

Out Reach

Saint Francis Xavier Brooklyn

Spring-2019

Holiness, what does it mean to you...

Ordinary People, Ordinary Things

When we think of Holiness we probably picture in our minds Seraphim and Cherubim hovering over some saintly figure as they do some extraordinarily good deed. Or we might think of St. Theresa holding a starving child in her arms. Or we may think of Jesus feeding the masses. This is all holiness, in it's highest form. It is not something that we can hope to attain. But don't let that scare you off. "Ordinary people doing ordinary things with love and faith" are right here among us at

St. Francis, And we don't even realize it. And neither do those who are doing "ordinary things." That's because of the humility that comes with holiness. Below are a few examples of those among us who are being holy everyday doing something that they may not realize makes them holy. They just act out of love for their fellow human being and because of their faith in God. "Ordinary people...ordinary things...love and faith." Is that you too? Think about it and don't underestimate your own holiness. - Ken L. Perry

JANICE AND JASON MANNINGHAM

What does holiness mean to you?

As Pope Francis once declared, holiness is not defined by having visions or performing extraordinary feats of devotion, but by living with the hope of salvation promised by Christ. To us, holiness means having faith and optimism that we will be redeemed and called to serve a higher purpose in spite of the daily challenges we face and the sins we perform. At the same time, it's about including God's will in our everyday lives and being mindful of his teachings, especially when we are tested with difficult situations.

Have you ever done anything that you would consider holy?

We are new parents to our 14 month old son and been called to perform a tremendous responsibility in raising a child. Taking care of a vulnerable



Jason, Janice and Jonah

child, and ensuring he is safe, healthy, and happy is a task that we would consider holy.

We are also called upon to be good role models for our son and showing

him what it means to be loving, forgiving, patient, and generous. We look to God's will to guide us in this endeavor.

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Rae Petroccione at CHIPS

**RAFFAELA
PETROCCIONE**

I retired in 2009 from the New York State Commission of Investigation. Upon retirement I was looking to volunteer at some charitable organization. I choose CHIPS because I knew it was a local charity and I heard about it from a neighbor.

Initially, I was interviewed by Sister Mary, a Franciscan nun who in 2009 was the Director of CHIPS. I was assigned to the soup kitchen on Thursdays. My shift starts around 8:30. Myself and 6 other regular volunteers prepare a pasta lunch along with a vegetable and salad. Urns of coffee and baskets of bread are placed on each table. The lunch tray contains a juice drink, a piece of fruit and a dessert. Lunch is served from 11:30 until 1. After 1 the volunteers help with the cleaning.

You may be wondering where CHIPS gets the food. They receive food from the Park Slope Co-op, Trader Joe's and various bakeries and restaurants throughout the neighborhood. On average, CHIPS feeds about 125-140 people a day. They also serve a breakfast of hot coffee and bagels and

muffins from 9-11. They average 350 meals a day and some rely on CHIPS as their only meal. They are open every day except Sunday.

I feel good about serving food to men and women who come to the soup kitchen. Some of them are obviously homeless. Some don't appear to be homeless but they are definitely poor or without a job at the moment and some of the working poor. Some are disabled individuals who come with their health aids. The meal they get at CHIPS is probably their best meal of the day.

Do I consider this an act of holiness?

Frankly, I never thought about it in those terms. I am very fortunate in that I am financially secure and have a comfortable life. There are many people who are not so fortunate and I'm happy to help in any way I can.

I can't say that I recall any unusual experiences but I have met several interesting people and have made some good friends. The volunteers are from all walks of life.

I wish more Catholics would find a reward in giving back to their community. I get back more than I give to CHIPS.

KATHLEEN GALLAGHER

What does holiness mean to you?

Often times, I think of holiness on a high level; on that level, it means following Jesus Christ, imitating Him in thoughts, feelings, words and deeds. It also means loving God, our neighbors and ourselves, and really living the virtues that Jesus talks about in the Gospels, such as kindness, generosity, humility and justice. On that level, holiness seems to be attainable only with God's assistance and constant striving on our part. But, what resonates even more with me now and, in part, due to

the recent focus in our parish, is the theme of "Ordinary Holiness;" that is, the concept that we are not necessarily called to do extraordinary things, that require the assistance of God, but can achieve holiness much more easily by doing ordinary things with love and compassion. I appreciate that view of holiness because it allows me to see how I can be "holy" in my everyday life and also to see more clearly and the holiness of others in the many "good" and loving things they do on an ongoing basis to support each other and our parish community.

Have you ever done anything that you would consider holy?

Focusing on the theme of "ordinary" holiness, I would say "yes" because I believe (and hope) I have tried to do ordinary things with love. Of course, not every minute or all of the time, but if I have Jesus's Gospel of Love as part of my mindset as I go through the day, I think I will be better able to see the opportunities that constantly present themselves to demonstrate love and compassion. This applies to everything I do and includes all aspects of my life: my family, friends, working life, the ministries I participate in at St. Francis, to name a few. So, when



Kathleen Gallagher

I am able to live in the way that Jesus modeled for us, I consider myself to be doing something holy. Viewed through that lens, I am also better able to appreciate the holiness of others.

