

From the desk of Fr. Jim

Welcome Home

One year ago we dedicated our new Church. While we may have grown accustomed to this new place, it continues to resonate with a sense of beauty and grace that is fitting for the worship of God.

As we are also celebrating our 25th anniversary as a parish, we are moved to reflect on the gift of our parish community. We may take that for granted as well, but there are always occasions when we are reminded of the dramatic importance of our life together. Here, we are guided by the very love of Christ who gave himself for us, just so that we would have the comfort and strength that comes from our belonging to the Church.

We have seen dramatic changes in our parish community over twenty five years. Even in the year since the dedication for our new church, our parish has experienced many changes. The most dramatic is our growth. Hundreds of new families have joined our parish, and have presented to us new challenges for providing ways for those of our parish to be involved and to serve our community.

Equally challenging is that the growth of the parish is not reflected in a growth in giving. It is difficult to analyze that phenomena, but it is probably the result of a need to feel more secure in the parish. We need to work hard over the coming year to respond to this need.

Perhaps the most helpful contributor to that will be for those who are new to the parish to make a financial commitment. Only those involved in the parish stewardship drive scrutinize the parish pledges, and then only for the collection of financial data. Nonetheless, we each know what we give and our attitude toward the parish is dramatically affected by that. Once we allow our participation in our church to cost us something, its value changes for us.

There are many unique blessings for our parish community. One is certainly the growth, but this has particular characteristics. Our growth is composed of a rich diversity of people from many different areas of the world and many spiritual backgrounds and experiences. This presents a particular challenge to us.

We need to grow more in our understanding of diversity and celebrate the gifts given to us in this regard. The leadership of our parish needs to reflect our parish's personality. As we worship together, we need to be constantly reminded of the way God has made our world, rich in diversity.

Perhaps it is not coincidental that our parish stewardship drive falls on the anniversary of the dedication of our new Church. The nature of our community is built upon giving. God gave us faith. Jesus gave us His life. And we respond to those gifts with our own giving.

As we move forward from here, we should do so with the same faith that has brought us together in this place. Some of us will spend the rest of our life in this parish. We will carry from here eternal gifts, ready to enjoy God's house forever. Just as we have welcomed others here, we will be welcomed there.

Domus Deus.

Domus Ecclesia.

The House of God.

The House of the Gathering of God's People.