



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK
Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time: SEPTEMBER 11-12, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

Last week I mentioned that our **Parish Leadership Night** is to be held on **Wednesday, September 29th, at 6:30 p.m.** Please see the invite in today's bulletin. As you may recall, I mentioned the **Renew My Church** Initiative. Today, I would like to review some of the reasons that we need to look with fresh eyes on how we move forward.

RENEW MY CHURCH

"Renew My Church" is a proactive and strategic effort to ensure the sustainable growth of our Church for the future. Renew My Church is meant to ensure that all parishes are vibrant, vital, and life-giving and have the resources they need to carry out the mission of the Church. Renew My Church is a diocesan-wide effort and its success is dependent upon local ownership, participation, input and support.

Why do we need this initiative?

As we look at how to answer the Holy Father's call to be more intentional and responsible in our desire to carry out Christ's Mission of being people of peace and reconciliation ("See how they love one another!"), the Archdiocesan leadership, the priests, deacons and lay staff, and the parishes' pastoral councils took an honest look at the significant changes in our Archdiocese (Cook and Lake County) over the past several decades. Let me be clear, these are issues that all parishes throughout the Archdiocese face and are not directed solely at St. Patricia Parish.

- ◆ *The Demographics Shifts* — While for some, if we are really honest, the shift out of certain neighborhoods is racially motivated. But, in many other instances, very good people have made a shift due to a desire for safety, a better home or to move closer to employment, or out of the city or suburb to be able to send the children to a better school. A neighborhood, once all Catholic, is more diverse with fewer Catholics.
- ◆ *Maintenance of Buildings Over Mission — Deferred Maintenance*: Despite loving the big, beautiful church, many people do not realize the cost to maintain these huge structures and all the other expenses, such as parking lots, parish halls, etc. (Most of these buildings are 50, 60 or 70 or more years old.), or despite parishioners' declared love of them, they simply do not make it a priority in terms of their level of financial donations. The level of giving on Sunday often does not keep up with inflation, and about fifty-percent of the people who attend Mass on a somewhat regular basis contribute very little — only a few dollars a week, or, do not contribute at all.
- ◆ *The Lack of Vocations to Priesthood* — The "me first" culture, the breakdown in the family unit, and the sexual misconduct by priests has certainly taken its toll on what was once a respected calling and a person once considered a leader in the community. Now, the priest is often castigated, harshly criticized or even openly ridiculed by even "practicing" Catholics resulting in fewer priests and even fewer who are able or willing to be pastors.
- ◆ *Half to Two-Thirds of the Parishes Lack Both Financial and Ministerial (People) Resources to Really Do the Mission.*



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- ◆ *Fewer Young People in the Church* — We have to first recognize the decline in the birth rate, the Baby Boomer Generation filled many a Catholic Institution to overflowing – most families had 4-8 children. Now, one or two children per family is the norm. This being said, the Catholic Church is not connecting with the younger generations and needs to look at how to reach them better.
- ◆ *Huge Economic **and** Cultural Upheaval* — There has been unprecedented shifts across the globe. Even the wizards of Wall Street do not know what is next. Coca-Cola is trying to figure out what to do with a product that is filled with sugar. McDonald's is trying to find its place with a health-conscious society. Social Media: Tweets, Facebook, etc. Look at our recent election.

All the facts I presented are not intended to find blame but to acknowledge our situation and try to deal with it and move forward. Cardinal Cupich is trying to provide a way forward and asks us to trust in God and seek solutions so that we can move in a more hopeful direction.

Please take time to reflect on the issues that are before us. And yes, it is easy to scapegoat someone or some part of the leadership, but does that really help us in the long run? The question that needs to be asked: how am I going to be part of the solution? Can we put the hope found in Christ into action? Are we really people of the Resurrection?

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Please remember the victims of 9/11 and all the first responders as we recall the terrorist attack that occurred 20 years ago. We also join the nation in mourning the death of the 13 U.S. Soldiers, men, women, and innocent civilians who died in Afghanistan during the recent evacuation. Finally, we pray for the souls of the faithful departed who died due to Hurricane Ida. May they **all** rest in peace!

Peace, Fr. Mike Meany

U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS KILLED IN KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. David Espinoza, 20, of Rio Bravo, TX
Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23, of Roseville, CA
Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, 31, UT
Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, 23, of Corryton, TN
Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22, of Indio, CA
Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Rylee McCollum, 20, Jackson, WY
Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola, 20, of Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kareem Nikoui, 20, of Norco, CA
Marine Corps Cpl. Daegan William-Tyeler Page, 23, of Omaha, NE
Marine Corps Sgt. Johanny Rosario, 25, Lawrence, MA
Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto Sanchez, 22, Logansport, IN
Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jared Schmitz, 20, of Wentzville, MO
Navy Hospital Corpsman Max Soviak, 22, of Berlin Heights, OH

