



St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter  
Providing a Seasonal Warming Center  
P. O. Box 1743  
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[www.StJohnHomelessShelter.org](http://www.StJohnHomelessShelter.org)

Special Edition — September 2010

## HOMELESS GUESTS REMEMBER FATHER BLAIR'S KINDNESS

It would have been more than enough to be known as the driving force behind opening the homeless shelter at St. John the Evangelist... a place that has provided hundreds with hope. But that was only a starting point for Fr. Guy Blair. He was a daily visitor and loved sitting down to share a meal and warm conversation with the guests. "He would just talk to people, like somebody that cares," says Anthony, a shelter guest last winter. Ed, another shelter guest, says of Fr. Blair, "He is a good guy... would give his shirt off his back if you needed it. He'd do anything for you. I'm going to miss him."

Shelter guest Craig says, "It meant a lot that he came over to hang out with us. It's a shame he's leaving." Other guests recall Fr. Blair playing cards and Yahtzee with them.

In an interview with the Green Bay Press Gazette, who recognized Fr. Blair as Person of the Year in 2007, Fr. Blair said, "It moved me to realize that often the best gift I can give to another person is just to listen to them... so just listening to stories of people who no one else wants to listen to... because no one wants to sit down and hear what a homeless person has to say or where they come from. But telling their stories, that can be



healing for them. In some ways, it was healing for me too."

They will also not soon forget Fr. Blair's efforts to make sure they all received new boots each winter. "A blessing," as one homeless man remembers. Fr. Blair went guest-to-guest, collecting all their shoe sizes before venturing out on a stormy night to buy the boots.

"He bought them the day of a big snow-storm," a shelter guest recalls. "He went out on a day nobody should be out on the roads and picked up the boots."

Shelter guest John says of the boots, "That just blew me away. Brand new boots for everyone."

It is that giving of his own money and more importantly, his time and kindness, that will leave a lasting mark on those he helped lift up at the shelter.

Shelter guest Ed says of Fr. Guy, "He makes me feel good about myself. He's got a lot of heart for you." Randall says Fr. Blair "relates to people. He's very kind and open-hearted. He was like a friend that I talked to and related to. He's going to be sorely missed by a lot of people." John said, "I am sad to see you go after all of your dedication to the shelter and people in this community. I wish you all the best."

Which is certainly what Fr. Guy Blair always gave to them.

## THANKS FROM OUR DIRECTOR, MARY KELLY

Dear Shelter Friends,

Father Guy has been an inspiration to more people that he will ever realize. He has awakened a sense of social consciousness in this community. Because of his steadfast support of St. John's Shelter and the guests that are welcomed at the doors, he has developed and spread a sense of community among the guests, volunteers, staff and area residents in general.

Father Guy has been a gift to us all. Although he will be painfully missed, he has

taught us how to do what is right... regardless of the turmoil that may need to be faced. He has made us all stronger.

To observe him interact with the guests has been a touching experience. Always a willing ear to listen and a spiritual strength that generated reflection and comfort.

Father: The selfless love and support that you demonstrate to others on a daily basis will always be appreciated and remembered... wherever you are.



You will always be loved and remembered for the wonderful person that you are. My very best wishes for you and the future that awaits you.

~ Mary Kelly

## A MESSAGE FROM FR. GUY BLAIR

Dear Friends, Staff & Volunteers,

I am writing this final message to all of you my friends, on the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6)...don't worry that suddenly I'm becoming overly pious and religious' ...smile ... you know me better than that! It is on this day we remember that Jesus was transfigured/changed in the sight of a few of his disciples. They saw him as he really was! It occurs to me that if we are only remembering what happened to the Lord Jesus 2000 years ago, it probably won't mean much to us. If for us, Jesus was alive once and we remember him fondly, but now we are left with crosses because Jesus is safely in heaven ... we've forgotten his words "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat..."

The guests at St. John's Homeless Shelter and you the staff and volunteers have been a 'transfiguration' for me...hopefully you have experienced this as well. Once I thought I was 'off the hook' not very concerned about the desperation of the homeless and suffering of people whom very few others would help

because I 'prayed' for them; now I not only feel differently, but live differently and believe differently. It is almost as if the transfiguration of Jesus in the homeless became a cure for religion that is so often reduced to laws and rules. I think I've seen a glimpse of the face of Jesus, the suffering Jesus, in so many of our guests ...he is still breathing in them and us.

Reflecting on Jesus revealed to us in the homeless, I hear Jesus saying "Come and see, embrace me, have mercy." As a matter of fact, the Scriptures have profoundly touched me more deeply because of Jesus transfiguration at the Shelter...I've read with new eyes a whole series of stories that Jesus deliberately chose the stranger, the sick, the unclean...in short, the people that others often continue to judge as the 'wrong' people to reveal his love and the love of God.

The sharing of ourselves, of our food, the sharing of work has turned the isolated Jesus and isolated individuals into a community. Yes, I remember that story about Jesus on the road to Emmaus...he

was revealed in the breaking of the bread to disciples who thought they knew him.

Jesus has been coming to us in surprising ways at the Homeless Shelter and will continue to appear among you in surprising ways!

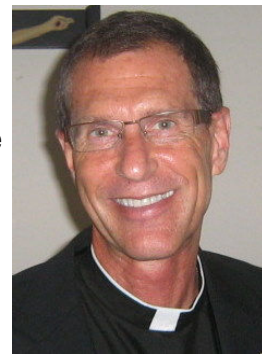
I will be traveling a different road which eventually will lead to S. Dakota; I've no doubt Jesus will surprise me there also.

We have shared hope and life ...You cannot be replaced...Thank you for being a friend and a traveler with me at St.

John's...I will miss you, working with you and your words of support. Leaving all of you and the Homeless Shelter, I do so with a heavy heart but thanking God our paths crossed.

Peace,

~Fr. Guy Blair, scj



## WORDS OF GRATITUDE FROM THE BOARD

By Dan Robinson

*"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith."*

-James 3:14-18

This newsletter is dedicated to Fr. Guy Blair, founding pastor and chaplain of St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter. There are many wonderful things that could be said about Fr. Guy and the good and faithful work he has done for the community here in Green Bay, and for the people who need to experience that God does indeed love them. In many ways, words seem inadequate to express our gratitude. However, I am reminded of this passage from James, and what comes to mind most of all is this – Fr. Guy truly seeks to be a disciple of Jesus and truly points others to Christ. Sometimes this is through his words, but most importantly it is through how he lives his life. Because of this, we shall forever be grateful to God for this gift with which we have been blessed... a life whose works showed his faith.



A tree was planted outside of the shelter last spring in memory of Doris Blair, Fr. Guy's mother.

## GIVING FROM THE HEART AND FROM THE HOME -- FR. BLAIR AND BLAIR FAMILY HONORED AT SHELTER APPRECIATION EVENT

When the City of Green Bay threatened to shut down the Homeless Shelter several years ago and fine the shelter hundreds of dollars a day for violating city zoning laws, Fr. Guy Blair stood tall and strong for those who did not have a voice and refused to back down.

They say "Charity starts in the home" and perhaps Fr. Blair was influenced by the memories of his own parents.... who, unbeknownst to him, were homeless for a brief time. In their 60's and living out of their car, they slept at truck stops. Fr. Blair said it shocked him and changed his perspective on meeting the needs of the homeless.

When his mother Doris died last summer, Fr. Blair's family agreed to sell many antiques that had been in the family for generations and give the money raised to St. John's Shelter. The items

included furniture and silver items from the Blair family, some dating back to the 1700's. The sale of the collection raised thousands of dollars for the shelter.

Fr. Blair told The Compass Newspaper, "In a few years, there will be no memory, no plaque, but it remains in eternity in God's heart that somebody survived another day, another week, another month because somebody stepped up to the plate. And that's what counts."

