

## Who is Blessed Sacrament? God's Living Stones

We heard from Fr. Paul about "How" to approach change, and Fr. Bob has told us "What" will change. So now let's look at "Who" we are as a parish, who is Blessed Sacrament Church. Who are we who are about to be affected by change?

St. Francis learned that building Jesus' "church" is more than collecting, assembling stones. It is collecting living stones, people, putting them together into one body, the Body of Christ. We are not just a moving and changing a building, we are a moving and changing a people.

So who is Blessed Sacrament? Who are these living stones

A few weeks ago I found myself unexpectedly part of a major life change. It was not my own but I found myself a part of someone's journey to the greatest change we will all encounter. I witnessed the passing of one of our fellow parishioners, Bill Echevarria. I want to thank his wife, Flo for allowing me to tell this story. It showed me a small glimpse of who the living stones of our parish are.

On a Tuesday at morning Mass, just before Mass started, Bill had gone to the back conference where the guys gather for coffee after Mass to leave some donuts he had brought. Everyone else had already gone into church but unfortunately no one noticed that Bill never came in. Not until Mass was over did some of the guys find him on the floor in the back room. He had collapsed and was unconscious.

At this point I began to see the "living stones" of our parish. Three people from the medical community, one Anglo woman, two of Indian descent began doing CPR. Two Hispanic woman were quietly murmuring prayers in Spanish over to the side of the room. Fr. Jack, who had said Mass that morning anointed him. People from morning Mass, all ages, socio-economic status, long time parishioners, newcomers, friends and strangers, were all standing quietly in hall and vestibule praying, hoping, supporting one another. Bill didn't make it. It was later when I realized he had moved on to be with an even greater part of our Church, the Community of Saints. They too were praying at the same time as us and welcoming Bill home to heaven.

Who are we? ... these living stones ... we are everybody!

Just as this small group gathered unexpectedly to help Bill "change" from this life to the next, we are all in this together to help us move and change as a Church. Life is constantly calling us to change. At this point in our lives it is time for us to pick up and move ourselves, our tangible belongings, our habits, good and bad, our traditions, personalities, cultures and ministries to a new location.

Thinking about it all is mind boggling. Sometimes I wonder how I can deal with change for myself and keep in mind my fellow parishioners. It becomes overwhelming, but then God reminds me it is not for my understanding. God is the one in control. All I have to do is be open to the Spirit and then I will be shown what my part in this change will be, where I fit in,

God is like the Master Builder in the story of a Master Builder and two stones. There was a Master Builder who was building a beautiful new church and he had a large quarry of stones from which to assemble his building. As he went along putting stones into place he came to two stones. One was perfect, with straight edges and angles and the other had a bulge on one side. The Master builder picked up the stone with the bulge and carefully put it into place then he reached for the perfect stone. The perfect stone said, "Master, surely you do not want to put me next to that other stone. We will not fit well together. That bulge will leave a gap between us and there will be a hole in the building. Why don't you take your tools and chisel away some of the stone so that we will fit together better." The Master builder said that this was a fine idea so he picked up his tools and began

to carve away some of the stone ... from the side of the perfect stone ... making a groove in it so that it fit perfectly next to the stone with the bulge.

Being living stones means we need to be flexible in God's hands. We need to be aware of how it will affect us individually but also how it will affect others. We will be asked to participate differently in this change we are undertaking; in the amount of money we will give, the time we can give, the gifts we have to offer. We are the living stones of our Church. We are all in this together. There is room for us all to fit in. All God asks is that we be open to the Spirit, listening to how God wants us to participate.