



Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action

New Year ... New You ... New Ministry?

Many of these Parish Heartbeats columns have profiled people who have spent years in dedicated service to their ministries. Have you ever wondered what it's like to start something brand new? To step outside of your comfort zone a little bit and grow into a new challenge?

St. Margaret Mary parishioner Anna Moore did just that when she joined the SMM Funeral Choir. Anna is no stranger to parish life or church ministry. She was a founding member of the Legion of Mary group at our parish, which brings together individuals dedicated to acts of service and evangelization, leading people to faith in Jesus through the divine intercession of Mary. She is also an active Eucharistic Minister and a Companion Minister, providing monthly Communion services at the Sunrise Assisted Living facility.

At the Parish Convocation last Fall, Anna had the opportunity to speak with John Schlaman, SMM Music Director. "During the small group break out sessions, John and I talked about my desire to hear more Marian-focused music during her feast days. He was so attentive and polite during our conversation. He invited me to join one of the choirs. When I heard about the Funeral Choir, I thought that, with Our Lady's help, I could try it."

Anyone who has attended a funeral Mass knows how much the right music can add to this emotional celebration of life. It captures the spirit of the deceased, the traditions of our faith, and comforts wounded souls. Choir members are often deeply moved by the personal stories of the deceased and participating in this final liturgy for a fellow human being can be emotional, humbling, and have a powerful spiritual impact.

If you can hold a tune, you are welcome to join this choir! The benefit for busy people is that there are no extra

practices. The choir meets for 30 minutes before each funeral Mass. "Even though I wasn't a member of the regular liturgical choirs, the other members of the Funeral Choir were very warm and welcoming. It was easy to join them. I am able to follow the lead of the more experienced members and they never hesitate to help me."

Anna enjoys this ministry because it provides another view of the Eucharist (from the choir stands instead of the pews) and it offers an opportunity to pray for those families who are hurting and grieving. "I feel it is our duty to find some way to volunteer at the church. All of us are called to be a part of this community. The Funeral Choir is a wonderful extension of my devotion to the Eucharist."

Anna also believes that trying a new activity allows you to discover new things about yourself ... including areas you may need to work on! It is also an opportunity to make new friends. "There is a quote from St. Frances Cabrini that I

enjoy: 'If we do not risk anything for God we will never do anything great for Him. Courage, and forward in His love.' "

There are many opportunities to try new ministries at St. Margaret Mary. Maybe we all just need a little courage and encouragement to get started.

Ready? Set? GO!

If you are interested in joining the Funeral Choir, Lumen Christi Choir, or the Contemporary Choir, please contact John Schlaman at 630-369-0777.



Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.