

# Storytelling is Central to Our Identity

## *As human beings and disciples of Jesus*



As Christians, we know that our Lord Jesus often communicated the Good News of his Gospel through storytelling or parables. As wisdom incarnate, Jesus knew that one of the most effective ways to communicate the message of God's love was through parables—the story of the Prodigal Son comes quickly to mind here. Jesus often used elements in his storytelling with which his hearers could identify. Because of its audacious truth, the Incarnation of God in Jesus and his death and resurrection is the greatest story in the history of humanity. At the end of his earthly life, Jesus commissioned his disciples to spread the true story of God's redeeming love with the world. Given the importance of Jesus's great commission, it is necessary for Christians to become effective storytellers.

Beyond the realm of faith, storytelling is one of the most effective ways to communicate and to teach and thus has been central to the human experience from the beginning of civilization. Yes, storytelling is central to our lives as Christians, but it is also central to our identity as human beings. One of my most enjoyable experiences is to spend an evening with friends or family telling stories; sometimes humorous, sometimes raucous, sometimes profound. Storytelling connects us to one another who share a common humanity, or who may share experiences of joy, a common cause, or who may share experiences of loss or longing.

As a relatively new pastor of The Basilica of Saint Mary, I have enjoyed getting to know the story of our dynamic parish and the stories of those who make up our community—the living stones of our family of faith. When I have the opportunity to meet parishioners or friends of The Basilica for a meal or for coffee, I always ask people

where they grew up, how they might have met their spouse, and about their family. I am moved when parishioners or friends talk about their connection to The Basilica and what The Basilica has meant to them. We often nod together and remark what a special place The Basilica is to those it serves, and certainly to those who call The Basilica home.

In my ministry of restorative justice, I have found, too, that storytelling is central to restorative practices, such as a healing circle. Inviting someone to share their story, including stories of harm, allows them to know that someone cares and wishes to accompany them on their journey from harm to healing. I am heartened that The Basilica has embraced the ministry of restorative justice as a way of responding to harm but also as a way of fostering healing and the common connections we share.

Since 1995, BASILICA Magazine has used these pages to tell wonderful stories that are part of our history and our present, as we look with hope to the future. I thank all those who have been involved in BASILICA Magazine over the years, for their dedication and care in publishing a professional and inspiring magazine. I look forward to future magazines that will chronicle the amazing things that happen when God's abundant grace meets our faith. In the coming months and years, as we seek to restore and renew our parish, telling the inspiring stories of what occurs in our community of faith will be all the more necessary. Storytelling is, after all, central to our identity as human beings and central to our identity as disciples of Jesus. ✚

— Fr. Daniel Griffith  
Pastor and Rector