



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — May 13, 2020

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From Our Bishop

Food insecurity amidst pandemic – here's what we can do

(This is a transcript of a video message.)

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. We've been talking off and on all through the pandemic about the ways that we love our neighbors. And right now, one of the ways that we love our neighbors is to help them have enough food to eat.

There is a hunger emergency going on in our state right now. It's a result of pandemic and the large number – record number – of people who have lost their jobs. And the financial pressure that resulted from that has created food insecurity amongst people who have not ever been food insecure before. It also has created a level of pressure on the organizations that provide meals and provide food for households. And as every organization scrambles to double or triple the number of people they serve, they have run into obstacles along the way. Some of this will eventually sort itself out, but one thing that seems quite clear is there is a pressing need that is going to remain in place for a long period of time as the pandemic continues in our area.

And so I come to you asking how you can help with hunger. I have some ideas and one of them is quite simple. Many of our parishes have some sort of feeding ministry, and I've asked our parishes to let

us know how they're doing and if they could use some help from the rest of the diocese. They're excited to get some help from all of us, and so every week in this newsletter we'll focus on a different parish. This week, the very first one, is St. Andrew's in Newark. And they're a perfect example of exactly what has happened: the need in their area increased, their income did not increase, as a matter of fact it decreased as members of the congregation lost their jobs, and the shelves in their pantry are completely bare. They're not able to help anyone at the moment and the need continues to be as pressing.

Each week those parishes that have a food ministry will tell us how they're doing and they'll also be specific with us about ways that we can help, whether it is our financial resources or whether we can volunteer for them or they could use someone to make phone calls to leave a word of cheer with people – however they could use help they are going to let us know what it is we can do.

And I think all of us are reminded in this, of the number of times that Jesus asked his followers to feed the sheep, take care of my people in essence. Please make sure they are not hungry, not hungry for food, not hungry for friendship, not hungry for God, but all of these things are ways that we address hunger. But this first one, the hunger for food, is a pressing one in our diocese right now. So I invite you each week to consider how you can help. And I hope at the end of every night that every single one of us as, we say our prayers, can also look back on the day and see that yes indeed,

we helped someone to have something to eat and when we did that we took care of one of God's people.

From Our Canons

Holy Manna

By the Rev. Canon Dr. Andrew R. Wright

In the supplemental hymnal *Wonder Love and Praise*, at #761, there's a great hymn that uses a tune from the 19th century American folk hymn tradition, *Holy Manna*, alongside a 20th century text by Canadian hymn writer Sylvia Dunstan that begins "All who hunger gather gladly." Here's the first stanza:

*"All who hunger, gather gladly;
holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering.
Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good."*

We talked about literal hunger in last week's *VOICE Online* and the basic imperative that we have as Christians to respond to that need. We'll continue to look at ways to respond to that in our diocese this week and in coming weeks. The powerful responsibility of Christians to respond to those in need is first and foremost about love – God's love for us enacted by our showing love to others – but it is also wound up in our basic identity as those who gather at Christ's table.

The complexity of Holy Communion in our current distanced moment has caused many of us to wonder when and how that meal of Jesus may return – and the hymn "All who hunger" is a joyful celebration of what that means, to gather for Communion from the wilderness, to be fed spiritually, to "Taste and see that God is good" once again. When we gather at that holy table, as we long to do, we encounter Christ in the

sacramental meal, in the bread, in the cup. It is vital to remember, though, that Christ is always in solidarity with those at the margins, with the poor, the hungry, those who are oppressed. Jesus brings all those he loves to the table with him. When we do gather in Communion, we are encountering the least and the marginalized through Jesus himself. And so, there is an ethical component to Holy Communion – as we gather at that table, that altar, with Jesus and all those Jesus loves, so we must go forth to offer love and care for them in their daily circumstances, in their hunger, in their pain, in their poverty. Jesus is one with them; we are one with him; we are called to be one with them. The hymn's second stanza reminds us of the radical welcome of Jesus, saying:

*"All who hunger, never strangers;
seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good."*

In this time of physical distancing and online worship, when we cannot gather at the Lord's Table in person for that holy meal that we long for, we can enact God's gift of love in Jesus in this other way – by nonetheless caring for those who hunger, those who are poor, those who are ill, those who are oppressed. In a time when we cannot gather at the Communion table, we can yet seek and serve Christ in all persons, as our Baptismal Covenant reminds us. We can encounter Christ in the meals that we share with those in need. This is kind of turning our usual idea of Holy Communion upside down – but everything else is upside down right now, so that makes a certain kind of sense – it's upside down because rather than gathering at worship, encountering Christ in the meal there, and then going forth to share and show that love in the world, we now have a call to share the daily meal with those we meet. To encounter Christ first in our fellow human beings and then bring that

encounter deeper into our lives of prayer and thanksgiving as we connect with one another in our times of worship. The Spirit breathes in and we gather; the Spirit breathes out and we scatter into the world. Whether we are gathered together or in a thousand different homes and communities, the Spirit is still active among us, showing us the life of Jesus in new ways. The third stanza sings:

*“All who hunger, sing together;
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.”*

We will gather in person again, at the table of God, sharing the Eucharistic feast. But, in the meantime, Jesus is among us every day, every moment, in the lives of those in need. If we want to encounter Christ in the meal, all we have to do is go and share what we have already been given in love by this mighty God. And then all may taste and see that God is good.

Stories from Our Congregations

God’s providence is so vast

By Mary Frances Schjonberg

The Friday Soup Kitchen at St. Andrew’s, Newark, reminds the Rev. Sylvester Ekunwe, the church’s Vicar, of the miracle of the loaves and the fishes.

“I’ve seen that God’s providence is so vast. It is something that we cannot exhaust even though we run low every week. We always have something to give,” he said. “I’ve learned that in whatever situation we are in, if we trust in God, the Holy Spirit is there to provide and to give us what we need at the time.”

The need is great in St. Andrew’s neighborhood, which touches Newark, Hillside and Irvington, Fr. Ekunwe said. Many people are homeless, many are unemployed. It’s been that way for years and it’s why the soup kitchen started more than 20 years ago.

Now, with more and more people getting furloughed, the need is growing at the same time the feeding ministry has had to change the way it operates to protect both its guests and its volunteers. Its sit-down Friday meal in St. Andrew’s parish hall is no longer served. In mid-March, the ministry began filling grocery bags with canned good and other packaged, ready-to-eat foods to give away to people on Fridays. The shelves were soon bare.

The Holy Spirit moves in many ways, and St. James, Upper Montclair, replenished the shelves, as did United Presbyterian in West Orange. But, Fr. Ekunwe said, the donations were quickly given away. “Whatever we have right now, we can give out on Friday,” he said.

When the food is gone, St. Andrew’s refers people to United Community Corp., a community action agency founded in Newark in 1965 which rents the parish rectory. The agency has some food to give out. It refers people to other services.

The number of people coming to St. Andrew’s on Fridays has dropped over the last three weeks “because they know that we are trying to ration” the food available to give away, Fr. Ekunwe said. Bags which early on had 15 or more cans and boxes now only have about five or six. Between 45 and 60 people are now coming each Friday.

When parishioners who have lost their jobs or who are older and cannot safely go shopping call the church to say they are running low, Fr. Ekunwe also delivers food to their doorstep. On Mother’s Day he brought food to three such members after he finished livestreaming the Sunday service.

God has shown up in the midst of this weekly scramble. “This has taught me that humanity has

so much love," he said. Yet, sometimes, it takes some kind of disaster to bring it out, he added. "I have seen a whole lot of love."

Fr. Ekunwe has seen guests offer others some of their food because they think they have too much and they know the other person has more people they are trying to help.

The soup kitchen welcomes monetary donations to buy food.

And, while the shelves need to be full each Friday, Fr. Ekunwe knows the soup kitchen must think beyond the end of each week. "The way I am seeing things, this is going to be a long haul," he said. "Whatever anybody could donate will be very helpful because we know we are going in need for a long, long time."

Donations by check should be made out to St. Andrew's Church with "food pantry" in the memo line, and mailed to St. Andrew's Church, 933 South 17th Street, Newark, NJ 07108.

