St. James Cathedral. Father Ryan's homily seemed intended just for me. He spoke of Abraham and Sarah and the "letting go" involved in their leaving their homeland for Canaan. "In their advanced years God broke into the quiet of their lives and told them to move—to leave everything behind."

In leaving everything behind I discovered a new-found energy, and in 2001 I joined 200 parishioners on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, St. James' burial site. As I peered through the rain-splattered windows of the bus winding its way along the Camino, I thought of the thousands who made this journey on foot. The only way they could reach their goal was to travel light. There was no room for "extras"—worry, regret and preoccupation with things.

My pilgrimage continues back in Seattle, where I walk daily to 5:30 Mass at St. James. Then I travel down First Hill to Horizon House, the retirement community from which I recently retired. These members of the Greatest Generation have modeled for me how to spend the time I have left. Will I have their grace and courage when I am on my final pilgrimage? What about creativity, writing my memoirs, spending time with my granddaughter, or reading *Moby Dick*?

There were more mundane questions, as I faced my second retirement. Do I have enough to live on? How can I leave the sustaining love of Horizon House? What would Abraham and Sarah have done?

A retreat in "Life Transitions," a no-frills budget, and a retirement plan helped me leap across the precipice. God caught me.

At 76 (one year older than Abraham when he started his pilgrimage), I'm working my way through *Moby Dick*; I'm on chapter three in my memoirs; I'm off to Grandparents Day. And I'm holding my fragile siblings and friends closer.

Here are tips for your pilgrimage: Travel light. You'll never get through security with fear and



busyness in your carry-on. Trust is the best passport. And remember to pack the great pilgrim, Thomas Merton's *Book of Hours*.

Helen Donnelly Goehring

What brought me to St. James Cathedral? My sister, Monya. We were cradle Catholics, baptized as infants, and we celebrated our First Communion during elementary school. Our parents let us choose whether or not we would be confirmed. As a teen I never really thought much about confirmation so pursuing it wasn't my priority. It was for my Nana, though—she thought about it a lot! About a year after she died my sister decided that she wanted to be confirmed and the place to do it was St. James Cathedral. We had been to the Cathedral on occasion, but mostly Christmas and Easter. I decided I might as well tag along and see what this was all about. As an adult I had questions about the Church and how it chose its stance on certain things. The Confirmation class was amazing as was the instructor, Rosanne Michaels. I had never met anyone quite so open and welcoming in the church and so ready to answer questions. I was hooked! After my

confirmation I became a full fledged member of the St. James Cathedral family. Shortly thereafter I was invited to be part of the Confirmation team myself. I was so surprised that they would want someone so new to the parish to be a confirmation team member. I remember thinking “Are they crazy?!” Maybe so, but during the Jubilee year, I became a catechist and again, I was hooked!

The ‘family’ of St. James never became more supportive than when my brother was diagnosed with an incurable cancer. During his two-year battle, our St. James family was there with my family and me all the way. Father Ryan made every attempt to see my brother when he was at Virginia Mason receiving treatments, even during busy Holy Week. Marc lost his valiant battle with cancer on December 26, 2004. The members of my various ministries were there for me in a way that I truly needed and appreciated. I couldn’t have made it without them. Then St. James started yet another ministry – Journey Through Grief. What amazing timing! Marc had been gone for almost two years and it still felt like it just happened. Along with Sister Anne and the other members of the team the walk through this journey was so amazing. Tears and laughter, frustration and anger were all accepted and welcomed feedback about what we were going through. It truly was a journey, with prayer, friendship, guidance and yes, even a little homework now and then. I wouldn’t have traded that experience for the world.

You never know what you are truly seeking until you find it. St. James Cathedral was that for me. A missing piece I had been searching for, where I have found my home.

Kristen Mandich

My little boy recently discovered a photo album of a trip I took nearly 10 years ago. He regularly flips through the pages, grinning widely as he spots a photo of me and calling my name. Those photos are of a pilgrimage I made to Santiago de Compostela, arriving joyfully on foot and crowding around the Holy Door to gain entrance to that St. James Cathedral. My arrival date was significant – Sunday July 25, 1999, the Feast of St. James, the last Holy Year of that century. We were connected, those of us there. Not connected so much by



the date of our arrival, but by the fact that we had joined the millions of pilgrims who once made the same journey for centuries.

The image of pilgrimage, a journey to a holy place, is an apt metaphor for Christian life. In our daily grind it is easy to forget that our journey as Christians can be experienced as pilgrimage when we remember that we are destined for holiness through the call of our baptism and that our compasses are oriented towards Christ. Yes, we waver and life sometimes spins us around in the wrong direction. But we share this pilgrimage together and God is there, often in the faces of our companions. Our connection as Catholics is grounded in our journey to the Eucharistic table where we receive our “food for the road,” Christ.

For me the daily routine of lacing my hiking boots before I stepped back onto the gravel of the Camino in the cool early morning is replaced with the uncooperative squirms of my children’s feet as I try to fit them into their shoes before leaving home. I am still a pilgrim, my wife and children my good companions, revealing God along the way.

Stuart Ling



Beyond the Wedding Day

Marriage Preparation at St. James

For Nathan and Elizabeth, it all began on November 19, 2006. Nathan remembers the place—the Victrola Coffee Shop on Capitol Hill. Elizabeth remembers the time—1:00pm on a Sunday afternoon. They had talked on the phone a couple of times after “meeting” online, but this was their first face-to-face encounter. After talking over coffee (for three hours!) they both knew they had found something special, and they both wanted to meet again.

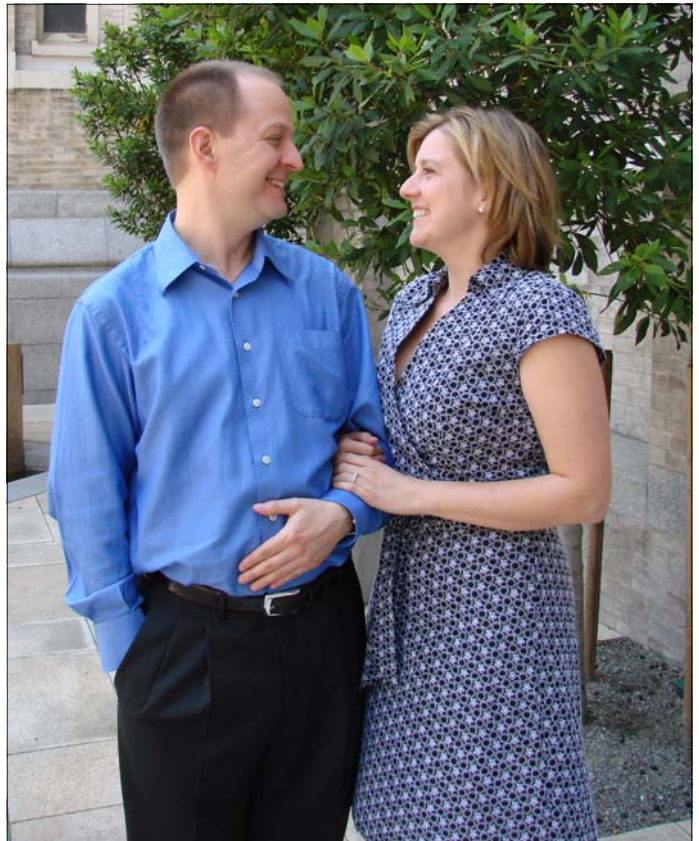
Elizabeth Arias, born in San Jose, California, is the fourth and youngest daughter in a large Catholic family. After college back east and medical school in the Midwest, she was delighted to be accepted to residency at the University of Washington Medical Center. The Pacific Northwest felt like home, and after residency Elizabeth accepted a position as hospitalist at Evergreen Hospital.

