



strengthening our faith

by rebuilding our heritage

September 2022

My dear parishioners,

As I begin this letter on a gorgeous Labor Day, the sun pouring in my windows, I see the end of summer and the beginning of a new parish season. This evening I join the priests of the Archdiocese for our annual Labor Day Picnic, and tomorrow my staff and I begin this new season.

A New Reality

Last year at this time we were beginning a new reality: a new Mass schedule and new office hours, and a hope to welcome many of you back to Mass and more in-person activities.

We continue to welcome more of you back to Mass in the Cathedral, where masks are encouraged but no longer required. Attendance at Mass now stands at **approximately 65%** of our pre-pandemic levels.

Some may have become comfortable with virtual participation at Mass; however, joining a livestreamed liturgy cannot replace participation in celebrating the Body of Christ. We need to renew our commitment to **being** Church—actively, as a community of faith, nourished by Word AND Sacrament. **Receiving the Body of Christ AND being an active part of the Body of Christ—BOTH are necessary.** We do this when we celebrate the Mass in person!

We are a **sacramental community**. We ARE members of the Body of Christ who come together to receive the Bread of Life, Jesus. **We need Jesus in his body and blood** and we need him in our brothers and sisters physically present around us. Working from home may make it seem harder to get up on Sundays, dress for Mass, drive into the city, or even walk the blocks to enter the Cathedral. Difficult, perhaps, but the reward is life-giving!

Time to Return for a Bilingual Feast of St. Matthew

Our “**Amen**” at Communion affirms not only our faith in the presence of Jesus in the host, but also the reality that we are the Body of Christ, joined with our Lord and brother, Jesus, and with one another. Together we are sent forth from the Mass to bear his presence to others, wherever we go. Unless restricted by health or other concerns, **we must ask ourselves whether it is time to return and celebrate with our community.**

A good time to start, if you have not already, will be this **Sunday, September 18th**, when we celebrate as one parish community the **Feast of St. Matthew at the 11am bilingual Mass**, with Cardinal Gregory presiding. The celebration will not be complete without your presence. **Please note that there will be no 1pm Spanish Mass on September 18th.**

Parish Council Update

For the past few months I have reflected on my vision for the Parish Pastoral Council. After much thought and prayer I decided on a new approach to the Council, with an emphasis on **mission** and **vision**.

The terms of the previous Council members have expired and **I am so grateful for their service**, especially during these months of COVID. Moving ahead, I have appointed a **new, 12-person Council** to help me to guide the parish into renewal, deal with upcoming transitions, and assist in navigating a post-COVID world.

This Council is a body of parishioners who will come together **monthly and offer prayerful advice** on issues that I as Rector may raise, or issues raised by members or other parishioners. The former committee structure will continue but not within the Council organization.

The Council will look at **vision, mission, the impact of transitions, the impact of the Synod Listening Sessions, and the major areas of Parish Vitality** (as proposed by the Archdiocese). By the time you read this, Council members will have received my blessing at the 11am Mass on Sunday, September 11th, and had their first meeting on Monday, September 12th. I will share more information with you next month. Please pray for all of us.

St. Matthew's Synod Report

This past February, we participated in the **Synod on Synodality** that was called by Pope Francis. Parishioners came together to pray and discuss the state of the Catholic Church in a series of in-person and online listening sessions. We reflected on our experience with God at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle and we discerned how the Holy Spirit is calling us to grow.

How might we begin to respond to the Spirit? We intend to provide an opportunity **after some Masses to allow us to spend time together**, with refreshments available. We already have begun a **Saturday morning retreat series**, led by our Director of Faith Formation, L.J. Milone, to address parishioners' thirst for spirituality. We also will be **reflecting on the call to evangelize** and what it might mean, practically, for our parish.

St. Matthew's **Synod Listening Sessions report** that we presented to the Archdiocese can be found on the website homepage at www.stmatthewscathedral.org, along with the Archdiocesan-wide report. Both are must-reading for all of us if we want a better knowledge of what members of our parish and of the Church of Washington are experiencing in their faith lives.

Call for Liturgical Ministers

Finally, we need your help to serve our brothers and sisters at Mass here at the Cathedral. We are in **serious need of lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, and ushers/ministers of hospitality** for weekend and weekday Masses. Please consider serving at one Mass a week, twice a month, or even once a month. We will work out a schedule based on your preferences and time constraints. At Masses on the weekend of September 10/11, we made an appeal for your help. If you missed the opportunity to respond then, just **send me an email** (rjameson@stmatthewscathedral.org) and someone from the appropriate ministry will be in touch with you.

Thank you so much for all you do for the parish. I am so grateful. I look forward to an exciting and challenging year. God bless.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector