

Living Stones: Stories of People Who Helped Build Up Our Church

Saint Peter wrote to those being baptized to describe what it means not only to belong to the church but to **BE** the church of Jesus Christ.

"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

As part of our observance of **150 years of the Catholic Church in Peabody**, I invited our parishioners to share stories from their past that may help us to see the wonderful work of God that has been going on. There are more people and stories than could ever fit onto these pages. But I hope the stories that appear here over the coming months will help us all appreciate how richly the grace of God has been working in our midst.

Two Stories: Long Lives of Faith and Service

Marie Cassidy is just a few months shy of her 100th birthday. Only the weather and COVID are keeping her in her home on Shore Drive. As soon as the season changes and COVID is behind us you can be sure that she'll be out walking, which is one the secrets of her amazing health! If she had her way she would be back at the Thrift Store or at the Outreach Program or the St. Matthew's Guild, all of which are ways she has served her parish. If you start something and need help, Marie shows up! She was a member of Our Lady's Sodality which sadly has ceased to be. Like Fran, she has been a regular at the 6:45 Mass. As much as any Catholic I know, Marie lives the corporal works of mercy. She seems to just keep seeking out ways to help people in need, from Haven from Hunger in the past to our parish programs for the poor. She can never do too much for her parish. When I asked her about she stays so alive, she spoke like the wonderful woman of faith she is: "The Lord is Number One!" Amen!



CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

FEED THE HUNGRY
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY
SHELTER THE HOMELESS
CLOTHE THE NAKED
VISIT THE SICK
VISIT THE IMPRISONED
BURY THE DEAD

Francis Bresnahan will be catching up to Marie in another year. His name has been around and is familiar to many long timers. Fran is the third generation of his family to make St. John's his home. The Bresnahan family goes back literally to the very stones that were used to build the first Catholic church in Peabody. Fran's grandfather was a stone cutter who came from Ireland. He helped bring granite from the quarry at the end of Warren Street to lay the foundations of Saint John's. Fran himself was involved in painting our church over the years. Again and again he gave his heart and soul to the parish through his involvement and support. Most of all he has been as faithful a Catholic as you will ever find, not only on weekends in his favorite bench but at the early 6:45 AM Mass every day he could get there. You always got his mind on whatever you asked of him, unvarnished! He loved his parish, its priests, deacons, religious and fellow parishioners. He and his lovely wife Dorothy made a truly amazing couple who gave their children all they could, including of course the Catholic faith. His love for others is known through his support of our school, St. Vincent de Paul and many charities. Every conversation I ever had with him always ended with "Father John, whatever you need, let me know. I love my parish!"

