

Renew My Church Summit

At the beginning of October, I had an opportunity to participate in the *Renew My Church* Summit organized by the Archdiocese of Chicago and hosted at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, IL. I was accompanied by our Associate Pastor, Fr. Matt Heinrich; our Deacons, Rick Moritz & Robert Carlton; our Director of Music Ministries, Scott Will; our School Principal, Sue Canzoneri; our Parish Secretary/Communications Coordinator, Melissa Anna; our Parish Council representative, Michael Tom; and our Finance Council representative, Rita Zambon. The conference, which gathered together approximately two thousand Catholic bishops, priests, deacons, and lay leaders from across our Archdiocese, provided us with an excellent opportunity to reflect upon the future direction of our local Church of Chicago. The entire conference was based upon the ideas prominently featured in Fr. Mallon's book *Divine Renovation*. Over the course of a two day period, Fr. Mallon (accompanied by his pastoral leadership team) helped us to understand the current challenges we face today in our parishes and proposed steps that can be taken to improve the situation. He challenged us, collectively as the Church, to redirect our mindset - shifting from our current maintenance mode to embrace one of mission instead. He proposed a missionary model of a church. Inspired by Pope Francis, Fr. Mallon views a parish as a greenhouse where missionary disciples are being raised. We introduce people to Christ, bring them to spiritual maturity, equip them for ministry, and send them out to make a difference in the world. Overall, I found the conference to be quite informative and engaging. We spoke candidly about the importance of changing the culture in our parishes, embracing new models of ministry, and including the laity in leadership positions. We were advised to invest more resources and energy in both the areas of evangelization and formation of new leadership. We were asked to devote more attention to the weekend experience we offer in our parishes, with a particular focus on the areas of hospitality, music and homiletics. We also discussed the pivotal role of the Holy Spirit in our ministry and the importance of inspiring witness as the stories of changed lives need to be shared in our communities. It truly was an inspiring summit to take part in. I was very moved to witness so many people prepared to take action in our local parishes and I departed the Convention Center excited to move forward into the future with a renewed sense of hope.

Fr. Robert

Divine Renovation Corner...

We are warmly inviting all of our parishioners to actively & faithfully participate in the life of our parish family by assisting us with the transformation of our parish culture. We continue to encourage you to kindly take the time to read Fr. Mallon's book: **Divine Renovation: Bringing your parish from Maintenance to Mission** and to act out of a commitment to our parish - to begin to grow with us in faith and in service to God and to kindly do your part to help us bring the hope of the future into the present. Copies of **Divine Renovation** are conveniently available in our Parish Office. The book can also be purchased online at www.twentythirdpublications.com.

For those that have already read the book (or for those who have completed at least the first five chapters), our fourth *Divine Renovation Workshop* will be held on **Saturday, November 17th from 9:00 A.M.- 12:00 Noon** in our Rectory Assembly. If you plan on attending, please contact our Parish Office (773.775.3833) to R.S.V.P.

For those who have already attended one of our workshops and would like to continue the discussion further in a relaxed, pressure-free environment, our next session of *Divine Renovation Conversations* will be held this **Monday, October 22nd at 7:00 P.M.** in our Rectory Assembly.