Elizabeth had dated off and on, but things hadn’t really clicked. She realized that what she really wanted was a partner who shared her faith. And she also realized that she would have to take action: “if this is what I wanted for the rest of my life,” she recalls, “I would have to look for it.” With much reluctance, she visited a Catholic dating website. Her first time on the site she found Nathan Standifer.

Nathan was born and educated in Texas. A convert to Catholicism, he entered the Church in Denton, Texas, in 1993. Nathan says he *read* himself into the Church, and was especially drawn by the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas and the lives of the saints. “It was the empirical and the phenomenological,” he says; “the combination of the two made it irresistible!” A scientist, Nathan is a post-doctoral fellow at the Benaroya Research Institute, studying juvenile diabetes. He is also a member of the Cathedral’s RCIA team, helping others to make the journey to the Catholic Church.

That meeting at Victrola Coffee Shop was the beginning of a wonderful new relationship. Just over a year later, on December 21, 2007, Nathan and Elizabeth became engaged. And then they began the formal process of preparing for marriage.

In the Catholic Church, marriage is more than a contract; it is a sacrament. It is a response to the universal vocation God has given to all people: the



Nathan Standifer and Elizabeth Arias were married at St. James Cathedral July 26, 2008. Some fifty weddings are celebrated at the Cathedral each year.

vocation to love. “God who created man out of love also calls him to love,” says the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Love is “the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being” (1604). The mutual love of husband and wife is, in Catholic theology, “an image of the absolute and unfailing love” of God.

Careful preparation is required for all the sacraments—adults entering the Church spend at least a year preparing for baptism, and children prepare for two years for their first Holy Communion. Young people get ready for Confirmation through months of prayer and study. And think of the years of preparation required of those preparing for the priesthood! And yet, until fairly recently, the Church required very little preparation for the sacrament of matrimony. Parishioner Joan McDonell, who has been helping couples prepare for marriage for more than twenty years, married in 1953. “We met with the

Corinna Laughlin is Director of Liturgy at St. James Cathedral.

priest, filled out some paperwork, and that was it," she recalls. "It was like being given keys to the car without ever having been taught to drive! Fortunately, both Larry and I had loving and kind families to learn from."

Requirements vary widely from place to place, but now the Church does ask the couple to spend time preparing for marriage. At St. James, there are two main parts of the process, which usually lasts 12-14 months. Couples participate in a "pre-marital inventory," designed to help them begin to understand and talk about their married life, and then join in "Evenings for the Engaged," a series of five sessions which takes them deep into Catholic teaching on marriage.

Even before a date is confirmed for the wedding, couples must complete the premarital inventory. They come to the parish office, where Joan puts them into separate rooms to complete a questionnaire called "FOCCUS" – Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study.

The FOCCUS questionnaire covers issues that can make or break a relationship. Is my spouse honest with me? Am I honest with my spouse? Do I want children? Do I want our children brought up in the Church? Other topics touched on by the FOCCUS questionnaire seem less important, but can become the source of serious tension. Who will handle the bills? Whose career will come first? Who will be the primary caregiver for the children? Will there be one checking account, or two? How involved will the in-laws be in our lives and our relationship?

When the results of the FOCCUS inventory come back, they are given to one of several married couples in the parish. The results are not intended to evaluate the couple or their relationship, or to predict their happiness or success in marriage. They are simply a tool to help the couple to identify the areas they need to talk about as they prepare for their new life together.

Fred and Jeannie Armstrong are one of several couples who assist with this part of the marriage preparation process. First they go over the results



Nathan Standifer and Elizabeth Arias exchange their vows on July 26, 2008.

together. They highlight areas where the couple is in significant disagreement either with each other or with Church teaching on marriage. Then they meet with the engaged couple, usually for about two hours. Their task is simply to help the couple to begin a conversation with each other on the areas of concern. "In every situation, and with every engaged couple, there are surprises on the areas of disagreement," Fred says. "But there's also a desire to drill down into the subject matter, and come to a better understanding of the other's reasoning."

The FOCCUS is useful even when the match is made in heaven! Nathan and Elizabeth found, as they expected, that they agreed on most areas, but there were still some surprises. "There were things we realized we had never talked about," Elizabeth says, "like household roles, for example, and money matters. It really helps you to discuss things that you might not have thought about."

Liz Shier, who with husband Tracy joined the marriage preparation team several years ago, is a firm believer in the FOCCUS inventory. "The survey is a valuable tool to help couples begin to communicate and explore ways to work through some of the issues they may find themselves facing after the honeymoon!" she says. "Every couple planning to be married should be given the opportunity to take this survey, and take the time to reflect on the results."

After the interview, the marriage preparation team prepares a report for Father Ryan, who meets with the couple next. Sometimes Father Ryan reviews the

FOCCUS results with the couple as well, but the primary goal of this first meeting is to get to know the couple better and help them come to a deeper understanding of the meaning of marriage as a sacrament. "I always get them to share with me about themselves, their families, their growing-up years, their education. I also like to learn about their faith and its role in their lives. And then, of course, it's always fun to hear how they met and began dating. No two stories are ever the same!" Following this meeting, with Father Ryan's approval, the couple is able to confirm a date on the Cathedral's calendar for the wedding—and to begin the second part of the marriage preparation process.

Evenings for the Engaged is facilitated by Director of Religious Education Helen Oesterle. Couples gather on five Sunday evenings to explore the Church's vision of Catholic marriage. They talk about love and romance, about God, about marriage and intimacy, about the sacrament of matrimony, and about ways to build a stronger marriage. They talk about challenging questions along the way: about the inspiration—and the baggage—they bring with them from past experiences; about their attitudes towards love and sexuality; about their faith, their sense of vocation, their hopes and fears as they enter into marriage.

