In Your Midst

A JOURNAL FOR ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL PARISH

Father Ryan’s Golden Jubilee
December 2016
“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.

CONTENTS

3 In Your Midst as One Who Serves
Thank you, Father Ryan, for fifty years of ministry. Parishioners, friends, and family share how your ministry has impacted each one of us

14 50 Years Ago
An album of Father Ryan’s ordination and first Mass, fifty years ago this month in Rome

16 World Youth Day
An unforgettable week in Poland with Pope Francis and 2,000,000 young Catholics from around the world

18 A New Vision
Father Ryan shares a new vision for the Cathedral parish, and invites you to be a part of it

20 Catholic 101
A number of wonderful opportunities for adult faith formation are coming in the next few months. Mark your calendar!

21 Seattle’s First Catholic Church
A new historic plaque marks the site of Seattle’s first Catholic Church, Our Lady of Good Help at 3rd and Washington

22 Solanus Casey Monument
A new monument at Calvary Cemetery honors Venerable Solanus Casey

24 The Pew Next to You
Meet David Grech

26 Cathedral Almanac
Snapshots of life at St. James, June-December, 2016

28 Christmas Mass Schedule
Masses for the Nativity of the Lord—and a new time for Midnight Mass!

In Your Midst is published twice yearly by St. James Cathedral, Seattle, Washington. All photos by M. Laughlin unless otherwise noted.

Editor/Graphic Design
Maria Laughlin

Comments/Suggestions for articles
Your comments are always welcome! mlaughlin@stjames-cathedral.org

St. James Cathedral
804 Ninth Avenue | Seattle, WA 98104
Phone 206-622-3559 Fax 206-622-5303
www.stjames-cathedral.org

Souvenirs of Fifty Years Ago, Rome 1966
In your midst as one who serves

Thank you, Father Ryan, for fifty years of ministry

I often tell people that being the pastor of a parish is the greatest job in the world. It’s a privilege beyond description to serve in the midst of a community of people seeking the Lord through all that life brings their way, a blessing to be sent by the Lord to them as their shepherd and father.

As I have observed Father Ryan over the past 6 years, I have seen a seasoned, caring pastor hard at work each day. Since I often stand next to him before Mass at the entrance to the Cathedral, I see close-up how he greets everyone with warmth and welcome—and how, more often than not, he calls each by name. Frequently he will turn to me and say, with love and concern, something like, “That was Mary. She lost her husband last year, and her kids have rallied around her with support”—“Little Matt is serving Mass for the first time today. His parents were refugees from Sudan 10 years ago, and he’s a great kid.”

I know, because I am told by parishioners that he is available to them whenever needed, at their side in the hospital room, in their home when tragedy strikes. Father Ryan has a keen sense of being called and sent by the Lord to his people, and preaching, leading in prayer, and serving tirelessly have been the hallmarks of his 50 years of priestly ministry. At any Cathedral, the liturgy holds primary place for the entire diocese, alongside serving the poor with the Lord’s own love—and St. James Cathedral fulfills both priorities in setting an example for every parish. Father Ryan’s pastoral leadership makes our Cathedral shine with the light of Christ high on a hill in Seattle.

Archbishop J. Peter Sartain

Father Ryan and I grew up on Queen Anne Hill, Seattle, went to St. Anne’s School, and then to St. Edward’s Seminary. I was privileged to be at his ordination in Rome fifty years ago. I was studying then at Belgium’s Louvain University for my doctorate... and wouldn’t have missed it!

I have come to esteem Father Mike as a close friend and a deeply admired priest. Few have his capacity for kindness, thoughtfulness, and gentle simplicity. His carefully crafted preaching is a special gift; he makes the scriptures and Jesus real for us, and touches so many of us with his down to earth homilies and pixyish humor. I marvel at his capacity to pastor such an enormous community, enabling the wide variety of ministries at St. James. His deep commitment to social justice, to Vatican II, and to our church’s rich tradition of art and music inspire me. His vision, unbounded dedication, and care for the weak and marginalized emulates that of Pope Francis.

I thank God for his witness. And I joyfully honor him as an extraordinary minister who truly is “in our midst as one who serves.”

Thank you, Father Mike, for the enormous gift you are. May God bless and keep you.

Father Roger G. O’Brien

Father Ryan, forty-two years ago you came into our lives then left us after only a couple of years. The very first Mass you celebrated for us on Orcas Island clinched it: you belong to us! Now, even though you’ve been in Seattle a lot longer than you were with us on Orcas, you are still only on loan to Seattle. Your two years (1974-76) with us here at St. Francis were enough to steal our hearts.

You made even the kids sit up and take notice. We have you to thank for getting us out of the chilly Madrona clubhouse and the stuffy basement of the Odd Fellows Hall into the Emmanuel Episcopal Church for Sunday Mass. What a difference that made!

Even at a distance you have continued to enrich

Margie Treleven Murphy

Father Ryan and I grew up on Queen Anne Hill, Seattle, went to St. Anne’s School, and then to St. Edward’s Seminary. I was privileged to be at his ordination in Rome fifty years ago. I was studying then at Belgium’s Louvain University for my doctorate... and wouldn’t have missed it!

I have come to esteem Father Mike as a close friend and a deeply admired priest. Few have his capacity for kindness, thoughtfulness, and gentle simplicity. His carefully crafted preaching is a special gift; he makes the scriptures and Jesus real for us, and touches so many of us with his down to earth homilies and pixyish humor. I marvel at his capacity to pastor such an enormous community, enabling the wide variety of ministries at St. James. His deep commitment to social justice, to Vatican II, and to our church’s rich tradition of art and music inspire me. His vision, unbounded dedication, and care for the weak and marginalized emulates that of Pope Francis.

I thank God for his witness. And I joyfully honor him as an extraordinary minister who truly is “in our midst as one who serves.”

Thank you, Father Mike, for the enormous gift you are. May God bless and keep you.

Father Roger G. O’Brien

Father Ryan, forty-two years ago you came into our lives then left us after only a couple of years. The very first Mass you celebrated for us on Orcas Island clinched it: you belong to us! Now, even though you’ve been in Seattle a lot longer than you were with us on Orcas, you are still only on loan to Seattle. Your two years (1974-76) with us here at St. Francis were enough to steal our hearts.

You made even the kids sit up and take notice. We have you to thank for getting us out of the chilly Madrona clubhouse and the stuffy basement of the Odd Fellows Hall into the Emmanuel Episcopal Church for Sunday Mass. What a difference that made!

Even at a distance you have continued to enrich

Margie Treleven Murphy
our lives. The Doty Clan has been blessed by your return to us for graduations, weddings, and baptisms over the years. We especially remember your visit with us when Archbishop Murphy came up to bless and dedicate the first Catholic Church on Orcas in 1995. And there were our visits to Seattle for Great Music for Great Cathedrals, which gave us an opportunity to take in a must-see event, and to have lunch with you. The Doty Clan sends regards and warm greetings along with “remember, you said you would come visit.” St. James has been fortunate to have you all these years and they know it! Love and prayers from Dick, Velma, Ricky, Roxy, Julie, Becky, Patty, all their counterparts and grand- and great-grandchildren!

Velma Doty

We congratulate Father Ryan on his 50th Anniversary! He has been “in our midst” guiding our family all his fifty years as a priest. John was a student and parishioner at St. Patrick while Father was there. After serving at St. Patrick, Father went to Our Lady of Fatima where Jeanne first met him.

Father Ryan married us 24 years ago; he baptized our three children, and celebrated First Reconciliation and First Communion with them. He has buried Jeanne’s mother, our grandparents, and godparents. We have enjoyed celebrating with him and are grateful for his gracious leadership during difficult times.

Our family enjoys strong faith and involvement in the Church’s ministry due, in large part, to Father Ryan’s ability to share the joy of his ministry, shepherd people into roles for which they are well suited, and live Gospel values in today’s world.

Thank you, Father Ryan for your 50 years of ministry. We are blessed to have you “in our midst.”

John Keckemet and Jeanne Flohr Keckemet

Newcomers to Seattle, we met Father Ryan when he was in residence at Fatima, in 1982. His work as Chancellor never got in the way of his commitment to serving the people of the parish and to celebrating wonderful liturgies.

A few years later, we were sent to Miami, where we found a home in St. Louis Parish, a vibrant and inclusive faith community. After we returned to Seattle, we followed Father Ryan to St. James, as we wanted our children exposed to the best our Catholic Church had to offer them. And we were not disappointed.

We watched as he turned a fire-scarred cathedral into sacred space and exposed our altar-serving children to our Catholic teachings and traditions that have become integral to their lives. We have learned so much from his homilies. We have seen him ministering to us and to other parishioners, and even strangers—in the cathedral, on city streets, in homes, hospital rooms, and elsewhere. He is literally in our midst “as one who serves.”

Thank you, Father Ryan! Ad multos annos!

Ted & Maureen Nutting

It was such a change—from an Irish Catholic home in the Catholic neighborhood “ghetto” of Queen Anne, to the hills of Rome, a world away, in the midst of the New Pentecost of the Second Vatican Council. The young seminarian revealed in being there, where it was all happening. Hopes were high for a new springtime in the Church. One thing was sure, the Church was semper reformanda. What would this mean for a young seminarian, called to serve amid the labor pains of a Church being reborn?

Back home, Father Ryan was soon called to serve in the Chancery. The Council and all that it meant was coming to Seattle, and Father Ryan found himself in the midst of this new awakening in the local Church. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen was assigned to shepherd the Church of Seattle. There was indeed a springtime, but soon, a hot summer rolled in for our dear Archbishop and for the local Church. Semper reformanda had indeed come to Seattle. Remaining faithful to the universal Church and striving to be true to where the Spirit was leading the local Church, Father Ryan, following his Archbishop’s lead, reassured priests and people that though things looked difficult, all would turn out well. By the grace of God, it did!

Father Ryan, the Cathedral parish has flourished under your guidance. Thank you for “making new” our Cathedral Church, so that it might be a better place to bring the baptized around the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist. Thank you for making real the teaching of the Church, that the celebration of the Liturgy leads to service of others. Blessing on your 50th anniversary. God bless and keep you always.

Carolyn Lassek

I will always be grateful for the nearly five extra years of formation I had at St. James. One could say I was blessed with five extra years of “Seminary” under Father Ryan’s tutelage. Fresh out of college, trying so see if I was being called to priesthood, I responded to a job opening to serve as Sacristan. I figured it was a way of “putting my toe in the water before taking the plunge,” a way to see what priesthood was all about. How fortunate I was to have Father Ryan’s example of what it is to be a priest and to have all the opportunities he gave me to learn from him at St. James.

Father Ryan introduced me to the great liturgical tradition of the Church and demonstrated how it and
Vatican II can come together in a wonderful way. He showed me how a shepherd cares for his flock by his frequent hospital visits between Masses, even when I knew he was exhausted. Long before Pope Francis, Father Ryan was ministering on the margins, to the mentally ill, to the homeless, to the hungry, both personally, and by the programs he encouraged and established at St. James. He showed me that priesthood is about knowing your sheep. I was always amazed that he could frequently tell if a parishioner was there on Sunday even among five crowded Masses. So too, as a shy person, I learned to work a room and how to greet parishioners, from watching him. And indeed, who can preach like Father Ryan? How blessed I was to hear so many well-crafted homilies with just the right words to bring the Gospel message to a particular moment.

In truth, these are just a few of the ways Father Ryan's priesthood has touched mine. Most of all I am forever thankful for Father Ryan's encouragement, support, and mentorship over the years. I am a better disciple and a better priest because of him. I know I am among many priests who are deeply grateful for his 50 years of loving service and good example.

Father Jim Johnson

You have been a powerful witness of support and a gift from God that has helped to shape, guide and bless my faith journey. You have shared some of my greatest joys and deepest sorrows; whether it has been in good times or bad you’ve been a beacon of light and steadfast presence compelling me to embrace my relationship with Christ and to fall in love with his kingdom more completely through service. I grew up in the faith but was without a church for many years. I owe you a debt of gratitude for helping me find my way to St. James Cathedral. I have a place at the table, a place in this faith community, a community whose cornerstone is built on love and service— St. James, the community that I call home. Blessings and peace as you celebrate this beautiful milestone anniversary.

Catherine (Bailey) Bylund

Yes, almost twenty-nine years ago I came to Seattle. Father Ryan had just been assigned as the Pastor of St. James Cathedral. While I had known Father Ryan briefly and by name, it did not take long for us to become friends. Of course, he was a friend to so many with his “pre-Mass” tour of St. James, smiling and shaking hands and speaking a word with parishioners and with those coming to St. James for the first time. This was always a warm, sharing moment that could make a person believe and trust he was there just for them!

Since I was new as vice-chancellor for the Archdiocese and little acquainted with “The Church” at this level, Mike knew better than anyone those pathways of challenge. His generous words of praise and encouragement always touched me. And when I became the Director for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue together with Superintendent of Catholic Schools his outreach to me, the gleam in his eye spoke to me of wisdom and understanding. He had lived through it all as Vicar General. I caught his love for the Church and his remarkable knowledge and grasp of the mission and goal of Vatican II. He lived that mystery of the Church in the Modern World. He opened many of us to the excitement and the call to renew our lives in that spirit.

Dear Father Mike,

I am one of many who is rejoicing and giving thanks for your life-long commitment to the ministry of building and shepherding the Body of Christ. I’ve done the math—you have been my pastor for nearly 24 years, that’s almost half as long as you have been a priest.
As I participate in Mass at St. James some twenty-eight years later I pray in thanksgiving for all that those walls can tell me, many a story, including wonder and miracle, grief and loss, joy and celebration. Those walls reecho in gratitude for the fifty years of priesthood that continue to bless the lives of so many who celebrate the giftedness of Father Michael G. Ryan, in our midst as one who serves.

Sister Joyce M. Cox, BVM

In October 1994 we flew from Rome to Seattle to start a three-year Fellowship Program at the University of Washington School of Medicine. When we arrived, we rented a loft on Pioneer Square, in the Quilt Building. The loft was amazing, it had three big windows facing west on Puget Sound in the living room, and, in those days, we could still see the Space Needle.

On our first Sunday in Seattle, we looked for a Church to go to Mass, and the closest one was St. James Cathedral, on First Hill. So we climbed up (quite a climb!), and we were surprised to be redirected to the Gym of O’Dea High School, because the Cathedral was closed for restoration. In the Gym, we took part in our very first Mass in Seattle, a beautiful ceremony with many people and wonderful music. At the end, we noticed that the people were really helpful and they all worked quickly together to put everything back in order!

We decided to introduce ourselves to the staff, and we went to meet the Deacon, Joe Curtis, a lovely person, who heartily welcomed us. Then he said: “Wait a minute, I want to introduce you to somebody who might like meeting you…” So he left, and came back with Father Michael Ryan. We immediately loved him, and from that very first Sunday, we started a twenty-two year long friendship that cannot be possibly summarized in a few words and that keeps growing every day, for us, and for our three children, each one of them baptized here in Italy by Father Michael. More than words, it would be better just to draw a big heart to describe this love story, like an emoji, which is worth a thousand words.

Mariangela and Sandro, with Pietro Michael, David Luca and little Elizabeth Maria

I have known Father Ryan since his arrival at St. James. I have witnessed his shepherding of the parish through a myriad of changes in building, ministries, liturgies, and staff. All of his results have been characterized by excellence. He has created a community of welcome and generosity, positively impacting the parish and the neighborhood around us. As accomplished as he is at management, he is equally at home and at ease on a personal level. We have been blessed to have had his guidance and input on weddings, baptisms, First Communions and confirmations—all the milestones of our family faith journey. However, I am most grateful for his care for us when our daughter Mairead died. He was with us from the beginning of that darkest moment in our lives. He helped to lead us through the fog we were in. It was comforting to know that he knew her so well and as he was grieving he could console us in our grief.

Yes, we have been blessed personally and the Cathedral parish has been blessed by Father Ryan’s guidance. Thank you Father Ryan for all you have done.

Barrett Corrigan

We, Chi, GiGi, Felix, Alex, and Max, would like to send our warmest congratulations to celebrate and honor Father Ryan’s 50th Anniversary of Ordination.

Our family was introduced to Father Ryan in 1989 and since then, we’ve been so blessed to be a part of this community. St. James Cathedral has grown...
significantly due to the presence and hard work of Father Ryan. He's also honored our three sons, giving them the Sacrament of Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

We all love Father Ryan as a great inspiration, a loving, and kind person.

Our oldest son, Felix, says: “Father Ryan has played a significant role in my life, from baptism, serving at church, and connecting me with my current job. He has a special way of working with people. I can’t think of a better person to look up to. He’s an inspiration, a friend, and a perfect example of a good and kind hearted soul.”

Alex, the middle brother, feels that Father Ryan's personable attributes makes him one-of-a-kind, mentioning that: “He takes time out of his busy schedule to chat with my family after mass... and sometimes, for the occasional family selfie. He is one of the very few people who can recognize my brothers and me without mixing up our names.”

