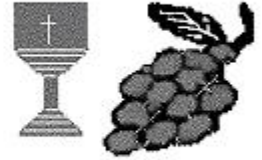


Taste the

NEW WINE



HOLY FAMILY PARISH

A CARING COMMUNITY

FALL 2013

Reflections as I Begin a New Year as President of Holy Family's Coordinating Committee

by Don Zebolsky

First of all, I want to thank all the Holy Family folks for the privilege of serving in this capacity. I want to thank Carl Wirth for his work as President this past year. Thanks Carl! You did and are doing great! And, thanks to all the members of Holy Family for all you do for our community and for the poor.

The preamble of our constitution reads: "We first wish to be supportive of one another...to form a community which is totally open to the person of Jesus Christ, as we find Him in ourselves, in one another, and in all people....We especially commit ourselves to the service of the poor." Our service to the poor, flows out of our service to one another.

I am aware that words are spoken that are sometimes hurtful to others. Short of apologies, I know of no way to heal those hurts. But if we serve each other, maybe we can mitigate the hurt by loving support. May we try to do that for each other?

Last weekend, Mary Ann and I attended a retreat given by Fr. Dick Hauser, SJ, about Thomas Merton. Some thoughts emerged. From Thomas A. Kempis: "Should you see another...doing evil...do not...consider yourself better...We are all frail...none more than yourself." From an Anthony de Mello story: "A woman came to the door of a monastery...Father you fathered this baby that I cannot care for, you must take it...OK... (later) I lied to

you before; the baby was not yours, now I can care for it, give me back my child...OK." From a Merton prayer: "Dear God, I have no idea where I am going...Nor do I really know myself...the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. I hope I have that desire in everything I do...I know that if I do this you will lead me ...though I may know nothing about it at the time. Therefore I will trust you always..."

I believe deeply that in working together we achieve so much more than any of us can individually, certainly than I can working alone. All of you gift me by letting me get to know you a little bit and to work with you. The beauty you show me is in part the presence of God within us all.

Thank you for the privilege of working with you and the support you give me and the parish.



Underwear and Sock Give-away 2013

by Don Zebolsky

At our two day Give-away event, over 1,600 children received packages of socks and underwear. This is a record.

Suzi Yokley-Busby managed the program on Tuesday, July 23 at the South Omaha YMCA. Lucille Saunders managed the program at Holy Family, Thursday, July 25. Pattie Fidone, Holy Family's Door Minister, worked long hours at both sites. Deacon Ralph Hueser, Holy Family's Parish Administrator, did yeoman duty working all day both days.

It was fun visiting with all the volunteers that Suzi, Pattie, and Ralph recruited for the program. Some come every year. It is like visiting with old friends now. There were also many young folks who volunteered, including many youths from South Omaha that Suzi recruited.

Socks and underwear continue to be given to needy children. In August, Pattie Fidone provided over 100 packages of socks and underwear to the nurses at a number of OPS school nurses to give to children in need.

Who Is Our Neighbor?

Wise Words from the Past - from Dolores Goodlett, our late and deeply missed friend.

The Gospel commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Who, then, is our neighbor?

Is my neighbor the person living next door whose children go to school with mine? Those with whom I work? Is my neighbor well-dressed, well-fed, well-educated, and well-spoken?

Or is my neighbor Leroy who comes to the door of the church? He who is sunk so far in despair that he hates himself and is offensive to nose and eyes. Is my neighbor Phyllis who sleeps in the doorway at Francis House and has enough pride left to deny to me that she is homeless, when I know she is?

Is my neighbor the woman in an affluent West Omaha neighborhood whose husband has abandoned her, and she is helpless and frightened at the prospect of feeding and housing her family with no work experience, no saleable skills, and ignorant of the procedure for obtaining state assistance?

Is my neighbor the 18 year old pregnant mother of four who has been abandoned by her family and comes to Holy Family from the shelter to ask for assistance in setting up a household? Is my neighbor the local American Indian population who feel welcome at the Door Ministry while being ostracized at local established agencies?

Jesus said love him as yourself. When he asked Peter, "Do you love me," He did not then say, Feed the deserving sheep." He said only, "Feed my sheep."

In the day-to-day interaction with and for our neighbors who come to us for help, I sometimes lose sight of why I'm doing this, why I am inwardly weeping with a person sitting across from me. Why I sit in meet-

From the library of Cathy Hayes

ings with the people who make policies that make it harder for people to eat and sleep, and suppress indignation at a system that daily reduces human beings to beggars. The Gospel reminds me of why we must care. The Door Ministry manifests an active, caring, witnessing love of neighbor.

I am deeply moved and inspired by the mission statement of Holy Family. My personal experience here has taught me that it isn't just words. When I came to the church I was suffering physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As I observed the parishioners minister to each other at a time of deep sorrow, I began to heal. As I was called on to implement the spirit of the mission statement, I was blessed by the opportunity to serve others.

As I watch conditions worsen – more people hungry, more families on welfare, laws that adversely affect the elderly, and a population where children are the highest number of the poor, I am encouraged to live out the vision expressed by the parish.

In this city and nation of wealth

and prosperity, I wonder why we are building new shelters for homeless people. Who are these women and children who are facing the same situation that Mary and Joseph faced 2000 years ago?

Who are these citizens of America that must beg food pantries every month for their daily bread? Who are the elderly who are discharged from hospitals because their "DRGs" are used up?

