“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 The Holy Land Pilgrimage
This past January, 113 Cathedral pilgrims joined Father Ryan on an unforgettable journey to the Holy Land

14 Album: Holy Week and Easter
Looking back on the holiest days of the year, from Palm Sunday through Easter

16 Modern Day Missionaries
Reflections from Cathedral missionaries, including the Johnson family after three months on mission, and Russ Brine after more than twenty years

18 Mother Joseph turns 200
The life and legacy of the Pacific Northwest's mother of faith on her 200th birthday

20 A New Fire Suppression System
The Cathedral is safer than ever before thanks to a state of the art fire suppression system

21 Partners in the Gospel
Q and A about this important Archdiocesan initiative

22 Cathedral Almanac
Snapshots of life at St. James Cathedral, November 2022-April 2023

24 Annual Catholic Appeal
The Appeal is all about being Catholic, all about being part of a Church that stretches far beyond the boundaries of our own parish

On the cover: The Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Photo by C. Laughlin.

In Your Midst is published twice each year by St. James Cathedral, Seattle, Washington. 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
I must confess that I’m still on something of a ‘Holy Land High’ in the wake of our recent parish pilgrimage. This was not my first visit to the Holy Land but it was hands-down my best. We were a large group of pilgrims (113, to be exact!) and we came from many different places, but in one way or another, each of us found our faith coming alive in new and powerful ways during those blessed days in those holy places.

We Catholics like to see and touch, don’t we? It’s in our DNA. Isn’t that what happens in each of the sacraments of the Church? Prayerful words are good, but not enough: we also need flowing water, bread and wine, blessed oil, the laying on of hands. And we need statues, stained-glass windows, the visual arts, music—not to mention candles, ashes, palms and processions. A Holy Land pilgrimage is yet one more example of our need to see and to touch.

We did a lot of seeing and touching on our pilgrimage. Picture with me, will you, the first time we saw the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee shimmering in the morning sun. It’s a sight never to forgotten! You can’t possibly take in that view without thinking to yourself: ‘Jesus saw this, and he loved what he saw!’ Father Jim Martin has said “if all you do in the Holy Land is see the Sea of Galilee, that’s enough, because you will see what Jesus saw, and that will change you.” He’s right, of course. But the Sea of Galilee was just the beginning!

The great St. Jerome who spent years of his life near the place of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem, translating the Bible from its original languages into Latin, called the Holy Land “the fifth gospel.” During our days in the Holy Land, 113 of your fellow parishioners were privileged to ‘read’ some of that “fifth gospel,” and you were with us as we read. At every Mass we offered in those holy places we prayed for you and your loved ones, prayed for our wonderful community of faith at St. James.

On the day we stopped by the river Jordan, the traditional site of the baptism of Jesus, to renew the promises of our baptism, I became keenly aware that it’s really all about baptism—all about being part of the Body of Christ, all about touching Christ in Word, Sacrament, and one another. And, my friends, you don’t need to travel across the world to experience that reality. You don’t. We experience it every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, every time we reach out to the poor in the name of Christ. It’s the same Jesus!

Father Michael G. Ryan

In preparation for our Holy Land Pilgrimage, we received sage advice from those who had traveled there before: Stay open, be curious and courageous, and have no expectations. I have heard the saying that expectations are “disappointments in the making,” so was determined to have as few as possible and try to receive all that was given by the Spirit on this adventure.

Still, in the excellent presentations preparing us for the trip, I had been struck and touched by the setting of the Mount of Beatitudes. This Scripture passage is one of my favorites and to stand where Jesus delivered them (or in the general area) intrigued and excited me.
What did he see and feel as he spoke these beautiful words of blessings? I imagined his gaze falling on his listeners with love, compassion and kindness. The thought of standing there and surveying the field below, just as it had been 2,000 years ago, filled me with anticipation.

We arrived at the site of the Mount of Beatitudes on a gorgeous sunny day. The grounds were lovely and the small intimate Church had the words of the Beatitudes inscribed in stained glass above the altar. I stepped outside and walked down to the viewpoint to soak in the view of this sacred site. Much to my dismay, the field was surrounded by old metal fencing and had patches of mud and dirt. Not exactly the idyllic setting I had imagined. Yes, I was truly disappointed.

Then the tour group was summoned together and we gathered just outside the Church to hear Fr. Mike read the Scripture from Matthew. Closing my eyes, I imagined Jesus speaking these words in this spot. “Blessed are…” Next we sang together, “I am sure I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” 113 voices, raised in confidence and praise, filled the hillside. And I thought, blessed are we here, listening, remembering, and longing to live these blessings here and now. My expectations were fulfilled, just differently than I had imagined. The Sacred Story is still alive! I hope to keep my eyes and heart open to its continued unfolding.

Carolyn Hickman

“I must get lonely,” I thought to myself as I looked at the icon of Mother Mary to the left of the altar at Duc In Altum, the chapel situated alongside the Sea of Galilee in Magdala. I was a few days into a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Rome with Seattle’s St. James Cathedral, and I had been thrilled to discover that we would be spending two nights in Magdala, home to Mary Magdalene, apostle to the apostles. On my way into the chapel, I lingered in the Women’s Atrium, which features pillars honoring the women who have followed Jesus throughout the ages, and stepped into the small side chapel dedicated to Mary Magdalene. The place was pulsing with the energy of holy women, and yet, as I settled in for Mass in the main chapel, I found myself feeling chagrined. In contrast to the atrium, which functions as a sort of architectural prelude to the “real deal” beyond its doors, the sanctuary was filled with images of men—namely, the twelve apostles—save the icon of Jesus’ mother Mary that I studied now.

I stewed in my exasperation, surveying the depictions of the twelve apostles accusingly, as though they were to blame for the systematic erasure of women from Christian history, before settling my eyes back on Mary. “It must get lonely,” I thought with a sigh, “being the only woman in the room, and so often.”

Now, I won’t say Mary answered me, in the sense that her icon didn’t crack a smile and start talking out loud, but what came to me next was this:

“I’m never alone. Just look around you.”

I took in the room: over 100 pilgrims, a majority of them women, filled the chapel. I thought of the language from a Holy Land synod report which made its way into the Vatican’s Document for the Continental Stage (DCS): “In a Church where almost all decision-makers are men, there are few spaces where women can make their voices heard. Yet they are the backbone of Church communities, both because they represent the majority of the practicing members and because they are among the most active members of the Church” (#61).

We have always been the ones to show up. We were there at the foot of the cross, bearing witness to the grotesque and humiliating dying of our beloved rabbouni. We were there to anoint his body and prepare...
it for burial. We were there at his resurrection, and the first to be commissioned to proclaim the Gospel. We were there in early Christian communities, opening our homes and our wallets to missionaries like St. Paul, and later retrieving the broken bodies of martyrs and seeing to their burial in places where they could be venerated. We have not shied away from pain and suffering, but have placed our very bodies as witnesses in the midst of it. Then as now, in the midst of a global synod that has shone a light on the Church’s many wounds, we have been there. As the DCS reports, “Those who were most committed to the synod process were women, who seem to have realized not only that they had more to gain, but also more to offer by being relegated to a prophetic edge, from which they observe what happens in the life of the Church” (#61).

There is a grace in showing up. Since Magdala, I’ve had the distinct—and playful!—notion that when I attend Mass, part of what I’m doing is keeping Mary company, breaking up the routine of her token membership in the boys’ club. Though I delight in the idea that Mary welcomes and enjoys my company—I think she does!—if I’m being honest, I know that I’m not actually rescuing her from any solitary status as the lone woman in the room. Regardless of what the texts and the images depict, I know we’ve always been there. We have always been the ones to show up.

Anna Robertson
This reflection first appeared at discerningdeacons.org

Some have called a pilgrimage to the Holy Land “the Fifth Gospel.” I did not fully understand what they were trying to convey with that phrase. Does a pilgrimage teach us something new, will it enhance what we learn from the four written Gospels, or is it something more? While I still do not fully comprehend the phrase, I can say that I am starting to think that is all the above and more!

I will say that walking where Christ walked and seeing what Christ saw adds to your faith simply by being there. For me, it was at the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives that put into focus Christ’s humanity, unwavering love for us, and willingness to accept God’s plan.

In the Passion we know that Christ went to Garden to pray; specifically asking, “Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.” While I was praying in the Garden prior to Mass, it dawned on me that this was Christ’s humanity was on display. He was asking God if this was truly the way for our sins to be forgiven, and it also showed that basic instinct for self-preservation. Knowing that this cup meant torture and death, would not any human want to avoid this fate at all costs? Yet, Christ’s humanity was only on display for an instant because his love for us and willingness to accept God’s plan became his only thought. This became more powerful when I learned that from the garden you can clearly see the across the Kidron Valley to the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu which stands on Mount Zion.

The Church of St. Peter is important because in the time of Jesus—according to tradition—this is where the palace of Caiaphas the high priest stood. That is also where Judas likely met the mob that went out to arrest Jesus. From the Garden Jesus would have been able to see the mob coming towards the Garden and him. Well before the mob reached him, Jesus could have slipped away and gone into hiding or fled Israel to continue his public ministry elsewhere. We know from the Gospels that Christ was familiar with the area, but simply driving through the Mount of Olives one sees that it is really at the “outskirts” of Jerusalem. Christ, however, did not flee; he walked undeterred into God’s plan.
That is when so many of pillars of our faith became more real for me. First, our belief that Jesus was both human and divine. Jesus displayed one of the most basic human natures—self-preservation—yet quickly embraced God’s plan knowing full well it meant death on the cross. Second, Jesus displayed his unfailing love for each of us. While Jesus could have given into human instinct and escaped well before the mob arrived, he did not. Rather, he accepted God’s plan to suffer and die for us. The Garden puts so much into focus when you simply stop and think of how easy it would have been for Christ to give into human nature and escape rather than suffer for our sins.

Dan Hsieh

We are “Virtual Parishioners.” Once upon a time, in the 1990s, I sang in the Women’s Schola and was called to conversion through St James’ RCIA program. In the year 2000, I moved to Maui for my career, but I never lost my faith or my connection to St. James. In 2009 my now husband and I were married at the Cathedral. Thanks to live-streaming, we are attending Mass in spirit with you.

As a devotional practice, my husband and I get up early, make coffee, and read the Bible and commentaries. My husband pores over the maps, learns about Jewish traditions, and studies the prophetic texts. I’m more of the “touchy feely type” myself. So with that in mind, our pilgrimage could not have been a more perfect introduction to Israel! Johnny loved learning about the plethora of all the archeological findings. For me, the best part was gathering for Mass with 113 people (whom we barely knew) and discovering, as we stood up and sang the first entrance hymn in Nazareth, that EVERYONE knew these familiar hymns, antiphons, and sung responses that live deep in my soul from my Schola days. There is no place like St James!

Fun fact: we didn’t realize was that there are surfers and windsurfers shredding it on the waves of the Mediterranean sea! We live in the windsurf capital of the world (Johnny is a Surf and Sailboard shaper), and we never knew.

One highlight for me (being a dancer) was being invited to join in a circle dance of Hava Nagila, first on the peaceful morning boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, and then again on the last day in Jerusalem by the Western Wall on Bar Mitzvah Day! What a delight!

Jerusalem really got under my skin. For years I have seen televised programs about the Old City, but I was surprised by its vitality. Visuals don’t paint the whole picture. The experience comes from all the senses—the smells, sounds, tastes, and activity that goes on in these very narrow pedestrian-only streets.
First there is the Muslim call to prayer, then the Christians can’t be outdone and all the bells start to ring! The place is noisy! The smell of Nard incense and beeswax candles, drinking fresh squeezed pomegranate juice, all the many vendors from the four quarters—Christian Arabs, Armenians, Jews, and Muslims—selling to tourists. Seeing about fifty teenage girls lined up in single file on a narrow path, dressed in their Israeli military uniforms, harnessing machine guns, all this was a bit of sensory overload. And yet as soon as we left, I wanted to go back.

What stayed with me is the peace of Jesus I felt every day when we celebrated Mass and the new friends we made along the way. And now, when we read the Bible, I exclaim “We were there!”

Gretchen “GiGi” Voxland

Our pilgrimage experience was quite amazing! My wife and I had two priorities the first was to stay open to any daze spiritual experiences with God. Don’t let the details get in the way! The second was to expand our circle of relationships. We succeeded on both! We made many close friends and expanded our circle of relationships significantly. We intend to nurture and grow those relationships. Each of us also experienced a close God “aha moment” while on the Pilgrimage.

Mine was in the garden of Gethsemane. It occurred after receiving Communion during the Mass we held there. I was kneeling and sobbing uncontrollably. I felt such sorrow for what Jesus had to go through.

After a few minutes a voice said to me, “Why are you crying! I have risen!” Then it said, “take care of my people. Be my ears, eyes, hands, feet, presence here on Earth! Keep doing your ministry, and keep saying YES to me! You are my chosen and I will protect you!”

I immediately felt so comforted. My ministry has been Mental Health. I have come back with a renewed vision and commitment to serving those in our faith community. My role is not to fix but to be a PAL (person adding love) to the world. This is what it means for me to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and live in communion with the crucified Christ.

Joe and Janie Stevens

I begin my pilgrimage full of wonder and wonderings. I am really here! I am wondering what is in store for me as I visit the sites, wondering what my reactions and responses will be, wondering what changes the Spirit has in mind for me, wondering how I will fit in with the community that I have chiefly met electronically, and wondering what difference physical sites could make in my spiritual life with Jesus.

On the first day our guide described the Jesus story as an ongoing drama, a multiple act play, in which each character enters, plays their role, exits. This description stays with me and focuses me on the question I continually struggle with: What is God asking of me? What role am I to play in this time and place in the world? Confronted with daily reports that show the depth of unhealth in our human family I feel like I am walking a razor-sharp edge between cynicism leading to despair and hope for the future. I am being asked to live in the paradoxy that God’s kingdom is here and now and at the same time, not yet. Can my singular human life make a difference? I cannot change, fix, or control any of it. Heck, so much happens so fast with no breaks between disasters I cannot even keep track of what to pray for, and prayer is the one thing I know I can do. How am I to maintain the appropriate responses of joy and gratitude for the wondrous gift of life amid such daily horrors?

After the Mass at the site of the Nativity, a small statue of the baby Jesus is brought forth to be venerated. As the group lines up in the aisle to approach the baby I think that I won’t go up. I no longer relate to the concept of sweet baby Jesus. But, pushed or pulled, I know not which, I walk the aisle and find myself looking down at sweet baby Jesus. I can do naught but touch and then bend to kiss the feet of this baby. An overwhelming sense of humility—His, not mine, floods my being.

As I ponder this moment over the course of the week increasing clarity evolves. The world today looks pretty much like it did back when Jesus lived. Even Jesus didn’t fix it! So, what hubris, for me to think that changing, fixing, controlling is for me to do. How startling it is to have the base motivation for my desire to better the world revealed! I hear Jesus say, “Stay with me. Remain here with me. Watch and pray.” I must painfully bear witness to reality as it is while I wait with hope for His kingdom yet-to-come.

Mary Jennings

In Your Midst May 2023
In Nazareth, on Day 3, I climbed down one level under the Church of St. Joseph (built over older churches). I saw two stained glass windows, one depicting the death of Joseph, the other the marriage of Joseph and Mary. I had never seen images like these. I felt surprisingly comfortable and safe, as if I belonged there, and I was moved to tears.

Next, in the Church of the Old Synagogue, built over the ruins of the synagogue where it is said Jesus studied and prayed, the ‘tearing up’ became sobbing. (I discreetly distanced myself from fellow Pilgrims.) Everything felt surprisingly familiar. Another ‘remembering’ happened above the house of Peter’s mother-in-law, in Capernaum. While again sobbing, I thought, “Jesus ate, slept, and healed people here (including the man lowered through the roof).” Then, during our Sea of Galilee boat ride, I danced the Hava Nagila to exhaustion (in lieu of sobbing). Here, Jesus walked on water and cooked breakfast for the Apostles when they returned, their nets bursting with fish! (I was bursting with joy, not fish!)

I soon became accustomed to my ‘remembering’ and renamed this experience ‘euphoria.’ Each time Father Ryan asked, “How are you feeling?” I answered, “Euphoric!”—meaning ‘to have a high sense of wellbeing and an intense sense of connection to people and the rest of the world,’ and, I most certainly will add—‘feeling connected to God.’ So, I did not change; rather, I remembered I am what God created—a perfect, cherished daughter, and God delights in me! (Furthermore, I just know Jesus got a kick out of me visiting his home town!)

The night before all of us Pilgrims returned home, we gathered for a farewell dinner which turned into a cacophony of joy and connection; we danced, sang, embraced... and just gloried in each other. Unique unto ourselves, we had touched the Divine as we walked the path of Pilgrims, and we will never be the same.

My ‘remembering’ is louder than all the noise now, and I can no longer stay still. Here, I connect intimately and actively to God’s love and to God’s world revealed in signs or shrines or saints or surroundings, whether in Rome, or in Jerusalem, when I touched Jesus’ tomb, or in the eyes of the squirrel that stopped and stared at me as I walked to church last week, or in the touch of the baby who grasped my finger yesterday. And, so... I dance on. “May I live day by day evermore toward my already identity. ... I am loved, saved, adopted, set free, set apart, set forth.”

Marilyn Brink
remaining ones who they think he is. After several wrong answers Peter finally says, “you are the Messiah.” Jesus is so relieved that someone gets it and at that very place named him Peter, the rock upon which the Church would be built. Then Jesus said he had to go to Jerusalem and be caught and killed as part of the plan to show God’s love. Peter, the fearless new leader, said “no, you can’t do this.” Jesus tells Peter to “get behind me, Satan.” The main point is that Jesus was afraid but knew what he had to do. Jesus willingly accepted his passion. He knew he had to go back to Jerusalem

Fast forward to the Garden of Gethsemane after the Last Supper. The Garden is across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem and Herod’s palace. It is about a 45-minute walk from the palace to the Garden and you can see the path clearly. The layout was a surprise to me and says even more about Jesus and his love. During the time Jesus prays in the garden, he can see Judas and the Roman cohort coming from the palace. He has time to run, to go up the mountain, and get to Bethany where friends could hide him. But no, he stays and is willing to be arrested, tried, tortured, and crucified to show us how much he loves us. I learned that’s how much Jesus, my Brother, loves me, loves us.

John Hickman

There were many moments that I will remember: sunrise over the Sea of Galilee, bucket-list Mass venues, the stark contrast of Palestinian- and Israeli-controlled areas, the joy of getting to sing for/with the group at each of our stops along the way. Most of all, though, being THERE—seeing the geography, geology, and space—gave me a whole new appreciation for the stories I had heard since my youth. It was a deeply spiritual experience to see things as Jesus had. It enriched my view and understanding of Him, like visiting a far-away-friend’s home. While it was hard to be away from our two kids, being there with Amy was a joy and her being in her expectant state awarded yet more layers of spiritual insight (and a certain empathy for St. Joseph) along the way.

Dave Hoffman

After long flights and a very short night stay at our first hotel in Netanya, it was amazing to finally arrive at Magdala. The grounds of the retreat center where we stayed were breathtaking. The sunrise on the Sea of Galilee in the morning was a beautiful backdrop for our Mass with Father Ryan. From here we went on a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. The water was calm and the air was brisk. It was easy to visualize the Apostles casting their nets and Jesus watching from the shore. While the towns are more modern and larger in size, the geography remains the same, making it easy for one to be in the presence of the past.

In Magdala it gave us chills to think Jesus and Mary Magdalene walked in this region as well. In addition, the archaeological remains of a synagogue adjacent to the hotel were full of discoveries that brought together Jewish and Christian history. To imagine we were literally walking in Jesus’s footsteps was incredible.

Our time in Magdala was a gateway to other sites—one etched in our brains was the Mass at the Church of St. Peter in Capernaum. The church is built over the archeological site of the Apostle Peter’s mother-in-law’s house. The floor is plexiglass with a clear view of remaining structures. Tradition has it that it was here where the paralytic was lowered through the roof to be healed. What an incredible opportunity to be in the presence of scripture coming alive!

We also visited the Mount of Beatitudes with its beautiful church and grounds. There we encountered many groups of pilgrims from other countries. Magdala was the starting point for what would be an incredible trip packed with so much history. We can now visualize places that are mentioned in the Bible, making the readings more vivid.

Another memorable event was floating in the Dead Sea, or Sea of Salt. It was a bit precarious getting into
the water, but once you were floating it was a relaxing feeling. In fact, it was so relaxing it was hard to get back into an upright position. We were relaxed but not enough to do a camel ride, as a few other brave pilgrims did.

Each day was packed from beginning to end. At the end of the day we often had to ask ourselves, “What just happened? What did we experience? How many places did we take in today?” Our pilgrimage was a bit of a whirlwind. However, what remains with us is a sense of proximity, new found appreciation for religious art, and better insight into scripture.

The sites were much closer together than we had imagined. Capernaum was so close to Magdala, less than a day’s walk. Tradition has it that the Last Supper was within view of the Garden of Olives, across the Kidron Valley, less than a 45-minute walk. While Jesus was in the Garden of Olives praying, it was easy to imagine him watching from across the valley as soldiers were on their way with torches to arrest him. So many scripture passages take on greater meaning because we were there.

Having had a wonderful introduction to the Holy Land, we look forward to returning and spending more time visiting the sites.

Ruben de Anda & Mike Kaminski

The Benedictine monk and writer, David Steindl-Rast, in his book, Gratefulness: the Heart of Prayer, describes a pilgrimage in this way: “When a pilgrim puts her feet on the ground, she says, ‘now, now, now!’; she is living in the present and claiming the presence of the Holy One now in her midst: upon this soil, this sacred land she walks upon.”

Of all the sacred places we visited in the Holy Land, there were two that spoke most deeply to me as a woman. The first was in the town of Magdala, Mary Magdalene’s home town, where she first met Jesus and was miraculously healed by him, her life forever changed. On the shores of the Sea of Galilee sits The Magdala Center, a beautiful hospitality and retreat center. Built in 2009 over an active archeological site, it contains remnants of a 1st century synagogue (where Jesus undoubtedly preached); and an intact box-shaped stone slab, engraved with a menorah on one side and a fish on the other, and on the top, a simple flower which has come to represent Mary of Magdala, beloved disciple of Jesus. She loved him wholeheartedly as the center of her life and followed him faithfully all the way to the foot of the cross. In John’s Gospel, she was the first person Jesus appeared to after his resurrection, and the one he sent to proclaim the Good News to the apostles: “I have seen the Lord! He is alive and wants you to know that he will meet you in Galilee as he promised.” Mary Magdalen, Apostle to the Apostles, and a leader of the early church community.

Outside the simple chapel is a spacious area dedicated to Mary Magdalen with a mosaic of Jesus’ Easter appearance to her and six large round pillars, each with an inscription: Mary, Mother of Jesus, Mary of Cleophas, Mary of Salome, Mary of Magdala. On the fifth is inscribed All the other Marys; and the sixth, with no inscription at all, stands for all women of faith of all ages. I put my arms around Mary of Magdala’s pillar, treasuring a new and closer relationship with her and with Jesus.

A second unforgettable experience of grace for me was our visit to the town of Ein Karem, home of Elizabeth and Zachary, where Mary, newly pregnant with the Son of God, traveled over the hills to help her cousin. Elizabeth, past childbearing age, was in her sixth month of pregnancy, carrying in her body “the Messenger of the Messiah.” Moved by the Holy Spirit, the two women embraced each other, and Elizabeth’s baby “leapt for joy.”

The beautiful Church of the Visitation sits at the top of a high hill overlooking Galilee. In the garden, there are two contemporary bronze sculptures, with simple and strong lines, of Mary and Elizabeth gazing intently into each other’s eyes with awe and wonder.
Deeply touched by this scene, I could almost hear the angel Gabriel saying to me and to our Church today: “Nothing is impossible with God!” And Mary’s prayer of praise soared in my heart: “God who is all powerful has done great things for me. Holy is God’s Name!” I have long treasured Luke’s Gospel account of these two women, central to God’s plan of salvation, whose trust and courageous “Yes” changed the course of human history.

As I continue to ponder these two unforgettable pilgrimage encounters, I am moved to deep thanksgiving for all the women in my life, whose faith, wisdom and love have guided me on my way. Through their intercession, I pray that one day, all the gifts God has given to women will be at the service of God’s People, for the whole world.

Sister Judy Ryan

Quite a while ago, Michael, my partner, took note of the announcement in a St. James Sunday bulletin about a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. For some reason I assumed that he, a Seventh Day Adventist, would not be interested in spending two weeks with a big bunch of Catholics. In short, he was: it was a great way to celebrate his 60th birthday! (OK, we ended up celebrating his 61st!) Many wonderful and blessed memories leap to mind about that lovely journey, marred somewhat by what I thought, for me, was the cold of the century. It was that other “C-word,” and I wasn’t the only one who got it.

Who can forget the calm of the Sea of Galilee? For me, it was one of the best places to meditate, thinking of Jesus having been truly there.

Riding the Purple Bus was almost always entertaining, unless one succumbed to much needed sleep. So often the scenery was awesome, with the green countryside of Israel reminding us of home and parts looking like the Lake Chelan area.

Walking the Mount of Beatitudes gave us much to think about, as we viewed each of the Beatitudes posted along the path. To this day, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” has stayed with me. The message leaped at me when I saw it.

The sounds we heard: birds with their lovely songs. The calls to prayer. The Jordan River, where Michael sang “Deep River” along with Dave, our cantor.

So much to take in.

I gave up waiting for Michael to get back to the bus with me—“Just one more picture!” he would say. And, yes, so many images to record.

Without a doubt, the best moment for me was at Mass when, unexpectedly, Michael jumped up ahead
of me and joined the Communion line to receive a blessing from Father Ryan. My partner of 38 years had been quite resistant to this. Tears welled up. When back at my seat, I buried my head in my hands and bawled, hard. The joy I felt!

At that moment, Jesus was oh, so close to Michael and me with His overwhelming Love!

Tom Bentler

The Pilgrimage was, for me, a wonderful way to visit the settings of many stories I have shared with students while teaching religion classes. I felt as if I was visiting familiar territory. Every site we visited was amazing and spiritual, but one place that stood out to me was Magdala and Duc in Altum.

Magdala is on the Sea of Galilee. The former crossroads of historic trade routes, Magdala has hosted myriad visitors and tradespeople through the centuries. The home of Mary Magdalene, a strong courageous woman who traveled with Jesus and the disciples, Magdala was a major fishing port. The beautiful chapel there, with an altar shaped as a boat on a floor of blue glass that looked like the sea was breathtakingly beautiful.

Duc in Altum, located at Magdala, is named for Jesus’ instruction to Peter to put out into deeper water. It is located next to an archeological site with the remains of a synagogue and the Magdala Stone, which has one of the earliest images of a seven-branched menorah. We all need to move into deeper water; try new things; consider different vantage points. The combination of one of the oldest synagogues in the world sharing space with a Catholic church is a powerful reminder of how we are called to be peacemakers, to share and tend to our spaces. To work together peacefully.

Duc in Altum—be courageous, go out into the deeper water, make wise choices. If we all try to put out into deeper water and go out of our comfort zones we will learn, grow, and, hopefully, make the world a better place.

Jeanne Flohr

The sign next to the gate we were all walking through said: CAPHARNAUM THE TOWN OF JESUS. There in front of us, on the left, was the partially restored first century synagogue and on the right, was the modern Church of St. Peter’s House perched on metal pylons.

