

Our Journey TOGETHER

ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

VOL. 3

ISSUE 1

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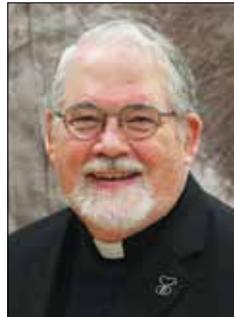
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SHARE THE JOY OF NEW LIFE

It is with immense joy that I look toward Easter, having just begun my eighth year at St. Michael the Archangel. With the glory of spring everywhere around us, it is so easy to put a smile on my face and enjoy the new life that abounds in our spring landscape, but also the hope that comes with it! Although we are all reminded of the passion and death of Jesus as we near the end of Lent, we know that just beyond that we will experience the glory of His resurrection and the new life that it brings to all mankind.



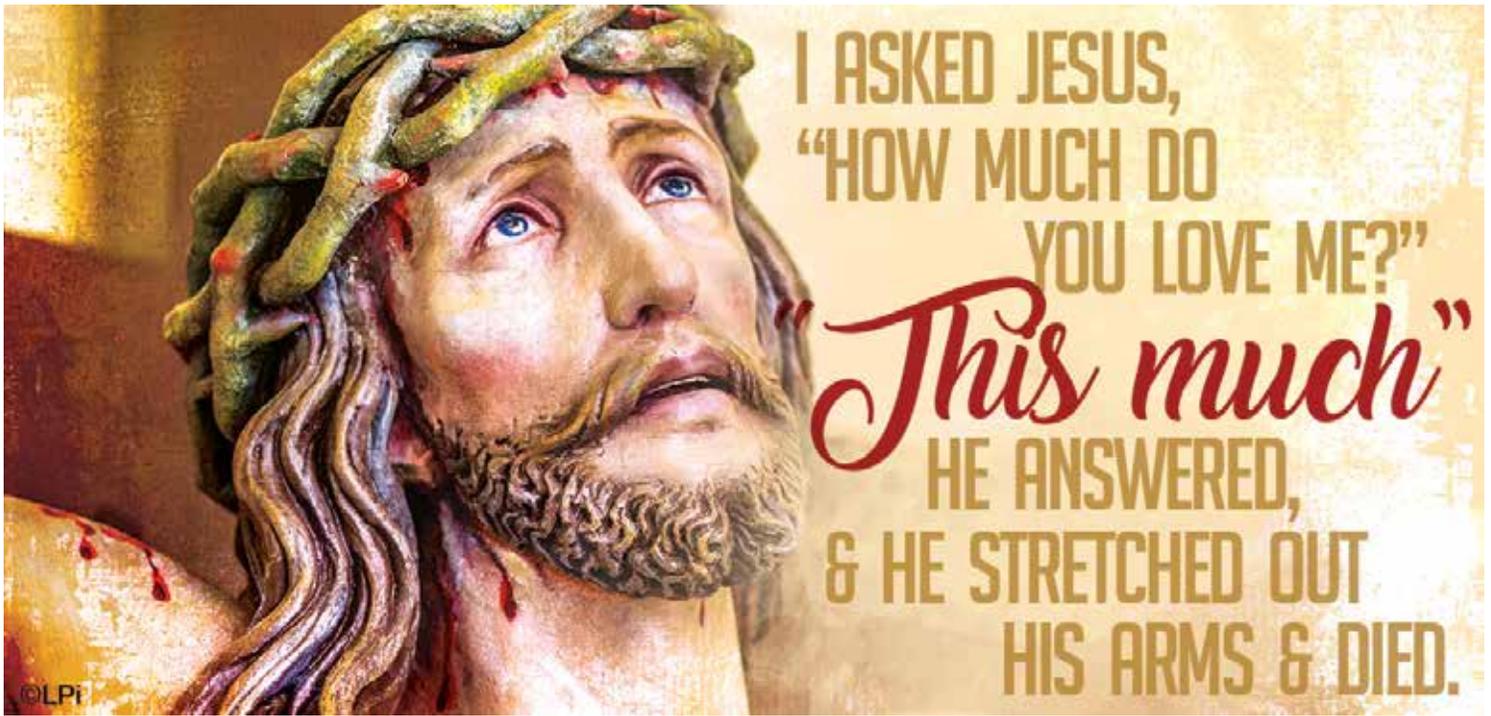
The parish staff and I have recently finished one of my favorite books, *Divine Renovation*, written by Fr. James Mallon. In his book, he shares many practical ways to breathe new life into today's parishes to take them "from maintenance to mission." This New Evangelization seeks to transform parishes from reactive,

