



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Today, on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, let us rejoice in the Lord!! May each and every one of us make time in our hearts, make time in our lives, make time on our calendars to actively and prayerfully make room for spiritual growth in these days of Advent waiting and Advent hope.

As I wrote in my article last week, family prayer time, family devotions are passed on from one generation to the next. I am confident that many families at St. Mary's make prayerful use of Advent calendars for prayer with their children during the Advent season. It seems like the secular world has noticed this opportunity as people have shared with me the Advent calendars they bought didn't begin on the first Sunday of Advent, but on December 1. Those in the secular marketplace can sell calendars from one year to the next that begin with December 1, while we know that Advent always begins in November.

Speaking with a good friend she shared with me her excitement about sharing a Lego's Advent calendar with her precious grandson. I asked her, "A Legos Advent calendar? I had never heard of such a thing!" She sent me a text with a picture of the gift she was giving to her grandchild. Sure enough, the Lego City Advent calendar states: "Kids can count down to the big day with the Lego City Advent calendar featuring an awesome prize behind every door." While the marketing of this product may not have mentioned the countdown to Christmas, I am sure this faith-filled loving Grandmother will make sure her grandson knows that Jesus is the reason for the season that we proudly call Christmas.

Throughout the year parishioners are very generous in support of St. Mary's and in support of many other very worthy causes. Recently, parishioners' generosity was demonstrated in donations of over 230 \$50 gift cards received through the Guild of St. Mary Giving Tree! This weekend many people will be bringing food items to help "*Pack the Pantry*" at Most Blessed Trinity Parish. Many other organizations, some with ties to direct outreach of the parish, and others near and dear to your hearts benefit from your kindness and support.

We have already been receiving Christmas envelopes from parishioners. I am grateful that the parishioners are very generous, remembering the Church of St. Mary at Christmas. The budget for the Christmas collection this year is \$250,000. With everyone contributing what they can, in support of the parish, I am confident that your generosity will shine forth again as it regularly does.

The Archdiocese of Chicago 2021 Annual Catholic Appeal is being supported by thousands of parishioners across the Archdiocese. Contributions to the 2021 Catholic Appeal can be offered through the end of January 2022. Thanks for your generous support of the Archdiocesan Appeal.

Recently, I received the PADS Lake County newsletter. There were some very interesting statistics they shared informing readers of what they have accomplished. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, PADS Lake County has moved 1,257 people into permanent housing. (One of their top priorities is finding long term solutions for their guests.) Over 140,000 meals have been served due to the partners and volunteers. They have served over 2,000 people. Over 760 people received shelter from the elements; over 730 people have stayed safe in their own homes. They have engaged with over 150 people building relationships with anyone living outside to provide a path to housing. Thanks to all those who support Deacon Jack and his ministry to PADS Lake County on the second Friday of the month, providing meals for the guests of PADS from October through April each year.

The Vocations Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago is holding an information session titled, "Who Will Fill These Shoes?" on Tuesday, December 28 from 5:00 – 8:30pm. Parents are invited to attend with a son who is between the ages of 13-30. This event will be held at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein. For more information you can contact Sharon Porter in the Vocations office at Shporter@archchicago.org. Let's continue to pray for and support our youth in growing in faith, maturing in their relationship with the Lord, and the openness to consider to learn more about and possibly pursue a religious vocation.

You are invited to stop by and enjoy the Pancake Breakfast in the Upper Grade School cafeteria after Mass on Gaudete Sunday from 7:30am to 1:00pm!

May God bless us with prayerful preparation in this season of joy,