

FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE



Summer is a wonderful time. It is a time to enjoy the beauty of God's creation, it is the time to visit with neighbors, family, and friends, it is the time to give active praise and thanks to God. I hear from many parishioners that travel that they make sure, in their planning, that they know ahead of time the closeness to a Catholic Church in the town they are traveling to as well as the Mass times. Taking time to give thanks on vacation reminds the family that "we never take a vacation from the Eucharist." It also gives us the chance to experience worship in another church, seeing how they celebrate the Mass. May your summer include time for praying in community at St. Mary's as well as churches you find in your summer travels.

The Knights of Columbus has a new and ongoing initiative to encourage more active participation in the Eucharist. The following link - www.kofc.org/eucharist - offers a number of videos and resources that you may share with family members and friends. I hope that you will be able to take some time and enjoy the reflections offered to all Catholics by the Knights of Columbus. Since COVID, we have been welcoming people to church as well as streaming the Mass daily. Currently, as of the second half of May 2022, we have approximately 55-58% of those who had regularly worshipped at St. Mary's joining us again in person on weekends. I hope that the summer may be the time for those who haven't yet returned to active presence and worship at Mass to do so. All are welcome at St. Mary's - come and share in the gift of the Eucharist, praying with guests, parishioners, and family members.

When I started serving as pastor at St. Mary's in July 2016, upon arriving on campus there were several pastoral staff positions that I needed to fill. The first hire I made back in 2016 was Mrs. Jeannie Brunk. She has brought children and families in the Religious Education program and in the sacramental programs of the parish closer to Jesus and to God. She has been devoted to working with and seeing the youth develop a better understanding of God's love for them, seeing them mature in faith and helping them develop a foundation of prayer and faithfulness that they will rely on throughout their lives.

Following in the footsteps of her husband who retired a while ago, Jeannie shared with me that she is retiring at the end of June, 2022. I wish her all the best in her retirement, and know that she is a phone call away if a need arises. I am very happy to share with the parishioners of St. Mary's that Mrs. Joy Pacheco; the Assistant Director of Religious Education, has accepted my offer to her to serve St. Mary's as the new Director of Religious Education. Jeannie and Joy have worked prayerfully and closely over the last number of years and will be working to assure that there is a smooth transition. Families in the RE program have been encouraged to re-register for next year's program. I am using this announcement and article to encourage those who haven't yet re-registered to do so by the end of the month.

Please reach out to Jeannie Brunk on your own to thank her for her service and ministry to the youth and families of our parish. Also, reach out to Joy Pacheco to congratulate and support her in her new role, the Director of Religious Education at the Church of St. Mary, beginning July.

May the following prayer, deepen your awareness of the God of surprises, present and active in your life.

*God of surprises,
Sometimes when I really stop to think about all of this-
Your revelation to Abraham and our ancestors,
Your desire to enter into Covenant with us-
Wild mistake-makers though we are-
Your decision to become human in Jesus,
Your generous and merciful love for every human being through Him,
Your humble acceptance even of death on a cross,
Your resurrection from a death we thought absolute,
Your appearances that encouraged even the hardest hearts,
Your return to the heavens and descent in the form of the Spirit,
Your guidance and inspiration in every age since-
When I really stop to think about all this,
I'm so awestruck I don't know what I feel or think or believe-
I'm stuck staring at the sky like the disciples.
But I do believe, O Lord, this is why I come to you in prayer,
But deepen my belief, give it a sense of awe and amazement,
An awe and amazement that doesn't paralyze me but sends me forth,
A loving witness to your love.
Amen.*

— Garrett Gundlach, SJ

God bless you with a prayerful and grateful heart this summer,

Fr. Mike Nacup