St. James Cathedral Mass is a spiritual therapy for our family. It's so refreshing and interesting to listen to Father Ryan's homilies every Sunday. Father Ryan, you are a Saint to our family and the heart of St. James Cathedral, our second home. Congratulations on your Golden Jubilee!

Chi, GiGi, Felix, Alex, and Max Nguyen

Father Ryan confirmed me in 1991. When I first met Father Ryan, he found me physically, emotionally and spiritually broken.

Over the years, I have learned about God's unconditional love, peace, hope, comfort and forgiveness because of Father Ryan's words of wisdom and presence.

I am forever grateful and blessed Father Ryan is my shepherd and to know I am one of his sheep. Even though I tested him at times, Father Ryan always was there for me. Thank you Father Ryan for all you have done for me as I thank God every day for you. Happy Jubilee.

Linda Floyd

To meet Father Ryan, is to immediately and deeply encounter his ministry. We have experienced that ministry through the many sacraments that comprise family life: Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmations, and, of course, the everyday encounters of a life lived as a Catholic. When we had new babies to baptize (two years in a row) Father Ryan suggested that we make it a yearly tradition (I politely demurred).

I have come to Father Ryan during many of the joys and travails of life, and have always marveled at his uncanny ability to make me feel as if I am the only thing he has to think about in that moment. The world falls away, and his only concern is how he can be there for me. I have never met anyone else with such an ability to “be present.” Despite the fact that he always has five different places to be and dozens of people to consult, during our time together, he maintains his laser-like focus on me, one of his many sheep.

Father Ryan has been a presence in the lives of our boys since birth, and they have been repeatedly moved and inspired by his kind words and avid interest in their lives. His example of ministry is a joy to behold and a wonderful example to emulate.

Teresa Ipsen

Father Michael G. Ryan is a giant of a priest. He has come from long line of distinguished pastors, and is a distinguished pastor himself. Father Ryan is an outstanding preacher and a caring pastor.

He follows his cousin and pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, Monsignor Theodore M. Ryan. He succeeded another relative, Bishop Thomas E. Gill, as pastor of the cathedral. His friend and mentor is Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen.

It’s been my great privilege to grow up with Mike at St. Anne Church and School on Queen Anne Hill. I followed him to Rome where we were both ordained priests for service in the Archdiocese of Seattle. Mike began his ministry as vocation director and I as campus and young adult minister.

We both served at the Chancery, and we're now colleagues in ministry—Mike at St. James Cathedral (“mother church” for the whole Archdiocese) and I at Christ Our Hope in downtown Seattle. We both owe our present ministries to Father Francis X. Prefontaine, founder of the church in Seattle.

What a blessing for me—and for all of us in the church of Western Washington—to be celebrating our friend and colleague, Father Michael G. Ryan, for 50 years of graced priesthood. Ad multos annos!

Father Paul Magnano

“...I am in your midst as one who serves.” When I think about Father Ryan’s 50th anniversary of ordination, those words inscribed high above the altar at St. James immediately come to mind. He truly has been in our midst as one who serves and continues to serve all of us. His ministry has impacted so many of us at pivotal moments in our lives, and I am no exception. Both the good times and the bad—from the joyous moments of family weddings, a grandson’s baptism, and full
communion into the Catholic Church, to the saddest moments of my husband’s death and funeral, and all the moments in between, Father Ryan’s ministry has touched me and my family in profound ways.

There is one special Father Ryan moment that comes to mind. A number of years ago while in the ICU unit at UCLA, I received a phone call from him. After his kind and healing words, I mentioned how lucky I was to be alive. His response was, “Clearly you have more work to do!” Just like Jesus—first the good news and then the challenge—a challenge to engage more fully in the tasks at the heart of our faith: Helping the hungry, the hurting, and the homeless, and speaking for those who have no voice. It was time for me to not only talk the talk, but walk the walk.

Throughout his ministry, Father Ryan has definitely walked the walk! While providing healing, hope, and peace for all of us, he has challenged us to change our ways and our lives. He is in our midst serving us, comforting us and challenging us.

Bev Mauser

_Dear Father Ryan,_

_When we were asked “how has Father Ryan’s ministry been a part of our family,” the answer is that there has never been a time in our family history where your ministry was not present! Isabel rightly pointed out that you presided at our wedding, baptized our girls, and baptized Sean, too!_ 

_Sadie wanted you to know that she appreciates how you always ask her and the other servers how they are doing when he sees them before Mass and that you come and say “hi” to us at coffee hour. She thinks it’s great that you always talk to people._

_Seans wanted you to know that through he attended St. James for nearly 20 years, before receiving the Sacrament of Baptism, you always made him feel welcome. Katherine wanted you to know that you have an uncanny way of knowing the challenges of being a_ _mother and have always been with her through the most challenging and most rewarding moments of being ‘mom.’ Your counsel has been so important to her. You’ve been with us through the good times and the hard times and we are so thankful to the Holy Spirit for allowing you to bless our family all these many years. Happy Jubilee, Father Ryan. The Berry’s love you!_

_The Berry Family_

_Every time I gaze at St. James’ oculus Dei—“eye of God”—I think of Father Ryan: “I am in your midst as one who serves.” To say that Father Ryan is in the midst of my life’s most important moments is an understatement._

_The year I moved to Seattle to help the homeless, my sister, Peggy, died. Grief-stricken after her funeral, I went to 5:30 Mass. Father Ryan promptly embraced me: “I am offering Mass for Peggy.” My healing began in that moment._

_Years later, an ICU nurse literally stopped me on the way to the OR for brain surgery, with, “Father Ryan is calling!” He would bless me with a calm and trust that carried me through surgery. Later, the soothing oils he rubbed into my palms for the Sacrament of the Sick carried me further._

_Father Ryan’s ministry extends to my children, even though they are miles away. He knows their challenges are mine, from broken hearts and illnesses, to new jobs and loves, and he’s there with them._

_Not long ago, when Father blessed my new home, every room deserved thanks. To the dining room: “You sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Help Helen to be grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others.” That prayer is my great reminder. Gratitude for mercy and mindfulness of the needs of others—Father Ryan has modeled both for me. Father, thank you!_

_Helen Donnelly Goehring_
When asked to consider the positive impact Father Ryan has on my family’s life, I must admit, it isn’t a stretch to come up with quite a few things. Of course, there’s Father’s integrity, work ethic, humility, and how he exemplifies the quote from St. Teresa of Calcutta: “Be the living expression of God’s kindness: Kindness in your face. Kindness in your eyes. Kindness in your smile.” But, there is more. When Father asks us to “love those on the fringes,” I take him at his word, striving to embody these same qualities in my own work, serving Seattle’s homeless population in supportive housing. Yet, how did I come to believe I needed to take his invitation to love so seriously? Well, here’s where it gets personal.

Throw back to 1999, when a young woman came to St. James, pregnant and unmarried, seeking solace in an active spiritual life, along with guidance to raise my unborn daughter, Noelle Marie. You see, ending the life within my womb was not an option for me, nor was it for what turned out to be our safe haven—the Church. We were warmly welcomed and loved with open arms. A tiny family—a single mom and her unborn baby, on the fringes—the kind with whom Father Ryan tenders an invitation for us all to love.

There has been Catechism, Confirmation, and Reconciliation for me. Baptism, First Communion, Children’s Faith Formation, thirteen years of Children’s Choir, Youth Group, a Quinceañera, and a Catholic school education for Noelle; tears, prayers, and of course, lots of hugs for us both.

Father Ryan, we offer our sincerest gratitude for showing up through the years in loving service as our parish priest. Happy 50th Anniversary of Ordination. We love and appreciate you so!

Lisa LeDoux

I grew up Protestant. Then 20 years ago I awoke to the fact that I was Catholic and had been so for a very long time. I was sitting in the south transept. It was Ash Wednesday. It might have been something Father Ryan said, but more likely, it was my growing sense of who he is. I called him the next day, and he warmly welcomed me, as he still always does.

He reminds me that God appears to us in many ways. For me, the most powerful are the ones most human—caring for people in my daily work, watching my grandson smile, smelling bread baking in the kitchen, hearing the exquisite music of the Fauré Requiem.

I remember him telling the story of the monk who sat in the marketplace and watched the crippled, the beggars, and the beaten go by. Seeing them, the monk went down into deep prayer and cried, “Great God, how is it that a loving Creator can see such things and yet do nothing about them?” And out of the long silence God said, “I did do something about them. I made you.”

I remember his steady voice and quiet calm as he listened to me during a very difficult time.

I remember him quoting St. Francis: “Preach the gospel at all times. Use words only when necessary.”

