



Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action

Angels in Disguise in April

One of the former pastors of Saint Margaret Mary Parish used to challenge the church with the question, "If our Parish didn't exist, would anybody notice?" Father Ted Weitzel's query would be answered with a resounding "yes" by the people who have benefited from the April in Parish Project conducted each year by the Saint Margaret Mary's Men's Club.

The mission of the Men's Club is Fellowship, Service and Contribution. One of the many projects they undertake each year is to look for a family "in need" and assist them with major household projects. Larry Riebold mentioned "the choice of the description "in need" is specific because a family may not be destitute in order to receive their help. Their need might be a result of the passing of the head of household, or major medical expenses that keep them from proceeding with these projects, or loss of an income for any reason."

The projects typically include, but are not limited to painting, light carpentry, tile replacement, plumbing, landscaping and electrical tasks. According to Norm Beauregard, "Any one at Saint Margaret Mary can nominate a beneficiary for this service project. In fact, identifying a parishioner or member of the community that needs our help is the toughest part of the project."

The men who participate are motivated by a variety of factors. The reasons are as different as the men are. Jim Vahle said "It is an opportunity to do what we talk about as Christians; it's tangible. Christ called us to be more like him and this service presents an opportunity to practice that idea."

Many of the men participate in this project annually and were inspired by others in the Men's Club. Rick Eckstein describes his involvement as "practicing discipleship and building community." As they reach out to "pay it forward" and practice their Christian heritage, they grow in fellowship with the family they are assisting and each other.

One beneficiary who recently received help from the Men's Club commented, "Most people have never seen an angel, but I was lucky enough to walk among them that Saturday in April," Her husband had passed and she said did not have the aptitude or resources to take on a project of such magnitude in her home. She wrote that even though these men could have slept in those three Saturday mornings in April, they were cheerfully there to make everything "grand and marvelous with being repaired,

refitted, redone, rewired, replaced, power-washed, painted, pruned, planted, mulched, edged, cutting down a tree, hauling branches and finally finishing." The Men's Club sees this as genuine outreach and believes their reward is the gratitude of the families served.



The Men's Club believes that when they mend those who are hurting or need help, they are witnessing Christ's love in the strongest possible way. One member said our Parish is willing to help each other when we need help. If we can identify a need, then this is one way to fulfill that promise to one another. Another member said, "All that I have, the talents, the finances, the family that I come from are gifts from God. I can share that gift with others and grow as a Christian." He specifically mentioned that if others are intimidated by the complexity of the tasks the group takes on, they should understand no special skills are required and no tasks are done alone.

Written by Phil Samuels

If you hear this story as a call to Christian service, contact Men's Club President Ray Jeffreys at 630-717-1142. You don't have to attend the regular monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. You just have to want to be there.

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