



MARY MOTHER OF MARTYRS PARISH CHURCHES OF ST. MARY & ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR

Happy Thanksgiving.

May the family gatherings of these days be an opportunity to continue giving thanks to the Lord for the many blessings he bestows on us as we enrich our memories and love for each other.

As a new parish, our task ahead of us is to embark upon creating a culture of evangelization and a long-term pastoral plan for making disciples, building communities, and inspiring witnesses. The call to renewal is central to our lives as Christians. While our faith is rooted in the birth of our Savior, who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” Heb13:8, our faith is also a perennial source of all newness and offering from there the streams of living water and sacramental grace. To this end, with some members of the Unification Committee, I am creating a leadership team of parishioners to begin a formation process to begin developing our parish vision and discern the best way to implement this culture of evangelization in our parish. I will keep you posted on this process.

As the vaccinations and boosters have continued and the restrictions on public gatherings have eased up, Cardinal Blase Cupich lifted the dispensation from the obligation to participate in Sunday Mass beginning November 27, the First Sunday of Advent. He encourages all the faithful to take our life together again as a community of faith by resuming attendance at the Masses and participating in the life of our parishes.

During the year 2023, you will receive the monthly packages of envelopes for your Sunday contributions in the mail. In each mailing, we have integrated the additional collections that occur throughout the year at the churches of St. Mary and St. Stephen. For the January and February mailing, you will see the monthly envelope for the Capital Projects that will be collected as a second collection after communion every second weekend of the month, so those who contribute only with cash join the purpose of this collection. There will be only one additional envelope on January 29 for the Youth Ministry Fund that you can drop on that weekend with your regular Sunday Collection and thus support programs for our youth. For the extraordinary collections promoted by the Archdiocese, we will announce a weekend before that there will be envelopes at church entrances for those who want to contribute to each respective cause.

In addition, if you donate by check, you can write the payment to “St. Mary Church” or “St. Stephen Church” or “Mary Mother of Martyrs Parish.” Remember that you can also donate electronically at the “Donate” button on our parish website and create or sign into your account. Thank you in advance for your generous contribution at the Christmas Masses. The support you offer to your parish expresses your gratitude to the Lord.

We are offering the sacrament of reconciliation during this Advent season every weekday at the times and places you will see in the inserted brochure; in addition, there will be confessions on Monday, December 5, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at St. Stephen Church.

May the spirit of the season of Advent fill your lives at the celebration of the coming of our Lord when he was born, in the constant coming of our Lord in our lives, and in the awaiting coming of the Lord when He will be manifested to all.

Fraternally yours,

Rev. David Arcila, Pastor