

Taste the

# NEW WINE



HOLY FAMILY PARISH

A CARING COMMUNITY

WINTER 2015

## WE AWAIT THE COMING OF . . . US?

By Pat Sullivan [Reprinted from *New Wine*, Winter, 2000]

It seems to me that my faith only began to relate deeply to my real daily life after Vatican II. It was then, in the late sixties, seventies, and ever since, that formerly abstract concepts started to take on flesh and life for me. Advent invites remembrance and reflection on a couple of these.

In Advent, 1979, I was visiting a tiny lady whom I'd just placed in a nursing home after finding her confused, wheelchair dependent, and victimized. When I arrived, I was told it was the day for Catholic Mass and, though Emma was not Catholic, she had asked to go. I sat by her, holding her arthritis-twisted hand.

When it was time for Communion, the priest came to Emma and, nodding happily, she let him place the host on her tongue. Then it struck me: Emma, in all her vulnerability, her total dependence on others for everything, was Jesus! "I was ill and you visited me." It made sense!

(This was very early in my work (my "ministry," as I tried to think of it), and I began meeting Jesus with new faces every day. Always they were the faces of broken people, hurting people, despised people, people our society devalued and shunned. Some were filthy and stinking. Some spent their days in agonized rituals of obsessive cleansing. Some were addicted to drugs, others to booze. Some thought they worked for the C.I.A. Some hallucinated demons rising from sidewalks. Vulnerable and needy, these were the Jesus of Christmas.

This Jesus, whom we know as the incarnation of God's love for us, is that

indeed, but I had never before grasped the depth of that sign of contradiction. God, who is a being so far beyond our comprehension that we have no language adequate to talk about this Other, loved us so much that I AM chose to enter the womb of a woman not yet wed, in a patriarchal society which considered her no more than property for a husband. Had her pregnancy become known, she could have been stoned to death, her fetus, God-incarnate, with her.

This God was again incarnate in the most vulnerable people in our society. That was the first light.

The second came when I was distributing Communion one Sunday at St. Leo's at the 11:00 a.m. Mass, the most crowded liturgy, bodies cramming the church and the adjoining social hall. The people started to come forward, long lines of them, mostly affluent people with an occasional person of color peppering the sea of white, all ages, many levels of mental and physical ability. Pretty routine for a second or two.

Then it happened again, seeing them as Jesus, but now with the words "Body of Christ" appended. "You are the Body of Christ," I heard coming from my lips to the next communicant. The long line continued and I was simultaneously aware of all the lines all over the worship space, and all resonated: "We are the Body of Christ."

This experience cohered with Emma and all the other vulnerable ones, then with the lawyers, medical personnel, judges, police officers, ambulance attendants, social workers,

and other community resource people. Everybody. We all were the Body of Christ. That some were not even Christian did not negate this truth. We were all connected in this reality that was unimaginably larger than we, all parts of this Body whether or not we knew it or accepted it.

Much later, I was able to acknowledge that even those who abused others were parts of this Body, albeit diseased parts, deformed parts. This made them as much in need of healing as those they victimized, and until they and all people-users in our world are made whole, the Body is not completely functioning.

Now the notion of Advent deepens as a time for contemplating our wait for the fullness of the Kin-dom of God among us. What we wait for may be the consciousness of Christ in us and in all the peoples on the earth. We await the completion of the Body of Christ, a healed and fully-functioning Body which will have brought the Kin-dom of justice, peace and acceptance of our mutual interdependence and love for each other to this world.

Parts of the Body may never accept Christianity. We may still be a diverse multitude. But we will have come to a place of accepting those truths that are essential to the bringing of justice to the earth. And I think we are called, each in our own tiny space, to be this Body for all those we encounter.

We are the Body of Christ continually gestating and being born into the world. Rejoice! Emmanuel comes... in Us!

## From the Deacon's Desk

by Al Aulner

May the blessings of this 2015 Advent season be upon all of our Holy Family friends.

During this season when the secular year is coming to an end and the Liturgical year is just beginning, we are called to both reflect and at the same time anticipate.

Reflecting back on this year brings about sense of loss for the Holy Family community. The parish lost four long standing members; Margret Anderson, Joan Berquist, Deacon Jim Brich, and Deacon Ralph Hueser. Each contributed to the mosaic image of community that is Holy Family parish.

We are reminded in thinking about each one of them how irreplaceable and unique each person is, and that the people in our lives are truly gifts from a giving God. This parish was truly blessed to have had them as part of the community, and we pray for and lift up to God their families as they carry the burden of sorrow.

2015 brought with it many opportunities to serve people in need. With the support of many people and organizations, Holy Family was able to respond to the call of Christ to love our neighbors.

