

PPC Report for Period June 2018 until June 2019

By Sharon Ledermann

This last year has been a year of reflection and discernment. We have asked ourselves who we are as a Parish, who we are in the Body of Christ and what is our purpose here in this time and this place. I write this report during the time of Ascension. Before he parted the apostles to join his father, Jesus said:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

All baptized Christians are called by Jesus to go out and make disciples of all the nations. We are called by our leaders, from Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis, to evangelize and to serve in ministry at our parishes. We echo that call here at St. John XXIII to serve, to evangelize, to learn and to take part in Christ's body as disciples in Christ.

We are fortunate to have many men, women and children full of diverse gifts who have answered this call from those serving the wounded and broken in our Care and Concern Ministries to those persons who have gone out and walked among the poor and needy receiving many times much more than they give at our soup kitchen and through the work of our Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) group. For those parishioners who bring us deeper spiritually — especially our new Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living (GPRL) and Walking with Purpose groups — thank you for accompanying us on our journey of faith while the Spirit opens up God's Word to our hearts and intellect. Our Parish is so much richer thanks to those serving daily and weekly at mass and in our parish office. The service ministries are the foundation of our Parish and we would like to give thanks to each minister who has faithfully served in some capacity up front at mass and behind the scenes. I would like to especially thank our Sacristens, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Welcome and Technical/Grounds crew who make our church safe and beautiful. Thank you to all the catechists and children who help Father Paul with the children's masses, altar servers as well as our visiting

priests. Thank you to our seven choirs who aid mass attendees in this very critical part of the liturgy of praising God and His works in song. I would like to especially commend those choirs that encourage the Parishioners to participate and open up in song and praise to Him.

Our Religious Education ministers are a cornerstone of the Parish. They are the first line of teaching the children, the youth and the new candidates the Kerygma or the good news of Jesus Christ and how to live out the life of a Christian full of virtue, faith and good works. In our RCIA program, our religious education coordinators are sometimes the first in depth impression of what it means to lead the life of a Christian to seekers as are our coordinators and catechists to be role models for our children and youths.

The foundation of our discipleship is found in the education we receive in our youth, but discipleship means a life-long pursuit of learning in Christ. We have a new group that started this year called Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living (GPRL) which welcomes men and women into a deeper spiritual life with Christ. It is a group guided by a partnership between several of our parishioners and the Ignatian Spirituality Centre (ISC) based in Glasgow, Scotland. Twenty-five participants completed the first part of the course and plan to continue with the next module in the fall. Our Walking With Purpose group also completed a wonderful year studying the Book of Ephesians with forty-five women growing in their knowledge of scripture and deepening their prayer life. What is also important among these groups is a sense of a smaller community within the larger Parish. It is our hope that such communities of learning continue to develop over the next year.

Our new Theology on Tap evenings have been a great success. We hosted a total of eight evenings of diverse speakers including theologians and priests from Switzerland to Peru. These evenings have had a great turnout and included a missionary element inviting a diverse collection of persons from our parish as well as members of other churches in Switzerland and even those who are not affiliated with any church but nonetheless are searching for answers to life's biggest questions. We thank Father Paul for organizing four mornings of Recollection. Many of us have appreciated the opportunity during the key points in our liturgical calendar to deepen our

faith during a morning of prayer and learning. Our vibrant African community also led a retreat to the birthplace and hermitage of St. Nicolas de Flüe taking many of our parishioners to this peaceful and holy place of our patron saint of Switzerland.

The fruits of learning are meant to lead to service and ministry and completing the circle of discipleship. Our Soup kitchen has grown over the last year and now has 20 regular volunteers with our parish participating four times over the course of last year. The participants see this as a way to deepen their spiritual growth through service meditating on scripture prior to starting their ministry. Around 150-200 persons benefitted from the balanced meals provided. Our JPIC group also held several initiatives to help us recall our connection with God, ourselves, humanity and our planet. Inspired by Laudato Si, this group continues to spread information about how we can help the poor, our planet and how we can all help in our little ways. Laudato Si planted a garden on our parish premises, ensured a reduction in waste at our Kermesse by providing reusable cups and involved our catechism and youth groups in various fundraising activities including raising money for power sources and collecting donations for street children in the Philippines over the course of the year. Our Care and Concern and Stephen Ministry continue their good works. Stephen Ministry is ecumenical with many of our parishioners helping others navigate troubled waters.

We are grateful to God for the growth of our Parish over the last year and we thank the Spirit for all the work He has done on us. We pray that those who have not yet heeded his call answer over the next year and find the riches which come through discipleship and service for His Glory!