



God's grace reveals a silver lining of love and hope...



We have all heard, felt, and experienced the devastating impact COVID has had on our lives, families, and society.

Many of us may know of someone (or perhaps ourselves) who have lost a family member or friend, job, home, or business from the fallout of the virus. We have all experienced the isolation, fear, uncertainty, and loneliness from the necessary precautions such as social distancing and mask-wearing to prevent the virus' spread to others.

We have all seen goodness and compassion shine forth through others precisely at our most vulnerable time. We have seen it in our first responders, doctors, nurses, essential workers,

neighbors, and the Church. Acts of kindness and going beyond the call of duty from our volunteers and benefactors are evident daily right here at Emmaus Ministry. In March, two staff, and two volunteers, made personal commitments to cover meal preparations and distributions for the increasing number of people in need in our area. This dedicated team carried out these duties, by themselves, from the end of March through August, providing over 21,000 meals! Just this fall, we have slowly called back into action some of our past volunteers.

Most inspiring, though, have been our guests. Observing our guests' gratitude and graciousness in this health and financial crisis has humbled all of us. Our guests have been patient and understanding of the numerous

adaptations our meal service underwent. Our guests never complain. They are generous with their appreciation of Emmaus' presence in these challenging times. Our friends bless and pray for Emmaus' willingness and ability to be here in one of the poorest Syracuse zip codes in their time of need.

We at Emmaus are changed. We are blessed. And we are renewed by the radiant silver lining seen every day our doors are open. I want to thank you for your unprecedented support throughout these months. You have made a difference in the lives of many. We have seen the power of your love and support in the eyes of those in need.

*- Sheila Austin, RN.,
Director & President*

A special thank you...

to CNY Community Foundation and the Jim & Juli Boeheim Foundation for their most generous grants for meal service funds during the pandemic. These critical monies augmented our increasing food demands for the south side. From January to March of 2020, Emmaus served 3,500 meals. From April through September, that number increased to over 20,000 meals – over 3,000 meals per month! These Foundations helped us tremendously as we saw limited supplies and increased costs. The excellent work of these Foundations blesses many non-profit agencies in our community!



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Mother Cabrini's Work Continues at Emmaus...



St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, also known as Mother Cabrini, a religious sister from Italy and founder of the Missionaries of

the Sacred Heart of Jesus, came to the United States in 1889 to work with Italian immigrants at the suggestion of Pope Leo XIII. Prior to government-funded social service programs, Mother Cabrini set up orphanages, soup kitchens, hospitals, and other institutions to serve the sick and the poor in New York City, Chicago, and various locations throughout the country. Mother Cabrini died in Chicago while preparing Christmas candy for local children. St. Frances

Xavier Cabrini led an exemplary life of service to God and those most in need. Along with St. Marianne Cope, we know Mother Cabrini is a great intercessor for all the incredible work that takes place at Emmaus Ministry. Last year, Emmaus Ministry was the recipient of a \$200,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation located in New York City. This grant was awarded to Emmaus due to our commitment to care for the overall well-being of each and every individual who comes through our doors. Emmaus is much more than a place for people to come and just receive food. People come for socialization; they come to share their personal and health needs knowing that they will

find a listening ear and many willing advocates; they come knowing that they belong and that they will not be judged. People who come to Emmaus know they will be embraced by God's love, mercy, and compassion.

Many stories are told of Mother Cabrini. One such story is that she would often be seen with her arms outstretched, embracing the poor. It is comforting knowing her life and mission continue on the south side of Syracuse. At Emmaus Ministry, our open door is just like the outstretched arms of Mother Cabrini, as we are always there to welcome and share God's love with all we encounter!

*– Reverend John Manno,
Vice President*

Emmaus Ministry Goes Mobile

Starting in mid-November, Emmaus will be returning to our roots by taking meals to the neighborhoods, in addition to continuing our operations at our Glen Avenue outreach center. With your support, we have been able to purchase a large van that will accommodate food storage units, both for hot food and cold drinks. The van replaces our previous "HOPE MOBILE" and will be easily recognizable throughout the neighborhoods.

Many people cannot reach our center due to a lack of transportation and are still in great need. Our plan is to begin serving in one nearby neighborhood, approximately 1.5 miles away, 2-3 times per week. Eventually, with your continued assistance, we will expand to an additional neighborhood or

two, providing much needed meals to multiple areas of the city.

