



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

We gather with friends, parishioners, family, and neighbors to pray together this Advent. The four weeks are filled with hope and joyful anticipation of Jesus' birth. It is a season of expectation – it is a season of preparation; Advent preparation is integral to our upcoming celebrations of welcoming the Christ Child anew into our lives on Christmas morn.

Fr. Radley, in his homily on the first Sunday of Advent, invited and encouraged us to “radiate the love, compassion, peace, mercy, and charity of Jesus” throughout each day of Advent. Through our prayer, open to the Holy Spirit, may each of us radiate faith in our homes, in our places of employment, in our schools, and in our parish.

Parishioners and friends of St. Mary's came together on the first Sunday of Advent to be enriched and encouraged by Greg Kozak to live the Mass we participate in during **The Other 167** hours of the week. Our full and active participation in the Mass, nourished by the Body of Christ, sent forth out into the world, is the lived responsibility of all followers of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist that we share, the Eucharist that is received, is to be shared in works of charity and compassion when we leave the physical church building. We are to go forth and glorify God with our lives. We are to go in peace. May our participation at Mass spiritually nourish us throughout these Advent days.

Living **The Other 167** hours of the week is our responsibility throughout the liturgical year. We will welcome Greg Kozak back in Lent and Easter to help us live **The Other 167** hours in those liturgical seasons. Mark your calendars today so you can participate and join us on Sunday, February 26 at 3:00pm and Monday, February 27 at 7:00pm, to help us spiritually and prayerfully move through the Lenten season with hope.

Like many in our community, I have traveled into Milwaukee and Chicago to prepare for Jesus' birth in special events and prayer services. Instead of traveling the highways north or south, you are able to prepare for Jesus' birth with a wonderful and special celebration next Sunday, December 11.

Tickets are to be purchased online for the Do-It-Yourself, singalong Handel's “*Messiah*” at St. Mary's on Sunday, December 11 at 3:00pm in the church. Information about ordering tickets can be found at the following link: [www.eventbrite.com/\(search for Niles Metropolitan Chorus\)](http://www.eventbrite.com/(search%20for%20Niles%20Metropolitan%20Chorus)). I look forward to having parishioners of St. Mary's stay in town, celebrating Handel's “*Messiah*.” With God's grace, perhaps this will become an annual celebration in our parish. Please bring family members, co-workers, friends, and neighbors that would enjoy this uplifting and beautiful celebration. You may also reach out to Marek Rachelski, St. Mary's Director of Music, if you have questions.

It was just over one month ago that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Letter to Congress Regarding Policies to Support Women and Families. That statement encourages a society in which the legal protection of human life is accompanied by profound care for mothers and their children. We continue to exhort our nation to prioritize the well-being of women, children, and families with both material resources and personal accompaniment, so that no woman ever feels forced to choose between her future and the life of her child. This letter is available on the USCCB website or by following this link: www.usccb.org/resources/statement-standing-with-moms-031522.pdf.

Let us pray through Advent, with hearts receptive to our Savior, born in a manger, because there was no room for them. Let our hearts be open to ways we can be of support to women and children on the fringes and margins of society in need.

Looking ahead to Christmas Masses, we will be offering the full schedule of Christmas Masses this year. May God bless all of us with health so we can come together celebrating Christmas Mass at St. Mary's before celebrating in our homes with loved ones. The Christmas schedule has been mailed to all registered parishioners, is available on our parish website, and in our bulletins.

Fr. Mike Radley