



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Today we celebrate the Third Sunday of Lent. I will be using my articles in this prayerful season to reflect on spiritual truths and spiritual themes that can deepen our friendship and relationship with Jesus. There are tried and true spiritual practices handed on from one generation to the next. May your efforts this Lent, draw you deeper into relationship with Jesus.

A family gathers together for dinner, and bow their heads in prayer. After the meal prayer there is a pause as members of the family add extra prayers for pets, family members, classmates, and friends. The family concludes the meal prayer and prayer for others with the sign of the cross as they share dinner with one another.

A child kneels next to their bed to offer their bed time prayers. They reflect on the beauty of the day and thank God for all things great and small. In addition to their own needs, they remember to ask God to bless those who are hurting, those who don't have a bed to sleep in, a pet to play with, or a roof over their head. The child rises from the floor, crawls into bed, and drifts peacefully off to sleep.

There is a beauty and a power to intercessory prayer, asking God's grace to be with, bless us, and to help those we care for, in our immediate family as well as people around the world. When we offer intercessory prayer, we are following the example of Jesus at the Last Supper. Through intercessory prayer, others pray for our needs as well as our prayers offered for others in need.

You will notice that our Prayer Book of Intentions is in the back of the church by the icons. You are invited to add your intentions in the "Book of Intentions". The needs, the prayers, the lives of those we care for are remembered in the Offertory Prayer also known as Universal Prayers, or sometimes called the Prayers of the Faithful.

You are also reminded today and asked to take a name of one of our students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Names of our students are found in baskets at the entrances to the church where they have been available for the last month. The Confirmation Program at St. Mary's includes a three-year preparation including study, prayer, reflection, and service. We welcome Bishop Francis Kane to St. Mary's on April 13 to confirm our students. Thanks for taking a student's name and praying for a member of the confirmation class of 2024 as well as all those to be confirmed this year in our Archdiocese and around the world.



Last Sunday afternoon, those in our RCIA program celebrated the Call to Continuing Conversion led by Cardinal Cupich at Holy Name Cathedral. Gathered with other candidates and catechumens from across the Archdiocese, pictured with the Cardinal are Katrina Klein, Patrick Lindemann, Charlie Reinhart, and Randy Tack. At the Call to Continuing Conversion, those present were prayed for and prayed over by the Cardinal and those in the cathedral, which was filled with parishioners from across Cook and Lake County. The candidates will complete the sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil at St. Mary's, on March 30, during Holy Week.

Once upon a time a pastor was speaking with a fallen away believer. The pastor said; "Brother you need to join the army of the Lord." The individual responded, "Pastor, I am already enlisted!" The Pastor replied, "If that is true my son, why don't I see you on Sundays in the congregation?" Softly, in a hushed tone, the man replied, "I am in the secret service!"

Blessed by God, may we come together, worship together, give thanks together, and be sent forth together serving our sisters and brothers with generosity, compassion, and mercy.

Next Friday you are invited to participate in Praise and Worship, Eucharistic adoration, and celebrate reconciliation on March 8. We welcome Fr. Frank DeSiano next weekend, March 10, as he begins our three day Lenten Parish Mission. Please bring a co-worker, neighbor, family member, or friend to one or all of the presentations by Fr. DeSiano at 7:00pm on Sunday, March 10, Monday, March 11, and Tuesday, March 12.

May God bless us with clean hearts these Lenten days,

Fr. Mike Narusz