



How to pause and prepare to live by faith more in 2019

On Tuesday, December 11th, those at BELIEVES took part in a very engaging and interactive dialogue on “How to Pause and Prepare to Live by Faith More in 2019” with Frank Mulcahy, Board Chair for Ignatius House; Katie Patterson, Leadership Team member for Welcome at CTK; and David Felts, Advisory Board member for Souly Business.



The discussion began with Mulcahy, Patterson, and Felts introducing themselves.

Felts, who is originally from Nashville, moved to Atlanta in 1993, and has been married for 31 years.

“We have two daughters – both of whom got married in the last year,” he said.

Professionally, Felts has spent his career in investment banking. When he was invited to the very first Souly Business weekend, he had been in the mindset of “six days of work, and then one for church.”

“Souly is focused on ‘authentic men living out their faith,’” Felts shared. “Twelve years and 50 weekends later, Souly Business is in Georgia, Tennessee, California, Canada, and Costa Rica. Each weekend is 48 hours together. Souly is one of the 5 or 6 biggest things that changed my trajectory in life.”

Patterson then shared a bit about herself, and her professional career as a musician, artist, and director of a fine arts school in Midtown.

“Welcome is a renewal retreat for both men and women that happens in March and August,” she said. “It’s all weekend at the church, and is for parishioners and non-parishioners.”

She added that participants are encouraged to take part in leadership roles in the parish or ministries upon completion.

“The goal is to be more connected to parish communities. It is transformative – mostly through the relationships.”

Mulcahy then shared he’s originally from Washington and been in Atlanta for 40 years, before telling a bit about Ignatius House.

“Ignatius House is in Sandy Springs,” he stated. “The standard offering has been 2-3 night weekend retreats grounded in Ignatian spirituality. Ignatius House’s offerings have now also expanded to include Days of Reflection.”

Following the initial remarks by the panelists, all three were asked how they each pause and prepare to live by faith on a daily/weekly basis?

“Spirituality requires time,” Mulcahy answered. “When I do that for prayer, it overflows. I also utilize the Examen to focus on where God is present throughout the day.”

For Patterson, time is key.

“One goal I have this month is to wake up earlier to journal, or read a devotional – there are three I get each day. I have a 15-minute drive so I also put on a rosary podcast. All of this makes me more mindful outside of myself.”

Felts then shared that prayer is less about bending God’s will to us, versus our will to God.

“I have a 19-minute MARTA ride so I listen to a devotional during that,” he said. “I also ‘pray scripture back to God.’”

Then Felts added that for 5+ years, he has gotten together with a group of guys once a week.

“We always ask each other, ‘Where have you seen God in the week?’” he commented. “For a while it was ‘God showed up in challenging situations.’ Now it’s less tragedy/trauma and more about joy and coincidences. I’d like to add that a few months ago we added, ‘Where did you see the Devil?’ to see where Satan’s trying to undermine. A lot of times, it’s the same moment, but both sides of it.”

Felts’ remarks spurred Mulcahy to add that Ignatian spirituality, there’s a focus on the good and bad spirit.

“Good leads to faith and life. In trying to discern the will of God, we need to see God from the beginning to the end.”

Patterson then remarked, “After Welcome, we formed small groups to continue to meet. We’re currently reading a book called *Go Bravely* that’s written for women. On the retreat, people speak about their ‘witness’ and their entire life, so people share where they’ve been on the path and fallen off.”

Following the panelists’ comments, those in attendance were also asked how they each pause and prepare to live by faith on a daily/weekly basis.



CTK Parishioner Tim Doyle answered, “Like you guys, I read something each day – Magnificat. I take it day-by-day, preparing myself for the unexpected and do little simple things each day. It’s often unexpected.”

Bob Lyford, an independent insurance agent with East Mountain Insurors, spoke next.

“Dan Hayes’ Friday AM bible study does prayer cards,” Lyford mentioned. “Because you have a prayer card, it causes action. This last time, I drove over to see my aunt and uncle to give the prayer card. They’re in their 90s and have been married for 71 years. They’re not all cognizant, but when I mentioned family, my aunt raised her hand and her helper said ‘she hears you.’ The day after, she passed. I had closure. It’s still tough, but it was peace.”

Hearing what Lyford said, Mike Boutros, an attorney with Krevolin & Horst, told every that two years ago, he and his wife began getting together with some other couples.

“It’s been nice to have four other couples to go through life with, but I hear here some focus in this discussion on doing something daily, which is good.”

Doyle spoke back up again, but this time with a question to the panelists.

“What do you walk out of at the end of Welcome, Ignatius House retreats, or Souly Business?” Doyle asked.

Patterson responded first.

“Welcome is a renewal retreat,” she said. “Each experience is different. For me it was definitely a renewal, and a deeper sense of community. The goal is not just to have an experience, but to get connected to the community or a ministry.”

Felts spoke about Souly Business next.

“For Souly, the original essence was a frustration,” he commented. “The founders had done Walk to Emmaus. There was a commitment – pre-weekend, the weekend, and post-weekend. They couldn’t get guys to sign up and commit. So they created Souly to have something sharable. Secondly, there’s a lot for those who don’t know the Lord, but there’s a whole lot more people who do know the Lord are on a ‘simmer.’”

In a typically Souly Business weekend, Felts told everyone there are eight speakers and then 15-20 minutes of silence after each speaker. There’s a women’s ministry called True Identity that’s similar, but they have 45 minutes of silence after each speaker.

“The speakers are ‘real,’” Felts pointed out. “We began with famous speakers, but people gave feedback to say they felt worse afterwards. There’s two hours on each Saturday during the Souly weekend for all who attend to share their stories with those in their table groups. This may have been the first time guys did this in their lives. Transparency and authenticity are key.”

Mulcahy rounded out the responses with some remarks about Ignatius House.

“When I did Cursillo, they had a rule that guys had to do the retreat first. It was because if the women did it first, guys wouldn’t do it,” Mulcahy told everyone. “Over time, guys began to come because they wanted to. The important thing is you end up in small groups to have accountability and continued stimulation.”

Mulcahy said at Ignatius House, the Jesuits don’t really have small group accountability and collaboration with the laity.

“I wish they would,” Mulcahy revealed. “What you get out of a retreat at Ignatius House is the action of the Lord in your heart. The two most important things to walk away with are to realize how much God loves you, and to be attuned to other things around us to provide service to others.”

Having heard about the Welcome, Ignatius House, and Souly Business experiences, everyone – panelists and attendees – were invited to pause for five minutes in silence and discern how the Spirit was speaking to each of them to pause and prepare to live by faith more in 2019.”



Here are responses that were shared.

“Refocus myself on the Examen, and take notes when doing so,” Mulcahy said.

“Prayerfully discern if I should go forth in personal and professional goals,” mentioned Patterson.

“Get my brain in a paradigm shift to accept that rich and authentic relationship with God is the ‘natural state,’” commented Felts.

“Daily prayerful devotional time, and listening and patience,” said Boutros.

“Focusing not so much on what I need in myself – meaning I don’t need to wait to be perfect to help others,” remarked Lyford. “Listening too.”

CTK Parishioner Elaine Szeto added what she discerned was to be still, pray, and listen.

She also said, “Praying to be mindful of whom we put in leadership, and that they have intentions of others in mind, is something else I am discerning.”

Doyle’s discernment included more and better daily reflection.

“Service – love and action with patience is something else,” he added. “There’s more I can do – and doing it with others.”

BELIEVES leader Andrew Schoppe provided the final discernment sharing, “What I heard came pretty quickly – to listen to God’s voice in others.”