

THE FOCUS CIRCLE ASKED Parishioners to write a brief thought about: What is different about SMMC that helps me to live out my Catholic Christianity?

Here are the responses we've received so far:

(To see yours included email it to Marie at marie@evensongretreat.com)

When I first came to SMMC, after reading about the "women priest" in the paper, my first thought was, I was at home. We gathered around the Table, we held hands at the Lord's prayer, we made a few voices sound like a full choir. I was at peace. At the center of this home was my Mother/Father God and I was surrounded by my brothers and sisters in Christ. It won't matter where we as a Community are, that feeling will be with me.

Ann O'Callaghan.

As a Catholic I've found it difficult to be who I am: a spiritual person seeking a spiritual experience. The unstructured freedom to worship, as I believe, is important to me. St. Mary of Magdala's Catholic experience has opened me to God's intervention in my life in many positive ways. Respecting, learning from and encouraging others in their faith practice has been a part of my growth here. And, I've learned how to serve the homeless as part of a dedicated team making a difference in all of our lives.

Dave Schropfer

As I searched for a new spiritual home I visited many communities but always missed the Catholic Mass. What I found at St Mary of Magdala were like-minded Catholics and many others that valued our faith traditions but were seeking a new way to live them. Our worship is focused on gospel teachings of love, mercy and service. As an inclusive community, all are welcome at Jesus' table! So Refreshing, The difference comes down to "doing things RIGHT" or doing the RIGHT thing. I am so grateful to have found SMMC.

Donna Kelley

An untypical setting. In two rows on each side of the chapel we face each other, which I would call monastic style. We are focused within ourselves and on our fellow members' The altar is positioned. not on some high edifice in the middle or end of the chape where a priest stands on high above the congregation. The altar is located at one end and is a large recycled telephone cable spool. A simple and natural cross, symbolizing the crucified and resurrected Christ, hangs in back of the altar and below a earth shaped window looking toward heaven. The readings and homilies take place at the opposite end. In between the altar and the reading stand is an empty space where all are welcome to receive Jesus at communion time. When this space is completely empty Jesus can be visualized saying "Be not afraid...I am with you...Come ...Follow me.."

The simple setting makes us one with each other and one with Jesus. |

Gene Sheridan

SMMC is an inclusive community. We not only say that all are welcome, but we live the words of the Gospel:

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Kathleen Carpenter

Of course SMMC does not help me with my Catholic Christianity because as you know I am neither Catholic nor Christian. The church does help me by providing a place, people, and rituals which celebrate God with humility and praise.

Nancy Kirchner

The celebration of the Liturgy in a smaller Community provides an intimacy and inclusion that engages one to experience God's love for us, and our love for God. As a community we are then moved to be present to fellow members, and to reach out to persons beyond our community.

The planning and arrangement of the worship space; the thoughtful intention and communication of the Scriptural message; the spiritually moving quality of the chosen music – all of this is the fruit of the prayer and blessed intention of our celebrants: our pastors and deacon.

I am grateful, and I am sure God goes with us.

Jane Moroney, July 2015