Helen Oesterle feels that a parish-based program like Evenings for the Engaged has advantages over an immersion weekend like Engaged Encounter. Couples have a chance to meet other people preparing for marriage in their own parish community, and hopefully deepen their connection with each other and with the parish. They meet married couples in the parish who can serve as mentors for them. They also get to spend time with Father Ryan, who always teaches the session on the sacrament of matrimony. But most valuable of all is the way Evenings for the Engaged requires the couple to dedicate time to each other. "The process requires them to get together as a couple for two to three hours each week outside the session," Helen says. "For some of these busy couples that seems impossible at first, but in the end they find this the most valuable part of the process. And we hope it helps them to form a habit of always making time for each other."

Both Nathan and Elizabeth found participating in Evenings for the Engaged illuminating. "The materials were wonderful," Nathan says, "and Helen's presentations were great. It took a lot more time to complete the 'homework' than we anticipated."

Some of the "assignments" would be equally challenging for long-married couples to complete!

After one session, couples are sent home with the task of doing something romantic for their partner that doesn't cost anything. Another session asks them to think about their parents' marriages, and to discuss openly with each other the expectations they are bringing to their own marriage. Helen loves to see the change in couples' relationships as they take time to explore these realities. "It is wonderful to see couples fall in love in a deeper way through this process, as they open up to each other."

There is no graduation day when it comes to marriage preparation! It is an ongoing process. As Joan McDonell says, "Marriage isn't just a ceremony—it's a lifelong commitment that takes daily attention." That is especially true in these days when so many marriages, for so many reasons, end in divorce. "There are many challenges facing couples today, that weren't present a generation ago," says Liz Shier, "such as ways to balance the pressures of having two careers, raising a family, and holding on to the core values of family time and worship together." Fred Armstrong adds that this can be a positive: "it requires that marriage be a true partnership. But it can also create pressures, especially when many of the couples were raised in an era that taught them different lessons." Helen agrees. "There are so many conflicting values and attitudes out there; our lives are so busy. It is really countercultural to think about marriage the way we do, and to take time to nourish a relationship."

But in spite of the challenges, hope is strong. Helen says, "Our young people are so much more spiritual, hopeful, and strong than we sometimes give them credit for."

For the couples who embrace the vocation of married life, there is some trepidation, but even more, there is hope and trust. "For me," Nathan says, "it means having a home that I hope will be the center, the balance of my life. In the fields Elizabeth and I are in work can become everything. Home and spouse will provide boundaries—and yet freedom."

Elizabeth adds, "the prospect of sharing my life with someone, forever, is an exciting thing."

Father Ryan summed it up in his homily for the nuptial Mass: "God is love and your love for each other is a powerful and very visible sign of the God who is love. And it will be that way throughout your married life... As you celebrate life's joys and face its challenges, you will be making Christ present to each other, showing each other the face of Jesus who laid down his life for his friends. You receive a sacrament tonight but you also *become* a sacrament tonight—a sacrament to each other and to all of us." ♦

‘Jesus Loves Me as I Am’

Jean Vanier, founder of L’Arche, visits St. James Cathedral

During almost all my years at the Cathedral, I have been blessed to serve as community pastor for the L’Arche community over on Capitol Hill. The beginning of my relationship with the community was less than promising. I remember battling rush hour traffic over to 15th and Aloha, all the while knowing that I was going to be late for an engagement that I kind of wished I had never accepted: Mass with the L’Arche community. It’s embarrassing to admit this but it’s true. I had accepted the community’s warm invitation mostly because I didn’t want to say no, and as I was fighting my way through the traffic that evening, I was feeling a little put out, a little tired and resentful (one more demand on my time!), and not a little embarrassed that I was going to be late.

Happily, I wasn’t late. Well, I was, but so was everyone else (a L’Arche trademark, I found!). But the real happy thing was what happened after I walked into the living room of Noah House and found myself greeted with warm smiles by people like Marge and Jack and Tom and Carol and Eddie and Theresa and Patty. I rather quickly began to realize that this wasn’t about me at all; it was about them. It wasn’t about anything I had to give; it was about what they had to give. I was greeted that night by what I will always think of as a living gospel: beautiful people, wounded and weak people, vulnerable and broken people who were willing to accept me and who, in welcoming me to their community, gave me the opportunity to be spiritually nourished by them.

My only regret over the many years that have passed since that January evening is that I haven’t had a whole lot more time to spend with this loving, caring, crazy bunch of people in whom God is so powerfully and mysteriously present.

L’Arche really is a living gospel. In a world of competition, of self-promotion, of “we’re number one,” a world where more is better, where beauty is confused with appearances, where wealth is confused with money and things, where truth is traded for what works, where individualism is exalted and prized above community, where poverty and brokenness are shameful, L’Arche points to the way of Jesus: the way of love, the way of acceptance, the way of vulnerability, the way of humility, the way of communion.

How blessed I am to have been able over these years to see and read the living gospel of L’Arche at close range through the eyes and heart of the community of L’Arche Noah Sealth. And how blessed I have been to have spent time on several occasions with L’Arche’s remarkable founder, Jean Vanier. Jean is without a doubt one of the true saints of our time. He is everything (and everyone) whom Jesus calls

blessed. He’s the poor in spirit, he’s the meek, he’s the peacemaker, he’s the one who hungers and thirsts for justice; he’s the one who loves his enemies, who judges not lest he be judged; he’s the one who finds the face of Jesus in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, the prisoner – “the least of his brothers and sisters.”

