



ST. ANDRÉ BESSETTE PARISH

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June 12, 2016

Dear Parishioners:

It was in August 2014 that the notion of forming an evangelization team for St. André's Parish was first inspired, and by August 2015 the first parish missionary moved into **Frassati House**. Before long, she was joined by four others—coming from different parts of the country, with diverse backgrounds, gifts, and experiences. During these past nine months, the five young adult Catholics who accepted the call to serve here have certainly kept themselves busy. They have put on regular events for youth (both junior high and high school age) and for young adults, and participated in diocesan youth ministry training. They assisted as needed during Forty Hours and Holy Week, and accompanied teens to the March for Life in Washington. They led the *Doors of Mercy* faith study for the Jubilee Year, prepared our teen Confirmation retreats, and taught our adult Confirmation classes. They got deeply involved in our religious education program and with the choir, and went out of their way to welcome visitors and newcomers whom they saw attending Mass. They participated in the recent Alice Hyde “color run,” and even arranged a game of pickup basketball with the local Mormon missionaries! They did these things (and so many others), all the while helping to lay the foundation for an entirely new apostolate—not only new to St. André's, but pretty much new to the Church as a whole. They also prayed daily and fervently for our parish, its people, and its needs. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Rachel, Lauren, Katie, Michael, and Zachary! (There will be an opportunity to bid them farewell before they leave us in mid-July.)

We began recruiting a second team of missionaries for Frassati House in early March of this year and, after conducting interviews and checking references, accepted three very fine applicants. In quite an unexpected turn, all three declined the invitation—each for his or her own personal reasons, and not because they saw anything wrong with Frassati House. That very suddenly left us with no new missionaries and not much time before our intended start date of July 1st. *It was immediately clear that the Lord was trying to tell us something...just not so clear exactly what he was saying....*

There was extensive discussion of this surprising development at the May 23rd meeting of the Pastoral Council. We did not feel it was time to scrap the program, since so much good has come from it in so short a time. Nor did we think it wise to just rush ahead with another round of recruiting, and risk making poor decisions in the process. The consensus, then, was to take a year off, to use the time to put Frassati House on sure footing, and begin recruiting again very early in 2017 to get things back on track for July 1st of next year. One of our main concerns for this coming year is to keep alive the good things the missionaries have already begun. That will require parishioners to step forward, which will also set up the next team of missionaries very well by having some active programs and volunteers in place before they arrive.

I ask for your continued support of Frassati House during this interim year—most especially by your prayers. May the Lord who has begun this good work among us bring it to fulfillment (cf. Phil 1:6)!

In Christ's peace,

Fr. Joseph W. Giroux
Pastor