Steve Nowicki will be overseeing our mobile ministry (read about Steve in this newsletter). He will drive the van loaded with food to predetermined sites, set out the awning that is attached to the van, and distribute meals to all who arrive. Our kitchen staff will be called on to prepare hundreds of more meals each week as we expand our services to include many more of our city's



Joan Hantke and Mary Catalano showing off the new van.

hungry in our meal service. Your continued support of Emmaus Ministry is allowing us to expand our outreach. Please consider a gift to Emmaus Ministry for our Mobile Meal Ministry.



Pandemic's Impact on Meal Distribution

Emmaus Ministry has experienced a steady increase in the number of meals being served since just before the pandemic hit. The year started with an average of approximately 240 meals per week being distributed from January 1 through mid-March. Since the pandemic hit, we have moved to a take out service only. The average number of meals distributed weekly since mid-March has increased to 770 meals. Perhaps the most telling number is the average weekly distribution in September: 1,207 meals. That is nearly a 500% increase in the number of meals being distributed each week compared to just before the start of the health crisis.

Each week there are new guests arriving at our doors for meals. On one occasion during the summer months, an individual presented herself at Emmaus to pick up meals for a friend. When asked if she wanted a meal, the visitor was surprised to learn that anyone who wants a meal will be served.

She had five children who needed food. That one visitor was able to feed her family of six that day, as well as many days after that, as she became a regular visitor to our outreach center.

When we contacted you through a direct mailing, telling you of the dramatic increase in meals being distributed, your response was overwhelming. Your generosity allowed us to meet the increased demand that we were experiencing in the spring and summer months, when the increase in meals served was in the 200-300% range. We are being challenged even more so with the September numbers showing a 500% increase. As the holidays approach, we anticipate at the very least to continue serving at the current levels. However, the number of visitors in need of hot meals may very well continue to lead to ever increasing numbers.

We will continue to provide meals to anyone who presents themselves at our door in need of food. With no end to



Guests arrive to receive meals for the day



Preparing to feed the many guests who visit each day.

the pandemic in sight, and the impact it is having on individual financial situations, these numbers may continue through much, or all, of 2021. Whatever He sends to us, we know He will provide for us, through your continued generosity.

Dentists, physicians, nurse practitioners, RN's, LPN's, hygienists, office receptionists...

Emmaus is looking to the future to provide free dental and medical services for the underserved!

Emmaus board members and advisors are **continuing to identify the needs of those we serve on the south side.** We are exploring ways to address the needs of individuals and families with dental and oral hygiene needs. Our guests either do not have dental insurance, cannot afford the co-pays, or cannot access care due to limited transportation. We see many guests struggling with pain, infections, and cavities that need attention. Many must revert to hospital emergency rooms as a solution.

Also, **we see the value in establishing a health center** for services such as hypertension and diabetic screening, cold and flu care, immunizations, employment physicals, referrals for mental health, and addictions, to name a few!

We can do better! But we will need your help. If you would like to be involved in this vision for inner-city health and dental care, share your talents, and make a difference, **please contact Sheila Austin, R.N., at 315-256-1982.**



Thank you for your generous support of Emmaus Ministry and those we serve!

– January 1 – September 30, 2020

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The Start of a New Ministry

With the onset of the pandemic, Emmaus Ministry had to shift gears quickly, as did the rest of the world. Desiring to continue to feed our guests, but to do it safely, we opted to provide meals on a to-go basis. One major problem that posed was that we would not be able to spend a great deal of time with individuals to assess any health concerns and to determine any needs they may have. To overcome that hurdle, we turned to many of you, our volunteers. And you rose to the challenge.

From the safety of their homes, many volunteers implemented our Vocare ministry. We called our guests in their homes, sharing with them the latest procedures at Emmaus, the County DOH guidelines for the pandemic, and discussed with our guests any needs they many have. The discussions often centered around physical needs, such as groceries, clothing, or toiletries. At times, though, the guests just wanted to talk. The isolation that so often envelops the poor, began to impact many of our guests as the pandemic restrictions were put in place. Our guests were so very pleased to hear from someone.

We will continue to reach out to our friends for the duration of the health crisis. While everyone certainly wants to see an end to the restrictions once it is safe, our volunteers will remain in contact with our guests. They will call to fulfill any needs that they may have, but will also let them know that they are loved.

