



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

This is a special weekend for the parish as we celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with the students and families that have been growing in faith the past few years. We welcome Bishop Francis Kane back to St. Mary's to Confirm the Confirmation class of 2024.

Many people influence the students: family, classmates, Confirmation sponsors, and parishioners. In this Easter season, the first reading at Sunday Mass reminds us of the importance of the community's role in passing on the faith. The Acts of the Apostles reveals how the Church grew, with the grace of God and the active power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Let's pray for our newly Confirmed and their peers. May they grow in faith and friendship as part of the "Body of Christ."

The tradition of the Roman Catholic Church lists twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. Can you remember all twelve? How many "fruits of the Holy Spirit can you name" prior to reading the next line of my article? The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity.

The tradition of the Roman Catholic Church lists the gifts of the Holy Spirit, derived from Isaiah 11:1-3 as wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, reverence (piety) and wonder and awe in God's presence (fear of the Lord). These gifts are permanent dispositions that move us to respond to the Holy Spirit, present and active in our lives. Is there a particular gift of the Holy Spirit you rely on in living out your faith? Is there a particular gift you pray to have more of as you serve others, not only using but further developing your God given gifts and talents? Come Holy Spirit, Come. Fill the hearts of your young people and make them your followers and ministers.

How often have you used the phrase, or heard others say, "Many hands make light work!" A task that is a burden to an individual can be joyously managed when others join together. Next weekend the Parish Council is hosting a Ministry Fair. They offer this to the entire parish so that in ministry - in service and in caring for one another - "many hands will make light work."

I have found many graced moments in parish ministry when people come together and share their talents. At a recent meal shared with parishioners, the man sitting next to me shared his story. "Fr. Mike, I wasn't good at reading the Bible. I struggled with it. Deciding to do something about it, I explored becoming a lector at St. Mary's. Over time, with effort, with practice and praying with the passages of the Bible, I have grown in my faith. Now, I am better at reading the Bible and find joy in serving as a lector at my parish." How many parishioners active in ministry or sitting in the pews may be able to discover similar truths as they move out of the "comfort or uncomfortable zone" and try something new? You will never know, that is, you unless you try.

Another phrase that came to mind in writing this week's article is a quote that a former pastor of mine kept in his room. "In life and in golf, it is the follow through that matters the most." On a regular basis we need people making a commitment and fulfilling the commitment in many liturgical roles at Mass. We have more than enough trained extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. We do not always have enough at many of the weekend Masses. We have a large number of students trained to be altar servers, assisting at weekend Masses. We need many parents to sign their children up on the schedule, to bring them to Mass, to attend Mass with them on a weekly basis. Mass was very important to me as a child, serving until I was sixteen years old and taller than the pastor. Then, following in the example of my dad, I hung up my altar robes and became a lector. There is also a need for men and women to join the core team of ushers at every Mass at St. Mary's. In addition to these opportunities, there are other ministries that would welcome more parishioners to their ranks. I hope you are able to stop by the Ministry Fair next Sunday in the atrium of the Upper Grade Center of the School of St. Mary.

Special Religious Education (SPRED) has been offered at St. Mary's for over thirty years. Members of the SPRED community will be part of the 5:00pm Mass on Saturday, April 20. You are welcome to pray with us and SPRED next Saturday. SPRED catechists would welcome a conversation to share with you the ways you can volunteer and join them in their ministry.

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

Fr. Mike Nacup