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FROM THE EDITOR

“Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God.”

— Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

**A Call for Justice**

*Locally and around the world*

PARAPHRASE *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church, our modern human experiences of joy, hope, grief, and anxiety — especially the experiences of those who are poor and suffering — are shared by all followers of Christ. Our Basilica community heeds the call for biblical justice and strives to make a difference in our city, in our world, and in each of our hearts.

The U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated, “lay people have the principal responsibility to transform the social order in light of the Gospel.” As Catholics we are called to stand with the poor, oppressed, and voiceless to provide dignified relief and to address the root causes of injustice. When we authentically see our brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering, we see God.

This issue contains articles related to social justice and living the Gospel message in our complex modern world. An article about Catholic Social Teaching offers instruction and guidance, providing a lens through which we all can see, experience, and impact the world. We are happy to also share some of the ways The Basilica community welcomes all with love and tenderness and advocates for social conditions where all people can thrive.

I am proud to be part of The Basilica community, where living out our call to serve the common good is embraced so thoroughly.

Whether it’s hosting an Archdiocesan Mass of Solidarity for refugees and migrants, dedicating a statue of Jesus as a homeless person sleeping on a bench, helping community members in need obtain state identification cards, saving energy and resources through environmentally conscious upgrades, or traveling to South Africa for hands-on lessons and insights on truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation, our vibrant parish is a beacon for hope, compassion, and hospitality to all.

It was personally inspiring to interview four of our weekend presiders who began their ordained ministry on the heels of the Second Vatican Council. As young men they were inspired by seminary studies and council documents to serve the people of God during an exciting time of change and renewal. Fifty years later, they — and we — are still answering the never-ending call to be faithful disciples in a modern world.

— Melissa Streit

Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God.

— Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*
To Live is to Change

Accepting God’s grace while working through change

BY FATHER JOHN BAUER

THIS past summer, after much prayer and reflection, I decided to sell a cabin I had owned for close to thirty years and a small condominium I bought when I was assigned to The Basilica, and buy a townhouse. Now this wasn’t a quick or easy decision. In fact, I had been thinking about selling my cabin for the past few years. It finally became clear to me, though, that the time was right. Perhaps the biggest reason was that, for someone who is not as handy as I look, the maintenance and upkeep was beginning to feel more like a burden than a blessing. And in regard to the condo, I decided that as long as I was consolidating it would be nice to have a bit more space.

Now the decision to sell my cabin and my condo was a piece of cake compared to the task of packing and moving. Since I have been at The Basilica for over ten years, I had forgotten what a pain in the neck moving is. The sorting and packing, as well as deciding what to pitch, what to keep, and what to try to give away seemed to take forever. I was blessed, though, in that some friends and family members helped me with this task. At times they seemed ruthless and cold hearted in their estimate of what should be kept and what should be pitched. At the end of the day, though, they were right, because at this point, I haven’t missed anything.

In retrospect, I have decided that moving is not for the faint of heart. In fact, as someone who thrives in a fixed and unchanging environment, it can be quite daunting. And so, during the moving process, I would bring any angst I was feeling to prayer. Additionally, I would share it with anyone who looked at all sympathetic. At one point I shared my tale of woe about packing and moving with a priest friend. In response he offered, not sympathy, but a quote from Cardinal John Henry Newman from over a century ago: “To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.”

Change — whether it be a physical move, or a change of health, behavior, situation, or status — can be difficult. I think the reason for this is that when change happens we lose our moorings, and we are adrift from those things that are known and familiar. In this situation, while we may want to return to or reestablish what we had, in most cases this isn’t possible. These times, though, can also be an opportunity for grace and growth. I say this because if we can turn to God at these times, if we can believe in and be open to God’s grace, it can make a difference. God’s grace can help us adapt, adjust, and yes, even grow.

This year The Basilica will be updating our Strategic Plan. Additionally, through funding provided by The Basilica Landmark, we will also be working with a liturgical consultant to look at how to renovate and refurbish The Basilica — and our entire parish campus — to update them and make them more welcoming and hospitable. Finally, our staff received a grant to attend a program offered through an organization called Parish Catalyst to look at what we need to do to attract, invite, involve, and retain the next generation of believers. It would be naïve to think that these things won’t bring changes. Should that happen, though, we can take comfort in knowing that whatever these changes may be, God will be there waiting for us, and that God’s good grace will strengthen, sustain, and enable us to deal with whatever those changes will bring.

“To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.” These words of Cardinal Newman remind us that change is part of the fabric of our lives. It often occurs without our permission and/or our cooperation. We can fear change, we can resist it, but it will occur nonetheless. In the midst of change, however, as Christians we believe there is one constant: God. It is our fundamental and abiding belief that God is with us and for us, that God’s Spirit guides us, and that God’s grace is offered to us through Jesus Christ. This grace enables us to accept change, even and perhaps especially, when that change is challenging or difficult. †
The Basilica Landmark

Ensuring a future of sustaining power

AFTER several years of significant renovations and capital investments made possible by The Basilica Landmark, I am proud to share that the City of Minneapolis awarded The Basilica of Saint Mary a 2017 Building Energy Performance Award for outstanding energy reduction. By working with Facilities Assessment and Ecological Stewardship volunteer committees, The Landmark preserves, restores, and advances our historic buildings by identifying energy savings solutions that meet our ecological goals. I invite you to learn more by reading Rick Moore’s article in this issue.

With your help we can continue to improve our energy reductions. The Basilica Landmark Board has determined the Fund-a-Need program at this year’s Basilica Landmark Ball will support converting interior dome lighting to responsible LED lighting. The existing power loads at full intensity utilize 29,000 watts. During one hour of Mass, they cost $2.90 at 10 cents per kilowatt hour. With the same light output, the new LED power load will use approximately 5,220 watts and cost $0.52. Not only will this project reduce our energy use by 82%, it will also provide significant cost savings.

We hope you will consider supporting the Fund-a-Need by joining us for an evening of illuminating power at The Basilica Landmark Ball on May 5, 2018, at the Solar Arts Building. It promises to be a wonderful evening of dinner, dancing, and amusements for a wonderful cause. Tickets can be purchased online at www.thebasilicalandmark.org/landmarkball.

If you would like to support the Fund-a-Need project for this year’s event but are unable to attend, please contact Monica Stuart at 612.317.3429 or mstuart@mary.org. Your gift will ensure a future of sustaining power for the people and the purpose we serve.

Ann Wilczynski is president of The Basilica Landmark

Help us illuminate the mission of The Basilica Landmark as we transform our interior dome lighting to LEDs — offering our historic space a life-sustaining future for the people and purpose we serve.

ILLUMINO

The Basilica Landmark Ball
May 5, 2018
Solar Arts Building
www.thebasilicalandmark.org/landmarkball

Ann Wilczynski is president of The Basilica Landmark

BY ANN WILCZYNSKI
South Africa: Global Witness Experience

Understanding racial reconciliation

“The problem of intolerance must be confronted in all its forms: wherever any minority is persecuted and marginalized because of its religious convictions or ethnic identity, the well-being of society as a whole is endangered and each one of us must feel affected.”

— Pope Francis
Simon Wiesenthal Center, October 2013

On June 16, 1976, more than 10,000 school children planned to march between two schools in the southwestern townships (Soweto) outside of Johannesburg. They protested the passage of a law that would require all instruction in secondary schools to take place in Afrikaans — the language of the Dutch settlers who had taken control of the government beginning in 1948. Because students’ first language in the region was predominantly Zulu, and because the white government’s control of the African population was growing more and more intense, the children said “enough is enough.” Police learned of the march and opened fire, killing as many as 176 children on that day including Hector Pieterson, who was thirteen years old when he died. Sam Nzima captured the scene on film. The photograph was banned in South Africa, but it appeared in England and in The New York Times in the United States, increasing the world’s awareness of the brutality of the apartheid government.