Emmaus Hires Two New Employees



Carol Antonacci has been hired as our part-time Administrative Assistant. After a 32-year career at Carrier

Corporation, Carol retired in July 2019. She and her husband Jack have two children, Nathan and Nicole. After Nathan and Nicole completed college and embarked upon their own careers, Carol decided it was time to give back and started her search for volunteer opportunities. She decided to volunteer at not one, but three worthy organizations: Make-A-Wish of Central New York, Francis House and Emmaus Ministry. Her volunteer work at Emmaus started with serving breakfast on Tuesdays, meeting with our guests on Wednesdays to provide needed clothing/toiletries, as well as with the monthly food pantry distribution. Soon thereafter, Emmaus purchased a donor management system. Using the system to manage and streamline our donor and volunteer data fit nicely with Carol's skill set. In July 2020, Carol was hired to oversee that donor management system, as well as to perform other administrative duties. "I'm thrilled to be able to work for an organization that is doing so much to help so many people who are in need." Emmaus Ministry is thrilled to have Carol on our team. Thank you, Carol, for being a part of our organization.



Steve Nowicki has been hired to oversee our, soon to begin, Mobile Meal Ministry. Steve recently retired after a long career in

the transportation industry, with the last 23 years at Koch Industries. Steve and his wife Erin have three grown children, Hannah, Peter and Maria. After moving back to Syracuse from Wichita, Kansas in 2019, Steve and Erin got involved in their parish, St. Ann's in Manlius as Faith Formation catechists and lectors. When the confirmation candidates volunteered at Emmaus in the fall of 2019, Steve accompanied them and became familiar with the ministry. His volunteer work began that fall working in the kitchen preparing and distributing meals. He and his wife also made sandwiches this past summer. That experience helped to prepare him for his new role as Mobile Meal Coordinator. In this new position, Steve will be assisting in the preparation of meals, packing them into warming units and then into the van for distribution at predetermined sites in the city. "I'm simply responding to the Lord's call to serve His people. If He wants me serving meals to those in need in Syracuse, then that's what I'm going to do", Steve shared with us. We are so thankful that the Lord called on Steve to become one of our Disciples!



Free Books for Kids!

Nearly 200 children ages 1-12 received free books at our Book Giveaway event on August 22. The Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation awarded Emmaus Ministry with a grant to support our Family Activity Days program, as well as the event in August. Prior to the giveaway, 136 children had preregistered, allowing our volunteers to put together age appropriate bags for the youngsters. Included in the bags were at least two books and much needed supplies for the coming school year, such as folders, glue sticks, pens, colored pencils and markers. Volunteers also prepackaged additional

bags with school supplies for the children who arrived the day of the event. Books were added to those bags based on the age of the little ones. We received a number of collections of books, so some children received as many as 10-12 titles in one unit! Once they picked up their bright colored bags loaded with gifts, children and parents alike made their way to the ice cream truck that was provided by Peter and Mary Catalano. Free books and free ice cream put grins on all of the participants' faces. One young boy was itching to investigate his bag to see what gifts he

received. His family members wanted him to wait until they got home to take the items out so others could move through the line and get to the ice cream. No way was that going to happen! He pulled out an item, looked it over and put it back, only to repeat the process for each goodie in his bag of treasures. When he pulled out one of his books, he shouted through a cheek bursting smile, "It's a dinosaur book!" That's the type of reaction we were hoping for when we first applied for the grant from the Foundation. Excitement for having books will almost certainly lead to parents and kids reading together...the best outcome you could hope for.



A happy young girl gets a new packback with books and school supplies.



One of many happy children checking out the goodies in the backpack!



Many volunteers were on hand to help distribute the backpacks filled with books and school supplies.



Free books and free ice cream - a child's dream!

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MISSION STATEMENT
To perform volunteer outreach ministry including Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, for the purpose of providing unconditional love, hope, support, and the presence of the Catholic Church to the poor, hungry, isolated, and homeless of the city of Syracuse, New York.

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Opportunities to help serve those in need...

Become a Volunteer...

If you would like more information on how to become a volunteer at Emmaus Ministry assisting with:

- Meal preparation
- Meal services
- Food pantry
- Shopping
- Organizing
- Children's Activities



Contact:

315-958-5191
info@emmausministry.org

Name _____
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Please indicate amount of donation AND area of sponsorship:

_____ \$250	_____ Meal Service
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