

OUR PARISH PLANS AND PRIORITIES FOR FALL 2020: A MESSAGE FROM FR. RICHARD AUGUST 14, 2020

Greetings St. Gabriel parishioners!

We continue to journey together through these unprecedented times. As so many are doing, we are adjusting our plans for the coming months, acknowledging that the impact of the pandemic will continue for some time. In this brief message, I want to share with you what late summer and fall will look like at St. Gabriel. In all seasons, we are called to meet, know, love, and follow Jesus.

As we move forward, last Sunday's Gospel from Matthew 14 provides great encouragement to us. The Apostles find themselves in the midst of a terrible storm at sea. In their fear, they cry out to God for help. Jesus comes to them – literally walking on the waves. "Take courage," he says. "It is I; do not be afraid." Jesus' message is for all of us who find ourselves tossed about in this storm of life: Do not be afraid. God is with us. This promise gives us peace and courage as we move forward, putting our trust in the Lord.

OUR PRIORITIES IN THE COMING MONTHS

Since mid-March, our parish has placed priority on worship and the sacraments. Online and outdoor Masses, drive-through Confessions, outdoor Adoration, smaller weddings and funerals, Anointing and Confession for hospital and hospice patients, and spreading out First Communions are some of the many changes we have made. I hope you have been blessed by these, and I thank our staff for their tireless efforts.

Worship and the sacraments will continue to be our primary focus through Advent. We are gradually phasing in opportunities to serve in our liturgical ministries again, as we adapt our processes to these times. Eucharistic Adoration on Mondays is one example. We will need people to serve in these ministries, who are able and comfortable participating. Please watch for details.

Most other parish events and meetings will be paused through Advent. Traditions like the Oyster Roast, the Taste of Latin America, and the Feast of St. Gabriel celebration are not prudent to plan for this year.

The Cradle Preschool and St. Gabriel School both plan to resume in-person instruction for their students. *For the health and safety of everyone, we will have very limited use of the Ministry Center and the school building by other groups.*

Our parish staff continues to be hard at work. **The church office will continue to be closed to visitors, for the safety of our staff.** They are hard at work, though, and available by email, phone, and appointment.

Details are coming soon about Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation. We are developing a program that provides flexibility given current health concerns.

OUR PLANS FOR PARISH MINISTRIES AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During July, key staff members and I met with the leaders of 37 of our parish life, pastoral care, and outreach ministries (*see list at end of transcript*). It was a beautiful opportunity –

especially for those of us who are new to the parish staff, including myself and Fr. Mike – to hear about the life of our parish and the impact so many of you have on our community. To each of you who are so generous with your time and talents, I thank you. Your gifts strengthen us.

We are journeying through an unprecedented time in parish life. Pausing from meetings and events is difficult. We are hungry to gather for meals and conversation and connection.

This time is also a great gift – offering an amazing opportunity for planning. **This fall, I am asking many of our ministry leaders to work with our parish staff and take a fresh look at their role and work** – to consider how we meet, know, love, and follow Jesus in all that we do. I am excited for the planning we will be doing, and I ask you to pray for this.

I specifically want to mention our charitable outreach efforts for the upcoming months. Opportunities to serve our brothers and sisters in need look very different right now. Many of the community organizations we have worked with in the past do not currently have in-person volunteer opportunities.

As an example, we are not permitted to gather at the Men’s Shelter to prepare and serve our monthly dinner. Our parish is continuing, however, to pay for this meal.

Similarly, Room In the Inn is not being held this winter. For St. Gabriel, this typically involves 20 homeless guests sleeping in our Parish Center one night a week. Our ministry leaders and staff are considering how to use our parish resources to support the needs of the hungry and homeless. We are looking not just to the present day but to the future, as well.

During this time, your many personal acts of charity and kindness make a difference while we cannot gather for community outreach.

An exciting opportunity that we are embarking on is a partnership with Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church. This predominantly African American parish is located near our city’s shelters for homeless men and women. The parish’s needs are great, as are the needs of their neighbors. Our partnership with them will provide numerous avenues to serve Jesus and share our gifts. I’m excited to provide more details in the coming months.

IN CLOSING: THANK YOU

In closing, I want to personally thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support during these times. All of these gifts enable us to carry out the good work Jesus has called us to do.

If you have not already done so, please prayerfully consider registering for Online Giving through our website. This is a secure and easy way to support our parish.

This Saturday, we celebrate the Feast of Mary’s Assumption into heaven. May we, like our Blessed Mother, keep our eyes and hearts focused on Jesus – that through this season of uncertainty, we will continue to say “yes” to his call.

God willing, we will see the shoreline of safe harbor from this storm and can disembark on solid ground. We do not fully know what the future holds, but we clearly know WHO holds the future: Jesus Christ!

Count on my continued daily prayers. Please continue to pray for me and our staff. We are here for you.

God bless you!

See next page for list of ministries we met with in mid-July.

JULY 2020 Ministry Review Meetings included leaders from:

CHARITABLE and COMMUNITY OUTREACH		PARISH LIFE GROUPS
Saint Vincent De Paul Society and Christmas Food Baskets		Young Families
Room In the Inn		Men's Club
HOM		Christian Women's Group
Men's Shelter		OWLS
Friendship Trays		Forever Young
Share Sunday		Cluster 30
Giving Tree		Empty Nesters
Habitat		RespectAbility
Florence Crittenton		Moving On After Moving In
Refugee Resettlement		JustFaith (leader unable to attend but sent presentation)
Hospice Meals		
Cochrane Collegiate Academy		HOSPITALITY
Freedom School		Greeters
Ronald McDonald House		Welcome Table
Red Cross Blood Drives		Welcome Brunch
Women's Prison Ministry		Bereavement Bakers
Sewing Guild		Bereavement Receptions
Respect Life		
Rosary Makers		
PASTORAL CARE - PARISHIONER SUPPORT		
Hospital Ministry		
Homebound Ministry		
Mental Health		