



FAITH: A FRESH TAKE



July 28, 2017

The Benefits of Bringing Work Home

As a teacher, I'm naturally inclined to make conversations with my children a teachable moment. However, as teenagers, they see right through my methods.



In fact, my son once said to me, "It's okay to take a break from teaching when you're at home, mom."

The reality is that our jobs and occupations do consume us at times and we tend to bring them home. While this may not be ideal for some professions, especially those working in extreme and dangerous situations, sometimes bringing "work" home turns out to be a blessing.

For the past month, I've had the pleasure of adding "reporter" to my schedule once again as a part time staffer at The Messenger during the transition of editors. I've come face-to-face with the work of people ministering to the sick, the homeless and the faithful. I've interviewed members of religious communities reflecting on 50, 60 and 75 years of religious life who see their work as a calling and something that was meant to be.

I've taken photos of seniors ministering in food pantries and children learning about their faith while attending vacation bible schools.

My work this summer as an interim staffer has put me in touch with people who see the positive in life and who trust in God completely no matter how drastic the curves of life have rocked their health and well-being.

It has been impossible not to bring my work home with me the past few weeks and it has benefited my children and my family just as much as it has benefited my well-being.

I've relayed my experiences to my teenagers while sitting at dinner. We've talked about the unique ways people in the Belleville diocese are impacting the lives of the less fortunate.

We marveled over the active life of a 95-year old woman I met while on assignment and how thankful the residents of East St. Louis were when St. Vincent de Paul's mobile ministries drove by.

By bringing my work home, I've shown my children that that we have a responsibility to do God's work and that we need these hard-working individuals to inspire us to do more.

This summer has been chalked full of teachable moments and I can only hope that these lessons last a lifetime for myself and my family.

— **Shannon Philpott-Sanders**
Shannon Philpott-Sanders is a freelance writer and college journalism professor, but most of all, a proud mom trying to keep the faith in a household of seven.



CNS/Rolax Dela Pena

A boy carries a bag of bread while wading through floodwaters in Quezon City, Philippines, July 27.

Teens Around the Globe Seek Peace

What can 75 teenagers from around the world teach us about encounter?

Early July, Christian, Jewish and Muslim teenagers from different countries gathered at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to "build peace through a culture of encounter."

The students — who came from Israel, Palestine, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, Burundi, Congo and Spain — shared their experiences and connected through music, poetry, sports and technology.

The summit was organized in part by Scholas Occurrentes, an organization initially formed in Argentina that promotes education, arts and sports to create a culture of encounter for peace. Its name means "schools encounter" in Latin.

Pope Francis has said that faith is an encounter with Christ, and we must imitate Jesus by encountering others. The Houston Catholic Worker wrote, "The disciple encounters other people as a response to having an encounter with Christ in the first place."

To encounter others, we must step out of ourselves -- which is exactly what the young people did during their four-day summit in Jerusalem.

According to the Scholas website, the youth shared that often they can be so focused on their own problems that they are not even aware of issues affecting other parts of the world. So, meeting peers who could tell their stories was eye-opening.

Niri Boasson, a 16-year-old from Israel, told Scholas that she gained a new perspective. "I thought that Israel had the worst problems with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but

discovered that there is a civil war in Congo," she said.

"I never knew how blind I was to other problems and places," said Adan Othman-Cabat, an 18-year-old from Palestine. "I would recommend this experience (of encounter and dialogue) to every human being."

Throughout the summit, they also worked on ideas to promote a culture of encounter that would lead to peace and understanding. One idea was to have a bus take Israeli and Palestinian youth to play sports together, and another was to create an app to connect students from across the globe to shatter stereotypes.

At the end of the summit, the pope sent a video to the young people celebrating their experiences in Jerusalem. He said that the encounter took place once they were open to life and one another. "There are as many stories as individuals but life is one," the pope said. "You yourselves, beginning from your differences, have achieved unity."

Creating a culture of encounter also means building relationships with others. The Scholas teenagers also created a mural representing their dreams, passions, doubts and fears. Each student took a piece of the mural with them as a reminder that they are united by the same dream and goal: achieving peace.

In a world that is afraid of what is different and barriers are built out of fear, a true encounter is very much needed, the pope added. "We can be united and value the diversity of cultures, not a uniformity but in harmony," he said.

By sharing with others and really getting to know their stories, we "encounter." How can you encounter others in your life? You too can teach the world about encounter.

— **Maria-Pia Negro Chin**

(This column is part of the CNS columns package.)



CNS/Dai Kurokawa

KENYA PEACE ELECTIONS: Men sit in front of a wall with a message of peace July 23 in Nairobi, Kenya. Kenyan Catholic bishops have urged citizens to prepare to vote peacefully in the Aug. 8 general elections.

Fresh Take: a way to look at faith from a different perspective

This is an online-only page dedicated to young adult Catholics, their interests, their needs, their challenges and their faith.

We want to give young adults something to "chew on," to think about when they're looking for something more than an on-line horoscope or the latest

star news.

This page offers columns we believe will interest our young adults. Let us know.

Email us at cathnews@bellevillemessenger.org with questions, suggestions or for more information.

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