



*strengthening our faith*

*by rebuilding our heritage*

July 2023

My dear parishioners,

It is hard to believe that the end of June has come and gone. It has been a very busy post-Easter season with First Communions, Confirmations, weddings, ordinations (14 new transitional deacons), and many baptisms and funerals (6 funerals in the last half of June).

This also is the time I submit a budget to the Finance Council. We have several special projects that need attention (the chimney repair, upgrade of the electrical system so we can install LED lighting, and long-overdue work in the Education Center on N Street.) Providing for these means there is a larger than normal budget deficit projected for next year. However, I think we can manage—more on that in my next letter.

Mass attendance is gradually increasing, at a slow rate! Many continue to rely on our livestreamed Sunday Masses, while some simply have let convenience take over. I would like to take this moment to encourage and challenge you to return. St. Matthew's Cathedral is a wonderful community of faith, but it is stronger and more vital when you are **present and participating** at the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist. When you worship and are spiritually nourished here week after week, prayer together is that much more powerful, and so is the outreach that we are able to offer to the poor, the homeless, and the needy, the sick, the immigrant, the refugee. Both of these—**the communal prayer and the loving outreach**—are works that Jesus calls us to. They are the lifeblood of our wonderful parish.

### **Renewing Commitment**

In this period of transition, I challenge you to make participation in the Sunday Mass **a part of your life and the life of your family** every Sunday. On behalf of the wonderful pastoral team that ministers here along with me, I assure you that **we commit ourselves** to working with you and for you, to make St. Matthew's a place where—

- everyone feels the welcome of Christ;
- your needs are responded to promptly and courteously;
- we can meet Christ in prayerful liturgies, celebrated with beauty and reverence;
- the Gospel of Christ is compellingly preached, day in and day out, from the pulpit and in all our parish programs;
- you and your children are given opportunities to deepen your knowledge of the faith through challenging faith formation programs, celebrations and events; and
- everyone has an opportunity to put their time and their gifts at the service of the Church and of the poor.

As we return to Mass, may we come together in community as never before to witness to Christ in a world desperately in need of his saving love.

## Renewing Community

You may remember the listening sessions we had in the parish last year. Many thoughts were shared. The number one item was the need to foster a **sense of community**. We need to be together. We need to listen to one another. We need to get to know one another. We need to **celebrate Eucharist together**.

The Parish Council is fostering this sense of community by sponsoring hospitality after some of our Masses. At present we are gathering after a particular Mass—during the summer, twice a month—to share coffee, donuts, conversation, an opportunity to get to know one another.

There is also the most important community we belong to: the Body of Christ. We come together at Mass to share the very Body and Blood of Christ. We cannot do this by livestream. We receive the Body of Christ so that we can be transformed into the living body of Christ. Jesus transforms us into his very body. We become the person of Jesus himself. We are the **visible presence of Jesus** to those around us. This teaching is expressed so well by St. Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body but yours; no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which his compassion looks out upon the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.*

## National Eucharistic Revival

To help foster this understanding of the Eucharist, our bishops are sponsoring the **National Eucharistic Revival**. Much more about this effort will be discussed this coming year. Pope Francis had this to say about what is being offered to us in the form of the **Eucharistic Congress**:

*It is my hope, then, that the Eucharistic Congress will inspire Catholics throughout the country to discover anew the sense of wonder and awe at the Lord's great gift of himself and to spend time with him in the celebration of the Holy Mass and in personal prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.... I likewise trust that the Congress will be an occasion for the faithful to commit themselves with ever greater zeal to being missionary disciples of the Lord Jesus in the world... This is the sense of a missionary spirit. You go to the celebration of Mass, receive communion, adore the Lord and then what do you do after? You go out and evangelize. Jesus asks this of us. The Eucharist, then, impels us to a strong and committed love of neighbor. For we cannot truly understand or live the meaning of the Eucharist if our hearts are closed to our brothers and sisters, especially those who are poor, suffering, weary or who may have gone astray in life.*  
(Pope Francis, Greeting to the Organizing Committee of the National Eucharistic Congress in the United States of America)

I will have much more to say about this in future letters. May the Charity of Christ urge us on!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson  
Rector