membership-based communities to proactive assemblies of intentional disciples of Jesus who proclaim and share the good news with all peoples.

As our faith journey continues, I reflect on our progress and am convinced more than ever that we are on the right path as a parish community. In just the last two years, I've seen increased vitality in our Faith Formation programming, including ongoing and vibrant men's and women's programs and parish missions. More new and existing parishioners have offered their time and talent to support our parish operation. And the response to our parish Long Range Plan has demonstrated a commitment to helping us be the best version of ourselves. Parishioners are enjoying our Livestream system, the digital displays in our church and the enhancements in our many communications channels. New life is evident all around us and I continue to be excited to be a part of it!

Monsignor Douglas P. Reed

St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Parish Community is committed to serving God and welcoming him in one another through a firm belief in God's love. Our mission includes: strengthening the presence of God through Word and Sacraments; dedication to stewardship and social justice; and ministry to our members and the greater community through acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity. All of this is achieved through complete union with the Holy Father and our Bishop of Raleigh.



Our Journey From 'Maintenance to Mission'

In February 2017, we began our parish long range planning process to continue our faith journey *From Gratitude to Greatness*. Nearly 1,100 people participated in a parish online survey with an additional 200+ participating in a series of 23 listening sessions. Some 50 volunteers helped collect the data from these sessions, and subsequently write the goals and objectives for the parish Long Range Plan derived from the seven most frequently mentioned topics.

As mentioned in the pastor's letter on the front cover of this newsletter, Fr. James Mallon's book, *Divine Renovation* provides somewhat of a roadmap for parishes like ours to transform ourselves from a reactive community that simply maintains ourselves to a proactive and dynamic parish intent on creating intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. This involves a real focus on doing the right things, challenging the status quo and listening to God's call to share our Catholic faith with others.

Change is often difficult for most people to embrace and seemingly impossible for others. However, there are times



when change is necessary for survival. We live in a time when parishes around the world are emptying, aging, sleeping, and dying. It doesn't need to be this way and we certainly want to keep St. Michael from heading in that direction. And yet, we know a goal without a plan is just a wish. Our parish Long Range Plan is our hedge against the trend and part of our journey from maintenance to mission. Awareness of this scenario has led us to where we are today in the midst of implementing our parish Long

