



*Dear Friends,*

When asked in an interview in 2013 by the editor in chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?”, the Holy Father replied, “I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.” Though he sits on the Chair of Peter, is head of the Church 1.2 billion strong, is the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Pope Francis understands his identity as one who is, first and foremost, “a sinner whom the lord has looked upon.” In the words of his motto, *Miserando atque Eligendo*, he sees himself as one whom the Lord “looked upon with feelings of love and chose him, saying ‘Follow me’” (from Homilies of Bede the Venerable). When we are asked the same question, what is our response?

In our reading from the prophet Isaiah today, Israel’s answer to that question would be to say they are God’s servant. St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, would answer by saying he is an apostle of Jesus Christ; and John the Baptist, in the Gospel, would say he is the one who points out the Lamb of God, testifying that Jesus is the Son of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All this begs the question, “Who are we?” By our baptisms, we are called to be servants of God, disciples of Christ, witnesses of the ‘Lamb of God’ in our homes, schools, church and places of work.

In my column last week I spoke of the remarkable witness of faith by two young members of our parish at their father’s funeral. They were not the only witnesses that day, though. There were others, three of whom were found in Doran Hall serving the luncheon. These three women – Treva, Gail and Fran - all buried their husbands within six months of Michael’s funeral. Though their grief is probably still very palpable, they chose to witness to their faith in the Son of God by serving another wife and young mother on the occasion of her husband’s death. That, too, was powerful for me to behold, and I thank these women as well as all in our Hospitality, Bereavement and Arimathean ministries for their witness.

Then, during the first week of this new year, numerous parishioners – under the direction of Terry DiGuiseppe and Judy Weilmuenster – also witnessed to who they are as servants of God by caring for the homeless during our parish’s week hosting Safe Nights. Members of all ages provided meals and companionship to our guests; they set-up and cleaned-up the hall; some stayed up all night serving as hall monitors; others gave up a holiday to be here while still others dropped what they needed to do at home to assist when snow brought the scheduled Saturday program to a standstill. To all of you who gave such a caring witness to our faith, I also say thank you.

Through our acts of compassion and generosity, each of us has the opportunity to witness to our identity, to proclaim that “the Lamb of God” walks among us, that the love and mercy of God has dawned upon us.

Peace and blessings

*Father John*