



Ethiopian Capuchin brings unique perspective to Capuchin Soup Kitchen ministry

Attending to basic human dignity a common thread across continents

One of the newest faces at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen is Br. Begashaw Tadesse, OFM Cap. He comes to the Soup Kitchen from the Capuchin Province of Ethiopia “Mary Kidane Meheret.” Br. Begashaw grew up attending Mass at a Capuchin-run parish in his hometown of Addis Ababa. At the age of 18, Br. Begashaw entered postulancy, the initial phase of becoming a Capuchin brother, and joined the order. “I loved the way the Capuchins live and so I joined them,” he said.

In many ways working in the Capuchin Soup Kitchen is not that different from ministry in Ethiopia. “Capuchin friars minister under a variety of settings,” said Br. Begashaw. “Service to people of a variety of cultures in Ethiopia and around the



globe have allowed us to witness to God at work in countless ways.”

Capuchin life, Br. Begashaw says, is about prayer, ministry and community: “We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart and to bring home those who have lost their way.” Whether in Africa or North America, the Capuchins are a friend to those in need. “It’s all done in the spirit of St. Francis,” said Br. Begashaw. “We follow in his spirit.”

Welcome, Br. Begashaw, to the United States and to our Capuchin Soup Kitchen!



Creating a culture of encounter

By Br. Jerry Johnson, OFM Cap

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has written and spoken about fostering what he calls a culture of encounter. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, he wrote:

“Let us not forget that responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.”
(Pope Francis. *The Joy of the Gospel*, 220)

At our Capuchin Soup Kitchen sites, because of all the people coming together from diverse parts of the social and economic spectrum, we witness the building of a culture of encounter within this ministry and within our communities. Following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, who was deeply moved by God’s desire to walk with people who were poor or alienated, those who share in this Capuchin Soup Kitchen ministry seek to heal that which is broken and build a more just world.

When he visited the United States in 2015, Pope Francis



Br. Jerry Johnson

joined the homeless for lunch at St. Patrick Parish in downtown Washington DC. While he was there, he again spoke of encounter:

“How good it is to encounter one another in this place where we see one another as brothers and sisters, where we realize that we need one another. Today I want to pray with you, I want to join with you, because I need your support, your closeness. I would like to invite you to pray together, for one another, with one another. That way we can keep helping one another to experience with joy that Jesus is in our midst, and that Jesus helps us to find solutions to the injustices which he himself already experienced.”

(Pope Francis, visit to St. Patrick Parish, September 24, 2015)

As we approach the Holidays, let us all celebrate together- guests, donors, volunteers, staff, and friars, the support and love we have for one another in our effort to reduce suffering and build a bigger table where all can be heard and cared for.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New year!

Br. Jerry Johnson O.F.M. Capuchin



E.A.T.: Where people and urban farming meet *Earthworks Agriculture Training a sustainable urban ag incubator*



At the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, one of the ways individuals encounter one another is through Earthworks Agriculture Training (E.A.T.). E.A.T. is a nine-month training program where students learn sustainable agriculture practices at Detroit's only USDA Certified Organic urban farm. Earthworks, a program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, connects people to the land, while modeling a more just and sustainable food production system free of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

"It's been beneficial to me because I have my own little farm and I've had some experiences where I wasn't so successful in growing," said E.A.T. graduate Hanifah Rahman. "So I've learned a number of things that have helped me, such as soil management, crop planning, the correct time to harvest and how to read seed packages correctly." Hanifah was an E.A.T. participant last year, but in 2018, she returned to Earthworks as a

crew leader helping to hone her managerial, business and leadership skills. "It's invaluable. You learn a lot about people. It gives people a chance who might not necessarily have this kind of experience, because we're in an urban setting, to engage with agriculture," said Hanifah.

E.A.T. participants point out how bringing people together to rub shoulders on an urban farm builds sister-brotherhood. Freddie Anderson, a former E.A.T. participant and current crew leader noted how Earthworks volunteers come away enriched by the experience. Volunteers "were so eager to come in a peaceful, inquisitive mindset about how to learn about gardening and soil techniques and above all a sense of community, which I admired very much," said Freddie. Freddie implemented what he learned



through E.A.T., purchasing a plot of land in southwest Detroit where he and his family grow produce.

"It gives people a sense of empowerment because they put a seed in the ground and there's a product that comes back within weeks," said NefeRa Barber, E.A.T. program manager. "If you plant a radish seed, in 28 days you pull that plant up and you have a radish, so that's a sense of accomplishment right there."



Since 1997, Earthworks Urban Farm has been fertile ground for encounters with mother earth and with one another. The Capuchins are grateful for the generous support of countless volunteers and Capuchin Soup Kitchen supporters that make this important ministry possible.

90 years of service to the poor and hungry

The new year 2019 marks 90 years since the founding of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Since 1929, the Capuchins, along with volunteers and staff, have ministered in the Soup Kitchen providing food and fellowship.

The ministry really goes all the way back to the first arrival of the Capuchins in Detroit in 1883. The Capuchins have joyfully served the poor, offering hospitality and attending to the spiritual and other basic needs of the community since the founding of St. Bonaventure Monastery on Mt. Elliott Street 135 years ago.

