



Dear St. Mary Parishioners & Visitors,

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

We have accomplished so much together this past year, and I always enjoy Looking Back at our good works from 2019, as we Look Forward to 2020.

Looking Back...A Few Highlights from Fall 2019...

- ***Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*** –With my full support, DRE, Sara Rodgers, spent numerous hours preparing for and launching “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd” for youth in the Preschool/Kindergarten class. We expect that this Montessori based formation program will have a tremendous impact on the lives of our youth and their families.
- ***Altar Server Day with Tigers*** – 9 young men and their parents/Virtus sponsors traveled with me to Sacred Heart Major Seminary to celebrate the Solemnity of the Feast of the Assumption. It was wonderful to concelebrate the Mass at Sacred Heart and enjoy fellowship with our youth/parents/sponsors at the Tiger’s Game that followed.
- ***“Encountering Christ” Stewardship Retreat*** – With over 150 people in attendance, this beautiful fall day was a highlight, beginning with Mass celebrated by Bishop Bradley, meaningful break-out sessions in the Parish Hall, great food and time for private prayer and meditation.
- ***Eucharistic Congress*** – Beginning with Mass and filling the day with pertinent workshops and opportunities for fellowship, Bishop Bradley ignited the faith of our Diocese and paved the way for the “Year of the Eucharist” in 2020.
- ***“Gift of Music” Organ Recital*** – This was another personal highlight for me in 2019, as I was able to share my gift of music, and collaborate with Benedict Robert, the St. Mary Schola, John Swender and Zachary Bramble on a recital that nearly 300 people from our community attended.
- ***Christmas & Christmas Day Dinner*** – St. Mary was beautifully decorated for Christmas by the loving contributions of so many volunteers, and it was fantastic that we filled the Church with parishioners and visitors during the Advent and Christmas Masses. In its 3rd year, the Christmas Day Dinner continues to warm the hearts of our parishioners and all the participants from the community.
- ***Expanding Ministry Involvement*** – St. Mary is fortunate to have increasing involvement of parishioners in a variety of ministries (i.e. Art/Environment, Knights of Columbus, Garden, etc.) Did you know that, under Deacon Mike’s leadership, we have over 10 parishioners involved in Homebound Ministry? This team makes weekly visits to shut-in parishioners to pray and bring Communion, and they are doing just what Jesus has asked all of us to do.

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Looking Forward to 2020...

- **“Year of the Eucharist”** – Joining with Bishop Bradley and Churches throughout the Diocese, the “Year of the Eucharist” will be our focus in 2020. Weekly Mass and Adoration will be regular opportunities to unite with Jesus, and I will offer some special “Year of the Eucharist” events. The first of these will be a **Youth Holy Hour on Sunday, January 26 at 5:30pm**, followed by a pizza party (Virtus-compliant) in the Parish Hall. Please see the bulletin and communications from our DRE, Sara Rodgers, for more details.
- **Building On His Cornerstone (BOHC)** – Working with Finance and Parish Councils, we will continue to secure and enhance God’s House through our BOHC Initiative. Our beautiful Chapel is nearing completion, and we will look forward to re-entering it sometime in the 1st Quarter. The new Church doors are taking slightly longer than anticipated, but we hope to have them installed in the first half of 2020.
- **Bishop Bradley’s Collaborative Visit on March 28, 2020** – Bishop Bradley will visit our Collaborative on March 28 to meet with Clergy, Staff, and Parish/Finance Councils at both parishes. We are also looking forward to the Bishop celebrating the 4pm Mass at St. John that afternoon.
- **Easter Vigil** – As a convert myself, R.C.I.A., Rite of Christian Initiation, is near and dear to my heart. I have the privilege of shepherding adults who are discerning entry into the Catholic Faith. Once again, we have approximately 20 individuals, some already Catholic, some not, who faithfully participate in the weekly lessons on the Faith. This year we may have 5 or more enter the Church and receive one or more Sacraments. The Easter Vigil Mass is a beautiful liturgy, an opportunity to experience again your own reception of the Sacraments. If you have never participated in this service, think seriously about doing so, especially in this Year of the Eucharist.

I wish you all a Blessed and Happy New Year, and I ask that you pray with me,

Loving God, Creator of the universe, you have gifted me with life. You call me to be a light to the world through baptism. Help me to brighten our world by sharing my gifts in the service of others and respecting creation. I ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*In His love,
Fr. Craig*