



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

I am away from St. Mary's this weekend and appreciate Fr. Radley leading the parish through the in-pew commitment process of the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) "Together at the Table". St. Mary's has a history of being generous and supportive of Archdiocesan appeals and campaigns. I am grateful for what I trust will be another demonstration of generosity to the 2024 ACA. You can learn more about the ACA at the following link: giving.archchicago.org/annual-catholic-appeal/about. I invite those new to St. Mary's this year, as well as all parishioners who have not supported the Appeal in past years, to be among the thousands of people that contribute to the success of the Annual Catholic Appeal.

I look forward to praying with you this coming Wednesday as we celebrate the beginning of the season of Lent. Often times faithful parishioners put forth additional effort to grow spiritually in the season. With God's grace, continued spiritual growth is something we experience, prayer by prayer, in our lives. Stagnation in the spiritual life is not a good thing. May we open ourselves to, and be guided by, the grace of God and the Holy Spirit to renewal this Lenten season.

Many of us have busy lives, activities, interests, and responsibilities that pull us in many different directions. I find that if I commit to something, entering it into my calendar before it fills up with other activities, I am able to prioritize and make time for things important to my spiritual growth.

If you were to review your spiritual life, your prayer life, your life as a disciple, how would you evaluate yourself? I ask that question and invite your prayerful reflection leading into the season of Lent. Fr. Frank DeSiano is going to lead the parish in a Lenten Mission on March 9 – 12. This Lenten Mission on the Eucharist is being offered to provide a means for parishioners to grow in their understanding of the Eucharist and the ways that the Eucharist invites them to deeper discipleship.

Fr. DeSiano will preach at all of the weekend Masses March 9 and 10 as well as lead us in a three-night mission. The Lenten Mission revolves around three themes directly connected to the Eucharist: (1) Personal Faith, (2) Community, and (3) Reaching Out.

The Lenten Mission presentation on Sunday evening, March 10, will prayerfully lead all gathered to find that discipleship is a constant growth in faith.

The Lenten Mission presentation on Monday evening, March 11, will prayerfully lead all gathered to know that discipleship is lived and exercised in communion with others.

The third and final Lenten Mission presentation on Tuesday evening, March 12, will prayerfully lead all gathered as it reveals how God sends all of us forth.

If you could only attend one evening, which evening would you attend, having answered the question as to the state of your spiritual life? If you have to miss one of the evenings, but could attend two, which two would you prioritize in your calendar? I am highly encouraging you to schedule the evenings of the Lenten Mission on the Eucharist so this Lent will be one of spiritual growth and not spiritual stagnation. As always, friends, co-workers, family members, and neighbors are always welcome to join you and other parishioners in prayer at Mass as well as at Lenten Missions. Who will you bring to our Lenten Mission next month?

I was given a copy of the following prayer. I believe the words can help each of us in spiritual growth this upcoming Lenten season.

ONE LA SALLE PRAYER

Let me be the change I want to see
To do with strength and wisdom
All that needs to be done. . .
And become the hope that I can be.

Set me free from my fears and hesitations
Grant me courage and humility
Fill me with spirit to face the challenge
And start the change I long to see.

Today I start the change I want to see.
Even if I'm not the light
I can be the spark
In faith, service, and communion.
Let us start the change we want to see.
The change that begins in me. *AMEN.*

Time is running out to pre-order your ticket to the Lenten Fish Fry on February 23. You can use this QR code or visit: lovestmarys.com/fish-fry to order tickets to help those leading the Fish Fry plan accordingly. If possible, please purchase advance tickets by Tuesday, February 13.



May God bless us in living extraordinary lives of faith in ordinary time,

Fr. Mike Maciej