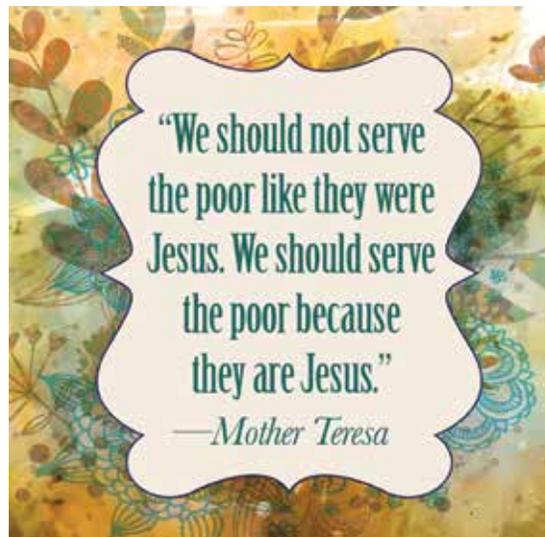
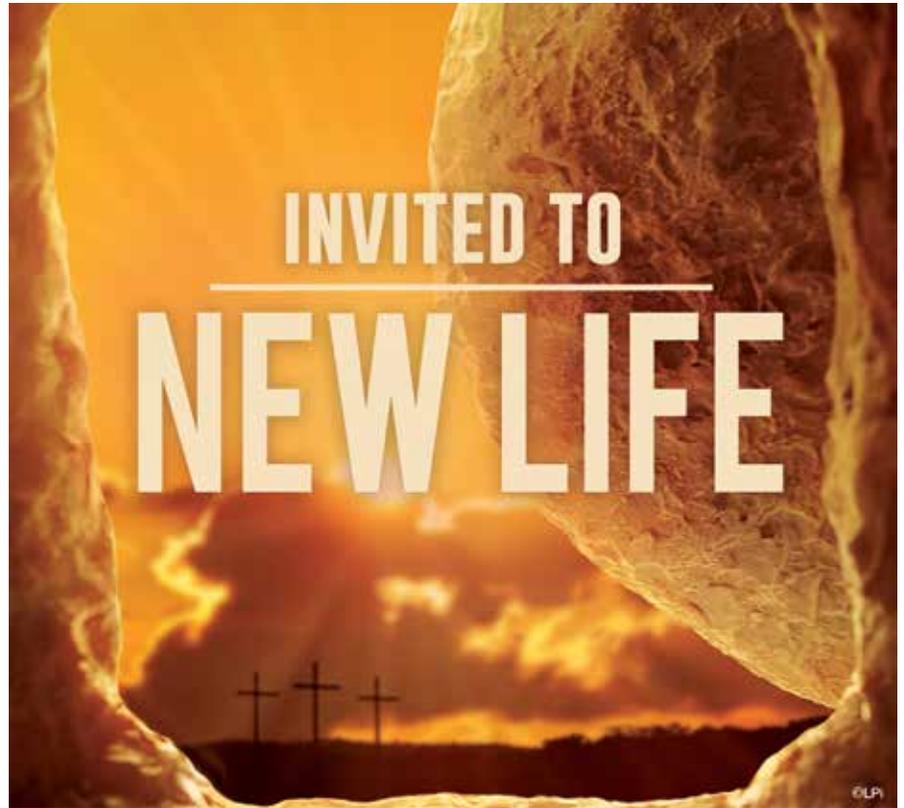
Range Plan. As with any plan, it is wise to celebrate progress and share it with your constituents.

The chart above provides a snapshot of some highlights of our progress over the last couple years. We have already met some of the goals and objectives in our 3-year Long Range Plan, but most of the value this plan will deliver is still ahead of us. Our future is bright thanks to your generous support!

A Game Changing Formula for New Life

We have all heard the term, “game changer” and many of us have used it frequently. According to Merriam-Webster, “A game changer is a person or thing that radically changes an industry or a company. It is often used in reference to a medical or technology breakthrough, or even a life experience. Such is the case with JustFaith, a game-changing social justice program that helps participants better understand the call of the Gospel to help heal the world, and in doing so, experience a deeper faith, a more fulfilling life.

More than 100 St. Michael parishioners have completed the JustFaith program. Wherever you encounter ministries dedicated to helping the poor and vulnerable, you can expect to find a JustFaith graduate. Happily, over the years, the testimony of those who have participated in this program is that they have discovered new possibilities for their lives. They have discovered, with fresh eyes, a Gospel that is drawing them into new ministries committed to the good of those who have suffered neglect and deprivation. Program participants have not only found their way to new choices and commitments and relationships but, in so doing, have also experienced a deepening of faith and new purpose for their lives.



Mother Teresa once said, “We should not serve the poor like they were Jesus. We should serve the poor because they are Jesus.” With the joy of Easter fresh in your heart, consider whether our Lord is calling you to experience a “new life” of compassionate caring that can change our parish, our community and the world.



Anyone interested in learning more about this program should contact Deacon Mark Westrick at the parish Social Action office.

PARISH LENTEN MISSION:

Christ Before Us, Christ Beside Us, Christ Within Us

Fr. Nathan Cromly is the latest in a growing list of standout speakers who have graced the St. Michael community with their presence for a parish mission over the years.

