

MERCY MATTERS



August 2020

“Living for others is the rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is. Life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you.” Pope Francis

Dear Friends,

Sr. Mary recently sent the above quote from Pope Francis as our Monday morning mission moment. I read it, and thought, “How can I be happy amidst the many challenges and stress of the times in which we live?” More on this in a bit.

I recently cleaned off my desk at home and found a homily our dearest friend, Sr. Kathy Green, wrote some time ago on the season of ‘Ordinary Time’ in the Catholic liturgical year. This refers to all the time between the special seasons and feasts of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter.

The dictionary defines ‘ordinary’ as that which is *common, routine, normal, everyday*. She wrote, “In a culture that has an unquenchable thirst for the new, the exciting, the bigger and better, there isn’t much appealing about a time called ‘ordinary’.

The normal, everyday, ordinary aspects of life can so easily be taken for granted until some tragedy, heartache, illness, loss or catastrophe turns our lives inside-out and upside-down. The loss of the commonplace reveals to us just how extraordinary and sacred the ordinary is.”



COVID-19 and the struggle for racial justice and all the other difficult situations we are dealing with every day certainly have done that!

Even so, I began to think about an ‘ordinary’ day at MNM: our hard working staff who never stopped serving others for a minute since the arrival of the pandemic turned our world upside down; our generous donors who have kept us stocked with supplies, food for the pantry and money for operations; our dedicated volunteers who have faithfully delivered the bags of food and personal note cards with kind and loving messages to our seniors who have been isolated since March; our courageous home care aides who faced the risk of contracting the virus each day so their elderly clients did not go without care and support; our persevering students who worked so hard to attain their credentials so they could join the health care workforce to fill worker shortages created by COVID-19.

Sr. Kathy concluded her homily with, “Each day is holy, the sacred is all around us, there is meaning in all aspects of life, God is in all...and life is a gift....even on difficult days.”

Ordinary Time



Extraordinary God

So, back to the quote from Pope Francis. We are bringing the touch of Mercy to so many in our very ordinary days, which are, in fact, quite extraordinary. So, it seems to me that we have much to be happy about!

Blessings,

Aue

MNM and CCHMC Team Up to Train STNAs

MNM will soon begin training new STNAs as part of their journey to becoming employees of Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC).



The dynamic collaboration will focus on supporting residents of Avondale who are interested in pursuing a career at CCHMC. After completing the Urban League’s job readiness program, individuals will begin employment at CCHMC while participating in MNM’s STNA training program.



We are excited to be part of this project which perfectly aligns with MNM’s mission of empowering economically disadvantaged people in our community to expand their education and prepare for and find meaningful employment. The first cohort will begin their training this Fall and we look forward to sharing stories of success over the coming year.



Educating for Life
Training for Employment
Helping Seniors Age in Place



Changing Lives with the Touch of Mercy



Partnership with the United Way Benefits Seniors



Sometimes it is all about timing! Just when the summer heat was knocking on our back door, a generous donation of VISA gift cards from **Proctor & Gamble**, via the **United Way of Greater Cincinnati (UWGC)** enabled MNM to provide some much needed relief to our senior clients. We used the cards to purchase fans that were distributed to **135 at risk seniors** in Walnut Hills and Evanston. As Cincinnati's oppressive humidity approached, our wonderful Senior Services staff and volunteers loaded up their cars and put the fans in the hands of our grateful elderly clients. In addition, we purchased **food and cleaning supplies** for distribution through our community food pantry, **mattress covers** for home care clients who struggle with bed bugs, and two homebound seniors received **new furniture** since they were unable to go out and shop for themselves. We were thrilled to have this resource that made such a difference and was so appreciated by those we serve.

Another unique project with the UWGC is the **"Notes of Encouragement"** campaign. The UWGC mobilized volunteers throughout the community to **write notes to local seniors experiencing social isolation due to the COVID-19 crisis**. The ongoing pandemic prevents older adults back from engaging in everyday activities that help them stay connected to friends, family and the community. The goal is to **collect 15,000 notes of encouragement** that will be delivered by MNM and 16 other community organizations to the seniors we serve at our respective agencies. So, recruit your family and friends to write a note (or two!) letting our most at-risk seniors know you are thinking of them during this challenging time. **Be a ray of sunshine for someone who needs it the most!** Visit <https://www.uwgc.org/volunteer/events> to learn more. We are very grateful for our partnership with the UWGC.



Caregiver Training Programs Moving Forward



Taking all the precautions necessary and ensuring that all COVID-19 protocols were in place enabled MNM to welcome back students to our **Home Care Aide Training (HCAT)** and **State Tested Nurse Aide Training (STNA)** programs beginning in April. After weeks of perseverance, patience, and hard work, **26 amazing women** have successfully completed our HCAT and STNA training programs and are ready to transition into employment. **MNM's caregiver training staff have done a great job of ensuring the safety of our students while teaching the required skills needed to care for individuals in their homes, long term care facilities, and hospitals.** Although we were not able to hold our traditional graduation ceremony where family members and friends gathered to celebrate our graduates' success, **our staff hosted a celebratory lunch on the last day of class.** One of our HCAT graduates shared these inspiring words that perfectly captures MNM's mission.

"This day may be like every other day to some, but to us in this program it will be a day we will always remember. We are extraordinary people living in an extraordinary moment. We have shaped the future for our children, grandchildren and even ourselves. This is definitely something we should be proud of. We now have the knowledge to take care of our future clients because of our teachers, our dedication, and the hard work we put into completing this program. Let us continue to learn, improve, succeed and have a compassionate heart for those we will serve. Today we have earned our home care aide certification. This should prove to us that we can do it and we are never too old to learn something new." Megan O., HCAT graduate

We look forward to welcoming additional students into these programs, and beginning in August, also to the Hospital Worker Readiness program as part of MNM's health career pathway.