Still, it would take more than twenty years after the so-called “Soweto Uprising” for the government to fail. Social unrest in South Africa, combined with international economic pressure, eventually pushed the government’s hand. Prime Minister F. W. de Klerk, the last prime minister under apartheid, agreed to a policy of “one man/one vote” and released Nelson Mandela from his prison sentence, of which he had served 27 years. In 1994, the African National Congress (ANC), with Mandela at the head of the ticket, became South Africa’s first democratically elected government.

For sixteen days in January 2018, a group of fifteen parishioners (and one friend) from The Basilica of Saint Mary traveled to Johannesburg and Cape Town on a global witness trip, hoping to bring insights from South Africa’s experience of racial reconciliation back to the Twin Cities to inform anti-racism work in our own context. Led by South African Anglican priest Richard Cogill and University of St. Thomas professor of systematic theology Kimberly Vrudny, the group listened to a number of reflections by leaders in the church, academia, and non-governmental organization (NGO) sectors. They wrestled
sincerely with issues affecting racial reconciliation as South Africa approaches the 25th anniversary of its first democratic election. Several themes recurred throughout our time in South Africa, among them memory, restitution, and forgiveness.

MEMORY

After World War II, the German Catholic theologian Johannes Baptist Metz spoke of “dangerous memories.” These are the memories of the victims (or, in some cases, the survivors of history) whose voices interrupt the narratives of people in power and give hope for the transformation of society. Their voices imagine a better way to be human through a more equitable distribution of the world’s resources.

The group heard South Africans give voice to the dangerous memories of the past and walked away with a heightened awareness of the complexities of shaping a post-conflict society. It was clear that in South Africa, like elsewhere, there is not a single story. History itself is contested by multiple perspectives. The Voortrekker Monument outside of Johannesburg is a good example thereof. This towering monument commemorates the “Great Trek” the Afrikaners (Dutch settlers) took to establish a republic independent from Britain’s colonizing rule. Some white descendants of those trekkers might celebrate this monument as a memorial to those who were brutalized by the British. Other white descendants might recognize it as a monument to white power and oppression of the indigenous Zulu population.

The speakers shared the complex history of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a court-like restorative justice body assembled in South Africa after the abolition of apartheid in 1994. The group recognized the trauma in their voices — the TRC Commissioner who shared her experience of being tortured at the hands of continued.

Imago Dei (Image of God)

To learn more about Imago Dei: Initiative for Racial Reconciliation visit www.mary.org/racialreconciliation.
mean that land will once again be forcibly taken from one and given to another? Are there other options? Travelers met with the Chief Operating Officer of the Restitution Foundation, an organization which invites South Africans to dialogue about these difficult issues.

Upon returning home, participant Susan McGuigan wrote, “Even though I was alive and even an adult during much of apartheid, I feel like I knew very little about it. My eyes were opened to the suffering and injustice that took place during that time and still takes place. But the connection between South Africa and the United States cannot be overlooked.” The group discerned if our parish could foster the same kind of dialogue in the Twin Cities to improve relations in our city?

FORGIVENESS
A philosophy of ubuntu tends to underscore African thought. Ubuntu means, “I am because you are.” It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings. Whereas the Western understanding of forgiveness may be a one-time act including an apology that entails both forgetting the violation (“to forgive is to forget”) as well as an immediate reconciliation with the wrongdoer, and African understanding of forgiveness is a reclamation of one’s own power. To wait for an apology is to hand power over to the wrongdoer; instead, forgiveness, even before an apology, enables one to refuse to become like the perpetrator. “I forgive because I refuse to allow you to have power over me.” Rather than a one-time act, in Africa forgiveness can be understood more as a spiritual practice. When anger bubbles up, as is natural after a violation occurs, forgiveness is the practice of letting go (even 70 x 7 times). It is a spiritual practice of refusing to allow
the anger and resentment to overpower and change the survivor into a monster who then becomes like the perpetrator by seeking vengeance which only continues the violent cycle.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu taught that to forgive does not mean to forget — nor does it entail immediate reconciliation. While forgiveness may be the first step towards reconciliation by opening a place of safety wherein a violator might offer an apology, reconciliation will require the re-establishment of trust through what can be a slow, arduous, and fraught process to restore right relations. Together, forgiveness and reconciliation constitute a restored relationship, which is ultimately the goal of a communal society.

Kimberly Vrudny is an associate professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Thomas.

Reflections from the Trip Participants

I learned to believe in my own goodness and in the power of forgiveness because it was reflected back to me in not only the fellow sojourners, but in everyone I met.

I am not an activist nor social worker, lawyer nor a doctor, but I am an educator and I can share what I learned by being courageous, speaking truth, and honoring all human beings.

— Tricia Burns

We have been successfully shocked, stimulated, and mildly culturally immersed. Now it is time to do our part.

— John Leonard

I have learned that I don’t really need to go across the world to work for peace, justice, and reconciliation; I don’t need to look any further than my own backyard. I think my challenge is to use what I have learned to make me a better person and my community a more loving and just place to live.

— Susan McGuigan

I was inspired by the tenacity and dedication of all those we met—from politicians to artists to community workers to theologians — in their focus toward the common good.

— Carol Frenning

The people of South Africa, particularly those of “color,” who, despite the crimes of humanity committed against them and the economic continuation of apartheid to the present, were committed... to the education of a white, entitled, male, American. It demonstrated to me that change is possible when I am willing to acknowledge my entitlement as a first step and follow up with small but continuous change in my own daily life.

— John Quinn

The South Africa post-apartheid truth and reconciliation journey challenged me to reflect beyond familiar cultural comforts and political viewpoints. Hearing personal wisdom stories from people close to the apartheid history taught me about global ramifications from white privilege. One speaker inspired me to develop a ‘wreak less’ attitude and to walk forward in promotion of equality and justice. I embrace the African concept of ubuntu (humanity to others) with prayer for a better global tomorrow.

— Linda Atwood

Kimberly Vrudny is an associate professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Thomas.

Basilica trip participants traveled to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa on a global witness trip for sixteen days in January 2018.
As we seek to live our life faithfully, how do we maneuver through the landmines of ethical and moral decisions of our day? In any given situation, the decisions we make and the actions we take can be driven by a complex array of experiences, hopes, and fears. What tools do we use to ensure we are living faithfully?

As Catholic Christians, most people are familiar with the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. There is another lesser known treasury of principles that speak to our lives today. Sometimes called the best kept secret of our faith, Catholic Social Teaching proposes principles for reflection, provides criteria for judgment, and offers guidelines for action.

Catholic Social Teaching is a way of reflecting on the world today. It is not a fixed block of doctrine or ideology, but the result of prayerful reflection on the complex realities of human existence. Animated by the Gospel, it provides core principles that can address the demands of the time.

“Theological dimension is needed both for interpreting and for solving present day problems in society.”

— St. John Paul II
Centesimus Annus, 1991
READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The conviction underlying Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the fundamental belief that God is at work in human history. God is engaged and present — with us today as we work and play, as we are hurt and heal. God invites all people to participate in this work — fashioning each person with unique gifts and abilities to join in building God's kingdom of peace and love.

Perceiving and discerning God's presence and invitation in today's events is often referred to as “reading the signs of the times.” We are called to recognize each moment as an ongoing revelation of God's love. The Second Vatican Council states that the Church has “the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in light of the Gospel” (The Church in the Modern World #4).

