Ministry with Maturing Adults Review

This past year the ministry at St. Mary’s’ Parish was extremely busy engaging adults in the second half of life (50+). Many programs and events were held and well attended. In addition to these very visible gatherings, there were other opportunities for maturing adults to support each other. The fruits of this ministry are the less visible blessings of connection, compassionate concern and prayer for one another, and growth in faith and spiritual life.

Contrary to the limited societal focus on the frail elderly, Ministry with Maturing Adults is open to a much wider population and includes those nearing retirement, the recently retired, as well as the more seasoned retired and elders. The experience of “retirement” is rapidly changing in our culture as the very active “baby boomers” are entering this stage in large numbers and as expectations of longevity continue to increase. This change has been referred to as the “Third Age”, a term coined by Peter Laslett, a history professor in the 1980’s. It speaks to the added years of retirement in which people have the possibility of using their experience, expertise, gifts and talents to help others in their communities, thereby achieving new purpose and meaning for themselves.

Yet, the maturing years are not only about action. It is the time of life that offers the greatest potential for inner spiritual growth and faith development. This focus is quite counter-cultural in a society which puts high value on action, productivity and “youthfulness”, not recognizing the potential of maturing adults. The ministry aims to develop this potential through its programs and reflective experience.
This past year Mary Perry White completed professional courses and now holds a certificate in Spiritual Gerontology from the Johnson Institute in St. Loui, Missouri. Spiritual gerontology is the study of faith development in the course of aging. This program will soon be a requirement for those working in this ministry in the future.

Since Sr. Mary Rose Marrin moved on from St. Mary’s parish in 2012 she has worked tirelessly with many parishes promoting Ministry with Maturing Adults and assisting in the establishment of this ministry throughout the archdiocese.

On July 28, 2016, Sister Mary Rose met with the new director at the archdiocesan Office of Formation for Discipleship, Fr. Chris Cauchi, to discuss the development of Ministry with Maturing Adults. Fr. Chris stated that we no longer need to "state a case" for the ministry. The need for it has become obvious. He also said that the spiritual growth and faith development of this group fits with the Office of Formation. Over the coming weeks he hopes to implement ways for the development of this ministry at the level of the archdiocese.

Once again congratulations are due to Sr. Mary Rose for her continued dedication to this ministry and the fruits of her labour is evident. St. Bonaventure Parish in Toronto has recently hired a staff person to develop this ministry in their parish.

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**Ministry with Maturing Adults at St. Mary’s offers many opportunities to develop a new focus on aging!**

*Please join us this fall to connect, reflect and be present with others as we deepen our faith journey into second half of life, with a positive attitude.*

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**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

**Christian Meditation:** An introductory five-week program based on the books by Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB, will be offered starting Tuesday September 13, in room 1. The program will be held on 2nd Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. and 4th Thursday at 2:00 p.m. of each month. Please see registration form for more details.

**Retirement as a Spiritual Journey:** This is an opportunity to take stock and look at retirement through a new lens. A time to look at how you planned for retirement, and a time to gain a deeper understanding and clearer perspective. Who is this program for? Those in the pre-retirement stage in the next five years and those retired in the last five to ten years. The new program will run for five weeks beginning Thursday, September 29, in room 1 at 7-9 p.m. Registration is required, please see brochure for more details. Facilitated by Mary Perry White and Sherry Chapman.
Faith Friends Friendly Visiting: — This is a time of reflection and training, a workshop for all those who currently participate in ministry to shut-ins. Who should attend? Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Communion, Faith-friends, Friendly Visitors as well as those who may be discerning if this ministry is for them. The three full day workshops will provide information on ministry to shut-ins. Workshop topics include: How to have meaningful visits, an overview of many health issues, chronic disease, and an overview of dementia. All volunteers are required to complete a volunteer form and security screening as set out by the Archdiocese of Toronto, information on this process will be available. This three-day workshop will be held in the parish hall starting at 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., on Saturday, September 17, 24 & October 1, 2016, facilitated by Ms. Sally Amaral of the Office of Formation for Discipleship. Registration is required, see brochure. The program is sponsored by Ministry to Shut-ins with Deacon Ron and Ministry with Maturing Adults.

ON GOING PROGRAMS

Neighbourhood Circles: This is a parish-based support group of maturing adults who live in the same neighbourhood. The group meets together for “coffee and conversation”. As a sign of its faith-base, a simple form of prayer is part of these gatherings. This program is held monthly at two community settings.

St. Mary’s Residence: First Thursday of each month in Community Room, 2-4:00 p.m. Begins Thursday, September 1, 2016.

Collier Street Place: third Thursday of each month in community room, 2-4:00 p.m. Begins Thursday, September 15, 2016.

Lunch and Learn: 2016-2017: This ongoing life-long learning series of DVD lectures is offered every Monday throughout the year after the 12:10 p.m. Mass in room 3 at St. Mary’s Church.

The First Lecture will begin on Monday, September 19, at 12:45 p.m. Bring your lunch if you wish and coffee will be provided. No registration necessary. The program begins with a DVD series on: Great World Religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. This is one of the courses from the Teaching Company. There are 12 sessions on each religion. Presenters are: Luke Timothy Johnson, Professor of New Testament and Church Origins at Emory University, Atlanta, Isaiah M. Gafni, Professor of Jewish History at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and John L Espósito, Professor of Religion and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, Washington.

Next Chapter: is a faith-based support network for women who have been widowed. The network presents an opportunity for those who have had a common experience and are interested in a gathering of mutual support through faith. Age is not important; it is life circumstances that create a common bond. This is NOT a bereavement support group and is not intended to replace the Bereavement Support Group at St. Mary’s church. The first meeting of Next Chapter will be held on Monday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. in room 3. The theme this year is Woman of Faith & Inspiration.
Writing Circle Alumni Group: this is a gathering for those who have completed the Life Story Program and wish to continue writing. The group will meet on the second Thursday of each month, 1:00 p.m. in room 1 and starts Thursday, September 8, 2016.

Christian Meditation Group: will meet twice per month. Meeting times are the second Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. and the fourth Thursday at 2:00 p.m. each month in room 1. The first gathering coincides with the introductory program session which begins on Thursday, September 13 at 2:00 p.m.

GENERAL SESSIONS

General Sessions: information will be made available in the weekly bulletin with dates and particulars for each general sessions and special events throughout the year.

October: Speakers Bureau: - Ontario Provincial Police, Constable G. Knox -presenting on Fraud and senior exploitation.

November: Health Fair: “Managing Health Issues through a Positive Attitude as we Age!” A number of community agencies will be participating with display booth and information presentation on a variety of topics. More details will be available closer to the event.

December: Advent Retreat & Reflection Day: Facilitated by Mary Bastedo. Mary has lead retreats in L’Arche, an international federation of communities where she lived and worked for over 40 years. Ms. Bastedo holds a Masters in Divinity and is a Spiritual Director. She has lead workshop with the Henri Nouwen Society. More information will be available closer to the date.

January: Winter Luncheon – Breaking up the January winter blahs. Dates and further information will be available closer to the event.

Coffee Sunday: Hosted by Ministry with Maturing Adults, Sunday, January 29, 2017, following the 8:00 a.m. and 10 a.m. Masses.

Reading Resources: There are many books available on the topic of retirement and spirituality. Please contact Mary Perry White to obtain a book list.

“Live more ageless in the Lord as you learn... to embrace your True Self”
Dr. Richard Johnson

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