Photographers capture beauty even in dark times

By Sharon Sheridan Hausman

As the COVID-19 pandemic has forced people across the world to shelter in place, many have turned to the arts for entertainment, solace and inspiration. *The VOICE Online* is profiling some of the many artists in the Diocese of Newark and sharing examples of their talents. This week's article features photographers.

Cynthia Black

Rector, Church of the Redeemer, Morristown

"I've always appreciated light," says the Rev. Cynthia Black. Sometimes she'll stop in the middle of a worship service and tell the congregation: "Just look at that light!"

"I see light from a photographer's perspective," she said. "I can't help but, when I see something just beautifully stunning, to stop and want other people to see it, too."

Black has been capturing and sharing the light in photographs for most of her life. The daughter and granddaughter of avid photographers, she was snapping pictures of her own first on a Brownie box camera and then a Kodak Instamatic when she was 6 or 7.

"By the time I was 8 or 10, I was developing my own film. I never got into color darkroom work. It was always black and white. I think what that did was give me an appreciation for light, because, [with] black-and-white photography, it's always variations on a theme of black or white and shadows and light."

It's a lesson relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic. "In a lot of people's lives, there isn't a lot of color right now," Black said. "So being able to look for the light and find the light and be able to show the light is really important."

"But it's also important to look at the shadows," she added. Many photographers use an editing product called Lightroom, which allows them to adjust details like the level at which shadows are seen, she said. "Typically, you don't want shadows to be just all black ... If you can bring out the shadows, that will make the image visually a lot more appealing."

"There's some parallels in our lives today. If we can bring out the shadows and see what's there, we can deal with it."

Black engages with photography in various ways. She practices contemplative photography, which she describes as an abstract Zen photographic practice. "It's an emptying of yourself, and it doesn't produce images that would necessarily be anything you'd want to put in a gallery anywhere, but it does help you to see in [new] ways."

She captures more gallery-worthy images during travels near and far. One of her favorite spots in the diocese is the Convent of St. John Baptist in Mendham. Recently, she has been photographing the beauty of spring during walks in her neighborhood and fresh tulips in her house.

“I like to capture beauty,” she said. “I want to share it and help others to see it.”

Sometimes, she shares that beauty in worship. Her photographs have provided the images for visual meditations at General Convention. During the current Zoom worship services at her church, she uses photographs to accompany the audio tracks of each week’s anthem. Recently, for example, she used photographs she took of birds in Costa Rica to accompany the song “His Eye is on the Sparrow.”

Through it all the light connects her photography and her faith.

The Black family crest contains the words *Non crux sed lux*, which means, “Not the cross, but the light.”

“I’ve always tried to look for the light,” she said. “It’s easy to get swallowed by the dark. But I think, especially during these times, what has been most important for me to remember and to share with my congregation is that light always follows dark. Always, the sun comes up.”

She recalled being disappointed if she arrived at her mother’s house on the coast of Maine when the tide was low, but then finding that tide soon would come in again.

“The light will always come. The tide will always come,” she said. “That’s the message of the gospel. That’s the message of the Resurrection. We don’t live in darkness. We can come into the light – not the cross, but the light.”

Stephen Dittrich

Member, Trinity Parish in Bergen Point, Bayonne

Stephen Dittrich intended to major in psychology at New Jersey City University. But when the school dropped its psychology department, “I took a photo class just for the heck of it.

“I fell in love with the idea of doing pictures and printing my own prints as well – not just shooting it and dropping it off at the store.” Doing the whole process, from shooting pictures to developing film

and printing the photos, “really made it a lot more fun.”

Soon he was tackling everything from black-and-white to color photos; large, medium and small formats; and slides. He also used a photosensitive solution to create bluish cyanotype prints.

Photography “allowed me to look at the world in a different way,” Dittrich said. When he took that first photography class, “something just clicked.”

“You get to see little things, little details, not just the bigger thing,” he said. “You get to focus on something small ... and just build a world around it. It changed my whole view.”

There’s an intimacy to looking through a viewfinder and trying to capture what you see, he said. “It becomes almost personal.”

Looking at a photograph tells you something about the person who took it, and no two photographers view a subject the same way, he said.

“You don’t have to have a big, expensive camera to take a picture,” he noted. “I’ve seen people take pictures with pinhole cameras that are just phenomenal. So you shoot with what you have, and it’s the way you express yourself” that makes the difference.

Dittrich owns film and digital cameras, but these days he takes most of his photos with an iPhone11. “I just use my phone because it’s so easy, and it’s right there.”

While he enjoyed darkroom work with film, he doesn’t do much computer editing of his digital images. “I try not to retouch a lot of my stuff,” he said. “I just like the simple, raw image.”

His subject matter varies.

“Until I had kids, I took a lot of pictures of just outdoor scenes. I never really liked taking pictures of people that much, which is funny because I was a portrait photographer. Outside of work, I took pictures of everything else. ... Now, I take pictures of my kids all the time.”

Dittrich worked taking portraits for The Picture People. "I've posed large families of 20 or more, and I've done a tiny infant that's maybe a month old."

He also photographed pets, including alligators, birds and snakes. Occasionally he did weddings or other projects on his own. He once climbed a ladder to photograph 200 people at a summer camp. Another time he shot a fashion-show fundraiser for a high school prom. He particularly enjoyed a business trip to Dallas with other photographers, including one who did all of the advertising photos for the portrait company. "We just walked around Dallas together taking pictures."

Dittrich sees a connection between the patience needed in both the photographic process and religious faith.

"You have to have patience" when taking pictures, he said. "You can't willy-nilly just fire away."

While digital photographers can shoot many photos and delete any they don't like, he began as a film photographer, which limited how much he could shoot. "I learned to become very patient and look for that one shot you're going to want to get. It takes that focus."

Similarly, he said, "in order to have faith, you have to have patience.... You have to wait for it and work on it."

Christy Ward

Member, Church of the Messiah, Chester

During the first few days of the government-mandated shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, Christy Ward thought: "What can I do to help?"

"What occurred to me was to take some of my pictures of the natural world ... I promised people I would put one up every day for 31 days."

She posted the photos on various social media. "Around day 25, I started getting requests: 'Please don't stop this. Please don't stop this.'"

So she kept going.

"The beautiful outdoor shots, as I call them, have fed my soul as much as they've helped anybody else. There have been several days where that ... two or three minutes I'm working on that has been the only bright spot in the day," she said. Still, "the response I have gotten on all those different platforms has been heartwarming, to say the least."

As owner of MC Ward Images, Ward photographs more people than nature shots. But her philosophy of capturing beauty transcends the subject matter.

"Whether I'm photographing people or I'm photographing nature doesn't matter. I see beauty in everything," she said. When people, especially women, lament that they hate pictures of themselves, "I say, 'No, everybody has beauty.' ...I see beauty in everything, and so my business is about photographing people, in part because I want that for people."

She owns a picture of herself in a red velvet dress, taken when she was 5, that originally hung in her parents' dining room. While growing up as one of nine children, she said, "I knew my parents loved me whenever I looked at that, or they never would have hung it. I want that for everybody."

Although she photographs events such as weddings, she considers herself a "candid event photographer" rather than a wedding photographer.

"I want to capture all those special moments, especially the ones where people don't even realize I'm there. That's capturing the magic of the event."

During the pandemic, Ward has been photographing graduation events in a new way. "I am working with parents of high school seniors to do safe distance photo shoots of their seniors to celebrate their seniors, since they're going to miss out on their prom and their graduation." She uses a long lens to keep a safe distance, and is able to

incorporate family members into the photos as well.

She and three other photographers also joined together to offer an online beginner photo course using phone cameras.

Ward's photographic beginning came at age 5, when she began taking pictures with a plastic Kodak camera. "I've had a camera in my hand pretty much ever since."

She belonged to the "film club" in high school and participated in a juried exhibit at Delbarton School in Morris Township but didn't pursue photography formally until years later when she left a job to return to school to study world religions. While there, she took a black-and-white film course in 2006.

