

Taste the

# NEW WINE



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HOLY FAMILY PARISH

A CARING COMMUNITY

WINTER 2013

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## Who is Jesus for you?

by Marie McIntosh

The recent death of Nelson Mandela has caused me to reflect upon those I have known who have inspired me as models of lived-out Christianity. Who are those who displayed the certainty of faith and the peace coming from a life of prayer?

Two men come to mind. The one, planted in his faith with a spouse also so rooted—call him Tom—was condemned by a community leader. Tom continued to live out the faith he believed in, stayed true to his sense of what was right. But above and beyond this, his manner betrayed the Christ-spirit living within him. He was universally respectful; not only did he respect those who were like-minded but more notably he would say nothing negative about those who ostracized him.

Tom was always dignified and gentle—with a telling sense of humor. He and his spouse would joke about how the community would treat him if he died suddenly. This was no plaster, stick-in-the-mud saint. No matter what my state of mind when I encountered him, I always came away encouraged and hopeful. Being around him was like a small vacation.

The second man—call him Michael—I met in 1980. After I left the Department of Social Services (with whom he contracted for mowing services), I made a point of looking him up and meeting his wife. Again these two partners shared the same spirit. Michael had been a Captain in the Army, working with new recruits immediately after the Vietnam War ended. With the war ending, fewer officers were needed so

he was let go. Although Mike was a good Captain, who watched his men and noted what type of messages communicated effectively, his planned career was abruptly ended. With his training he soon landed a job in business.

And then he attended Cursillo. The man had to attend first and then his wife. Kathy asked him about it, but although it clearly made a mark on him he would say nothing, only smile. When she attended Cursillo a few weeks later she felt it too: the sense of being totally accepted, of being loved for who and what you were, unconditionally.

For a year Michael studied scripture without saying much. Then he began to re-align his life according to the Bible. He no longer drove over the speed limit. He left his materialistic-oriented job and sought another.

He and Kathy became foster parents of sisters ages 2 and 4 who had a chronic disorder that mom was not attending to. The girls, as a result, had spent about half their lives in the hospital. They learned early how to manipulate others, and their ability to trust others and follow normal rules was low.

The couple raised the girls along with their sons (ages 8 and 9) as their family. Kathy was very sensitive to the emotional arrows the girls used and kidded about wanting to punt the girls off the back deck. Michael was the calming spirit during these years. But, when the boys became teenagers, it was Michael who fought down the urge to punch them while Kathy talked him down.

Sometimes when at a low point, I would come to supper with the intention

of telling my tale of woe. But it never got told. Being around this family with Mike and Kathy's leveling sense of humor always restored my sense of perspective. Amazingly, they valued my perspective on the kids' behavior. Again I found they had a wonderfully calming affect upon me.

I should also mention Beth. Beth, some 25 years older than I, grew up Catholic at a time when women were told to offer up the slights, unequal treatment, and abuse they had to endure. Beth, like the other two persons mentioned, was grounded in daily prayer.

A sensitive person, she frequently found herself biting her lip and gnashing her teeth with resentment. Then she would apologize for feeling resentful. This included a time when she went to the doctor for a procedure that she was told would not take long. True, it didn't. However, the doctor had failed to mention that it would cause a fair amount of pain. "I really wanted to hurt him," she confessed to me.

Beth was amazingly, amazingly supportive. She would send delightful thank you cards if I did any small thing. I knew I wanted what she had; I wanted the ability to be calm, unperturbed by the slings and arrows life flings, to be at peace and right with my God.

These are some of the Christ figures in my life. Who are yours? Or are you one for other people?

I pray for God's gift to be humble in whatever state s/he has placed me. And I pray that each of us this year will develop a better sense of hearing, tuning in to whatever Jesus or the Spirit has to tell us.

## Once upon a Relationship

by Marie McIntosh

Faith is not just me. It is me embedded in a community. This does not mean it is a perfect community.

Thank God ! For what would a perfect community have to do with me and my many flaws? So reasonably, my community, my Church, is a group of flawed humans who can lean on each other and learn from each other and grow. And the hopeful result is that we all will have fewer flaws and become better listeners.

At the Call to Action Conference this November in Milwaukee, a speaker talked about what we learn in relationships. A dozen ideas came to mind as he opened the topic. "We learn," he said, "how to receive from others."

Wow! I guess I do know how to share things with others. I grew up in a Catholic family so this is no surprise. But I find it hard to accept gifts from others. And when the gifts are praise comments, boy, do I duck in my seat. It seems someone suddenly put a mirror in front of me and I see—in bright neon colors—all the ways I am imperfect. I see all the ways I have failed my community. I see the times I have failed to be a good listener, failed to lend a helping hand. I am humbled that someone can see beyond all the ways I keep others at a distance, all the times I use sarcastic humor to keep from feeling touched by some event. I guess I feel . . . I feel LOVED.

This is not something I deserve. Nothing I did could earn me LOVE.

Love is Gift. Like all gifts one gives it and lets it go. Those who receive have it—possesses it—and may do what they want with it. If the person likes it, it can be mounted and displayed on the wall. The receiver can file it and ignore it or can even throw it away.

And I wonder, how many times have I refused to receive this Gift. How many times have I denied or tried to pretend I wasn't given this Gift?

O Lord, I have a lot to learn. Please stay with me.

