

THE GREATER IOWA CITY CATHOLIC MISSION

At the *Greater Iowa City Catholic Mission*, we heard Fr. Frank DeSiano tell us some good stories and a few good jokes.

What has long arms, a big heart and a tiny mouth? A Catholic. A Catholic has long arms to reach out and help those in need. A Catholic has a big heart to embrace others in the midst of difficulty. But a Catholic has a tiny mouth when it comes to sharing their faith. Why is this? Does the Catholic faith have less to offer? Is there nothing special about being Catholic? Does our faith have no bearing on our daily lives?

Absolutely not! Only the Catholic faith offers the **fullest** expression of Truth. We are distinct, because nowhere else can you find our Lord, sacramentally present in the Eucharist. Our faith is so deeply a part of who we are that it cannot be separated from how we live our daily lives. A Catholic may not preach and may not ask you “are you saved?” but our lives and our actions speak louder than words.

Nonetheless, we need to *witness*, to *welcome*, to *invite* and to *share*. We need to *witness* to our faith by living our faith with courage, in accordance with our Catholic beliefs and morals. We need to *welcome* each other as we gather to worship as a community of faith. We need to be a community that supports its existing members and welcomes newcomers. We need to *invite* our lukewarm or estranged Catholic family and friends back into the church. We need to *share* our experiences, challenges and hopes, talking about them in terms of our faith.

We need to open our mouths and share what it means to us to be Catholic; to proclaim the Good News!

PARISHIONER PROFILE

My name is Shaina Gaul, and I was initiated into the Catholic church on Christ the King Sunday, November 22, 2009. I converted to Catholicism from the Congregational faith after being inspired by my husband Nicholas, who has been Catholic all his life.

Nicholas and I dated for a year and a half before getting married, so I was always aware of his religious convictions. Our wedding ceremony on June 13th, 2009 was officiated by a Lutheran pastor from my hometown who we trusted and identified with. We chose to be married in a banquet hall in order to honor both of our upbringings.

My decision to convert to Catholicism has been surprising to many of my friends and relatives. I’m a self-employed freelance writer and editor, which may clue you into the fact that I’m a bit of a free spirit. I don’t often fit into societal norms when it comes to my ideas about spirituality, American culture, and politics. For this reason, I have done a great deal of independent research in addition to attending RCIA classes, in order to learn more about the Catholic church and its religious framework. This has allowed me to examine my life and integrate my former sense of self into my new faith.

Today, I can truly say that I have been born anew. While I don’t discount my former lifestyle and beliefs, I know that through our Savior Jesus Christ I am now truly free to live a life of kindness, peace, and piety. I’m exactly where I want to be, and I am honored and blessed to be a parishioner of St. Mary’s. I thank God for welcoming me into his family of Catholic believers.