



Nativity as a Second Family

Rector's commissioning during New Members' Welcome service:

Dear Friends, I welcome you to the community of the Church of the Nativity. Is it your wish to make this community of faith your church family, and the people with whom you will share your journey of faith? Is this the place and are these the people with whom you will seek to make sense of the issues of your life: your dreams, your faith, who you are, what you are to do, who God calls you to be? Is it your wish to make this the place where you continue your journey into greater health and wholeness; where you listen to the story of God's salvation and the Good News of Jesus Christ, allowing Jesus to be an example and teacher to you, where you are called to a life of ministry and justice; and where you are fed at the table of new life?

How we flourish at Nativity with our church community:

How fitting that during today's services we are celebrating baptisms as well as remembering loved ones who have died this past year on All Saints Day. We are reminded of the importance of building community with our entire church family.

Indeed, the purpose of many of our ministry teams is to love and serve our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the small day-to-day moments as well as the larger challenges in our lives:

- The Newcomers Team welcomes our most recent church members and seeks to introduce them into the myriad activities and ministries here at Nativity.
- The Pastoral Care Team serves our church family with meals, transportation, and simple presence when needed. Many of us may be unaware of this vital ministry until times of challenges in our lives. What a blessing to have Deacon David pray with us before a medical procedure or to have a home-cooked meal provided upon the arrival of a newborn!
- The Parish Life Team provides congenial fellowship on Sunday mornings and memorable specialty receptions in Corlett Hall.
- The Adult Education Team looks for opportunities to engage our minds and hearts and to deepen our understanding of the Gospel teachings.
- The Communications Team keeps us all connected and informed so that we may wholeheartedly engage in our church's missions.
- The Music staff and the choir provide inspiring music each Sunday. The spectacular Spirituality in the Arts series is currently in its tenth season, seeking to glorify God and inspire our souls through the performance and interpretation of the arts.

Our Goals for 2014:

The Stewardship Ministry Team strongly affirms that we continue our full support for all of these significant ministries. Your prayerful pledge will enable Nativity to remain present in our lives as we hold in our hearts that our church can be our second family.

Flourish in Faith *Stewardship Narrative Series*

Proper 26 - Luke 6:20-31

All Saints Sunday, November 3, 2013

Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.



On this All Saints Day, Jesus tells us of the four blessings and contrasts them with four woes or curses. The blessings are directed to the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the excluded. For those of us who are not poor, hungry, weeping or excluded, when we hear Jesus' woes, perhaps we feel like we are being reprimanded. We are not being scolded; rather Jesus is giving us a wake-up call to kingdom living.

Jesus wants us to be more mindful of those in need and to live out our faith to fulfill the holiness of life. It can be challenging to follow Jesus. Sometimes we are asked to do more than we think we are able to do. However, the saints before us and at present time remind us and encourage us to be bold in our faith.

Daniel Groody, a Catholic priest and college professor with years of work in Latin America, tells a story of the undocumented immigrants who are struggling along the Mexico/US border that stretches across forty miles of deserts, mountains and other dangerous areas. On one summer day, the temperature in the Arizona desert area reached 120 degrees. Samaritans, a humanitarian organization, sent out volunteers to offer life-giving water and food to immigrants crossing this dangerous terrain.

The Samaritan volunteers saw a group of about twenty immigrants. They called out to see if they had water or food. The immigrants, not knowing who the volunteers were, but very mindful of the perils of desert heat, yelled back that they had no food left, but they did have a little water to share, should they need it.

These immigrants knew need and recognized need in their midst, and they did not think twice about sharing their lifeline. In sharing their water, they honored the holiness of life that God had given as they would their own. In sharing their water, a precious commodity and source of life, they honored the true Source of Life.

What can these immigrant—the poor, the hungry, the weeping, the excluded and unwelcome—teach us? They had the faith to share from their scarcity; can we share from what we have? To be bold in our faith requires the awareness that God is holding us all responsible for the well-being of the other. To follow Jesus is to go where there is pain and suffering. The Communion of Saints remind us to not be afraid, to not turn a blind eye to the needs of the world, for it is in our responding, in our sharing that we are blessed.



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Reflection Questions

- Where does our faith connect to the world's needs?
- How is our faith deepened in being present to the needs of others?
- How do we experience blessing in caring for the other?

