

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jan 20th 2019

There are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

My parish refugee team co-chair, Ann, is a retired hospice nurse who skillfully manages the complex medical and dental problems of our Karen family– everything from negotiating with school nurses on immunizations to collaborating with a Creighton Dental School parishioner on extensive dental work.

Every day, I marvel at her dedication and competence in doing things I could never do. She, however, could not imagine handling the promotional tasks that are second nature to me.

When we met, we knew instantly that we shared the same “Spirit” but grew to appreciate how our gifts complemented each other. Our whole team illustrates St. Paul’s celebration of different services coming from the same Spirit.

One person collected the furniture. Another took charge of setting up the apartment while one woman supervised laundry and apartment maintenance issues. Another has become our social activities leader while a young woman does our monthly statistical reports. Our teen volunteers are wonderful with the kids and we have a faithful team of drivers to English classes. God gave us all different gifts and we share them with each other and our family,

Today as I reflect on this wonderful passage from Corinthians, I’m not going to even try to say anything profound. Instead I’m celebrating people for their differing gifts of service and I invite you to join this fun.

Here’s to elementary, junior high and high school teachers who manage classrooms of little people and adolescents with patience, love and grace.

Hats off to people who tutor children, volunteer in nursing homes, deliver meals, sort books for library book sales, ring bells for red kettles, staff food pantries, distribute communion to the sick and do any form of hands- on volunteer work.

Thanks to people who turn seemingly mundane jobs into service by the way they treat others like Creighton’s beloved “hey, baby” lunch line checker or the shuttle driver who knew every student and wished them luck with exams.

I’ve often marveled at the willingness of people to volunteer for things I detest like selling raffle tickets or running Scout troops. No one gives plaques to all these almost invisible servants or honors playground monitors or people who scoop snow for elderly neighbors. Fortunately they aren’t looking for glory.

It’s probably not so much what we do as why we do it, knowing that “the same God” produces these different works and services in his very different children.

Now, go out and use your gifts (whatever they may be) and celebrate all those people who give so

generously in all these different ways. Have a blessed day!

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