Guidebooks that I had read at home told of the church we would visit here that was suspended over the site of the house of Peter’s mother-in-law. I couldn’t understand why they would do that… cover over the existing ruins? Until we were there! Then the modern building made sense. It protects the important site and there is a large window in the floor that allows viewing from inside.

Before going into the church, you can walk up close to and see the existing walls, about three feet high, underneath the church. You can clearly see the outline of the house in the middle and then, around that house, the octagonal walls of the church built here in the 5th century.

Then we went inside the church for Mass. We
looked down through that window and saw the house of Peter directly below us. We sat down in seats which were in a semicircle around the site, facing the altar at the far end of the room. We are surrounded by walls of glass which allow us to see the archeological site of Capernaum outside, all around us.

During his homily, Father Ryan reminded us that Jesus would have also been here. Pointing down there, he said this is where he cured Peter’s mother-in-law of her fever and he told us of the many other things Jesus would have done right here. For me, that is when it all became real and I knew we were in for a week of amazing experiences!

Now, whenever I hear the gospel reading that tells the story of the paralyzed man whose friends climbed up on the roof to lower him down in front of Jesus, I will remember this place and know it happened right here!

After Mass, we were able to walk into the nearby synagogue. The back wall of it is mostly complete. Partial side walls have benches where people could have sat. This is the synagogue where Jesus taught on the Sabbath and where a man with an evil spirit in him came and confronted Jesus. Some places in the stone floor look older. Jesus could have walked where I am now walking!

Every day of our pilgrimage, Father Ryan said Mass for us in many wonderful churches, in many very extraordinary places. I especially have very heartfelt memories of the Boat Church in Magdala, by the Sea of Galilee, and the Cenacle on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. But, it was in Capernaum where it first became clear to me that this trip would be unlike any trip I had ever taken. We would be walking where Jesus walked!

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a bit of a mess, or at least that was my impression the first time I saw it thirty years ago. The church is built over the sites of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and, because of that, I expected to find a place of great solemnity and reverence. Instead, I discovered that the Church is a rather haphazard collection of many different chapels, altars and shrines, in a myriad of architectural and decorative styles, that don’t seem to add up to one cohesive whole. This is due in part to divisions within Christianity, with different areas of the Church being controlled by the Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and other groups. There are strict schedules governing when and where each group can hold services. Tension at times has run high enough that no one group is trusted with the key to the main door, which has been held for centuries by a neutral Muslim family. On that first visit, I was so overwhelmed and upset by this visible manifestation of divisions within Christianity that I had a hard time finding a way to pray in this holiest of places.

So it was with low expectations that I came to the Church on this second visit, but I tried to set these aside and approach it with an open mind and an open heart. We were fortunate to visit early in the day before things got too crowded, and we had plenty of time to visit the sites and to explore on our own. I found the same confusing layout of nooks and crannies as I’d encountered before, the same obvious signs of division and discord, but I also found places of quiet and contemplation. After time on our own, we had Mass together in the Franciscan chapel within the Church, and, to my surprise, that Mass was one of the most profound prayer experiences I’ve ever had. It’s hard to describe what was different about that particular Mass. We celebrated Mass every day on the pilgrimage, and each was wonderful in its own way. But for some reason, participating in this particular Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was different. It felt as if I were hearing the words of the Mass for the first time, that they made sense in a new way, that I could really feel the presence of Christ in a very tangible way.

As I’ve reflected on this experience, I think much the same could be said for our “small-c” church. Our church is also messy, and our divisions and disagreements can sometimes get in the way of our authentic prayer. But despite that messiness, we can be assured that Christ really is present with us, right here, right now, just as he was present to the disciples who witnessed everything that took place on that sacred ground so many years ago.

Marlene Koob

Patty Bowman
The Easter Vigil is the high point of the entire liturgical year. It is a privileged time when the Church keeps watch together in the light of the risen Christ, and witnesses a tremendous outpouring of grace in the celebration of the sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—with our Elect. Congratulations to our eight neophytes! May the grace of this holy night live in your hearts always, and may you find in the Church a community that helps you grow in knowledge and love of God and service of God’s holy people.
As I sit writing, it has been exactly three months since our plane landed in Mwanza, Tanzania and we stepped off onto the red, sandy dirt of Lake Victoria’s shores. Our family of 5 had just completed a grueling 40-hour journey from the West Coast of the US to East Africa and we were officially beginning our 3 ½ years as Maryknoll Lay Missioners. We were greeted warmly by fellow lay missioners and driven to a nearby Airbnb where we would rest, adjust to the 10-hour time zone change, and begin to acclimate to a new climate and new culture. As we drove from the airport into Mwanza I was immediately aware that we had just entered a very different world: colorfully dressed women balanced large baskets filled with fruit and vegetables atop their heads, men and women of all ages worked in the fields next to the road harvesting corn and beans, large groups of young children played in the yards next to mudbrick houses, laundry drying on the line. In an instant, the West was gone—we were in Africa!

The first week in Tanzania was a bit of blur. I don’t remember any of the kids—Josephine (12), Collin (10), and Charlotte (8)—ever complaining during that first week as we adjusted to a new continent and new culture. Almost everything was different: the food, the language, the beds, the showers, the toilets. One of the most noticeable differences for all of us was the absence of any form of fast food. Food here is bought fresh and prepared from scratch. And while it is one of the things I have most fallen in love with in Tanzania, it requires a complete shift in grocery shopping, meal preparation, and eating. Food is inexpensive here for us as Westerners with our US dollar but incredibly expensive for most of the locals here who earn less than $2/ day. Many Tanzanians (including children) eat only one simple meal a day of corn and beans. Knowing this as a fact back home was one thing; suddenly finding ourselves immersed into the middle of that reality was another. Our relationship with food changed immediately.

One of the other differences we immediately felt was the limited access to resources. Whether it is electricity (we lose power at our house every week, often for the entire day or evening), internet (we have limited access due to the cost of data), or clean water (we are blessed with running water in our house here but must boil it before drinking)—resources that we took for granted and never thought about back home suddenly became finite and more valuable. It is not uncommon for us to go on a walk and see women washing their laundry in a muddy ditch or hauling polluted water home from the lake for cooking.

Kyle and I have now been in language school for three months and slowly are beginning to understand...
more and more Kiswahili. The kids all started at an international school in town and seem to be thriving: their classmates are from Tanzania, India, Canada, Great Britain, and China. Many identify as Catholic, Muslim, and Hindu. The diversity and different worldviews they are being exposed to are new for us coming from small, rural Washington; it’s quite beautiful to see such a diverse group of children coming together and becoming friends.

As Kyle and I finish our language training, we are anxious to begin the work we came here to do: serve. We have visited several rural Catholic hospitals in the area and will be assessing specific needs they have that we might be able to meet. We will also be working with Huruma School—a school started by a former Maryknoll Lay Missioner back in 2006 for children with disabilities. Many students at the school are diagnosed with seizures, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, and deafness; educational opportunities for these children were all but non-existent prior to Huruma School. They have never had a nurse on staff and our goal is to assist the 60+ students with better access to medical care.

