

A Pastor's Perspective

May 2, 2021 Bulletin



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Since Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday, and every weekend since, I cannot tell you how many times parishioners have stopped to speak with me after Mass, introducing themselves, and saying something like, “Father, this is the first time I’ve been in church in more than a year. I am so happy to be back.” They will usually share with me that they and their loved ones have been vaccinated, that they are still taking precautions, and in many instances, they also celebrate that they’ve been able to gather or visit with family for the first time in a long while.

When the Lord created us, he formed us for relationship and community. It is inherent to our human nature. Made in the image and likeness of our God, we reflect the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit whose divine nature is a mutual bond of life and love.

Throughout human history, God’s merciful acts have always been to reach out and save us as a family, a tribe, a people, a nation. When the Son of God came into the world, he gathered disciples around himself, establishing and empowering them to be his Church, through which his work of salvation would be shared with all peoples, of all times, and in all places (“to the ends of the earth”).

Despite the blessings of being able to participate in Mass *virtually* – to know that we are with our fellow parishioners at least electronically, and to join ourselves to the Lord through an act of spiritual communion – it isn’t the same, is it?

Is it any wonder that we have yearned to be together as one community under the beautiful vaulted ceilings of our churches ... to gather in person as a family of faith that prays and sings with one voice ... to greet one another with the sign of peace ... and to receive sacramental communion, to touch and to taste, to be nourished and nurtured by, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity?

We still have room at most of our Masses for you and your family. Please consider going online to register for Mass and to join us in person. I would like to remind you that even if some of our churches might be full, four of our churches have extra seating in their halls: St. John (Saturday at 4 PM; Sunday at 10:30 AM); St. Mary (Sunday at 7 and 8:30 AM); St. Joseph (Saturday at 4 PM); and St. Matthew (Sunday at 10:30 AM).

If you still aren’t completely comfortable with the size of a Sunday gathering, please know that our *daily* Masses still have lots of room, which might be an easier way to restart your in-person Mass attendance. Although the obligation to attend Mass in person is still suspended, as Catholic-Christians, we know that it is essential to our identity to gather for and with one another so that the Lord Jesus may come to us in his Word and Sacrament and send us forth to share his life in the world.

Last weekend’s Gospel reminded us that Jesus desires to gather all of his sheep into one fold, as one flock, where we can hear and know his voice. This weekend’s Gospel has Jesus providing us with an alternate image of the Church: he is the Vine, the source of all life; we are the branches, who need to remain connected to him if we are to have the fullness of life and our faith is to bear abundant fruit.

Peace and blessings,

Msgr. Andrew