We, of course, could not have begun to meet the many needs without our army of faithful and dedicated volunteers. Week in and week out they arrive and set about being the serving hands of Christ. The volunteers perform many tasks: make sandwiches, pack lunch items, drive our vans, sort clothes, wash dishes, sweep floors, and clean up the grounds.

Watching them, I see that they are not simply doing tasks, but rather they are engaged in ministry and there is a difference. They all joyfully do what needs to be done in a most caring and charitable way.

We were blessed with some new partners in 2015. Gordman's depart-

# In Memory of Deacon Ralph Hueser

by Al Aulner

On May 26, 2015, the Holy Family Community lost a faithful leader and good friend who was a fixture at the parish for over 25 years. Deacon Ralph Hueser along with his wife Ruth Ann faithfully served this community since the late eighties.

Deacon Ralph wore many hats while he ministered to the community. He was the Parish Administrator, maintenance man, programs manager, office manager, driver, preacher, and many other things as well. Above all that, Deacon Ralph was a good friend to many. Anyone who came to Holy Family was welcomed by Deacon Ralph. He was not in the business of judging anyone, but rather he sought to help everyone.

Given the homeless population in the neighborhood, Deacon Ralph was a perfect fit for the parish. His patience, compassion, and willingness to reach out to help others was always on display. The homeless were comfortable around Deacon Ralph, and he was happy to serve them. He even acquired a nick name from one of the homeless women in the neighborhood: "Pastor Rufus" was the name she tagged him with and it stuck. The word on the street was, "Go see 'Pastor Rufus' if you are in need."

Deacon Ralph and Ruth Ann were married for 54 years and they have five children. He was in the second class of deacons ever to be ordained in the Archdiocese of Omaha; he was ordained in December, 1974. After ordination he first served at St. Mary's Church in Bellevue, coming to Holy Family in the late eighties. Deacon Ralph was a Fourth Degree Knight in Knights of Columbus and was named the "Knight of the Year" for the Nebraska State Council for the period of 2008-2009. A few years back, he also had the distinction to be named "Person of the Year" in Bellevue by the *Bellevue Leader* newspaper.

What defined Deacon Ralph to so many was his humble nature and his willingness to serve others. Even after his diagnosis of cancer, he continued to give the community everything he had for as long as he could. Deacons are called to be servants to others in the name of Jesus and to bring the Good News of the gospel to the people they serve. Deacon Ralph provided an excellent example of what that looks like, and he answered the call of Christ to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, give drink to the thirsty. We will miss Deacon Ralph, a faithful servant of Christ.

ment stores worked with us and the Goodfellow's organization to distribute about \$20,000 worth of vouchers for socks and underwear to children as they returned to school this year.

The Knight of Columbus, Council 14077, from St. Charles Borromeo Church collaborated with us to provide turkeys and grocery items for Thanksgiving dinners and shared their proceeds from one of their fish fries with our Sack Lunch Program.

As we look forward and anticipate a new year, I am reminded of a saying I once heard; "I don't know what tomorrow holds but I know who it is that holds tomorrow." Every year brings new challenges and opportunities. We have a confident hope that this community will continue to be blessed, and we pray for the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit as we navigate a new year.

Pax Christi

# Holy Family Finance

by: Bob Gronstal

Holy Family is a Prayer Community Dedicated to Serving the Poor.

We are a small but vibrant Parish. With the generous help of many from outside the Parish, We serve the Poor. How Can You Help? We can use your Time, Talent, and Treasure. Maybe I should say: We *need* your Time, Talent and Treasure.

**Door Ministry** Our Door ministry provides clothing, a food pantry, and a very small amount of financial assistance to those in need. The Door Ministry also provides socks and underwear to many school children every year. Our Door Ministry advocates for the poor. The Door Ministry has two paid part-time positions. Money to cover financial assistance for the poor and for the door ministry staff position is essential. There are some volunteer opportunities in the Door Ministry.

**Food Redistribution** Nearly every day our vans collect incredible amounts of food from various grocery stores and some other stores. The food is then redistributed to food banks and low income housing facilities throughout the local area. Costs include gas and maintenance. Drivers are all volunteers –many of the volunteers are provided by the Bellevue St. Mary's Knights of Columbus.

**National Criminal Justice Review (NCJR)** The NCJR is an advocacy publication for issues related to prison justice and to those in prison. The publication includes articles from people in prison and from administrators and others. Costs include publication costs and salary for the part time editor.

**Lunch Program** Our church is located in an area where there are numerous homeless. For many years the Parish has provided about 7,000 sandwiches every month to those in need. The sandwiches are distributed 6 days of the week at the Parish and several other locations. Unpaid Volunteers run the program. Costs include lunch materials, meat, bread, drink.

