“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 Blessed Solanus Casey, pray for us! An American priest—with connections to St. James—is beatified in Detroit

7 Madre de las Americas A photo album of the festive annual procession

8 Walking in the Footsteps of St. Vincent How our Cathedral Vincentians grow spiritually through service to the poor

10 Grace on the #2 Bus A parishioner shares a story of a graced encounter

12 Finding a Forever Home Our youth ministry travels to NPH, Nicaragua

14 El Primitivo Reflections on a Path Less Travelled along the Camino de Santiago

16 Prayer Partners Ministry Offering unconditional love, acceptance, and prayer

17 Putting Church at the Center Giving God a return on all his gifts to us

18 Alpha A meal, a talk, and a place to ask questions about the Christian faith

19 Searching for Advent Hope My personal longing for faith like a child

20 Annual Report to the Parish Looking back at FY 2016-2017

22 Cathedral Almanac Snapshots of life at St. James, July—December

24 Christmas at your Cathedral Note the special Mass times this Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

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

Shrine of Blessed Solanus Casey at the Solanus Casey Center, Detroit. Photo courtesy Solanus Casey Center.
November 18, 2017 witnessed an extraordinary moment for the Catholic Church in the United States as Father Solanus Casey was beatified in Detroit. Some 65,000 people filled Ford Field (home of the Detroit Lions). Instead of hot dogs and beer, people lined up to receive souvenir programs for the Mass and red plastic glasses (a tribute to the red hornrims Solanus wore). The giant pillars at the entrances, normally decorated with heroic images of football players, instead displayed huge projections of a frail-looking Capuchin friar. The field itself was transformed into a sanctuary, with a central altar and seating around it for a festival choir, an orchestra, hundreds of priests, bishops, Capuchins, and more than three hundred members of the Casey family.

People came from as far away as Ireland, but the crowd was mostly made up of locals: natives of Detroit and the Midwest for whom Father Solanus Casey is a household name. The joy and excitement was palpable as people gathered and the liturgy began.

Archbishop Allen Vigneron of Detroit introduced the Rite of Beatification during the Introductory Rites of the Mass. Brother Richard Merling, OFM Cap., vice-postulator of the cause for beatification, read a short biography of Father Solanus. Then Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and the representative of Pope Francis, read the formal decree of Beatification, officially placing Father Solanus among the Blesseds of the Church.

During the celebration of the Eucharist which followed, Sister Anne Herkenrath SNJM, longtime member of the Cathedral staff and the great-niece of Solanus Casey, brought forward the gifts. The day of Father Solanus’ Beatification was an extraordinary day for the United States, the city of Detroit, the Capuchins, and the Casey family—and, most especially, for Sister Anne!

Several Cathedral parishioners were able to make the journey to Detroit for this remarkable event, all of them drawn by the life and example of Solanus Casey. Cathedral reader and counter Ed DeAlbuquerque (a Detroit native) was there with his mother and sister. “The humble nature of Father Solanus drew me to this occasion,” Ed says. For Shirley Wright, Solanus’ “simple, but profound, words of wisdom prompted my interest in being present at his beatification. One (out of many!) highlights was to see his personal journal where he wrote down every request for prayers and healing from anyone and everyone who sought him out.”

Patty Bowman, Director of Outreach and Advocacy at St. James for many years, found it inspiring to be at the Beatification of a man who has inspired her for years: “His example was very powerful in helping to shape our outreach ministries at St. James, particularly the Emmaus Companions and the Solanus Casey Center outreach to the homeless and those in need.”

Father Ryan reflected on the day after the Beatification: “I had the privilege of being in Detroit for the Beatification of Father Solanus Casey on November 18. It was a great celebration. There were 65,000 in Ford Field. I don’t think the Detroit Lions bring in any

Corinna Laughlin is Director of Liturgy at St. James Cathedral.
more for football games. And this was better than a football game! It was a happy, proud moment. I don’t know when I’ve had a prouder moment as a Catholic—celebrating this humble servant of God, who spent his life as the doorkeeper at a monastery, receiving tens of thousands of people. He gave them a listening ear, a loving heart, some advice, and prayed for their healing. The Church has been through some tough times in recent years. At the Beatification, I thought to myself, this is the best the Church produces. This is the best the priesthood produces. How fortunate we are to have this connection to Father Solanus. He has an important message for all of us. It was truly one of the proudest days of my life.”

Who was Father Solanus?

Bernard “Barney” Casey was born in Prescott, Wisconsin on November 25, 1870 to Bernard and Ellen Casey, Irish immigrants who had met in Boston before heading west. “Surely we were fortunate children,” Barney later wrote to his sister Margaret, “that the good God gave us such sturdy, honest, virtuous parents. How can we ever be grateful enough?”

Barney was the sixth of sixteen children. Theirs was a deeply religious family, and, in spite of illness and some financial ill luck, a happy one. As soon as he could, Barney started working. He had a number of jobs: as a logger, a brick-maker, even a part-time security guard at the local penitentiary. While working as a streetcar operator, he witnessed a brutal stabbing. As he prayed for the victim and the assailant, he realized he wanted to do something more to heal the pain and suffering he saw around him. Two days later, he went to his pastor and asked about becoming a priest.

Barney was soon studying for the diocesan priesthood at St. Francis de Sales Seminary in Milwaukee. He found the academic work very challenging, however, since his classes were taught either in German or in Latin and he did not know either language. He was told he would not be able to pursue his vocation as a diocesan priest.

Barney did not give up. His friends urged him to look at a religious community—perhaps the Franciscans. He hesitated. Then, in prayer, he heard the voice of the Blessed Virgin Mary: “Go to Detroit.” To him, that meant one thing: St. Bonaventure’s, the Capuchin novitiate in Detroit.

Barney never looked back. He was given the religious name of “Solanus” because of his love for the violin—his namesake, St. Francis Solano, is always shown carrying a violin! Academic difficulties continued to plague him as the Capuchins also taught largely in German and Latin. He was allowed to stay, but when he was finally ordained a priest on July 24, 1904, he was made a “Simplex Priest,” which means he was not allowed to preach on doctrine nor was he able to hear confessions.

These limitations did not prevent Solanus from living an extraordinary life of ministry. After serving in New York for several years, Solanus returned to Detroit where he was assigned to the post of assistant porter at St. Bonaventure’s. St. Bonaventure’s was a novitiate, friary, and provincialate—most people had little reason to visit, except perhaps to enroll themselves or loved ones in the Seraphic Mass Association, a Franciscan prayer guild in which members prayed for each other and were remembered in the daily Masses of Capuchin priests. The front office at St. Bonaventure’s was very quiet—until Solanus arrived, that is. Within a few weeks, people began showing up to ask for prayers for themselves and family members. Solanus carefully recorded their intentions in his notebook, urged them to pray, and enrolled them in the Seraphic Mass Association. He also sat and listened to their stories, their griefs, their anxieties, often from nine in the morning until nine at night. Even if there was a long line of people waiting, the person seated across the desk from Solanus sensed that he was in no rush—he
seemed to have all the time in the world to listen to them.

Before long people began to come back and report on prayers that were answered. Solanus would add a note next to the original entry in his notebook—“Perfectly cured. Deo Gratias.” “Loss of mental faculties restored indeed. Now thanks be to God!”

Remarkable stories abound in the life of Solanus Casey. In 1925, orders for new cars suddenly dropped. For Detroit, America’s “Motor City,” the consequences were disastrous. As Christmas drew near, every auto plant in Detroit closed and thousands were thrown out of work. John McKenna, an auto worker, was on reduced hours, but he knew he could not support his family on two hours of work a day. He went to Solanus and asked him to enroll the Chevrolet Corporation in the Seraphic Mass Association. Solanus had never enrolled a company in the association before, but he quickly agreed. McKenna paid the fifty cents for Chevrolet’s annual enrollment in the SMA and departed.

