



Parish Health Ministry

Bringing Easter Joy to Others

“We can only love one person at a time – serve one person at a time. Do you want to do something beautiful for God? There is a person who needs you. This is your chance.” Mother Teresa

Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church Network of Care Health Ministry in Reading, Ohio has a history of being Christ’s hands and feet on earth through a ministry of personal touch. This is particularly true for its 15-year-old Friendly Visitor Program which the Ministry modeled on a program offering of [ERH Parish Health Ministry](#). As a natural outgrowth of the Friendly Visitor Program, the Ministry developed a Holiday Visiting program, coordinating visits by parishioners to their fellow parishioners who are homebound or in nursing homes during the Easter and Christmas holiday seasons. Holiday times can prove to be periods of severe depression particularly for the homebound and nursing homes residents. Through the Holiday Visiting program, much joy was given as well as received!

Early on April 12, 61 Sts. Peter and Paul parishioners gathered for prayer and Eucharist with their pastor, Fr. David Howard. Armed with palm crosses, flowers, Easter cards created by the students of Sts. Peter & Paul Academy, prayers cards and most importantly a special blessing of Fr. Howard, the visiting parishioners received their assignments to take the Eucharist to 45 of their fellow parishioners.

To all these gifts, each visitor added one more, the gift of their time which brought such joy and happiness to the special people visited. All were very grateful, and the parish office received numerous calls thanking the volunteers. One of the ladies visited said, “The visitors came at a perfect time. I was not feeling well and feeling depressed, and, when they knocked on my door, it brought so much joy to me. It could not have been any better! I will never forget the kindness and thoughtfulness and bringing me the Eucharist. It made my Easter season what it should be!”

Another visitor told the Network of Care coordinator, “I think this is a wonderful program that is done here at church. It is so well organized, and it was a wonderful event for all!”

Several of those Easter time visits were made to the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, who had taught at the parish school or lived in the parish convent a number of years ago. The eight sisters receiving visits gathered in the Mt. Notre Dame Health Center cafeteria to receive their visitors. The thankful sisters loved the cards the students made and stated they felt like they were having a party. One Sister wanted to know the children’s names so she could pray for them.

While the visitors were thankful, so were those doing the visiting. On these Easter visits were a number of young adults and teenagers. They were so touched by the appreciation shown by the seniors they visited. One young lady mentioned, “I think the lady that I visited and I are soul mates! I am going back to see her again!” Another said, “My son wants to go back to see the gentleman again. It was a very positive experience.” One team making the visits, discovering their gentleman loved donuts, added that to the gifts they brought, which made his day!

The day following the visits, one visiting lady stopped Fr. Howard to tell him that she probably got more out of the experience than the person she visited. Father told her about the original ongoing program, the Friendly Visitor Program, about which she was very excited to hear!

Network of Care Health Ministry Coordinator, Rose Lindeman, said, “You never know how you can touch someone’s life with the gift of your time. In just a few hours these 61 parish visitors were as touched and blessed as those they visited.” One parishioner commented after completing the visit, “I never saw anyone more appreciative!”

The Network of Care Health Ministry provides a number of services including monthly blood pressure screenings, Friendly Visitor Program, Shawl Ministry, Mail Reading, Yearly CPR/AED Training, Card Ministry, monthly bulletin articles on health, Transportation Ministry, Prison Ministry (monthly Transportation for families to visit prisoners), Outreach – BP Screenings at Fish Bake during Lent & Health and Wellness Booth at Parish Festival, Special Easter & Christmas visits to homebound and those in Nursing Homes, Lifeline screenings every 2 years, and outside speakers on relevant health and wellness topics.