



MARY, MOTHER OF MARTYRS PARISH
ST. MARY & ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Parishioner,

The journey of our parish continues this new year with our eyes fixed on Jesus, who gives us hope to live the values of the gospel among the daily errands of our lives. As we rejoice in our celebrations of the Christmas season, we are invited now to look ahead of us to embrace the next liturgical season of Lent. The spirituality of Lent always reminds us of the need for conversion and renewal of our souls. I have included with this letter a Lenten brochure that presents us with opportunities to help us grow as Catholics and events that bring us together to celebrate and nurture our fellowship.

Becoming one parish requires time, collaboration, and support from all members of the two former parishes. One of the significant challenges the Church faces in this generation is to foster in the faithful a sense of personal responsibility for their parish's mission and to enable them to fulfill a commitment to being disciples., building up a community, and inspiring others. This requires creativity in adapting to changed situations, carrying forward the legacy of the past not primarily by maintaining our structures, which have served us well, but above all by being open to the possibilities which the Spirit opens us in the here and now of our spiritual paths.

To begin this discernment of what should be our parish's mission and vision, two years ago, I asked participants of the Unification Committee of the two former parishes to join me in reflecting on the process of renewal for our parish based on the principles of the Divine Renovation model that the Archdiocese of Chicago suggested. Two Divine Renovation core teams were created (English and Spanish, with six parishioners each). The purpose of these core teams is to collaborate with the Pastor to ensure the parish is led effectively. After two assembly meetings we had with parish leaders in the past months, the task of the core teams this semester is to summarize a few goals for our parish to be presented in a parish assembly for the input of all.

Another essential aspect of the parish renewal is to make sure our buildings are well maintained. Thanks to your support, the replacement of the roof of St. Stephen's school and church has been completed. This coming spring season, efficient air condition units will be installed in the St. Stephen Church.

As the process of the sale of St. Mary's school building has been initiated, the next and urgent project is to separate the heating from the school building to St. Mary's church. The cost to install new furnace boilers in St. Mary's church is approximately \$ 100,000. They must be installed before August of this year. Thus far, \$ 30,000 is the balance of funds from the second monthly collection for the capital projects. Thus, I appeal for your support to be able to collect the remaining \$ 70,000 in the next five months. Please prayerfully consider doubling your contribution to the monthly second collection to be able to make this project possible.

Mary Mother of Martyrs is your parish, your spiritual home, the place where the Lord nourishes you with his Word and sacraments. May your spiritual journey of Lent be a season of deepening your relationship with Christ, as he always loves you by bestowing many blessings upon you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. David Arcila, pastor.