



## Fr. Don's "State of the Parish" Message

February 1, 2019

My brothers and sisters,

For the last thirty one years, I have written to you at this time of year to share a "State of the Parish" message. This is my last, and I am happy to say, my most positive report of where we stand in our faith community. God has truly blessed Corpus Christi Parish in so many ways. We have a unique diversity of people, a set of parish boundaries which invites us to serve, and an abundance gifted of members and staff. Few parishes in the entire Archdiocese of Detroit are so strategically poised to become a dynamic band of joyful missionary disciples.

In the past year, God has blessed us with a unique process for the transition of pastors. Archbishop Vigneron granted our request to have the outgoing and incoming pastors work together for an entire year. He named Fr. Patrick Gonyeau to succeed me as pastor beginning July 1, 2019. About a month ago, Fr. Patrick and I wrote consecutive bulletin articles to share with you how the transition is going. (Copies of the articles are reprinted in this mailing.) Let me assure you that you are getting a good return on your investment of \$50,000 for having a second priest at our parish this year.

Now, six months into the process, Fr. Patrick and I would like you to invite you to be part of the transition. We are inviting you to participate in one of two ways. First, please take note of a special "**Transition**" box in the back of church. Feel free to place any of your questions, comments, concerns, or insights about the transition process into the box. We will personally respond to them. Second, we invite you to a **TOWN HALL MEETING** for all parishioners on **Saturday, February 23, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM**. We will fill you in on the details of the transition and listen to your questions, insights and concerns. Food and child care will be provided. We really hope you can make it.

Let me take a moment in this "State of the Parish" message to share with you the kind of parish we are placing into Fr. Gonyeau's hands. First of all, we have a community noted for welcoming all people. The hospitality is most evident at the Sunday Eucharist. ALL are welcome, and indeed they should be because the Lord calls us to reach out to all the nations of the earth. God's people of old were noted for welcoming the orphan, widow, and the alien in their midst. I am delighted that we have a reputation for attempting to include all of God's people in our joyful, spirit-filled celebrations. Over 200 parish members volunteer to serve the community and make our Eucharistic celebrations both effective and transformative.

We also have one of the most diverse offerings of faith formation programs. Experiences such as Monday Night Bible Study, Generations of Faith, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, superb Infant Baptism preparation, First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation, and a unique Confirmation preparation program, Emmaus Faith Sharing Groups, liturgy planning sessions which meet at the beginning of Advent and Lent on Saturdays, RCIA preparation for those

entering the Church, and an active youth ministry are available to help our community grow in faith.

Our parish effectively serves those in need through the St. Vincent de Paul Society - Corpus Christi Conference's food pantry and neighborhood outreach, and counseling for those with personal, financial, and physical needs at the Outreach Center. We link people in need to the many resources available to them and pray with them.

Corpus Christi is also known for the number of ways we serve in the neighborhood community. Our parish members have leadership roles in New Hope Non Profit Housing and Community Development Corporation, Northwest Detroit Youth Coalition, Better Men Outreach, and O'Hair Park Community Association. We also partner to serve beyond our parish boundaries through the annual Youth Mission Trip, Haiti Outreach Mission, Christ the King Parish's Saint Christine Soup Kitchen, and the Detroit Community Clergy Association.

Financially, we have indeed been blessed by your generosity. Some members tithe; others give as generously as possible. Your outpouring of donations has put us \$17,000 ahead in our target for offertory donations in the first seven months of this fiscal year. Those funds will help cover the deficit of \$50,000 from having two priests on staff this year. (See the budget numbers for the first half of our fiscal year included with this letter.) I **thank you** for your sacrifice, support and vote of confidence in the Lord and in Corpus Christi.

Let me end by saying that we are living in difficult times:

- tragic scandals in the Church with clergy child abuse and clerical cover up being exposed and, I pray, being rooted out,

- rampant secularism in our society where the only places we can comfortably speak of God is at church and in our homes,
- people in many nations of the earth becoming modern day martyrs for their witness of faith,
- and great prejudice and rejection of hurting people from different nations, religions, and cultures who seek refuge in our national borders.

In the midst of all these challenges, may we stand as a counter-cultural community giving joyful witness to the Risen Lord.

Your brother in the Lord Jesus,

*Fr. Don*

Fr. Don

### Prayer to Unleash the Gospel

God our Father,  
you have called us to be witnesses to Jesus  
and have commissioned us to lead  
all people to encounter him.

Send your Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds  
so that your will may be clear to us  
and that we may accept it.

Dwell within our souls  
and make our hearts your own.

Transform us into a band of  
joyful missionary disciples  
embracing the fruits of Synod 16  
so as to share the good news  
of Jesus Christ in Southeastern Michigan  
through joyful evangelization and service.

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle  
in them the fire of your love. Amen.

Saint Anne, pray for us.