



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Today we celebrate the Second Sunday of Lent. May your efforts this Lent, draw you deeper into relationship with Jesus. May we continue to trust more deeply in God who created us in His image and likeness, the God of our understanding who has been present to us and with us throughout our lives, and not the God of our imagination.

Today is a very special day in our Archdiocese as well as in our Parish for those participants in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) / Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA). This afternoon, at Holy Name Cathedral the Archdiocese of Chicago will celebrate the Combined Rite of Election with the catechumens (the unbaptized) and the Call to Continuing Conversion (the baptized candidates). This is a very beautiful and powerful public prayer in the Archdiocese.

Since last fall, those in St. Mary's RCIA / OCIA have been gathering weekly with the RCIA team, praying together, trusting and turning to Jesus, reflecting on God's word and learning a variety of important topics including, but not limited to, Church history, doctrine, creeds, prayer, sacraments, saints, the Trinity and the liturgical calendar. These gatherings have been held at the Parish Center.

The Combined Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion brings people preparing to complete the Sacraments of Initiation and professing their faith in the Catholic Church together at the Cathedral. There are four different celebrations at the Cathedral this Lent which allows representatives from every parish across the Archdiocese to gather with the Cardinal or one of the Auxiliary Bishops.

It is a very moving experience to hear your name called forth, to come forward into the sanctuary of Holy Name Cathedral, greeted by our Cardinal or an Auxiliary Bishop with hundreds of other people seeking community, faith and membership in the Roman Catholic Church. This prayer and celebration at the Cathedral is a visible experience of the many other people across the Archdiocese, that gather weekly with RCIA teams in parishes to prepare for the Easter Sacraments.

You have been asked to pray for those in our RCIA/OCIA program. In a special way I invite your prayers for Katrina Kline, Patrick Lindemann, Charlie Rinehart, and Randy Tack as they participate in the Call to Continuing Conversion with Cardinal Cupich at the Cathedral Sunday, February 25. May their prayer and spiritual growth continue as they, their families, sponsors, and parish look forward to the celebration bringing them fully into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil at St. Mary's on March 30.

During the Lenten season we intentionally focus on growing closer to God and God's Son, Jesus Christ, through our acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. May all of us know the call of Jesus and the love of God this Lent as we open ourselves to continuing conversion in Jesus our Lord and Savior.

I pray that you have our Parish Mission on your calendar for the second weekend of March. In this year of the Eucharist, the Mission will allow us to reflect on and deepen our individual commitment to living Eucharistic lives.

As we journey in prayer this Lenten season, as we are experiencing some warmer than normal weather for our part of the country, the following prayer is offered for your Lenten reflection.

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reek his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

"God's Grandeur" by Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ

Might you be drawn into prayer this week, giving thanks for and meditating on God's grandeur in your life!

Thanks to Heidi Christen and her hard-working team of volunteers who brought back the return of the Parish Fish Fry this past Friday evening.

May God bless us with clean hearts these Lenten days,