

## Getting to Know....

### Ed Hyde

Written by Vic Gideon

"When I come in here, it's just joy." Ed Hyde says about St. Philomena Church. "When I come in here, there's a part of me that comes to life."

There's probably not a Sunday morning you won't find Ed Hyde at St. Philomena, serving communion as a Eucharistic Minister, reading as a lector, and doing everything as a sacristan from putting out the candles to cleaning up the property.

"I do whatever the church needs," he says.

St. Philomena has become an important touchstone in Ed Hyde's journey, with all roads leading him back to the church on Euclid Avenue. From Vietnam to addiction to prison, St. Philomena has been "my port in the storm."

"I could not find my way home," Ed remembers, "but I could find my way to St. Philomena Church."

Born in Cleveland and baptized at St. Thomas Aquinas Church on Cleveland's east side, Ed's family moved to Los Angeles for his father's work when he was young and, when the family returned to Cleveland, Ed started fourth grade at St. Philomena School, then attending Benedictine High School for a year before graduating from Shaw High School in East Cleveland, where he played football and swam.

Two tours of duty in Vietnam with the U.S. Navy in the early seventies, starting a family and working as a nurse at Huron Road Hospital, Ed's journey entered a dark valley of alcohol and drugs, his wife leaving and Ed making a commitment to quit drugs and alcohol while on his way to work.

"I heard a voice, which today I know was the Holy Spirit," he remembers. "'What do you want to do?' I said, 'I just want to quit.'"

But quitting wasn't so easy.

"You're in the right place," he heard Father John McCarthy say to him in a booming voice one day when he was passed out in a pew at St. Philomena. "Good to see you back. Keep coming back."

But then there was a real wakeup call, Good Friday 1997.

"When I got my teeth knocked out buying crack, guess where I was? Across the street!" Ed remembers. "I looked up at the cross on top my church and then he put the gun up to my head and clicked it three times because it didn't go off."

"It was the best Good Friday ever," he said. "I didn't die!"

Ed gave up crack then but continued to drink, eventually causing a fatal accident on East 55th and Chester in October 1998 where a two-and-a-half-month-old boy died, resulting in Ed getting sentenced to five years in Grafton Correctional Institution.

"I got locked up to get set free," he remembers.

Sober since 1998 and released from prison in 2003, Ed had lost his nurse's license but started college while locked up. He eventually earned three bachelor's degrees and an MBA, starting work as a counsellor and now a Financial Management Analyst at United States Department of Defense in the Celebrezze Building downtown. He also says he'd like to return to work as a model and actor.

Now in his early seventies, he's gotten questions about his multicultural ethnicity for his entire life. He has an answer.

"'Oh, you're Black, oh, you're white, oh, you're Italian or you're this, or you're that,'" he recalls people saying about his background. "I belong to God. I'm one hundred percent Child of God."

Ed has three adult children of his own, two girls in Atlanta and a son in New York. But his heart will always be at St. Philomena.

"'Are you on something?' he says people have asked about his enthusiasm for his church. "Yeah, God! I'm on Jesus, C'mon get some!"