Originally from Toledo, OH, Fr. Cromly is a Catholic priest of the Brothers of St. John in Denver, CO. He opened the St. John Institute in 2015 – a program unique in its kind, allowing young adults to earn an accredited MBA while receiving spiritual formation from the Brothers of St. John.

For two nights, February 25th and 26th, Fr. Cromly inspired and energized a church full of St. Michael parishioners. His message challenged those in attendance to live their Catholic faith with more energy and passion and to take their stories

out into the world to evangelize their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

For those members of our community who couldn't attend, we have great news! Fr. Cromly



granted us the right to Livestream his 2-night mission for those who couldn't attend, but still wanted to experience his message and inspiration. One of the direct benefits of our ***From Gratitude to***

Greatness campaign in 2016, our Livestream system has attracted viewers in nations around the world on five different continents. This gift from our generous faith community is truly a gift that keeps on giving!

To watch the recording, visit our website homepage (www.stmichaelcary.org) and scroll to the Livestream logo to access this broadcast, or use the mobile app Livestream icon.

*A mission to help us engage
Christ from within*

STEWARDSHIP BASICS FOR EVERYDAY STEWARDS



Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

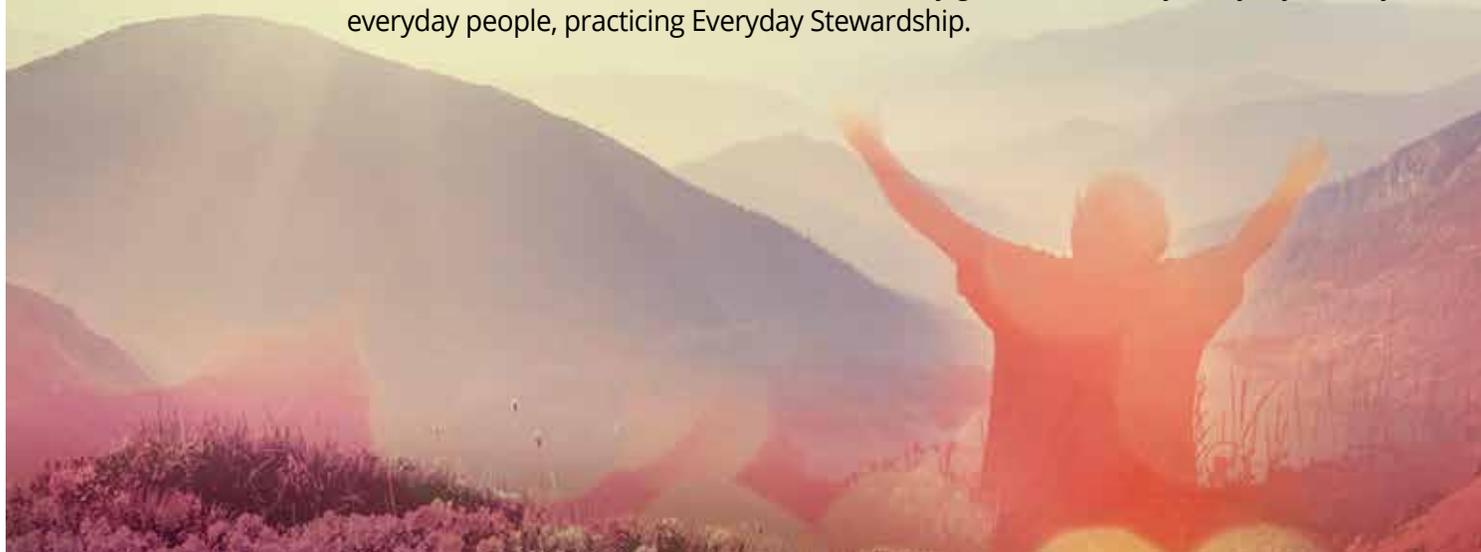
The Heart of Stewardship

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Mark 14: 22-25

What else is there to give when one has already given away their body and their life? What more can one say or do to demonstrate love for another when all they have has been given to another? This total giving of self to loved ones cannot be trumped by flowery words or material gifts that are fleeting. This is the ultimate in love. This is the love Jesus had for us on the way to His Passion, at the institution of the Holy Eucharist. This is the love He has for us daily in the celebration of the Mass on altars in every church, in every city, in every nation on earth. No one can give more. No one can ask for more. This is the true heart of Christian stewardship.