Two days later, McKenna was back: “We had overtime yesterday and today, and the company has an order for 45,000 machines wanted in 30 days!” Chevrolet was saved, and soon all of Detroit’s auto workers were back at work.

Solanus became famous in Detroit, and the quiet monastery of St. Bonaventure began to change as more and more people came seeking his prayers. He responded to the need around him not only with spiritual help, but with concrete assistance. In 1929—four days after the stock market crash—he started a soup kitchen at St. Bonaventure’s which continues in operation today, serving an astonishing one million meals each year. In his homily at the Mass of Beatification, Cardinal Amato described an incident that happened shortly after the opening of the kitchen: “One day there was no more bread and there was a long line of more than two-hundred people waiting for something to eat. Father Solanus approached and began to recite the Our Father. A little bit later knocking was heard at the door and the baker appeared with a large basket full of bread. He had also brought a truckload of God’s gifts. When the people saw this they began to cry with emotion. Father Solanus simply stated: ‘See, God provides. No one will suffer want if we put our trust in Divine Providence.’”

Brother Richard Merling, OFM.Cap., vice-postulator of Father Solanus’ cause, and Sister Anne, celebrate following the Beatification ceremony. 
Photo courtesy Solanus Casey Center, Detroit.

Spirituality of Solanus Casey

Solanus always reminded the people who came to him that all he did was pray: God was the one who healed them, helped them, consoled them. He urged people to absolute trust in God. “Shake off anxiety,” he would say. “Last year it was something that you now smile about. Tomorrow it’s about something that will not be serious if you raise your heart to God and thank Him for whatever comes.” He wrote: “One of humanity’s greatest weaknesses is setting a limit to God’s power and goodness.”

Out of this total trust in God came the phrase most associated with Solanus: “thank God ahead of time.” He urged all who came to see him to trust so entirely in God that they could thank him in advance for all God had in mind for them. “Let us thank Him at all times and under whatever circumstances. Thank him for our creation and our existence, thank him for everything—for his plans in the past that by our sins and our want of appreciation and patience have so often been frustrated and that he so often found necessary to change. Let us thank him for all his plans for the future—for trials and humiliations as well as great joy and consolations; for sickness and whatever death he may deign to plan…. We should thank him frequently, not only for the blessings of the past and present, but thank him ahead of time for whatever he foresees is pleasing to him that we suffer.”
Ordinary and Extraordinary

The ordinary and the extraordinary were always side by side in the life of Solanus Casey. Soft-spoken, with a rather high-pitched voice, the friars would tell him, “speak up! Open your mouth!” He loved the violin, which he played quite badly; he was a fan of the Detroit Tigers; he played Scrabble with his fellow Capuchins; and he was not averse to a drink. Soon after Prohibition, he stopped in a bar and ordered a beer, to the great astonishment of all present!

He was a man of intense prayer. The friars would sometimes find him curled up in front of the altar in the Chapel, where he had fallen asleep while praying before the Blessed Sacrament. When they told him he was too old to sleep on those hard boards, he would reply, “oh, I slept on the soft side of the boards.” Always eager to relieve the sufferings of others, he endured his own physical ailments with great patience. As he was dying, he offered his sufferings for the unity of Christians and the conversion of all people. His last conscious action was to sit up in bed and say distinctly, “I give my soul to Jesus Christ.” Twenty thousand people attended his funeral.

The Story Continues

The people of Detroit never forgot Father Solanus. A steady stream of pilgrims found their way to his tomb, and in 1960, just three years after his death, The Father Solanus Guild was organized to collect information related to his life and ministry. In 1976, under Cardinal Deardon of Detroit, the first formal steps towards introducing his cause began. His writings were declared free of doctrinal error (an essential step). Later, under Cardinal Szoka, the formal investigation began, as sworn testimony was collected from 53 people who had known Solanus. On July 11, 1995, John Paul II declared him Venerable. Before he could become Blessed, a miracle must take place. Countless miracles have taken place through Solanus’ intercession, but before a miracle can be used in a cause for sainthood, the Church requires an exhaustive formal process. In the case of a healing, doctors must attest that the cure could have happened only through a miracle.

The miracle which led to Father Solanus’ Beatification took place in September, 2002. Paula Medina Zarate of Panama had suffered from a skin condition, ichthyosis vulgaris, all her life. In this genetic condition, the skin does not shed its dead cells naturally, and instead forms “scales” which can be very painful. Zarate, a schoolteacher, had to retire early because her condition had become so severe. Two Capuchins at her local parish invited her to join them on a pilgrimage to Detroit.

Zarate had never heard of Solanus before that visit. As she knelt by his tomb, she prayed for a long list of family members: her mother, her brothers, her students, her hometown of Chepo. As she stood to go, she heard a voice saying, “and you—what do you need?” She knelt again and prayed for healing. Immediately, she felt a current of warmth through her body; she rose healed. Over the next two days, all the scales fell away. The cure was complete. In 2015, the formal investigation into Zarate’s healing began, and in May of 2017, it was approved by Pope Francis. The way was open for Solanus’ Beatification. Another miracle, similarly attested, will be needed before Blessed Solanus becomes Saint Solanus.

Sister Anne reflects: “The Beatification of Father Solanus was extraordinary. My heart was filled with emotion, awe, and an overwhelming sense of God’s Presence—peace and joy. I was particularly struck by the faith and devotion of people from every walk of life, especially those that came to the Solanus Casey Center to visit and pray at his tomb. It is utterly amazing! When I think of the first time I met him, I was 15 and a little skeptical of who this Uncle was who had a reputation of holiness and as a healer. But I soon found out that he was as normal as his brothers and sisters, my aunts and uncles! How did he get to this point in his life? I believe he always lived, worked and prayed in the Presence of God.”

Blessed Solanus Casey, pray for us! ◆
Madre de las Americas
Celebrating Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, December 2
Pope Francis calls us “little mustard seeds.” In September, he wrote to all followers of St Vincent de Paul (“Vincentians”) to mark the 400th anniversary of God’s calling Vincent to serve the poor: God “scatters you throughout the world like seeds that sprout in arid land, like a balm of consolation for the wounded, like a fire of charity to warm so many hearts cooled by abandonment and hardened by rejection.”

The journey begins when people call the Seattle/King County SVdP Helpline seeking help with basic necessities, like rent, electric bills, food, clothes, household items or a bed. Calls from residents of the Cathedral parish are referred to our local SVdP conference. Whether we help depends on how much money we have (thank you for donating!) and how many Vincentians are available.

When we help, two Vincentians go to where the person or family lives for a “home visit” to better understand the situation and give the best help possible. What we encounter is never quite what we expect.

Tammy Bendix has been volunteering with SVdP at St James for over 20 years and recalls: “When I started volunteering, I just wanted to help people. I didn’t think about my faith. That came later ... a secret surprise. As I went on home visits and reflected on the scripture during our [SVdP] meetings, I came to realize the teachings of my faith—the teachings of Jesus—called me to do something, give of myself and my time to help others. As I met people who needed help, I was deeply moved by the strong faith in so many of them. It seemed that the less they had, be it financially or health challenges, the stronger their faith. They inspired me and my faith. Helping me to recognize the blessings of my life (family, employment, a home) and to appreciate them and praise our Lord all the more. SVdP allows me to live my faith.”

On a home visit, we ask simple questions like, “What’s going on?” “Why did you call us?” Then we listen. The people we visit talk about financial problems, difficult family or job situations, how hard it is to find work, a troublesome neighbor, a landlord threatening eviction. Loneliness, debt, deaths of family members, domestic violence, legal problems—we hear about all the bad that life brings. We also hear of joyful moments, the love of children and aging parents, beloved pets and good friends, the pleasure of having a home after homelessness. With amazing frequency, we hear about unquenchable faith in God.

