



My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope and pray that you are all enjoying the winter season and staying warm! As we enter into Ordinary Time, it's good to keep you updated on the goings-on at St. Richard in our parish family. RE Classes and Youth Group are going full tilt now with classes and activities through the winter and spring. Thanks to all of our RE teachers as well as Raven, who is adjusting beautifully with her and Fred's little one Sylvia, who adds a lot to the dynamic of Wednesday evenings. Also, our RCIA is going well with a small army of teachers and really nice folks making their way to full Communion with the Church under the direction of our good Deacon Cordier! Kudos.

Also, thank you to the folks who have volunteered to get the snow shoveled for our parish safety.

Many thanks to the CCW and the K. of C for all you do for love of Our Lord.

Emma Gulko does a beautiful job of keeping the parish interiors very clean, thank you, Emma!

We are having the rectory kitchen, guest bath, and bathroom upstairs renovated as Monsignor O'Neill, the Diocesan Administrator did a walk-through and exhorted me to have this done. The result will be a more ergonomic and safe shower area that allows for handicapped access as well as for your unworthy priest who has had two orthoscopic knee surgeries in the last two years! Special thanks to an anonymous benefactor who is responsible to allowing us to retain Mr. Chris Hammacher, a very talented and amiable local contractor who has done a lot of work for your fellow parishioners, to take all three area projects.

I am very excited for our parish family in that we have three new special parish resources that are very user-friendly. First, Lynette Smith has done a lot of work and put in many hours designing and continuing to make our new website really easy to navigate as well as to be very interactive with you. Please visit our website at strichards.org and check it out! Second, we have the new FlockNote program which you can sign up for on the website which makes it easy for interactive text messaging and email for individuals and groups so that we can be up to speed on various activities here at St. Richard. Finally, due to the generosity of a wonderful couple who have given us the funds, we now are subscribed to "Formed" which offers an exceptional amount of Catholic movies, catechetical materials, ebooks, podcasts, so that you can study, watch, listen, and read a wealth of materials which are free to every parish family member. "Formed" offers various resources for kids as well as adults. We will be giving you more information on this remarkable way to deepen you and your family's faith in the next few weeks.

Thank you for all that you do in the parish, offering your time, talent, and treasure.
Yours truly in Christ,

Father Raftis

Legislation Alert: From Matt Brower of the Montana Catholic Conference:

Friends,

I pray you and your families are well and you enjoyed a very happy and holy Christmas season.

I am contacting you because there is a **very important bill** coming up for a hearing in our Montana Senate next week. On **Friday, February 1** the Senate Judiciary Committee will be holding a hearing on a bill (SB 100) that would require abortion providers to inform pregnant mothers of the opportunity to view an ultrasound and listen to the fetal heart tone, if audible. Sen. Keith Regier of Kalispell is the sponsor. This seems to me to be a very straightforward and common sense bill that deserves our strong support, though there will most certainly be strong opposition.

In addition to asking for your prayers surrounding this effort, I am hoping that we can enlist the help and support of young women from around Montana. I am hoping we can fill the hearing room and the gallery with young women who support this legislation. ***This is not a protest but an opportunity to show support for legislation that is pro-woman, pro-child and pro-family.*** Attendees don't even need to testify. Simply being present (perhaps with their own ultrasound pictures in purses or pockets) is a powerful witness. Those who would like to testify could say something as simple as "My name is Sally Smith from Helena, Montana and I am here to urge your support for this bill." That alone is enough. A show of loving force of one woman after another simply being present and urging support, that's what I'd love to see. And if they have a t-shirt with an image of an ultrasound on it....wear it!

The hearing is scheduled for **Friday, February 1 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 303.**