



ST. JOHN THE COMPASSIONATE NEWSLETTER Great Lent 2015

...In the Breaking of Bread...



Aida from Baghdad



in the "I forgive you"
in the wiping of a tear
in the sharing of a story
in the hug of acceptance
in the sharing of a smile

in the "I love you"
in the sigh of hope
in the welcome of a meal
in the opening of a door
We See the Resurrection

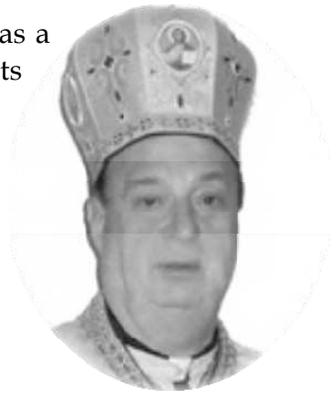
FR JOHN CIRHINY

a longtime friend, died October 2, 2014

Fr John supporter of Fr Roberto and St John the Compassionate Mission. Fr John was a real visionary who saw the potential for St John's Mission even before it opened its doors on Blake Street.

Father's deep faith and enthusiasm for people, especially the marginalized, was a great encouragement at the beginning of the Mission life. He served the very first liturgy at a ground breaking retreat where the Mission was "conceived". His goodness, sense of humour and humility will be missed by all those who knew him. He is especially missed by Fr Roberto.

May God give him eternal rest among the Saints. Memory Eternal Father John!



LESSONS FROM THE WALL

If you were to go into the office on the main floor of the Mission you would notice that one wall is covered with photographs. This wall is in some ways the story of the Mission itself. These are the photographs of those who, no longer alive, are still part of the community here. The photographs span almost 30 years of Mission life.

Each photograph is of a person whose life included being a member of the community here. Some of them were even buried from St John's - sometimes at the request of their families and some because they had no families to arrange their funerals. Each of them had someone from the Mission at their funeral. Each of them had personal relationships here. In an age of immediate results the wall speaks of the importance of **stability**. Of the importance of just being there year after year after year. You cannot and you don't build relationships in the short term.

Take Jay, for example - a large jovial guy always cracking jokes who was found dead in his apartment following a seizure and whose funeral was held here. He was not the first member of his family to be buried from here - both his parents and his sister were also. You don't "earn" such a relationship except over years of

stability. Jay would probably have had a chuckle at the comment of the funeral director who said, as the pallbearers trod gingerly over the frozen icy January snow, towards his grave, "hope they get a move on I'm worried the bottom might drop out of the casket". He was a big guy after all! If you hadn't known Jay's sense of humour this might have seemed a callous remark but Jay would have laughed.

Or Kathy, whose life had been almost destroyed by drugs but who came day after day to the winter breakfast program because she was accepted here and people turned a blind eye to her repeated requests for winter clothing. She probably sold them for drugs but here, despite outward appearances, she was seen as a person. She was knifed to death in the street - just another crime statistic. Here she was grieved for because people had taken time over the years to see the person underneath the addict. And as anyone involved in the rehabilitation of addicts will tell you recovery is achieved

only after many failures and over a long period of time. Only a stable community can offer this support. Stability might not be exciting but it alone is fruitful.

Deacon Pawel



LET RISE: THE RESURGENCE OF ST. JOHN'S BAKERY

Bright. Vibrant. Alive. Ah, what a difference a fresh coat of paint makes!

After two January weekends spent scraping, scrubbing, sanding, patching, crack-filling, and painting by a small legion of volunteers, St. John's Bakery is showing the world a proud new face in 2015.

But the sense of renewal at St. John's Bakery runs far deeper than the paint on the walls. Rather, the cosmetic changes reflect a through-and-through renaissance of the entire enterprise which is presently underway.

Underlying the paint and the putty is a reawakened passion for exceptional bread, a renewed commitment to stewardship, and a reinvigorated dedication to the social mandate.

When I started in my new role at St. John the Compassionate Mission in late October 2014, St. John's Bakery was emerging, battered and

battle-scarred, from a calamitous summer. That the bakery is even still standing is surely a testament to Divine Providence and what must have been superhuman efforts by Fr. Roberto, Presbytera Maria, Shawn, and others during that period of adversity.

And yet the view from the production floor - a picture of dilapidation and disrepair, of shoestring and duct tape and yellowness - signalled deeper-set, more long-running difficulties. The financial picture was similarly bleak: erratic costs, declining revenues... The bakery had been careening down an unsustainable course for some time.

Standing on the brink has a way of sharpening the senses and focusing the mind. In the crucible, we find a new clarity of vision. A sense of perspective: St. John's Bakery must be well as an enterprise if it is to do good as a social enterprise. It must adopt an analytical rigour and an operational discipline previously lacking. It

must reach out every day to draw together more and more people around its message about superior, wholesome bread and the basic human need to work. In this light, we are now pressing forward to rebuild St. John's Bakery on stronger foundations.

And meanwhile, God provides. As one fellow labourer frequently reminds me, all things - bakery, Mission, all things - are in His hands; we mortals can only serve diligently and faithfully. And hope, and pray. Sometimes we act on a faint hope, but the point is

that we do hope and so we do act. And sometimes, particularly at St. John's Bakery these days, we see our limited efforts bear fruit in the most improbable ways.

"Give us work, not charity!" goes the motto of St. John's Bakery. Clearly, its mandate to provide training and skilled employment

opportunities for

marginalized persons is one that resonates widely; it has been very encouraging to witness the generous support from the broader community in recent weeks especially. For example, the refurbishing project in January brought together many first-time volunteers, regular Mission supporters, and a few of the bakery's key founding personalities. We will rely on further community support in the coming weeks and months as we continue to reach out to prospective new wholesale customers, media outlets, volunteers, partner organizations, institutional funders, private donors, and others.

Meanwhile, we will hope and pray.

Aaron SanFilippo: Administrative Director
St. John the Compassionate Mission
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Paul, member of our training program

Memorial Dinners - Eternal Memory!

We are grateful to those who have offered a meal to the poor in memory of a loved one. On the day the meal is offered a notice is posted informing those who come to the meal for whom, and by whom, it is offered. If desired, a short memorial service precedes the meal. If you wish to offer a memorial meal, please contact the Mission.



Volunteers From the Courts

People volunteer from all kinds: walks of life and backgrounds.

For over 25 years now St John's Mission has welcomed people referred to us by the courts. Jointly with the Salvation Army we help these individuals integrate into our community.

Our program gives people a chance to give back to society in a way that also restores their often lost self-worth.

Almost all those who complete their hours with us express gratitude and a real desire to keep connected with people and life of the Mission.



Great Lent Needs List

- Dry Lentils & Beans
- Herbs & Spices
- Fresh Fruit & Vegetables
- Canned Tomatoes, Sauce, Paste
- Canned Tuna
- Rice
- Regular, Herbal Tea
- Quinoa/Bulgar Wheat
- Snack Bars & Nuts
- Dish & Laundry Soap
- Dish Clothes & Tea Towels



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"The Cake"

Celebrations of birthdays, welcomes, leave taking, milestones in a person's life are a really important part of our daily life. "The Cake" is a symbol of this joy that unites us in real love for each other. We are in of need cake mixes, can you please donate some. We never have enough cake mixes!



Marco, Mikhail (farewell), Irene, Teryl

Farewell Mikhail

Today we celebrated one of many dedicated volunteers with the Food for Families program. Mikhail has been with the Mission for over 4 years and brought lots of warmth, youthfulness and sweets(!) our community. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for all of his love, time and energy! Good luck Mikhail and come back soon to visit!

South Africa

It is hard to think of a kinder person than Tom Makison. Every Friday faithfully he comes to the Mission to do projects that have been waiting for him over the previous weeks. Tom fixes things, makes all kinds of things, shops for bargains and saves things from the garbage. From flower stands to ambon (pulpit) and light fixtures, Tom does them all. His presence and humble demeanor warms all our hearts.