I delight every day in being Catholic—and I might not have figured it out by myself. It’s as simple as that....

Glenn Lux

Sometimes I get the feeling that early on Father Ryan made a contract with Jesus and Pope John XXIII:

“I will dedicate my life and ministry to your vision of a renewed, vibrant and contemporary Church. Even if it’s 2,600 people on a Sunday, I will personally greet the young and the old, the sick and the well, the timid and the bold, the straight and the gay, people of many cultures and languages, all who are here seeking God and trying to serve His people. And, I will give a special warm hug to those who might want to hide in the shadows of this big Cathedral.

“I will work hard to connect the Gospel to the everyday realities of people’s worlds, especially in my homilies. I will try to create a small-parish feeling where no one feels anonymous, even if the community includes parishioners from 180 ZIP codes.

“I will help children discover their real beauty and their capacity for doing wonderful things in our Church and make room for them serving Masses and singing in our choirs.

“I will create a beautiful, safe shelter, a holy place, for all to experience God’s love and be renewed in body and spirit, whether it be on big occasions as weddings and funerals, the Sunday and daily liturgies, or as part of the throngs that stream from many parts, wanting comfort and companionship when terrible things happen in our community and world.”

As a fairly new parishioner, but a friend of some forty years, I often wonder how Father Mike can absorb so much of our humanity. Personally, I’ve had my share of hard knocks with the deaths of so many loved ones. I’m among the many who know of his reach to console, to follow up, to keep a watchful eye, to help heal the broken hearted. Nothing perfunctory or obligatory about his sympathy. At the same time I know the experience of love and close friendships, of nice surprises, and joyous living. Father Mike is ready to celebrate those, too.

When I see Father Ryan at work, I sense that his
seemingly inexhaustible energy comes from a strong core of daily prayer, study, self-discipline, hard work, and love for people. Truly the consummate Vatican II pastor! I think we might pause at the statue of Saint John XXIII, thank him for inspiring that contract Father Mike made a half-century ago, and ask for continued blessings on our beloved pastor.

Peg Haggerty

I first met Father Ryan when I was an idealistic seventeen year old convert to the faith. I loved how Father Ryan always made me feel welcome at Mass and how moved and challenged I felt by the homilies he preached. But a few months after my conversion, I still had some doubts and questions that I was sure Father Ryan would have the answers to. I told his secretary I thought an hour would be sufficient to address them. I was told I could have 30 minutes. I arrived at the rectory. He came out to greet me warmly, invited me to sit down and put to rest any awkwardness I was feeling about meeting with a priest. So I laid my concern on the table: I was not sure the Eucharist was really “working” the way it was supposed to. After years of looking forward to receiving Holy Communion, I wondered if perhaps now, as a new Catholic, I was missing something. After all, I still found myself distracted in prayer and prone to sin and selfishness. Was I doing it right? What I remember of his response was the gentle reassurance that the Spirit works in us in ways we often fail to recognize, and for all the working and striving we do, we must allow God to work and strive in us too.

It was good advice (and still is), but I realize that even more important than his words in the moment, was his presence, his witness. Since that first somewhat theological meeting as a teenager, Father Ryan and I have shared countless conversations. We don’t always talk about the Eucharist, but we do break bread. And I recognize in those many lunches and conversations over coffee, the answer I think I was seeking as a teenager. Those tangible signs we call Sacraments are gifts to be shared. We struggle to receive them sometimes, to relax and accept God’s grace, but thank God for people like Father Ryan who continue to reassure us that God is indeed at work. I think Father Ryan’s 50 years of priesthood speak of that power more eloquently than maybe even he could. Thank God for it!

Curtis Leighton

I was a lost soul when I first met Father Ryan. In my 20s and 30s I had my early troubles with anxiety and depression and read more books about therapy and spirituality and coming out gay, too.

Then, in the mid-1990’s two friends became ill with AIDS and died within a year of each other. The first one to die really broke my heart. That’s when I met Father Ryan. He was so sweet, even though I was kind of out of control. (More out of control than I am now.) I muddled around in my grief (prolonged grief I guess it’s called). I came to St. James periodically for a couple of years—telling myself that it was part of the grieving process. Even then, some part of me knew I was hooked after experiencing the incense and the music at the funeral, and Father Ryan himself (so courageous, sweet, smart—and so good looking too). The first time I attended a non-funeral service at St. James the entrance hymn was a tune familiar from my Methodist days. I felt at home and I enjoyed talking to people at coffee hour.

Anyhow, after two years I gave in and went through RCIA with Kathleen McCabe and I was
confined in 1998.

Part of me always wanted to be a Catholic. I like the way the Catholic rituals appeal to my senses. Without words. When I’ve needed Father Ryan, he has been there for me, he’s listened to me when I was hurt, angry, depressed. I like that he’s smart and opinionated in a way I like. With the Catholic church and Father Ryan as my pastor I have learned the staying power of commitment. Father Ryan has put up with the internal politics and “family squabbles” and that’s how it is. By watching Father Ryan I learned it really was okay to take a whole week off when a parent dies; to be present with others; and when family members have “issues,” we live with them.

Alison Warp

Eighteen years ago, I walked into St. James Cathedral with a friend. I was not Catholic at the time, but was at a turning point in my life. I walked into St. James, thinking it would be a one-time visit. Inside, I instantly felt a sense of peace. My friend introduced me to Father Ryan. We chatted for a few minutes, and that was that. Or so I thought. We attended Mass, and then I kept on attending mass during the weeks and months that followed. I tried to blend in, uncertain what would happen next. Sometime later, Father Ryan came up to me before Mass one day and said hello, remembering my name and asking how I was doing. I was completely awestruck; we had talked for a minute or so during our first encounter, yet he remembered me and cared enough to stop and see how I was doing. That was it; I was hooked! Many years have passed, and I’ve been blessed to have been baptized at St. James and to have met my husband there. Father Ryan officiated at our marriage and we were blessed to have him baptize our three daughters. Father Ryan profoundly changed me with those first encounters. I know now it was really the Holy Spirit that guided me to St. James and to explore the Catholic faith during those early days. But it was certainly Father Ryan who kept me there, and who helped me find a path that I didn’t even know I was looking for.

Anna Horton

One of Father Ryan’s memorable homilies concerned his good friend, Father Phil, who was dreadfully ill with side effects from cancer. My recollection is probably inaccurate, but the essence of the homily has stayed with me. Father Ryan repeated the message from his friend who said, “If I call myself Catholic, then physically dying means I will know God’s eternal love; I will have no desire for anything on earth.” It was a simple message but powerful. I have been afraid of death; it is heart-wrenching to lose a loved one. Yet if I say I am Catholic—do I mean it? Do I live it? Do I believe in what God has promised?

Every week Father Ryan helps me become a little bit stronger. When I feel afraid of loss, he reminds us, “Death does not have the last word.” When I feel despair, he points out examples when good overcomes greed. When I want to focus on myself and my problems, he talks about those in actual need. Father Ryan shows us that he understands the effort it takes each day and each week to truly act as Christians. Father Ryan wants to also enjoy life and thereby also celebrate God. When Father Ryan says, “My friends in Christ …,” he makes us feel as if indeed, we are his friend, and that we are side by side on the journey with him—toward Christ. In the joyful occasions as well as in somber moments, Father Ryan’s intense faith radiates.

Sara MacDuff

Among the things meaningfully dear to my heart is active participation in church life however God calls me. But when I was new to Seattle, I was reluctant about volunteering, much less about accepting leadership roles. Father Ryan’s genuine ways opened doors for me and helped me to come out of my shell. Spirit-filled, he invited me to participate at a workshop for presiders at Communion Services. I loved doing it and was grateful for those opportunities to lead Communion Services even on short notice. Many years later, staff from St. James called before posting an open position to ask if I was interested in working in Children’s Faith Formation. I gave my “Yes!” When I thanked Father Ryan for letting his staff call me, he said, “I didn’t let her call you; I made her call you!” What an affirmation from a wonderful pastor, and what confidence that gave me!

Father Ryan’s personal touch reached out to my family, too. After my dear mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Father made time in his busy schedule to visit her in the hospital. That meant so much to my brothers and me! The week when mom’s doctor prepared us for her final days, I left messages for Father Ryan in the office. At 7:00pm, Ash Wednesday, 1992, my family was gathered around mom’s bed. In walked Father Ryan! When I thanked him for responding my messages, he said: “I didn’t get your messages. I just wanted to come!” How powerfully touching that was! My precious mom went home to God the next day.

Father Ryan, you are a priceless gift of God to St. James and to my family personally! We love you!

