



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

November 16, 2020

My dear parishioners and friends,

At this time each year we normally start to think of family gatherings, parish events, thanking God for his many blessings at Thanksgiving, and the upcoming great celebration of Christmas with family and friends. These are joyful occasions, times to remember God's gifts to us, especially in the person of his son, Jesus.

On that note, I first invite you to join in the celebration of a bilingual (English and Spanish) Mass on **Thanksgiving Day, November 26** at 10am. I will be the celebrant and Fr. Benson, the homilist, with our rectory priests concelebrating. You are most welcome - in person or watching the livestream on YouTube (www.youtube.com/c/cathedralofstmatthewtheapostle). Offertory donations will go to our Social Justice ministries. In our **new reality** dealing with Covid-19, masks, safe distancing, and smaller gatherings – including at Mass – are necessary. Thus, our Thanksgiving Day Mass is limited to 100 persons, as are all Masses.

Meeting Jesus, Nurturing Hope

This year, in this **new reality**, we need hope more than ever. This year we really need Jesus. During this Advent we need to make an inner journey on the landscape of our hearts that takes us to meet, to encounter, the Lord Jesus at its center. We have the opportunity to reorient our lives by deepening our intimate communion with God, considering God's vision of what our world is like, rethinking our values and allowing our relationship with the Lord Jesus to change our behaviors and lives.

This new reality causes us to seek out Jesus in our brothers and sisters, to make sacrifices towards keeping us all safe, to strive to come ever closer to Jesus. **We are called to find Jesus** in the domestic churches of our families, in our neighborhoods and workplaces, in prayer, at Mass whether in person or via livestream.

A central message of Advent is **HOPE**. In a beautiful seasonal reflection, Janet Schaeffler says the following:

Angels are often present in our Advent/Christmas readings. One of their messages is the same in all the instances: there is nothing to fear. Often we find that message a challenge; it's easier to believe in angels than to believe that there's nothing to fear.

Mary was perplexed by Gabriel's message. As we live our daily lives, our lives in our church, nation, and world, we, too, experience fear and confusion. Why is this happening? What's going to happen to us? How can there be suffering, a pandemic, disappointments? How can injustice, hatred, and violence continue to exist?

Like Mary, we have angels in our midst to remind us that life and hope are always possible even if the world tells us the opposite. The good news Mary receives is that nothing is impossible with God. Like Mary, we can be afraid and confused about the logistics of how things will work out, but, at the same time, know that God is with us, waiting for our yes to join God's plan to make new things possible.

"Miracles Abound," by Janet Schaeffler, OP (Twenty-Third Publications ©2020)



It is my wish this Advent and Christmas that you will be free from discouragement and assured that Jesus is always by your side, showering you with deep, lasting hope.

Giving Hope and Recognizing our Shared Mission

Just as each of us seeks the treasures of Christ in our own lives, so we also are called to share Jesus with others. **You, our parishioners, are the key to fulfilling not just our common mission, but our shared Cathedral parish mission** of bringing life to Jesus' command to love one another. During this pandemic we must come together to enable our parish - a beacon of hope in downtown Washington, DC for 180 years - to continue the work entrusted to us.

In the midst of this pandemic, our **homeless neighbors** still need food, clothes, rental assistance, and much more. We have children in our English and Spanish **religious education programs**, and adults in our **RCIA program** wanting to become Catholic. Regular and thorough cleaning of the Cathedral is more important than ever to provide a **safe space for worship** during the pandemic. In order to meet these needs, staff members who lead our ministries and

maintain parish operations must be paid and their benefits funded. Insurance premiums and loan payments must be made, and other regular expenses paid.

Restructuring to Balance the Budget

As we finalized our 2020-2021 budget in June, we hoped and prayed for a quick end to Covid-19 and the related restrictions. We all know the reality.

First quarter income for this fiscal year has not kept pace with the budget. Offertory giving is down \$20,116 from last year; general contributions, down \$38,905; wedding donations, down \$16,250; **total income, down \$129,147 from last year!** I saw the need for cuts in individual ministry budgets but also a real need for restructuring of staff and music positions to balance the budget. All three choirs were cut (a major financial saving). Cantors' hours were reduced. I also cut hours in early fall for most staff members. **All of these cuts together have saved us approximately \$175,000.** Benefits have remained the same – one of the items I insisted would not be cut. Without the staff and music cuts (which I intend to be temporary), and the other cuts, our deficit would be much greater than the current **\$65,156.**

Nothing is Impossible with God!

We continue our work while placing hope in the message that Mary received - nothing is impossible with God. We need your help. If you currently support St. Matthew's financially, we thank you. If you use FaithDirect or donate via PayPal with debit & credit options, thank you. If you do not, **PLEASE** enroll or begin giving today.

Consistent, regular giving is vital to our existence and sustainability – and **I ask that everyone give something.** So many of you are generous donors; I am so grateful. We are so happy to have all of you as parishioners, but we need all of you to become donors. You may be struggling as we are, but it is true that a little makes a big difference if all chip in. We simply cannot meet our basic operating needs without you. My staff took big cuts so that the least among us can at least have the necessities.



Your gifts are the lifeline for our Cathedral parish! **Please consider making a special gift this year.** Your whole gift goes only to the parish. You may mail your offering to the rectory, drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave on Sundays, or give via **FaithDirect** (membership.faithdirect.net/enroll/DC284; Church code 284). You also may donate via **PayPal with debit & credit options.** Just scan the QR code at left, or access these options through our website at www.stmatthewscathedral.org – choose *Make a Gift* on the website front page, then choose *Donate* under *Make a One-Time Gift*. You will be remembered at our Christmas season Masses. Thank you so much. Muchas gracias.

