

From the October 17, 2021, Bulletin

St. John Neumann's Mission Corner

Our Parish Mission: To make disciples by encountering Christ, growing in Christ, and being sent by Christ.

On a Mission

For many of you reading this, you took a dive into the deep end of your faith when you encountered God. The encounter could have been through the sacraments, through Scripture, or in deep prayer. The encounter could have been during a crisis in your life where you hit rock bottom and where God was all that was left. Often the encounter with our God leaves us thirsting for more, and you then dove into Bible study or a small faith group or a myriad of ways that helped you learn more about our faith and the Church. Many of you because of continual encounters and growth feel called to help build the Kingdom of God. That is in fact what Jesus commissions us to do in the Gospel of Matthew: go on mission to build up His Kingdom. He says in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

The parish presented a retreat on three successive days in September to help break open this faith cycle of encounter, growth, and commission. On day 1 of the retreat, Sisters Linda Hatton and Vicky Mobley reminded us that breaking bread together – both at times of a shared meal and in particular during the Eucharist – are times of encounter. The bread provides nourishment for our bodies and spirits; the Body of Christ provides nourishment for our souls.

On day 2 of the retreat, the Sisters reminded us that growth in the love of God is a process akin to the grain of sand that finds its way into the oyster, which seeks to reduce the irritation of the grain with layers of soft mother-of-pearl material. Spiritually we grow often when we reach the boundaries of our comfort zones. A confrontation, a misery, a problem – these things invite us to surrender to God. We grow and mature in the midst of difficulties.

The corporeal and spiritual works of mercy became our road map on day 3 of the retreat. The Sisters reminded us to study the life of Jesus Christ to help us find out way along during our faith journey. This life was one of discerning the Father's will and of radical love and service. Christ during his time on earth was on a mission. Before he ascended, he sent us on the same mission: to make the love of God present to others in our lives.

The Sisters ended our retreat focused on our parish mission of encounter, growth, and commission, by giving us a road map to living out a life of service by recognizing our unique gifts and lending those gifts to the ministries in the parish. The road map is reproduced here. We invite all in the parish to consider the talents and gifts God has

given you and how you can lend those gifts to our parish ministries. Please consider the map and then visit this link to volunteer your time and talent: www.sjnstcharles.org/missionary-disciple-page/.