Lita McBride
Congratulations Father Ryan! I have lost track of all the wonderful ways you have helped us all. In times of our happiness, you take great pride and rejoice with us in the accomplishments of our children. In joy and happiness, you were there to baptize our children; and in times of mixed emotions and sorrow, you were there to console us when God called back to Heaven our little girl. You love people; you bring people together, inspiring us to live out our faith, motivating us to love and to trust the Lord, to pray at all times. Our lives are enriched and our faith deepened through your prayers. You are our example: you take to heart our joys, fears, sorrows and our hopes. You demonstrate your vision and to empower and encourage us to see beyond the boundaries of our parish.

Father Ryan, we reserve a special place in our hearts for you. Thank you for your kindness, prayers and friendship. May our Lord continue to bless you with many more years as you continue to do His work and His will by serving others.

The Sevao Family

My family and I love coming to Mass at St. James Cathedral. We cherish Father Michael G. Ryan, like many parishioners who come from afar to make St. James their parish.

It’s almost twenty years now since my family and I first walked through the north entrance of the cathedral. A new beginning that paved a way in strengthening our faith and becoming more active in the Mass.

In that time, Father Ryan baptized the last of my three kids. In years to come, all three had their First Reconciliation, their First Communion, and then Confirmation. All three, Joseph, Desiree, and Phillippe, became altar servers. My husband and I served as ushers. For many years, I assisted as a 2nd teacher in the Children’s Faith Formation, and then I became a Eucharistic minister. About three years ago, I became a reader, overcoming my fear of speaking in front of people. I wanted the community to listen to the readings as they listen to Father Ryan’s homily, with eagerness, attention, aspiration, and hope. These words resonate with me when I think of Father Ryan and all that he does: “Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do,” as well as the words above the altar, “I am in your midst as one who serves.”

Father Ryan is not only the pastor of St. James, he is a teacher, a leader, an adviser, a friend, and a member of the family.

Rachel Bungay

Since I first learned of Father Ryan’s priestly ordination date, I’ve never forgotten it. 1966 was a big year for both of us—I was born on November 17, and Father Ryan was ordained on December 17. I have a feeling that even if we didn’t share this connection, I’d remember Father Ryan’s ordination date because he’s made such positive impact on my life and the life of my family. I remember vividly the first time we met him after Mass six years ago. Even though there was a line of people waiting to say hello, he was fully present and took the time to learn each of our names. I’m sure it will not surprise anyone who knows Father Ryan that the next time we saw him, he warmly remembered us!

Father Ryan has been wonderfully supportive of our family, especially our three children as they volunteer in the youth reader program and our eldest when he recently joined the adult readers. Indeed, St. James Cathedral feels like home, and that is due to Father Ryan’s caring, wise, and inspirational ministry. Most importantly, Father Ryan doesn’t make just our family feel this way, but everyone he encounters. Our parish family is beautifully diverse and Father Ryan acts and speaks with love to each one of us, just as Jesus would, ensuring that we each know we belong and are called to extend our hands to others. I wish every parish had a pastor like Father Ryan. Imagine!

Tami Kowal
Then there was Father Ryan. He so naturally just asked me to be honest and not to be nervous. He made the experience so personal even though at least ten kids preceded me. I left that confessional ready for just about anything. Never again would I be afraid of something due to my inadequacies or sins.

When I think of all the fond memories I have of Father Ryan I remember his kindness, his friendliness, his love of both God and others, and his amazing ability to keep a four-year-old me engaged, at church. If any of you can remember what it’s like sitting at Mass as a child you can understand how great an accomplishment that is.

There is only one Father Ryan!

Jack Ipsen

Faith has not always come easily to me. I have always had questions, opinions, and doubts.

Great Uncle Mike has always entertained those worries not in a perfunctory or condescending way, but with true consideration and empathy. Being able to have these discussions with him at the beach or over Thanksgiving dinner has allowed me to truly consider and choose my faith.

Great Uncle Mike has performed several sacraments for my family: marriages, baptisms, first holy communions, and confirmations. This year he will be presiding over my own marriage ceremony, which is so incredibly special for me. Not only is he my Great Uncle, but Father Mike is also a model of faith that I want to emulate in my marriage and for my future family. We are so lucky to have him in our family.

Cherylann Pasha

I’ve known Father Ryan for almost half a century. In those many years, I’ve gone through many changes—as a struggling teenager, a young seminarian, as somebody who came out, got involved in politics, and now as Mayor of Seattle.

Father Ryan has been a constant over the years—the same open, welcoming person I’ve always known.

He’s an incredibly gracious individual—in that Irish kind of way. (Those reading this will know what I mean.) Father Ryan isn’t the guy to go out and play baseball with you, but he will help you think through a tough issue. I still have a box of his letters that are full of thoughtful mentoring. As a product of the Second Vatican Council, he taught me faith can be a positive force that is integrated into every aspect of life, whether at home in a family that’s struggling economically, as a student figuring out what to become in life, and in my case, as an elected official.

Mayor Ed Murray

He once gave me a little red book called “Quotations from Chairman Jesus.” While it had a silly, sarcastic title, it was a way for Father Ryan to positively influence me and demonstrate how Scripture could be a source of strength.

Father Ryan has been a source of strength as well. I will always appreciate that when we were trying to get an LGBT civil rights bill passed, and the Archdiocese was campaigning in opposition to the bill, Father Ryan stood in front of the rectory and spoke of a Jesus for whom ‘there are no outcasts whatever: only fellow humans in need of love, human warmth, healing, acceptance.’ On that day, Father Ryan showed the bravery and courage that has made him a voice for many. He has repeatedly stood up for equality and inclusion, particularly for those on the margins of life, which is why I respect and frequently draw guidance from Father Ryan.
Fifty Years Ago
An album of Father Ryan’s Ordination and First Mass

Left: Father Ryan was ordained with at St. Peter’s Basilica on December 17, 1966. Here, the candidates are shown wearing diaconal stoles. Each candidate has his chasuble—the priestly garment worn only for the celebration of Mass—over his arm. Right: Father Ryan was ordained at a transitional time in the liturgy, as the reforms of the Second Vatican Council were just beginning to take shape. Here, the newly-ordained priests concelebrate the Mass, praying parts of the Eucharistic Prayer together. Father Ryan is second from left.

Left: Bishop Francis Reh, Rector of the North American College, lays hands on Father Ryan in the most important moment of the Rite of Ordination. Above, Right: Father Ryan stands with family near the famous statue of St. Peter in the nave of St. Peter’s Basilica after the Mass of Ordination. His mother is on his right, and his sisters, Sister Judy Ryan snjm and Janet Pasha, with her husband George are on his left. Bottom Right: Father Ryan greets his mother, Marjorie, after the Mass.
Top Left: On the day after his Ordination, Father Ryan celebrated his first Mass as a priest at Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, a masterwork of the Baroque by Bernini. Top Right: Father Ryan offers the Eucharistic Prayer. At both his ordination and his first Mass, Father Ryan wore violet in keeping with the Advent season. Center Right: Father Ryan gives communion to his mother. Bottom: After Mass, the family gathers on the steps of the church, with Bishop Thomas Gill, auxiliary bishop of Seattle and a relative, who preached at the Mass.
Ten pilgrims from St. James, including five youth and five adults, traveled with over a hundred others from around the Archdiocese of Seattle to Poland for World Youth Day 2016. Pope Francis, in his welcome message to pilgrims to World Youth Day, noted that this event brings together people of all races, languages, cultures, and nationalities, all united in love through Christ. WYD stands out in a world mired in evil, and demonstrates what is possible when God is the ultimate concern.

Heaven on earth is possible. We are the ones who stand in the way. The good news is, as we encounter situations that would typically anger and dishearten us, we can remember to respond with mercy. That alone will change the course of events. That flips everything upside down and sets a new path, one filled with life and love. The more we practice mercy, the more it is ushered into being. That is what this year’s World Youth Day was all about.

For me, WYD was the ultimate experience of the universality of the Church: people in the streets carrying their nation’s flag, cheering each other along, even high-fiving one another in the streets. Gathering for a candlelight vigil with 2,000,000 others—a truly awesome moment. Pope Francis himself, and the message he offered our youth: “Following Jesus demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths.”

Yes, it was exhausting, and we didn’t get much sleep, and not everything worked out as we had planned; but it was an experience of heaven on earth, nonetheless.