**If you like our focus on the poor:**

Pray for Holy Family

Consider becoming a member of our Parish

Consider donating to our ministries, a general ministry donation or a donation to a specific ministry

Consider a volunteer activity

Consider supporting the Parish with a donation to the Parish:

Holy Family, 1715 Izard, Omaha, NE 68102 (402) 345-1062



## *An Appeal from Holy Family Church*

*Hello again friends and supporters of Holy Family Church. At this time of year we are called to contemplate and anticipate receiving the gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Often we respond to this wondrous gift by in turn giving to others. The opportunities to give are endless including gifts to family, friends and perhaps our favorite charity and maybe a little something in the "Red Kettles". This year I would ask you to consider making a gift to our Holy Family Church operating fund.*

*Here at Holy Family we are proud that the vast amount of funds given to the Church goes directly into the various ministries to the poor. However without properly maintained facilities and vehicles the ministries to the poor cannot continue. Our operating funds are the resources used to keep the facilities up and running. As many of you know our Church is one of the oldest in Omaha. The building is entering its 133rd year of service and all that wear and tear has taken a toll on this faithful structure. The list of "must do" items needing to be addressed is getting alarmingly long and the funds needed to cover these expenses simply do not exist at the moment.*

*A donation of \$100 from you into our operating fund would be a tremendous help in keeping Holy Family Church viable and ensuring this holy space continues to be available to the many poor who come to our door in need of basic items such as food, heat and shelter. Any gift will be greatly appreciated no matter the amount. As a very small parish with a big mission we absolutely depend upon the generosity of our friends to continue from year to year. If you are able please consider helping Holy Family Church to continue being a beacon of hope and caring for some of this city's poorest.*

*Have a Blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!  
Deacon Al Aulner*

# REPORT ON HOLY FAMILY MINISTRIES July- September, 2015

by Don Zebolsky

## Door Ministry

Pattie Fidone is our Door Minister. In July, 1407 persons were served with clothes, food, or some financial assistance. August and September saw 1796 and 1621 served. In July, food pantries benefited 216 families with 294 children and 306 adults. Numbers for August were 254, 312, and 341, and for September were 267, 311, and 368.

We are blessed and grateful for Patrick Hoarty and the donors from Mary Our Queen (MOQ). Patrick coordinates donations of food for the pantries monthly. Also MOQ shared proceeds from their annual garage sale with the Door Ministry, among other agencies. Thanks MOQ!

Vouchers to Gordman's were given to 1000 children at our Socks and Underwear Giveaway, July 23 and 24. Thanks to Goodfellows for funds. Nancy Garrner of the *Omaha World Herald* wrote on November 11, of Holy Family's annual Sock and Underwear Giveaway, noting the Goodfellow's continuing contribution to the effort. *"Holy Family distributes the vouchers in late summer, just before the start of the school year. Families line up from across the metro area, not just from those neighborhoods hardest hit by poverty, [Door Minister] Fidone said....Deacon Al Aulner, parish coordinator at Holy Family, said the undergarment vouchers are distributed in late summer so families can purchase needed items before the start of school. 'By late July, families are asking if we're going to do it again. It's something people count on,' he said. 'A lot of families who come to us have five or six kids, so it's \$100 to \$120 off their back-to-school budget. It adds up in a hurry, at \$20 apiece.' Holy Family has been distributing vouchers for underwear and socks since the 1970s, and Goodfellows has been a partner for most of that time."* (The entire article with a photo of Pattie can be accessed at: [http://www.omaha.com/goodfellows/goodfellows-charity-eases-back-to-school-costs-for-parents-in/article\\_7b050f0a-9cde-531f-afb4-7c24f70ba08c.html](http://www.omaha.com/goodfellows/goodfellows-charity-eases-back-to-school-costs-for-parents-in/article_7b050f0a-9cde-531f-afb4-7c24f70ba08c.html))

Lucille Saunders and Sheri Bauer filled 70 backpacks with supplies some of which were picked up by OPS school counselors; others were delivered to several schools in September by Henry Caruthers, a volunteer from Grace Tabernacle, our neighbor across Cuming Street. Thanks to the The Knight of Columbus, from St. Charles Borromeo Church, the pantry was able to give turkeys to 100 families in time for Thanksgiving.

Thanks to all who volunteer and who support us with their giving!

## Food Redistribution

Deacon Al Aulner, Parish Coordinator, oversees the collection and distribution of food donated from grocers. The donated food is provided to shelters and low income high rises. In July, August, and September, 23,480, 18,120 and 18,515 lbs., respectively, of produce and baked goods were moved.