To be faithful to this call, we are challenged to pray diligently and to live with eyes wide open to the realities of our day — to see the joy and gifts of our community, as well as the struggles and oppression experienced by our brothers and sisters. We are to ground ourselves in prayer, pay attention, and engage.

There have been key times in history that have compelled Church leaders to speak boldly, prophetically, and directly about conditions in our society. Throughout modern history, Church leaders reject the idea that the Church — the people of God — have a marginal role in society. Rather, they recognized that by its very mission, the Church has a unique responsibility for shaping values and institutions in the world. Pope Francis exercised this responsibility recently, speaking of the care for creation and the plight of immigrants.

Modern Catholic Social Teaching begins with Pope Leo XIII, as he wrestled with effects of the industrial revolution on lives of people throughout the world. Speaking directly to the pervasive injustices experienced by working people, including women and children — as well as the extreme disparity between rich and poor — Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical to advocate for the rights of workers. He introduced the just wage theory, suggesting wages must realistically support the basic needs of the individual (Rerum Novarum – The Condition of Labor, 1891).

CORE PRINCIPLES

Human Dignity: The most basic, fundamental principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the deep belief that every human person is sacred and has dignity. Made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26, 27), each person carries transcendent worth and value simply because the person exists. Their human dignity is an essential part of each person — an intrinsic quality that cannot be taken away regardless of behavior or legal mandate.

This deep understanding of human dignity is the foundation of morality and the cornerstone for all Catholic Social Teaching. If we embrace this belief, we are challenged to look critically at the issues of our day. How do our language and actions live this out, individually and collectively? What are the basic rights to ensure dignity is realized? Human dignity becomes the standard by which the political, societal, and economic structures are to be judged.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: If we take seriously a commitment to transform society into a place where human rights and dignity of all are upheld, we are faced with the option or choice to support and protect the most vulnerable and poor among us. Individually and collectively, we are called to see the realities of those who are marginalized and downtrodden. It is for these people we are called to advocate and support. We find ourselves compelled...
to see, understand, and resist any injustice, oppression, or exploitation of people in our communities.

We can see God’s actions of care for those who are poor, suffering, or marginalized throughout scripture. This is a challenging principle with theological, social, political, and economic dimensions. It can have strong implications for our personal lives, as well as for the organization of society.

Common Good: As we seek to build a community of love and peace, our faith calls us to a radical commitment to one another. The human person is social by nature and needs relationships with others to thrive. CST instructs us to see that the good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. It rejects the principle of “the greatest good for the greatest number,” as well as the stance of individualism. The rights of one group cannot be set aside for the convenience of the majority. As we prayerfully reflect on how this principle intersects with issues in our world today, there are many personal and institutional implications.

Primacy of Love: Reason was the primary organizing force in much of the Church’s early social teaching. In more recent times, however, Catholic Social Teaching has been shaped by the primacy of love. Love is at the heart of all interpretations, actions, desires, and hopes. Martin Luther King Jr. offers, “Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.”

The issues of our day are challenging and controversial. They can disturb us and make us uncomfortable. It is clear — as we engage, we will have differences. Catholic Social Teaching emphasizes that if love is the motivation, even as we disagree we can learn from one another. Especially when there is tension, we are called to engage in love, in patience, and to trust in the ultimate goodness of the other.

Rooted in love, the principles of CST broaden to include solidarity, care for creation, and promotion of peace. What is God inviting us to today? Let us live with eyes wide open to build a just and compassionate community.

Janice Andersen has been The Basilica’s director of Christian Life since 1994.

ADE BETHUNE:
WORLD-RENOWED LITURGICAL ARTIST
AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST
(1914–2002)

Ade Bethune was one of the women pioneers of the liturgical renewal and a prolific artist. Many of Bethune’s works were dedicated to liturgy, biblical scenes, and to the Catholic Worker Movement.

She was born in Belgium and emigrated to the United States with her family in 1928. As a young art student in 1930s New York, Bethune was mentored by Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and others of the Catholic Worker movement, as well as Arthur Graham Carey and John Howard Benson. Her early works reflect her observations and sympathies toward the poor and disadvantaged people. Her works were often published in The Catholic Worker; one of her drawings became its masthead in 1935 and remains so today.

Bethune was especially talented at drawings that depict Biblical scenes and at drawing saints. The people in her drawings tend to be ordinary, working-class people dressed in the common clothes of the present day. They perform everyday chores and often are shown in what she called “acts of mercy,” such as nursing the sick, feeding the hungry, and housing the homeless.

She attended the National Academy of Design in New York and is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees. Bethune’s archives are located at St. Catherine University in Saint Paul, MN; images are from their Ade Bethune Collection.
St. Vincent de Paul ID Program
Helping those in need secure identification documents

EDUCATION, contacts, faith, and commitment are all important factors in “making it” in today’s society, but none are more important than a simple state identification card. “You have to have top-flight ID," says a Minneapolis woman who has endured the ordeal of not being able to prove her identity as a Minnesota or U.S. citizen for months on end.

Basic valid identification is required to start rebuilding self-sufficiency and the necessities of life — work, housing, education, and services. In many cases, people in crisis and transition lose track of important documentation while they are focusing on surviving. They may have to move frequently or live without housing and a secure place to keep important documents.

The number of people visiting The Basilica’s St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) ID Program in search of help to obtain some form of official identification document, validating their status as a Minnesota citizen, outpaces the projections every year. Each week, 63 volunteers assist guests in starting this process that can take a couple weeks and up to three months, depending on the circumstances.

The Basilica works with Hennepin County to streamline the ID-acquisition process for clients of the SVdP ID program. What began as a simple referral process evolved into a substantial program. The Basilica now provides clients with vouchers, which they redeem to obtain needed services, such as copies of birth certificates, and to pay for their state IDs, through Hennepin County. Hennepin County then bills the costs back to The Basilica.

The Basilica funded $70,000 for the program in 2016, helping 4,222 people obtain citizenship-validating state IDs. Costs are paid entirely by charitable contributions, and with the need growing, The Basilica looks to the generosity of parishioners to continue the program each year.

For people living on the margins of society, the process of obtaining the required ID documentations can be overwhelming, says Janice Andersen, Director of Christian Life at The Basilica. A new Minnesota state ID card costs $19.25. A new driver’s license costs $44.25. Minnesota charges $26 for a new copy of a birth certificate. To get a new or replacement state ID card, one must provide two forms of proof of identification, such as a birth certificate, social security card, marriage certificate, or certified high school or post-high school transcript. Each step is fraught with difficulty, especially so for those with little or no means, and doubly so for those born out of state.

Minnesota residents born in other states face even more daunting challenges in reclaiming their lost identities. The process can be long and frustrating, especially if the name of the requesting party doesn’t match up precisely to a record on hand. Linda Raynor grew up in Minnesota and considers herself a native of the North Star state. But she happened to be born in St. Louis, Missouri, a way station as her parents made their way northward from Louisiana to the Twin Cities. “I was conceived in Arkansas, born in Missouri, and raised in Minnesota,” says Raynor. “They were just passing through St. Louis when I was born.”

Fast forward a few decades, and Raynor finds herself living in Minneapolis as a single mother of eight with no financial resources and only one clear way out of her predicament. A regular participant in the SVdP ministry since 1995, she knew the church offered help in a variety of ways to people seeking to get back on their feet.

“We came there hungry, broke — and I’ve got to think of the kids in school,” she says. “All these complications...”

As part of its street ministry, Saint Stephen’s Catholic Church in Minneapolis helps those without IDs from out-of-state apply for vital documents in their home states. The Basilica and Saint Stephen’s partner up to help people get their IDs straightened out, with Saint Stephen’s taking on the out-of-staters. Even so, time-consuming complications lurked ahead for Raynor.

