

Pastor's Message

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Have you ever noticed that many of us see church attendance as an obligation and a troublesome duty, rather than as a gift? We need to be mindful of the fact that living in a society of many temptations and countless mixed messages, we badly need the encouragement of one another to help us become and remain strong Christians. It is only by supporting one another that we are able to avoid distraction, remain focused, and order our priorities rightly. That is why St. Paul writes "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another all the more." (Heb. 10:25).

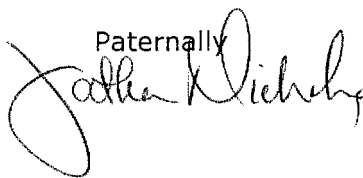
In visiting the shut-ins of our parish, I am struck by the fact that they who can no longer attend church because of physical limitation, appreciate this gift more than any others. Remarkably, however, their deprivation does not cause their faith to cool or their enthusiasm to wane. They eagerly wait for the sacraments of the Church to be brought to them, and many request and listen to the tapes of the Bible study classes, Sunday sermons, and daily meditations we make available to them. Their forced confinement is not marked by a decline in faith, but in a deepening of their spiritual lives

What a lesson they provide for us! For those who attend church, they are a reminder that our presence at worship is not the fulfillment of a responsibility but the receipt of a gift and an opportunity for respite and renewal. For those others of us, all other superficial excuses aside, who are unable to attend worship because of illness, the limitations of age, the special responsibilities of our livelihood, or any other legitimate reason, these deeply spiritual people encourage us not to feel forgotten and not to allow indifference to undermine our faith.

We are all a part of the church even when for good reason we cannot attend. Like the shut-ins, we too can pray for the church, for its ministry, its needs and its people. At the same time, those of us who are not limited must take the church to those who cannot attend. We must visit them regularly, bring them antidoron, and be God's presence in their lives. In this way we "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2).

This year Great and Holy Lent begins on February 15th. I would ask you to commit yourself and your family this lenten season to becoming regular participants in the life of the Church through personal participation in the Holy Services and Sacraments.

Paternally

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Father K. Kichel". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Paternally".