

### *From the Pastor's Desk*

As I begin to write this reflection, it is the end of Ash Wednesday, the first full day of the Lenten Season. Traditionally, this is one of my favorite days of the Liturgical Year, standing alongside Easter Sunday, the Annunciation of the Lord, the Nativity of the Lord, and the Solemnity of All Saints. Usually, it is a time of great joy (even for Lent) because liturgically it accentuates my response to God's gracious initiative; God revealing himself in Jesus Christ through the Spirit so that I may make a commitment through the experience of 40 days of intensified intimate conversation with Christ I can enter more deeply into the mystery of conversion.

Well, this year it began in a manner that did not lend itself to the usual spiritual "high." We had several unfortunate incidents surrounding the fish fry, the first celebration of liturgy, while by its very nature gave glory to God, was saddled with some unfortunate oversights and inconsistencies that distracted me, there were a few unexpected administrative issues, and a few other matters that left me quite dismayed by the middle of the afternoon. I share this with you not for your sympathy, but rather to share with you how good God can be. After the period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament that followed the first Mass, the Holy Spirit moved me to reach out to a dear priest friend who helped me to weather the perceived tempest that I was encountering. He was gentle and kind and gave me the sacramental support that I required to experience the remainder of the day with the fortitude and grace that I needed to allow the day to regain its traditional status as one of my most beloved liturgical days. In addition, at the second liturgy, God sent an unexpected blessing that renewed my spirits. I believe all of this was possible because I practiced what I preached. I made the most of my Lenten opportunity for intimacy. I showed my broken self to the Lord, and he healed me, and for that I am most grateful because it bolstered my commitment to make the Lenten experience one in which I will engage the mystery of conversion whatever life might throw my way. It is worth it, for it brings me closer to God which is the goal of my existence. Know that I want much the same for you and that is my prayer during the entire season of Lent for all of you. Engage the Lord in intimate conversation over these 40 days. I PROMISE YOU; you will not be disappointed

Again, I would like to encourage all members of the parish to please continue to keep Pope Francis in your prayers. Remarkably, this afternoon (I am writing now on Thursday), Pope Francis is doing better and even released a short, recorded message thanking the Catholic faithful around the world for their prayers and asking for their continued acts of faith and hope regarding his healing. Know that I very much appreciate the prayers for our Pope. You know how deeply I care for him pastorally, liturgically, and

theologically. He is a special blessing to the Church and it is my most sincere hope that at the very least he sees the Jubilee Year through to its completion.

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### **THIS WEEK’S MEETING SCHEDULE**

**Jubilee Committee Meeting: Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 PM.\*** All members of the committee should make an effort to attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend, please call the parish office.

**Combined Council Meeting: Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM.\*** All members of both the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council should be in attendance. Please inform the parish office if you cannot attend

**Basket Party Planning Meeting: Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM** in the School Cafeteria.

\*The CC and JC Meetings are to be held in the Elizabethan Suite

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**MARDI GRAS PARTY THANK YOU!!!** A tremendous thank you to all who participated in making our Mardi Gras party a grand event and a great success. With more than 70 people attending, it was our best social event since COVID. There were so many new faces as well as several young persons attending. **The food was outstanding:** delicious chicken, jambalaya (thanks Fr. John), Red beans & Rice, Pasta, as well as the many wonderful fresh side dishes and desserts that were brought in by parishioners. The volunteers were plentiful, hospitable, and certainly hard-working. Several attendees remarked that “we should do this more often.” Well, with friends, food, fellowship and fun like so many people had that evening, we will certainly take that suggestion under advisement!! Stay tuned to your Visitation Community Building Channel!!! Next time, perhaps we can shoot for 90 people or more.

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### **SAINT ANDREW FOOD PANTRY**

This Monday is one of the food distribution days for the St Andrew/St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. The pick up times are from 2:30 – 6:00 PM at the St. Vincent DePaul building at 927 Franklin Street. All families who are eligible under the published income guidelines are welcome and invited to take advantage of the generosity of the Food Pantry.

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