

Artfully Done by Bob Kloos

On the Road in June: a month in the life of Beacon Street

"How is the clowning going, Bob?" I get that question when I run into people I don't see on a regular basis. They think I am in and out of greasepaint a couple times a week, entertaining children at parish festivals. So I thought it might be helpful to give a brief accounting of last month's activity to demonstrate the diversity and the depth of Beacon Street's mission.

A last minute call took me back to Urban Community School on June 2nd for their Peace Day. In the middle of all the national immigration debate, a remarkably multi-cultural campus set aside a day to celebrate diversity, acknowledge the year's achievements, and recommit to respectful language and behavior. This was Beacon Street's third presentation at UCS since the first of the year with as many planning sessions in between. Their new facility at W. 49th and Lorain is worth a visit, or check out urbancommunityschool.org.

Early on June 7th I was in Akron participating in Heart to Heart Communication's Leadership Connections. It is a 10-month program during which small groups meet to support individual efforts to integrate faith and work. Heart to Heart (h2hc.org) has a mission to serve as a community catalyst for personal and spiritual development as a foundation for enriching workplaces. They accomplish this critical task by inviting business and professional leaders to meet, listen, and witness to how faith and values can "go to work" too. Co-founders Fr. Norm Douglas and Larry Vuillemin are looking to bring Heart to Heart to the Cleveland area in early 2007. The three of us met recently to discuss how I could participate in facilitating this new effort.

On Sunday morning, June 11th, I returned to one of my favorite places. Mantua Center Christian Church might be no bigger than 100 households, but hospitality abounds and their spirituality runs deep. They are between pastors, so they invited Beacon Street to come with a word of "healing." I suggested an opening hymn: "How Can I Keep from Singing." The chorus goes like this:

"No storm can shake my inmost calm,

*While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?"*

My message focused on two facts: 1.) All good preaching is a dialogue, and 2.) Just as parents learn to be good parents from their own children, a new pastor will learn how to shepherd well from the people sitting in this very church. A visitor from Landcaster, Pa. took my notes for his congregation; they are undergoing a shift in leadership as well.

The next day I met with Bob Grgic, campus minister at Lake Catholic High School where teachers and staff at will be helping to facilitate student retreats next year. Bob and I met at Red Oak Camp, a forest and wildlife respite from the classrooms and athletic fields -- a place where students will reconnect with nature, quiet, and the voices inside them. The challenge on the faculty day in August will be to demonstrate the immeasurable value of a day away from classes and the impact adult participation will have on the kids. Bob is a pro and a veteran facilitator in youth work, retreats, and workshops on prayer.

On the 20th, we convened the bi-monthly meeting of our board of trustees. Beacon Street is a small nonprofit, and Pat and I have tried to make the board experience less administrative and more of a participation in the ministry. Last month we focused on the transition from Pat's tenure to a new office manager as well as strategies to connect with the corporate and nonprofit world.

The 22nd found me at Tri-C East for an all day workshop on bullying. A local expert, author, and experienced teacher, C. J. Bott, guided 75 participants through several critical areas including: cyberbullying, homophobia, and some prevention programs in local school districts. I found the cyber component most informative. Apparently there is a lot of hard hitting going on from the anonymity of cyberspace. Prevention is only as successful as adult supervision is vigilant.

On the following Saturday I took a long drive to Millersburg in Holmes County. Several