

THE CATHEDRAL PARISH

EST. 2012

Dear Members and Guests of the Cathedral Parish,

At the start of a new calendar year, and halfway through my first year as pastor of the parish, I wished to take some time to reflect upon the six months in my new role, share my thoughts for the upcoming year and present a bigger picture for the parish including new groups and initiatives that will be starting very soon.

REVIEW

June 30, 2018, I officially took over from Fr. Ringley as the pastor of the Cathedral. Certainly, many of you already knew me from my almost two years of residing in the parish and assisting with the Sunday Masses. This is my first assignment as a pastor and it has been such a fulfilling part of my priesthood. The parish provides a set of challenges including the maintenance of many several large, old buildings, limited resources and communication challenges. At the same time, the parish is blessed to have some beautiful structures and many areas for things, a variety of languages and cultures that mirror the universality of the Church and a dedicated community of disciples of the Lord Jesus. The first six months offered me first-hand experience of the life of a pastor, something that I never had before. There is much on the job training and, again thanks to many good people, my deficiencies have not been as apparent. Thank you. I have changed very little as I still need to learn more fully everything that happens here and try to be sensitive to the nature of change. I have made a few changes that built upon previous movements. The liturgy continues to be a central focus, as it must. One notable difference is the expansion of the celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, particularly in the Solemn Masses. I continued with the overhaul of the RCIA/sacramental preparation program, with a few adjustments here and there. I started to look to alternative means of revenue. We are in discussion with a management company of cell phone transmitters and the prospects are looking very good for a contract! As you read this letter, there are some enhancements being done at the parish office to replace worn out carpet and make the reception area more welcoming and friendlier. It's a start!

2019

For 2019, I wish to continue to enhance and grow the things that are happening. As I mentioned in my homily on my first weekend of pastor, the parish involves looking in two different directions, what I called the *ad intra* and *ad extra*, that is, the focus upon the interior life of the parish and that of the exterior life. The interior life is who we are as a community as members of the Church and what we can do as a specific community to grow in our identity, draw closer to the Blessed Trinity through the Lord Jesus Christ and thus deepen our bonds as brothers and sisters in the Lord. The exterior life is that which can be described as the mission focus of the parish, the going out into the community to live the faith and bring the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church to others by witness, love and evangelization. The interior and exterior dimensions of the parish will be aided in their development by the establishment of committees that have specific scopes. While I am not crazy about the word "committee," I struggle to find a different word. I am open to ideas, particularly something that is more distinctly Christian and something that expresses us living our faith rather than some bureaucratic entity. The major areas of focus for the year and beyond for the interior life of the parish are: Liturgy, Faith Formation and Fellowship. The committee charged to assist with the going out is the Mission committee. There will be two additional committees that are more practical: Communications and Buildings & Grounds. Descriptions follow below for each of the committees as I understand them, although the membership and our

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progress might modify the plan. The committees are open to anyone who wishes to attend. The dates below are only for the first meeting. Depending upon the interest, we can try to accommodate a different regular day and time. If you would like to be involved with a committee or committees and are unable to attend the scheduled time, please contact me directly to be a part of the discussion for future meetings. I recognize that it is a bold proposal of activities and groups in a small period of time, however I want to start as soon and possible and see what we can do!

COMMITTEES

Liturgy: The liturgy is a central action for the Christian community, especially the Mass. There is much that we do and much more that we can do. In addition, as a way to better enter into the mysteries celebrated in the liturgy, there are various things that can be done to assist in the actions. For example, Evening Prayer is a great tradition and I would like to offer it more. How can we make that happen? What can we do to help everyone appreciate and understand the traditions and reasons for our actions. These are only a few ideas. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, January 17 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church.

Faith Formation: I think that it was St. Teresa of Avila who said that there is no standing still in the spiritual life. One is either making progress or, if not, then regression is happening. What are different groups that we can run for the parish? The committee could help with retreats or discuss ideas about other gifts that the parish could provide, along the lines of the books at Christmas and give input about initiatives like Word on Fire and future suggestions for study programs. The first meeting will take place on Monday, January 28 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church.

Fellowship: There are a number of events that the parish hosts annually, such as the autumn and spring dinners. In addition to these large events, I would very much like to have more small events on a regular basis, such as get togethers after the Sunday Masses from time to time for coffee. These are more opportunities to be together as a parish community. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, January 24 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church.

Mission: While a major focus is upon the community and building up our bonds as a parish, the other major focus is the parish going out into the larger community. The word mission takes its root from "missio" in Latin, which means a sending forth, going out or a dismissal. I see two elements to the Mission Committee, both involved with the going out. One element is a lived expression of the corporal works of mercy: visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and so on. The second element is the sharing of our faith with others, that is, evangelization. This committee will discuss and implement different ways to accomplish these goals and help encourage parishioners and facilitate the means to carry out the activities. The first meeting will take place on Monday, February 4 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church.

