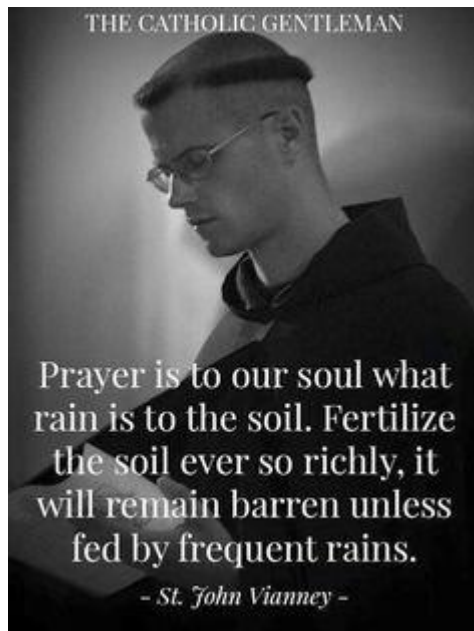


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** *"I believed, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted." Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of his faithful ones. O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your handmaid; you have loosed my bonds. To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the LORD. My vows to the LORD I will pay in the presence of all his people, In the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem." ~ Psalm 116*

***I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living!!!***



I have consulted with numerous members of our parish who serve in various leadership positions, with our parish staff and with Fr. Peter's family over the past few weeks concerning the memorial mass for Fr. Peter. The consensus among all of us is that we should postpone his memorial mass and, therefore, we have decided to postpone the mass to a future date.

The reason for the postponement is simply that we will still be under all the pandemic related restrictions on April 25<sup>th</sup>. This means that we would not be able to have a reception after mass, that we would not be able to have a choir, that we would not be able to have open seating in the church, that we would be limited in the number of priests and parishioners that could attend, etc.

Fr. Peter was loved by many. It's important that when we celebrate Fr. Peter's memorial mass that the celebration truly reflects his many years of service to the Church and to the People of God as an ordained priest. It's also important that we can all come together to celebrate the love that God shared with all of us through Fr. Peter and his priestly ministry.

A new date has not yet been scheduled. When I scheduled our original date back in August, I was totally positive that all the restrictions would be lifted way before April 25<sup>th</sup>. I was wrong and, because I was so wrong, I think it's best to wait to schedule a new date until we have a better idea when we can properly celebrate his memorial mass. I will announce the new date once it is scheduled.

Our Religious Education Program is hosting two more virtual fundraisers in support of our children's education in our Catholic faith. This time they are hosting fundraisers surrounding the NCAA Tournament's March Madness.

One fundraiser will be a board with 100 squares for the Sweet Sixteen. There will be 15 chances to win a prize among 100 squares. The cost of each square will be \$100. We will draw numbers for the board and you will have the numbers that are drawn for your square for each game in the Sweet Sixteen, Regional Finals, National Semi-finals and the National Championship game. The top line will be for the team that is the highest seed the line of numbers on the side of the board will be for the lower seeded team. You win every game that has a final score ending in your numbers.

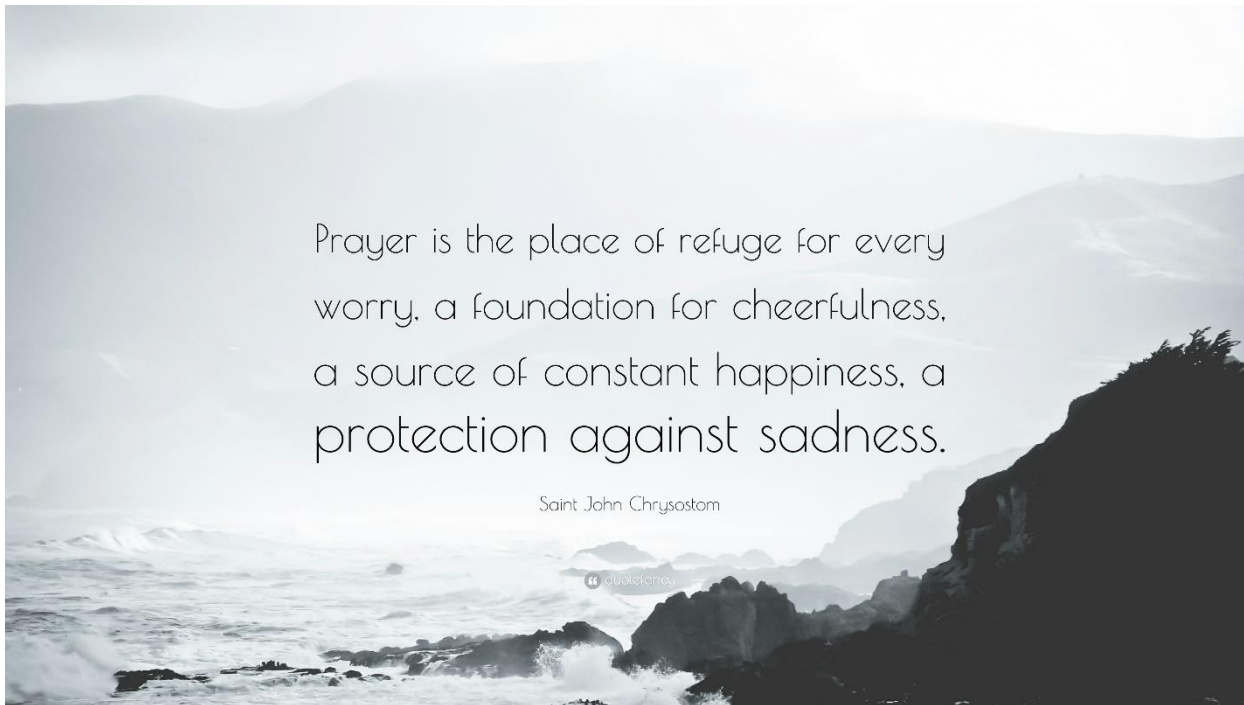
The other fundraiser costs \$50 and is limited to 64 contestants. This fundraiser is a point spread based fundraiser. It will use the point spread that is published in the Chicago Sun-Times the morning of each game. Each contestant will be assigned a team in the 64-team field (no play-in games) through a random drawing. If your team covers the point spread in a tournament round, you advance to the next round even if your team lost the game. In the case where a team loses the game but covers the spread, the contestant who advances to the next round gets the team that won the game in the earlier round even though that team did not cover the spread. There will be one grand prize for the winner of the National Championship game.

