

Pax Christi

Metro-New York

January 2014

Featured Recent Event

Luke Live!

I admit it. It was so cold on Sunday, January 26th, that I would have been perfectly happy staying home, but Pax Christi Metro New York was presenting its Peacemaking through the Arts Winter Benefit, *Luke Live!* and I had to go. Thank God I did and thank God so did an assembly of hearty souls willing to conquer the arctic air and support PCMNY.

Luke Live! turned out to be a fine way to warm the soul. Fr. James DiLuzio, accompanied by the talented composer-pianist Laurence Rosania, graced his audience with several passages of Luke's Gospel proclaimed not simply by heart but from the heart and enriched by a range of beautifully sung songs and interludes of commentary to entertain and enlighten.

Fr. James began by emphasizing the value and virtue of simplicity, pointing out how much we tend to like what is "down to earth." He placed the Gospel and Jesus in that context, starting with the birth narrative in Luke's Gospel. How much simpler and down to earth could Jesus' birth have been! With that, Fr. James broke into the Quaker classic: "'Tis a Gift to Be Simple," followed by Bernstein's "A Simple Song" from *Mass*. He then proceeded to proclaim other passages of Luke's Gospel, including the Temptations in the Desert, the call of the Apostles, the Sermon on the Plain, the Lilies in the Field, and the stories of Martha and Mary, the Prodigal Son, and Zacchaeus. Hearing each passage with the inflections and pauses that Fr. James gave them, seeing the facial expressions and body movements that he incorporated into each verse made them come alive and take on deeper meaning than a simple reading generally does. Pairing them with such songs as Bruce Springsteen's "Into the Fire," Brian Wren and Norman Warren's hymn "Is This a Day of New Beginnings?", Bernstein's "My House" from *Peter Pan*, "Who Will Buy?" from *Oliver*, Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer," "The Happy Working Song" from Disney's *Enchanted*, "Bring Him Home" from *Les Miserables*, and Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing" not only gave new meaning to each song, but also served as prayer responses to the Gospel sections. Some revealed the joy of the Good News; most revealed its solemnity.

Besides returning to the message of simplicity throughout the program, Fr. James also reminded us of our common humanity which begs us not to be judgmental or arrogant,

but to be forgiving and humble. With the story of Martha and Mary, he suggested we learn to balance action and contemplation, not to put one above the other. With the story of the Prodigal Son, he focused on the good brother, noting that he lost nothing because his brother was royally welcomed home. Nor do we lose by another's gain. With the story of Zacchaeus, he noted that Zacchaeus was transformed not because Jesus chastised him, but because he rose to the level of esteem that Jesus afforded him.

Fr. James gave us many important ingredients to integrate into our peacemaking. Yes, we will all be tempted to stay at home where it's safe and warm, but if we do we may miss an opportunity to be so much more.

Rosemarie Pace, Director