

A letter from our Clergy...

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Recently, excerpts from the illustrated history of St Raymond Parish, written by Jean Powley Murphy, were published in the parish bulletin. These articles depicted the history of our faith community from its founding, through the many years, as it was passed on from one generation to the next.

For each of us, these articles offered two opportunities. First, they offered us a timeline, where, at one point, each of us finds our entry into this parish. Second, these articles revealed to us that, from the first days, every generation has focused on the future of this faith community - building a stronger, more vibrant parish that could serve the needs and desire to be a community, through the many ministries that came forth from the people of this parish.

Perhaps that is why the People of St Raymond embraced the invitation of Vatican II to actively step forward and to serve or minister others. That invitation called us to fully invest ourselves in the life and in the mission of this faith community - from educating and spiritually forming our community, to supporting the families, to walking the difficult journey with our seniors, our sick or homebound parishioners, and by comforting those who grieve. We have always answered the call of Vatican II, with eyes focused on the future, to remain vibrant. Nothing ever remains the same; change is always necessary. Needs change, numbers change, those willing to invest and to engage themselves changes too. Even a lack of funding or financial resources calls for a change to stay alive and vibrant. Like the GPS that is constantly calibrating, change is always a part of life to ensure the mission for the future.

This week Cardinal Cupid presided at the episcopal ordination of our new bishops. **We warmly welcome Bishop Jeffrey Grob as our new Vicar of Vicariate I.** Bishop Grob will now lead the parishes in Vicariate I in the archdiocesan process of Renew My Church. Renew My Church was initiated by Cardinal Cupich as a diocesan-wide response to the increasing challenges of declining finances and involvement in the Catholic parishes across the archdiocese. Due to an absence of a Vicar, Vicariate I has not yet been as involved in this process as parishes in the other Vicariates.

It is certain that change is inevitable. We know St. Raymond of today is not the St. Raymond of the 60's, or even the 90's. We are seeing the changing skyline of Mount Prospect. We have watched our October Count numbers change. We have watched the number of fellow parishioners who are willing to be invested and engaged in parish life change. We have seen what a pandemic can do, as it has kept most of us out of the church building for so long that we are concerned what a post-pandemic day will look like when we gather once more for worship.

The invitation of Vatican II remains for each of us. Our eyes must always focus on building a better and vibrant future to leave as our legacy for those who will come after us. As ordained ministers, called to serve this community, we want to ask that the community unite in prayer as we consider how to strengthen St. Raymond for the challenges of Renew My Church. In Renew My Church, parishes that are judged to be financially unsustainable or have declining mass attendance are asked to merge with another parish facing the same challenges. This loss of parish identity is painful for all. We need to do all we can to ensure that the potential of this community is fully realized.

For a period of our history we were proudly known as the "People of Promise." We have reached a crossroads in our history, where being a part of this faith community means we are called to embrace today's challenges. We hope and pray that St. Raymond will continue to be that beacon of welcome and hope to the community of the northwest suburbs.

Peace Be With You,

Fr. Scott Hebden, Pastor
Fr. Gilbert Mashurano
Deacon John Lorbach
Deacon Dave Babczak