



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

HAPPY EASTER! We shout and proclaim the verse from John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life." A very blessed Easter to you and your loved ones across the miles. We are very happy that you are here with us in prayer, or streaming from your home this Easter Sunday.

It is with joy that we come together to celebrate our faith and belief in Jesus' resurrection. His death shattered the hearts of those closest to him. His resurrection brought shock, that turned to wonderment and awe. May Jesus' resurrection transform whatever is heavy, whatever is clouded, whatever is burdensome, into life, light, peace, and joy. Jesus is Risen and we are able to rise from all that has held us back to rise with the Lord.

We celebrate fifty days of Easter joy. We celebrate the Easter season, culminating with the final Easter feast, Pentecost Sunday. Throughout these fifty days may our relationship with Jesus deepen, grow, develop, and be strengthened as members of the Catholic Church and as parishioners of the Church of St. Mary.

I pray that for the next fifty days, in a very committed and intentional way we will:

- Make a commitment to know Jesus on a personal level.
- Invite the Risen Lord into every aspect of your human life.
- Experience the presence and guidance of the Risen Lord in a tangible way.
- Develop a deep faith and belief in Jesus' divinity.
- Accept Jesus' teaching as did the early Church.
- Make a total and complete heartfelt surrender to His will.
- Share in the Eucharist receiving Jesus as spiritual nourishment as you live your faith.

Fifty days of prayer. Fifty days of celebrating. Fifty days of living life with our resurrected Lord.

The Solemn Blessing for the Easter Time includes the following prayers. In addition to reading it in my article, may you be present in the church, gathered as community, being sent forth to be a sign of the Risen Lord in your life, community, and world.

MAY GOD, WHO BY THE RESURRECTION OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON WAS PLEASED TO CONFER ON YOU THE GIFT OF REDEMPTION AND ADOPTION, GIVE YOU GLADNESS BY HIS BLESSING. AMEN.

MAY HE, BY WHOSE REDEEMING WORK YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE GIFT OF EVERLASTING FREEDOM, MAKE YOU HEIRS TO AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE. AMEN.

AND MAY YOU, WHO HAVE ALREADY RISEN WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM THROUGH FAITH, BY LIVING IN A RIGHT MANNER ON THIS EARTH, BE UNITED WITH HIM IN THE HOMELAND OF HEAVEN. AMEN.

Do you know that your parish was founded in 1875? Nearing the end of the nineteenth century, thirty families approached Bishop Foley of Chicago, asking if they could open a Catholic Church in east Lake Forest. Bishop Foley listened to their request and St. Mary's was founded in 1875. We are now in our 149th year of following Jesus, being shaped by God's Word, and nourished in the sacraments. Parishioners continue to live and share their faith to this very day. One hundred fifty years is a significant milestone for St. Mary's.

Do you want to be part of a team of parishioners planning how we can give thanks to God for His grace present and active in our parish? You are invited to mark your calendars for Wednesday, April 10 for an initial planning meeting at 7:00pm in the Upper Grade Center Multi-Purpose room. Please enter through the Green Bay Road school entrance. Come together and join other parishioners in sharing ideas of how we can give thanks to God as St. Mary's celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2025.

May God bless us with prayerful, compassionate and joyous hearts this Easter season,

Fr. Mike Nacup