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**2017 Day Four - Tuesday, 6/27 - Holy Family Retreat Center, West Hartford to Hartford to St. Dominic Parish, Southington to Holy Family Retreat Center, West Hartford**

So it is Tuesday morning and we are going to 7:00 am mass with Fr. John like we do every morning we stay at Holy Family.  Seem this has become an integral part of our ride each year. What a blessing for us to start each day with this mass, a lesson with each gospel and the most gracious hospitality you can ever receive from our friend, Fr. Terry. I cannot express my gratitude enough.

We all attended mass. Got nourished. And then we went for breakfast and got nourished.  Nice start to Day 4.

We would be cycling into Hartford the the LOB for a visit with State Senator Steve Cassano and hopefully will be able to drop off our material with the other State senators and Representatives I contacted.  Only a few actually responded and most indicated they either could not meet or would be out of the office. One Representative, Liz Linehan indicated she would be out of her office but commented on some of her work to help protect Healthcare for those in poverty and SB586 which she proposed along with a group of, in her words, incredible women legislators, does exactly that. She even wanted to ride with us if we were going to be in the Cheshire area.  Pretty cool.  We have to follow up with her to find out who these "incredible group of women legislators" are and how is SB586 doing.

So, after breakfast we started to get ready.  We pumped tires as usual.  Support packed the cars, as usual.  We gathered around for our morning pre-ride prayer.  I noticed it was a bit chilly this morning and overcast.  Should I wear a jacket?  Some of us did.  I did not.  Mistake.

Today we would have 10 cyclists and 6 Support.  Lauren and Maureen would be leaving us after our visit to the LOB.

They decided to cycle from there to Manchester, St. Bridget.

We followed the same basic route to Hartford from Holy Family. We again rode on Park Street and got another "taste" of life there in the early morning.  I noticed Jim beginning to stop and pass our the Free Meals cards as well as Claire.  I again stopped at one particular merchant's place of business and gave him more cards.  He was grateful and said that he was passing them out to single moms.  Our experiences on that street over the years has always enlightened and educated us.

I was cold.

We got to the Legislative Office Building on time.  John and Pam had made up packets for us to drop off at the respective offices of the legislators I had contacted.  We were meeting with Cassano at 10:30.

We had to enter the front of the building and through scanners.  We all got it and we scattered to the various offices based on our constituency.

We tried to engage staffers of these legislators to get our message across.

When it was time to go to Steve Cassano's office we were greeted in the chamber hall by his representative Stephen Sidorak.  He started to talk to us right there in front of the elevators, a very weird place for a conversion with the 11 of us who were standing there.  Awkward.  We finally asked if we could go to a conference room, to a more conducive local.  He agreed and lead us to a conference room.

Apparently Steve Cassano was busy and might join us later.

We proceeded to conduct our visit as we had in the offices of Murphy and Blumenthal.  We spoke to our five topics including the CT State Budget rather than Federal Budget.

After some time "dancing" around the subjects. Stephen Sidorak began responding to our questions with more upfront dialogue and mentioned quite often that he would pass on our concerns to Senator Cassano and would get back to us on our issues.  John Ryan pressed for a response concerning the state budget with a concrete plan.  Where is it?? We will see what response we get.

We also asked for the substantial list of individuals running for Governor.  Stephen would supply me with that list after we were home.

Although the meeting started off awkwardly, it was a very "productive" meeting with a much more acceptable response than many we have received.

We left the LOB more pleased than we thought we would.

Outside we said our farewells to Maureen and Lauren.  We prayed they would be safe and asked them to text us when they arrived safely.

As it was close to lunchtime we went over to the side of the building where there were picnic tables.  We were under an overhang which was nice as it began to rain.  It got chillier.  I was cold with no jacket.  Everyone else asked for their jackets form Support.  I didn't even bring mine.  Dumb.

It began raining pretty good but we were able to eat lunch, sandwiches from Holy Family.

We were going to leave for Southington soon after lunch and would have spent more time there if the weather was better. Like I said it was cold.

Most of us put on our rain jackets. I did get to borrow Claire's fleece jacket.  It was a bit tight but kept me warm.

We rode only a short distance when the rain subsided some and I was just too warm.  I gave the fleece to Support.  Jim took his jacket off as well.  Funny how that works though.  Cold then hot then cold again.

We followed the Cue sheet as best as we could.  Some mistakes. My fault.  Again I did this one but did not ride it in my car.  Not good.

But with the help of Support and good navigation by Gary up front we made good progress.

We knew we were going to be early getting to the Church of St. Dominic's so we were thinking of going to Gary and Lynne's house in Southington to kill some time.

As we were riding and deciding it began to really rain harder. Thunderstorms were in the area.  We had to worry about lightening.

We were cycling along when it really poured.  We pulled over and huddled together on our bikes as best we could.