Who are the people who don't "qualify" for needed medication and are asked to sell all they have, however meager, before the state will help them? Whose neighbors are these?

There are those who say, "There are food stamps, energy assistance, ADC, etc., to help such people." Yet, the processes make help difficult to obtain, and the "benefits" are often inadequate.

I admit to having a serious problem with the terms *deserving* and *eligibility*, since it is my contention that being hungry makes one eligible, that requirements for service are satisfied simply by need.



Deacon's Corner

by Ralph Hueser

Well, unfortunately, my cancer is back. When we had the underwear and sock give away in south O, we were in the YMCA gym, which is huge room. I was in and out from 1:00 to 7:00 pm.

Within in a day or two, I lost my voice. I thought I had strained it with all of the noise in the gym. A week later, I went to the ENT doctor who gave me some steroids to last about twelve days. I didn't feel any better. Went to my family doctor. I told him about my voice which was pretty obvious. I also mentioned I had some type of obstruction in my chest. He suggested I get a scan. I had one scheduled for Sept. 16th but he suggested I move it up.

I called my oncologist who got me scheduled Aug. 19th and to visit him on the 20th. I called my daughter in San Antonio, who is a radiologist. She managed to get a flight up. I had received a copy of my scan, she brought her computer, with my previous scan and compared them.

My cancer was back after only five months. A tumor was resting on the nerve that went to my vocal chord. I had another pushing my trachea which made it hard to swallow. I am now in therapy again, started on the 22nd.

As I am writing this, the following day, I haven't experienced any negative side effects. So far so good. My daughter thinks that after the second or third treatment, I should have my voice back. Our parishioners will get a little rest from my homilies.

The sock and underwear program went better than last year. There is a summary in this issue so I won't go into it. All of the other programs are going well. Thanks to you who support us in so many ways. We would not be able to do GOD's will for us without you giving us that support. GOD's blessing on all who help and support us in our work for the poor.

OTOC Report

by Don Zebolsky

Omaha Together One Community (OTOC) is a multiethnic, interfaith organization. Members are institutions, mostly congregations. Like-minded organizations, such as neighborhood groups, schools, and PTAs are welcome to become members. Holy Family is a member church.

OTOC helps people to "become effective leaders, explore their legitimate interests, do solid research, engage in tough, but respectful public discourse, hold elected officials accountable, and create positive change through collective action" (www.otoc.org).

Recent successes have been to:

- Win over \$1 million in the 2014 Omaha city budget for demolition of condemned buildings;
- Help organize an informative panel about immigration reform on Sept. 3, and packing Representative Lee Terry's town hall meeting at South High School with over 240 people in favor of immigration reform;
- Preparing with 9 refugee groups to hold the 2nd Annual Refugee Cultural Night on Saturday, Oct. 5 at 5 PM at Creighton Prep.

This latter event will include dance, music, and culture-sharing by refugee groups plus an opportunity for discussion afterward. Tickets are \$10. Refreshments will be available. Reserve tickets by phoning 402-344-4401, e-mail to iplomaha@gmail.com, or get them from Mary Ann or Don Zebolsky. All proceeds will benefit the refugee groups.

Action groups include Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, Immigration, Refugee Support, and Workforce Development. The mayor and City Council members are being urged to initiate a Land Bank program.

OTOC is now engaged in planning the future by dialog with interested persons and groups. Mary Ann and Don Zebolsky would be glad to have new ideas on what is important for you for us to present to OTOC. New action groups mentioned are mental health, and growing vegetables on vacant land. For more information, to volunteer, or to donate please phone 402-344-4401, or e-mail omahatogether@otoc.org.

Regarding OTOC Leadership Meetings

and One-on-Ones

by Mary Ann Zebolsky

If you're looking for an "upper," I strongly suggest attendance at one of the monthly OTOC Leadership meetings, usually held at 1st United Methodist on 70th & Cass. On Monday night, Sept. 9, the meeting began with Rosie Volkmer presenting a few sentences from Joan Chittester's monthly internet newsletter. Leave it to Chittester to stoke the coals of justice, humility, love, and peace. This was followed by lively contributions by Kevin Graham and particularly insightful thoughts and inspirations entitled "The Cycle of Organizing and Listening for Interests" by Joe Higgs.

Every once in awhile there was a reference to "one-on-ones," and I'd like to share my limited experience with these. Before I arranged my first one-on-one (others have had as many as 40 such meetings), I really couldn't bring myself to see the value or make the effort, but finally I did make arrangements to visit with a member of our parish with whom I had been wanting to visit for some time.

I soon realized the value of one-on-ones. For ½ hour, two people share their "stories" via questions, listening, and comparing notes. I soon arranged a second meeting and then a third. All have been insightful, not just regarding what I discovered about the other person, but about myself as well. What does all this have to do with OTOC? Well, I see it as "foundational." Let me illustrate. In yoga, there is what is called Tadasana or mountain pose. It is the basis for all standing poses. That is how I see one on ones — foundational for growing and learning about issues of community concern.

Holy Family's Website is now Up and Running.

Log on to www.holyfamilyomaha.org to see information about Holy Family on-line. Right now it is rather bland with only black and white text. Don Zebolsky claims to be pretty ignorant but is trying to place updated text in place in the one hour/week he has for the task. We have no webmaster. If you want to see something on the website, or if you want to help improve the site, please contact Don at demzeb@cox.net, or 402-551-4252.

Thanks!

TASTE THE NEW WINE

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