

June 13, 2021

From Fr. Jim . . .

A Ministry of Presence: What I appreciate the most about Pope Francis is that he seems to put much importance on pastoral ministry and on creating a ministry of presence within the church. I am reminded of something that my priest/pastor/supervisor said to me in my diaconate assignment in 1978 which was a year before I was ordained a priest in 1979. When he and I sat down to discuss what my ministries, duties and responsibilities would be, he said, "Jim, the only thing I want you to do is to create a ministry of presence. Whatever you do just be present to the people."

I really think this is a right and appropriate expectation of the people of God to expect from their priests and I believe my supervisor was an incredibly wise man. But a ministry of presence begs an especially important question: what does it mean to be present to someone or what is a ministry of presence all about? I confess to you that it took all my time as a deacon to explore this, and it is taking all my 42 years as a priest to try to answer this question.

Any answer that I attempt to give, I have learned by trial and error. I am still learning what a ministry of presence is about, but I am clearer on what a ministry of presence is not about. A ministry of presence cannot just be about trying to be at every parish event, service, meeting, and function. A ministry of presence cannot always be about trying to please everyone or make everyone happy. A ministry of presence is not about always being in control or needing to be the center of attention all the time. In fact, a ministry of presence has little to do with my presence and it has more, if not everything to do, with the presence of God.

At any given time and any given place, no matter where we are or who we are with, God is present with us and always in our midst. A ministry of presence always involves being aware of God's presence, calling upon this presence, deferring to this presence, living with this presence, and giving thanks and praising God for this presence. When we are present to one another, we are with the presence of God, and we bring God's presence to each other and help one another discover and appreciate the presence of God in every one of us. When we are pastorally present to another, we love that person as we know God has loved us. What would it take to wash their feet symbolically and figuratively? This, I believe, is the vocation of every baptized Christian.

I was so aware of God's presence in your presence last week, as we gathered to celebrate the Eucharist together in over a year. God was so present to me in your hunger and thirst for the Body and Blood of Christ, in your smiling faces, and in your joy to be in each other's presence again around the tables of Word and Eucharist. Oh, how good it was to see all of you, pray with you and be renewed and restored as the Body of Christ and the parish church of St. Leo. Thank you for being ministers of God's presence and thanks be to God for entrusting each of us with this ministry.

"We cannot break bread on Sunday if our hearts are closed to our brothers and sisters. We cannot partake of that Bread if we do not give bread to the hungry. We cannot share that Bread unless we share the sufferings of our brothers and sisters in need."~~Pope Francis

Sunday Mass:
10:30am, limited seating available, or join Fr. Jim as he livestreams Sunday Mass at 10:30am at:
RCC St. Leo Church Cincinnati
https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rcc%20st%20leo%20church%20cincinnati&epa=SEARCH_BOX



You can **read the Sunday bulletin** at: www.saint-leo.org/Publications/StLeoSundayBulletin
You can **read Fr. Jim's letter** at:
www.saint-leo.org/Publications/FromtheDeskofFrJim

We are looking for two sewing machines to be donated that are new or slightly used. We also are in need of gift cards to help with our everyday needs, please consider Staples, Amazon, Kroger, or Home Depot when donating. You can see our latest needs on our Amazon Wish List Link
https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1Y6S276N39W08?ref_=wl_share. **Please call the office at 513-921-1044 if you have questions or would like to donate these items.**

YOU'RE INVITED- World Refugee Day is Sunday June 20th and we are celebrating early on Tuesday June 15th from 7:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m. on zoom! Let's celebrate together with song, scripture, sharing, prayer, and give thanks for the refugees among us. To gain access go to; <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86241075272>

BEACONS UPDATE- Stay up to date with the latest news and announcements about the Beacons of Light by signing up for the free monthly newsletter. Go to CatholicAOC.org/Beacons to sign up.

Join us for summer fun activities- June 15th come learn how to cook and play summer games from 9:00 a.m. – Noon! On June 17th have fun with ART for ALL; People Painting from 9:00 a.m. – Noon. For more information or to sign up contact Judie at judiekuhlman@gmail.com.