
Bethany Ministry

Caring for the Sick,
Homebound, and Bereaved

Encouraging a Healthy Lifestyle
for All

“Love your neighbor as yourself”

“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit”



Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

March 2012

Glory to Jesus Christ!

The Call to Christian Service

The call to Christian service is answered by prayer and good deeds.....
and Bethany Ministry is a beautiful way of responding to that call.

One year ago, in March 2011, we started working toward two goals:

1. Supporting laypersons who are already serving their parish families as members of Bethany Ministry
2. Helping parishes in the Archeparchy to initiate a Bethany Ministry organization

As with any program development, this will take time. We hope that this newsletter will keep the lines of communication open so that we all can work together, reaching out to our fellow parishioners who are experiencing difficulties and supporting them with prayer and good deeds.

Please send your comments and suggestions to Fr. Tom Wesdock frthomas2000@gmail.com 412-835-7800.

Beginning a Bethany Ministry

Parishes typically have so many things going on that finding volunteers for a new program seems impossible. But it is so awesome to observe how people step up to the plate because their gifts and talents are a good match for the task that needs to be done for the church.

St. Paul ~ 1 Corinthians 12:27

“You, then, are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it. And God indeed has placed in the Church apostles, prophets, teachers, workers of miracles, those with gifts of healing, services of help, power of administration, and the speaking of various tongues.”

Beginning a Bethany Ministry only takes a few people who are willing to pray for parishioners who are sick or homebound, send cards, church bulletins, and help the pastor by making an occasional phone call or visit.

While a layperson’s visit can never take the place of the pastor’s visit, it can bring friendship, caring, and serve as an important connection to the church family. According to research done in pastoral care, when people feel connected to a caring community, it helps them to cope with difficulties they are experiencing. This leads to healing. They layperson benefits as well by having an opportunity to perform Works of Mercy.

These are the questions we asked ourselves at St. Gregory’s parish in 2001 before beginning Bethany Ministry:

- What is our parish currently doing for our sick, homebound, and bereaved members?
- What are the obvious needs?
- What do we hope to do in the future?

Scripture for Reflection

Fr. Tom suggests this scripture passage for our reflection:

Matthew 25: 36 – 40

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

A Reflection:

Nurse historian M. Patricia Donahue points out that because of Jesus' mandate to initiate such ministerial activities as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, and caring for the ill, a spiritual meaning became deeply attached to the care of the sick and suffering. Because of Jesus' own witness in healing the ill and disabled as well as teaching his disciples to go and do likewise, early Christians saw 'caring for the sick' as an activity especially pleasing to God and a ministry through which an individual might inherit 'eternal life.' (Source: *Spirituality in Nursing by Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, page 4.*)

In Bethany Ministry, we can translate this in ways that may seem small, but in fact make a difference to someone. If visiting a parishioner who is recuperating, we can offer to get them a glass of cold water. Medicines often cause dry mouth and distort one's sense of taste. A Chap Stick and some peppermint Lifesavers are appreciated more than you know. If you can, bring a few cookies or a sample of some other comfort food. The homebound are in a prison of sorts, not free to come and go, so a visitor can be a bright spot in their day. If we are unable to visit, people appreciate a phone call or a cheerful card that comes in the mail. All of these simple gestures let a person know that the parish family cares about them.

The Model for Healthy Living

These 7 key dimensions of our body-and-spirit experience overlap at the core of our lives. Healthy living means that all aspects of our lives are in balance:

Faith Life – Building a relationship with God, your neighbors, and yourself.

Movement – Discovering ways to enjoy physical activity

Medical – Partnering with your healthcare provider to manage your medical care

Work – Appreciating your skills, talents, and gifts

Emotional – Managing stress and understanding your feelings to better care for yourself.

Nutrition – Making smart food choices and developing healthy eating habits.

Friends & Family – Giving and receiving support through relationships.



Source:

Church Health Center, Memphis TN
http://chreader.org/contentPage.aspx?resource_id=712&listWebPage_id=6

A Little Levity

Inner Peace: This is so very true!

If you can start the day without caffeine,

If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,

If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,

If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,

If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,

If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,

If you can conquer tension without medical help,

If you can relax without alcohol,

If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,

Then You Are Probably ...

The Family Dog!



Read more about Health Ministry and Parish Nursing

from Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Pittsburgh, PA

http://www.pmhs.org/pdf/PNP_The_Faith_Connection_March%202012.pdf

Church Health Reader - from the new home of International Parish Nurse Resource Center, Memphis, TN

<http://www.chreader.org/>

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Thank you for reading. Please pass this newsletter along to anyone who might be interested.