The people in St. Louis could not match her last name up with a document in their files. She tried again, this time using her mother’s last name — Moore. That turned up a match. “The people in St. Louis work pretty fast,” she says. The duties of motherhood distracted her from keeping track of her birth certificate, causing her to request help retrieving her birth certificate once again this past winter. “I’ll make sure to hang on to it this time,” she adjures.

“To make a long story short,” she adds, “The Basilica is a blessing. I am blessed to have The Basilica working for me.”

Doug Hovelson is a parishioner and public relations consultant.

For more information about The Basilica’s SVdP ID program, and to become involved as a volunteer or donor, please contact Janice Andersen at jandersen@mary.org.

DOUG HOVELSON
Homeless Jesus
by Timothy P. Schmalz

An internationally recognized symbol of compassion and awareness for the homeless

“You should defend those who cannot help themselves. Yes, speak up for the poor and needy and see that they get justice.”
— Proverbs 31:8

On NOVEMBER 19, 2017, The Basilica community marked the first annual Day of the Poor instituted by Pope Francis. On that day we celebrated a special evening prayer with our Schola Cantorum and StreetSong-MN, a choir comprised of people who are or were homeless and those who advocate for them. The congregation that evening included several of our homeless friends. At the end of the service we all processed outside to our newly installed sculpture of the Homeless Jesus facing Hennepin Avenue. Under a beautiful blue late fall sky, we blessed the sculpture with prayers, songs, and holy water.

Homeless Jesus, by Canadian artist Timothy P. Schmalz, is an internationally recognized invitation to love and compassion. It depicts a homeless person sleeping on a park bench. His face and hands are obscured, hidden under a blanket. The wounds on His feet reveal that this homeless person is Jesus. The work is inspired by the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25. Its stated goal is to encourage compassion toward those who are homeless and to motivate concrete actions to end homelessness.

Schmalz is a well-known Catholic sculptor based out of St. Jacobs, Ontario; much of his work is religious. His overall artistic goal is twofold: “creating art that has the power to convert” and “creating sculpture that deepens our spirituality.” He further states, “If my sculptures are used by people as a tool to think, then I’m very happy.”

About Homeless Jesus, Schmalz said, “some people might think that if He’s not depicted as beautiful in a very specific way then we are insulting Him, but that’s not true.” Indeed, Jesus depicted as a homeless person almost unrecognizably wrapped
in a blanket and sleeping on a bench is a shockingly earthly portrait of Jesus. It can be upsetting to those who are more comfortable seeing Jesus depicted in grand and glorious ways. However, sometimes we need to see Jesus as one of us, sharing the fragility of our human condition, in order for us to awaken to the demands of our faith.

About two years ago, recognizing the transformative power of art in general and of *Homeless Jesus* in particular, the members of our St. Vincent de Paul Steering Committee explored the possibility of adding the sculpture to The Basilica’s sacred art collection. As part of their careful deliberation they engaged some of our homeless friends in the conversation. When asked what they thought about this sculpture, one homeless person commented, “that could be me one night.” Someone else said she would be honored to have this sculpture at The Basilica. A third person said, “it shows that The Basilica cares about us...all of us.”

After months of prayer and discussion the St. Vincent de Paul Steering Committee brought the idea to the different leadership teams of The Basilica. The conversation with each one of these groups was extended and profound. In the end, each group saw great value in this initiative and recommended moving ahead to our Parish Council. The Parish Council approved the commissioning of the sculpture in early 2017. Funding for the sculpture was provided by a group of anonymous supporters who are passionate about The Basilica and our vision to seek the well-being of the city.

Continued.
The decisive factor for everyone involved was the two-fold mission of our St. Vincent de Paul Ministry: emergency assistance and continuing education. For decades, The Basilica community has offered emergency assistance to those in need. And we will continue to do so. As a parish we also have the responsibility to educate people in the social teachings of our Church and to invite everyone to help those in need. *Homeless Jesus* does that very well because it invites people to think in new and different ways about our brothers and sisters who are homeless. It helps us to see Jesus in each person we meet, especially in those who are most in need.

*Homeless Jesus* is located prominently near Hennepin Avenue for everyone to see: a quiet but strong visual sermon, a sculpted challenge, and a bronze invitation to authentic Christianity. With The Basilica as its backdrop it proclaims to the world that we are committed to assist all those in need because in each one of them we recognize Jesus.
We ended the dedication of Homeless Jesus by taking turns sprinkling the sculpture with holy water while singing A Place Called Home by Michael Joncas. Father Bauer went first followed by Timothy P. Schmalz, who flew in for the dedication. Then the holy water was handed from person to person, including our homeless friends. The striking words of the song and the tenderness of this gesture moved many of us to tears.

Homeless Jesus, guide us and intercede for us now and forever. Amen.

Johan M.J. van Parys has been The Basilica’s director of liturgy and sacred arts since 1995.

Homeless Jesus, guide us and intercede for us now and forever. Amen.
Baking the Bread to Become the Body

Where does altar bread come from?

The Eucharist is a cornerstone of living out the Catholic faith. Every time a Catholic goes to Mass, he or she has the opportunity to encounter Christ in the Eucharist and contemplate the mystery of faith. For such a fundamental part of our shared spiritual tradition, we may have never stopped to wonder where the bread that becomes the Body of Christ is made.

Until recently, The Basilica of Saint Mary received its altar bread from the Contemplative Sisters of the Good Shepherd, an order of nuns in Saint Paul. The Sisters recently discerned that they will discontinue their altar bread ministry because of the advanced age of their sisters. The Basilica received their last shipment of 30,000 hosts from the Sisters in early January and will now look for a new source.

“Altar bread is different than bread or crackers at the grocery store. It must be made with wheat and water and without any additives,” said Johan van Parys, Director of Liturgy and Sacred Arts at The Basilica. Though it’s not required, hosts are typically made by religious communities like the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

ABOUT THE SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd are a contemplative order of nuns who historically have made altar breads and sewed shirts for their source of income. Contemplative orders focus on silence, solitude, and practices which help foster prayer and rest in God, like study, work, and leisure. Baking altar breads gave the Sisters an opportunity to contemplate the mystery of faith and the Catholics worldwide who participate in the Eucharist every day.

“It has always been a joy and privilege to do this kind of work,” says Sister Beverly Hedgecoth, a nun who lives at the convent in Saint Paul. “It allows us to have a small part in supplying the hosts that will become the body of Jesus and allows us to pray for all those who will receive the consecrated host.”

When the Convent first opened in Saint Paul at the turn of the century, the Sisters used a heavy cast iron baker over a fireplace to bake the hosts. (Imagine a vintage waffle iron with a long handle and disc-shaped divots for the batter.) The baking mechanism evolved when electricity became available; the Sisters began to use heavy electric plates to bake the hosts.
In 1986, the Sisters were the first convent in the United States to receive a modern host baker. A German man whose wife was a benefactor of the Carmelites modified a cookie machine with 30 plates and a conveyor belt so that they could bake hosts faster.

“With fewer vocations, this was a godsend,” said Sr. Beverly. “We could bake 18 sheets a minute, which was a joy. It allowed us to get into a rhythm, and we could pray or sing in our heart to our beloved Jesus Christ for all who were to receive the Eucharist.”

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

Some parishioners might not realize that The Basilica offers low-gluten hosts for those with Celiac Disease or gluten sensitivity. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye that some people find hard to digest. The Catholic Church requires altar breads be made with only wheat and water, because it’s believed that’s what Jesus used at the Last Supper.

