



## MADE FOR THIS

By David Ashley

My wife Chris and I moved from New York City to New Jersey in 1978. It's only few miles across the Hudson, but for us a huge transition. We began looking for a house and within a year moved into our home in River Edge. Although I've worked my whole career in Manhattan, we've never looked back. We fell in love with this town, it's people and our Church. At various times over the years we considered moving... larger, more luxurious house, better investment, etc. However, we found we couldn't... we didn't want to. We were held in the grip of this wonderful community and have never regretted not doing so. St Peter's was the place we wanted our daughter to grow up.

Yet with this being said, I have never felt so blessed by being a part of this St. Peter's community than I have during the four weeks of this October when St. Peter's celebrated its 60+ active Ministries by devoting a week to each of the Four Ministry Clusters... Word, Worship, Community Building, and Service. I'm sure you noticed the Ministry~Fest signage & Ministry tables. Perhaps you stopped and enjoyed the coffee and refreshment at tables in the Gathering Space, or listened to the homilies, all woven around Jesus' call to serve. I was mesmerized by the astounding witnesses given at the Masses by various Ministers who shared his or her story of the *how and why* they got into Ministry in the first place. In hearing each of them speak, I felt their desire to share their Gifts of Time, Talent & Treasure. Inspiring, just awesome!

We all want our lives to matter. It's the reason we

do the things we do. We chase promotions and leadership positions because we want to make a difference. We encourage our kids to go to college, get a good job, and make lots of money, in hopes that they, too, will make a difference. There's nothing wrong with wealth or influence, but those things alone won't change the world and they aren't what we were made for.

We were made to build the church and fulfill Jesus' commission. God made each one of us with unique talents, personalities and skill sets. But the reality is the Lord doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called. The truth be known, tapping into our gifts and passions builds self-confidence, energy, and strength. Serving others can also be the best distraction from our own worries. And we get the most joy and make the biggest difference when we use our God-given talents, gifts and abilities.

That word "minister" isn't a job title. It's an action. A minister is simply someone who tends to another person. You minister healing to an injured person by bandaging their wounds. The title is "doctor" but the job is to minister healing. You minister comfort to a hurt child by picking her up and cuddling her. Your title is "mom" but your job is ministering comfort. And you minister truth to others

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by bringing God's Word & love to bear on their life and circumstances. Your title is "Christian" and your job is to minister truth. In James 2 it says...

*14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? 17 So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

All of us make all sorts of rational explanations for not serving:

*I don't have time.*

*I don't know what I would do.*

*I don't have any special skills to contribute.*

*They don't need me.*

But it is the ordinary who are called to ministry, not the extraordinary. Serving is a form of worship, a way to express gratitude for what Jesus has done for us, and to share the love and grace we've been given. We shift our focus off of ourselves onto others through serving. We begin to see others as Jesus sees them. And we see Jesus IN others (Matt 25:40).

Fostering your role in Ministry starts with you and your personal spiritual journey. Only you and God (and maybe your spouse) know what unique trials, joys and unexpected surprises in your life have planted the seeds. You have to create mind space and regular times to reflect on where God has brought you.

Every day we minister, we are given the opportunity to practice putting our attention less on ourselves and more on others. We will not be perfect. We may find ourselves serving in an area that doesn't match our gifting and need to adjust. We may also find we love a group of people or an area of ministry more than we thought we could. Either way, in this God

weaves a beautiful relationship between both working in us and through us.

God calls us to participate, not spectate. And God doesn't just want to work through you, He wants to work in you. You were made for this.



## **GET IN THE SPIRIT WITH CHRISTMAS TEA**

By Pam Loblely

The New Evangelization Ministry will be hosting the second annual LADIES CHRISTMAS TEA, Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. The theme this year is "Simply Christmas" and the evening begins in the church with a talk by guest speaker Mary Parisi.

Following the talk, the ladies will convene in the St. Peter's gymnasium to sit at beautifully decorated tables and enjoy tea and light refreshments. Many ladies also choose to bring wine for their table.

The New Evangelization Ministry was inspired to host this event by a member of the ministry, Grace Pichardo. Grace had been attending the Christmas Tea at the Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River and was invited to be a guest speaker there one year. She was so moved by the event and had such a great experience that she was excited to bring it to St. Peter's. A few members of The New Evangelization Ministry attended the event at Presentation in 2016 and agreed that it was spiritually uplifting and offered everyone a great sense of community. They brought the event to St. Peter's and the first tea was held last year in December 2017.

The evening is organized like this: one person is chosen as a "hostess" per table. The hostess purchases the table (tickets are sold by table to make it simple: there is just one person to communicate information to), then she collects the funds from the rest of her tablemates (which is \$10 per person). She then receives an invitation to give

to each guest. The invites have the date, time, place and the guest is supposed to bring their invitation with them - it is kind of like their ticket.

The hostess will also coordinate the food/drink and table setting with her tablemates. The ministry provides a green or red plastic tablecloth, then the tables bring their own decorations: napkins, dishes, utensils, wine glasses, teapots, centerpieces, etc. Last year many guests chose to bring fine china.

Coffee, hot water and tea bags along with milk/half n half are provided. Ladies can bring their own tea if they prefer a special brand. Guests bring whatever refreshments they would like to share and, if desired, wine.

The ticket price goes toward paying the guest speaker, and for small gifts for each guest. This is not a fundraiser.

Ladies come to St. Peter's the evening before the event - or the afternoon of - to set their table so when they arrive that evening, everything is set. They can drop off their food and drink items when they arrive for the Tea before taking a seat in the church to listen to our guest speaker.

Mary Parisi, who has been a speaker at the Church of the Presentation's Tea, will give a talk that speaks to everyone about the holidays: the stress, the bah-hum-bug of it all and a gentle reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. Last year's theme was "Celebrate Christmas in your Heart". This year's theme is "Simply Christmas"

When she is done, the ladies go to their tables and enjoy their food, drink, and tea while a few of the fine gentlemen from St. Peter's volunteer to serve the tables. They will open wine bottles, pour beverages, provide hot water, and help with the cleanup. There should be at least one gentleman per table.

In the spirit of giving, we ask our guests to bring a gift card (food, Target, Kohls, Visa/MC). The cards are split between two organizations. Last year the two were Family Promise and Project Literacy; this year

will once again be Family Promise and a second one TBD. We like to ask our guest speaker to choose an organization that they hold near and dear to their heart.

**Ticket sales will be held after all masses on November 4 & 11, one table per hostess. Tables will seat 8-10, Tables of 8 are \$80.00 and Tables of 10 are \$100.00 (\$10.00 each person).**

Last year's attendance was very large and space is limited – gather your friends and family for this special evening!



## **Finding God in All Things**

**Marianne Conway, Ph.D.**

For the believer – you and I – the ability (and the desire) to find God in all things might seem quite obvious and quite easy. Is this not what our lives are all about? There was a time when I was younger (a good bit younger!), and growing up in an Irish Catholic family in the South Bronx, when life seemed very much less complicated, less stressful, less hurried. I remember the straight forward question in the Baltimore Catechism, "Why did God make me?" and the equally straightforward, uncomplicated answer, "God made me to know, love and serve Him in this world, and to enjoy His presence in the next." As an elementary school student, I thought I understood this whole concept! God was everywhere, in all things – at home, with my family, at school, among teachers and students, in my community, with neighbors and shopkeepers – and people I passed on the street. God was there, present in my every day!

Since those innocent days, I've come to realize that life is not as simple and carefree as I once thought it was – and this realization now, in this day, seems to be more true than ever before. I hear family members, friends, former colleagues, and new acquaintances express concern, worry and sadness about the "state of things." While I share their concerns and worry, I also find myself being drawn

back to the core of Ignatian Spirituality – **finding God** in all things. As change occurs in our world, our country, our church, our relationships, our families, and all aspects of our 21st century lives, I reflect on the bedrock truth that God NEVER changes. He has always, and will always, be present to and in each of us, cherish each of us, support and forgive each of us, love each of us! As we are reminded in Romans 8:38-39:

*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

St. Ignatius of Loyola, and we, acknowledge that our loving God will never leave us. We also acknowledge that our loving God can be found in every person, every place, and everything. The challenge for us, I believe, is to slow down long enough to genuinely experience His presence, to dwell in His presence, to find joy and peace in His presence, to be grateful for His presence – a presence that brings a depth of peace that Jesus spoke about:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

God wants us to be peace-filled, and happy, and loved. He does not want us to be troubled and afraid. What we are being called to remember at each moment of our lives is that it is in and with God that we will find the peace that only He can bring. And when we take a moment to reflect on this, we realize that He is present to us at every moment of every day – if we but have the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the heart to be open – and the desire to allow God to be God in the messiness and the beauty, the sorrows and the joys, the mundane and the surprises of our lives. He is literally all around us, in us, and with us!

God is there in the stunningly beautiful crucifix that hangs in St. Peter the Apostle Church – a daily reminder of God’s boundless love for each of

us. So too is God in the magnificent colors of the changing Autumn leaves. He is there in the precious beauty of a newborn child – and the equally precious beauty of the grandparent filled with wisdom and experience and tender love. God is present in a beautiful piece of music, and an equally beautiful piece of art – even one created by a four-year old. God is not stingy in His presence – He fills our world, and desires to fill our hearts. He comes to us in many faces and in many places – in the homeless person in Grand Central Station, in the immigrant seeking a better, safer life for her children, in the physically and mentally challenged persons in our community, in the “wayward” family member, in.....

As we embrace a spirituality that “finds God in all things,” may we offer each of our days to this loving God – all the persons whom we will meet, the opportunities that will present themselves for growth and goodness, the responsibilities, the deadlines, the difficulties and the joys. May we embrace God’s invitation to use our talents, our time, and our treasure to bring His presence to those with whom we come in contact. May we set aside time each day to speak with our loving God, sharing our joys and sorrows, our disappointments and hurts, and our gratitude – deep gratitude. May we be open to the Lord as He calls us to serve Him, to be His hands and feet and heart in our world, to embrace our brothers and sisters as sons and daughters of our loving God.

As you finish reading this piece, may I suggest that you take a moment to STOP, LOOK and LISTEN. STOP any activity – even for just five minutes, so that you can enjoy the peaceful presence of your loving God in your heart. LOOK – around you to find God’s presence in your family, your friends, your home, your office, in nature. LISTEN – to the sounds of God’s presence in words spoken, a kettle whistling, birds chirping, and may you...

***...find God in all persons,  
places, and things.***