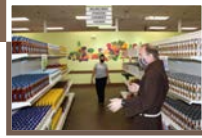




# Breaking Bread Newsletter

Feeding Bodies, Nourishing Spirits, Strengthening Communities

Capuchin Soup Kitchen

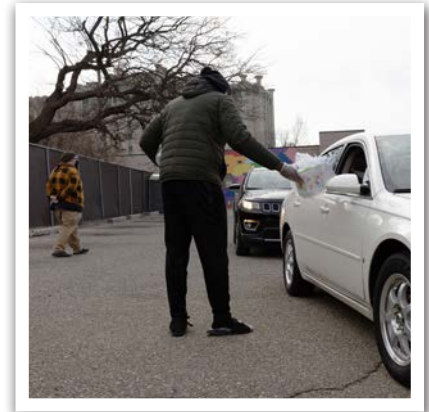


Summer 2021



## DELIVERING EASTER JOY... TOGETHER

*ROSA PARKS YOUTH PROGRAM ADAPTS EASTER BASKET GIVEAWAY*



This year, our Rosa Parks Youth Program, based at our CSK Conner meal program site, adapted its annual Easter Basket Giveaway to suit the present era of social distancing. In the past, Easter Baskets were typically donated and delivered to our CSK Conner meal program site and distributed indoors to area families.

Due to the pandemic we had to pivot to an online Easter Basket gift registry which generated an overwhelming response from generous benefactors near and far. And for distribution, we switched to a drive-through distribution in our Conner site parking lot. On a chilly Holy Saturday, the staff distributed over 400 Easter Baskets. Thanks to the generosity of many donors and benefactors, together we were able to deliver Easter Joy to hundreds of Detroit families.

## MELDRUM SHOWER PROGRAM ADAPTS TO COVID-19

*DESPITE ABUNDANT WATER, MANY GUESTS LACK ACCESS*

Here in Michigan, the conventional wisdom is that you're never more than six miles from a source of fresh water, like a river, lake or stream. However, for people experiencing homelessness or those without access to running water, access to a hot shower and change of clothes is precious.

At the onset of the pandemic, the shower program inside our Meldrum meal program site was suspended. There was no way to ensure the safety of guests with as many as two dozen guests per day using the showers.



After suspending the shower program inside the building, research and installation started on an outdoor shower trailer in our Meldrum site parking lot that allows guests to safely get a hot shower and change of clothes. The trailer is fully equipped with electricity, heat, a small changing room, hot/cold water and wastewater hookups. The showers are sanitized in between each use.

"It's better outside, because we have more fresh air and we aren't closed in, so it works better as far as COVID-19," said Darryl, a guest who showers here.

# WORKS OF MERCY

## VOLUNTEERING RETURNS!

We are happy to welcome volunteers back to partner in ministry with us. There are some safety requirements and we encourage you to read about them here: <http://bit.ly/CSK-Volunteer>

### Current volunteer opportunities:

#### Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Meldrum location:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Apply to volunteer at: <http://bit.ly/CSK-MeldrumVols>

#### Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Conner location:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Apply to volunteer at: <http://bit.ly/CSK-ConnerVols>

#### Capuchin Services Center:

- Sorting and organizing clothes
- Stocking and organizing food items
- Special events & projects

Apply to volunteer at: <http://bit.ly/CSK-SvcsCntrVols>

#### Earthworks Urban Farm

- Mixing soil/making soil blocks or germination trays
- Planting/seeding or thinning out seedlings
- Pricking out seedling/transplants
- Harvesting/processing produce
- Cultivating/weeding beds & Flipping compost
- General cleanup and other tasks generally related to gardening or farming.

Apply to volunteer at: <http://bit.ly/CSK-EarthworksVols>

# Encourage One Another

by Br. Jerry Johnson, OFM Capuchin  
Ministry Director

Encourage one another. Ask for help when you need it. Give help when you can. These themes keep coming to mind. The story of Bartimaeus, who is blind, in the Gospel of Mark brings out these themes. The successful efforts of our staff and volunteers have been so encouraging during these emotional, and sometimes tragic, times.

The encouragement of our donors through thick and thin is like a strong, uplifting, steady wind at your back, helping our sisters and brothers we serve to stay on their feet and to keep moving forward with support.

