



Fr. Tom Manjaly, SAC

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Beloved People of God,

We are already well into the New Year, 2020. I hope you have begun the year well, for as the saying goes, “well begun is half done.” This is my prayer for all of you that you will have a hope-filled year and may all of your plans find success and your dreams come true.

So much has happened in our parish since my last communication with you through my pastoral letter. Among the various events there were some which deserve special mention. Let me begin with the Children’s Liturgy of the Word which is beginning to take root. Further growth of this ministry of imparting God’s message to our children, depends on the cooperation of all parents who have children. I get positive feedback from the children who attend it regularly and from the teachers who are engaged in this ministry. The community outreach group had organized various events, including Halloween Night and the Chili Cook-off. There was also the Spaghetti Dinner and the Choir Christmas Cookie Sale. All of these were aimed at bringing us together. I think all those activities were a great success. I would like to mention here the good work the Stewardship Commission is doing by inviting parishioners to volunteer for various ministries in our parish. Human Concern Commission has, as always, done a kind gesture giving prayer shawls to the home bound and the sick, reassuring them through this our prayerful support. On the Volunteer’s Sunday we had a chance to remember, pray and appreciate their selfless services without which our parish community cannot function effectively.

Christmas and the Parish Feast of our patron were celebrated meaningfully and with solemnity. This year the participation for both the events was very good. The Religious Education children’s Christmas Pageant on the eve of Christmas was well appreciated. Two novelties introduced with the Parish Feast this year were: the nine day Novena and the Pallotti Family Quiz. Both of these had reasonable participation. I do hope and pray that in the years ahead many more will try to benefit from these spiritual events.

Successful completion of the Parish pictorial directory was yet another important milestone. It will go a long way toward giving us accurate data about our parishioners and our parish’s numerical strength. It was indeed a very time consuming job, requiring patience and perseverance. I would like to thank the staff and the volunteers who worked as part of the editorial staff for their hard work and commitment. I want to thank every one of our parishioners who cooperated in the process. I hope the directory helps us to get to know each other better as members of the St. Vincent Pallotti parish family. Let me also share with you a few findings from the recent census of our parish which may be of interest to you. According to the census 2020: our parish has 490 members, 292 registered families, and 27 home bound. It is a cause of joy to realize that during the year 2019, we had 27 new families joining our parish.

Among the forth-coming events **LENT** is the closest and the most important. The holy season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday which is on February 26 and ends on April 9 with evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Lent is a **season** of reflection and preparation before the celebration of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice when he withdrew into the desert for 40 days. As an important religious observance in the Christian world, Lent is the season to observe and commemorate the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. The traditional three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. In taking advantage of this season's rich opportunities for service and growth, focus on these three things.

Our parish programs for Lent will always be published in our parish bulletin and special flyers. Please stay tuned to these in the coming weeks. However, there will be Stations of the Cross at 6.30 pm on every Friday of Lent at the East site. There will be special times for Reconciliation and the Penitential rite. We will have a Communal Penance Service on Tuesday, March 24 at 6.30pm (west site). The Diocesan Day of 12 hours of Reconciliation will be on Wednesday, April 1 at St. Margaret Mary Church, Milwaukee. Let us decide to make these 40 days different from the rest of the year by attending Holy Mass more often, taking part in the Way of the Cross at least once a week, reading and meditating on the passion and death of our Lord, by practice of acts of self-discipline, and works of charity and mercy. This is a most appropriate time to repent and make a good confession. May this holy season and every spiritual activity within it, enable us to appreciate Jesus' unconditional love for each one of us by dying on the cross and motivate us to love one another as He loved us.

Other upcoming events: This year we are going to introduce a special time of Adoration and Reconciliation on Divine Mercy Sunday (Sunday after Easter i.e., April 19). On April 22, five of our candidates will receive the sacrament of Confirmation at St. Jude's Church. On Sunday May 3, eleven of our children will receive First Holy Communion. Another major event will be our Parish Picnic on June 7. Let us come together to celebrate these events as a parish family, united in the Lord and with one another.

Before I conclude let me wish you a holy season of Lent and the Joy of the risen Lord. I would like to express my profound appreciation and gratitude to all of the volunteers of our parish, our parish staff and all the committees and commissions. Were it not for all of your initiatives and involvement we could not achieve anything. I thank each and every member of the parish family from the children to the oldest for doing their part in building our faith community with admirable love and devotion. However, let me remind those who have not yet made a decision to give your time and talent in service to our parish activities that we are waiting for your good will. We would love to work with you. The Widow's mite was appreciated by the Lord not because she gave a large sum but because she gave "all she had".

Let us keep in our prayers our nation as we approach the presidential election, that the Holy Spirit guides us in our choice of president and other government leaders.

God bless you,

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