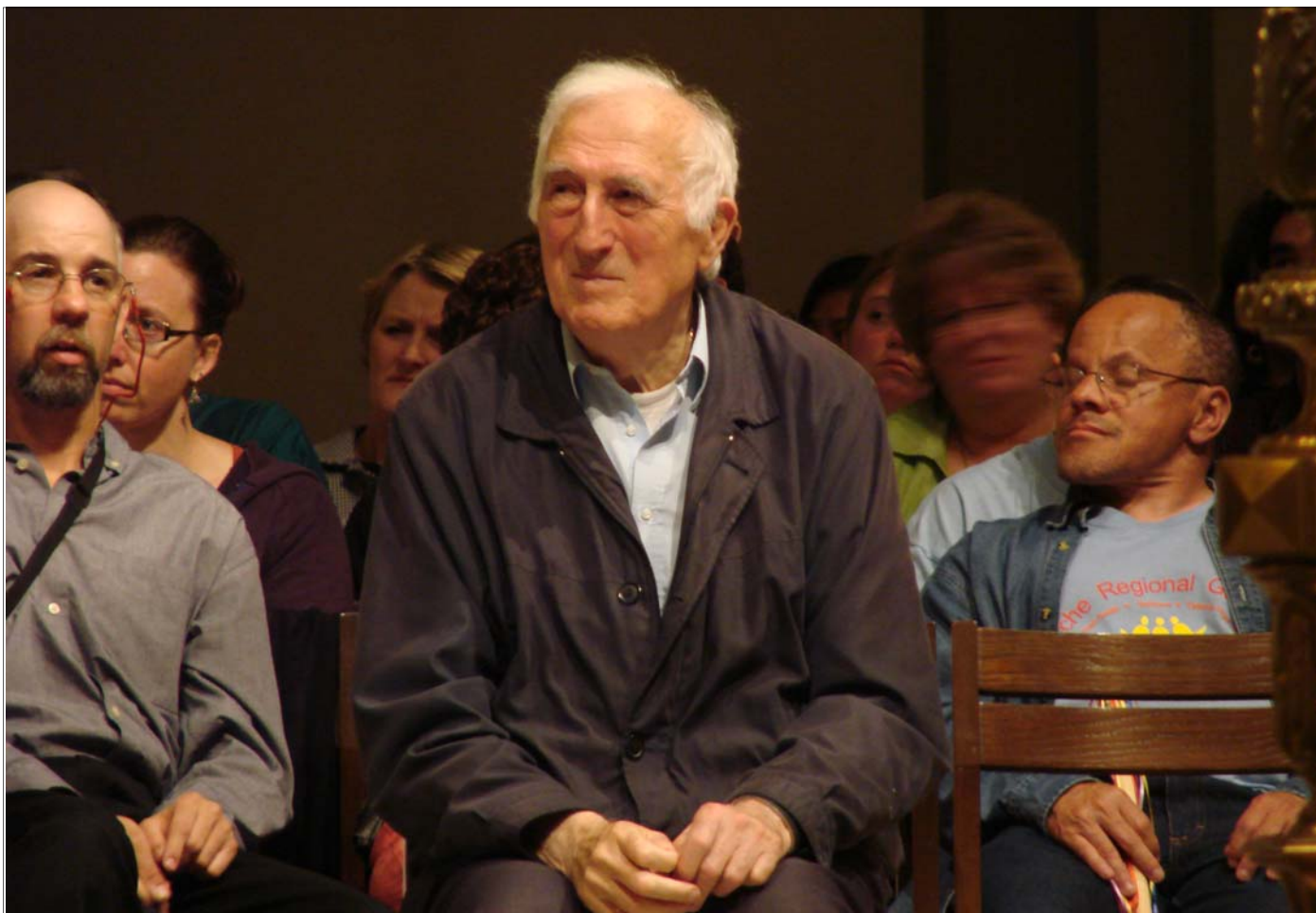
And Jean understands in a way few people do the precious worth of each human person. In a politically correct society that can mount passionate campaigns to save the whales and the spotted owls but overlook life in the womb, or life after it has ceased to be ‘useful,’ he reminds us of Jesus’ teaching that each human person is “worth more than many sparrows.” That doesn’t mean that he doesn’t have a deep care for all of creation and for all of God’s creatures – he most certainly does – but the Christian philosopher in him assures him that each human person made in God’s image and likeness has a worth beyond measure, and that is true whether the person is ‘normal’ and healthy, or handicapped, severely disabled, and of no perceivable worth to society.

The following are extracts from Jean’s talk in the Cathedral on June 22.

Father Michael G. Ryan

What I’d like tonight is to lead you into a mystery. A mystery is not something we can grasp. It’s not a reality that we can hold on to intellectually. It’s a reality that’s given to us: a reality that we experience, but can’t always understand. Jesus, the Word who became Flesh, is teaching us in L’Arche and in Faith and Light that the *Flesh becomes Word*. The word became flesh so that the flesh becomes word...becomes *revelation*. The whole mystery of the word of God: in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, turned towards God, and the word was God... The Word became flesh. *Not* the word became a ‘human being’... the Word became *flesh*. L’Arche and Faith and Light were founded on the reality of broken bodies – fragile bodies – vulnerable bodies. We’re not first of all founded on the Word, but on the Flesh that becomes Word. The flesh speaks, the flesh announces.

We all know how a little baby is born, and the incredible relationship between mother and child or father and child. The mother, through her tenderness, through the tone of the voice, through touch, is revealing to the child, “I love you. And you are important.” And the child is revealing to the mother – communion, tenderness. That’s how we all begin.



Jean Vanier visited St. James Cathedral on June 22, 2008. The founder of L'Arche and co-founder of Faith and Light, communities with and for people with disabilities, Jean is also the author of numerous books, most recently, *Befriending the Stranger*.

And in a way, this is the reality of L'Arche and of Faith and Light.

Many people with disabilities have led a painful life, and parents of people with disabilities have suffered an immense amount. When they discover that their child will not speak, will not be able to walk, will not be able to go to school like other people, there's a terrible wound in the heart of mom and dad. That wound in the heart of mom and dad is in some mysterious way transmitted to the child. "If I'm not loved, if I'm not wanted, then I'm not lovable... no good." In L'Arche, as in Faith and Light, our vocation, our gift, is to welcome those who in some way have been a disappointment to their parents, a disappointment to family, and a source of concern for many people. And the whole of our lives at L'Arche as in Faith and Light is to say "I love you." We're not first of all there to *do things* for people, we're there to *reveal*. And what do we reveal? "You are precious; you're important. It's a gift for us to be with you." I would say that the essential element of L'Arche is just to say, "I'm happy to live with you."

Generosity is a great gift. So many people are filled

with generosity. Generosity is when one has the capacity to do things, to bend down, to give, to help, and that is a wonderful human quality. But essentially what we're discovering in L'Arche is that this generosity must lead to a meeting. When one is generous, one has power, one has a certain superiority—we give to whom we want, and when we want, and how we want. But if generosity leads to a meeting, we become vulnerable. I've met your eyes, I've seen the tears in your eyes, I've touched your wounded heart, maybe I've heard your anger or heard your violence, your feeling that you're 'no good'... we have met. And when we meet someone who is vulnerable and in pain, we ourselves become vulnerable. The cry that comes from many people with disabilities is a cry for friendship. Do you love me?

We have been led, L'Arche and Faith and Light, into the mystery of the Gospels. We didn't seek things like that. But we have been led. Jesus wants to lead us all into the mystery. And where have we been led? To those words of St. Paul: "God has chosen what is foolish in this world, chosen the weak to confound the strong and the so-called intelligent." It's important that

we reflect on those words. What is this choice of God?

I'd like to share with you the very first experience I had with people who were fragile. I was teaching philosophy in Toronto. And my mentor, my spiritual father, a Dominican, Thomas Philippe, was then chaplain of a small institution where there were some thirty men, many of whom had been in psychiatric hospitals or asylums. Father Thomas suggested to me, "Come, come and meet these people." He said, "To understand human nature, to understand a society, you must speak to those who have been pushed aside and marginalized." I said I would come, but I was a little bit anxious... How would we communicate if people don't talk? Even if we do talk, what'll we talk about? I could teach them a little bit about how to drive an aircraft carrier—I my last ship; I could tell them a little bit about Aristotle—I did my doctorate in Aristotle. And so there was a bit of anxiety. But I was amazed. All my anxiousness disappeared. Each one of these men in some way or another expressed through their body the flesh become Word. Each one was saying, "Do you love me? Am I important for you? Will you be my friend? Will you come back and see us?" I saw there an immense cry for *relationship*.

My students in philosophy wanted a bit of the things in my head (which was not very much). They wanted the things in my head so they could get through their exams, and then get a job and have money and go into this society which is a very competitive society, as you know. My students weren't seeking my heart, they were seeking my head. But this was different. The men in this particular institution were seeking a relationship.

Jesus speaks in the Gospel of Matthew and Luke—22 Matthew or 14 Luke—about a wedding feast. A king has prepared a huge meal for a wedding feast. And he sends out his servants to say, "All is prepared: come." "I'm too busy. I'm sorry, I'm too busy. I've things to do, my daughter's getting married, I've bought land, or I've bought a pair of oxen, I'm terribly sorry." And each one made excuses. You can imagine the pain of the king.

This wedding feast is a sign of the kingdom. Those who are in power, well inserted in society, are too busy. They're taken up with short term or long term



At the conclusion of the prayer, Jennifer Kelly and Gerry Scully of L'Arche Seattle present Jean with a Native American blanket as a farewell gift. Jean plans to rest from travel and spend more time in his own L'Arche community outside of Paris.

projects. So the king, and we read this in Luke, sends out the servants into the highways and byways. "Bring in the poor, the lame, the disabled, and the blind." They came rushing in. They were yearning for community, they were yearning for relationship... not just to have a good meal, something much deeper. So when Paul talks about "God has chosen the weak": the weak are crying out for relationship. The mystery of God is that *God is relationship*.

Let me tell you a rather beautiful little story. It happens in a parish in France, in Paris. There's a little boy of eleven with an intellectual disability, and it's his First Communion. After the liturgy, the Eucharist, there's a family celebration. And the uncle who is also the godfather of the little boy goes up to the mother and says, "Wasn't it a beautiful liturgy? The only thing that's sad is that he didn't understand anything." The little boy heard and he said, with tears in his eyes, "Don't worry, mommy, Jesus loves me as I am."

Jesus loves me as I am. Do we dare say that? Or will our reaction be, Jesus loves me if I pray a bit more, if I'm kinder with my wife, with my husband, with the children... That *consciousness* that that little boy had. "Don't worry, Mommy, Jesus loves me as I am."

In our communities it's very striking, when we pray together, when we share together, nobody will ever talk about "Christ," they'll never talk about "the Savior." They'll talk about "Jesus." A first name, Jesus. Jesus is my friend. I'm loved by Jesus. I love Jesus. The whole mystery of God is a mystery of relationship.

The experience we have in L'Arche is that those people who are extremely vulnerable are *leading us*. I welcomed two people from an institution, this goes back over 40 years ago, and there was something within me which was generosity, a desire to good, to react to the situation of many institutions where people with disabilities were locked up, or where they were locked up in their homes. I believe that somewhere at the beginning of L'Arche there was a desire to do something "good." Gradually, as we've lived together, and here we touch the aspect of mystery, which maybe you will not really be able to believe unless you yourself have experienced it, that in living with Raphael, Philippe, and others, *I have changed*.

In my own community, not far from Paris, we once had nineteen future priests in the various houses that were nearby. They asked to meet me at the end of the month that they'd spent with us. I said to them, "I don't want to talk to you, I want to listen. What have you lived?" And each one said in some way or another, maybe using different words, "I feel *transformed*. After the month I had in L'Arche, I feel transformed." I said, "Do you realize what you are saying? You have had an experience of God. You're hoping to become a priest. And you're saying that spending a month in L'Arche, maybe giving a bath, eating at the same table, working together, helping those who are more fragile... you say you have been transformed? What does that mean? What is that experience that you have lived? And what is the meaning of transformation?"

I think we came down to the realization that these men were moving or had moved for a brief while from the head to the heart. You see, we can learn theology. We can do studies. We can *know* things that can enrich us and help us, maybe later we can teach. But relationship is something very different. As we enter into a relationship, as we move from generosity into a *meeting*, where your heart touches my heart, then in some way, we're caught. We become vulnerable. Vulnerable, one to another. Your pain becomes my pain. Your concerns become my concerns. And we enter into a meeting which gradually can be the beginning of a friendship. We begin to know each other's name. The other person is no longer a person with disabilities. It's just Mary or Nancy... it's a person, with a heart, a wounded heart, and I have my heart, I realize also that my heart is a wounded heart. So we begin to need each other.

So I've learned a lot. I've learned about the beauty of relationship. I've learned that we are transformed little by little as we enter into relationship with the weak.

You know, Jesus is extraordinary. I encourage you to meet him.

At one point, the disciples are on their way to Capernaum, and Jesus turns to them and says, "What were you talking about?" They were talking about who was the best amongst them, who was the most important, who was the most loved by Jesus, all that sort of stuff. And Jesus, taking a little child, said, "If you want to enter the kingdom of God, you must become like this little child." And he said, "Whoever welcomes a child like this one, welcomes me, and who welcomes me, welcomes the Father." Can it be true? That if we welcome a wounded child, fragile, broken, we welcome Jesus? Welcome the Father?

I'm always touched by the text of the Book of Revelation where the Lord says, "I stand and knock at the door. If someone hears me, and opens the door, I will enter, to eat with that person, that person close to me, and I close to that person." Jesus knocks at the door, and often we don't hear, because we've got too many projects or things in our head, too many fears, too much busyness, we don't hear. But if we do hear, maybe we don't want to open the door. And the incredible thing is that Jesus is waiting outside. Just waiting. He doesn't kick the door open. This is the incredible delicacy and tenderness of Jesus, the deep respect, *deep respect*, he has for our freedom. Because there can be no love without freedom. We can only love freely, and receive love freely. Jesus waits. He knocks at the door.

This incredible *invitation*. You have probably heard as I have heard, some people who say God cannot exist, there's too much pain in the world. If God is all powerful, either he just doesn't care about us, or he doesn't want to do anything, so he can't exist. You can hear people say things like this. They don't know about the vulnerable God. The All-Powerful who becomes powerless.

If somebody has a toothache, don't sit with that person, and say "I'll pray for you." Take them to a dentist. If somebody is hungry, don't think that suddenly bread will fall from heaven... give them food. If there's so much pain in the world, it's not that God is disinterested.