Human life in all its sorrow and glory, that’s what we encounter on SVdP home visits. We listen. We sympathize and encourage. When appropriate, we offer a bit of common sense advice or a referral to other possible help. And, of course, we help pay rent and electricity bills, provide new beds and meet other basic material needs.

Hattie Grant, one of our newest members, explains: “At first, you might think, ‘Well, this is a way to help the poor that feels less random than giving $5 to someone on the street corner or feels more personal than writing a check for $50 at a fundraiser.’ Very soon, however, you realize it isn’t about the money—it’s about the connection. It is loving the poor.”

When we first volunteer with SVdP, most of us are surprised by what we discover. Andrew Balet speaks for many of us: “Coming from a comfortable background, I had only read about the poor. It was good to actually meet them and see how they live. It is astonishing to see people build comfortable lives on what I consider a pathetically small, almost nonexistent, income.”

Our Cathedral Vincentians make afternoon and evening visits, usually 2-3 hours to visit 2-4 homes. People we visit rent rooms or apartments Downtown, on Capitol Hill and First Hill and in the Pioneer Square, International and SoDo Districts—pockets of poverty amid Seattle’s great wealth.

For JoAnn Wiesner, joining SVdP has been an eye-opener. “I’ve worked downtown Seattle on and off for many years and never knew of the people housed in the buildings I have passed. I assumed these buildings were full of fairly prosperous working folks. I see Seattle in a new light. The people we serve are individuals and very different from each other. They are appreciative and their stories are often interesting and inspiring. Volunteering with SVdP has filled my life with meaningful work and a full heart.”

For Susan Picht, “Being a member of SVdP has given me an opportunity to practice my Catholic.” We visit people who need food and rent, “but they also have a need for some human contact in their day.

Barb Schmidt is president of the St James Cathedral-Bl Rosalie Rendu Conference of SVdP. Call her at (206) 495-8214 or email svdp.barbinseattle@gmail.com
Whether they are in that position through their own fault or the fault of society, so many of them have a deep love of God and are thankful for what they receive. And they have a kindness that gives me wonder.”

Members decide how often they can go on home visits. Most go 1-3 times each month, although some cannot go that often. In a recent 12-month period, we averaged helping 70 people monthly. By visiting in pairs, our members get to know each other and—two heads are better than one—do a better job serving those in need. We have conference meetings twice monthly, on Tuesday evenings. We start with prayer and spiritual reflection. Then we discuss how to help specific people facing extraordinary challenges and other topics germane to our work—for example, how to handle bed requests when bed bugs are present. We always end our meetings with prayer.

Personal encounter is at the heart of our ministry. Ken Goddard notes that “SVdP participation has given me the opportunity to feel more a part of my community, a chance to serve those in need, increase my awareness of what those needs are and how many people are facing very difficult situations. I feel like I’ve received more from those I’ve visited in their home than I’ve given. I’m more aware of how God has blessed my life, and more thankful.”

For Michele Ferguson, “The thing that most affects me about SVdP is how it helps me put things in my daily life in perspective. It allows me to see how trivial many of my problems are relative to what our clients experience.”

For most of us, the greatest fruit of SVdP is our personal spiritual growth. Bob Clifford says it well: “Something I once read about St Vincent: ‘Love of the poor did not mean sentimental adoration. He was scornful of those who like to remain in the realm of imaginary acts of charity. Our love of God must be effective,’ he wrote. I had done many things at St. James—ten years making muffins with my wife, Donna, four years as the Monday gleaner and a few other volunteer jobs. But, as I get older, the Beatitudes sum up for me the message of Jesus. I came to see that with SVdP, I can meet the people face to face and fill urgent needs, feed the hungry, give shelter and food and comfort. Of course, the irony is that I get more comfort out of it than I give. The courage and optimism of those we help is amazing.”

And throughout our ministry runs a constant river of prayer. Again, Hattie Grant: “I pray for the people we visit, not in some overarching way like ‘a prayer for the poor’ but a specific prayer for each man and woman we visit. I see their faces, remember their voices as I pray. That alone has deepened my faith.”

Sometimes the effect of a home visit is very powerful. Carolyn Lassek, now in her third year as a Vincentian, has witnessed this: “I was on my very first home visit. I had worked in parish ministry for some 38+ years, so I was sure that I was prepared to visit the poor and needy in our parish. Little did I know! Here I was, having climbed the stairs to this lady’s apartment. What we discovered was that this woman had several needs, but central for her was a bed. I could not imagine not having at least the minimum—a cot! When I saw the pile of dark rags on which she had been sleeping, my heart sank as she turned to face us. Then suddenly I was face to face with the awful truth: ‘Whatsoever you do unto the least of these...’ I was looking into the face of Christ. Somewhere in the distance, I heard the voice of my companion work out the details of how soon a bed would be delivered. “When I returned home and walked into my bedroom and looked at my bed, I fell to my knees and kept repeating, ‘Thank you, thank you, oh my God, for my bed!’ I do not take my bed for granted anymore. I love being part of our Cathedral’s SVdP conference because of the blessing to visit and serve the Christ among us.”

Right now we have 22 “little mustard seeds” volunteering with our SVdP conference at St James Cathedral. We could sure use more. If you feel called to this ministry, please let us know. We would love to talk with you.
I arrived just as the #2 was pulling away from the Summit Street bus stop. If I had left my apartment two minutes earlier, I’d be on that bus! “That ride to downtown Seattle is a trek,” I thought to myself, “but this fragile Irish skin needs a sun hat, or I’m in trouble.”

As I breathed in the fresh summer air, a thick cloud of smoke wafted my way from the two men standing near me. They’d come from the methadone clinic across from my building. The gales of smoke tested my 85-year-old heart, and I was nervous. That heart had been challenged for almost two decades, after all, starting with a blood clot in Chicago that hospitalized me. Thanks to a pacemaker and a few ablations—and a move to Seattle—I have been relatively stable. In fact, I have been well.

I’d never intended it, but a call from a dear friend Jeanette was part of that wellness. “Helen, this is what you’ve been waiting for!” She read me an advertisement from America: “Jesuit Volunteer Elder Corps needed in the Northwest—for those over 55.” My head and heart raced. I could go to Alaska, Yakima, Portland or Seattle. “Deepen your spirituality, live in community, work on behalf of social justice and live a simple lifestyle. Get spiritual direction, an $80/month stipend, and free room and board.” I could go!

My perplexed doctor frowned on the idea of Alaska or Yakima. “Too far from major medical centers,” he said. I tossed a coin: Portland? Seattle? Seattle won. I sold my car, closed my fundraising consulting business, put my furniture in storage, cancelled the lease on my high rise overlooking Lake Michigan, donated my wardrobe to women’s shelters, said good-bye to my boyfriend, Don, and my family, and left. No big deal. I was 68.

So 17 years later, living on First Hill—a populous Seattle neighborhood—I am in heaven. It’s close to Seattle University and St. James Cathedral, where I find rich liturgies, social outreach and community. Some of my neighbors are here because of the tech boom. Some are here because they’re marginalized -- a stark contrast to the affluent population in my building. When I walk out the door held by a concierge, I feel like the rich one encountering a cluster of Lazarus types. They speak in voices. They sleep on benches in front of the building.

They struggle with addiction. It’s why they come to the clinic across the street.

I’ve visited that clinic, wanting to help. The Executive Director there tells me “lives are restored and hope is renewed as our patients begin to lead the lives they were meant to live.” Standing at the #2 stop, I remind myself of this. These are vulnerable people. And they’re courageous and disciplined—traveling several hours a day for treatment. But again, I forget, as I listen to their words so foreign to my vocabulary: bail, court appearances, defaults. But the worst ones were the “f”, “b” and “s” words.

“Oh, “f”, paying alimony! Haven’t been with her for 10 years.”

“Damn, that’s the truth! My ex is full of “s”. Got to go to court because of her. Ain’t got no job, so where the “h” am I going to find the “f” money?”

I was withering inside. My heart rate was speeding up. It wasn’t just because of the sun. Admonitions from my daughter and my friend Catherine popped into my memory bank. “You need to be careful who you talk to and what you say.”

I turned a deaf ear to their warnings and listened to another voice. That voice said that if I do nothing I will be seething with anger and judgment on the #2. Is that how I want to go into this sunny Saturday morning?

“Excuse me. I’m standing right here. I’m 85 and have a weak heart. It’s really difficult to listen to those words. Could you choose some others? I’m sure you know lots of them.”


“Who the “f” do you think you are? How is this your business, Lady?” They started to move away from me.

“Anybody talkin’ to you?,” they muttered, as they walked several yards away—I suspect to avoid further scoldings.

Silence. Their subject changed. My heart rate slowed.

“Let me show you my girls,” said one of them to his buddy. The friend took his iPhone and scrolled down to gaze at the photos. “Aw, man. Aw! They’re big girls now.”

They seemed joyful. My interest piqued. I wanted to lean in. But how could I?

We could see the bus approaching, now. I had two choices: 1) ignore these fellows; or 2) extend an olive...
branch. I didn’t know the splintered landscape of their past. They hadn’t hurt me; they had a right to be angry.

“May I see your daughters’ pictures?” I blurted. I brace for another onslaught of profanity.

Shock from both of them. Who is this pastel lady?

The one with the iPhone summed me up, as I leaned on my cane, standing under the elm tree, waiting to board the bus. I looked at him and saw a man haunted by his yesterdays. His face softened. In an act of profound generosity, he handed me his phone.

There they were: two lovely young women, smiling triumphantly, the older with her arm around her younger sister. She appeared quite glamorous. The younger seemed more serious and wore spectacles.

“Lovely! How old are they?”

“Twelve and 17.”

“You must be proud. Good students?”

“H---”, yeah!” he chuckled. Then, “Yo, sorry for the words, you know what I mean?”

“I was the one who was out of line, actually.” I apologize.” Any chance you could tell me more about those girls?”

He stepped aside; ladies first. We climbed the bus steps to a new beginning. He sat down next to me, while his friend moved to the back of the bus.

I brandished my phone: “Would you like to see one of my granddaughters? She’s six months old. Her father, my eldest son, is 55. Imagine becoming a father at 55!”

“Damn! (Sorry). I can’t!,” he laughed.

I went on. I told him my son had four months paternity leave because he lived in Canada. He spent it in Japan, immersing his young family in his wife’s culture. My companion thought the baby, Yutaka, was beautiful. (True!)

“My mom would be so mad at me if she could hear the way I spoke to you!”

“Is she in Seattle?”

He coughed. He looked at his shoes. A whisper.

“Nah, died when I was 12. Cancer—know what I mean? She was 38. No one talked about it.”

I took an audible breath. “I’m so sorry. Mine died when I was 16. Nobody talked about that either. At 85 years old, I’m still grieving her.”

It’s true; I’d been grief-stricken. But my life had been one of opportunities—for an education (college was expected in my family), for the presence of nuns who were my surrogate moms at school, and for a secure home without wondering where the next meal would come from or if I’d be safe. Where would I be otherwise? At the methadone clinic with my fellow passengers?

Did my bus companion get comfort from his father and siblings? Did he have teachers like mine? What derailed his life? His grief, like mine, didn’t just vanish. Today, on the #2, he trusted a stranger with his pain. That made him my teacher, when it comes to having a map toward unity in this increasingly polarized world.

As he pulled the cord for the next stop, I felt a tug of disappointment to see him go so soon; I wanted to learn more about this man - his hopes for his daughters, the kind of work he had done, what his aspirations were. One thing I did know is that this man’s fundamental kindness stood in stark contrast to my patronizing ways. I extended my hand.

“I’m Helen.”

“I’m Larone.” His voice was gentle. It’s as if our conversation had released the harsh consequences of repressed grief and given him new life.

“Larone, it’s been a pleasure talking to you. I wish you the very best.”

Another sheepish apology as he slid out of his seat and proceeded down the aisle. He lifted my spirits when he waved, as the bus pulled away from the Seneca stop.

Peering through the windowpane of my soul, I wondered if I lifted his life, too. Perhaps it had taken an unforeseen turn.

I whispered a prayer of thanksgiving for missing the earlier bus. ◆
Nicaragua is a land of contrasts. Although the largest country in Central America, it has the smallest and second poorest population in the Western Hemisphere. The natural resources and people are its treasure. Freshwater sharks swim in Lake Nicaragua. Large archipelagos are found in its lakes and along the Caribbean coastline. It is also here in the land of mountain jaguars, that poets become politicians, priests become revolutionaries and its people who have witnessed political tyranny, bloodshed and natural disasters remain optimistic in terms of the future. It is in this Nicaragua that orphaned and abandoned children come to a special place, a “forever home” where they are greeted by hundreds of new brothers and sisters.

It is to this “forever home” in Jinotepe, Nicaragua that twenty-eight members and volunteers of the St James Youth Ministry journey. Planned months ahead with Youth Ministers Curtis Leighton and Joe Cotton, this group of Missioners have come to meet new friends that for many, will become family. Upon our return, many volunteers will become sponsors/godparents to these children. One St James family will be returning for the wedding of their adult goddaughter whom they sponsored!

To step back in time for a moment, this special place and eight other Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos homes (which translates “Our Little Brothers and Sisters”) were founded by Father William Wasson. In 1954, as a young American priest in Morelos, Mexico, Father Wasson was notified by the authorities of a young boy stealing from the poor box at the local Catholic Church. Upon seeing the “thief” behind bars, Father Wasson asked for custody of the child. A judge complied and soon began sending dozens of children to Father Wasson. In one year’s time, 38 boys became members of the newly founded home, the first NPH. Since that first boy in Mexico, 18,300 children have become part of the NPH family throughout Central and South America as well as Haiti.

One such child is Marlon. Found living on the streets of Honduras, a local woman took him in to do chores in exchange for meals and a place to sleep in her yard. Seeing the young boy’s potential, she contacted NPH. Marlon and his brother were sent to NPH-Honduras.

Although street-wise and headstrong, both Father Wasson and NPH Director Reinhart Koehler would not give up on him. Marlon confesses, “I was tough. I didn’t want to go to school. Reinhart and I used to yell at each other.” But one day, Reinhart, tired of the bickering, stated, “No matter what you’ve done or what you’re going to do, I will always love you. You could burn down this classroom and I will still love you.”

Those words began a healing process. Marlon began to love himself and his NPH family. He began to enjoy his studies, traveled with Father Wasson to Arizona and graduated from college.

Today, Marlon is the Executive Director of NPH-Nicaragua. Marlon believes in family. He states, “When I bring in a new child to NPH, I introduce him to his brothers and sisters. He is part of the family. I tell the children, if you see your brother or sister crying, you sit down and cry with them. That’s what families do.”

Back to present-day Managua: our group is picked up by a repurposed yellow school bus at the airport. Although exhausted, Missioners press up against the glass windows of the bus to look out at the countryside. City streets become country roads where horses and cattle are as common as cars. The sun clouds over and a torrential downpour cools things off as we rush to close stubborn windows before getting drenched. This is July in Nicaragua. It is also the rainy season. After 40 miles of driving, our bus stops at a gate with an armed guard. A blue sign showing a priest walking with three children (the NPH logo) is evidence that we have arrived. Receiving clearance, our bus enters.

In this farmland setting, the bus meanders along the fields of corn and rice, past a chapel, clinic, pastures, a tilapia pond, and 16 residential buildings with covered porches and cement walkways. Dave, one of the adult volunteers in our group proudly points out a livestock fence: it was built two years earlier by the St James Youth Ministry on their first trip to Nicaragua.