With an estimated 20 million Americans suffering from gluten sensitivity, this poses a problem. Luckily the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Missouri were able to find a solution. Working with a scientist, the Sisters developed a low-gluten host made out of two different types of wheat starch. Most of the gluten is removed from wheat starch, so this type of host is softer on the stomach for those who have gluten sensitivities.

Because of the Sister’s good work, The Basilica can now provide low-gluten hosts so everyone can participate in the Sacrament of the Eucharist regardless of dietary restrictions.

If you need a low-gluten host, simply ask one of the hospitality ministers (ushers) before Mass. The host will be prepared in a pyx — a small, round container used to carry the Consecrated Host, typically to those who are sick or homebound. When it comes time to receive Communion, simply point to the pyx in the presider’s plate, and the priest will drop the host from the pyx into your hands with minimal risk of cross-contamination with the regular hosts.

REFLECTION

The Eucharist is an invitation to participate in the Last Supper by contemplating Christ’s sacrifice and recommitting ourselves to following His teachings. The next time you receive the Eucharist, consider the effort, joy, and prayer that went into baking this bread that became the Body of Christ. From the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Saint Paul to the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri, religious communities are praying for all of us who receive the Eucharist, that we grow deeper in faith and closer to Christ. Please keep them in your prayers too.

Rachel Newman is a parishioner and RCIA sponsor.
Half a Century of Faithful Service

Weekend presiders at The Basilica

BY MELISSA STREIT

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL closed in 1965, and dioceses and parishes around the world began implementing the widespread changes instigated by the Council. At that same time, four men who serve The Basilica as weekend presiders graduated from the seminary and began their careers in ministry. As they each mark almost a half-century of ordination, we learn more about their faithful service.

REVEREND PETER BRANDENHOFF

Fr. Brandenhoff was born in Duluth; his family moved to Fairmont, Minnesota, when he was in grade school. His family, including two sisters and a brother, was active in their local parish and he served as an acolyte and organist. He always felt “close to the Church,” so entering the seminary felt like a natural part of God’s plan.

He attended Saint Mary’s College and Saint John’s University before being ordained in 1970. The Second Vatican Council was in process while he was enrolled in college seminary. Brandenhoff recalls that, while he loved the pre-Vatican II liturgy, he welcomed what transpired and found the excitement and change very exciting. His ordination day was “like a fairy tale,” with so much happening that it was almost overpowering.

Brandenhoff served as a parish priest, chaplain, and teacher in the Diocese of Winona for over twenty years before moving to the Twin Cities to pursue a master’s degree in social work. He served...
as a Licensed Social Worker (LICSW) in a clinical setting for 18 years while helping in parishes throughout our Archdiocese on weekends.

A personal highlight for Brandenhoff was a six-week trip to Israel led by a biblical archaeologist with Saint John’s University. One of the most profound moments was reading scripture at dawn in Capernaum along the Sea of Galilee. “More than anything else, it brought the scriptures to life,” and images flood his mind even 35 years later. That experience inspired his acquisition of an icon depicting Peter walking on water with Jesus.

Brandenhoff started as a weekend presider at The Basilica in 2016 and finds it to be “second to nothing” in the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic liturgy. He says, “ Tradition is a living thing to hand on — the living tradition of the faith. As I approach a half-century of ministry, it is very humbling to have been part of so many people’s lives.”

REVEREND PAT GRIFFIN

Fr. Griffin, the youngest of four children, was raised on a farm in Shieldsville, Minnesota. He laughingly recalls an “Irish, democratic, and Catholic” upbringing, and his oldest sister, Sheila, also entered religious life as a Dominican nun. Griffin entered the Saint Paul Seminary “at a fascinating time” in Church history, and especially enjoyed theology classes examining the implementation of Vatican II, “not just the philosophy.”

He was ordained in February 1967 and presided at his first Mass on a cold and snowy day back in Shieldsville. “I was scared to death,” he recalls with a laugh. Griffin always felt called to ministry as a diocesan priest, and “there was so much reflection occurring at that time on what it meant to be Catholic and the people of God.”

Throughout his career and in a number of parishes around the Twin Cities, including Saint Timothy (Blaine), Risen Savior (Apple Valley), Saint Pascal Baylon (east side of Saint Paul), and Saint Stephen (Minneapolis), Griffin recalls a tremendous blessing in the lay communities at each parish. “I enjoy ministering to the needs and challenges of lay life.” He especially recalls the “wonderful privilege” of serving people in need at Saint Stephen. “The poor have a lot to teach all of us.”

Griffin continues be fascinated by Church history, what it has become today, and the various people who bring our Church to life. He enjoys reading, especially history and the documents of the Church and the Second Vatican Council. “It brings a whole new understanding of Jesus the Christ in the modern world.”

Although recent health problems have limited his ability to preside at The Basilica, Fr. Griffin has an affinity for our “wonderfully mixed” and welcoming parish community. He admires that all of us, “young and old, rich and poor, families and individuals,” intentionally chose to engage in parish life at The Basilica. “It is what a parish ought to be.”

REVEREND HARRY TASTO

Fr. Tasto, the second oldest in a large family, grew up on a prairie farm in western Minnesota near the South Dakota border. He enjoyed repairing things that were broken or dilapidated and at one time dreamed of being an architect. Their parish priest was also the director of vocations in the Diocese of New Ulm, and at his urging Tasto enrolled in the seminary.

His father’s cousin was the Bishop of Superior (Wisconsin) in 1968, and was given delegation to ordain Tasto in the hometown parish church where three

Continued.
REVEREND GREG WELCH

When asked about his childhood, Fr. Welch bemoans “I’ve spent my whole life within one hour.” He grew up in Saint Paul with two sisters and attended Cretin High School before entering Nazareth Hall and the Saint Paul Seminary. Welch was ordained in February 1967. “There have been enormous changes between then and now,” Fr. Welch reflects. For post-Vatican II priests like him, “there was a lot of excitement on implementing the Vatican Council.”

He served at four parishes as an associate pastor, and recalls those early years as challenging personally “because I’d never done it before.” But he also says it was—and still is—a privilege to be part of people’s lives in such a meaningful way, especially at funerals and weddings and in experiences of confession or counseling. As a priest, he explains, “you take the reputation of everyone who served before” and are invited to “celebrate with people and parishes in all points of their lives.”

He became a pastor in 1978 and led four local parishes — All Saints (Lakeville), Saint Luke (now Saint Thomas More in Saint Paul), Saint Austin (Minneapolis), and Saint Patrick (Edina) — before retiring in 2011. Welch is “very rooted in this area” as a diocesan priest, and he enjoys the stability of the Twin Cities where he has a community of school classmates, relatives, and former parish members.

As a weekend presider at The Basilica, Welch “likes the feel of it here” and specifically cites the wide diversity of worshippers. “There is a pluralism of people and in the liturgies themselves. The Sunday evening Masses are very different from a 9:30 a.m. Mass.” In all the various Masses, though, Welch notes the high caliber of staff and volunteers involved with liturgies and music. “Even if the Mass is a little long, people don’t leave,” he chuckles. “People stay very intentionally because they want to be here.” He also admires our social justice and interfaith outreach efforts. “There is just a lot to like about The Basilica!” he says with a smile.

Melissa Streit has been an active volunteer and parish member since 1996.

REVEREND HARRY TASTO

generations of his family had worshipped. Their town had six Protestant churches in addition to the Tasto’s Catholic parish, and he invited those pastors to process with the other vested clergy at his ordination Mass. Five pastors accepted the invitation, and most of them met for the first time that day. One month later, they formed a ministerial association which still continues.

Tasto describes his first parish as “one of those scenic white clapboard churches” often seen in rural villages. The other church was of United Church of Christ denomination and Tasto became dear friends with their pastor, a retired seminary professor. After his sudden death from cancer, the parish had difficulty attracting a new pastor and Tasto conducted Sunday services at their church for almost a year (in addition to two regular Sunday Masses). Many years later, when the congregation was celebrating its 100th anniversary, Tasto was invited to attend as a former “pastor.”

After a decade in rural Minnesota, Fr. Tasto came to the Twin Cities for graduate school and worked at local parishes while completing two Master’s degrees. Bishop Lucker gave him permission to join this Presbytery and he served our Archdiocese for 36 years, while also completing a doctorate degree. Fr. Tasto was pastor at many local churches, including Saint Timothy (Blaine) and Saint Thomas the Apostle (Minneapolis) before retiring. Fr. Tasto began as a weekend presider at The Basilica in Fall 2016.

Known as a man of a million hobbies, Fr. Tasto enjoys woodworking, building and home remodeling, vegetable and flower gardening, cooking, baking, cycling, traveling and reading. Father Tasto will celebrate his 50th Jubilee with a reception on July 1 after the 11:30 a.m. Mass at The Basilica.
A Conversation with
Anne Cullen Miller

“MINNESOTA NICE” isn’t just a saying — it’s a way of life here, with a large percentage of Minnesotans sharing their time and treasure with a variety of charitable organizations. Our vibrant local Catholic community is particularly generous and the Catholic Community Foundation is celebrating 25 years of faithfully investing in the Minnesota community.

“Donors give through us, not to us,” explains Foundation president Anne Cullen Miller, “and Catholic values are infused in all we do.” She views her work as a ministry of the Church, teaching donors about the joy of philanthropy, and helping to unlock our human desire to give back.

The Foundation’s work is rooted in relationship — learning about each donor and understanding their philanthropic goals. “Some donors know very specifically what they want to do,” Miller shares. “Others don’t know as much yet and are open to recommendations and suggestions on how to achieve their faith-based goals, whether it is in education, social service, or other areas.” As a public charity, they earn and sustain the trust of donor partners and stakeholder organizations through intentional care, support, and transparency.

Miller is proud that the Catholic Community Foundation is the largest and only self-sustaining foundation of its kind in the country. Separate from the Archdiocese, the Catholic Community Foundation skillfully manages investments for Catholic organizations as well as individual donors via donor advised funds, endowment funds, charitable trusts, charitable annuities, and more. They are also the sixth-largest public grantmaker in Minnesota, administering $14 million in grants last year to support organizations whose missions and ministries align with Catholic values.

Despite being born and raised in Saint Paul, Miller feels a particular kinship to The Basilica. Her relative, Rev. Thomas Cullen, became rector of Immaculate Conception parish in Minneapolis only a year after his ordination. He served that parish, which eventually became The Basilica of Saint Mary, from 1902-1921. As pastor, Fr. Cullen worked with Archbishop John Ireland on initial plans for the current Basilica church.

“I really admire what is happening at The Basilica,” Miller enthuses. “The membership growth and engagement, especially with young people, is exciting.” She demonstrated this enthusiasm by designating funds from her board-designated President’s Fund at the Catholic Community Foundation to underwrite expenses for Basilica staff to participate in Parish Catalyst. Based in Los Angeles, Parish Catalyst builds vibrant Catholic parishes and develops platforms for parish excellence. Our staff attendees participated in a cohort for engaging millennials in the Church.

To mark their 25th anniversary, Miller and the Catholic Community Foundation are hosting a special dinner called Come to the Table on April 26 to celebrate the impact made possible by collective generosity and to inspire future faith-aligned philanthropy throughout Minnesota.

Reflecting on her vocation at the Catholic Community Foundation, Miller is inspired by how Catholics continually move forward, undeterred, to pass along the blessings they received due to their deep personal faith and connection to God. “I hear it from donors from all walks of life and in different forms,” she says smiling. “We can move the dial farther when we do it together.”

To learn more about the Catholic Community Foundation, visit www.ccf-mn.org or contact Mary Haeg at 651.389.0875.

Melissa Streit has been an active volunteer and parish member since 1996.
Mass of Solidarity and Cultural Celebration

In support of migrants and refugees

The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is home to more than 800,000 Catholics celebrating Mass regularly in 11 different languages.

It ISN’T COMMON to walk into a Catholic church before Mass and hear the rhythmic pounding of drums echoing against stone walls, see onlookers in the pews watching children perform a native dance, and the Archbishop beaming with pride, watching his flock share its array of cultures. The Mass of Solidarity and Cultural Celebration held at The Basilica the Second Sunday of Advent 2017 was a vibrant, festive evening.

Following Pope Francis’ appeal to “Share the Journey” with our sisters and brothers around the world who are displaced from their homes, the Mass of Solidarity highlighted the rich cultural diversity in Catholic parishes across the Archdiocese. The Mass offered all in attendance a snapshot into the true definition of the word catholic: diverse, broad, comprehensive, and universal.

The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is home to more than 800,000 Catholics celebrating Mass regularly in 11 different languages. All were invited to share the richness of their culture by wearing the clothes of their native culture or ethnicity.

Throughout the Mass, members of the Aztec, Cameroonian, Indigenous Peoples, Karen, Karenni, and Vietnamese communities led the diverse mix of musical styles and dance. Archbishop Bernard Hebda celebrated the Mass, with concelebrants Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Fr. John Bauer (The Basilica), Fr. Dale Korogi (Ascension, Minneapolis), Fr. Donald Willard, CSSR (Saint Alphonsus, Brooklyn Center), Fr. Augustine Truong (Saint Anne-Saint Joseph Hein, Minneapolis) and Deacon Noakao Yang (Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Paul). The first and
second readings were proclaimed in Spanish and Swahili, respectively, and the gospel in English. Bishop Cozzens delivered his homily alternating between Spanish and English, and the intercessions were offered in seven languages. The Mass was truly an answer to Pope Francis’ call.

In September 2017, the Pope and Caritas Internationalis launched a two-year campaign to promote global action and awareness of the plight of migrants. “Christ Himself asks us to welcome our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters with open arms,” the Pope proclaimed during his weekly General Audience in September. “When the arms are open, they are ready for a sincere embrace, an affectionate embrace, a warm embrace.”

The situation is indeed dire and it can be difficult to grasp the enormity of the crisis. There are currently over 65 million forcibly displaced people across the globe. They are fleeing war, religious and ethnic persecution, and, in many cases, natural disasters. To put the scale of this crisis in perspective, 65 million people would fill US Bank Stadium 984 times.

And the crisis does not end there. Public policy debate rages in the U.S. over how to not only address the refugee crisis, but also immigration, including the plight of ‘Dreamers’, individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children and have no legal status. This is no small number either — there are an estimated 800,000 ‘Dreamers’ currently residing in the U.S. Bishop Cozzens urged those in attendance to support legislation protecting ‘Dreamers’, saying that all human beings want the same things: “To provide for our families. To raise our children. To worship our God.” And in a nod to standing in solidarity with these people, he said, “If these things are criminal, then we are all criminals together.”
Given the magnitude of this crisis, solutions may seem out of reach or reserved for those who wield political power. But Catholic organizations around the world are leading the effort to inform and inspire this movement of solidarity: the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Catholic Charities, among others. To learn more about what you can do to join in solidarity with migrants and refugees, visit www.sharejourney.org. The recommendations range from donations and prayer to social media and legislative advocacy.

The Basilica community has been active in an Immigrant Support Ministry for several years. Through partnerships with Lutheran Social Services and Advocates for Human Rights, The Basilica has sponsored seven refugee families and four families seeking asylum since 2015. The ministry helps families assimilate to their new life in Minnesota — supporting them with services ranging from rental assistance to learning the bus system and enrolling their children in school.

