

FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE



Journeying in prayer these Lenten days, may the following story that the rector of Holy Name Cathedral shared with his parishioners expand our faith.

A man had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly, so he sent them each, in turn, on a quest to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third son in the summer, and the fourth son in the fall. When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent and twisted.

The second son said no, it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful. It was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The fourth son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

Then the man explained to his sons that they were all correct because each had seen only one season in the tree's life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree - or a person - by only one season and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it is winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, and the fulfillment of your fall.

Conclusions – Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest.

Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come some time later.

The lesson of the pear tree contains a Gospel message for all of us. We have all experienced different seasons in our lives. Even Jesus experienced the joys and pains of life all the way to the cross. However, Jesus trusted God his Father and we are invited daily to do the same. By the way, a life filled with love, forgiveness, sharing compassion, faith and joy is always in season.

How is God guiding you in grace this Lenten season?

St. Mary's Parish Clothing Donation Drive for Catholic Charities is taking place during Lent at St. Mary's. The Catholic Charities Round Lake Clothing Room is open each Thursday 10:00am to Noon and 2:00 to 6:00pm — lately visitors have been about 40 per day. While that's great news, the clothing inventory has been dropping. With spring break and spring-cleaning right around the corner and during this time of Lent, we are asking for clothing donations from our St. Mary community. Catholic Charities is requesting gently worn or new clean clothing for women, men, and children (especially boys' sizes infant through high school). No stains, holes or tears. Only new/unopened undergarments please. Collection bin(s) will be placed in the back of the church (north entrance) to receive your donations through March 26.

Have you already taken the 10 – 15 minutes to complete a survey conducted by the Catholic Leadership Institute? The survey allows parishioners across the Archdiocese to reflect on their own spiritual growth and discipleship, and also identify ways in which the parish can support that growth. The survey will be accessible online and in paper form at the Parish Office and in the church until March 31. All responses will be anonymous and the parish will only receive a summary of all responses in total—no individual responses will be reported. It only takes 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. Results will greatly support the plans of the Archdiocese for the future. Please follow this link: portal.catholicleaders.org/dmi/survey/g56ykg to complete the survey. Thanks for "sharing your voice" this Lent.

Thanks for your almsgiving this Lent in helping feed the hungry by Packing the Pantry at our sharing parish this weekend, March 11 and 12.

Our parish welcomed retired Bishop Francis Kane to St. Mary's this weekend, celebrating Confirmation with the class of 2023. May all of us, Spirit-led, be a witness to God's grace in all of our lives.

Mazur and Son and Inspired Artisans have started the work in the church in expanding the baptismal font. Registered parishioners received a mailing with information about enlarging the baptismal font earlier this month. Please use proper caution when entering or exiting the church via the Divine Mercy east entrance to worship.

All are welcome to attend the Sunday 5:00pm during Lent. High school students are especially invited to help at Mass and to gather after Mass for the COR Youth Group in the Parish Center.

May our prayer be guided by God's grace this Lent,

Fr. Mike Mazur