

## “GROW IN SPIRIT”

*Spirit Growth Ministry*



### Parishioner Faith Story

When I first came to St. Christopher parish in 1971, I was a newlywed and far from my home in southwestern Wisconsin. I attended a parish meeting one Sunday afternoon even though I really didn't know anyone. I can't remember what the meeting was about at all but I do remember that Mary Smith came over to me and introduced herself and made me feel welcome. Maybe St. Christopher's could become my home parish! In the '70s and '80s my life was occupied with job and family so I didn't become too involved in parish activities. I did make time to attend parish meetings. After one of these meetings, an associate pastor at the time stopped to chat with me and during our conversation said, "I think you should become more involved in the parish." He didn't ask me to do anything specific, but his comment stuck with me.

In 1993, I was invited to become part of the RCIA team as the hospitality coordinator. I was very much open to the invitation because the words of the Gospel passage from St. Matthew Chapter 5 kept bothering me: "...nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket." I felt that I had been given the gift of faith and I was called to share it with others. What better way than through RCIA and I said yes to the invitation! It is 16 years later and I am still part of the RCIA program as a catechist and team member.

Also in the 1990's I was inspired by the priests and lay people in the parish who brought Communion to the sick and homebound. I had always been drawn to the elderly, even when I was a child, so becoming a Minister of Care seemed a natural thing to do. It also fit with my job skills as a hospital employee who came in contact with patients. I was comfortable in that setting too. The archdiocesan training program for Ministers of Care provided me with additional skills to serve the sick and homebound of St. Christopher Parish and sometime beyond those boundaries. As a Minister of Care I find that I receive so many graces and blessings from the people I visit!

By invitation from the Religious Ed coordinator, I served as a lector for a special catechists' Mass one year. I had never lectored before but agreed to do it since my neighbor, Pat, was also going to read at that Mass. I discovered that I loved sharing Scripture as a lector and continued to do so at daily Mass when a vacancy needed to be filled. Reading Scripture for funerals and Sunday Mass allows me to share God's Word in a special way!

The priests and staff here at St. Chris have been very supportive of involving the laity in the parish and at their urging I signed up for the diocesan program Called and Gifted in 2001. I was eager to become more knowledgeable about Scripture, church history, and the sacramental life of the church. Unfortunately my plans and God's plans weren't the same! My husband had a motorcycle accident in June 2001 and my plans were put on hold. In fact, I began to doubt if I really should pursue the Called and Gifted program. I was still unsure about it when I signed up at the very last minute to go on the first women's CRHP retreat at Techny in January 2002. In the course of that two-day retreat, we had a session during which we were asked to just open our Good News bibles and read the first passage we saw. I cheated because the first time nothing on the pages spoke to me! I closed the book and opened it again, this time to 2 Corinthians Chapter 8. My eyes fell on the right hand column of the page and when I got to verse 10, my heart stopped! Right there was the answer to the question whether or not I should go ahead with the Called and Gifted program. Verse 10 began with these words: "*My opinion is that it is better for you to finish now what you began last year.*" Scripture does speak to us!!! I signed up again in 2002 for the Called and Gifted Program and completed the 2-year studies in May 2004. One stipulation of the program is to give 2 years of service to the parish. I have been privileged to do just that as I continued being part of RCIA, serving as a Minister of Care and as coordinator of the Ministers of Care, and in being a lector and Eucharistic Minister.

Being active and participating in parish life can be rewarding if you let God guide you. If you are being invited by someone to become involved in a parish activity or ministry, consider it prayerfully and then give your answer. If you say "Yes", there will be times of sacrifice and hard work but the blessings you receive in abundance make it worthwhile!

*Kathy D—RCIA, Minister of Care*