"I had not been in the darkroom since high school," she said. "That class changed my life. I have yet to get a degree in world religions. I do, however, have a degree in photography now. That was the beginning of my business."

Newborn zooms in to Sunday worship

By Sharon Sheridan Hausman

Violetta Frega may hold a record for earliest church attendance following birth.

While many lament the need to maintain physical distancing and to worship online during the COVID-19 pandemic, computer technology allowed Violetta and her mom, Krista Donough, to join the April 26 Sunday service at Church of the Redeemer in Morristown less than 3½ hours after Violetta entered the world at Morristown Medical Center. Not only that, her mother, the church's soprano soloist, sang that day's anthem, recorded earlier.

"It was the miracle of modern technology," said the Rev. Cynthia Black, Redeemer's rector. "I've never had a mother and a baby back in church in 3 hours in all of my 35 years of ordained ministry."

Donough was 39 weeks pregnant when she went into labor at around 1:30 a.m. on April 26 and gave birth to Violetta Hazel Frega at 7:04 a.m.

"I had just moved from labor and delivery to the mother-baby unit," she said. "I called my parents, who are members of Church of the Redeemer, and they said, 'Oh, are you going to dial into church?' I said, 'I hadn't really thought about it.'"

This was about 10 a.m., with church set to start at 10:30.

Donough thought: "There's a lot of people in the congregation who would be really glad to get some good news and see a little newborn baby."

So, while dad Joseph Frega napped, mother and baby showed up from their hospital room for worship on Zoom. Congregants greeted them with delight:

"Wonderful!"

"A beautiful baby! God bless her!"

"Best news I ever heard!"

Said Donough, "I think they were pretty surprised, and everybody had questions and congratulations, and I think everybody was really happy to see her."

"Under any other circumstances," she noted, "I sure would not have been in church that day."

Her voice, however, would have. In recent weeks, she and music director Chris Henke have shuffled videos and sheet music back and forth to provide Black with recordings of her singing to his piano accompaniment for Sunday worship.

The congregation's newest member, Violetta, arrived weighing 6 pounds, 14 ounces. Her parents named her after Donough's maternal grandmother, Hazel. "She was a prolific watercolor artist, and her favorite color was purple," she said. "Her favorite flower was the violet."

They named their older daughter, Katerina, 2½, after Frega's grandmother.

Technology helped introduce Violetta, not only to the Redeemer congregation, but to her big sister.

“They have met on Facebook but not yet in person,” Donough said on May 8. At that time, Katerina was staying with her paternal grandparents.

“We wanted her to stay there for 14 days just to make sure we didn’t bring the virus home from the hospital.”

The family planned their in-person reunion for May 10: Mother’s Day.

Diocesan Resources & Announcements

Clergy Ministry transitions

Arrivals:

- The Rev. Cathie Studwell, Rector, St. Bartholomew's, Ho-Ho-Kus – June 1

Gratitude Matters: Worrying?

By Fr. Stephen Rozelle, Christ Church, Pompton Lakes

So, you worry a lot. Bless you! It speaks to your love and compassion as a human being. It’s not the worrying that creates the upset. It’s that we’re not supposed to worry. “Don’t worry!” Does that keep you from worrying? Of course not!

What we worry about is what matters in our lives: our children’s health, our finances, etc. We don’t worry about the soy bean crop in China. We have no investment in that. Just look at it another way, worrying is our love and compassion showing up inside our minds. Give yourself permission to worry. It is a very loving way to be!

Prayers of Pandemic from the Diocese of Newark

This week’s prayer is by Verna Fitzgerald, Our Saviour, Secaucus

Our Heavenly Father, in this chaotic and confusing time we put ourselves in Your hands, asking for Your love and Your help to get us through the current global morass and on to whatever will be the new normal. We ask You to be with the essential workers in all fields, who are giving 100% of themselves to aid those in need. And a special blessing, please, to the people we don't necessarily think about, the ones who are routinely there in our daily lives: the owners and workers in mom and pop shops, neighborhood restaurants, copy stores, and all who provide the local services we take for granted. Please help us through the road back when it is Your will to get us there. In many ways, the world has messed up. Please give us another chance. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.