

St. Rita's Café: Serving up Kindness

Excerpt from the newsletter of St. Mary's Drop-In Centre

Our Mission Statement

St. Mary's Drop-In Centre is a ministry of St. Mary's Cathedral living, in imitation of Christ's washing of the disciples' feet. His commandment that: "I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you" (John 13). Recognizing the dignity of each individual, through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (Matthew 25:32), we care for the material, emotional, and spiritual needs of the homeless and those most in need in the city of Kingston.



St. Rita's Café

Dealing with COVID

During Stage 2 of Ontario's COVID re-opening plan, establishments could only serve food and drink outdoors. Since we wanted to be able to offer a place for people to relax, socialize (with physical distancing), and eat a nutritious meal, we opened St. Rita's Café, an outdoor patio on Brock Street.

During the summer, our clientele increased steadily; we currently serve over 500 guests a month.

The Kindness of Others

One of the highlights of this summer has been our Marian Donation Garden. Thanks to a group of 25 dedicated volunteers who care for the garden, over 1000 lbs of 12 different vegetables have been harvested.

From the fresh produce, our local Italian ladies have started *Cooking with Nonna*, making delicious soup for our guests and preparing extra portions to be frozen for the upcoming months.



Gratitude and Best Wishes to Deacon Michel Quenneville

Congratulations to Michel Quenneville, who was ordained to the Transitional Diaconate on July 11th. We have been blessed to have Deacon Michel as a volunteer this summer. He will be missed when he returns to seminary in Toronto. Please read through his reflection about the Drop-In Centre:

"I have been truly blessed in the past two months to spend part of my diaconal service at St. Mary's Drop-in Centre. I think that this is a truly anointed apostolate among the poor and homeless of the City of Kingston. Not only does it accomplish an important corporal work of mercy -- feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and clothing the naked -- but it also sets the scene for an even more important encounter, a human encounter, by listening, comforting, journeying, and even praying with the men and women who come each day.

"I am truly edified by the volunteers who do not shy away from encountering each person in the fullness of their dignity as children of God, with true love and compassion. Keep St. Mary's Drop-in Centre in your prayers! I pray that it may always be faithful to its call to encounter and minister to Christ in the poor."

- Deacon Michel Quenneville