Joe Cotton

This experience proved to be not just good, but great, greatly surpassing even the grandest of expectations. Every passing moment seemed to be better than the last as I grew in closeness from Catholics from across the globe and down the street. The entire trip seemed like a dream as it was as if no trip could be this great. I was profoundly affected by seeing over two million youth all openly practicing their faith together. However the true peak of the trip was seeing and hearing the Holy Father in person. His resolute calm and his unwavering commitment to the church was clearly felt and every moment in his presence was a blessing. Our trip is truly the highlight of my life and an experience that has affected me greatly forever changing me for the better.

Jack Ipsen, 18 years old

Being in Poland has truly been a life changing experience for me. This was my first time in Europe, ever, and I couldn’t have imagined a more perfect trip. Visiting churches and having Mass everyday has definitely changed my spiritual life in a positive way. One of my favorite moments on the trip was when our bus broke down on our way to Kraków, and we had Mass at a gas station! From goofy and wacky moments like this, to deep prayer and spiritual moments like visiting the Black Madonna, WYD is an experience that I will hold dear to my heart for the rest of my life.

Zoë Davis, 16 years old

Special thanks to Tami Kowal for the photos of World Youth Day events.
Dear Friends,

You may remember that in launching the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis challenged us with these words: “In this Jubilee Year, let us allow God to surprise us.”

That got me to thinking. Are we open as a parish to God’s surprises? Am I open as pastor to God’s surprises? To help answer this, I decided to do two things. The first was to conduct a survey of the entire parish last fall to learn what your hopes, dreams, and concerns were. More than 600 of you participated and the results were shared with you in the bulletin and in this journal, In Your Midst. Secondly, I convened a new Vision Council for the parish. I wanted to explore how a representative group of engaged parishioners—people like you—were experiencing the life of this Cathedral community. Where did we need to grow and change? What were our successes? Where were we falling short of the vision of mercy Pope Francis laid out for this Jubilee Year? How could we open ourselves to God’s surprises in ways that might push us in new, untried directions?

During six weeks of intensive discussions with the Pastoral Vision Council and the parish staff, we explored these and other questions in depth. And I’ll be frank with you—we didn’t come up with all the answers! But we did come up with some key themes for us as a parish to focus on in the next five years. The themes are listed below; each is followed by a series of questions, which I am hoping you will give some serious thought to, much as our Pastoral Vision Council and our staff have already done.

Welcoming the Stranger
How can we make the Cathedral a more welcoming place? Do we really welcome seekers and strangers? How can we become a community that is not just focused on itself, but is genuinely outward-looking? With the explosion of new construction, our Cathedral neighborhood and our city will change drastically in the next five years. What new challenges will this bring to us? What new opportunities? How will we meet them? How can we reach out and engage in dialogue with the city around us?

Hospitality
One way of making people feel welcome is by being hospitable. Are we welcoming to those sitting in the pews next to us, or to those we walk into Mass or out of Mass with? We all know what a difference a simple smile or “hello” can make. How can we be more welcoming? Can we reach out more warmly to visitors and regulars alike? How can we make the coffee hour a place where everyone feels at home, not just the regulars? Are there other opportunities for us to build community by breaking bread together? How can we make hospitality a way of life at St. James Cathedral?

Outreach and “Inreach”
In a very large community that worships in a very large space, doesn’t it make sense to build what Pope Francis calls “a community of small communities,” where each person has a place, a home? Can we do this by inviting parishioners to truly get involved in the parish, participating in one or another of our many ministries? Our parishioners live all over King County and beyond: how can we form community out in our many neighborhoods (e.g. by getting together in small study groups)? Are there other ways of extending the Sunday Mass community to the other six days of the week—especially when we live so
far from one another?

**Telling Our Story** So many of the good things that happen at St. James Cathedral go unnoticed. They are well-kept secrets! Are there more compelling ways to tell the story of what is going on here day after day, bringing the Gospel to life through the stories we tell? Social media offer endless possibilities for making connections. Can we do more to take advantage of the possibilities of technology and social media to share what goes on in the Cathedral throughout the week, making it easy for more and more people to participate in the day-to-day life of the Cathedral?

These are just a few of the themes and questions that our Pastoral Vision Council and our staff found quite exciting to discuss and brainstorm. I am hoping you will find them exciting, too. I invite you to join me in reflecting on them in the coming months. And I hope we do more than reflect on them. As I mentioned, the Pastoral Team will be setting specific goals in response to these questions. What if you were to set some of your own goals? In the weeks to come, we are going to be proposing some very practical possibilities to help you do just that. Please stay tuned!

Pope Francis has written: “The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community… It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.” I can’t think of better words to describe this Cathedral parish. So let’s accept Pope Francis’ invitation and be creative! I don’t know what will come of this new Vision, what new ideas, new ministries, new communities will be formed. What I do know for certain is that together, we can make this Cathedral parish even more warm, loving, and welcoming; more centered on the Gospel; a parish that conveys the image of God’s merciful face in everything we do, every liturgy we celebrate, every telephone call or email we answer, every new outreach we undertake. We’ve got work to do, my friends. We really do. Each one of us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Ryan

---

**Living the Vision**

*Practical ways each one of us can bring it to life*

- **Just say hello.** While we are all grateful to the ushers for welcoming us to St. James Cathedral, making the Cathedral a welcoming place is a job for everyone! When you enter and leave the Cathedral, say hello or good morning to those you greet. And when someone climbs past you in the pew, give them a smile and a greeting. It makes the Cathedral a much friendlier place.

- **You may not have the time or inclination to come to coffee hour every Sunday.** But why not commit to stopping in just once a month? There’s always something going on, as well as wonderful people to say hello to. Coffee hour isn’t just for parish “insiders.”

- **Many of us come great distances to be at the Cathedral on Sundays,** and find it almost impossible to participate in the day-to-day life of the parish. If getting to the Cathedral during the week is difficult for you, consider looking ahead at the schedule of events for the coming months (see the faith formation events on the next page) and commit to attending just one of them.

- **If you miss the feeling of a neighborhood parish and long for a smaller community,** consider being a part of one of our Lenten home groups in neighborhoods. You might even consider hosting a group in your own home, and meeting fellow Cathedral parishioners in your area.

- **Families have a hard time finding Cathedral activities they can all do together.** Consider coming to the Cathedral Kids’ Epiphany Party, Saturday, January 7. It’s fun for the whole family, and a chance to meet other Cathedral families. If you’re looking for service to do together, why not sign up to make sandwiches for St. Martin de Porres Shelter?

- **Share the story of St. James Cathedral.** One simple way to share the good news of what happens at St. James Cathedral is to follow St. James Cathedral on Facebook. Why not share a post every now and then with your own friends? Or just post a photo of you or your family at the Cathedral. It makes a difference.

- **Do you have a Catholic friend or family member who is lackluster about their parish or about Sunday Mass?** Consider inviting them to join you for Mass one Sunday.
Catholic 101
and other opportunities for Faith Formation in the coming months

Saturday January 7
9:00am-3:00pm, Holy Names Room
PAUSE FOR PRAYERFUL REFLECTION AS YOU ENTER THE NEW YEAR
What better time to stop and take stock than as a New Year begins? Rosanne Michaels leads an all-day retreat

Mondays, January 9, 16, 23, 30 & February 6, 13, 20, 27
7:00pm, Holy Names Room
FROM CAPTIVITY TO COVENANT: THE BOOK OF EXODUS
“I will take you as my people and you shall have me as your God.” (Ex. 6:7) The Exodus experience lies at the heart of our faith – an experience of deliverance from oppression and an invitation to live in relationship with God who offers us freedom and life. Patty Bowman leads an eight-week series exploring and reflecting on the Book of Exodus.

Wednesday January 25
7:30pm (note start time), Holy Names Room
LITURGY OF THE HOURS 101
Andrew Casad, Director of Liturgy for the Archdiocese of Seattle, gives an overview of the “Prayer of the Church”—and an opportunity to pray together!

Saturday, February 4
9:00am-1:00pm, Cathedral Hall
IN SERVICE DAY FOR CATHEDRAL MINISTERS
All liturgical and outreach ministry volunteers are invited to attend a morning retreat to be refreshed and renewed in their ministries and share lunch together.

Wednesday, February 22
7:00pm, Holy Names Room
GRACE 101
Through Flannery O’Connor’s story “Revelation,” Father Stephen Rowan walks us through the often violent ways that grace transforms people in a secular age.

PILGRIM PEOPLE: A LENTEN JOURNEY
This Lent, the whole parish is invited to gather in small groups to reflect on Bible stories of journey and pilgrimage, from Abraham and Sarah, the Exodus, to the Gospels. Various sessions will be offered at the Cathedral and in homes.

Wednesday, March 29
7:00pm, Room 1EW, 2nd floor, Cathedral Place
HOLY WEEK 101
Corinna Laughlin helps us prepare for the coming Holy Days in this guided tour through the great liturgies of Holy Week.

