

Holy Ground

The heavens embrace the earth

And they sing of a new birth

The hills echo and resound

For we are on holy ground.

(Donna Pena)

In this morning's reading from Exodus, Moses encounters God in the form of a burning bush that is on fire but doesn't burn. On one hand, it is almost as if God has a sense of humor to take on that form.

However, we are snapped out of it by the words, "Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy."

What do we consider to be "holy?" Our call to worship today refers to our church building as holy ground. I would agree with this. I also feel that the small yard around us is holy. Whenever I walk down the sidewalk between the sanctuary and Old Town Hall, I am brought back 100 years or so and think that I should even have on a robe and carry a prayer book. As we feed those in need twice a week from the

Westfield Food Pantry, I encounter people for whom the sidewalk and black-top area would be considered holy. “Whenever you feed those in need, you also feed me.”

I also consider holy the area in which we live to be “holy.” With all the rain we have had this summer, we are able to see the green grass, trees, and plants in all of their glory. Surely our earth is holy ground. I also feel as though I am on holy ground whenever I step into a hospital, rehab facility, and nursing home. “Whenever you care for the sick, you care for me.” This is what helps to make Southwick Village so special to me.

As a school teacher, I have always considered any school that I entered to be holy ground. How can a place where everyone is present to facilitate learning NOT be a holy ground? I have felt that regardless of being in a public or private school. Even the Dining Commons at Westfield State can be holy ground.

The message I’d like to leave us all with is to pay attention to where God is present. We may not be in a position to take off our shoes,

but be mindful that we are on holy ground and that we encounter the
Risen Christ in every person we meet.