As the immigration crisis grows increasingly challenging, Bishop Cozzens’s words bring comfort and perspective. “None of us is in our homeland,” he said in his homily. “None of us are truly at home because we are not made for this home.” We are called to welcome our sisters and brothers with open arms and a warm embrace in this life, and we look with joyful hope to receiving the same in the next.

Joe Eiden is a parishioner and a eucharistic minister.

Dancers, presiders, and attendees at the Archdiocesan Mass of Solidarity and Cultural Celebration, December 9, 2017.
The Basilica Receives Energy Efficiency Award

Stewardship of our historic campus

The Basilica of Saint Mary was designed to be many things, including an awe-inspiring piece of architecture rising high above the western edge of downtown Minneapolis and, of course, a spiritual home for a congregation with no borders. It wasn’t designed to win any awards for energy efficiency.

But times have changed, and The Basilica is keeping up. In fact, The Basilica recently received a 2017 Building Energy Performance Award from the City of Minneapolis for outstanding energy reduction. The noted improvements — specifically a new boiler system, the addition of central air conditioning in the rectory and school, and a significant conversion to LED lighting — resulted in a 21 percent reduction in energy use for The Basilica campus.

“It was a real honor,” says Peter Crain, chair of The Basilica’s Facilities Assessment Committee and a member of The Basilica Landmark’s Board of Directors. “I think it’s wonderful that the city is recognizing buildings — especially historic buildings — for the progress that is being made in energy efficiency.”

Crain notes that it can be difficult to make energy-efficiency changes to older buildings, in part because they were horribly inefficient to begin with — a product of their era and the technology of the times. Take The Basilica’s 1913 boilers, for instance. A century ago, long before being converted to gas, they were coal-fed behemoths, and they operated at an efficiency rate of about 30 percent. The Basilica has converted to a new system of three boilers that are each about the size of a refrigerator, with energy efficiency over 90 percent.

As part of renovations to the rectory and school buildings, central air conditioning has replaced about 35 window units, furthering energy efficiencies. And across The Basilica campus, there has been a dedicated effort to convert halogen, fluorescent, and incandescent light bulbs to LED lighting, which lasts longer, takes less energy, and emits less heat. Other areas of the church will be converted to LED lighting as interior restoration projects move forward.

As Crain points out, the builders of the majestic Basilica used state-of-the-art design and materials at the time, like a steel substructure. “We’re doing the same thing now. We’re using the latest technology available to us, and hopefully producing the best outcomes for the money donated to [The Basilica Landmark],” he says. “We want to be good stewards of that money.”

And if good stewardship can translate to the environment as well as the balance sheet, all the better.

Rick Moore is a parishioner, usher, and volunteer for the Hennepin Connections mentoring program.
Parish Celebrates its Sesquicentennial

A look at where we started

How does a parish grow from a modest group of Irish and Italian immigrants worshipping in a wooden shed to a grand Basilica whose members hail from 434 different zip codes across the Twin Cities metro area and beyond? In the words of Florence Brown, intrepid chronicler of the earliest years of our parish, it takes “boundless zeal, ardent faith, unstinted charity, holiest simplicity and deepest consecration to the service of religion,”...and about 150 years. This October, we begin a year-long celebration of the sesquicentennial of our parish; a parish history of three churches, two locations, eleven pastors, and the people who lived and worshipped here.

The first Catholic church in what is now Minneapolis was on the northeast side of the river, Saint Anthony of Padua. Each Sunday, west bank Catholics had to cross the river by ferry, toll bridge, or for free across the ice come winter, to go to Mass.

In 1866, with the blessing of Bishop Thomas Grace, Fr. John McDermott purchased land on the west side of the Mississippi to build a Catholic school which doubled as a church building on Sundays. The community continued to grow, and shortly before their first resident pastor, Fr. James McGolrick, arrived in October 1868, a “shed church” was built off the rear of the school.

The church was furnished with a simple altar and benches. Double doors opened up to the ground floor of the school to facilitate overflow congregations. This was the first church of the Immaculate Conception parish, though the parish would not be officially recognized for several more years.

Fr. James was immediately popular; he was young, Irish, full of enthusiasm, yet retiring in character. He soon founded a St. Vincent de Paul Society for the care of the poor and a Rosary Society for care of the church. By the end of the year, he announced in the Minneapolis Tribune that the “Catholic Society” was planning to build a new church — the biggest in the city.

The new (second) Church of the Immaculate Conception was built beside the school at the corner of Third Avenue and Third Street North in 1871. A striking building of gray stone with a high bell tower, the laying of its cornerstone drew a crowd of 3,000 people. The parish boundary
stretched far to the west, even drawing several families from distant Golden Valley. Community life revolved around the new church, with its 5,000 book lending library, social and devotional clubs, musical groups, and parish picnics at area lakes. Missionaries came to speak at what was still considered a pioneer parish.

Fr. James’ most successful venture was a chapter of the Fr. Matthew Society, a Total Abstinence Society. The successful group curbed alcoholism in the community, created a sort of Irish ex-pats social club, and made Fr. James a respected city leader.

By the early 1890s, the neighborhood around the church had changed drastically. Residences had been pushed out by industrial and manufacturing development. Rectors Fr. James Byrne and Fr. James Keane both explored options for building a new church in a less congested part of the city, but their dream was not realized until Archbishop John Ireland partnered with newly ordained rector Fr. Thomas Cullen. On August 1, 1905, the Archbishop announced plans for a bold and beautiful church: a Pro-Cathedral dedicated to Mary on the western edge of the city, to be built simultaneously with his new Cathedral in Saint Paul.

The old church stood vacant for several years after all Masses moved to the Pro-Cathedral in 1914 before it was dismantled. The stone from the church was offered for free to anyone with a cart to haul it away, and legend is that many homes in Northeast Minneapolis were built with Immaculate Conception stone for their foundations.

There are current Basilica families with roots in the original shed church, and new families joining our parish today. Our community is our greatest strength, which is why starting in October we’ll be telling the parish history through 150 Faces: 150 Stories. This initiative will collect and tell the stories, not just of the priests and wealthy donors, but of musicians, neighborhood shopkeepers, and lunch ladies who were and are the heart of this parish over the past 150 years.

Heather Craig is the archivist for The Basilica.
On ANY GIVEN DAY at The Basilica of Saint Mary, guests arrive eagerly throughout our campus, accessing the church building, The Basilica School, the Reardon Rectory, or Cowley Center via many public entrances. Some may be arriving for Mass while others are attending meetings, concerts, or educational workshops. Others come to our campus for our St. Vincent de Paul outreach ministries or maybe they just seek a sandwich and a hot cup of coffee.

The Basilica is the spiritual home to thousands of parishioners and community members, with an average of 2,400 weekly Mass attendees plus hundreds more for weddings, funerals, and a variety of events. The staff and volunteers strive to create a welcoming experience for each and every person coming to the campus.

In the coming months Basilica leadership will begin a concentrated look at campus space — identifying how our space is both a help and hindrance to meeting our parish needs and serving the broader community. In addition to addressing space concerns, this effort also is assessing accessibility, security, aesthetics, and a number of other areas.

The Basilica of Saint Mary, with the financial support provided by The Basilica Landmark, has hired two liturgical design consultants to engage and assist in our efforts to reimagine campus spaces. Robert Habiger and Father Gil Sunghera, S.J., are providing space usage guidance and insights throughout campus. The multi-year process started with a series of meetings and introductions with staff and volunteer leaders in January.

MEET THE CONSULTANTS

Robert Habiger brings 40 years of experience in addressing the function of assembly spaces with an emphasis in religious projects. He sees himself as a guiding hand, asking questions throughout the process and pressing the leadership committee members to think about how we worship in our space. He recognizes and wants to honor The Basilica’s traditional and historic space, but will also press us to contemplate the future and ask, “What are we being called to do now?” Remarking that “The Basilica Landmark has done a wonderful job with the exterior environment,” he now urges us to look to the future while maintaining the historic significance of a church that is meaningful to so many people.

Father Gil Sunghera, S.J., who has a background in architecture and liturgical design, will consult with The Basilica on a
more limited scale, providing insights relating to young adults as an asset in evolving our campus space plans.

THE CHURCH INTERIOR

“The heart of the matter is the church interior,” says Terri Ashmore, The Basilica’s Managing Director. “It has been a driving force since we developed a master facilities plan in 2012, for our entire campus and looking ahead to the interior restoration.”

The Basilica Landmark has funded several interior renovation projects already, including the Narthex, Sacristy, and Saint Anthony of Padua shrine. Habiger also cites the development of our Saint Joseph Chapel and Undercroft (The Basilica’s lower levels) in 2000 as great examples of what can be done.

“The main sanctuary space is an extremely large feat,” Habiger notes. All of The Basilica’s different ministries need to be considered — how would they be impacted and what additional space needs should be addressed? “For updates to be all inclusive, immediate needs must be met while also looking towards the future.”

Habiger says the process of assessing space is best described as “one step at a time.” Each step is broken down and analyzed in order to put together a vision. He challenges the leadership committee, led by committee chair Kathy Andrus, to think about guiding principles such as thoughtfulness, being inclusive to all peoples, Church documents, and Catholic doctrine. “It is a difficult process,” he states, “but The Basilica has already been doing it. The vision is already very inclusive.”

His goal is to help us adapt space to create and enhance God’s presence with us. “Does the space give us a sense of God’s presence and learning about God? How does The Basilica community move forward in a fuller way in this location?”

CAMPUS NEEDS

Modern considerations also need to be put to the forefront, with safety as one of the most important considerations. “We have a lot of access points,” Ashmore says, “so security always needs to be assessed. We want to remain welcoming, but new technology and tools are available that weren’t available before.”

Accessibility is another key consideration in configuring further work on the campus. With guidance from our active Disability Awareness Committee, there is always more The Basilica can do to insure our campus is accessible and hospitable to all.

The Basilica has good space to accommodate smaller groups and large-scale events, but space(s) that can support 50 to 200 people in a comfortable setting must to be addressed. “An opportunity is Cowley Center,” says Ashmore. “The question is if we could retrofit the building to fulfill these needs”

MANY PARTNERS

Parishioners at The Basilica are drawn to our diverse and vibrant downtown community. Ashmore shares that attracting young adults and families with children is vital to position The Basilica towards the future. So the committee needs to understand these demographics as they relate to our space. Habiger agrees that we need to get parishioner input in this process, to guide and advise the leadership committee to what is next for this community. Ashmore concurs, saying “it’s important to really involve [parishioners] in the conversation as we go.”

To that end, a campus planning team has been formed — a group of parish members who will provide context and work with the consultants and parish leaders. In addition, Habiger shares, “engineers, acoustical and audio visual professionals will also add to the conversation and inform the decisions” as the committee moves forward.

Miller Dunwiddie Architecture has worked on The Basilica’s renovation projects since the 1990s and continues to address space functionality and accessibility needs. The Minneapolis-based firm will continue to be a key partner in planning future projects and Mortenson is our general contractor.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

A thoughtful plan of this scale takes time and the input of many people. Parish members will be asked to provide support and insights to the leadership committee as ideas evolve and specific plans are developed. With real plans still to be created, the cost of these improvements is not completely known. But, looking at past restoration and renovation projects at The Basilica, a capital campaign would likely occur. The Basilica Landmark, a separate 501(c)(3) organization organized to preserve, restore, and advance The Basilica campus, is generously funding the consultant costs and would manage a future capital campaign to bring these plans into fruition.

When The Basilica of Saint Mary was designed over a century ago, the breadth of change in and around our historic building could not have been imagined. Now our leadership committee is tasked to identify and address various considerations. Our community can take great pride in the deliberate and thoughtful care being taken throughout this process.

George Norman is a parishioner and serves as an acolyte and on the 150th Anniversary Celebration Committee.
Dear Johan,

Is it true that Pope Francis is going to change the words of The Lord’s Prayer? Those were the words of Jesus himself. Does the Pope have the authority to change them?

Gentle Reader,

To be sure, Pope Francis has no intention to change The Lord’s Prayer. What he has spoken about is changing the vernacular translations so The Lord’s Prayer may reflect more accurately the words Jesus prayed. Jesus of course prayed in Aramaic. The Lord’s Prayer as we know it is a translation of the prayer found in the Vulgate, the first Latin Bible. This Latin version in turn is a translation of the Greek prayer found in the original New Testament. And the Greek is a translation of the Aramaic prayer spoken by Jesus. So the words we ascribe to Jesus are three languages removed from the actual words Jesus used.

Translating a text from one language into another is extremely difficult. It is said that each translation is in effect an interpretation. And as our English version is not a direct translation/interpretation of the Aramaic, it ends up being an interpretation of an interpretation of an interpretation.

In recent news reports, Pope Francis reacted positively to a request by the French bishops to change one line in the French version of The Lord’s Prayer. Since then, the Italian bishops have voted to do the same while the German bishops voted against it. In English, the contested line reads “and lead us not into temptation.”

In an interview with an Italian Catholic television station, Pope Francis said: “It’s I, the one who falls, not Him pushing me toward temptation so as to then see how I fall. No, well, a father won’t do that. A father will immediately help you pick yourself up. Satan’s the one leading you into temptation. That’s Satan’s task.”

Though a translation closer to the Greek would be “do not put us to the test,” it does not seem like we will be using those words anytime soon. In last year’s Motu Proprio: Magnum Principium, Pope Francis granted more independence for translations to the different bishop’s conferences; the U.S. Bishops don’t seem eager to change The Lord’s Prayer. Second, very few people think that God tempts them to sin, even though that is what the current translation implies. Third, The Lord’s Prayer is so ingrained in people’s minds that it seems daunting to change it, even though the French did it without much fuss.

Dear Johan,

I noticed that you took part in some sort of a football game with Muslims and Jews. If I am not mistaken you wore your alb. Was that appropriate and why did you do it?

Gentle Reader,

Admittedly, I was a bit worried about wearing my alb on the football field, but after taking one look at Archbishop Hebda I stopped worrying.

The idea of featuring different faith leaders on one football team was proposed to a group of interfaith clergy by former senator Al Franken. He wanted to show to the country that Minnesotans are committed to interfaith dialogue and collaboration.

The group of clergy loved the idea and started preparations with the full support of the local Super Bowl host committee. A professional crew was assembled and everyone went to Augsburg University for the filming. It was a wild experience, but I think everyone enjoyed it and the result was great.

Pope Francis reminds us again and again that the only antidote to religious extremism and violence is a culture of genuine encounter. One of the Pope’s titles is Pontifex Maximus, which means supreme builder of bridges. As disciples of Jesus and following the example of our “Bridge Builder in Chief” (Francis), we are all called to be builders of bridges in the service of a global culture of encounter. Walls, once built, can be destroyed or circumvented.

The video theme was One Heart. One Mind. One Spirit. It is a wake-up call to all of us. For as we all believe that we are created in the image of God we ought to embrace a uniting narrative. With our faith leaders, let us proclaim One Heart. One Mind. One Spirit from now unto eternity.

Johan M.J. van Parys, Ph.D., has been The Basilica’s director of liturgy and sacred arts since 1995.
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