Wednesday, April 26
7:00pm, Holy Names Room
EASTER 101: SUFFERING AND RESURRECTION
Theologian Father Mike Raschko explores the question of suffering in the light of Christ’s resurrection

Mondays, May 1, 8, 15, 22
7:00pm, Holy Names Room
EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE’S MEASURE FOR MEASURE
This four-week series led by Corinna Laughlin, with Scott Webster, will explore Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure and its themes of virtue, sin, and retribution.

June 18 through July 23
CAMINO SEATTLE
Our annual five-week walking/ hiking and prayer event begins on Corpus Christi and concludes July 23, the Feast of St. James.

Wednesday, June 28
7:00pm, Holy Names Room
MUSIC 101: WHY WE SING AT MASS
Dr. Paul Thornock explores the basics of liturgical music, and the role it plays in the celebration of the Mass. Some singing may be involved! ✌
Seattle's pioneer priest, Father Francis Xavier Prefontaine, was ordained by Ignace Bourget, the saintly bishop of Montreal, on November 20, 1863, and less than one month later set out for Vancouver. Bishop A. M. A. Blanchet immediately put Prefontaine to work. In fact, by November, 1864—when he had been ordained all of one year—he was assigned responsibility for all the Catholics of Puget Sound. His “headquarters” was Port Townsend but he was constantly on the move, travelling from settlement to settlement to minister to the Catholics scattered over an immense territory.

Prefontaine first visited Seattle in December of 1867. After carefully canvassing the rough-and-tumble community, Prefontaine found ten Catholics, of whom three attended the Mass he offered. Bishop Blanchet visited Prefontaine in Seattle a few months later, and while he applauded the young priest’s enthusiasm, he would give him no encouragement for establishing a permanent residence in Seattle. As a mission center, Blanchet told Prefontaine, Seattle was “a lost cause.” But the persistence of the energetic priest wore the bishop down, and finally Blanchet consented to the building of a church—provided Prefontaine could muster the funds to pay for it without help from the diocese.

Prefontaine did muster the funds. He purchased a lot at 3rd Avenue and Washington Street, an undeveloped corner still covered in the stumps of immense trees that had fallen to the burgeoning logging industry. A church fair helped launch the project, but Prefontaine’s primary money-saving technique was to do everything himself. He assisted with the clearing of the land, and also served as “superintending architect, carpenter, painter and decorator.” The church—named in honor of Our Lady of Good Help—was begun in the summer of 1869 and completed in the fall of 1870.

From his first arrival in Seattle, Prefontaine rubbed elbows with Yeslers, Dennys, and many of the other leaders who helped transform Seattle from a “lost cause” to one of the fastest-growing cities on the west coast. Among his parishioners were Seattle pioneers as well as legends like Princess Angeline, daughter of Chief Seattle, who was a friend of Prefontaine’s and who was later buried from Our Lady of Good Help.

Corinna Laughlin is Director of Liturgy at St. James Cathedral.
Bernard and Ellen Casey passed along something priceless to their 16 children: their Catholic faith. The couple’s legacy includes three sons who became priests, including one—Father Solanus Casey—who has been declared venerable.

“The faith has been a very important part of our lives,” said Holy Names Sister Anne Herkenrath, a great-niece of Father Solanus.

Born in Ireland in the 1840s, Bernard and Ellen Casey embarked on a journey that led them to Boston, and then Wisconsin, before they settled in Seattle, where they attended Immaculate Conception Parish.

To honor both the couple’s legacy of faith and Father Solanus, 77 members of the extended Casey family braved the rain November 5 to dedicate a family monument at Seattle’s Calvary Cemetery. Some traveled from as far away as Florida and Washington, D.C.

“We are reminded that the first and best teachers of the faith are parents and family,” said Richard Peterson, the archdiocese’s director of Catholic Cemeteries.

The couple and nine of their children are buried near the location of the granite monument. The memorial displays a 1913 photo of the extended Casey family, taken on the occasion of Bernard and Ellen’s golden wedding anniversary. The inscription reads: “Legacy of faith and prayer of the Bernard and Ellen Casey family in the Seattle area.”

On the monument’s opposite side, a bronze statue of Father Solanus faces his parents’ graves. Inscribed are two of his favorite sayings: “Thank God ahead of time” and “Blessed be God in all his designs.”

Bernard Francis Casey was born December 18, 1870, in Wisconsin. Before entering the seminary at age 21, he worked a variety of jobs: logger, hospital orderly, streetcar operator, prison guard. When he joined the Capuchins, he was named Solanus after a Spanish missionary to Peru.

Father Solanus had been an average student and so was ordained as a “simplex priest,” meaning he couldn’t preach sermons or hear confessions, according to Capuchin Father Larry Webber, who is helping with Father Solanus’ cause for canonization. “He just accepted whatever happens, with gratitude to God,” Father Webber added.

Father Solanus spent nearly 20 years serving parishes in New York, including Harlem, Yonkers and New York City. He often served as porter, the public face of the monastery. “Solanus spent his life with the poor answering the door and taking care of their needs,” Sister Anne said.

He became known as a healer and a counselor to monastery visitors. He encouraged them to enroll in the Seraphic Mass Association (now the Capuchin Mass Association). By submitting their names and providing a small donation, even a quarter, people would be remembered in the prayers of Capuchin

Nathan Whalen is a freelance writer for Northwest Catholic. This article originally appeared on nwcatholic.org. Special thanks to Northwest Catholic for permission to reprint the story in In Your Midst.
missionaries worldwide, Father Webber said.

“He tried to stress the importance of the power and prayer of the Mass,” Father Webber added.

Father Solanus eventually was transferred to St. Bonaventure Monastery in Detroit. There, he continued his work as porter and visiting the public. Eventually, word of his presence spread and the number of monastery visitors swelled from 30–50 each day to about 200 daily, Father Webber said.

Father Solanus died in 1957; in 1995, Pope John Paul II declared him venerable, a step on the path to sainthood. Webber and Capuchin Brother Richard Merling (who both attended the November 5 dedication) are postulators for Father Solanus, responsible for keeping the process to sainthood moving forward.

People still benefit from Father Solanus’ intercession, Father Webber said, and they contact the Solanus Casey Guild to report favors received through that intercession. Every year, tens of thousands of people visit Father Solanus’ grave in Detroit.

His name is known in Seattle, too: The Solanus Casey Center, jointly operated by St. James Cathedral and Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, serves the poor from its First Hill location near downtown Seattle. ☀
"I have some bad news," I announced tearfully as our Christian Faith Formation class gathered in a circle on that Sunday morning in March. "We need to pray for our friend and teacher, David Grech. He has been in a very serious car accident."

The 7th and 8th graders stood stunned, momentarily processing what they had just heard. Questions then began in quick succession. "What happened? Where is he? Is he going to be okay?" While I had few answers, I knew that David, a friend to everyone who met him at St. James, needed our prayers at this critical time.

It was on the evening of March 8, while running to catch the 303 Express to Northgate, that David was hit by a car at the crosswalk of Boren and Columbia. On that dark night, his 6 foot 6-inch frame took a massive blow from a distracted driver. His lace up tennis shoes were torn from his feet and lay 50 feet away in the middle of the street. Before David passed out, he borrowed a cell phone from a passerby to call the Cathedral Kitchen to say that he wouldn’t be at work the next day. David would say: "We are all in a state of change. Homelessness is a state of transition and doesn’t have to be permanent. And it could happen to any of us."

An ambulance rushed David to the emergency room where he was transferred to the ICU at Harborview. He quickly went into shock as his lungs filled with blood and his condition deteriorated. A ventilator kept him alive while doctors tried to determine the full extent of his injuries. A broken leg, broken thumb, blood clots, and possible neurologic injuries necessitated a medically induced coma.

News of David’s accident spread throughout the St. James community. Students from his class, volunteers and guests at the Cathedral Kitchen, as well as the staff and parishioners all prayed for his recovery. Father Ryan would often sprint over to the hospital between Masses to pray for David who lay comatose and gravely ill.

The waiting room outside David’s room filled with friends and Cathedral staff eager to visit their friend and pray for him. "He’s a very popular guy," one nurse reported. Along with Father Ryan, David’s best friend, Jimmy Caron, visited daily.

As the drugs that kept David in a coma were reduced, David’s comatose state persisted. The medical staff grew more and more concerned. He wasn’t waking up. There was perhaps more damage than previously thought. It had been over three weeks since the accident.

However, the prayers kept coming. Jimmy conferred with Sister Anne Herkenrath about David.

