



Dear St. John's Family and Friends,

The world needs more **compassion!**

That's part of what God's "abundant life" looks like – not hostility, indifference, or patronizing pity, but genuine compassion, the kind of mutual care evoked by Jesus' call to "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Compassion means seeing things from someone else's point of view and experiencing their struggles. The word compassion literally means "suffering with" – and then taking actions that benefit each other and the community as a whole.

At St. John's, this kind of compassion is at the heart of everything we seek to do. When the Food Pantry opens its doors every week and boxes of food are distributed across our city – that's compassion in action. When our seven support groups meet here to encourage one another and walk the path of sobriety together – that's compassion in action. When the youth group packs thousands of shoes onto a truck to be transported across the world – that's compassion in action. When we share our abundance with those in need through the annual Yard Give – that's compassion in action.

And when we gather, get to know each other, and take care of each other when we need it most – that's compassion in action, too. The simple, beautiful work of empathy, reaching halfway around the world or halfway down the block.

Now more than ever, in an age awash in suspicion, supposed scarcity, and disconnection, the world needs more places like St. John's – communities dedicated to bringing more compassion into the world, more beauty, more abundant life.

On the other side of this letter, you'll find a brief testimony from Sea MacLeish about the power of compassion here at St. John's. We hope you'll read her thoughts on how compassionate action helps create the abundance God intends for all.

And speaking of abundance: we're looking forward to celebrating Giving Sunday with you on November 5. Come celebrate the compassion St. John's has for the world – and most of all, the compassion God has for us all!

With joy in abundance,

Pam Loose, Leslie Morgan, Debbie Carter, Rosemary Coverly, Jen Trenary, Amanda Knouse

P.S. Watch your mailbox for more opportunities to share in "Abundant Life."

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.
+ John 10:10



St. John's Testimonial from Sea MacLeish

Father Pete used to talk about 'com-fort' in a wonderful way. He would say it was Latin for 'bring-strength'. Maybe 'com-passion' is the same? *It calls forth steadfast enthusiasm, devoted care.*

Doesn't compassion change everything? When I have visited someone in the prison or spoken to a recovering mother in transition, the space often becomes sacred. In those moments we were caught in a loop. That loop was a presence, endless, God's Love.

Richard Rohr says it best, "Compassion pulls us out of ourselves and into the heart of another, placing us on holy ground where we instinctively take off our shoes and walk in reverence."

People would laugh at the old bumper sticker: "Follow your Bliss." But truly, isn't that our calling? As disciples, don't we get to figure out what brings us joy? What "thrives" us? What ignites our passion and therefore compassion? Then, in God's grace... we go forth!



I take art with me on my visits to the prison. The images are chosen to encourage discussions on spirituality and Christianity. The art centers on images that express faith, steadfast hope, forgiveness, love, and **compassion**.