When Bartimaeus approaches Jesus with the encouragement of others, Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do

for you?” He responds, “I want to see.” Bartimaeus was asking for not only physical sight, but also for spiritual sight; to participate in the restoration of everyone to

their rightful place in the community, to be a part of an effort where we all find release from what keeps us bound up. “What do you want me to do for you?”



▲ Staff prepares the clothing area for the day's guests.

Every morning I imagine God asking me this question. Some days I ask for help with a particular question we are grappling with. Sometimes I ask God to help a particular CSK guest that is struggling. In any case, we know we can't do this alone. We seek to encourage one another. Ask for help when we need it. Give help when we can.

# EARTHWORKS SPRINGS INTO ACTION

## VOLUNTEERS RETURN TO HELP PLANT GARDEN

As spring turns into summer, volunteers and staff at Earthworks Urban Farm were hard at work preparing beds and planting broccoli, winter squash and other crops to supply fresh, in-season, organic produce for our Capuchin Soup Kitchen meal program sites. Pictured here tilling the soil at the Gleaners farm are our volunteer Pam, farm manager Patrick and assistant manager Tyler.

We're very happy that this year, Meldrum Fresh Market will be returning to the parking lot at our 1264 Meldrum meal program site. Fresh produce and other products will be available for purchase between the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm on our four market days planned for the summer and fall. All Thursdays, they fall on July 15, August 19, September 16 and October 14, 2021.



# NEW FRIARS COMING TO CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

## FIVE NEW FRIARS JOIN THE MINISTRY THIS SUMMER

Br. Gary Wegner will become our new ministry director starting on September 1. Br. Gary comes to the Soup Kitchen from Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, where he was pastor at the Holyland Catholic Parishes. Joining Br. Gary will be Br. Tien Dinh, who will be our assistant director, a new position created to help support the executive director. Br. Tien comes from Crow Agency, Montana, where he ministered at St. Dennis Parish among the Crow Nation.

Our Capuchin Services Center site, located at 6333 Medbury Street in Detroit, is blessed with the arrival of three additional Capuchin friars to serve the spiritual and material needs of our guests. Our Capuchin Services Center, a program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, provides a “Shopper’s Choice” food pantry, clothing distribution, spiritual care and social work/case management services for guests.

Br. Rob Roemer will join the staff at the Capuchin Services Center this summer as operations manager. Br. Rob comes to us from Appleton, Wisconsin, where he served as the local minister of our St. Fidelis Capuchin Community. Prior to that, Br. Rob was the ministry director of Capuchin Community Services in Milwaukee, which included St. Ben’s Community Meal Program and House of Peace. Br. Rob returns to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen here in Detroit after having served here already for several years in the 1990s.

Another new face at the Capuchin Services Center is Br. Fred Cabras. As our Social Work Manager, Br. Fred will be working with guests on addressing those roadblocks that keep people trapped in poverty. Br. Fred, a native of Paw Paw,

Michigan, completed his master’s degree in social work at Loyola University in Chicago and obtained his license as a social worker.

Our social workers assist guests with meeting their short-term and long-term goals. “We are really

offering a holistic approach. We want to help the individual at every point, not just giving food, but also offering services. So, bringing in social workers and bringing in clinicians you really can approach the holistic part, and social work is all about meeting the person in their environment,” said Br. Fred.

Br. Fred was recently ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood. “Part of the work we do is, we offer food and we offer clothing but we also offer respect and love. Respect that they are a person recognized and loved by God.”



▲ Br. Mark Joseph, Provincial Minister (Center) welcomes Br. Tien (Left), Br. Gary (2nd from L) and Br. Rob, (R) with current ministry director, Br. Jerry (2nd from R).



▲ Br. Fred helps a guest who has called in with a need for assistance.



▲ Br. Dijan helps repot seedlings in the Earthworks greenhouse.

The mission of the Capuchins includes ministering to the spiritual needs of those we encounter, in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. So, our Capuchin Services Center will be adding Br. Dijan Michael as chaplain to provide spiritual care for those who visit the program site. Br. Dijan is a friar from the Pavanatma Province of Capuchins in Kerala, India, and joins us through the Province of St. Joseph’s fraternal collaboration partnership with the Pavanatma Province. Br. Dijan has been a Capuchin since 2007.

