

Do we have room for 15,726 more people in our community here at Christ the Servant?

God's on-going revelation is most often heard in the heart of humanity when the obstacles of our self-centeredness are removed. The Garden of Eden is a human reflection of the world that God intended from the beginning. Eden becomes the place or community where all creation lives in right relationship. East of Eden is outside the community of right relationship. For Adam and Eve, and in fact for all of humanity, being expelled or cut off from the community is the equivalent of death; for some a living death. The Angel of Life stands at the entrance to the garden where life abounds.

Pope Francis writes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation."

When in Rio de Janeiro Francis spoke to the youth telling them to make noise, to *"go out into the open; I want the Church to be in the streets; I want us to defend ourselves against all that is worldliness, comfort, being closed and turned within – parishes, colleges and institutions must get out otherwise they risk becoming NGOs, and the Church is not a non-governmental organization,"* The social doctrine of the Church calls us to create environments in which people can realize their God given dignity and value. Therefore the pre-evangelization and evangelization of the contemporary city is a necessity.

The successful evangelization of our communities, requires our parish centers to become advocates that enable these environments in which a way of life, and commitment on the part of the people of God and the institutions that represent the Church of Christ in the contemporary city, are able to respond in more than a "vague "compassion", as St. John Paul II says in *Sollicitudo socialis rei*.

The struggle has always been in trying to achieve those right relationships in community. In the Acts of the Apostles speaks of the community being of one spirit and one heart, sharing everything in common. The story of Ananias and Sapphira, tell the story of what happens when one steps outside the community of right relationship; death. This "death" is symbolic, as I mentioned earlier, as being outside the garden of right relationships, East of Eden. The sharing of our resources and enabling the capacity building for greater participation can occur, enabling the common good of the contemporary city. Again Francis says, "nor will harmony and happiness be attained in a society that ignores, pushes to the margins or excludes a part of itself,"

We are called to reach out to those living within the boundaries of the contemporary city, inviting them into the community; that is into a community of relationship in which Christ the Servant is the model of our faith life; allowing no one to remain East of Eden.

As mentioned this previous Sunday, using the traditional boundaries of our parish community, which include those of Our Lady of Peace and the former St. Paul's in Canton, we have according to the study 16.5 square miles of mission territory. Within that mission territory we have approximately a population of 41,386 people living within these 16.5 square miles. And of the 41,386 souls, there are approximately 19,474 households.

David Kinnaman, a religion researcher, adds ""the unchurched, the never-churched and the skeptics" to what is now named the "none's" – those who claim no religious affiliation – at about 38 percent of the population.

Given our population of 41, 386 souls, 38 % is 15, 726 persons. Are we able to provide an encounter with Christ and a way of life within a community of faith that is inviting and welcoming and ultimately transformative of the contemporary city?
LGaetano