If you take the time to gaze upon your God in the simplest of forms, and begin to reflect on what has actually taken place with bread and wine becoming the presence of the Divine, then you can begin to understand true humility, sacrifice, and love. And when you have the privilege to take that Real Presence into your body at the meal where you are an honored guest, you become one with the One who is the embodiment of stewardship. Then, you must ask the question of yourself, "How can I even begin to reflect the love that I have encountered at this feast?" The answer is you can begin with the simple actions of the day: where will you go, whom will you meet, and in what work will you partake? Jesus Christ has shown that the greatest gift ever given can be disguised in this world in a piece of bread. By joining your body to His, He can now transform human hearts, not by grand acts, but by everyday acts, by everyday people, practicing Everyday Stewardship.



Addressing PARISH SECURITY

As our parish community has grown since being established in 1963, so has the complexity of our parish life. After all, in 1963, color TVs weren't yet in homes, nor were microwave ovens. Many of the homes in America still had "party line" telephones where two or more neighbors shared the same phone line. Cellphones hadn't been invented. Neither had the Personal Computer, nor the internet.

When St. Michael opened its doors, the Vietnam War was being conducted and was known as the "first television war." Despite that description, there was no "real-time" coverage of events as we know it today. We have become accustomed to watching GPS-guided smart bombs strike faraway targets half a world away with amazing precision – all from the comfort of our homes in North Carolina.

Today, we routinely use the internet and its many diverse tools to communicate with our parishioners, attract new members to St. Michael and share our history with generations of Catholics. Our website is full of text, copies of publications, video

clips, interactive applications for event registration, online giving and more. The internet gives us access to FORMED, the revolutionary digital platform that gives our parish access to video-based study programs, feature films, audio presentations, and eBooks from the Church's foremost presenters. We live in a technology rich environment that is vibrant, fun, complex and yes, even a bit frightening at times!

Unfortunately, security in the fast-paced world we live in has become a primary concern of home owners, businesses and even churches. Earlier in this edition of Our Journey Together, you read about our journey "from maintenance to mission." Part of that journey has included the formation in 2017 of a security group, led by St. Michael parishioner, Dave Wulff. He has assembled a team of volunteer parishioners who routinely check the security of our campus on a nightly basis, checking for doors left open, lights left on and other breaches of our campus policies. Additional security measures will be coming as this ministry grows.



Feel free to contact Dave at dwulff@stmmary.org, or 919-368-4031 if you want more information, or want to be involved in this ministry. They are already making a difference – and having fun together – while making our parish campus a place we can pray, play and socialize together without worry.

Growing in God

STEWARDSHIP FOR THE YOUNG ADULT

"I received so much more than I gave!" Have you had this experience? You offered service of some sort — perhaps through a project at school or work, or maybe with people from the parish. You weren't quite sure what to expect; it just seemed the right thing to do. Then, something happened. The recipients of the service worked side-by-side with you, or you talked with someone as you cleaned or painted or built or shared company. And as you think about it now, you realize that you received as much or more than you gave.

We are hard-wired to give. In fact, we are created to be in relationship with others, to give ourselves and our time, to share experiences, work, effort, and care. We could say that each of us has a need to give! It is not as though we do service in order to feel good about ourselves, but giving of ourselves enriches our lives and boosts our spirit. We have a renewed connection between faith and our lives, and this link lingers beyond the moment of service into the days and weeks that follow. We can never measure the impact of service on another, yet we may have a sense of the ways in which we are touched by giving, and that is enough to make many of us return to serving again and again, just as Christian disciples are called to do.

— *Leisa Anslinger*





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