

Words of Hope

August 2021

Established in 1996

Celebrating 25 Years of Service



Dear Friends,

For a while I have been trying to compose this message. I have to admit that it has not been easy. After many attempts and re-workings, I simply told myself – speak from your heart! At that moment, when I reached into my heart, I found two words to express what I was feeling – GRATITUDE and HOPE. This year Sanctuary of Hope marks its 25th anniversary. Fr Dennis's vision of a prayer and retreat center came alive 25 years ago. It has held true to its mission of being a place of prayer in the heart of the city and a place where people could come to encounter God. There have been those who have come on occasion and those who have been regular visitors (even some who just came to walk the grounds). There are those who have embraced the mission and have given of themselves and their resources to see it continue. In other words, the mission of Sanctuary of Hope over these past 25 years has touched the lives of a lot of people. For this I am extremely grateful! The second word in my heart is that of Hope. When one comes to a significant anniversary, they look back over the past and forward to the future. In looking to the future, I have some information to share with you. It is news that may appear to be sad – the mission of Sanctuary of Hope is coming to a conclusion. When we look to the history of humanity, we see that it comprises of the dying and birthing reality. The decision for the conclusion of the mission of Sanctuary of Hope was born out of the decision to turn over the building that Sanctuary of Hope used to Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities, as we know, has a great and varied ministry. I know that Catholic Charities will use this space, that we have called Sanctuary of Hope, to touch the lives of many people over the years to come. And so, I am grateful for what has been and I am hopeful for what is to be!

As we come to conclusion here at Sanctuary of Hope, please know that both Fr Dennis and myself carry each and everyone of you in our prayers and in our hearts. May God bless each and every one of you a hundred-fold for your generosity and support for Sanctuary of Hope.

With profound gratitude and hope in my heart!

Blessings,

F. J. M. A. C. S. J.

A New Dream By Fr Dennis Wait

It's difficult for me to write this article to all of you. Maybe the way to begin is to start at the beginning on this **25 Anniversary** of Sanctuary of Hope Prayer and Retreat Center.

Over 25 years ago, I remember being at prayer in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at the Franciscan Brothers of Peace Monastery in St Paul, Minnesota. I was there by myself, as I had done many times before. As my time was coming to an end, and I was wondering what God desired of me, I heard these simple words in my heart. "Dennis, just bring the people to me." A big smile came across my whole being and I said in response: "Lord, that is something I can do, just bring the people to you." And so the ministry of **Sanctuary of Hope Prayer and Retreat Center** was launched. When I returned to our Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS, and shared this with Archbishop James Keleher, now Archbishop Emeritus, he gave me his approval. I was so grateful and was able to live at **St Mary/St Anthony Parish** in KCKS. Within a short time, we started our first prayer group with people who were very interested in establishing this new ministry **in the heart** of Kansas City, KS. Some of the names that come to mind and heart are Bernadine Asher, Donna Cermak, Leah Mullen, Stephen Sullivan, Sister Mary Eugenia Flourish, SCL, Jim Randall, Rev Ron McCorkle and so many others. I knew about the property of the Mount St Joseph Nursing Home, KCKS, and it became our home. I still see Willie E. Jennings, Bernadine, Ron and I praying there on this property at the **gro o** of Our Lady of Lourdes inside the small shelter house asking her intercession. Willie E. when she entered this site, said "O what a wonderful **ghe o!**" We all laughed.

Our symbol for this **new ecumenical ministry** became the **burning bush** that spoke to Moses when God was ready to save His people in bondage: "Where you stand is holy ground." (Exodus 3:5) Ron designed our symbol. And our first donation came from my family, and with it I opened our first checking account. I can say from then, until now, we have been able to pay all our bills, and provide a place of refuge for so many seeking this, another miracle!

I can't even begin to tell you **how grateful** I am and so many of us at Sanctuary of Hope, and our new leadership under Fr Joseph Arsenault and the Augustinian Religious Community, these last five years, and our past 20 years! Without people like Julie Elwell, our faithful secretary, Jeff Stock, our go to man and brother in Christ to so many, Nick Reveles and Rev Mike Wills, our maintenance crew, Shirline Moore, our faithful receptionist, Bernadine Horvat, our faithful records keeper, Robert Gardner and Chris Radiel, our network technicians, Tom Korb, our laundryman, Sue Arnold, our housekeeper, Lou Finocchiaro, our accountant, Gary and Jane Walton and Ann Hatch, our **Holy Ground** book store, Stephen Sullivan, our brother in Christ and cook, eternal rest grant unto him O Lord, Gary Schumann, our prayer warrior, Serge Guislain, our Professional Volunteer, Jennifer Dusil Loechler, our post woman, Barb

Beauty for writing thank you notes, Jim Beauty for all the cleaning he did, all our live-in communities and Associates over these years, all our generous donors and numerous volunteers and to all our guests, who have blessed our own faith journeys, and many more too numerous to name, we would have never been able to accomplish this mission given to all of us by Jesus!

I would just end with a funny story that happened one day, a lady rang the doorbell and asked me where Jesus was? I thought about our chapel and His presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and maybe a religious picture of him in the building. Then she said "Oh no!" I mean that statue of him that overlooks the City. I meekly led her around the building and showed her the trail that led to Jesus, and I told her just take your time.

Love and Prayers, your brother in Christ, tu hermano en Cristo, Fr Dennis

Happy Memories of Sanctuary of Hope





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In light of the restrictions in place for Wyandotte County with regards to the COVID virus, and after serious thought and discussion, we have come to the decision that it is not possible to hold the 25th Anniversary celebration that was originally planned for September 26th. We are sorry that many will be disappointed not to be able to say good-bye to the Sanctuary of Hope staff and this beautiful building.

