

Catherine Nolan



Growing up, I thought everyone had a family like mine. We had an open-door meal policy. We ate a lot of vegetable soup and whole grain bread. It was filling and it could be added to for additional mouths to feed. Anyone visiting, kid or adult, was welcome to stay for dinner, if they happened to be there around dinner, lunch, etc. time. Friends often seemed surprised, which I thought at the time was sort of funny.

La Sagrada Familia reminded of the home I grew up in. Visitors were/are a source of joy, love and learning. We, people from St. Johns' were visitors. We learned, we were loved "and hugged a lot" with a sense of joy. Rubrics were OK, but the Faith, not the letter of the law, that is what's important. This is the understanding that comes home with being in the company of each person I met. There is more we can learn, teach, do, - become. Widen this into celebrations of the Liturgy and how life is lived. Each evening we celebrated Mass. I have to admit, it took me a few Masses to be able to find my way around the liturgy. I have a new empathy for non-English speakers in our community. I recognized the basic parts of the Mass, but got lost with some language changes. Using Spanish in the petition response helped me find my way in the middle, and the sign of peace was easy to identify - it was a hugging festival. Everyone hugged everyone.

Our Sister Parish has many challenges. Clean water, water to grow more nutritious food and make electricity. (I really missed our easy access to the internet and "air conditioning"!!!!) That said, my experience was unforgettable. By the way, I had a great childhood. La Sagrada Familia is growing, growing and growing. Pray for them and realize they have a special love to share that can make us really see what is important in life. The love they share with each other and us is an uncomplicated faith in God.

- Catherine Nolan