

## **From the Pastor's Desk – PLEASE READ**

**Do we ever consider just how lucky we are being surrounded by the chilly scenes of winter that are considered to be normative for this time of year?** Yes we are put out by some lingering snow and some temperatures that are a bit colder than we would like, but let's put things in perspective. If we look to recent days, geographically we are blessed by a very safe space. To our south and immediate west, there has been a virtual "snowpocalypse" to quote the journal, Science Tech Daily. In these earliest days of January 2025, a powerful winter storm brought snow, ice, and freezing temperatures to the central and eastern United States. The cold air first swept into the north-central U.S. at the start of the month, gradually pushing south and east. By January 7, frigid conditions had engulfed much of the country. The early January chill was accompanied by a potent storm system that dumped snow and ice on states from the Plains to the Mid-Atlantic, including Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa all of which received record amounts of snow in feet and more than 10 deaths. To our distant west, at the time of this writing (1:17 AM Friday morning), six major wildfires are burning, mostly still uncontained, in Los Angeles County. Officials have confirmed at least a dozen deaths but warn the actual toll will remain unclear until it's safe for investigators to access neighborhoods. Well over 100,000 people have been impacted by evacuation orders since Tuesday and at present there are many more persons in the path of this overwhelming inferno. As many as 10,000 structures have been destroyed between the coastal Palisades Fire, which is now the most destructive ever to hit Los Angeles County, and the Eaton Fire, which devastated communities below Angeles National Forest to the east. The devastation to the area has been likened to the "drop of an atomic bomb" affecting more than 35,000 acres of land, unparalleled amounts of non-human wildlife, and stretching emergency resources to the limit. Unfortunately, weather conditions over the weekend are expected to continue to fuel these deadly fires, bringing tragedy to even more potential victims. And here we sit, in the luxury of warmed homes, with less than significant amounts of snowfall on the ground, blessed by God that we our lives have not been devastated by the aforementioned misfortune brought on by the inclemency of the weather which is beyond comparison. **I pray that we have transcended the unique human weakness of complaining and all of us are giving thanks to almighty God for our safety and security as we are also praying earnestly for those who find themselves in the path of immediate peril.** I am confident that we are doing so here at Visitation Parish due to our commitment to loving our brothers and sisters because of our generous hearts and positive dispositions.

I am presuming that the diocese will chose to respond to the needs of those whose lives have been devastated by the apocalyptic fires of California; however, I am announcing today that **next weekend we will be having a second**

**collection** to assist with those persons whose lives have been broken by this momentous catastrophe. This is an opportunity to not only reach out in charity to victims but also to give thanks to almighty God for our personal safety and well-being. I am asking all parishioners to be as generous as possible as we consider our donations to alleviate some of the pain of this calamity. We can be an extension of the light of the world that has been given to us in Christ Jesus whom we have been celebrating during this Christmas season. We can be practical signs of **hope** at the beginning of this Jubilee Year that portrays this virtue as central to our lives as Catholic Christians.

.....

Speaking of Jubilee, there are two announcements that I would like to communicate regarding the Jubilee Year. First, **The Jubilee Year Planning and Implementation Committee will meet in the Elizabethan Suite (formerly the rectory meeting room) at 7:00 PM on Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup>.** The meeting will be brief and will consist of a series of updates regarding our current planning of events for the year. Please note that new members continue to be welcome. Second, **I would like to remind all parishioners of the pilgrimage opportunity to the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg, MD tentatively scheduled for Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> or Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>** (yet to be determined). This unique and glorious shrine that honors the first American born saint whose legacy played an important role in our parish history. This trip will be a day long event and will include a tour of the shrine and its surrounding buildings and grounds (the museum, the Seton Home, the first community house and schoolhouse, and cemetery grounds), Mass celebrated in the basilica, and a community meal. The cost is still being determined; however, we will pass this information to you as soon as it is available. We will be providing sign-up sheets in the main vestibule of the Church for those interested at the beginning of February. Please note that we will need at least 40 persons in order to roster this trip. If you are able, Please consider joining us marvelous spring Jubilee event and mark your calendars.

\*\*\*\*\*

There will be **a finance council meeting on Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM** in the **Elizabethan Suite** (formerly the rectory meeting room). It is extremely important that all members be present. If we cannot have full participation, this meeting will need to be rescheduled given the paramount importance of the agenda items. If it is impossible for you to attend this meeting, please call the rectory on Monday morning. In terms of other parish administrative meetings, **a pastoral council meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM** and **a combined council meeting on Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, both in the Elizabethan Suite.** Again, it is extremely important that all members are in attendance at these meetings due to the critical importance of the agenda items. **NOTE THAT THESE MEETING DATES REFLECT A CHANGE FROM THOSE MADE AT THE LAST COMBINED COUNCIL MEETING.**