

Father Knows Best

by Father Jack Mattimore, SJ



When one thinks of St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, what often first comes to mind is the food given to the hungry and the drink for the thirsty served to so many each day in the kitchen. Perhaps others think of the clothing offered without cost to those in need or the home offered to those with nowhere else to go, or the hand of friendship and the listening ear for those who are lonely or burdened.

In all of this the work of Christ continues, for at the heart of St. Luke's is the call to do what Jesus did.

Jesus, the Divine Mercy, asks each and every one of us to be mercy for our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. At St. Luke's the works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual, are performed by missionaries, associate missionaries, volunteers and friends, who have heard the call in their own hearts to give freely what they have freely received from God. And all of this would not be possible without the help of so many who share generously with the Mission so that the bills can be paid and the work can continue and grow. As Jesus brought Good News to the poor, so too does everyone at St. Luke's, thanks to the help of each and every person who gives clothing, food, furniture, or money so that those without can have what they need.

What we need to remember is that all of this good work in one way or another is intimately connected to prayer. In some ways, it is the fruit of prayer. When Amy and Norm have an intimidating financial need, they bring it to the Lord in prayer and trust that He will take care of it for them and they can recount stories of how God answered their prayers by speaking to others as they prayed, prompting them to give to the Mission. People have written large checks that have been exactly what Amy and Norm had told the Lord they needed. Amy jokes that the Lord doesn't let her get ahead with the bills, but He always allows her to catch up, as long as she continues to trust Him.

In other ways, prayer provides the strength and fortitude needed for the work. Those who are privileged to work here at the Mission could not do what they do day after day without a daily discipline of prayer. The Eucharist, of course, is at the heart of the prayer life of the Mission, with both daily Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament being important parts of the life of a missionary. Working in such intensely spiritual surroundings also requires faithfulness to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To continue to say "Yes" to God without knowing what lies ahead also leads us to Mary, our Mother, and praying the rosary and meditating on her life and her Son's life, guarantees Our Lady's help as well.

As a Catholic community, the heart of the prayer life of St. Luke's Mission of Mercy is the sacraments. The community gathers for the Eucharist each weekday afternoon and each Sunday. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated quite often. Rarely does a priest visit the Mission without being asked to hear a confession, and a line forms almost instantly whenever there is a light on in a confessional. Knowing the power of God's mercy makes us eager to confess our sins so as to hear the words of absolution and to receive the gifts of pardon and peace.

At the Easter Vigil each year, we welcome into the Church men, women, and children who have gone through RCIA in preparation for the sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. At other times throughout the year, we are blessed with the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of baptism during Sunday Mass for some of the newest and littlest members of our community. When there are those in need of the healing strength that comes from the Sacrament of the Sick, they are

anointed in the context of the Mass so that they can benefit from the prayers of the whole community.

We have even had marriages at the Mission, a cause for great joy as couples commit their lives to one another in the presence of Christ and His church. And while we have not seen an ordination at the Mission, we pray often that some of our younger brothers will hear the call of Christ and respond generously to the invitation to the priesthood. Many of us are trusting God to raise up holy priests from our midst and we patiently pray that this will come to pass.

At the community's Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday as the missionaries and associate missionaries commit themselves to service at the Mission, they are given a crucifix to wear that has at its center a St. Benedict's medal. This is fitting for several reasons, one of which is that St. Benedict's motto of "laborare et orare" – to work and to pray – is a concise summary of what the missionaries and associate missionaries have just promised God they will do for the coming year. St. Luke's Mission of Mercy is all about doing the works of mercy and praying for God's mercy "on us and on the whole world."

St. Benedict was also known for his emphasis on hospitality, so too do all at St. Luke's Mission of Mercy welcome all who would like to come and share in our work and prayer. Come for Mass someday. Come to help serve a meal. Come to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy before the Blessed Sacrament at the hour of mercy. Come for a day and keep coming back and perhaps you may realize that God is calling you to stay awhile. No one is turned away at St. Luke's. And even if you can't come, be merciful and say a prayer for us. We promise to do the same for you.

Join the Missionary Community in Prayer!

The Missionaries of St. Luke's Mission of Mercy invite you to join us as we gather daily in prayer. Please see our winter schedule below and feel free to stop in for adoration, prayer, or Mass. If you can't make it to the Mission, join us in prayer right at home.

Sunday Mass: 1:00 PM
Daily Adoration: 9:00 AM -4:30 PM (Monday to Friday)
9:00 AM Rosary
9:20 AM Morning Prayer (Liturgy of the Hours)
3:00 PM Hour of Great Mercy / Chaplet
4:15 PM Evening Prayer (Liturgy of the Hours)
4:30 PM Mass