Along the way, our bus is greeted by smiling children who are waving and cheering. What a welcoming! It has been a long first day but we are reinvigorated by the greeting. Our group of twenty-eight will all stay together in the guest house. The girls split up into two rooms while the boys all stay in one
room with 4 sets of bunkbeds. Without much time to recover, we ready ourselves for dinner with the pequeños. We stumble through conversation (not knowing much Spanish). We eat Gallo Pinto (rice and beans) ladled from a large cooler that is brought to each house in a red wagon.

In the next few days, part of our group will be helping to sort the rice along with other chores. But for now, we all head back to the guest house in the dark, past feral cats, skinny dogs and a gray burro who was part of the purchase of the land for NPH. He knows this is his place too and he isn’t planning on leaving anytime soon.

Part of the St James Youth Group training for the trip was to prepare for change and try to stay flexible. Meal times may change, events may change, even work projects may change. Buses might not show up and even museums may close without much warning. This is “Nica Time.” We find out that many pequeños have left for mid-year break. While disappointed, this is the first lesson for many of us. We’re learning it’s all part of being “in the moment” as Joe Cotton can often be heard saying. It doesn’t have to be a setback.

Although NPH is a permanent home, many of these children have extended families that they can visit temporarily. Most of the pequeños have become wards of the state due to unsafe living environments: poverty, neglect and/or abuse. The economic hardships of Nicaraguan life (50% unemployment) have made families difficult to maintain. Many NPH children are found living on the streets. NPH is home to 250 full time residents as well as another 190 students who come during the week for school and return home nightly or on the weekend.

The children who remain during break become fast friends to the Missioners. We have great one-on-one time with this smaller group who sadly, have no one to visit during the break. Often, the adults are called “Mama” and “Papa” while the teens are greeted with hugs, high fives and smiles. The NPH break also means no school (!) for the pequeños. Mornings begin with chores for everyone. We dig post holes, prepare fields for planting and sort rice. Afternoons are filled with soccer games, jumping rope and listening to very loud music while painting, making bracelets and just “hanging out.” We also go to see a soccer game in Managua and visit the Colonial City of Granada. In addition, we celebrate Mass in town at the local church.

Back at the guest house, the Missioners spend time together. Reading from an NPH prayer book and journal, we pray for the pequeños and our sponsors. In one lesson, we are asked to go to the margins of society away from our place of comfort. Maria prays that the ideas and lessons we learn from the children will stay with us. We repeatedly witness pequeños share everything they have with us and each other. They are so invested in our happiness. We pledge not to let our prayers and convictions die here.

At the end of our nine-day stay, we load up the bus and head towards the guard gate. We said our goodbyes the night before. However, the children come out from their homes waving to us. One boy is lifted to the window of the bus while we all yell his nickname, “Nacho, Nacho.” The little boy smiles. He proudly holds up a red car.

The bus gets quiet. We check out at the gate and the bus lumbers down the country road.

Our Cathedral youth group and their mentors with friends in Nicaragua. Photo courtesy David Buchholz.
“Quien va a Santiago y no al Salvador visita al criado pero no al Señor”

The one who goes to Santiago and not to the Savior visits the servant but not the Lord.

The refrain of the old Camino pilgrim song provides a convenient introduction for this brief reflection on walking “the Original” (El Primitivo) route along the Way of St. James. This past summer 2017, parishioners Steve Curry and Mike Quinn, joined by Marty Curry and friend Scott Chapman, had an opportunity to try out an alternate Camino to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. More than a few St. James parishioners have walked “the Way”; but most all seem to have done the more popular French Way (El Frances) from Saint Jean Pied-de-Port (or another town along this route) to Santiago de Compostela. One has a sense that El Frances has become a victim of its own success, as facilities are now often jam packed along that route during the popular summer months. As well, the legions of pilgrims diminish the chance for solitude and prayerful reflection. The terrain along El Primitivo was advertised as a bit more rugged and isolated and, being lovers of hiking the backcountry, we decided to opt for a Way less travelled.

El Primitivo is so-named because it is believed to be “the original” or first route hewed to Santiago beginning in the 9th century shortly after the discovery of the remains of the Apostle James the Greater in a field near what is today the provincial capital of Galicia, the city of Santiago de Compostela. The route begins in the provincial capital of Asturias, the City of Oviedo, scarcely 20 miles from the north Spanish Coast, which became the capital of Christian Spain and the seat of Spanish Kings during the Moorish occupation. The walk to Santiago begins at the Cathedral of the Holy Savior (San Salvador) referred to in the pilgrim’s ballad. In construction and reconstruction over many centuries, the first piece of this edifice (today the Camara Santa) was raised by King Alfonso II (“the Chaste”) who became the first of many illustrious pilgrims to journey to Santiago.

The San Salvador Cathedral in Oviedo contains many remarkable relics found nowhere else. There one may find the Cruz de la Victoria believed to have been carried by Pelayo at the 8th century Battle of Covadonga that halted the advance of the Moors; the Cruz de Los Angeles, a gem-laden cross said to have been wrought by angels; and in the Camara Santa, a silver chest that reputedly holds a vial of the Virgin Mary’s milk, a piece of the True Cross, and a burial cloth said to have been wrapped about the head of Christ (similar to the shroud of Turin). The main sanctuary has an extraordinary gilded altarpiece depicting the life of Christ.

El Primitivo rises west southwest from Oviedo through the Cantabrian Cordillera, an ancient mountain chain which is dotted with small medieval villages and farmlands and is anchored about half way along by the Roman walled city of Lugo. It joins El Frances at the town of Melide, where it follows that route into Santiago some 30 miles farther along. Altogether it is just over 190 miles from Oviedo to Santiago.

Mike Quinn and Steve Curry are both longtime parishioners at St. James Cathedral.
Santiago along El Primitivo. Elevation change along the route is approximately 3,000 feet, from 800 feet in Oviedo to some 3,800 feet at the trail’s high point at Puerto de Palo, where one may be lucky enough to see wild horses nearby (and most assuredly cows, which are plentiful throughout the Asturian and Galician countryside). We were able to walk El Primitivo in two weeks averaging about 13.5 miles a day, not counting one “zero day” in Lugo.

For all peregrinos in our group, it was our first attempt at pilgrimage. We had begun training in Seattle, mostly just walking, up to 30 miles a week. On Camino, all sported the icon of the pilgrim, a badge containing a yellow sea shell against a blue background that we had acquired from St. James Cathedral’s Camino Seattle collection. Each day began with a brief collective prayer, typically conducted just outside our lodging of the previous evening. Individually, prayers were offered along the Way, with the rosary and St. Bridget’s Prayer commemorative of the Lord’s Passion being favorites. Sometimes there was song. Steve and Mike offered a spirited if not always on key version of “This is the feast, the joyful day” to the melody of St. Columba upon reaching the Monte del Gozo (Hill of Joy), where medieval pilgrims first laid eyes upon the distant spires of the Cathedral in Santiago.

There were so many roadside shrines and chapels along the Way that it was hard not to think at least some otherworldly thoughts. It was sad to see many of these places were locked and quiet . . . testament perhaps to the secular spirit that has swept through much of Spain and the Western world. There were fortunate exceptions to this. At Santa Maria in A Fonsagrada, we attended a vigil mass that was standing room only. Unusually, audio-visual aids were employed; screens standing on both sides of sanctuary projected liturgical responses, homiletic notes, and the words of songs, all inviting engagement. After mass, all peregrinos present were invited to come to the altar for a special blessing.

There was at least one spiritual surprise along the Way. One of our group had expected to find that the Spanish preference for gold altarpieces and ornate statuary would be off-putting. To the contrary, the life-like depictions of Christ Crucified and our Lady of Sorrows (yes, with a sword protruding from her side) were experienced at first as shocking, then as stunning. They draw you out of yourself and into the experience of the Passion, exactly as they are supposed to do, as objects inviting contemplation, compassion, wonder and thanksgiving.

So, has walking the Way changed us in any palpable way? Perhaps the best answer is to offer a prayer that the Holy Spirit will continue to work in each one of us... that the Spirit will continue to lead and guide us, transforming the pilgrimage into the True Way to Him through due worship and service to others, especially the most vulnerable among us. Perhaps we will find that the end is really an invitation to a new beginning for us, our families and friends. Buen Camino! ✨
Prayer Partners Ministry
Unconditional love, acceptance— and prayer

Unconditional Love — Acceptance — and Prayer. This is the very heart of St. James Cathedral’s Prayer Partners Ministry.

The Prayer Partners Ministry began as part of the St. James Cathedral Mental Health Ministry, which was founded in 2012. The volunteers involved wanted to find a way to provide prayer support for those who were struggling with mental health issues or other difficult life situations such as illness, surgery, or the death of a loved one.

A group of very dedicated parishioners and friends came together and committed themselves to be part of a prayer team. They later became known as the “St. James Cathedral Prayer Partners”. With the help of the Cathedral’s IT Manager, we were able to set up an on-line Prayer Request system on the Cathedral’s web site on the Mental Health Ministry page. Each prayer request submitted received an immediate e-mail response, indicating that their message had been received, and would be held in prayer for nine days.

Over the months and years that followed, the prayer requests that came in were profoundly moving. Since it was a confidential site, it provided the opportunity for the individual requesting prayers to share their innermost struggles, fears, and hopes for healing. We received prayers from across the United States. When deemed appropriate, the Cathedral Mental Health Nurse would respond personally to the prayer requests and share opportunities that might be helpful through the Cathedral’s Mental Health Ministry (Sunday Hours at the Gallagher Center, NAMI classes, and other resources, depending on the circumstances). Above all, we wanted those requesting prayers to know that they were not alone... that there were people standing alongside them in their illness and need with compassion and love.

The most rewarding thing about the Prayer Partners Ministry is the gift of offering unconditional love, acceptance, and prayers for those in need... an immense privilege. We witnessed the power of our prayers in many ways.

If you are interested in learning more about the St. James Prayer Partners, or would like to become part of this ministry, please contact Nancy Granger, RN, Parish Mental Health Nurse, ngranger@stjames-cathedral.org.

Patty Heffernan is a longtime parishioner at St. James Cathedral.
Putting Church at the Center

Giving God a return on all the blessings we have received

As a child, I grew up directly next door to St. Basil the Great Church and School in Vallejo, California. This was the same church my mother served as housekeeper and cook for the priests. This was the same church where I served 7:00 a.m. daily Mass. This was the same church I helped my father clean on Monday nights; he too was employed by the church as caretaker and custodian. This was his second job, which helped pay tuition for me to attend the very same Catholic elementary school where I met my husband, Michael. I suspect that this entwined, enveloping experience I had as a child shaped the view of church that I hold to this day. That is, that the church is the center of my life. Just as my father would never say, “No,” to the church alarm ringing next door at 3:00 in the morning, I would never say “no,” when given the opportunity to speak about stewardship.

St. James Cathedral is a long ways away from St. Basil the Great, but it’s just as much a part of our lives, and it’s an equally remarkable place. We found ourselves here two and a half years ago. We were looking for a faith community, searching for warmth, and desperately seeking a message of God’s love and inclusion. Ironically, our needs were fulfilled by the very unrelenting needs of this place and the inviting people who work so hard to fill them. We met friends through our work with the Winter Shelter, we were blessed by exchanges with Cathedral kitchen dinner guests, and we found a sense of meaning through the Sandwich Ministry. The blessings we have received have far outweighed our contributions. We have found a home, where we have been accepted for the people we are today, yet challenged to be better tomorrow.

The history of my marriage with Michael is a little more typical. From the beginning of our marriage, we had goals for our family. At first, it was buying a house. Then it was having children and providing for their Catholic school and college educations. Admittedly, it was hard to find room for charitable giving back then, but we tried to squeeze it in in small amounts, thinking that we could make it a priority one day, maybe when we earned more money, or when our children were older. Over time, we came to realize that the demands, needs and desires of our earthly lives never recede, and that true stewardship means giving of whatever we have, wherever we are on our life’s journey. We came to better appreciate that true stewardship is planned, committed and sacrificial.

Michael and I, throughout our marriage, have been greatly blessed. We have been blessed with four beautiful children—Sam, Isaac, Grace, and Imani. We have been blessed with times of fortune and misfortune. Throughout all of these, all that we have—however much or little—is a gift from God. Habitually giving God a return on these gifts, no longer feels like a burden – it has come to feel more like a blessing.

When things are going well, this practice runs smoothly and can make you feel fulfilled. When things are a little dicey and you don’t have a job, or you decide—as we did!—to adopt two children instead of one, or those Catholic school tuition payments are taking their toll, things get interesting. The reward is that those are the times you feel the most faithful. Times like these remind me of a story from Africa:

A missionary had taught his people to tithe. He had explained that “tithe” meant “one-tenth,” and that this should be their goal. He also had emphasized the difference between giving what is left over, and giving off the top.

Early one morning a man came to the door with a fine fish, explaining that this was his “tithe.”

“You must have done well,” said the missionary, “if you already caught ten fish.”

“No,” said the man. “This is the one I’ve caught so far. I’m going back now to catch the other nine.”

In our experience, God truly does provide the other nine, or at least help along the way with the faith that things will fall into place. At times sacrifice is called for, but that only serves to remind us to put our stewardship lenses on and remember that we are not put here merely for our own enjoyment and comfort. We are put here to be Christ’s hands by serving the people he loves so much.

We love this church, this awesome parish where we are so blessed to pray and serve. We thank everyone at St. James for serving us along the way.

Michelle Maher and her family are parishioners at St. James Cathedral. This is the witness talk she gave at all Masses for Sacrificial Giving Sunday, November 12, 2017.
18

Alpha
A meal, a talk, and a place to ask questions about the Christian faith

“I...more to life than this?”
“How does God guide us?”
“Does God heal today?”
“How can I make the most of the rest of my life?”

These are some of the intriguing life questions that were explored this fall during our first Alpha series at St. James. About 20 people completed the program during this inaugural run, enriching their own faith and preparing to invite others to do this same.

Alpha was started at London’s Holy Trinity Brompton in 1977 as a course for new Christians. Each session of the series involves sharing a meal, watching a video presentation, and discussing the video in a small group. Facilitators, or “hosts,” give guests the opportunity to respond to what they have heard and to ask questions in a safe, non-threatening environment. Alpha provides a place for seekers to honestly express what they think, participating in discussions that are relaxed, casual, and entertaining. While the videos primarily address an audience that may have no faith background at all, the topics explored and the stories shared offer food for thought for even the best-educated Catholics.

Over the past 30 years, Alpha has spread to 169 countries and is offered in 112 languages. While it began in an Anglican church and was soon offered by other Protestant denominations, Alpha programs are now growing in popularity in Catholic circles. St. Michael in Olympia has been running Alpha once or twice a year since 2007. Their Alpha administrator, Mario Villanueva, reports that upon completing Alpha, about half of the participants are inspired to become more involved in the life of the parish, either by attending mass more regularly, participating in small groups or new ministries, or seeking to join the Church through the RCIA process.

Other parishes, like Mary, Queen of Peace in Sammamish and St. John Vianney in Vashon, started Alpha about two years ago and are also seeing positive effects on their communities. Johnny Hom, Alpha administrator at Holy Family in Kirkland, says, “Alpha has given our parishioners a safe place to wrestle with the questions of faith. We have had many people who have had life changing transformations. We have had marriages strengthened, we have had Catholics reconciled with the Church, we have had physical and emotional healing for many. Those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit now have fuel for their faith journey.”

Our series in the fall was just the beginning of Alpha at St. James, a chance for us to plant the seeds of what will hopefully blossom into a vibrant program. While none of us who went through the fall session—including me—had ever experienced Alpha before, we all emerged from it with our faith transformed in one way or another. Some said they have started praying more; others came to a new understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives; still others were nourished by the small group discussions and challenging questions. All of us, I believe, formed new friendships and strengthened bonds with our faith community.

But the work is just beginning, and the richest fruit of such a program is yet to come. What makes Alpha successful over time is having those who have completed the program invite others to take the Alpha journey as well. Nicky Gumbel, the featured speaker in the video series, says, “Alpha is friends bringing friends.” The first disciples, once they had encountered Jesus, invited their friends to meet Jesus as well, and they in turn invited their friends to meet Jesus, thus beginning centuries of missionary discipleship. By our baptism, we are all called to go out and share the Good News of God’s love with others, and Alpha can be an instrument for responding to this missionary call.

Father Ryan says, “We want to help people become more effective disciples, disciples who will in turn go out and invite others in. There are so many people out there who are simply waiting for an invitation to find out more about who Jesus is. My dream is that every one of our parishioners would think about such a person in their own life, and invite them to try Alpha.”

The next session of Alpha at St. James will begin in February 2018. The Alpha Team and I invite you to come and try it for yourself—and most importantly, bring a friend.

Julianna de M. Castro is the Baptism Coordinator at St. James Cathedral. Along with a team of parishioners, she coordinated the Alpha series this fall.
We pray with our sons about waiting for Christ at Christmas and listening for His voice or feeling His presence. “What does He sound like? How will I know He’s talking to me?” they ask. It’s difficult to answer. I haven’t felt God’s presence in a long time.

I think back and remember times I did feel close to God and try and depend on those moments. The same way I look back at old photos and try and remember happy moments from my childhood or a friendship now gone sour. I sing Christmas carols hoping that they spark something; that they conjure up God’s presence, just as my boys sit in Advent expecting Christ to show up.

A couple years ago, with no memory of Christmas past, my oldest listened intently to an Advent reading my husband read aloud at dinner. When he was finished and we began eating, our son said, matter-of-factly, “When Jesus comes at Christmas, I am going to give Him a big hug!” My husband and I looked at one another confused and then realized how the language of the Church had confused our then 4-year-old. He expected Christ to come at Christmas, that we would all celebrate together.

I want that faith.

I think of the Anne Lamott quote: “Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don’t give up”. This is my faith, a stubborn one.

So, I sing Christmas carols, day and night. I recently went for a morning walk at 5 a.m. It was still dark. There are a few strings of Christmas lights hung at the end of the block. I start to hum a tune in the darkness. “O, morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth.” As I look out into the dark sky still dotted with stars, I imagine how much darker it was that night.

There were no city lights. No Christmas lights.

As I sing “O Holy Night” to myself, the line, “Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth” shoots through me. I have always loved the Peter Gabriel song “Mercy Street” and the line, “She pictures a soul with no leak at the seam.” My heart aches. I want that wholeness.

I attempt to lighten my mood by singing, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” switching my walk to a march in keeping the time. “To save us all from Satan’s power when we have gone astray.” Oh dear. My soul answers in prayer, “Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. Here’s my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.”

I am longing for Christmas Day when the archbishop flings open the main doors to the Cathedral, and we will sing:

Yea Lord we greet Thee,
born this happy morning.
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing!

A sweet release.

So, I stubbornly sing, hoping to conjure Him up through these magic words.

Christ is coming. And I’m going to give Him a big hug.
Dear Friends,

Each year at this time, we publish a report on the financial condition of the parish. As you reflect on your giving to the parish will be in the coming year, I hope that the information contained in this report will help inform your decision. The report details not only the dollars and cents, but also some of the ministries and activities made possible by your support.

Dollars and Cents

Our fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, our total parish income was $4,854,567.

This came from:

- Sunday and holy day collections (59%)
- Various gifts, grants, and bequests (24%)
- Fundraisers (5%)
- Annual Catholic Appeal rebate (4%)
- Business income (including rental of parking spaces and reception rooms, Cathedral Bookstore, etc.) (8%)

Total expenses for the year were $4,777,693. They included:

- Salaries, benefits and other personnel-related expenses such as security (57%)
- Parish assessment by the Archdiocese (5%)
- Our annual assessment to support five central area Catholic schools and parish scholarships for Rainbow Schools and high schools (8%)
- Various operating costs for the maintenance and improvement of the Cathedral, other parish buildings, and the grounds (29%)

This left us with a surplus in 2016-2017 of $76,874. Last year at this time, we projected a deficit of $192,525, so this is extremely good news—but it could be misleading. It was several unexpected and extremely generous bequests that made all the difference.

But as you will see from the budget to the right, we are anticipating another large deficit ($301,080) in the coming year. The reason for this is that our ordinary expenses (insurance premiums, utilities, archdiocesan assessments, salaries and benefits for staff) continue to increase, and so do major maintenance costs on our beautiful, 110-year-old Cathedral (e.g., the recent repair and painting of the Chapel, the major restoration currently underway on the towers, and a long-deferred upgrade to the 70-year-old Rectory elevator). All this to say that our income doesn’t always keep pace with our expenses!

Our Life as a Parish, 2016-2017

We are a vibrant and diverse parish with 2,529 registered households, comprising 5,422 individual members. Our parishioners come from across Western Washington, from more than 180 ZIP codes. Nearly 1,000 volunteers are involved in some forty parish ministries.

During the past fiscal year, more than 1,100 Sunday and regular daily liturgies were celebrated, not counting special liturgies for Holy Days, the Sacred Triduum, and ecumenical and interfaith services. Fifty-nine children and six adults were baptized; thirteen people baptized in other Christian traditions made a Profession of Faith and were received into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.

### 2017-2018 Projected Income and Expense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday &amp; Holy Day Collections</td>
<td>$2,982,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bequests (anticipated)</td>
<td>164,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other gifts, grants &amp; Appeal Rebate</td>
<td>1,192,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business income (bookstore, property rental, fundraisers, etc.)</td>
<td>387,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,725,823</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries &amp; benefits</td>
<td>$2,698,209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies (including postage &amp; printing)</td>
<td>419,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>242,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>190,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted Services (includes insurance premiums, service contracts, &amp; contract musicians)</td>
<td>371,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Expenses (including bookstore &amp; fundraising expense, hospitality, donations to others)</td>
<td>163,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities, vehicles</td>
<td>290,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocesan assessment</td>
<td>223,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Schools &amp; Scholarships</td>
<td>428,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,026,903</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projected Deficit 2017-2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>($301,080)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Twenty-seven confirmations were celebrated; thirty children received their First Communion. During the year 40 weddings and 27 funerals were celebrated.

Liturgy, Music, & Special Events

As the Cathedral Church, we are privileged to host special events which gather Catholics from across Western Washington, including Rites of Election, the Chrism Mass, Ordinations, Madre de las Américas and Simbang Gabi. The Cathedral also hosted Baccalaureate Masses for O’Dea High School, Holy Names Academy, Seattle Prep, and Seattle University.

In November, 2016, we marked the conclusion of the Year of Mercy, and in December, we marked Father Ryan’s Golden Jubilee of Ordination with special celebrations at the Sunday Masses. As a gift to Father Ryan, the parish community contributed $203,322 in his name to the Hunthausen Fund, which helps people move from shelters into permanent housing. In May, 2017, we hosted the episcopal ordination of our new auxiliary bishop, Daniel Mueggenborg, and in June, 2017, the ordination of four men to the priesthood.

Over the course of the year, there were numerous concerts, recitals and other musical events. Among the highlights of the past year were our New Year’s Eve Gala Concert. In addition, the Schola Cantorum Choir Camp in August brought fifty children to the Cathedral for a week of prayer, service, and singing.