Lisa Casterella is a freelance writer and a parishioner at St. James.
She offered him a relic from her great-uncle, Venerable Solanus Casey. This saintly priest was known to many in the Detroit area and beyond as having miraculous healing powers. Solanus Casey is known to Cathedral parishioners because of his connection with Sister Anne and the fact that our drop-in and referral center is named for him.

Like David, Father Casey had worked at many jobs and was mostly known as the greeter or “public face of the monastery” where he was a Simplex Priest (unable to hear confessions or give homilies). Father Casey is described as having “limitless patience while offering prayer and counsel to anyone that needed his help.” He welcomed people of any ethnicity and faith to the soup kitchen where he toiled tirelessly and without complaint for the poor of his community.

As Jimmy lay the small relic (a photo with a tiny piece of his robe) from Solanus Casey on David’s forehead, he offered a few prayers and went home for the day. The next afternoon, Jimmy made his daily trek to Harborview to visit David. Much to his surprise and delight, David was sitting up in his bed, awake at last. “I believe it was the intercession of Solanus Casey that brought David back to us,” Jimmy states matter-of-factly.

It would be many more months of physical and occupational therapy for David. He would eventually be transferred to Mt. St. Vincent. At one point while still at Harborview, David recalls a near-death experience. “I was a little boy playing in the dirt in the back yard of my grandparent’s home in San Francisco. My grandma yelled out to my grandpa, ‘hey ol’ man, come in for dinner.’ He turned to me and said, ‘Come on Davidy, let’s go’. As he reached for my hand, a hospital orderly said to me, ‘Come on Dude, time to go back to your room.’ I believe that I was almost taken at that moment and it still blows me away.”

Today, David is living temporarily with a friend in Madison Park while he completes his physical therapy and doctor visits. He goes for long walks (without the assistance of a walker) and is slowly starting to run again. A multiple marathoner, David looks forward to a 5 K run in a few weeks. “I’m going to start out slow but every day, I’m getting stronger mentally, physically, and spiritually.” He adds philosophically, “I was spared so that I can help others and that is what I intend to do.”

David has begun to participate again in the things that he loves: the education series at St. James, volunteering in the Cathedral Kitchen, and visiting the CFF class where he used to teach every Sunday. He brings a spirit of hope to the class when he describes his recovery, friendships and his awakened spirituality.

When he is asked about future plans, he states, “I’m looking at a possible job in Redmond… but don’t worry, wherever I am, I’ll always come back to St. James.”

David Grech and Jimmy Caron
June
4. At the 5:30pm Mass, Archbishop Sartain blessed over a hundred pilgrims in advance of World Youth Day.
11. On a rainy Saturday afternoon, we hosted the Seattle University Baccalaureate.
15. In conjunction with Saint Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral, we observed an Interfaith Prayer, Vigil, and Procession in memory of those killed in Orlando.
25. Ordination of Priests. Archbishop Sartain ordained five young men to the priesthood in the presence of more than 100 priests and 1,300 of the faithful.
28. Camino Seattle, our annual summer walking program, began. Parishioners walked on their own or joined with others in dozens of walks around the city.

July
17-21. The first annual Art of Faith Camp brought young people to the Cathedral to explore the art of stained-glass and to create their own windows.
24. We honored our patron, James the Greater, at all Masses. Our annual Parish Picnic on Terry Avenue brought out the whole neighborhood to celebrate.

August
1. We were privileged to host WHEEL Women’s Shelter in Cathedral Hall each night during the months of August and September.
8-12. Our Schola Cantorum Choir Camp gathered fifty kids at the Cathedral for a week of prayer, singing, and service. Each day, the campers stopped to reflect on the highlights of the day. One camper wrote: “When I came I didn’t have friends, but now I have many friends and I like to be in the camp. It is so fun to learn about many things like music, songs, instruments, and about St. James Cathedral. What an awesome day!”
17. We welcomed Craig Cramer, Professor of Organ at the University of Notre Dame, as part of our Summer Organ Recital Series.
21. A clothing drive for refugees in Greece was held in partnership with Salaam Cultural Museum Medical Missions.
28. Our 20th Annual Hunthausen Charity Golf Tournament was our most successful ever, raising nearly $175,000 to support Cathedral outreach ministries. A huge thanks to our co-sponsors, Pagliacci Pizza, Roy Simperman, and an anonymous friend of the Cathedral Kitchen.

September
6-27. Corinna Laughlin and Scott Webster presented a month long series exploring T. S. Eliot’s masterpiece, Four Quartets.
11. The Cathedral Choir returned in all its glory after its summer hiatus. After the morning Masses, our annual Ministries Fair encouraged parishioners to explore ways to put their gifts at the service of the parish community.
15. We began a five-week series exploring Faithful Citizenship. The series, co-sponsored by St. Joseph Parish and Christ Our Hope Parish, explored themes like...
homelessness, life issues, immigration, and environmental concerns.

18. Father Ryan gave a special blessing to the catechists who will be teaching our young people the ways of faith in the coming months.

28. Father Ryan launched our Catholic 101 Series with “Cathedral 101,” exploring what it means to be a Cathedral.

October
1. We welcomed Father Joseph Corpora, CSC, to preach a Mission of Mercy at St. James Cathedral. Father Corpora received a mandate from Pope Francis to be a Missionary of Mercy, and was commissioned to be a special confessor and a “living sign” of God’s forgiveness during the Holy Year of Mercy. The morning concluded with a solemn Rosary for Vocations.

2. It was a treat to have the Schola Cantorum back to lead us in song.

5. Father Ryan had the privilege of meeting Pope Francis!

November
2. On All Souls Day, we celebrated a Solemn Requiem Mass with the Cathedral Choir and Chamber Orchestra performing the transcendent Requiem of Gabriel Faure, under the direction of Dr. Paul Thornock.

6. Sacrificial Giving Sunday. Parishioner Tim Gately shared the story of what the Cathedral means to him and his family. “Anyone who enters the Cathedral takes note of the inscription high above our heads from Luke’s gospel, what has become our parish motto, “I am in your midst as one who serves.” When you first visit the cathedral, those words belong to someone else. They are more of a ‘nice touch’ than a living mantra. But once you have been welcomed, once you feel welcomed in this community, this phrase becomes one to live by.”


11. The Mass for the Deceased Homeless was offered in memory of the men and women who died homeless on the streets and in the shelters of Seattle in the past year. After Mass, all gathered in the Cathedral Courtyard as the bell was tolled eighty-nine times in memory of the dead.

13. The conclusion of the Year of Mercy. Father Ryan invited all to process through the Doors of Mercy at the conclusion of each Mass. “It will be a strong, symbolic way of saying that we are going to take out there—to our homes, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, to the world in which we live—the message our world needs more than ever to hear: the message we receive in this place week after week from a loving God, the message of mercy.”

24. Thanksgiving Day. In his homily for today, Father Ryan said: “In its 240 years, our nation has had its ups and downs, its moments of glory and moments of shame, its times of violence and times of peace, its pitched battles and its quiet harbors of unity and harmony. And then there is this moment. This moment—in the wake of a bitter, seemingly endless election that was unlike any other in our nation’s history, when the demons of our nature seemed to suffocate the angels, when honesty and decency, respectful dialogue, civil discourse and mutual respect all but faded from the national scene. It’s almost as if we forgot who we were, forgot how to be Americans.”

27. We began the beautiful season of watching and waiting for the Lord: Advent.

From top to bottom: Father Ryan meets Pope Francis, October 5 (photo by L’Osservatore Romano); All Souls Requiem, November 2; the closing of the Doors of Mercy, November 13; the beginning of the joyful season of Advent, November 27.
Saturday, December 24, 2016

5:30 pm
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD—
VIGIL MASS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Entrance Procession of the Children and Crib Figures;
blessing of the Christmas Crib
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,
Presider & Homilist
with youth readers, musicians, and servers
9:00 pm CAROL SERVICE

10:00 pm NOTE TIME!
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD—MASS DURING THE NIGHT (FORMERLY MIDNIGHT MASS)
The Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain, Archbishop of Seattle, Presider & Homilist
This Mass, celebrated at 10:00pm, will be broadcast at Midnight on KING-TV

Sunday, December 25, 2016

8:00 am
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD—MASS AT DAWN
The Reverend David A. Brant, Presider
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan, Homilist

10:00 am and 12 Noon
NATIVITY OF THE LORD—MASS DURING THE DAY
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,
Presider & Homilist

4:00 pm
SOLEMN VESPERS OF CHRISTMAS
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan, Presider

5:30 pm NATIVITY OF THE LORD—EVENING MASS
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,
Presider & Homilist