The great depression causes great need



The Capuchin Soup Kitchen began officially in 1929 in a time of economic tumult. A massive stock market crash on October 29, 1929 ushered in the Great Depression. By 1929, Detroit was firmly entrenched as the Motor City and was dependent on new auto sales for its livelihood. As demand for vehicles fell sharply after the crash, auto plants began laying off workers. At the same time, people in the skilled trades had difficulty finding work as new construction came to a halt. Banks became insolvent. Unemployment estimates hit a high of 25 percent in 1933.

On November 2, 1929, just a few days after the Wall Street crash, the Soup Kitchen opened its doors for the first time.

“At first only coffee and rolls were available to the hungry. But, within a few weeks, members of the Third Order [of St. Francis] began to make a hearty soup which they served at noon... In the dining room of their hall, rough planks were set up over sawhorses

for tables. The hungry, typically men, began to pour in each day. As the Depression cast more and more people into need, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen was feeding between 1,500 and 3,000 people daily.”

From Father Solanus Casey by Catherine Odell

Ministry continues, evolves

From 1929 to today, the doors have remained open for anyone in need of a hot meal and a warm smile. As the needs of the community evolve, the Capuchins have responded. In the 1970s, Jefferson House, a CARF-accredited residential treatment center, was founded to help men overcome substance use disorders and become productive contributors to society. In 1997, Br. Rick Samyn started Earthworks Urban Farm to connect people to each other, the land and their food. On the Rise Bakery began 12 years ago out of the ROPE (Reaching Our Potential Everyday) program with a vision of developing returning citizens and communities, connecting one with the other. The

Capuchin Services Center was created to address the need for nonperishable food and clothing items. The

Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program provides tutoring and art therapy, helping stimulate creativity and conflict resolution.



Capuchin Soup Kitchen co-founder Blessed Solanus Casey was known for an attitude of gratitude. “Thank God ahead of time” was his maxim. All of us from the Capuchin Soup Kitchen are thankful to God, and to our many benefactors, for providing so many of the basic needs of Detroiters for 90 years.

**In memoriam
Stephanie Jackson
1961 – 2018**

Stephanie Jackson, a friend to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, was greeted by Sister Death at Harper Hospital on September 8, 2018. Stephanie grew up and lived on the east side of Detroit. For over 25 years, she found faith, friendship, community and support at the Solanus Casey Center and the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, where she found food for her body and soul. Stephanie participated in the women's prayer and Bible study at the Solanus



Casey Center and sang in the Capuchin Soup Kitchen Choir.

James, a neighbor and friend to Stephanie, shared this reflection: "I know that at times, she kind of aggravated people, but she was who she was. None of us are perfect. That was a part of her, and that's what I loved about her. She was just who she was. I miss having conversations and getting into it with her. And, as difficult as it was, I still loved her for her. This makes me sad again just thinking about all of this. When I talk about it, the pain comes back. But, the reality is settling in, and it gets a little easier, but I will still miss her. Someone just asked me about her today and said that I must miss her. And, I do. I miss her at home too--still getting used to not seeing her in the building where I live, and she had her apartment."

Stephanie is survived by her beloved children and many friends and neighbors at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Solanus Casey Center.

Calendar of Events



Save the Date: November 30
SOCK (Support Our Capuchin Kitchen)

Bocce With the brothers Friday, January 25th, 2019

April 29th

Buddy's 'Slice of Life' event April 29th All-you-can-eat pizza to be served at Buddy's 11 metro Detroit locations benefiting Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Visit any of Buddy's Pizza's full-service locations to enjoy an all-you-can-eat two-topping pizza and salad meal with proceeds benefiting the Capuchin Soup Kitchen's programs. A carry-out option is also available for purchase at all 11 Buddy's Pizza locations and includes either a 4-square two-topping pizza or a medium sized antipasto, Greek or house salad.



46th Annual SOCK Dinner tickets on sale now



**Peggy and Dave Meador
2018 SOCK Chairs**

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen builds a culture of encounter at our Meldrum and Conner meal sites and through programs like the Capuchin Services Center and Earthworks Urban Farm. Guests, friars, volunteers and staff rub shoulders and encounter each other as sisters and brothers. Each year, hundreds of individuals, families and businesses support the work of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen through the SOCK (Support Our Soup Kitchen) Dinner.

This year's SOCK Dinner will be held Friday, November 30 at 5:30pm in the Grand Riverview Ballroom at Cobo Center in downtown Detroit. You can help the Capuchin Soup Kitchen build a bigger table – showing compassion and love for our sisters and brothers by nourishing their physical needs and providing a space for fellowship.



The evening includes a cocktail reception, dinner and entertainment from the Capuchin Soup Kitchen Choir. An afterglow follows dinner. The 46th Annual SOCK Dinner is presented by the DTE Energy Foundation and is chaired by Dave Meador, vice chair and chief administrative officer of DTE Energy and his wife Peggy.

Individual tickets are \$275. More information and online ticket purchase at sockdinner.org