Outreach and Pastoral Care

The Cathedral Kitchen has continued to thrive, with between 150-170 people of all ages and races sharing a hot, nutritious meal, lovingly prepared and served in the Cathedral Hall each weeknight—around 40,000 meals a year!

The Solanus Casey Center, our drop-in and referral center, found a new home in the Cathedral’s Gallagher Center and continues to be open four days a week to provide a caring, listening ear as well as to help hundreds of people secure their Washington State IDs and to access basic social and mental health services available in our local community.

The St. James Immigrant Assistance program provided thousands of hours of services to immigrants and refugees. The St. James Winter Shelter provided overnight shelter to 10 to 15 men for 120 nights. Tens of thousands of sandwiches were prepared by our parishioners and distributed through St. Martin de Porres Shelter and Operation Nightwatch.

Many homebound parishioners received communion in their homes each week, allowing them to remain connected to the liturgical life of St. James. Others received the bulletin in the mail each week, along with a recording of the Sunday Mass. And our faithful van drivers continued to transport nearby seniors to the 10:00am Mass each Sunday.

Faith Formation Opportunities

More than 150 Cathedral children participated in Sunday School classes, offered September through June. Special events and presentations for adults in 2016-2017 included our popular Catholic 101 series, bringing in notable local speakers to talk on a variety of subjects, from Flannery O’Connor to reading the bible. During Lent, a dozen small groups gathered for Pilgrim People, a scripture study course. Other offerings included a series on T. S. Eliot’s Four Quartets and Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure, as well as bible study and other offerings.

Our Youth Ministry and Young Adult programs continue to be a whirlwind of new and exciting opportunities for youth, including retreats, service activities, and social events.

All this was made possible by your generous contributions and by the generous bequests of parishioners who included the Cathedral in their estate planning. We want you to know that, under the careful oversight of the Cathedral’s Finance Council, there has been careful stewardship of the financial resources of the parish. We look forward to accomplishing even more with your support and with the help of God’s grace in the coming year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Michael G. Ryan
Pastor
July
2. At the conclusion of the Noon Mass, Father Ryan gave a special blessing to the young people and adults who were traveling to Nicaragua. See the article on p. 12 of this issue.
17-21. Our second annual Art of Faith Camp brought young people to the Cathedral to pray together, learn, and create art of their own.
23. We celebrated the Feast of St. James, our pilgrim patron, at all Masses, and enjoyed a wonderful parish picnic on Terry Avenue.

August
7-11. Choir Camp 2017 took the theme Magnificat. One camper wrote: “I love Choir Camp because I know it’s a place where I don’t have to be scared or embarrassed to stand up and do a solo or answer because I know I’ll always have friends to support me.”
19. Thanks to the efforts of Marjorie Bunday and a team of volunteers, the Choir Rummage Sale to benefit the parish pilgrimage to Rome next Lent was a tremendous success.
28. The annual Hunthausen Golf Tournament to benefit the Cathedral Kitchen was held at the beautiful Glendale Country Club in Bellevue. This year’s event was again sponsored by Pagliacci Pizza and an anonymous donor, and raised $158,000. A huge thank you to all who participated!

September
5. The Cathedral’s first Alpha course began with a delicious meal and an evening for questions and conversation. See the article on p. 18 of this issue.
10. Our Children’s Faith Formation classes resumed after their summer break. At the Noon Mass, Father Ryan blessed the bibles that young people will read and pray with throughout the coming year.
20. Bishop Mueggenborg launched our Catholic 101 series with a riveting talk on Blessed Stanley Rother, beatified on September 23 in Oklahoma City. Rother was an American priest who was martyred in 1981 in Guatemala. A chance encounter with Rother inspired Bishop Mueggenborg’s own vocation to the priesthood.
28. Mayoral Forum on Homelessness. The Housing Advocacy Committee sponsored a spirited debate between Jenny Durkan and Cary Moon, both of whom were running for the position of Seattle’s Mayor. The two candidates answered questions posed by the HAC on their solutions for homelessness and affordable housing, as well as their position on the City’s sweeps of homeless encampments. More than 200 people attended the debate, where they engaged in what one candidate called “the raucous exercise of their First Amendment rights.” People from the SHARE/ Nickelsville group attended as well as many parishioners and other interested citizens.
30. We celebrated a special Mass celebrating the Season of Creation. In the gifts procession, items symbolizing our care for the planet were brought forward along with...
the gifts of bread and wine at the offertory.

30. In the evening, nearly 200 gathered for a warm and festive Italian Dinner benefiting the Cathedral Choir and their upcoming pilgrimage to Rome. The event featured fantastic music, wonderful food, and a fun silent auction. Huge thanks to all who made the event possible.

October
29. We marked the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation with an historic ecumenical vespers service at which Archbishop Sartain and the Lutheran Bishop, Kirby Unti, both preached. More than five hundred people attended this powerful service of hope and reconciliation.

November
2. Father Ryan presided at the Solemn Mass of All Souls with Durufle's Requiem.
5. In his homily for this 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Father Ryan reflected on Pope Francis: “How refreshing to have a Pope who is not afraid to depart at times from the expected papal script, not afraid to ruffle some feathers, not afraid to expose hypocrisy wherever he finds it, not afraid to condemn things like clericalism and careerism in the Church for the cancers they are. In doing so, Pope Francis is really doing nothing more than taking his cues from Jesus’ own playbook: Jesus who never hesitated to boldly confront the religious leaders of his day.”
9. Our annual Mass for the Deceased Homeless honors the men and women who died on the streets in the past year. This year, we remembered 127 men, women, and children, and pledged ourselves to work to end the scandal of homelessness in our city.
12. At this year’s Ministries Fair, we observed in a special way the 100th anniversary of the death of Mother Cabrini (1850-1917). A special exhibit in the Cathedral Hall featured autograph letters of the saint as well as a chair she once sat in!
18. Beatification of Solanus Casey in Detroit! An historic day for the Church in the United States. See the article in this issue.
23. At the beautiful Mass of Thanksgiving Day hundreds gathered as a parish family to begin the national holiday, bringing with them gifts of non-perishable food items for the poor. In his homily, Father Ryan noted: “I give thanks for this beloved nation of ours… This great country founded on freedom and equality has been a shining beacon in our world, but we lose our soul if we forget that democracy is rooted in the God-given dignity and rights of each and every human person without exception; and that justice for some is not the same as justice for all, and that our national interests alone are not sufficient grounds for any kind of policy, domestic or foreign. America is great but not when we turn in on ourselves; not when we put partisan politics ahead of the most basic morality; not when we close our doors and our borders to ‘the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free’; not when, instead of summoning our better angels, we fan the flames of hatred and division.”
30. It was a privilege to welcome Victoria Ries, PhD, for our Catholic 101 series. She spoke on Advent and Mary as model of prayer.

December
2. Hundreds from across Western Washington gathered to give honor to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Madre de las Americas. See the photo album on p. 7 of this issue.
Christmas at your Cathedral

Sunday, December 24, 2017

8:00am & 10:00am Masses of Advent IV  
No Noon Mass; No Vespers

5:30 pm  
The Nativity of the Lord—  
Vigil Mass with Children and Youth  
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,  
Presider & Homilist  
with youth readers, musicians, and servers

9:00 pm Carol Service

10:00pm 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

Monday, December 25, 2017

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 & 12 Noon  
The Nativity of the Lord—Mass during the Day  
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,  
Presider & Homilist (10:00am)  
The Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain, Presider & Homilist (Noon)

4:00 pm  
Solemn Vespers of Christmas  
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan, Presider

5:30 pm The Nativity of the Lord—  
Evening Mass  
The Very Reverend Michael G. Ryan,  
Presider & Homilist