



## FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Merry Christmas! May each and every one of us continue to find joy in the Savior, born in the manger, as we take time to “unwrap with our hearts” the gift of Jesus in our lives.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Before the manger the Magi remind us: “All people have gifts to share. We, too, have gifts that are shared when we enter into the lives of others. We are like the Magi because we know and believe that Jesus is God’s Son and so we honor Him in our lives. We are called to take care of people in need, those who are homeless, and the sick and the hungry. Jesus said that when we do something for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do it for Him.”

In 2024 may we continue to care for one another through the simple, kind, generous, loving actions of our lives.

We celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, tomorrow, January 8, as the final celebration of the festive, faith filled, prayerful, joyous, and beautiful season of Christmas. We will pray our way in Ordinary Time or ‘counted time’ to February 14, St. Valentine’s Day, as well as the first day of Lent, and our faith filled celebration of Ash Wednesday.



The work on the school breezeway project continues at the parish. The “heavy work” of the demolition and installing the major framing took place over the last two weeks. (This photo shows some of the iron and steel that was installed to support the breezeway.) We did this so that the work could proceed without the students, faculty, and staff moving in and around the major construction equipment and project. We will have pedestrian access underneath the breezeway, to and from the Oakwood parking lot, this weekend.

The remainder of the work on the project will be done over the coming months. The schedule has been set so that there would be limited interruption to the school calendar for the students, faculty, and staff. The project will be completed in the coming months.

One of my favorite prayers since childhood is the Lord’s Prayer, the Our Father. I regularly share with students and adults the importance of the prayer in my faith journey. The Lord’s prayer comes from the heart and the lips of Jesus. It guided the disciples when they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. It has guided individuals ever since. It has guided the Church for over two millennia.

At Christmas, we celebrate Emmanuel, God with us. Living the Our Father, we acknowledge and look to God with us. If we are blessed with the maturing of faith, the gift of health, and the gift of life, we are able to repeat the prayer and have its impact in our life day after day. I often get caught up in so many things that are out of my control. When I live life, a day at a time, as Jesus taught the disciples, I am able to trust God, active and present in my life, often through the people God places in my life.

A friend recently shared some gentle goals for 2024. My adapted version of them for the parishioners of St. Mary’s

*“Slow Down. Schedule some rest. Be grateful for the smallest of things. Lose yourself in the moment more often. Belly laugh daily. Say yes to simple adventures. Say yes to God. Put down the phone. Let go of perfection. Go for small sustainable growth. Spend more days praying. Hold onto things lightly and people tightly. Put more earth under your feet and sunshine on your face. Spend less time consuming and more time creating. Embrace the beauty of living each day and each season. If the trees and the bears need a season for rest, so do you. Give thanks to God. Breath prayerfully.”*

Thank you to all those who “make a return to God for all the good God has done for you” as generous stewards to the Church of St. Mary with a gift this Christmas.

God bless us with heavenly Joy at Jesus’ birth,

*Fr. Mike Nacur*