## Nebraska Criminal Justice Review

Editor Mel Beckman edits this review quarterly for crime victims, inmates, and those interested in Criminal Justice. The Fall issue is available. View it and other issues at [www.holyfamilyomaha.org](http://www.holyfamilyomaha.org).

## Lunch

Lunches are made Mondays through Thursdays and Sundays after 10 a.m. mass. The Lunch Program continues to be blessed with many volunteers; Jack and Fran Berg and about 20 others are regulars. Creighton students sometimes help. James Parsons continues his route. Lunches are distributed from Holy Family and at various sites in Omaha. Thanks to all our volunteers!

	<u>LUNCHES DISTRIBUTED</u>	
	<u>At HOLY FAMILY</u>	<u>Total</u>
July	2,146	7,492
August	2,064	6,289
September	2,295	6,939

Visitors often come to help our ministries. July 3, was a hot-dog-fest. In July, August, and September, confirmation classes visited from St. Pius. On July 15, members of 1st Calvary Christian Church helped make lunches and in the Door Ministry. On July 29, clowns from Omaha's clown group jollied all! What a delight! On September 25, Creighton Prep students cleared grounds and gave out sandwiches. On Sept. 15, students came from Duchesne Academy. Before guests leave they are treated to a tour of the church and a brief talk about our ministries and history by Carl Wirth.

## OTOC Report ([www.OTOC.org](http://www.OTOC.org))

by Don Zebolsky

OPPD is proposing a phased in rate restructuring that would increase their fixed charges from \$10.25 to \$35 per month and reduce the kWh rate by 28%. The OPPD Board will vote on this proposal at a meeting on December 17. These changes will not impact all households equally. The third of all households that use relatively little electricity (200-700 kwh/mo) will spend \$50-225 more each year for electricity, while the 40 percent of households using a lot more electricity (1000-2000 kwh/mo) would spend \$50 to 345 less each year. Such changes would harm those in poverty and of low-income. They would provide a disincentive to conserve and to use solar. This would be detrimental to the environment. It is better to have one minimum fee for infrastructure, then a fixed rate per kilowatt-hour that would fall equitably on all users.

On December 10, Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) hosted an informative discussion at First United Methodist Church, about ways that other utilities are restructuring their service fees and usage rates to deal with declining revenues resulting from customers using less energy.

The Omaha City Council approved on November 17, a Vacant and Abandoned Building ordinance. The ordinance requires the property owners or banks with an interest in them to register those properties every 90 days and pay a \$500 registration fee every 90 days until the status of the property changes.

A short prayer vigil was held at Gifford Park on Monday November 23, for refugees. Three hundred people joined OTOC, the Refugee Empowerment Center, Nebraska Appleseed, and refugee leaders. Five Refugee Leaders spoke about their experiences and three clergy and faith leaders reflected on our call to welcome the stranger, even when it is challenging to do so.

OTOC on October 21 held a discussion at Urban Abbey about the need for and prospects of Medicaid Reform in Nebraska. Mark Intermill, Executive Director of A.A.R.P. Nebraska, discussed the challenges and the strategies to finally achieve Medicaid reform in Nebraska that would allow more working families to purchase health insurance to cover their families. Mark also spoke at Holy Family in August.

On October 29, at Urban Abbey, OTOC held a discussion of the Mental Health System in Nebraska. Christine Johnson of the Behavioral Health Foundation discussed the nine gaps in behavioral health care that were found to exist in Omaha in a January, 2015 "Assessment of Adult Behavioral Health Care in the Omaha region" and what is being proposed to address those gaps.

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) is a co-sponsor of the 2015 Nebraska Conservation Summit which explored issues that impact Nebraska's water on Monday, December 7, at the UNO Scott Conference Center. Dr. Peter Gleick of the Pacific Institute delivered the keynote presentation. He discussed the global water crisis, how Nebraska's water issues fit into the larger picture, and what we can do to ensure sustainable water supplies now and in the future.

Nebraska Senator Sara Howard (District 9) has been serving as Chair of the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee. The Department of Health and Human Services has had significant problems with its system of taking applications and answering client questions. Significant wait times for people who use the call centers was especially troubling to the Legislature. Senator Howard reports that because of the committee's work, call waiting times have been reduced but there is still more work to be done.



### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE:

Christmas Eve	5:30 p.m.
Christmas Day	10:00 a.m.





Holy Family's Door Minister, Pattie Fidone, is asking for gift certificates to give to folks in need seeking help during advent. She suggests \$25 gift cards from Baker's, Family Fair, or Aldi's. Bring them to the Door Ministry, 1715 IZARD St. 68102, Mondays - Thursdays, 10 AM - 1 PM, to the door facing north or mail them to that address. Her phone number is 402-341-6561. Thanks!

**TASTE THE NEW WINE**

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