Tanzania, in a short 3 months, has caused our family to stretch, adjust, adapt, and grow. I can only imagine what 3 years will do to us! At times I feel God the potter at work, gently molding us; other times I feel like we have been dropped directly into the refiner’s fire. Sometimes when the discomfort starts to reach the point where I want to pack my bags and buy a plane ticket home, I am reminded “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). I also firmly believe that the prayers of those back home—family, friends, and parishioners—have helped to carry us through the challenges we have faced these first few months in country. I’m sure we will meet many more challenges before our 3.5 years in Tanzania are over—but through Christ and your prayers—we know that our family will be sustained.

Anna Johnson

I am a convert to the Catholic faith. The very first Mass I attended was at St. James Cathedral. Something attracted me from the very start (must have been God!). I soon went through the RCIA and was confirmed at St. James in January 1998. Just two years later I applied to Maryknoll. St. James Cathedral, and its concern for those at the margins, was central to the faith journey that led me to join the overseas mission of the Catholic Church.

I had worked as a CPA before I joined Maryknoll, and over the past 22 years I have worked to support the financial management of projects of the Catholic Church overseas. My first assignment was to St. Martin’s School in a slum area of the capital city of Nairobi in the East African country of Kenya. A few years later I was assigned to administer the St. John Bosco Rehabilitation Centre in the farming community of Kitale in Western Kenya. The St. John Bosco project provides educational assistance to children from pastoralist families who have been displaced by drought and hunger in Northern Kenya, which is part of the famine-prone Horn of Africa. At the Bosco project we rescue children from the streets, place them in schools and reintegrate them with their families. I am currently assigned to the Finance Department at the local Catholic Diocese of Kitale, but I am still involved in administering the Bosco project.

I have been surprised by how vibrant and dynamic the Catholic faith is in Kenya, as it is throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In the Diocese of Kitale we have 37 parishs and will add 12 more soon. Vocations here are numerous and religious communities are thriving. Some are even going to serve in the US. The Catholic Church in this Diocese runs hundreds of schools, many health facilities, and a variety of projects: children with disabilities, child protection; youth, women’s and men’s groups; water projects, Justice and Peace office, Laudato Si (tree planting/d clean energy), etc.

Catholics in Kenya seem very intentional about their faith in Jesus. Weekly mass attendance is high here (73%), and each parish has neighborhood Small Christian Communities (jumuiya in Swahili) that also meet weekly. It is a blessing to be welcomed into the Catholic faith community in Kenya. Mungu Yupo—God is with us!

Yours in Mission, Russ Brine
Mother of Faith
The life and legacy of Mother Joseph on her 200th birthday

Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, the woman who helped build the Catholic Church in Western Washington with her leadership and skills—ranging from fine embroidery to carpentry and design—would be celebrating her 200th birthday April 16.

During her 46-year ministry (1856-1902) in the Northwest, she served as the first leader of the Sisters of Providence in the West, establishing 29 hospitals, orphanages and schools, including St. Joseph Hospital, the Northwest’s first hospital, and Providence Academy, both in Vancouver.

As a key figure in the history of Western Washington, Mother Joseph is honored with a statue at the United States Capitol and was inducted into the Puget Sound Business Hall of Fame in 2002. Thanks to the efforts of some Vancouver sixth graders back in 1999, April 16 is Mother Joseph Day in Washington state.

Mother Joseph was born Esther Pariseau in 1823, on her family’s farm in the village of Saint-Elzéar, not far from Quebec, Canada. When she entered the Sisters of Providence, a newly established community in Montreal, she brought with her an array of skills and abilities and a seemingly inexhaustible capacity for work.

“I assure you, Madame, she will someday make a very good superior,” her father, Joseph Pariseau, told Mother Emilie Gamelin, founder of the Sisters of Providence.

He was right. Esther—who took the name Sister Joseph—proved an invaluable asset to the new community. She took care of the elderly, nursed the sick through epidemics of typhus and cholera and watched by the bedside of Mother Gamelin when she succumbed to cholera in 1851. She also skillfully handled the community’s finances.

So when Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet came looking for sisters to assist him in his new mission diocese of Nesqually, Sister Joseph was the obvious choice to lead the new community. She and four other sisters set out for far-off Vancouver in Washington Territory. They navigated many inconveniences and some very real dangers—their journey concluded dramatically when their ship Columbia nearly foundered at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Throughout the journey, Sister Joseph (now Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart) was a tower of strength, at least on the outside. Only Mother Caron, back in Montreal, knew her inner misgivings. In a letter home, Mother Joseph wrote: “The idea of being responsible for leading the others, for running a house, training the young sisters, my lack of experience, my disagreeable nature, my ignorance—everything seemed to overwhelm me... and yet I had to maintain my composure for the sake of the others.”

When the sisters arrived in Vancouver on Dec. 8, 1856, nothing was ready for them. Before they could go to sleep that first night, they had to transform part of the attic of Bishop Blanchet’s residence into a convent. Mother Joseph put her skills to immediate use: Wooden

Corinna Laughlin is Director of Liturgy at St. James Cathedral and unofficial diocesan historian. This article originally appeared in Northwest Catholic April/May 2023 issue. Reprinted with permission.
boxes became chairs, and spare lumber was turned into shelves for prayer books and a fold-down table where the sisters could eat.

“When Mother Joseph and her companions arrived at Fort Vancouver in 1856, they immediately rolled up their sleeves, pinned their skirts up out of the dirt and went to work,” said Providence Sister Barbara Schamber, current provincial leader of the Mother Joseph Province of the Sisters of Providence.

By Ash Wednesday of 1857, they moved into a separate residence that had been built for them. Bishop Blanchet dedicated a small chapel for the sisters and reserved the Blessed Sacrament in a tabernacle crafted by Mother Joseph. Before the sisters had been in Vancouver six months, they had started three ministries in that little building: a school, an orphanage and a hospital.

They fed and tended to those in need, including mothers struggling to feed and clothe their children, Sister Barbara said.

“Always they prayed and trusted they could reach the souls of the people by ministering to their physical needs first,” she said. “They counted the number of poor assisted rather than the number of converts made.”

Mother Joseph could work, dream, design and build, but dealing with people was more challenging. She could be irritable and impatient, especially with any signs of laziness or incompetence.

“Sister Joseph is very pious, zealous, and all afire for the good works of Providence,” Bishop Blanchet said in a letter to a brother bishop, “but she is also too hasty. … Thus she makes her sisters suffer, though I am sure her intentions are very good.”

Mother Joseph was often frustrated with herself.

“I am incapable of doing any good,” she wrote to Bishop Joseph Larocque in Canada. “Yet at the same time, I am happy to be here, and to make these sacrifices for our Lord, and to allow my life to be consumed in his holy service.”

A decade after the sisters arrived in Vancouver, Mother Joseph’s dear friend and fellow missionary, Sister Praxedes, became the community’s new superior. Although the change brought disappointment, it also brought relief. Mother Joseph was free to concentrate on what mattered most to her—establishing new ministries and serving the poor.