Br. Jerry Johnson will help transition the friars into their new roles before moving on to his next ministry assignment. Please pray for Br. Gary, Br. Tien, Br. Rob, Br. Fred and Br. Dijan as they transition into their new roles.

# CSK Community Hit Hard by COVID-19 Pandemic

*an interview with Br. Bob Malloy, OFM Capuchin Pastoral Director*

The past year has been difficult for guests of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Loss and isolation have taken a toll on guests and the community surrounding our Soup Kitchen meal program sites.

## *Remembering sisters and brothers who have gone home*

Over the course of the past year, we've lost many guests and friends of the Soup Kitchen, some directly from COVID, others indirectly. "As we reflect on it and talk about it, we begin to understand the effect that it's having emotionally [and] mentally," said Br. Bob Malloy, pastoral director of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. "Sometimes it's very obvious, like road rage and shootings ... but connected with that we have also lost more people during this past year than we have in any of the last 20 years that I've been here."

Br. Bob believes that the virus is a contributing factor in many of the deaths of the past year. "I'm convinced that loss of life has been COVID-related in one way or another for a lot of people, whether by an overdose, suicide, freezing, or murder. There are others who have quietly gone away, and we don't know what happened to them."

Guilt and regret haunt the survivors. "One of the men froze to death," said Br. Bob, "When that happens, I think the people nearest to him say: 'What could I have done to prevent that? What could I have done for somebody that died by suicide? That didn't have to happen.' All these things come and they're all emotionally heavy and that heaviness just looms over us."

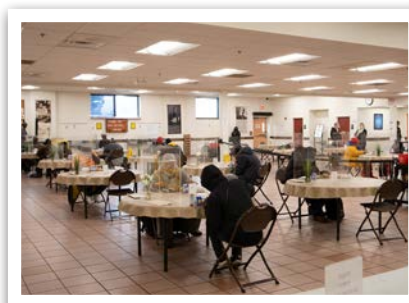
Since Br. Bob started ministering at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, he's put a lot of

the obituaries that he receives from funerals, prayer cards, and memorial cards on the wall of his office. The past year has presented a new challenge though. "I'm running out of space," said Br. Bob. "All these pictures and obituaries are, for me at least, a wonderful contact with people that I've known over so many years... Though they've all died in various ways, some on the streets, some freezing, some by violence, it's a whole variety of ways that people have died and some of our own Capuchin brothers are mixed in with them. And we've been losing a number of them too, as we get older."

## *Hope for better days ahead*

Perhaps fueled by optimism that the worst of the pandemic may be behind us, the soup kitchen is seeing more guests returning to eat inside. "At both sites we're getting a few more people coming in. Especially here at our Meldrum site, I noticed that for breakfast and lunch people are getting a little more comfortable in coming in." Br. Bob remarked that some of this may be due to isolation in the home life of guests. "People come here, not just to eat, but for the opportunity to be with other people. If they're living alone, if they're elderly, living in a high rise or whatever, they're able to get out, [and] they enjoy one another. Our situation here is very safe and it's a good place to be. People know each other. They like being together."

► *Guests enjoy dining together again!*



## CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

**CSK Conner Meal Program Site:**  
4390 Conner  
Detroit, MI 48215  
313-579-2100 ext. 4216

**CSK Meldrum Meal Program Site:**  
1264 Meldrum  
Detroit, MI 48207  
313-579-2100 ext. 2205

**Spiritual Care:**  
Offered at both CSK Conner & Meldrum Meal Program Sites  
313-579-2100 ext. 2209

**Capuchin Services Center:**  
6333 Medbury St  
Detroit, MI 48211  
313-579-1370

**Rosa Parks Children's Program:**  
4390 Conner  
Detroit, MI 48215  
313-579-2100 ext. 4224

**On The Rise Bakery Cafe Program:**  
8900 Gratiot  
Detroit, MI 48213  
Phone: 313.922.8510

**Earthworks Urban Farm Program:**  
1264 Meldrum St.  
Detroit, MI 48207  
313-579-2100 Ext. 2204

**Jefferson House Program:**  
8311 E. Jefferson  
Detroit, MI  
313-331-8900

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