MAUREEN ROONEY

What does holiness mean to you?

In the eyes of the Church, saints are the “holy” people. What makes them holy is their capacity to know who or what God meant them to be - why they were created - and then, with their freedom, a willingness to live that path consciously and faithfully. Thus, Christ is present in every moment of everything they do.

Have you ever done anything that you would consider holy?

So what does this mean for a common ordinary person like myself who would like to be holy? It means trying to REMEMBER that EVERYTHING comes from God. It means taking every opportunity to wake up from the everyday distractions and forgetfulness that continually pull me away from recognizing Christ in each moment lived. It means trying to remember to say THANK YOU for each small blessing that comes my way - like every time I get a parking spot!

IAN MCGRATH

What does holiness mean to you?

Reflecting on the words of Pope Francis in his encyclical, “Gaudete Et Exsultate”, Holiness is being a person of good faith. Not just faith in the sense of religious faith, but being true to ideals and principles. Holiness calls us to participate in society, to go out among our brothers and sisters and try to make



Ian McGrath

things better for all. It's easy to focus on our own wants and needs but holiness calls us to look out for the common good, to be bold and insistent on doing what is right and good over what is easy or convenient. Another part of holiness is spreading joy and love. A wonderful way to achieve this is to share our gifts, the things we love and are passionate about. This also has the benefit of making the drudgery parts easier to bear, especially if the burdens can be shared with the community.

Have you ever done anything that you would consider holy?

My attempt to live these ideals in the church community is largely expressed through my participation in the choir at 9:30 Mass and my handling of the web site. Both are ways I contribute my abilities to make the parish a little better. Although I never succeeded in making a career of it, I spent much of my youth training to be a musician. Through the choir I exercise the skills and passions I cultivated to provide moments of meditation

or perhaps occasionally rapture to members of the congregation who care to listen. It's an honor and a great pleasure to lend my voice to this group, especially given its wide-ranging and challenging repertoire. By maintaining the parish web site (stfxbrooklyn.org), I bring skills acquired in my professional life to help the church reach the larger community and make it easier for the faithful or searching to find us out in the noisy world. This is an example where an activity that might seem like drudgery or even sorcery to some is something that a person like me can do for fun.

Being a father requires a different approach to holiness. We want to make our children's lives easier for them, by providing, both necessities like food and clothes, as well as by helping them achieve what they want. The challenge is also demanding of them the kinds of behavior that not only help daily life but also instill traits and practices that will benefit them in their lives. Setting up an environment where these behaviors are expected and consistently reinforced is a challenge, as is knowing when to hold the line and demand more and when to ease up. This makes for a constant balancing act, and I'm sure I often get it wrong. The quest for holiness leads us on.

JACOB GOELL

My name is Jacob Goell and I'm a sophomore at Xavier High School. I attended CCD program at St. Francis Xavier Church. I have participated in various community service experiences in the Parish as well as in the neighborhood such as Jack's

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Sandwich Project, park clean ups and bulb plantings. I eventually found one that keeps me coming back. It is Saturday Fun and takes place twice a month at St. Saviour's. Adults with special needs come to have F-U-N.



Jacob Goell

For two hours, everyone participates. We sing, dance, draw and celebrate. Everyone is smiling and this is what keeps bringing me back. To me, holiness is the act of treating others with fairness. When I see the smiles of everyone there, I know we've all shared in it and will be bringing a little bit of that holiness to our homes and to the rest of the world.

Within Our Church: The South Transept

The next time you are in our church on a sunny day, take a walk up the center aisle. In front of the altar, turn and look up to your right. You may be surprised to find yourself in India!

The stained glass windows depict the missionary activity of the Saint Francis in India. Francis appears in the center panel, holding a crucifix. He is surrounded with lilies, recalling his chastity and purity of intention. To Francis' right is novice Francis Marsilhas, his companion. To his left is a man in armor, possibly Martin Alfonso de Sousa, Royal Governor of Goa.

To the left and below St. Francis are the masses of the poor, sick and invalids. St. Francis has just restored the life of a man rising from his pallet, beside two astonished women and a gravedigger. A women carries a dead child in her arms. Two men, one blind and the other leaning on his crutch, wait to be touched by the healing power of God.

A pagan temple rises in the rear left, housing idols; one



has been destroyed. St. Francis' right arm extends toward the falling image. To the right, a gathering of angels bears a cross in radiant light; beyond them a seated woman holds a chalice in one hand (symbolizing the promise of suffering and consolation), the other resting on a globe (symbolizing universality or Catholicity).

The window was designed based on a painting by Rubens, entitled "The Miracles of St. Francis Xavier, executed for a newly built Jesuit church in Antwerp in 1621. The original is now in Vienna. The South Transept of the Church, where the stained glass resides, is a gift to the parish from Helen Tracy Driscoll made in 1980. If, when you are there, the bells start ringing, you can thank the same family—

Helen's family also donated the tower chimes in 1932.

For more information on St. Francis Xavier Church, please pick up a copy of the self-guided tour book in the vestibule.