As many of you know, our church building had some issues in the past with the roof leaking. Work was done on the west roof last year to fix the problem. We are also looking at doing additional work on the east roof this year as well.

But, the longstanding problem with leaking on the west side led to another issue. There was a black residue near the windows and the steel beam on the ceiling of the west side of the church. We had the area tested a few weeks ago and found that we had a non-toxic low grade mold. This is a mold that is often found in homes and doesn't cause any health problems but it was important that we take care of this issue. We contracted with M&O Environmental Company to remediate the mold problem. The cost of the remediation is \$8,100.

The mold has been removed, the area has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized, and mold resistant paint has been applied in order to make sure this does not happen again. I want to thank Deacon Bob for managing this project, Kim Mitchell for working on the financing and contracting for this project and Tom Uraski and the Wall Gang for removing and re-installing a section of pews so that we could get a 40-foot articulating boom lift into the church which was necessary in order to get to the location of the mold.

Replacement boards for what has been removed will be installed in the near future. There will be an additional cost to have this work done.



Our Lord Jesus emphasized the importance of prayer in our gospel reading on Thursday. *“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.’”* (Matthew 7:7 – 8)

Prayer is one of the spiritual practices that we endeavor to focus on during Lent. It is one of the most important parts of our spiritual life, our life of faith and our discipleship. The goal of prayer is to grow closer to the Lord, to deepen our relationship with the Lord, to experience God’s love and to discover God’s will for us. But, it’s really more than just that, it’s really more than just discovering God’s will for our lives. The key movement in a life of prayer is to allow God’s will for us to become our will; it’s making God’s will our own.

Pope Benedict XVI highlighted the importance that silence plays in creating a prayerful mindset and a prayerful environment in which we are able to pray to the Lord our God.

*“Silence is the environmental condition that most favors contemplation, listening to God and meditation. The very fact of experiencing silence and allowing ourselves to be “filled,” so to speak, with silence, disposes us to prayer... God speaks in silence, but we need to know how to listen. This is why monasteries are oases in which God speaks to humanity; and there we find the courtyard, a symbolic place because it is a closed space, but open toward heaven....*

*The world is filled with these oases of the spirit: some very ancient, others are more recent, while still others have been restored by new communities. Looking at things from a spiritual perspective, these places of the spirit are a load-bearing structure of the world! It is no accident that many people, especially in times of rest, visit these places and stop there for some days. Even the soul, thanks be to God, has its needs!” (Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Castel Gandolfo, August 10, 2011)*

St. Paul tells us to Pray all the time. This means that we must make a habit of prayer. It means praying before answering the door, before pumping gas, before eating, before going to bed, before turning on the TV, etc. What we are trying to do is develop a habitual awareness of God’s presence in our lives, in the world.

We begin by praying in such a way that we are reminded that God is with us in the everyday events of our lives, that God is with us no matter where we are or what we are doing, that God is with us in the spectacular events of our life like marriages, baptisms of our children, graduations, first reception of the sacraments, illnesses, deaths and births just to name a few. We listen, we watch and we notice God’s presence in our lives and then we are able to share God’s love with others.

Our faithfulness to the time set aside for prayer is critically important. Everyone has dry periods in their prayer life. We need to trust that our Lord will carry us through the dry times to more powerful times of prayer. This means that it is more important to show up to pray than it is that our prayer is perfect or powerful at every moment. We must be faithful to how much time we spend in prayer in order to allow God to perfect our prayer and to fill our prayer with His life and love.

Sometimes prayer involves simply showing up, praying as best we can and then waiting for the Lord to share His grace and love with us. The waiting can sometimes take months, or even years, as we remind ourselves that God will fill our prayer with His glory and His power in His own good time, not in our time and not on our schedule.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

Virtues are formed by prayer.  
Prayer preserves temperance.  
Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer  
prevents emotions of pride and  
envy. Prayer draws into the soul  
the Holy Spirit, and raises man  
to Heaven.

- *St. Ephraem of Syria* -



*The Catholic Gentleman*