Buildings & Grounds: We have many buildings and a good amount of space on our campuses. They are constantly in need of attention and without proper attention, they will fall into disrepair. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will review different ideas and projects for our campuses. They can help to execute different tasks as a group that would be much easier than leaving it to a few. For example, the committee could help with Christmas setup, but also could discuss different utilizations of space, possible new projects and try to discover people within the parish and community that might be able to help us to carry out our plans more efficiently. The first meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 16 at 7:30 PM at the Parish Office on Thompson Street.

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Communications: While I do not see this as a major committee, it can play an important role. Tasks could include gathering information about how other parishes and groups communicate within the community and outside, review of the bulletin, help with the website and discussion about social media. These are a few possibilities that come to mind. The first meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 30 at 7:30 PM at the Parish Office on Thompson Street.

STUDY GROUPS

I want the parish to be even more active than it is already, and that's saying something! If you recall a few weeks ago, I mentioned my desire to subscribe the entire parish to the Word on Fire program and asked for help. I am delighted to say that we received contributions and/or commitments that cover half of the annual cost. It will be offered to the parish without cost and for those who find it beneficial, particularly in the group study programs, an opportunity to make a donation to the overall faith formation efforts of the parish will be possible. It is not too late for those who wish to sponsor a month to do so. You can simply place the money or check in a standard envelope labeled "Word on Fire Donation" and give it to the regular collection. The standard format for many of the study programs involve videos, reading and questions. Each participant will have access to the workbook for free through the computer. We will also provide copies to anyone who may not have access to the internet. Generally, there is some reading that can be done before the session with some questions. We gather as a group to watch the video and then discuss the questions and any other topics that those in attendance wish to discuss. For those who wish to simply come, watch and chat, this is also acceptable, and it is not required to do work outside of the sessions, although the more that one puts into the program, the more that he or she will benefit from the study. Some of these are more concrete and definite, while others are on the table for later in the year.

Catholicism: This was one of if not the first comprehensive study offered by Bishop Barron and covers the basics of the faith. It is broken into 10 different themes including the basics about the person and mission of Jesus Christ, the Mass and sacraments, prayer, the saints and the last things. Each session will include a video, review of questions from homework and other discussion. I will offer two opportunities for the English program. One will be on a weekday morning and the other will be in the evening. The specifics are still being determined and will begin in February. Fr. Alexis will offer the Spanish program on Friday evenings from 7-8:30 PM beginning in February.

St. Benedict and St. Augustine: It is a smaller course that focus on these two great saints. For us as members of the Cathedral Parish, who claim the patronage of St. Augustine, this would be a perfect opportunity to learn more about him, with St. Benedict as a bonus. Both saints have significance in the modern world, as those who participate in the study will see. I will offer this study over the summer closer to the feast of St. Augustine (August 28).

Latin Enrichment: The Extraordinary Form of the Mass is entirely in Latin and our daily Masses and parts of our Sunday Masses use Latin. The scope of the group would be to learn some of the basics of the language and also to review some of the Latin prayers that are offered during the Mass. More information will be forthcoming once the instructor offers me his proposal. If you are interested in the Latin group, please speak with me to help coordinate a suitable day and time.

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English Classes: I would like to assist Spanish-speaking members of our parish who have a desire to learn English. I am uncertain how this will work at the moment but am in the process of seeking out a person and gathering ideas as to how it would work best.

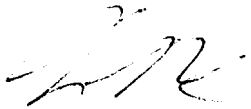
Reading Group: In my previous assignment, over the course of a year and a half, a group of us met regularly and read together Dante's "Divine Comedy." I would love to bring this opportunity to the parish as some point. He read the entire work together aloud. For great works of literature or sermons of the Fathers, for example, it makes sense. For other works, the approach would be to read a portion at home and then gather together to discuss the reading.

Catechesis about the Mass: The Mass is the central act of worship for us as Christians. There is much to learn about it, both in the Ordinary and the Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite. I think that there could be opportunities to gather during the week and weekend after some of the Masses. For example, we could meet for 30 minutes following the 12:30 or 5:30 Sundays Masses to discuss one aspect of the liturgy.

REVIEW OF DATES FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- Buildings & Grounds – Wednesday, January 16 at 7:30 PM at the Parish Office on Thompson Street
- Liturgy – Thursday, January 17 at 7 PM at Parish Center at St. Patrick Church
- Fellowship – Thursday, January 24 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church
- Faith Formation – Monday, January 28 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church
- Communications - Wednesday, January 30 at 7:30 PM at the Parish Office on Thompson Street
- Mission – Monday, February 4 at 7 PM at the Parish Center at St. Patrick Church

If you have any questions, thoughts, comments, ideas or anything else that comes to mind, please do not hesitate to speak with me after Mass, reach out to me by email or phone or setup an appointment. I am very excited for the different initiatives and I hope that many will have a desire to become more involved and act on this desire. I am looking for a large variety from the parish and even though the initial meetings are very close together, I do not expect all of the groups to appeal to the same people. See what speaks to you. Think about it. And as you prepare for Mass one day or after its conclusion before you leave, take a few minutes to ask the Lord Jesus, present with us in those moments and in our churches in the Tabernacle by the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, ask if there might be something that you can do a particular group, or even two, that might be for you.



Fr. Michael