

A Justice Ministry V

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

August 29, 2021

Fr. Tony Davis

“The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.” Those were the words of our psalm today for this final homily on our new Justice Ministry at St. Matthias. Again, this ministry is in connection with BREAD, the local faith-based community organizing group. Today’s final question is ‘what would a justice ministry look like here practically?’

A Justice Ministry through BREAD consists of three levels of involvement- team leaders, network members, and participants. The highest level of involvement is a *team leader*. To get us started, we have two trained team leaders who have been meeting with the community organizer to get us started. The team leaders are the ones who run the ministry, start conversations with those interested in joining, keep in contact with BREAD, and host house meetings once a year. Each team leader has a group of people that he or she keeps in contact with throughout the year. These are the *network members*. Network members are more numerous than the team leaders. They share their personal experiences regarding injustices and attend 4 meetings a year. Both the team leaders and the network members are encouraged to show their commitment to the ministry by investing \$200 a year to BREAD, although arrangements can be made if that is a burden. Lastly, *participants*, the lowest level of involvement, are the ones who attend one event a year, which is the large gathering in the late Spring known as the Nehemiah Action. That is the day of showing our people power.

We are joining BREAD at the right time of year, as it operates on a one-year cycle, starting with grassroots meetings in September, known as the listening process. At the end of this month, both of our team leaders will be hosting their own house meetings the last week of September. These house meetings are scripted small group conversations about current issues in which everyone is given an opportunity to share. If you are interested in being invited to one of these house meetings and are not on our Flocknote 'Justice Ministry' group, please join our Flocknote group. The team leaders are in the process of reaching out to everyone interested to tell you about their meeting date, time, and location.

In the Fall, BREAD will move into the research phase, which includes an opportunity for the congregations to come together and see what issues are emerging most frequently. Then, throughout the Winter and early Spring, the issues move into possible action plans. Lastly, in the late Spring, at the Nehemiah Action, a final plan is presented to those who have leadership roles in the city and can make a change. Pre-covid, these gatherings bring about 3,000 people together. Independently of BREAD, there is also room for the Justice Ministry to host events at the parish related to justice themes.

I want to thank all of you for listening to all these homilies on justice the past 5 weekends. As we move back into our normal homilies, may the words of the psalm continue to echo in our hearts: "the one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord."