

Seeing the Face of God...

By Angela Anno

As we get ready for Fr. Jim's retirement, I find myself feeling deep gratitude for the many ways he has touched my life. I remember him coming to the emergency room when my dad died suddenly, him beginning his homily for my mom's funeral by singing "Only This I want but to Know the Lord...", the tears of joy he shed as he prayed with us at Christmas Mass, the first time he was back after breaking his foot more than three weeks earlier... I remember drive-thru sacraments of the sick, weddings, funerals, baptisms—lots of baptisms—First Communions and the time he needed help opening the sacramental oil at Confirmation. He's a prankster and a master of "groaner" puns. His laughter echoes through the rectory when he shares one of his favorites. He loves his rescue dogs even though they're often a step ahead of him. He can be forgetful like the time he locked his keys in his parked and running car and had me come to bail him out. Sometimes we have locked horns, but this has always ended in discussion and reconciliation. Jim is humble, holy, and like all of us, very human.

Thinking about Jim reminds me how much God interacts with and loves us through each other with all our strengths and flaws and I have a new awareness and gratitude that God came in Jesus to live with us in the ordinariness of our lives and the brokenness of our humanity.

If we look, we can find God alive and loving us in so many places. For example, in addition to recognizing the face of God in the gift of my family being part of our wonderfully diverse parish has blessed me abundantly, more than I ever could have imagined

I always wanted to visit other parts of the world and meet the people who lived there but I still have a passport that's never been stamped. Yet people fleeing gangs and violence in Latin America and refugees from genocide in Africa are now a real part of my family as we pray together around the Eucharistic table. We have come to love, trust, encourage, celebrate, and grieve together and also be playful with and tease one another just like brothers and sisters do.

When my daughter got married the entire community was invited and though I fretted about whether there would be enough for the ever-increasing crowd, somehow there were left overs. There was food and song and dancing and everyone had a wonderful time. One of our Guatemalan parishioners wanted to share his wedding with his parish family and he and his wife got married at Sunday Mass with Anglo parishioners as witness. Then we all joined together for a reception in the undercroft with Guatemalan food served by youth of the community.

We have wept together over deaths, prayed with each other when we were sick, rejoiced in the births of new babies, some of whom had been prayed to life by the community. We've learned to sing and praise God in multiple languages and to dream together about ways we can further become one.

We've had blips and misunderstandings along the way, but somehow as we have been able to work things out and grow. In our broken humanity, there is holiness and God is present.

We look to a new and unknown future as we join with other parishes in our Beacons of Light family I am sure that as we come around the Eucharistic table together and open our hearts to each other, we will find God present and alive and our hearts will expand to welcome everyone home.

Thank
You

THANK YOU— HUNGER WALK 2022:

Thank you so much to everyone who participated or donated to the Saint Leo's Lighting the Way Team to help benefit the Saint Leo Food Pantry. We appreciate each person for being a hero for our community in the fight against hunger. All the funds raised will help off set any cost we may accrue when purchasing food from the FreeStore Foodbank. If you weren't able to

donate, don't worry there is still time! Please visit <https://cincinnatihungerwalk.org/2022> click on the DONATE button and scroll down to pick the St. Leo's Lighting the Way team. Thank you so much again for the support and we hope you are able to participate next year. Save the Date for May 29th, 2023!!!

