

## “Make It Yours” 04.06.18 SMT Article by Bong Bringas

A story is told of a pastor who hosted a Japanese Buddhist priest who came to his city to study English. The priest’s temple in Tokyo had been so inundated with foreign tourists that the locals had decided to send him to the United States to learn English, so that he could eventually communicate and serve as a guide. As he described the temple complex to the pastor, it was easy to understand why there were so many visitors: it featured dozens of beautiful buildings, carefully tended gardens and ponds, and hundreds of monks. Learning that his American host was a pastor, the Buddhist priest asked if he may visit the pastor’s church. The pastor served at a large congregation but he knew, based on the Japanese priest’s description, that his church’s building was nothing compared to the Japanese temple with its hundreds of pilgrims visiting each year. So he said, “No, I am sorry.”

“Is it because I’m a Buddhist?” the priest asked.

“On no,” the pastor tried to assure him. “Our church welcomes everyone,” he said.

“Then why can’t I see it? Is it too far away, or don’t you have the key?”

The pastor responded, “If I wanted you to see our church, we would need to visit many of the neighborhoods, schools, office buildings, hospitals and stores in the area.”

“Your church is big then!” the priest said.

“Yes,” replied the pastor. “You see, when you describe your temple, you talk about its buildings and grounds. They sound wonderful. But when we talk about our church, we talk about where the members live and work.”

As people of the resurrection, we are all called to a vocation. All are gifted for service in the community. We live and work in ways that glorify God. Our very actions are truths that the world can touch and experience. It is how we love one another and ourselves that make us witnesses to God. A God who became one of us, and taught us how to be human with and for each other. Church is a place where a new humanity, a new sense of significant community can be found. Come and see. Make it yours!