

Conner's AMA UPDATE



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DIRECTOR LETTER

CONNER'S REFLECTION

ODE TO CONNER!

*"Find joy in sacrifice
and in the total gift
of yourself to God!"*

-St. Marie Eugenie

**One thing Conner hasn't
mastered yet is knitting, but
he makes a beautiful rosary!**

Letter from the Director

As I reflect back on Conner's two years in Worcester, I remember scrolling through prospective volunteers on the Catholic Volunteer Network and seeing Conner's bio and thinking this young man could bring something special to Worcester, but I never imagined the depth of the gifts and talents he possessed!

On the day of his Skype interview, I remember Conner came dressed in a suit coat, shirt, tie, and his red hair pulled back. He was looking quite professional. His interview garb was a first for me, and looking back now I see it as a precursor to this unique young man from Minnesota.

As we know, Conner came with years of carpeting/flooring skills, but we learned very quickly that he could do lots of other handyman tasks too! What a gift he has been to the Center and Sisters with so many projects he completed. Conner was always looking out for a bargain or free materials on Craig's list or on the streets of Worcester! He has learned his way around Massachusetts and Rhode Island on some of these bargain-hunting excursions!

The pandemic certainly changed Conner's weekly routine this year without ESOL and mentoring. Instead of teaching immigrants English, he was teaching Religion to 5th, 7th, and 8th graders at St. Peter's Catholic School, - not an easy task at all! His availability seemed providential at the time, and I witnessed with joy his efforts in preparing the best possible classes for his students. Most mornings, when I would arrive at the Center I would find him in the dining room surrounded by his computer, books, and coffee (of course) preparing for the day's classes. There were days when he had his frustrations, but he was 100% committed to the challenge!

I am going to miss Conner's presence around the Center. Our discussions in the kitchen (Conner's kitchen!) of Flannery O'Connor's short stories, hearing about his students at St. Peter's (those 7th graders are tough!), or coming to the Center and being surprised by something he fixed or spruced up.

Conner has gone above and beyond what the typical volunteer in Worcester is usually responsible for, and we will be forever grateful for his total gift of self to AMA, the Sisters, and the Main South community!

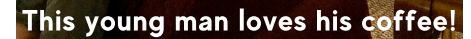
THANKYOU



**The Knitting ladies holding up
their rosaries made by Conner!**

Go with God our faithful friend, and count on our prayers and support as you begin this next chapter of your life. Remember, your room at the Center is always here for you! We will miss you, and that red hair! Love, Sandy & Assumption Sisters

A man approached me the other day as I was walking home from school, glassy-eyed, and thanked me. I neither recognized him nor understood why I was being thanked. He read this confusion in my expression and explained further, "The holy water. You gave me the holy water last year." He was referring to a day that I remembered quite well: Palm Sunday of 2020. Relatively early in the pandemic when churches were very much closed, I was tasked with distributing palms on Main St. in front of our church after the end of our live-streamed mass. He had been one of the many, many people that pulled over that morning to reach a tentative gloved hand from the car window to grasp a blessed branch, to simply pray quietly and solemnly in the vicinity of the sacred space, or—in this case—to ask for a holy water refill.



My shift was intended to last for 30-45 minutes but then it turned into an hour, and then two hours, and then nearly three, not by external mandate but by internal compulsion. I remember vividly how itchy and uncomfortable wearing a mask felt all throughout that morning—it was the first time I had worn one for an extended period of time. But the people kept coming. I was struck by the clear hunger and reverence that they displayed over these otherwise mundane mainstays of our faith. I think ‘hunger’ is right; for weeks these faithful had been unable to satisfy their hunger, their need, for God, for grace, for communion with one another, and throughout that morning I had the privilege of dispensing something to them that, in a small, way, helped to satisfy that hunger. I remember experiencing a deep sense of ‘this is what I’m for,’ and it was in light of this, many other similar experiences and relationships and prayerful discernment that I ultimately decided to apply to study for ordination to the priesthood for the diocese of Worcester, MA. I’ve since been accepted and will begin studies at Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland this fall.

I'm filled with gratitude and excitement as this next chapter begins, even while my illustrious AMA career draws to a close. There is neither sadness nor dread over this transition because, in truth, this will continue to be my home; the Sisters, the Assumption Center, St. Peter's, and all of the wonderful people I've met over these past two years will continue to be a part of my life. Thank you all for allowing me to be a part of yours and I look forward to serving the community however I can in the years to come.

**How can
we describe
Conner?
Let's try in
a few
words
shared by
the Sisters
and friends
in the Woo!**