But indeed, Fr. Guy and the Blair family will be remembered. On May 2, 2010, the

Shelter dedicated the main area of the Shelter as Blair Family Hall, hanging a plaque high on the wall which includes a passage from the Gospel of Matthew 25:40.

The hall will always be a place where the spirit of Fr. Guy's loving and faithful presence to the shelter community has found a home.



## SHELTER PRESENTS STOLE TO FR. BLAIR AS FOUNDING CHAPLAIN

At the Shelter Appreciation Event, the shelter honored Fr. Guy Blair in his role as the founding chaplain at St. John's. The following message was read as the stole was presented:



*As a founder of the Shelter and in your role as Shelter Chaplain, you have touched so many lives and so many hearts. Your solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters and your witness to the Gospel through your compassion and sacrifice has set an example for all of us. Today, we want to present you with this stole, signifying your role as the spiritual leader of this Shelter Community.*

*You are always reminding us that we are called to be Easter people. The white stole represents the joy of the resurrection and the great hope of the Easter season. The red in the stole represents the work of the Spirit that you have enlivened in all of us.*

**A stole was made especially for the occasion through the skilled hands of Lucille Britton and Doris Rommel, help from Adele Coopmans, and consultation from Barbara Schmitt and Susan Perrault.**

*The fabric of the stole, both the white and the red, have a "brick-like" texture. The bricks symbolize not only your leadership in offering the building space for the shelter five years ago and the endless work in the last year of re-building this space with the renovation project, but even more so, your tireless efforts for this shelter ministry which have served as the foundation for this home for all who come to its door.*

*The tag sewed on the inside of the stole reads:*

*Fr. Guy A. Blair, SCJ  
St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter  
Founding Chaplain  
Presented May 2, 2010  
"As I have done, so you must do"  
John 13:15*

*Thank you Fr. Guy for your faithfulness and your loving service to God and to all of us here at St. John's Homeless Shelter.*

## MEMORIES AND MESSAGES FROM SHELTER STAFF

Father Guy asked me if I would read a Bible passage during a short "prayer service" he held at the Shelter on November 1st, just before we were scheduled to open the doors to our Guests and begin another shelter season. As he started to walk away, knowing that I'm not of the Catholic faith, he turned to me (with that mischevious smile of his) and asked, "Lutherans do know how to read from the Bible, don't they?"

Later that same season, I asked Father Guy if he would visit one of our previous guests as he was in the Brown County Jail. About a week later I saw Father Guy and he told me that when he got to the jail they asked him to fill out all kinds of paperwork and then refused the visit because he wasn't on Steve's "Visitor List." He told me that he was surprised to be turned away as he had his collar on. Seeing an opportunity for "pay-back," I put on my best quizical face

Many nights I remember Father Guy sleeping in a recliner on the shelter floor among our Guests. Father could have been at home in a nice comfortable bed. This is just one of many ways Father showed his dedication and love for our Guests.

~ Dan Arendt



Thank you Father Guy for being my friend.

Thank You Father for all you have done for our parish family and for the homeless. You knew that the less fortunate needed somewhere to sleep during the cold winter months and you provided that for them. You knew that they would need warm food to give them strength and you helped to provide that. Father, you knew that they would need boots to walk in the cold and icy times of the year and you provided that for them. You knew that if you opened a shelter they would



and said, "That's funny, I don't think I was on a visitor list either but I was able to get in without signing any papers. I was wearing my employee nametag, but they didn't even ask for ID!" Then, looking as though I had just figured out the greatest mystery of the world, I said, "Now I remember why they let me in without hesitation. I told them I was a Lutheran!!"

~ Mary J. Marks

Father has helped so many people, me included, so tremendously to realize how precious life is, and how important it is to help others. I am grateful that I was blessed to meet such a amazing human being. He has touched my life and all of our lives in so many ways. – Courtney Grissom



In 2008, Fr. Guy and Mary Marks were awarded the NAMI Award for their efforts through the shelter on behalf of those suffering with mental illness.

come and you provided that and you and a whole bunch of other people give much of their time to provide to the less fortunate. You would come to the shelter to befriend any and all who wanted to speak to you. I am not so sure I understand why you are leaving with all of the good that you have done, but I do know that wherever you end up, a whole new bunch of people will become far better people because of you.

Father you have a heart of gold and I, for one, feel so privi-

Fr. Guy,

*You are about to leave your home,  
As a moth leaves a darkened room;  
Unless a light rekindled to lure you home,  
You may never return.*

*You have touched the hearts of many and  
They are just like a lithographer's stone –  
What is once written on them  
Cannot be rubbed out.  
You have brought happiness  
To so many and  
It is like a refreshing stream flowing from  
Heart to heart in endless circulation.*

*Our loss of your love might be  
As bitter as aloes.  
But if we accept in love our loss,  
It will come like a gentle dawn,  
Instead of like lightning,  
Blinding and blasting us.*

*Your symphathetic influence  
has surrounded many  
Like a pure atmosphere,  
In which they drew long,  
Refreshing breaths of healthier life.  
Fragrant as a crushed rose is the  
Sweet flower of remembrance.*

*You will never be forgotten!  
God Bless You!  
- Randall (a former guest)*

leged to have shared special times with you. I will never forget these. I will truly miss your sense of humor, and your caring for people. Don't forget to give me your e-mail address so you can delete them (Smile). Hugs to you Father, Joanne S.



**SHELTER TALK**  
Ask our Shelter Volunteers what they would say about Fr. Guy Blair and this is what they will tell you ...

*"Fr. Guy is one of the most genuine and sincere individuals I have ever met."  
— Mark DePrey*

There are many of us who recognize intellectually that we are all equal in the sight of God. There are so few of us that act on this fact in our interface with others. So few of us really see the poor, the homeless, the ragged, the dirty, those of different sexuality than ourselves, strangers in our land, the lawless or anyone different than we are, as truly equal. There is an old quote that says, "Now is the time to erase the lines that divide things neatly." Fr. Guy Blair carries with himself a huge eraser that he uses often in the kindest way. — Bill Harrington

*"Fr. Guy's commitment to open a shelter in St. John's gym provided a homecoming for those that Green Bay had not found a way to serve. For me he represents the Father who welcomes home the prodigal son with open arms and an open heart."  
- Karina O'Malley*

*"No one was ever too lost to be outside the circle of concern of Fr. Guy. Indeed, person after person is reeled in by compassion, and being treated with all dignity. All are "keepers" in the eyes of Fr. Guy!"  
- Marge Mattice*

*Father Blair has brought integrity, vision, and compassion to so many areas in our community. His presence will be long felt and sadly his absence will also be long felt. Know that you always will have a place in our hearts. - Jean Fiedler*

*Thanks to Fr. Guy for all the love he has put into the shelter, both for the staff and residents.  
— Cheri Galowski*

Fr. Guy inspired me with his determination to provide for the homeless. — Lillian Bock

*Father is such a great guy. I don't know how we are going to get along without him.  
— Gary Bauman*

*"It never mattered if he was running off to a meeting or had parish business to attend to; he always had time to stop and talk with the guests, offer a smile and some kind words." - Jean Neidenbach*



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**IF YOU HAVE AN E-MAIL ADDRESS, YOU CAN HELP US CUT  
COSTS! CONTACT US AND TELL US YOU WOULD LIKE TO  
SIGN UP FOR OUR E-MAIL LIST. THANK YOU!**



**SAVE THE DATE!!**



**SJEHS  
OPEN HOUSE  
THURS., OCT. 28  
4:00—6:00 P.M.**



**Come stop by and say hello as the  
shelter prepares to open for  
another winter season on  
November 1st!**



**Contact Us:**



Mary Kelly, Executive Director  
Mary Ellen Marchant, Volunteer Coordinator  
Jan Katers, On-Site Coordinator & Donations  
Rev. Guy Blair, Pastor, St. John the Evangelist  
Church and Shelter Community Chaplain

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