“More and more I feel that I shall be happy only in contacting and relieving the destitute,” Mother Joseph wrote to Bishop Larocque.

In the 1890s, when she was in her 70s, Mother Joseph began slowing down. She underwent cancer treatment, but the cancer later returned, eventually spreading into one eye. Even worse than the excruciating pain was the loss of sight in that eye, since it meant she could no longer do the work that she loved.

In the first days of 1902, it became clear that Mother Joseph was dying, and Bishop Edward O’Dea performed the last rites. The biography The Bell and the River recounts how, with the sisters gathered around her bed, Mother Joseph begged their forgiveness and expressed love for her community. Her last thoughts were of her beloved poor: “My sisters, whatever concerns the poor is always our affair.”

Mother Joseph died Jan. 16, 1902, and was laid to rest among the Sisters of Providence at St. James Acres (now Mother Joseph Cemetery) in Vancouver, amid an outpouring of praise and gratitude from the whole community. Mother Mary Antoinette, superior general of the Sisters of Providence, described her as the “perfect model of a Sister of Charity, with her soul of flame and her will of tempered steel!”

Two hundred years after her birth, Mother Joseph’s example and legacy are as powerful as ever. “Mother Joseph lived a life of compassion, faith and determination” and serves as a model for women today, said Providence Sister Susanne Hartung, mission officer for Providence Health Systems. “To emulate Mother Joseph is to follow the message of the Gospel.” ☞
Fire Suppression System
Making the Cathedral safer than ever

The devastating fire which enveloped Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in April of 2019 (almost exactly four years ago) brought to the forefront a concern that Parish leadership had worried about for years: the vulnerability of the vast attic space in the Cathedral to a fire.

In March of 1992, St. James suffered an arson fire set in the South Sacristy and the vesting areas in the basement. Luckily, the fire was quickly contained and did not spread any further than the immediate areas where it had been set. Nevertheless, smoke and water damage cost over a million dollars to clean and restore the Cathedral, especially the sacristy and the Chapel.

Students of the Cathedral’s history will know that in February of 1916, a record snowstorm hit Seattle, causing the roof in the center portion of the Cathedral to collapse, destroying the huge dome that had crowned the building since its construction barely eight years earlier. Given the tight finances at the time, the parish did not have the option to rebuild the dome, but instead rebuilt and bridged the crossing area above where the altar is now situated. The four large columns near the ambo, presider’s chair, cathedra, and ministers’ pier were installed at this time to support a future dome, should one ever be constructed. (It wasn’t.)

The new design provided for a lowered, suspended ceiling above the crossing and the east apse. The ceiling you see today is actually about nine feet lower than the original ceiling and roof, creating a vast attic space. That space is jammed with wooden supports, huge steel beams and wire for hanging the suspended ceiling. Access to this attic area is very difficult and restricted and would be a nightmare for firefighters trying to quickly put out a fire there. The acres of 100-year-old wood make the attic a tinderbox.

The fire at Notre Dame galvanized the parish into undertaking a project which had been in discussion for years: installation of an automatic sprinkler system in the attic and above the sacristy and chapel. The cost (over $600,000) was daunting, but it was felt we had no responsible option but to move ahead with a fire suppression system. Funded through our Annual Catholic Appeal rebate and the generosity of Cathedral benefactors, funds were raised to complete the project.

We engaged the Viking company which has been providing fire suppression systems in major Seattle buildings for over 100 years (including the twin towers of Museum House under construction across Columbia Street).

After considerable delays for City permitting and delivery of enhanced water service, the system will be operational early this summer. The new system is integrated into a new control panel for our monitored fire alarm and smoke detector system in the attic.

St. James Cathedral parishioners (especially the pastor!) can sleep soundly, knowing that at least one potential hazard to our beloved cathedral has been diminished.

Larry Brouse is Pastoral Assistant for Administration at St. James Cathedral.
What is PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL?
Partners in Gospel is the next stage of the strategic pastoral planning effort taking place across the Archdiocese of Seattle to re-invigorate and renew our local Catholic Church.

Why now?
Today we face many realities that are impacting parish life and making it difficult to fully live out our mission. We face an urgent—yet exciting—opportunity to transform parish life. Over the past few decades our local Catholic Church has experienced a decrease of engaged parishioners, fewer priests, dwindling finances, deteriorating campus conditions and more. Here are just a few statistics:

- Today the archdiocese has 80 diocesan pastors for 174 locations; by 2036, we estimate we will only have 66 diocesan pastors, an 18% decrease. (We also have fewer seminarians and fewer lay ministry leaders.)
- While the overall population the Archdiocese of Seattle is growing, registered households are declining, along with Mass attendance, baptisms, first communions, marriages in the Church and parish giving:
  - From 2010 to 2019, Mass attendance as a percentage of total registered parishioners declined from 40.7% to 35.5%.
  - Between 2010 and 2019, baptisms declined 30% and weddings declined nearly 19%.
  - Currently, 67% of parishes operate with a financial deficit (excluding extraordinary income, which is income apart from Sundays and Holy Days).

What will be the outcome of Partners in the Gospel?
There is no predetermined outcome for this strategic pastoral planning effort. Together we will pray to the Holy Spirit to guide our efforts so that we can support our mission to encounter Jesus, accompany others and live the joy of the Gospel.

What we do know is that Partners in the Gospel will bring most parishes together into a new family structure with two or more other parishes. The pastor, parish leaders and parishioners will determine how this new family will best join together to carry out the mission of the Church as one parish.

Will all parishes be in families?
The majority of parishes will be placed in a family. However, there will be some parishes, due to size or geographic location, that will not join a family. These parishes will still be part of the Partners of the Gospel renewal effort to determine how to best carry out the mission of the Church.

When will this happen?
Here is a timeline of the key milestones for Partners in the Gospel:

- Jan. 2023: Public launch
- Fall 2023: Invitation to provide input on families
- Early 2024: Final family structures announced
- July 2024: Families go into effect with one pastor
- 2024-2027: Parish families journey together
- 2027: Families become one canonical parish

What are the benefits of this approach?
This highly consultative approach gives parishioners the ability to provide input and take an active role in building their local Church. The process allows communities time to truly journey together and accompany one another while forming one new vibrant community. It is intended to give priests more time for pastoral care.

The new parish family will benefit from the shared gifts, talents, finances, resources and more from each of the joining parishes. This consolidation means that the new parish family may have more resources to carry out the mission, which may mean benefits like a larger active youth group and fuller Masses in one location — and a larger outreach ministry at another location. It really comes down to the creativity and engagement of the parishioners and parish leaders to determine how the family will collaborate and carry out the mission.

Find out more! Read the complete Q&A and sign up for the Partners in the Gospel email updates at https://archseattle.org/partners/
November 2022

**24.** It is a wonderful Cathedral tradition to gather for Mass on Thanksgiving morning, bringing gifts of non-perishable food items for the poor.

