



## *Reflection from Toni Pennisi Wurth*

### **“Here I Am.”**

In the Old Testament story, God calls Abraham, Abraham answers: “Here I am,” God orders Abraham to sacrifice his only son, and Abraham takes on the task. Then when it’s clear that Abraham will proceed with the deed as demanded, he is called again (this time by an angel) and again he answers, “Here I am.” We all know the rest of the story.

When I first heard this story, I got stuck, really stuck: Why would God mess with Abraham - or with anyone - like that? Moreover, why the heck would Abraham even CONSIDER answering such an extreme request? The good nuns of my youth gave me to understand that like Abraham, all of us will have our faith tested at some time, and if we hold fast to that faith, and act according to that faith, we will be rewarded as Abraham was rewarded. Big acts of faith bring big rewards. All we have to do is be open to the ask. All we have to say is “Here I am.”

These days I’m privileged to witness almost daily how small acts of faith can also bring big rewards. At Troost39 we see people answering “Here I am” all the time. People bring in food to share with customers who might not have enough. A person next in line offers to pay the balance if someone ahead of them finds themselves short of money at checkout. Staff members working on a deadline stop everything they are doing to find clothing and a pair of shoes for someone who has walked in off the street soiled and barefoot. A customer who has a car offers a ride to a perfect stranger who has purchased something that might be too big to carry on the bus. Small acts of faith making a big impact in other people’s lives. People saying to each other, “Here I am.”

At St. James, the Parish Staff finds themselves in similar circumstances. In the middle of a hectic parish day, the doorbell rings, someone answers, (“Here I am.”) and living acts of faith are performed: someone gets money to buy expensive medicine. Someone else gets assistance with a heating bill or rent. An immigrant family gets bus fare to their final destination in the United States.

Every time we look out for each other, every time we respond to the needs of other, we are expressing our faith. At St. James and at Troost39, I’m proud to be affiliated with the people who daily express their faith by saying “Here I am.”

*Peace,*

*Toni*