Adopt-a-Family: A Special Way to Give Back

The pandemic, while difficult for all, has severely affected low-income families. Our parish tradition of helping parishioners and other local families in need at Christmas is more important than ever. This year **we invite financial donations so we can provide Visa gift cards** that allow families to purchase their own gifts or meet urgent needs. Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/outreach/social-justice/donate to donate (specify that the donation is for the Adopt-a-Family Christmas Drive). You also may mail a check to the rectory or schedule a time to deliver gift cards (Visa, \$25-\$100 in value). For more information or to confirm receipt of your donation, please email Fr. John Benson and Norma Canedo at socialjustice@stmatthewscathedral.org.

Advent Offerings

As Advent approaches, each is called to prepare for Jesus the only gift he desires – the gift of ourselves, our hearts, open to the love of God. Although we cannot celebrate our Advent Penance Service this year, we would like to celebrate the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** with those desiring it. We will shortly announce a list of dates and times when a priest will be available for Confession in the Cathedral. Confessions by appointment also will continue to be available by calling the rectory at 202-347-3215.

We are happy to invite you to these Advent liturgies and events - a mix of in-person and online/livestreamed events. Find St. Matthew's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/cathedralofstmatthewtheapostle.

- **“The Advents of Christ: A Bible study on the presence of Christ,”** led by our Dominican Seminarians | Mondays of Advent, November 30, December 7, 14 and 21, 7 to 8pm (via Zoom) (email Br. Simon at simon.teller@opeast.org, or call him at 202-554-7863 ext. 112, for information on how to connect.) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/news/2020/11/PresenceofChristStudy.
- **Organ Recital by James Wetzel** | Wednesday, December 2 at 12:10pm (in-person and livestreamed on the Cathedral YouTube channel) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/WetzelRecital.

- **Advent Retreat, "Preparing for the Prince of Peace with the Prayer of St. Francis,"** with Fr. Jonpaul Cafiero, OFM | Saturday, December 5, 10am to Noon (via Zoom) (email Theresa Prymuszewski at tprymuszewski@stmatthewscathedral.org, or leave her a voice mail message at 202-587-5139 by December 2 for information on how to connect) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/AdventRetreat2020.
- **Reflexión de Adviento, "La fe nace del mensaje, y el mensaje consiste en hablar de Cristo, y aguardamos la manifestación de nuestro Señor Jesucristo"** | Saturday, December 5, 9:30am to Noon with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary and Confessions in the Cathedral (in-person; in Spanish) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/SpanishAdventReflection2020.
- **Masses for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception** | Tuesday, December 8 at 8am, 12:10pm (Cardinal Gregory), 5:30pm and 7:00pm (Spanish) (all Masses in-person, with 12:10pm Mass livestreamed on the Cathedral YouTube channel) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/ImmaculateConception2020.
- **Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** | Saturday, December 12 at 8am (in- person) www.stmatthewscathedral.org/Guadalupe2020.
- **Virtual Walk with Mary** | Saturday, December 12 at 1:30pm (Rosary) followed by Mass (2:30pm) with **Cardinal Gregory and Bishop Dorsonville** (livestreamed only, on the Archdiocese of Washington YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/WashArchdiocese) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/WalkwithMary2020 or <https://adw.org/media-events/walk-with-mary/>.
- **Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** | Sunday, December 13 at 1pm (Spanish) with **Bishop Dorsonville** (in-person and livestreamed on the Cathedral YouTube channel) Visit www.stmatthewscathedral.org/SundayGuadalupe2020.

Christmas Masses

Because we anticipate that our Masses will continue to be limited to 100 persons, attendance at Christmas Masses will be **by reservation only**. You, our parishioners, may request reservations **beginning Monday, November 30** by calling our reservations line at **202-587-5134** and leaving a voice mail message with your request, and your name and phone number. You will receive a call back to complete your reservation. Please do not leave more than one message or call before November 30. When we return your call, if space is available you will be able to reserve seating for **yourself and up to four additional household members** at the Mass of your choice (see the schedule below). Face masks will be required to enter the Cathedral, and social distancing of six feet (but likely not more than six feet) between (not within) registered household groups will be maintained. **Guides will greet you, check you in, and seat your group according to our seating plan.** We look forward to celebrating the Nativity of the Lord with you and your loved ones!

Christmas Eve, December 24 • 4pm (livestreamed) | 7pm (bilingual in English and Spanish) | 10pm (**Cardinal Gregory**) (livestreamed)

Christmas Day, December 25 • 7am | 10am (livestreamed) | 1pm (Spanish) (livestreamed)

Christmas Flowers

Our Cathedral always looks beautiful for the Christmas season, though we plan to decorate more modestly this year. **Will you help us** with the cost of the flowers, plants and trees? You may mail your Christmas flower offering to the rectory, drop it in the baskets at the doors as you leave on Sundays, or donate via PayPal (specifying "flowers" in the Notes or Comments section) or via FaithDirect.

May the Lord Jesus bless you as we enter Advent and prepare for Christmas. May the birth of Christ be a time of great hope and blessings for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector

Facebook: www.facebook.com/st.matthews.cathedral

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/cathedralofstmatthewtheapostle | Twitter: <https://twitter.com/msgrjameson>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/stmatthewsdc/> | 360° Virtual Tour: tour.stmatthewscathedral.org