

The spirit of fellowship was out in full force on Sunday, June 28th. The venue was the parish hall of beautiful St. Ann's Church in Raritan, New Jersey and the occasion was the 25th anniversary celebration of the Metuchen Diocese chapter of Courage. Father Tom Odorizzi, the pastor of St. Ann's and the chapter's chaplain, graciously provided the space to commemorate the important milestone.

So often, the demands of our busy lives can blind us to the significance of certain dates and, as we know, the years begin to blur together. Not the case, however, with the founding member of the chapter who, while no longer in a leadership role, remembered the date and set out to ensure that the milestone was not passed unnoticed.

After bringing the upcoming anniversary to the attention of the current member-facilitator, the chaplain approved, the date was set, the venue secured, the caterer was engaged, and the invitations were sent out. The attendees consisted of the current Courage members, several past members, including those who attended those first meetings in 2001, and others who stopped coming regularly due to age or distance but still remain in touch with the members. About twenty souls joined in the celebration.

After the welcome and acknowledgments, a delicious luncheon was served and the fellowship commenced in earnest. Following the meal, we were treated to a presentation on the 12 Steps by Dr. Joseph Springer which provided some interesting insights into the Steps and gave all some food for thought.

Following the talk the chapter's lay facilitator gave a brief exhortation on perseverance, citing the travails of Saint Paul as described in 2 Corinthians. The encouragement for the group served as the segway to honor the founder of the chapter who, as he recounted earlier in his history of the chapter's genesis, endured a slow start, lack of cooperation, resistance, and his own personal trials. Yet, with perseverance and God's boundless Grace, the chapter was launched and is still sailing today.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was participation in the parish's scheduled Holy Hour and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Somewhat anticlimactic but nonetheless essential to any celebratory moment, came the coffee and homemade desserts! And no gathering of Courage would be complete without time for sharing (Fellowship and Support). All the attendees gathered in a circle and recited the Goals before going around to share with the brothers what this group, or Courage at large, meant to them. The day concluded with the singing of the chapter's signature "Servant Song" *We are pilgrims on a journey, brothers on the road, here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.*

It was a wonderful, memorable day reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. May the Lord, in His Providence, continue to bless, grow, and strengthen the apostolate in Metuchen for years to come.