



THE REAL PRESENCE

(Many Times. Many Ways.)

Coming Home is what it's all about at Our Holy Redeemer for a variety of reasons. The first and foremost reason of course, is the Real Presence of Jesus, Risen from the Dead; the same Jesus Who restored sight to Bartimeus on the side of the road (cf. Saint Mark X:46-52); the same Jesus Who called Lazarus forth from the tomb (cf. Saint John XI:43); the same Jesus Who turned bread into His Body and wine into His Blood at the Last Supper (cf. Saint Luke XXII:19-20); the same Jesus Whom the disciples recognized in the breaking of the bread (cf. Saint Luke XXIV:35). Yes, the same Jesus Who took flesh and dwelt amongst us two thousand years ago is taking flesh and dwelling amongst us today!

After the Real Presence of Jesus, Risen from the Dead, the second reason that makes *coming home* what it's all about is the real presence of parishioners. Yes, you the parishioners who *come home* and offer the time, talent, and treasure that feeds the hungry, gives drink to the thirsty, and clothes the naked as volunteers at *Parish Human Services* and the *Our Holy Redeemer Thrift Shop in Memory of Janene Suchan*; visits the sick at Meadowbrook Care Facility and South Shore Nursing Home as a member of *the Legion of Mary*; instructs the ignorant as a catechist in our *Parish Religious Education Program*; rakes leaves, shovels snow, and transports homebound parishioners to various appointments as part of our *Mercy Mission* team; and offers prayers at daily Mass, monthly Rosary, monthly Holy Hour or as members of Parish prayer-groups such as the *Nocturnal Adoration Society* and *Señor Misericordia*. The real presence of so many parishioners not only helps make *coming home what it's all about*, but it truly makes our Church: absolutely beautiful!

As my Pastorate has unfolded at Our Holy Redeemer, I have tried "many times and many ways" (prepare ye the way of the Lord: Christmas will be here in three months.) to express my gratitude for the Real Presence. In Sacramental ways with the return of Mass on the Waterfront in 2011, a 7:00 A.M. Sunday Mass during the Year for Priests (2009 -2010), and a 5:00 P.M. Sunday Mass and an extra hour of Confessions (Friday, 4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.) which were introduced during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (2015 – 2016). In devotional ways with the addition of a Sunday Holy Hour from 8:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. in 2014, and a 7:30 P.M. Family Rosary on the third Friday of the month introduced in 2008. In ways for adults with a six part presentation of Bishop Robert Barron's Catholicism in 2013 that developed into *Discovering Christ* in 2014, and the Saint Thomas More Book Club which emerged in 2015. In ways for children with Summer Vacation Bible School since 2009 and the addition of a Sea Scouts Unit in 2016. I have even requested and received permission from Bishop Murphy to welcome home Priests in residence († Bishop Paul H. Walsh in 2010 and Monsignor Donald T. Bennett in 2016) as well as a Sunday-supply Priest (Father Nicholas Zientarski) so that the parishioners of Our Holy Redeemer could/can encounter the Real Presence of Jesus, Risen from the dead not just at many more times but in many more ways as well.

Over the past eight years there have been many other times and ways that with help from Priests, Deacons, Religious, staff, employees, and volunteers, my Pastoral-gratitude for the Real Presence has been expressed; but I will leave those for another time and another way. For now, may it suffice for me simply to say with help from an absolutely beautiful bulletin cover featuring images from *2016 Parishioner Appreciation Day*: "Thank you!"