The way God works is to say to you, Will *you* give bread to the hungry? Will *you* welcome those who are fragile? Will *you* succor those who are abandoned? Will *you* be present to those old people who have Alzheimer's? Will *you* be close to those who are hurt? Because God will be saying, I want to work through you, and if I can become your friend, we will work together, to bring peace to others. ♦

Youth Migrant Project

Cathedral Teens experience life with Migrant Workers in Lynden & the Skagit Valley

This July, seven of our Cathedral teens participated in the Youth Migrant

Project, a program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Seattle which gives young people the opportunity to experience the life of migrant workers in Washington state. Our young people spent five days helping in daycares and reading camps, as well as working in the fields, and praying and reflecting together.

One participant, Frankie Murray, writes: "The week in Lynden produced a lot of new experiences for me. I was able to experience what it felt like to be a migrant worker. I was able to experience what it felt like to be earning seventeen cents for each pound of picked cotton and to be totally exhausted even after a couple hours in the sun. I saw the humbleness of families as they approached the piles of donated clothing and food. I ask God to bless all those people I met that week and all those with whom I 'bunked.' During the week, I often called to mind the inscription at St. James Cathedral. *I am in your midst as one who serves.* I wanted to serve and to help as best I could even in little ways."

Dylan Thomas says: "The thing I learned the most was that not everyone is as privileged as some of us. The thing that surprised me the most was the conditions some of the families lived in. One family of five might have a home that is a little bigger than your bedroom!"

JJ Rosario writes: "What I learned from this experience was that the camps were all different.... The bad ones had some houses made out of steel slats that looked like they were being held up by threads. But despite the living conditions the people there seem happy and were more than willing to play with us, and they did not reject us at all.... It was the most astonishing thing ever, because we were strangers and



Experiencing what life is like for migrant workers in Washington State. Photo by Jennifer Ibach

they took us in like family."

The following journal by Jennifer Ibach, Pastoral Assistant for Social Outreach at the Cathedral, chronicles an eventful and educational week!

Monday, July 7, 2008

Hello all! It's Monday afternoon and we've settled nicely into our mission trip. We arrived yesterday afternoon and were greeted by the other parishes... St. Mary, St. Edward, St. Paul, and St. George. We set up our sleeping areas, unloaded the donations, and then headed out for some fun in one of the local migrant camps. We had a chance to meet some of the people staying in the camps and share a meal with them. One woman gave us some homemade tamales

to try that were *muy delicioso!* The youth especially enjoyed playing basketball and soccer with the kids. In the evening, we prayed together and shared a little about ourselves.

This morning, we divided up into two different groups. One group spent today at the daycare center helping in the classrooms for kids five years and under. The other group began the hard job of sorting through our mountain of donations. Later today, we're headed down to a camp in the Skagit Valley to do crafts, share food, decorate faces, and enjoy a couple of piñatas full of candy!

Tuesday, July 8

We had a great time last night in the Skagit Valley. We visited our biggest camp yet and had fun playing with all of the kids. We brought cake, watermelon, games, crafts, and piñatas! In the evening, we shared some reflection time and talked about someone or something that had touched our hearts that day.

Today, we broke up into two groups in the morning. One group went to the fields to work with the Small Potatoes Gleaning Project. This project grows, distributes, and gleans fresh produce for local food banks. Our group harvested sunflower sprouts and cauliflower, weeded, and spread manure! In the afternoon, this same group hosted a reading camp and sorted more donations. The other group spent the day at the daycare center. When everyone got home, we kicked into action to finish sorting all of our donations, which we'll hand out tonight! This was a tough job but, with everyone helping, the work was fun and went fast. In the evening, we all took some well-deserved rest time and enjoyed Dairy Queen and swimming at the local YMCA. Our evening reflection asked us to consider how our perspectives have changed since we arrived.



Above, the participants in the Youth Migrant Project got a special blessing at Mass on Sunday, July 6. Below, sorting a mountain of clothing donations! Photo by Jennifer Ibach

the afternoon, our reading camp group spent their final afternoon with the kids. In the evening, we all drove down to the Skagit Valley again to celebrate Mass in one of the farm workers' camps. We were joined by parents and friends from our different parishes, as well as a group from St. Madeleine Sophie in Bellevue who is spending the week doing the Youth Migrant Project in the Mt. Vernon area. Before Mass, we carried an icon of the Virgen de Guadalupe around the camp and invited people to join us for the celebration. Then we all shared in the Eucharist at a Mass presided over by Father Felino from St. Edward's. It was a beautiful moment for us all.

Back at St. Joe's that night, we had some fun performing skits for one another and then we closed with time for reflection.

Friday, July 11

Today was the final day of our Youth Migrant Project. In the morning, our groups went to the daycare and farm for the last time. When we got back, we did a thorough clean-up at St. Joe's and then enjoyed some pizza in the yard. We closed our week with an affirmation activity where everyone got a chance to affirm another person and then share what they're taking home from this experience. We had a beautiful ride back home with a stop for ice cream at a farmers' market in Mt. Vernon.

Thank you again to everyone who has supported us on this journey. Your donations, prayers, and help have made this week possible. We made many new friends within our group and within the larger communities of Lynden and Mt. Vernon. We had our eyes opened to the poverty that exists right here in our own state and learned about the struggles of migrant families. Many of us left with a desire to do more and a hope that it is possible to change things for the better. Please continue to pray for all of those who work in the fields. ♦

Wednesday, July 9

This morning, we split into two groups again. One went to the daycare center and the other spent the morning preparing for our food and clothing distribution tonight. We now have backpacks full of school supplies and bags of sorted clothes to hand out to people. Thanks again for all of your donations, which have made tonight possible.

Thursday, July 10

We had a great time handing out food and clothing last night. At the end we discovered we had enough clothing left over to make a donation to the families at the daycare center. We also enjoyed a fantastic, home cooked Filipino meal of chicken adobo thanks to Lindsay, Vanessa, and Ray.

Today, we separated into our groups again. One group spent the day at the daycare, while the other went back to the food bank farm. We were excited to share our experiences with Helen, Lita, and TerryAnn who came up from St. James for a visit. In

The Feast of St. James

A Photo Essay



Celebrating our Patronal Feast. *On this page:* St. James “the Greatest” (otherwise known as “Big Jim”!) makes his annual appearance at the conclusion of the 10:00am Mass. *Left:* A 16th-century reliquary bust of St. James (the gift of a generous parishioner) is venerated following Mass. *On the facing page:* images of our Parish Picnic on Terry Avenue. *From the top:* fun activities for kids: face painting and balloon swords. Volunteers frying up burgers, our noon altar servers dance the hula, sidewalk art; the Toucans steel drum band, and the grand finale... the piñata! The picnic was coordinated for the seventh straight year by volunteers Stephen Pace and Anna Horton. Thank you, thank you, thank you! *Photos on these pages by Maria Laughlin.*



The Pew Next to You

Meet Laura McLaughlin and Ray Phillips & family

When you meet Laura McLaughlin, in the Cathedral or in one of her volunteer roles, her reassuring presence and smile let you know that help is on the way. Laura's schedule changes frequently so she doesn't attend the same Mass on Sundays or have one pew she favors. According to Laura, "All the liturgies are life-giving and each pew or chair works!"

