



strengthening our faith **CATHEDRAL OF ST. MATTHEW THE APOSTLE** *by rebuilding our heritage*

February 2020

My dear parishioners,

Lent is almost here! It begins on Ash Wednesday, **February 26**. As we start our Lenten journey, let us try to heed Pope Francis' words that Lent is truly a time to live in hope!

"What does it mean to be Christians? We are those who believe that God is Father. We are not orphans but have a Father and our Father is God. We believe that Jesus descended among us, shared our life, making himself companion above all to the poorest and most frail. We believe that the Holy Spirit works unceasingly for the good of humanity and of the world, and that even the worst suffering of history will be overcome. This is the hope that awakens us each morning. We believe that every affection, every friendship, every good yearning, every love, even the most minute and neglected, one day will find fulfillment in God. This is the power that spurs us to embrace our daily life with enthusiasm. And this is our hope: to live in hope and live in light, in the light of God the Father, in the light of Jesus the savior, in the light of the Holy Spirit who urges us to go forth in life."

—Pope Francis, "Lent: A New Beginning," edited by Steve Mueller © 2018 All Saints Press

We Need Lent

As Christians we believe that **Jesus shared his life with us**; he is our friend, brother, and companion. This is the hope that awakens us each day. This is the power that spurs us on with enthusiasm. This our hope: to live in light, in the light of Jesus.

We need Lent this year more than ever. We are challenged as a nation. In our deeply divided country there is a great need for civility, dialogue, and peaceful expression of concerns. Respect for one another and a willingness to dialogue and to learn from one another are essential. There is no other way if we are to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While the future is unknown, this much is certain: the high priority that St. Matthew's Cathedral Parish has longed placed on **servicing the poor, the homeless, the marginalized** and advocating on their behalf will not change. Nor will our commitment to **reaching out to immigrants and refugees**, documented or undocumented, or to **fighting racism and sexism**, or to **forming our young people in the faith**.

We are challenged as Catholics. As the clergy sexual abuse crisis has unfolded, we as a parish family have felt extreme sadness and disappointment, and have felt betrayed. These months have been rough. How can we continue in the Church? How do we maintain our faith? We wait. We pray. We hope. But we still question. **Where is Jesus in all of this?**

We need a renewed personal encounter with Jesus. We must remember that **Jesus IS here**, next to us, reaching out to us with open arms. Jesus is our only real hope. With a new archbishop we look to the future, with Jesus. We work together towards a **renewed Church** right here in our midst. Let us join together this Lent in prayer and fellowship, reaching out to our brothers and sisters in the community—those hurting or in need, survivors, those who feel hopeless or abandoned. **Let us join together with Jesus.** Let us not waste this Lent, a season of grace and of hope leading to new life and resurrection! Now is indeed the acceptable time to hear the call to move on from darkness to new life.

Hope Fulfilled: Thank You, Muchas Gracias!

In October I wrote to you about our financial challenges, and again in November I reached out, highlighting the message you heard at Mass from members of the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council. Our financial contributions were down. Over \$100,000 in bills lay on my desk! Needing hope? You bet!! As your rector I kept looking for it. And Jesus brought us **Advent/Christmas hope fulfilled – you responded**. You increased your donations. Some who had never given became donors.

You responded because you recognized that we could not meet our daily challenges without financial wherewithal. Thank you for helping to heat our soaring cathedral, to support three choirs, to provide 22 daily Masses, 7 Sunday Masses and confessions each week with the paid assistance of extern priests. Thank you for providing for so many families and individuals needing food, clothing, and shelter. Thank you for helping to maintain our parish staff who support and lead our liturgical, faith formation and social ministries, and keep the Cathedral and rectory office going.

Your response gives me great hope of keeping up with our budget needs. I believe in you. I know you will continue to respond, as **sustained giving is key to our survival as a parish**. I was candid regarding the shortfall and promise always to be upfront. I know you will hold me accountable for my stewardship. Jesus is our ultimate hope, but we are his hands and feet in our homes and workplaces, and in the public square. Let us recognize this truth. All are called **to commit to good stewardship**, giving generously from what we have, recognizing that in the end, all is gift, all is grace.

Are you among the two-thirds of our parishioners who have not given a recognizable gift to the parish? If so, I ask – **will you please begin to give** something from what you have? We need ALL our members. Please, determine what you can give, and **enroll in Faith Direct**. Sign up online at www.faithdirect.net (Church code DC284), use the form found in the bulletin, or call Pam Erwin at 202-587-5150.

I am so grateful and sincerely appreciate and continue to count on your support.

Lenten Liturgies

There is no better way to heed the clarion call of Lent than to join the Church in the **celebration of the liturgies**. The prayers and readings—the **Liturgy of the Word**—and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist** give us the strength and guidance to journey through the desert to the empty tomb of promise, to rise with Christ on Easter Sunday after having been plunged into his death at our Baptism. If we journey with integrity, then we will arrive at the tomb and see the future, and, indeed, **share in his resurrection**.

On **Ash Wednesday, February 26**, we will wear the sign of penitence as a reminder of the need for our inner conversion, for the rending of our hearts, not our garments, and for our return to the Lord our God. (Joel 2:13). On Sunday, **March 1**, our catechumens and candidates will travel to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to participate with Archbishop Gregory in the Rite of Election. Please keep these men and women in your prayers.

Stations of the Cross in the form adopted by Pope John Paul II will be celebrated on Fridays of Lent at 6pm and Sundays (in Spanish) at 2pm. Each Wednesday beginning **March 4**, priests will be available for confessions in English and Spanish from 6:30 to 8pm (6 to 7:15pm Wednesday of Holy Week). Our regular confessions will continue—weekdays, 11am to Noon and Saturdays, 4 to 5pm. On Tuesday, **April 7**, at least 10 priests will be available for confessions at our 12:10pm Communal Penance Service.

Lenten Faith Formation Offerings

We hope to see you at our Lenten Faith Formation events. Highlights include our **Day of Recollection** on Saturday, **February 29** with **Fr. Luke Melcher**, Director of Textual Resources of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, speaking on “The Sanctification of Time: The Hymns of Lent and Holy Week.” Our Tuesday evening Lenten series gets back to the basics with talks on “Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving” by local author **L.J. Milone**, author and retreat leader **Fr. Tom Ryan** of the Paulists, and **Msgr. John Enzler**, President & CEO of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Washington.

Know Someone Who Is Looking for Something? Maybe It's God

Enclosed is our Lenten brochure—please pick up extras in the Cathedral or rectory office for family, friends and co-workers. Please also take advantage of the opportunity during Lent to reach out to people who you know have drifted from their faith. Will you think about people in your life who might appreciate an invitation to come back to Church, for prayer, Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Please keep the staff and me in your prayers and be assured of my prayers for a blessed Lent.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector