

SPRING CLEANING THE CHURCH

From the Pastor's Desk

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Ever since I was a little child, I have liked order in my life. As I young boy, I made my bed and straightened my room every day, without being told to do so. I even placed my shoes neatly under my bed. This desire to have things in order has carried over into my adult life and is still with me today. All one must do is see my rectory or enter my office here in Conway or at the diocese to see that Father John likes order in his life.

Since my arrival at St. Joseph, I have made some progress in putting things in order in the church, such as the sacristy, especially with the help of Denay Minett, and the sanctuary of the church. Once we renovate the church in the next few years, the new church and the chapel will get a fresh look.

One of the areas that I longed to straighten up and put in order was the baptistry. I have a strong philosophy that when one enters the church it should be inviting, clean, and free of clutter. So, over the past year or so, you have seen small changes made to the baptistry to make it look larger and more welcoming.

I have eliminated excess stands and advertising in the baptistry. This area is for congregating and should be open, and these message boards often got in the way. We are adding a tv screen to the baptistry to take care of all announcements, so there will be no need of posters and banners. This screen will run continuously, and everyone can put information about their group, activity, or event.

There is a new table near the baptismal font to give the priest easier access to the supplies needed for baptisms. It also has everything we need in one simple location.

The entrance way has new chairs and tables (thank you H3) and I added another art piece.

I have taken away the need for individuals to put a host in the ciborium for daily Mass. This was a leftover from covid, and we know approximately the number of people that attend each Mass, therefore, hosts needed at each daily Mass.

Starting in July, *"The Pack the Pantry program"* drop off location will change from inside the main Chapel door to the side entrance under the overhang. The boxes will line up along the wall across from the restrooms. We are doing this to allow more space in the foyer of the baptistry.

I would also ask you not to drop off books, literature and other devotional materials at the places we have reserved for approved literature. I understand your desire to share and not want

to throw away your devotionals, pamphlets, books, or other things that you receive in the mail from the missions, but they simply clutter our shelves and everything on those shelves must be approved for distribution. We wind up just throwing them away.

We will no longer be collecting old palms. You may dispose of your palms by burning them or burying them in a respectful way. We purchase ashes for Ash Wednesday at St Joseph. It is a much cleaner and easier way to get them.

There will be other little things that I will do to make the area more inviting over the next year, but these are the main changes. I hope it helps to put you in more prayerful spirit when entering church.

Father John