## OTOC Summary of Medicaid Expansion

by Don Zebolsky

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) provides for financial help with health insurance for those between 100-400% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (by household, \$11,490, for one person, \$15,510 for two, and \$23,550 for a family of four). For those below 100% Medicaid was to expand to enroll them. Actually, folks up to 138% of FPL are eligible for the expanded Medicaid. The Supreme Court made that optional for states to decide.

Governor Heineman and the Legislature in 2013 decided not to expand Medicaid. Nebraska allows children to be on Medicaid up to 200% of the FPL, but their parents must be under 63% to enroll, and adults without children are not eligible for Medicaid.

According to Mark Intermill, AARP advocacy coordinator, 58,700 Nebraskans are under the FPL and are uninsured. An added 22,400 have purchased insurance directly but are under the FPL. How many of these are eligible for Medicaid but do not have it? Even if half are eligible,

40,000 or more would be helped by Medicaid expansion. For comparison, 240,600 people in Nebraska are presently on Medicaid (154,000 children), and the state of Nebraska has about 2 million people.

Unanswered questions: How many on Medicaid have mental illness? How many on Medicaid are ex-inmates? Mental Health expenses are covered in Medicaid, and in the ACA.

Sharon and John Anderson alerted us to a related issue: Transportation, provided by the state through HHS for people on public assistance (folks with disabilities, physical or mental, Medicaid, elderly). It is believed that the contractor, AMRAccess2Care, fails to keep appointments, drops off people curbside that don't know where to go, and forgets to get them, or makes them wait for two-three hours. OTOC will try to see what resources they need to improve their service.

There must be many resources yet to explore. Send me your ideas: 402-551-4252; demzeb@cox.net.



### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE:

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

# Deacon's Corner

By Ralph Hueser

CHRISTmas is here again. Having made a decision a few years ago to send our children money for CHRISTmas, since we probably wouldn't understand what they are talking about when they ask for something specific, Ruth Ann and my gift giving problem seems to be solved. But I still struggle with CHRISTmas. The Knights of Columbus emphasize "remember the reason for the season." With our culture's emphasis on "black Friday" and the five pounds of ads included in the Sunday paper, it is hard to think of the "reason."

We do have a joyful celebration at the Christmas Eve liturgy and usually have many visitors attend. On CHRISTmas day we contact our kids scattered around the country. This year will be different. A granddaughter is getting married on the 21st in San Antonio, so we will see all of the families except for one grandson. I bring this up to share with you what it means to be a married cleric. In talking with priests, this may sound like I'm gloating, but I'm not because we usually also discuss the conflicts between calls for ministry and family activities. They don't envy me then.

Our ministries are busy. We do take a few days off at this time, a welcome respite, considering that the Door Ministry operates about 200 days of the year and the lunch program operates over 300, as does the food re-distribution program. I don't think Mel Beckman, with the *Criminal Justice Review*, ever takes any time off.

We have been blessed with very dedicated employees, but especially many volunteers who help us. I am amazed at what our small parish has been asked by GOD to do with His promise that to provide the resources with which to do it. GOD has fulfilled the promise and I would like to believe we are doing our part. It is only with your support, some in time, others with talent, and many with treasure, that allows us to do our part.

At this CHRISTmas season, on behalf of the parish, I can only say THANK YOU, and tell you we pray for you often, asking GOD to bless each of you in a special way.

## A Christmas Reflection

by Don Zebolsky

As I look over music for possible use in Advent and Christmas, there is one I find I like very much in *Just Jazz Real Book* (Warner Bros., 2002). It is a beautiful soft jazz waltz, and scored for guitar and piano. It is called "A Child is Born." Music is by Thad Jones and lyrics by Alec Wilder. It goes:

*Now out of the night, new as the dawn, into the light,  
this child, innocent child, soft as a fawn, this child is  
born. One small heart, one pair of eyes, one work of  
art here in my arms. Here he lies, trusting and warm,  
blessed this morn a child is born.*

These words lead me to one written by Terri Mifek in *Living with Christ, Christmas 2013* (Bayard, 2013).

*"...Our first grandchild...The first time I cradled his tiny  
body in my arms, I was struck by his vulnerability and  
total dependence. It was the first of many choices he (Jesus)  
made for us out of pure love...if Christ is to be born in us we  
too must become vulnerable and completely dependent on  
the mystery we call God...What Thomas Merton called "the  
false self" is too often in charge of our life, even...spiritual...  
We are afraid to relinquish control, to risk removing our mask  
of perfection. The helpless child in the manger beckons us  
to stop trying and begin trusting."*

Merry Christmas!!!

## Follow Your Star

by Lucille Saunders

As Christmas approaches keep the star in view. This star led the magi to the greatest gift that was ever given to us. This star can lead each of us to peace and love!

A star appeared in the sky. Different, unusual so much so that it prompted action. Action that led the three to strange and unknown lands. Action that brought hardship and suffering on a long and danger filled journey. Fatigue and fear must have made them question the advisability of such a journey.

But the reward was far and above what they anticipated. For how could they have anticipated the joy of their discovery?

So follow your star where ever it may lead. Watch that star as it leads you to the joy of family.

Follow that star as it reveals the wonder of God and the beauty of God's creation.

Follow that star as you draw neighbors and friends together.

Follow that star to the babe in the manger in Bethlehem as we celebrate the birth of the one who makes our journey easy and well worth the rewards.



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, No Frills, or Aldi's. Bring them to the Door Ministry, 1715 IZARD St. 68102, Mondays - Thursdays, 9 AM - 1 PM, to the door facing north or mail them to that address. Her phone number is 402-341-6461. Thanks!

**TASTE THE NEW WINE**

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