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Small gestures can have big impact Veterans Day service project has emotional conclusion for student

BY SUZANNE WEISS | SPECIAL TO THE COMPASS

CLARKS MILLS — If any year could use an uplifting story, it's 2020.

This story got its start a few weeks before Veterans Day, when students at St. Mary/St. Michael School in Clarks Mills began creating cards for area veterans to thank them for their service. The students take part in service projects each month, said Jeanne Duenkel, who teaches third and fourth grades, and the Veterans Day project is an annual one.

Students and veterans were paired at random. The school mailed about 220 cards and timed them so that recipients would have them by Veterans Day, she said. The school received more responses than usual to their cards this year, likely due to the pandemic, Duenkel said.

One response stood out among the rest. Third grader Sam Staudinger, 8, wrote his card to Charles Spiering, a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Manitowoc and Vietnam veteran, who served in the U.S. Army and the Army Reserve. Spiering received Sam's card the day before he was scheduled for routine surgery. He told Carol, his wife of 54 years, that she should make sure that Sam received a thank you card and one of his service medals in the event that something would happen to him. Spiering, 79, died at the hospital on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

Our full story appears in the Dec. 18 issue.



SUBMITTED PHOTO | FOR THE COMPASS

Carol Spiering poses with Sam Staudinger, a third grader at St. Mary/St. Michael School in Clark Mills, Dec. 4 after presenting him with her late husband's service medal and a thank you card.

FRANKLY, FRANCIS



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Those who pray never turn their backs on the world. If prayer does not gather the joys and sorrows, the hopes and the anxieties of humanity, it becomes a "decorative" activity, a superficial, theatrical, solitary way of behaving. We all need interiority: to retreat within a space and a time dedicated to our relationship with God. But this does not mean that we evade reality. In prayer, God "takes us, blesses us, then breaks us and gives us," to satisfy everyone's hunger. Every Christian is called to become in God's hands bread, broken and shared. That is, it is concrete prayer, that is not an escape.

So, men and women of prayer seek solitude and silence, not so as not be disturbed, but so as to listen better to God's voice.

+ Pope Francis, Dec. 16, 2020

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Follow Him On



Student exchange program continues to foster vocations

BY JEFF KUROWSKI | THE COMPASS

ALLOUEZ — An alumnus of the Global Outreach Catholic Exchange Program celebrated two milestone moments within a few weeks. Miro Hazy, a native of Slovakia who attended Roncalli High School in Manitowoc in 2012-2013, was married to his wife, Maria, on Aug. 8. On Sept. 9, he was ordained a Byzantine Catholic priest.

"After my wedding, there was one week to

be ordained a deacon, then one month later to be ordained a priest," he said in a video call with The Compass. "We don't have strict dates like the Roman rite that you have to be a deacon for a year or a half year. For us, it's just the decision of the bishop."

Fr. Hazy is the first alumnus to be ordained in the Byzantine Catholic rite.

Fr. Larry Seidl, Global Outreach spiritual director, believes the mission of the program — "to

build a civilization of love by forming young, dynamic Catholic servant leaders for the 21st century" — helps young people discern their vocations. "Servant leadership, as practiced in Global Outreach, is all about inspiring young people to use their gifts in service to others and to help them become servant leaders by inspiring others through their example," he said.

Our full story appears in the Dec. 18 issue.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

About Paul's Conversion

BY PATRICIA KASTEN | THE COMPASS

- 1 Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles, was raised a Jew, a Roman citizen of Tarsus and first named "Saul."
- 2 Paul was taught by one of the most famous Pharisees of the time: Gamaliel. Gamaliel had advised the Sanhedrin to be tolerant of the new Christian faith (Acts 5:34).
- 3 Paul was such an enemy of Jesus' followers that he condoned the stoning of Stephen and went to Damascus to take Christians to prison.
- 4 On the road, Jesus appeared to Paul, who fell to the ground, blind. (No, Scripture does not say Paul fell from a horse.)
- 5 Paul was led to Damascus and Ananias, who healed Paul's blindness and baptized him at Jesus' word.

Deep listening is a way to build unity

Dear friends and followers of Jesus:

2020 has been quite the year! It's hard to believe that in just a few short weeks, the year will be over and we will be on to 2021. While there is always some excitement



BISHOP'S CORNER

Bishop David Ricken

and anticipation for a new year, I sense that people are looking forward to 2021, and, as importantly, to an end to 2020, more than in past years. I know I am ready for a fresh start and the hope of brighter days for our families, our churches and our communities in the year ahead.

But as we approach the new year, brothers and sisters, let us pause to consider how to make the world a better place in 2021. It's easy to pin our hopes for a better year on the COVID-19 vaccines that are now being administered. Yet we would be naïve to think that the challenges we've faced this year are simply a result of the pandemic. Many of the issues we face as a church, as a nation and as a world cannot be blamed on this virus. This is why Pope Francis has often spoken, during the pandemic, of two viruses: the coronavirus and the virus that comes from within the human heart when we value ourselves above other people.

One of the main ways we have seen this

other virus this past year is in the growing division in society. This division exists on a variety of issues, but, regardless of the issue, it seems to have infected all areas of society including families, communities, government and, sadly, even the church. So as we approach 2021, I am suggesting a New Year's resolution for all of us: We need to develop skills in deep listening.

Deep listening is a way of connecting with another person that recognizes their sacred dignity as a child of God. Too often these days, we see other people, especially those with whom we disagree, as a threat. But God calls us to regard each person as a gift, and deep listening allows us to do this. When we slow ourselves down to hear a person's perspective and to understand their point of view, and when they offer that same grace to us, we have entered a place of safe and authentic dialogue.

Deep listening does not necessarily mean that two people will agree on everything. But when they disagree, rather than framing each other in either/or terms — you are either with me or against me — we see each other in both/and terms, recognizing that both people desire good even if they see things differently. This becomes the means for fostering unity in our relationships built on a foundation of love and truth.

The entire column appears in our Dec. 18 issue.



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Parish SNAPSHOT



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Resurrection (Allouez), St. Francis Xavier (De Pere) and St. Mary (Ledgeview) churches sponsored "Follow the Light: A Drive-Thru Lights Adventure" on Dec. 13 in De Pere and Allouez. The parishes were able to fill an SUV full of food for an area food pantry and raised \$77 for meal packs at the Salvation Army.