

Giving Thanks and Looking Ahead

New Year's is an important time for our Burundian parishioners. It's the time when they get together, remember and give thanks for the events of the past year and look ahead in hope toward the coming year.

As a parish, we have a lot to be grateful for in 2013. For the first time, we have a pastoral council that represents the wonderful diversity of our parish and Anglos, African Americans, Guatemalans, and Africans are taking a larger role on parish council and in liturgical ministries. Infant baptisms continue to be high and our first Confirmation class in many years is under way. Relationships with our partner parishes continue to flourish as we work together in ministries sharing our time, talent and treasure. And more and more we are seeing ourselves not just as fellow believers, but as extended family caring for and supporting each other—ancestry, skin color, economic status don't matter—we are all children of our loving God.

During 2014 we are looking forward to coming together in worship in a truly multicultural way with all of us together celebrating the rich heritage with which we have been blessed. In the coming months we also hope to expand our involvement even further in our neighborhood, collaborating with the police and other faith and community leaders in a developing plan to revitalize the Fairmount area. We plan to work even more closely with partner parishes exploring additional ways we can get to know, pray, work, and play together. We hope to get even more of our students in Catholic grade and high schools—and maybe even colleges. We want to celebrate as more of our refugees become citizens, find better-paying jobs, and are able to buy homes. We can't wait to see what God has in store for us in the new year!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could celebrate similar progress and share hopes for God's action in our homes, neighborhoods, our cities, our nations, and in our world? What if at the end of 2014 we were giving thanks for:

- *A world where nations collaborated for the common good of all, especially the least among us?*
- *Politicians made civility and cooperation the norm, rather than reelection and repaying debts to special interest groups?*
- *A just and comprehensive immigration reform leading to citizenship was passed?*
- *Newcomers were received with welcome rather than suspicion?*
- *People became willing to stretch beyond their comfort zones?*
- *The breath of the Spirit revitalized churches, attracting people wanting to worship God and love and serve each other?*
- *Families and neighbors let go of old hurts and divisions and chose reconciliation and forgiveness?*
- *Neighborhoods became inviting and renewed as neighbors helped each other and worked together?*
- *Parents really listened to children and children heard and sought advice from their elders?*
- *Each one of us stopped for a few minutes a day to respond to that whispering call of God to spend time together?*

Why not dream? After all, with God, ALL things are possible.

—Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate



(PHOTO: above painting that hangs in the Parish Office is by Barry Davis, designer of our Prayer & Peacemakers Wall)