

Making Room for Jesus

A Message from our Pastor, Fr. Dominic Barber

January 14, 2018

Happy New Year! Thanks very much to the pastoral team and the various ministries who have worked so hard during Advent and the Christmas season to ensure that everyone who came to the parish seeking Jesus, might find him and draw closer to him through the liturgy and sacraments, the sacred environment, the outreach programs, the music, the socials, a phone call and in moments of silence.

During Advent our parish mourned the passing of Vern Bechard, our beloved deacon emeritus. Mary Lou, we feel your loss and hold you and your family in prayer. On December 31st we bid farewell to Fr. Joselito Oriasel as he goes on a much needed health leave. On January 1st we officially welcomed Fr. Gerald Mendoza who hails from northwestern Alberta. He claims he did not bring the frigid Arctic weather!

As 2018 begins and life continues to unfold around us, I am aware that we have just celebrated the season of Christmas when we recall the circumstances of Jesus' birth. St. Luke points out that there was no room for Jesus. In St. John's gospel he writes that Jesus "came to what was his own and his own people did not accept him." God persists though. He keeps coming to us, revealing himself to us, inviting us into a saving relationship with him and St. John continues, "All who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become the children of God."

In today's gospel we hear how Jesus is discovered, how some people develop a relationship with him and then have faith to become his disciples. It all starts with a simple invitation: what are you looking for? Once we give voice to the deep yearning of our hearts, when we confess it is Jesus that we are seeking, then there is that further call to come and see where he lives, to spend time with Jesus to get to know him. And, in that new found trust, make a decision to turn our lives and our will over to him, to become his disciples and, finally, to begin to witness to Jesus. My friends, that is it in a nutshell. It is captured in three words on our "Live Your Strengths" banners in the lobby: Discover, Develop, Discipleship. Find Jesus, fall in love with him, and then follow him! This is what I hope for every person that walks through the doors of our parish. If people come to St. Patrick's and do not have some kind of "3D" encounter with Jesus then we are in the wrong business, we are not a true parish; then we will perish!

Back to the Christmas narrative. When Jesus comes knocking on our door, we do not want to tell him that there is no room in the inn. When people come to our parish seeking Jesus, we want to say to them, "Yes, Jesus is here, come and see!" We need to make room for Jesus; we need to make room for people seeking Jesus. How do we do that? Our archdiocesan pastoral plan which challenges us to feed the gathered and reach out to the scattered requires us to be a welcoming, prayerful and thriving parish. In many ways we are, but there is much more that must be done. With the birth of a new parish, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, we can seize upon this moment to bring about a renewal in our own parish community; as we say good-bye to some of our current parishioners, we can see this as a moment of grace and growth. The Lord is offering us a chance to bring in those who are scattered and lost but come seeking Christ so that they can encounter him in St. Patrick's Parish. We need to ensure that we as a parish are looking to thrive, to gather more of God's children into Christ's fold. Therefore we must ensure that there is plenty of room where people can encounter Christ. In order for us to grow as a parish, to reach out to more people seeking Christ and welcome them, I believe that we need to continue with our renovation plan. As we look to welcome new parishioners into

St. Patrick's, let's make sure we have room for them; a warm, welcome and inviting space where they can encounter the Lord.

As a parish family of faith we need facilities that will enable and allow our parish to thrive and grow. Without this forward thinking mindset, we run the risk of becoming a closed stagnant community, unable to reach out to others and invite them in; turning them away because we do not have the room.

As this new year begins, the challenge is before us. Parishioners of St. Patrick's let's work together to advance our parish on the path I believe the Holy Spirit is calling us to. I ask you to support the renovation project we have proposed for the parish and usher in a time of growth and renewal. In order for this growth to happen, we *need* the financial support of all parishioners. We *need* to work together to see this become a reality. This means honouring pledges made in the Family of Faith Campaign, giving at each Sunday collection and supporting our Building and Maintenance fund each month. I'm asking you to invest in the future of our parish. Our Lord stands at our door and knocks. I ask you to help me ensure there is room for Jesus and all those seeking Him.

In Christ,

Fr. Dominic



St. Patrick's Parish

Family of Faith Update, January 2018

Parish Goal is 1,510,000

Month	\$ pledged by Parishioners ¹	Total Collected to-date	Parish Share of Total Collected
May 2015	2,035,640	\$258,567	\$64,641
February 2016	2,035,640	\$519,990	\$129,997
April 2016	2,035,640	\$624,948	\$156,237
January 2017	2,035,640	\$950,699	\$237,674
April 2017	2,035,640	\$1,051,010	\$262,752
January 2018	2,035,640	\$1,295,359	\$314,140 ²

¹ The adjusted amount is based on those parishioners that have cancelled their pledges or have moved from our parish.

² The 25% Parish Share of Total Collected has been adjusted to reflect the portion transferred to Blessed Frederic Ozanam Parish as of December 31, 2017. Once our goal of \$1.51 million is reached, we retain 75% of pledges collected beyond our goal minus the adjusted amounts transferred to Blessed Frederic Ozanam.