



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

This weekend we once again changed our clocks, moving them back one hour. As I was writing this article on Tuesday morning, looking out the window, snow was gently falling on the leaves that were covering the ground. It doesn't appear that the snow will be long lasting, and the temperature will return soon to the mid-50s. As the days get shorter, and the nights longer, may we intentionally let our faith shine forth bringing light, hope, and warmth into what at times, and for some, is a dark, despairing, and cold world.

Many people use phrases in their conversations such as, "before COVID" or "after COVID". Without a doubt COVID impacted each and every one of our lives, some in more ways than others. References such as these are used in conversations with those who run and volunteer at the Most Blessed Trinity Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen.

Next weekend we have the chance to support guests that rely on the Food Pantry for support and assistance. While Fr. Deo was visiting us from Zambia this past August, I took him to the Food Pantry at our Sharing Parish. After learning about the administration and organization in place, he humbly stated; "What a gift that would be if people in Zambia had a place that they could visit to receive food for their families."

The Food Pantry has experienced an increase in the number of individuals and families that reach out to them for food. The increase in demand has brought with it a need for more resources to replenish the shelves in the Pantry. Leadership of the Food Pantry share that the contributions received do not stay on the shelves that long. As soon as they are received, they are packed up in bags to be handed out to guests. Next weekend you can directly support the restocking of the shelves by bringing food and household items to church. This month's Pack the Pantry will help families in need as they do what they can in providing meals for their families. Monetary donations are also welcome to support feeding the hungry through the Most Blessed Trinity Food Pantry. Your items for donation can be brought to church next weekend, November 11 and 12, so that they can be delivered to the Food Pantry on Sunday, November 12, at 1:00pm.

We have a dedicated and growing cadre of volunteers that staff the Soup Kitchen on the third Friday of the month at Most Blessed Trinity. In October there was a significant increase in the number of meals served on a chilly but pleasant evening. The team of volunteers usually prepares meals for 120 – 130 guests. Last month, on the third Friday, there were over 180 meals served to guests at the Soup Kitchen. When the number of meals needed exceeds the number of meals prepared, creativity, ingenuity, hard work, and God's grace multiplies the available meals so that guests at the Soup Kitchen can walk away fed, rather than empty handed and with an empty stomach.

Last month the Parish Council learned how parishioners can directly support refugee families that are being cared for through Catholic Charities in Cook and Lake County. With the resources and contacts of Catholic Charities, a donation of \$10,000 can provide for a family for six months. This summer a parishioner family put forth a lead gift of \$10,000 with the hopes and prayers that parishioners would be willing and able to match that amount. Thank you to those who have contributed to the Refugee Relief fund. When the initial donation is matched, two families will be able to be supported. If enough funds come forward, perhaps a third or fourth family can be cared for. Catholic Charities manages the "Parish Family Sponsorship Program" which allows individuals and parishes to make contributions as well as to get directly involved in numerous ways of support to families beginning their life in America.

It was in 2015 that Pope Francis wrote the encyclical, *Laudato Si'* or "Praised Be: On the Care of Our Common Home." Across the planet there have been many responses and efforts undertaken in the past eight years. Pope Francis wrote: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" and "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change."

Next Sunday, November 12, in music and in spirit filled reflections, we can pray together at the North American Premiere of "The Future" that is inspired by *Laudato Si'*. The performance begins at 7:30pm. Tickets are available online at www.eventbrite.com (search for *Niles Metropolitan Chorus*). You can reach out to Marek Rachelski with any questions at mrachelski@churchofstmary.org or speak to him after Saturday/Sunday Mass.

God bless you in living "Eucharistic lives" of gratitude, generosity, and compassion,

Fr. Mike Naciri