Over the years Laura has volunteered as a Cabrini minister and Emmaus Companion and worked with Sister Anne Herkenrath on forming the St. James Grief Ministry. She has spent many Sunday mornings assisting at the coffee hours after Masses.

Laura and her husband Tom first came to St. James Cathedral in the late 1970s when their eldest sons were attending O'Dea High School. The family had come to Seattle in 1969 from Annapolis, Maryland. Tom was the deputy regional director of HEW and was sent here to establish that office in Seattle. Tom also served on the Issaquah School Board for 11 years. Laura and Tom had met in college in Michigan and were married at the National Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. Their children are Tom Jr., Laurie Evans, Michael, John Paul and Kathleen. Tom and Laurie live in Vancouver, Washington, Michael in New York City, John Paul here in Seattle and Kathleen in Portland.

Laura's husband Tom died in 1995 and Father Ryan presided at his funeral Mass on June 24 of that



Laura McLaughlin

year. Laura recalls how important Father Ryan and St. James were to her and her family during the months of her husband's illness and the final farewells, spirit lifting and life giving.

Over the years, Laura has gone beyond volunteering. When friends needed more assistance Laura would stay with them in their homes. For quite awhile, she has spent the weekends with a friend who should not be alone. This month, Laura left the family home in Renton where she has lived for 37 years, to move in with longtime friend Mary Healy on East Hill in Kent. The two met through Cabrini Ministry Training, a program

for lay ministers. Laura had completed the program in 1993 and Mary began in 1995. They were paired together and became more than team partners; soon they were fast friends.

Laura cites her sister-in-law for prompting her to dedicate herself to caring for others. When her own mother was dying back in Michigan, Laura could not go and take care of her. She was so grateful that her sister-in-law could. Laura wanted to follow her example.

Laura said she has prayed for several years as to where she would move: should she go to Vancouver, where her daughter Laurie and son Tom live, or stay here? Her parish community played a role in Laura's answer to that question. "St. James is the reason. There is so much here. I feel so blessed to be here, I could not leave."

Joan McDonell is a Marriage Tribunal Advocate and a regular volunteer in the parish office.

According to Ray Phillips, the ushers at the Sunday Noon Mass are almost one extended family. "They are my church family," is how Ray describes them. According to Ray, his wife, Floramie's father, Ramone LaMadrid, is the head of the clan. Ramone came to Seattle from the Philippines in 1971. The story he tells his family is that the first time he came to St. James, the sacristan said "Hi." Ramone was so delighted at this greeting in his new country that he responded by saying, "Do you need some help?" Ramone began his first Sunday as an usher and has rarely missed since.

A year later, Ramone's wife Florentina and their young daughters, Roselyn, Floramie and Marife joined him. Their youngest, Marvin, was born in Seattle on December 26, 1977 and baptized at St. James. Soon, Florentina joined Ramone as an usher and they continue to usher together today.

Several of the other Cathedral ushers were from the Philippines and they became a close-knit group, helping each other and their families in their new country. Floramie says that she and her siblings considered the others as aunts and uncles, with the Sunday Noon Mass a focal point for their family. Their friendships continue beyond Sundays with lots of advice, loving care and concern. As the families grew, the wives and children would help as ushers including Floramie and her sisters.

Ramone and Florentina's daughter Floramie met Ray Phillips when both were students at Rainier Beach High School. They were married not long after graduation, on June 3, 1989 by Father Ryan. By then Ray was already helping his father-in-law at the Sunday noon Mass. As Ray and Floramie's family grew, their sons, Ryan, 18, Justin, 14, and Marcus, 11, also got involved in ushering. Ryan is most always there on Sunday and Justin is scheduled for every First Sunday Youth Celebration. Marcus and Floramie now serve as "back-ups." Ray, who was raised in the Lutheran tradition, completed the RCIA process and was formally received into the Catholic Church in 2004.

To be an usher at St. James appears to be a simple task, but appearances are deceiving. More than 75 parishioners volunteer as ushers at the five weekend liturgies, with 24 ushers at the 10 am Mass and 23 at



Floramie and Ray Phillips with their sons Marcus, Ryan, and Justin. Ramone and Florentine LaMadrid are not pictured. Photo by Melinda LaMadrid.

Noon. With Patrick Martin and Anna Horton, Ray is one of three head ushers who not only help coordinate the usher ministry on a weekly basis, but also recruit and train new ushers. (If you're interested in joining this ministry of welcome, talk to Patrick, Anna, or Ray!) Through this important ministry, the LaMadrids, the Phillips, and many other ushers do more than hand out bulletins and take up the collection. Week after week, they welcome visitors and regulars alike in the name of Christ, extending to all who come to the Cathedral the warm welcome Ramone received when he first arrived at St. James so many years ago. ♦

Cathedral Almanac

Snapshots of life at St. James Cathedral, April, 2008-July, 2008

April

8. The Archdiocesan Housing Authority opened the **First Nations House** for Native American men, at the home of deceased parishioner Jim Lyons, 610 Terry Avenue.

11. **The Choir of the Cathedral of the Madeleine**, Salt Lake City, visited the Cathedral. This world-famous choir of children and adults sang at the Noon Mass and presented a concert of sacred music in the evening.

20. The Health and Healing Committee joined forces with the Eco-Justice Group to bring us a special **Health Fair**, focused on themes of stewardship of our health, and stewardship of the environment.

22. St. James Cathedral was pleased to host IMAGE journal's **Denise Levertov Award**, presented to poet and essayist Thomas Lynch. Lynch gave a delightful reading from his works in Cathedral Hall.

25. The annual **Student Recognition Ceremony** gathered hundreds of seventh graders from Catholic schools across the Archdiocese of Seattle. Students receive awards in various areas, including faith, service, and academic achievement.

28. Archbishop Brunett presided over the groundbreaking of the new **Frederic Ozanam House**, an innovative home for formerly homeless men, being built directly across from the Cathedral Rectory at Ninth and Columbia.

May

3. Bishop Tyson celebrated the **Sacrament of Confirmation** with thirty of our young people and adults.

4. The Cathedral hosted **Scouts Emblem Sunday**, a fun event gathering scouts and scouters from around Western Washington to receive Catholic badges and awards.



