

Dear Friends,

If you know me at all after 17 years, you know that I don't believe in coincidences. What happens, happens for a reason, and is spiritually inspired! Also, I am long winded, so get a cup of coffee or a cold drink before you start to read!

Seventeen years ago, I was teaching at Holy Family School in White Center when the principal resigned quite late in the year, late for hiring a good principal so they were going for an Interim principal. I could do that; with all my previous experience it seemed a no brainer. But no...I wasn't offered the position. At the same time, St. Anthony's was looking for a PAA to no avail. So, I applied during the second round and went off to Cleveland to visit my family. On the day after I returned, I interviewed and was offered the position. Spiritually inspired circumstances.

Most can understand what 17 years passing can be like, especially parents...it is enough time to see little ones grow up. I've watched the children:

- Two of them became priests
- Some became teachers, with one now teaching our present Confirmation class
- Graduate College- one now employed as IT Manager for our parish and school
- Get married and have children now in school
- And there are the children of staff born while I was here that have visited my office and allowed me to be 'Aunt Donna' to them.

Those who first introduced me to the activities, outreach, and volunteering in the parish...I have watched them too.

- Facility volunteers who fixed toilets on Saturdays, built storage areas for groups, pulled electrical lines when fuses kept blowing, worked on repairs in the school all summer long...now retired from volunteering or have passed to new life.
- A young man who joined a committee to follow in his father's footsteps and continues still serving his parish today.
- The money counters, bulletin stuffers, office volunteers who dedicated time weekly to the parish. Some still hard at work while in their 80's & 90's showing the next generation of volunteers how it is done.
- Our faithful servants of the poor, St. Vincent de Paul Society who packed lunches, food bags, and met with those in need day after day, hearing their stories and lightening their burdens on behalf of St. Anthony Parish.
- The volunteers that served the community weekend after weekend as ushers, Eucharistic ministers, Lectors, sacristans, Music ministers, and servers, who without them our Community Liturgies would not have been spiritually uplifting and beautiful.

These women and men have witnessed Stewardship of Talent to the nth degree and the love of God that spilled over into their everyday lives.

And what about the events begun and obstacles overcome? Let's look at a few:

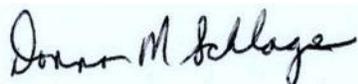
- ToSA... ‘Taste of St. Anthony’ which celebrates the diverse cultures of our parish while building the community up through coming together and enjoying life.
- Do you remember “Raise the Roof” Part I & II, where the buckets in the pews catching the rain drops leaking from above turned into the vehicles to collect more than half the money needed to replace the peaked and flat roofs of the Church? You should be good to go now for the next 50 years or so and be very proud of that accomplishment!
- Standing with Haiti, our ongoing Covenant with Ste. Anne d’ Hyacinthe, Haiti born out of the tragic loss of the granddaughter of John & Annette Hightower, parishioners, when Molly was killed in the Haiti Earthquake of 2010. This led to a spiritually inspired joining of two parishes in Christian love and dedication. We are the blessed recipients of the continuous prayers of our sisters & brothers in Haiti and they have been blessed with support in the education of the children of Ste. Anne’s, the future of their parish and country.
- The Covid Pandemic which separated us from one another, our faith community at a time we would most probably have clung to one another and our sacramental lives together. Yet, because of the dedication and faith of our priests, Fr. Jack and Fr. Bazil, and the support of staff and some volunteers, our parish church became a harbor of hope to parishioners and others. Our church remained available, livestreaming of Masses and spiritual presentation helped to keep faith strong in a very frightening time.

So, why have I gone through all these memories? Because YOU and the witness you gave me kept me coming back. As an Administrator, I often needed to deal with the unpleasant side of things, upset people, facility problems, staffing issues... Sometimes things got me down and then I’d remember a good time, a positive comment, a thank you, or a visit from someone in my office who listened to my tale of woe. Much like your lives, it is those positives that help us through the tougher moments. My love for the people and the ministries of this parish helped to feed my spiritual life. You have been my family, for as I said before, my family lives in Cleveland.

I also went through the memories for YOU, these are only a handful of the memories that make St. Anthony Parish what it is. I thought as you set about the task of returning to a more normal life as St. Anthony Parish, a reminder of what was and can be again, perhaps in new and different events and activities with new and dedicated volunteers, the faith Community of St. Anthony’s will continue to be the Beacon of Love and the Harbor of Hope in the city of Renton.

As I looked at the Readings for Mass today, I was struck that spiritually inspired, they were about completion...the completion of Jesus’ work on earth, John’s ending time, and the death of St. Stephen. Hopefully, you won’t drive me out and stone me like Stephen was, but rather know that my work with you is complete now. I have given what I have had and ask your forgiveness if I have hurt you. I will hold this time at St. Anthony’s in my heart always and keep you in my prayers. So, I close with the final words of St. John in Revelations...

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen!” (Rev. 22:21)*



Donna Schlager