

From the P.A.'s Desk

Halloween:

This year is that I will be passing out candy on Halloween from the front porch rectory. If you are in the area trick or treating, please feel free to stop by; I would really like to see all your costumes!

RCIA:

I still want to encourage you to invite people you know to be part of our RCIA or to simply return back to church. Invite them, but don't pester them. Pray for them before you ask them and not simply as you are about to ask them, but for weeks before you ask them. Then when the opportunity presents itself, invite them to consider coming back. Weddings, funerals or special events are great opportunities to ask people to join you for Mass. Christmas is coming soon, so start praying for people now to return to Mass during the holidays.

Christmas Outreach:

This year Faith Weavers of St. Mary (who meets here once a month for prayer/Mass and fellowship), has asked a number of churches to consider collecting new and gentle used coats as part of the Christmas Outreach Program of Isabella County. They are in need of 1700 new good used coats for distribution. During the Christmas Season of giving and gratitude, if you think you have time to help organize a collection within our parish, please see me.

Scripture Today:

Today's first reading from the Book of Exodus gives us a wonderful example of how God is always with his people, continually working to watch over them and provide for their needs.

It's important to remember that on their way to the Promised Land, the Israelites experienced many hardships. The first reading tells about another bump in the road when war is waged against them. Their great leader, Moses, initially addresses the situation by giving some practical commands. But the most important thing Moses does is to stand at the top of the hill with the staff of God in his hand.

This staff has been evident throughout the book of Exodus. For example, think of the parting of the Red Sea. The staff is a symbol of God's saving power and might. In this case, it reminds the people that God will bring them safely to the Promised Land if they place their trust in him. In lifting the staff and allowing others to help him keep it lifted, Moses recognized the Israelites' need to be assured that God was indeed with them and would lead them to victory. This assurance helped give them the courage they needed to go forward into battle.

Today's second reading parallels the message we heard in the first reading. We are encouraged to persevere and be faithful to what we learn through sacred Scripture. We must study it throughout our lives to become wiser in the ways of the Lord. This practice will help us gain more insight into how God is working in our own life.

Finally, today's Gospel reading highlights the importance of praying always to strengthen our relationship with God. It uses the parable of the persistent widow to make the point.

Widows in the ancient world were incredibly vulnerable. They were listed with orphans and aliens as people deserving special protection. The fact that this widow is unattended by family when she beseeches a judge highlights how extremely vulnerable she was. Yet she was strong enough to not only petition the judge, but also to persist in her pleas for justice. She even put sufficient pressure on him to influence his actions. Even though the judge was an unsavory character, he granted her request in order to avoid being hurt by the widow in some way.

The lesson for us is that, unlike the unjust judge who granted the widow's request for self-serving motives, God the Father hears and answers all the prayers of his dearly beloved sons and daughters in the way and time which is best for us.

God is with us. We know that. So when we turn to him in prayer each day, we draw closer to him and receive the grace and strength needed to persevere in our faith and lead lives that give glory to God.

Youth Ministry:

A few weeks at the Parish Pastoral Council we started talking about some of the most pressing and needed agendas of the parish. Almost immediately we started talking about the need to focus on youth ministry, primarily anyone in middle school, high school, and early college. At Mass each week I'm very aware of the young people within that age group, and the missing piece of parish life that fails to address their needs and wants. A few days after Pastoral Council, I sat down with our Faith Formation Director, Mary Moomey, and Kaylie Willoughby, and Shavonne Shanteau. We talked on what can be done now, as well as what we as a parish need to do in the future to address this great need in our church, or any faith community today. **We have scheduled a meeting next Saturday, October 22, right after Mass at about 5:45, to start brainstorming on this topic. All are welcome to attend, including parents and teens.**

All Saints and Souls Day Celebration & Pictures of Departed Loved Ones:

As we move into the beginning of the end of the liturgical year, we celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day.

All Saints Day is a solemn celebration in the Roman Catholic Church and is a Holy Day of Obligation. This year all Saints Day is Tuesday November 2 (a Holy Day of Obligation and Mass will be celebrated at 7 pm) and the very next day on Wednesday November 3 is All Souls Day. The beautiful reality about Catholicism is that we believe that death does not divide the one family under God. Some of God's people are still alive on this earth (you and me), and some of God's people are alive in the next world with the Lord. All Saints and All Souls Day celebrate the reality that we still are all God's one family. As a way to remember and celebrate All Saints and All Souls Day, I'd like to invite you to bring pictures of your departed loved ones to display in church throughout the month of November. The pictures and photos will remind us of those members of our family who have gone before us in faith to live with the Lord. I'm thinking of putting the display up on tables near the white northwest wall of the church, but I'm open to your suggestions. Please remember to put your name on the back of the photos so we can return them to you at the end of November. Please bring in your pictures to me by the weekend of October 30, or any time after that.