Top, May Crowning with fourth-graders on May 16.
Below, First Communicants scatter flower petals in the great Corpus Christi Procession on May 25.

11. We celebrated **Pentecost** and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In his homily for today, Father Ryan said: "Come Advent, when the long weeks of Ordinary time have come to an end, will we be any different? Not *feel* any different but *be* any different? Will we be any stronger, holier, more grounded in our faith? Will we be more caring for one another, more compassionate, more understanding? Will we be more faithful in gathering here Sunday after Sunday, more alive and active in the way we pray together? Will we be more committed to the poor, more passionate in advocating for justice, more aware of all the things that our Baptism calls us to? Pentecost is the right day to ask such questions and the right day to try to answer them, too."

15. We had the opportunity to gather with Core Members and Assistants from several local L'Arche communities for a special educational evening entitled **Befriending the Stranger**. In L'Arche, people with disabilities find a home, and assistants both support them and learn from them.

16. Fourth graders from Catholic Schools around Western Washington gathered for a traditional **"May Crowning"** in

honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

18. Twenty-four Cathedral children received their **First Holy Communion** today.

22. Our **Senior Tea** honors the seniors of our parish, with prayer and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral, followed by tea and goodies in the Cathedral Rectory, with music provided by the children of our Youth Music Program.

25. Our annual **Corpus Christi Procession** gave witness to our faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Father Ryan quoted Blessed Teresa of Calcutta in his homily for today: "The Body of Christ is one. In the Eucharist we find Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. And each day of our

lives we find Christ under the appearances of flesh and blood. It is the same Christ!"

28. Father Ryan presided at the O'Dea High School

Baccalaureate.

29. Holy Names Academy celebrated its Baccalaureate Mass in the Cathedral.

June

6. More than one hundred people packed into the Cathedral Chapel for the opening night of an exhibit of art inspired by the Camino of Santiago, **Sacred Steps**. This event, sponsored by the Office of Tourism of Galicia, included Spanish baroque music, as well as wonderful Galician delicacies and wine.

7. Ordinations to the Priesthood. Hundreds gathered for the priestly ordination of Jack Shrum, Cal Christiansen, and Mark Guzman.

7. Archbishop Brunett celebrated Mass for the **Deaf Community** of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

8. Camp4Unity at City Hall.

Five people from St. James joined with people from around the community to campout overnight in City Hall plaza to protest the sweeping of homeless encampments in the city. One participant wrote of the experience: "This was the first time that I've been out sleeping on the streets. I was struck by how cold it was, how hard the ground was, how bright the lights were, and how noisy the streets were... I am grateful for this experience and for the insights that it provided me. It has filled me with greater compassion for those who are suffering among us and has given me greater resolve to work for a better solution in our community."

12. Our annual **Celebration of Ministries** was the biggest ever, with about 300 Cathedral parishioners active in one of our 40+ cathedral ministries, from polishing candlesticks to fixing breakfast for the men in our winter shelter!

14. Archbishop Brunett presided and Father Stephen Sundborg, SJ, preached at the **Seattle University Baccalaureate Mass**.

21. Archbishop Brunett presided at the Ordination to the Priesthood of four men for service in the Oregon



Top, four Jesuits were ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Brunett on June 21. Middle, the Celebration of Ministries gathered 300 of our Cathedral volunteers for dinner and prayer together. Below, Archbishop Brunett celebrates the Golden Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood on July 8.

Province of the **Society of Jesus**. **22.** St. James Cathedral had the extraordinary privilege of welcoming **Jean Vanier** to speak in the Cathedral. See pages 12-15 of this journal for extracts from his talk.

26. Archbishop Brunett celebrated a **Mass for Deceased Bishops** on the 11th anniversary of the death of Thomas J. Murphy.

29. The Church began a year dedicated to **St. Paul**, Apostle. In his homily for today, Father Ryan said: "Paul's whole life as an apostle became one long response to the question, 'Who do you say I am?' To use his own words, Paul answered it 'in season and out of season, in labors and imprisonments, in beatings and stonings, in perils and dangers, in shipwrecks and toils, in hardships and many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst and frequent fastings, in cold and in nakedness.' And finally, he answered it definitively one fateful day near the Ostian gate just outside the great wall of Rome when he shed his blood in witness to the Christ he had once persecuted."

July

6-11. Several teens from the Cathedral Parish participated in the **Youth Migrant Project**. See article on pages 16-17 of this journal.

8. Archbishop Brunett observed the **Golden Jubilee** of his ordination to the priesthood with a special Mass in the Cathedral. In his homily for

today, Archbishop Brunett said: "As I reflected on these fifty years, my journey of faith, it is indeed *hope* that has kept me united with the Church I love and strengthened me through the priests and people I have been privileged to serve. This hope has brought me immense joy."

19. Ten **Sisters of Providence** (including our parishioner Sister Susanne Hartung) celebrated their jubilees of religious profession during a beautiful Mass at which Father Ryan presided and Archbishop Hunthausen offered a special blessing.

27. Feast of St. James and Parish Picnic. We celebrated our patronal feast at all Masses the weekend of July 26-27. See the album on pages 18-19 of this journal. ♦

Image of the Divine



At the center of the Archbishop Murphy Courtyard on the south side of the Cathedral is the statue of *Sedes Sapientiae* – Mary, Seat of Wisdom. Mary has many titles – she is called “seat” or “throne” of wisdom because she holds Jesus, the Word made flesh, in her arms. For many years, this beloved image of Mary and her Son stood on the grounds of the Archdiocesan Seminary, St. Edward’s in Kenmore. Every May, the seminarians would gather in front of this statue at the end of the day to sing a hymn in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To the intercession of Mary, cradling God’s own divine Wisdom, the seminarians entrusted all the hopes and struggles of their day.

After St. Edward’s Seminary closed in 1977, the statue was brought to St. James Cathedral. In 2006, the creation of the Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Courtyard provided a beautiful setting for the well-loved image. Water flows from a hand-hewn source stone on the south side of the Cathedral, and gathers in a pool at Mary’s feet. In the evening, the statue is gently illuminated, a reminder that Christ is the light of the world. He is the living water that alone can quench our thirst.

Long ago, St. Ephrem the Syrian imagined what Mary whispered to the child Jesus, asleep on her breast: *“My Master, give yourself to me for me to embrace you... I don’t know how to explain that you are silent, when I know all thunder resounds in you. You have been born of me like a little one; but you are as strong as a giant. Here, all of You is with me, and nevertheless you are totally hidden in your father... You are with me, and all the angelic choirs adore you. While I cradle you within my arms, you are carried by the cherubim.”* ♦

ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL

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