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**2017 Day Two - Sunday, 6/26 – St. Mary’s Parish, Branford to Holy Family Retreat Center, West Hartford**

The bright corridor lights finally went off long enough last night and the room darkened enough for all to fall asleep. Eric had moved his position due to the bright lights.

Regardless, I believe everyone got a good night's rest.

It's morning and there was movement.  Breakfast was going to be at 8:00 after the 7:00 am mass.  Some of us decided to skip mass.  It was a tiring day, 50 plus miles in the rain and humidity.

Fr. Matt and Emily had arrived and began putting out the mixings for breakfast, bagels, muffins, fruit and coffee.

Eric had previous gotten up earlier and made coffee which made Claire very happy.

We all began to get ready for Day 2's ride.  Lauren was a bit self-conscious as parishioners coming to morning mass peered into the hall wondering who was sleeping on the floor.

We deflated our air mattresses, pumped up our tires, packed our luggage and began packing the cars.

Pat Curry would be joining this morning for Support.  She would ride with Joan. Also, Martha Giovanni joined us for Support and Bob Sardo left. Ed Mirek, one of our new riders, and his daughter, Katie and son-in-law Joe would also be cycling with us today.  Gary left to go to hiss parish, St. Thomas in Southington to wish Fr. Nick Melo farewell as he was transferring to Wethersfield and the merged parishes of Sacred Heart, Corpus Christi, and St. Lukes.

Eric fixed his flat but noticed that there was a slight bump in his tire.  We would have to pay special attention to that on the ride this morning.

We had to be out of the Church hall by 9:00 am as parishioners were preparing for Fr. Matt's farewell party.

Some of us began taking photos.

Finally all Support vehicles were packed and final photos taken. We had to leave so our parking spaces could be used by parishioners.

The ride started quickly with a few hills.  Claire and I commented to each other that we had already noticed a difference in today versus yesterday's ride.

Once we climbed our 5th hill we knew today was going to be different for sure.

We eventually came to Snake Pit turn, a steep, twisting uphill.  Claire had to get off her bike and did so in time to avoid the very dangerous part of the curve.  I, too, got off my bike primarily to be sure she was safe and we walked up the hills together one step at a time.  Pam too waited for us  at the top of this hill.

We learned a bit later from some cyclists coming from the opposite direction that a cyclist last year got severly injured going over the handlebars and railing as he descended.

Glad we were going uphill.

Obviously today's Cue Sheet was a little different than yesterday's and we were coming to Savage Hill in Berlin shortly.

On one of our rest stops I met and talked to Ed Conrad as we rested in his driveway.  We got into a discussion about what is wring with the state budget, etc.  It was a healthy conversation and he was no friend of President Obama. I patiently listened to his rant and moved on.  We should all take heed and listen to each other's side of the argument.  By listening you give the discussion a chance to be civil and productive.  Why can't we all do that? Why can't our leaders do that?  We would be so much better off as a nation.

At our next rest stop, Eric checked his tire.  As he did so there was a huge, loud pop!  The tire had punctured.  He was done for now because he need a new tire, not just a new tube. He was lucky this did not happen going down one of those hills.  Our second Holy Spirit moment!!

He got into Joe's truck so that Ed, Katie, and Joe could all cycle together.  They had been alternating driving the truck and cycling.  Now they had an opportunity to ride together all because of Eric's mishap.  He was going to go to Pedal Power bike shop in Berlin to get his bike fixed.

We continued slowly but surely.  We got up the remaining hills, even Savage Hill which was much easier going in this direction as compared to previous rides going the other way.

We passed by the hill behind what was Aetna building in Middletown, now taken down.  I looked down on what was at one time Pistol Creek golf course which had closed several years ago.  I remember running these hills around the old Aetna building.

We found a place for lunch.  Some corporate building with picnic tables, very nice.  We spent a good amount of time there. Enough time so that Eric was able to join us there.

As we continued our ride I spotted a young family, a mom and dad with 4 young kids.  I crossed over to them and told them we were doing a bike ride around the state for poverty awareness and we were handing out Free Meals for Kids cards and all they had to do was call 211.  I asked them to help us by spreading the word and explained the kids get free breakfast, lunch, supper. As I finished explaining one of the little boys looked up into my eyes and said "I love You".  Wow!  I was touched.   We cycled on.

We cycled closer to Holy Family Retreat Center but noticed the sky threatening.  Hopefully we would make it before the rain.  I tried to prompt Claire to cycle a bit faster but she had gotten into a conversation with Jim and seemed to be a bit slower.  I was concerned about the rain.

We made a slight mistake misinterpreting the Cue Sheet and found ourselves in the wrong place near WestFarms Mall. Rather than go back we rode through the mall.  It started to rain, actually pour. We tool shelter in the parking garage and waited until the rain subsided.

About 15 minutes later we resumed riding to Holy Family.  We got there around 5:00 pm, got our room assignments, showered and then went to supper.  The meal was exquisite.  Thank You Fr. Terry!!!!!

After dinner we went to the 7:00 pm mass which was glorious.  Excellent celebration of the mass with terrific upbeat music accompanying the mass. What a nice way to end the day. And, Fr. Terry talked us up at mass and promised next year he would get folks to stay after mass and we would do our presentation for them. That would be great.  I have them locked in for next year.

After mass we all gathered in the second floor reception room for refreshments and the word of the day.  Fr. Terry joined us.

Word of the Day 2:

**Jim:** Caring/hills/chapel

**Martha:** Community - Support

**Sister Elaine:** Celebrating; among ourselves and in the Liturgy

**Eric:** Blessed - due to his flat at the "right" time, a Holy Spirit moment

**Wendy:** Father; heavenly and Ed cycling with his daughter, Katie

**Bob Sardo:** Jealous; because he could not be there today'

**Pam:** Reflection; rode a lot by herself today

**Maureen:**Beauty; scenery and the mass

**Lauren:** Up and Down

**Lou:** "I love you"

**Johnnie:** Poison Ivy

**Ed:** Connectedness

**John:** Be Not Afraid; You are the voice

**Claire:** Thank You

**Tom Breen:** who just joined us at Holy Family - Apprehension/Anxiety

**Joan:** Forgotten how good this group works/mass

**Mary:** Grace

Done by Lou