

The Power of God's Grace

My dear friends in Christ,

For the past several weeks, we have all been battling the coronavirus pandemic. It has brought uncertainty, fear, depression, loneliness, and many ills that seem to be beyond our control. However, we are reminded in today's second reading that "the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness." These words of scripture call our attention to the fact that the power of God's grace transcends all our struggles. The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of grace as the "favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life". Thus, we are invited to turn to God now more than ever.

Sacraments: Within these past months some of our parishioners, through God's grace, responded to His call and were baptized, confirmed and received First Holy Communion. Kim Graves and Daniel Cabrera received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Jobe Castro received new life in Christ through Baptism. America Ruiz and Nathan Daigre received the Sacrament of Confirmation. These members of our parish family, guided by our catechists over the years and supported by their family, friends, and parishioners, opened their hearts to God and cooperated with His grace. Please continue to pray for them and be a good example to them of what it means to be Catholic.

New Parish Logo: At our last Pastoral Council meeting before the pandemic, one of our topics of discussion was the parish logo. The Council agreed that we need a parish logo that would reflect the name of our parish. On the front page of the bulletin is our new parish logo. This logo highlights various aspects our Catholic faith and identity. The simple woven trinity knot design is a symbol of the Most Holy Trinity, that is three Persons in one God. The crucifix in the middle is the symbol of Christ, who through his death on the cross brought us redemption. The circle signifies the host (the Eucharist) that the priest raises up at Mass. Blue is the color of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of the Church. Yellow and White are colors of the flag of the Catholic Church. The white also signifies purity and innocence.

Gratitude: In April, the two bathrooms in the church were renovated so that our parishioners, especially older parishioners and families with young children, will find it easy to use as the old systems were posing a challenge to some parishioners. We thank Sarah Stadelman for sponsoring the entire project and supplying all the materials. We are very grateful to Eric Quella for the labor, and Chris Ochoa for putting the flooring down. May God bless you all.

Many people have expressed to me how beautiful the roses on our church premises are. It would not be so without the help of some parishioners who want our parish, the house of God, to stand out and be edified. We thank Janet Hawthorne and Judy Crowe for donating rose plants to our church. We also thank Corrine Clifton and Anne Toth for not only donating rose plants but also for caring for all the roses. We thank an anonymous person who donated office furniture for our parish office as well as John Freitag, Greg Daigre, and Jim Upton for repainting one of the office rooms and assembling the furniture.

Homebound Ministry: Since March 2020 Holy Communion to the homebound has been suspended due to the high risk to those involved during this time of pandemic. Last Rite (Viaticum) brought by a priest is the exception. At this time, only the priest will take Holy Communion to the homebound, maintaining the reverence due the Blessed Sacrament and the appropriate health and safety measures. Each sick call request will be treated individually, and a prudential pastoral approach will be applied. Normally, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion bring Holy Communion and visit with the homebound. For now, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will not be visiting the homebound due to the high risk involved. If anyone requests Holy Communion, please send the request to me.

Time for Prayer: Due to the need for more prayer during this time of pandemic, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays and Fridays will continue during the summer months. If you cannot make it for your scheduled adoration time, please use the list in the binder at the back of the chapel to find a substitute.

Mass Times and Safety Guidelines: Mass times for the month of July are listed on the front page of the bulletin. I ask every parishioner to please continue to follow the Mass health and safety guidelines listed on the second page of the bulletin. These guidelines are meant to keep us safe and to protect one another, and so that our church will remain open for celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic nature of our faith calls us to die to self in order to give life to others just like Jesus did for us.

Deceased: Our parishioner Kathy Welch from Port Orford passed away on June 23. Kathy was a great part of both the spiritual and social life of St. John's in Port Orford. She will be greatly missed. We pray that God in His love and mercy welcome her into His heavenly kingdom. Please pray also for her grieving loved ones, especially her husband John.

God's grace is at work within us and in our parish community. Always remember that Jesus invites you to respond to His grace at work within you.

God bless you.

*--Fr. Anthony Ahamefula
Parish Priest*