

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Mission News

Fr. Steve Pawelk, Pastor of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Mission, visited St. Malachy's the weekend of September 29-30. Mike and Daryl Brown, from the Mission also visited. On arriving they enjoyed a tour of St. Malachy's and then of Geneseo. Mike and Daryl took several pictures of our church which they found "immense and very beautiful". They were given a Parish Directory to take back with them.

Fr. Steve gave the homily at all the weekend Masses. He asked someone to bring him a glass of water. He then quizzed us on what we just saw him do. Of course, we saw someone hand him a glass of water, but he said, he had actually been handed a Cup of Salvation. Whatever we do for others we do for Jesus. He said that all we have done, as a parish, for Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Mission, whether in prayer or donation, is a Cup of Salvation helping them along the way in the Kingdom of God. He stated the importance of our desire to connect with them. He also related the story of the beginnings of the Mission, the community growing and working to establish a Catholic Church and their on-going purpose to establish a presence in Union County, Tennessee. Daryl and Mike spoke briefly of the challenges and meaningful direction that being part of a Mission was for them.

Later, at dinner, Fr. Steve expanded on the purpose of Blessed Teresa Mission. They are actively seeking to meet the people of the county and be Christ to them. They have become very active in an ecumenical prayer group which included pastors of many of the churches of Maynardville. They are trying to change some misconceptions in the area of who Catholics are and what we believe by reaching beyond their own Sunday worship to addressing needs in their community. He challenged us to also find the 'poor' in our own community—"They are here. Perhaps they don't look poor, but they may be struggling with paying the rent, maxing out their credit with few options to recover, finding it harder to pay the higher price of food—any or all of these, but they still appear to fit in." He told us we need to find them and be present to them.

Response to Fr. Steve was wonderful. He was able to spend time in conversation with many between Masses and answered many questions. The school children had created cards for him to take back to his Mission. Many spontaneously gave donations. (These donations totaled around \$2,300) He said he was very humbled by our generosity.

What's next?

We, as a parish are hopefully continuing to pray for their needs, our needs, and our mutual commission. We contribute \$200 monthly to Blessed Teresa Mission, but they would welcome donations any time just to cover the expenses of upkeep, office needs, paper products, hosts for Mass, rent, etc. There is a list in the parish office of expenses if anyone is interested in being specific with their donation.

We have also asked them to share recipes for our new cookbook, so it will include recipes from both parishes. We will send them copies when the cookbook is put together.

During Advent, Fr. Steve suggested sharing something together--a common practice for the season. We think it is a good idea. So during the weeks of Advent we ask St. Malachy parishioners to offer a special time of prayer, fasting, doing corporal works of mercy (in the spirit of a Spiritual Bouquet) for the needs of Blessed

Teresa of Calcutta Mission and for a blessed Christmas. We encourage all to send personal Christmas cards extending a seasonal greeting or blessing and tell them what we have prayerfully offered for them. They will be doing the same for us. Our school children and CCD classes will also participate.

We hope to keep before us the work of God's Kingdom in Maynardville through Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Mission. We can pray often. Personal letters are always a joy. We, in turn, receive from them the simplicity of Jesus' way—learning from their coming together from different levels of life to create and celebrate Church. And in their doing this they are focusing not just on what they need, but most importantly focusing on all people and places in their community to share God's love and to be His Presence there.