December 2022

**3.** The annual celebration of Madre de las Americas once again packed the Cathedral. The celebration began with a wonderful procession from Immaculate Conception Church with troupes of dancers from parishes around the Archdiocese. After Mass, all were invited to a festive celebration in Cathedral Hall, including tamales, mariachi, and more dancing. ¡Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!

**10. Simbang Gabi** (Night Mass) is a traditional Filipino Advent devotion, marking the days leading up to Christmas. Hundreds gathered in the Cathedral with beautiful parols, or lanterns, for a special blessing from Archbishop Etienne.

**16.** Our Youth Music Program and Cathedral Choir joined forces to present our annual Advent Readings and Carols. It was wonderful to see the Cathedral full once again.

**22.** We marked the Solemnity of the Dedication of St. James Cathedral. It was 115 years since the Cathedral’s dedication in 1907, and 28 since it was rededicated in 1994.

**24-25. The Nativity of the Lord.** In his homily this Christmas, Father Ryan said: “We need not journey to far off Bethlehem to find the Christ. He waits for us in our cities, our neighborhoods, our homes, our streets, our shadows. Wherever there is human need of any kind, there is the helpless Christ lying in a manger, the poor Christ with nowhere to lay his head. Christ waits to be found by those who have eyes to see God in the ordinary and the unexpected, those who, like children, can still be surprised.”

**31.** On New Year’s Eve, we celebrated the Vigil of Mary, Mother of God with a special candlelight Mass. Hundreds of candles were lit throughout the Cathedral as we prayed for peace in the New Year. On this day, we also prayed in a special way for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who died at the age of 95 in Vatican City.

January 2023

**15.** We celebrated the Santo Niño—the Holy Child Jesus with a colorful procession and the return of our fiesta after the Noon Mass, courtesy the Friends of Santo Niño (a great group of Cathedral parishioners).

**22.** Today in his homily Father Ryan made reference to Partners in the Gospel, a major restructuring that is taking place in the coming years in the Archdiocese of Seattle. (See Q&A on page 21.) “Most of our parishes will no longer be able to go on by themselves but will, instead, need to become part of families of parishes—two, three, or four parishes being served by one pastor and an assisting priest. None of this is going to happen overnight, but the planning is underway and all our parishes will be affected. Will we be affected? Well, we are the Cathedral and will always enjoy a certain special status for that reason, but we can’t exempt ourselves or isolate ourselves from the larger picture. Just how we will be affected is not at all clear at this point, but this much is clear: as the Cathedral, we will always play a leadership role in the archdiocese and we will always need to model what an alive and vibrant parish looks like. And it also needs to be said that the hope for this whole planning effort is that we will discover new ways to come closer to Jesus, walking with each other.
on the journey of faith, living the joy of the Gospel in ways that will speak to people and attract them. What could be more important than that! And I know: change of whatever sort can be scary. I don’t find it easy. None of us do. But change, if handled well, will breathe new life into our mission as church.”

22. The long-anticipated Holy Land Pilgrimage began as 113 pilgrims departed Seattle for the long journey to Israel. See the album and reflections in this issue of In Your Midst.

27. Joseph Adam presented the fourth and final program in his year-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Cesar Franck.

February 2023

22. Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the season of Lent.
27. Reflect and Renew, our Lenten series began this week, with an in-person offering on Monday evenings and a Zoom option on Wednesdays. We joined with Catholics around the Archdiocese in reflecting on the scriptures of the Lenten Sundays and our own encounter with Christ.
28. Sister Beverly Dunn offered a five-week series on the Art of Discernment, exploring the rich array of tools available to us as Catholics in navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

23, 25. We celebrated the Rite of Election in the Cathedral, with hundreds of catechumens and candidates from parishes around western Washington.

March 2023

11. We were privileged to welcome Tenebrae, the world-renowned vocal ensemble from England.
30. The Chrism Mass brought priests and people from every parish in the Archdiocese for the blessing of oils to be used in sacramental celebrations at Easter and throughout the coming year. In his homily tonight, Archbishop Etienne noted, “The Church does not exist for itself, but for evangelization. Our work is to carry Christ into the world, and to lead others to Christ. Our life is to be found in Christ and our life’s work is to

sense and serve Christ in others. Jesus is not a concept or an idea, but a living person, now risen and fully revealed as the Son of God... This is the purpose of the oils we consecrate tonight—to consecrate and bind us to Christ and his mission.”

April 2023

2. It was wonderful to see the Cathedral packed for the 10:00am Mass on Palm Sunday.
5. The solemn office of Tenebrae is a Cathedral tradition on Wednesday of Holy Week.
6. At his homily for the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, Father Ryan said, “The way of Jesus is the way of the New Commandment where self-emptying, humble service is the measure. The way of Jesus maintains—against all common sense—that it’s the peacemakers, the poor, and the persecuted who are blessed, not the powerbrokers.”
7. It was a privilege to welcome Diana Macalintal to offer reflections on the Seven Last Words at the traditional Tre Ore service on Good Friday. “On this Good Friday, how remarkable is it that the Word of God, who was in the beginning, could have ‘last words,’ as if Death could render God’s Word speechless. Jesus may have indeed spoken seven last words from the cross, but that was certainly not the last we would hear from the Word of God.”
8. At the great Easter Vigil, eight people were baptized, confirmed, and received first Holy Communion. See album on pages 14-15.
9. It was a beautiful Easter Sunday at St. James Cathedral. It was wonderful to see the Cathedral packed for the first time since the pandemic!
19. Father Ryan celebrated a special Mass marking the Centennial of O’Dea High School. “This parish had a dream of ‘offering...young men an institution of learning equal to anything in the country,’ You men are the fulfillment of that dream as you proudly carry the torch and the banner of the Fighting Irish into the next one-hundred years!” ◆
Dear Friends,

I invite you to participate in Archbishop Etienne’s 2023 Annual Catholic Appeal. This Appeal is all about being Catholic, all about being part of a Church that stretches far beyond the boundaries of our own parish. The Annual Catholic Appeal is a combined effort of 169 parishes to support a vibrant Catholic community in Western Washington. The Appeal funds Catholic social outreach ministries, programs for youth and young adults, seminarians, Catholic schools, Hispanic and multicultural ministry, as well as administrative support for parishes including liturgy guidance, human resources, and much more.

The Archbishop’s goal for this year’s Appeal is $11 million and, of this amount, our own parish of St. James Cathedral is being asked to raise $383,376 (which is $64,000 more than last year!). Everything given over and above that amount will come back to the parish for our own needs. This year we intend to use the rebate to enhance the Terry and Marion entrance to the Cathedral, which has become the Cathedral’s main entrance. We’ll begin with some notable upgrades to the interior vestibule and restrooms. Eventually, I dream of changes to the exterior entrance to make the Cathedral an even more welcoming place.

We have set our rebate goal for this year at $180,000, which brings our total goal to $563,376. It is a daunting figure, but I am confident we can meet it. Would you please consider making a gift to this year’s Annual Catholic Appeal?

Father Michael G. Ryan

https://archseattle.org/GiveACA