

sprinkled them with water. Parishioners were instructed to use them whenever they wanted to be wrapped in the compassionate embrace of the community of St. Paul Parish. Large, square pieces of felt were also blessed and made available for sending to family members in military service or to families who had moved away.

There was music and song as people came forward to retrieve what they brought. Others came forward to be prayed with for special intentions. Fr. Nick announced he would be moving through the congregation with oil to anoint anyone in need. (Jas 5,13-16) What evolved was a gracious mix of movement, prayer, and ministry.

Fr. Nick moved to the section where I sat after the teaching. Two young ladies, sisters seven and nine-years-old, had reserved a seat for me each night. The woman sitting directly in front of me raised her hand as Fr. Nick approached with the oil. No sooner had he stopped in front of her and begun to pray when both sisters next to me immediately reached forward, laid hands on the woman's shoulder, bowed their heads and joined in the prayer. I quickly did the same. "The reign belongs to such as these." (Mt. 18,3.)

The focus for the final evening was "Until everybody comes," leaving our mission and our personal ministry open-ended. Scriptures used in the teaching led seamlessly into the Eucharist that followed. It was a resounding and fitting conclusion.

In a follow-up note, Fr. Nick captured the lingering sentiment of those who came: "Words can't fully express our complete appreciation for all you did to help our parish's growth. Your talent, closeness to God, and deep appreciation of our Church and tradition sparked a joy, laughter, and glee in the hearts and on the faces of all those who came. Every age group and every 'brand' of parishioner was most touched." I made sure to tell the pastor I had been touched deeply as well. Indeed, the participation of the people was artfully done.

Perhaps the best testimony to Beacon Street's effort to answer the call from St. Paul's parish is their invitation to Beacon Street to in 2004! "Come and See" has become "come back and do that again!"

Where are they now?

In the last issue, we reminded our readers that Beacon Street was founded by five visionaries in 1988. I am often asked about their whereabouts by clients who have known us from those early days. In this issue, a closer look and an update on one of Beacon Street's pioneers. . . .

**Steve
Rico**



What do you remember most from the initial BS days?

I remember the excitement of being a part of a type of ministry that had always affected me deeply. I had been a fan of the Fountain Square Fools for years and saw this group as doing something similar...perhaps offering healing and hope to a people (and church) in need...and it was fun. The people I was with seemed to put up with my foibles and I felt good about my role. I admired the skills in those around me, and the openness to try new things.

Did you think BS would fly? Last 16 years?

I never actually considered the fact that Beacon Street wouldn't fly. There weren't many groups doing what we were doing in the country, and the need seemed to be so great. My departure, reluctantly made yet absolutely necessary, was buoyed when a person named Barb Ballenger joined Beacon Street. She was a blessing...such talent, grace and sensitivity, and what a songwriter! Enjoyed seeing Bob and Barb whenever I attended Beacon Street presentations and marveled at the commitment and quality of the presentations!

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