I was freezing!  No jacket remember.  John Ryan came up to us and brought out umbrellas from the Support vehicle.  We had three.  They helped some.

Then I looked over across the street.  A little old lady was in her from doorway pointed to her opened garage door.

Our next Holy Spirit moment!! we all hustled across the street and into that garage.  We tried to thank her but she was a little reserved with us strangers in her garage.  The rain continued to come down in buckets  Then it began to hail.  Wow!  We waited for about a half hour before it subsided enough to venture out. This was so reminiscent of when we were on our way to East Haven a couple of years ago.

We eventually went to Gary's house.  Lynne was insisting we all take showers, etc.  But we did not have any clothes to change into.  She offered whatever clothes she had for all of us.  I did not think we had enough time to all take showers, have our riding clothes dried, etc. so only Claire took a shower and she had her clothes with her. Why?  Because she was going to be leaving us after the presentation to go help her daughter move.  She was torn between staying on the ride and helping her daughter. To me it was a no brainer.  Family first.  Go help your daughter.  I will miss cycling behind her and our little chats and encouraging her up those hills and fixing her flats. One thing Claire did learn on this ride, she now knows how to better shift her gears and ride on the larger sprocket.

After all these years.  She now has got it and was so pleased. See you are never too old to learn.

So none of the rest of us took showers.  We did have some refreshments and we did dry off after a short time.  It was a little air-conditioned on their porch and I was chilled again but I would get over it.  Folks in poverty do not get a chance to get warm or out of the rain in many instances of their lives.  They deal with discomfort every day.

So, finally we headed to the church.  It wasn't too far, maybe 6 or 7 miles.  But, we had to cross Queen Street which Gary kept saying was going to be very difficult.  We were hoping maybe to be lucky and ride down to a light but Gary mentioned that was a ways down the street from where we had to turn.

At least there was a nice downhill to get to Queen street from their house.

Once we got to Queen Street we all realized how hard it was going to be to cross.  Then we experienced our next Holy Spirit moment.  All of a sudden there were no cars behind us, no cars on the other side of the street either.

We crossed over to the median and continued right across onto the street we need to get to.  It was like Moses parting the sea!  We all smiled and noted how lucky we were but commented this was the Holy Spirit doing His thing!!  Wow!

A few uphills, a couple of downhills and we got to the parish.  No one was there yet except Leeanne Frisina our contact.

She did not know how many people would show up but since her Social Justice committee was supposed to meet that evening she knew there would be those folks at least,

We brought in our equipment and noticed they had this huge screen high up in the near end of the church hall.

But, we could not hook up our computer to this screen. Technology works only when you have the correct connectors.

So we set up in a smaller room, more like the size of the room where the Last Supper took place.  Long table.

Plus our clicker to move the slides along did not work so it would be done manually.

Leeanne had sandwiches, actually wraps, for us for our supper. We enjoyed this as always and cleaned up before the rest of the folks coming to the presentation showed up.  To our surprise Fr. terry entered and brought along Fr. John.  Also, Claire's husband came as he was picking her up to take her home.

We did our presentation and it went well.  Johnnie did the Matthew 25 slide and he incorporated a little of Maureen into it. Worked out well.  We again entertained questions and those who were there seemed to really "get it".

We were satisfied and thanked Leeanne for hosting us.  We had been to this parish back in 2005.  Seems so long ago.

Bikes were packed on the vehicles and we rode to our home away from home, Holy Family.

Again we took showers before we did the word of the day.

We would be saying our goodbyes to Gary and Lynne.  They were done for this year's ride.  Thank you to them, especially Gary for helping get some of the parishes this year,  I am so grateful.

When we got to HF, Eric met us as he would be riding Day 5 and 6 and he did Wednesday's Cue Sheet with all those hills!!

Word/phrase of the Day 4:

**Lou**- Integral - I had said earlier in the day that each of us was integral to this ride, to Claire, to Lauren, to Maureen, to Gary.

**Jim** - Common God

**Gary** - Jesus - in so many ways!

**Pam** - Emotional - Pam shared her concerns about not feeling adequate on the ride.  Almost went home early.

She felt her words did not live up to some of the other team members words, Gary, Jim, Maureen.  I told her that was a lot of -----!  But I knew exactly what she meant because I too felt some of that inadequacy.  And even Johnnie F commented in like form.  So, I go back to my word, "integral".  WE are ALL integral to making this mission work!!! All of us together!!!  I thank Pam for being brave enough to share her feelings with us.  I ove you Pam!!

**Lynne** - It wasn't that horrible - being Support

**John** - Almost tears

**Tom** - Safety Net - in the team and the folks we meet

**Johnnie** - Gratitude

**Eric** - Perspective

**Wendy** - Bigger than each of us - Our mission

Done by Lou