

That they may not be alone...

When people hear of the ministry Disciples for the Dying, they tend to think of fellow parishioners sitting at the bedsides of people in their homes or visiting them in hospice. They might imagine them comforting and praying with the terminally ill who are weathering the last of their earthly storms.

But that is not the group that Judy Ley, with the encouragement and help of Father John Valencheck, started three years ago.

Instead, Judy explains that the Disciples are praying for people anywhere and everywhere in the world who are dying.

A few years ago, she discovered, through internet research, that 280,000 people die every day. "Someone, somewhere in the world," she said in a recent interview, "is dying now, as we speak--through wars, natural disasters, abortion, disease, accidents, in hospice, in homes and hospitals." As disciples to them, she continued, the group tries to help those facing eternity through prayer, "so when they die they will go to heaven."

The group, about 10 strong at St. Sebastian, has no meetings, and for the most part they pray alone. "It's just prayer, prayer, prayer for those dying right now," she said. "We go to the Masses and we say prayers (individually) at will—daily, at Eucharistic Adoration, at our convenience and as many prayers as we wish."

Judy got together initially with about six to eight people who shared her commitment to the cause and they chose prayers which, after seeking approval from Fr. Valencheck, they had printed in a booklet entitled Disciples for the Dying, which is available for free in the book rack in the church vestibule. She approached the pastors at St. Bernard and St. Vincent parishes, and the booklets are also available in their churches.

In addition, a Mass for the dying is said on the first Friday of each month (check the bulletin) alternating among the three parishes. It is a separate Mass at 5 p.m. at St. Sebastian's; at 12:10 p.m. at St. Bernard's and at 6:30 a.m. at St. Vincent's.

In addition to involving these parishes, Judy says that people from out of town, as far away as Maine and Maryland, who have attended funerals at St. Sebastian's have requested booklets in hopes of establishing such a ministry in their home parishes.

Anyone interested in further information can reach Judy at judithley@neo.rr.com or 330-836-4379.

