

Dear Friends,

Throughout the Gospels Jesus teaches us to live by the law of God, which as he says in today's Gospel he has not "come to abolish . . .but to fulfill." In fulfilling the law and the prophets he also calls us to obey and teach them in a way that "surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees." What Jesus is teaching us is that faith and our response to it begins in the heart. What we say, what we do, what we decide, are all responses to God who speaks to us in the depths of our hearts.

In my almost two years as your pastor I have been blessed to observe the presence of God among us, the works of faith brought forth from so many hands, brought forth from the depths of faith-filled, loving hearts. For this I am blessed and thankful. The good works that I have witnessed demonstrate our belief that God does provide for our needs when we respond to his invitation to help build his kingdom on earth. Grateful for the fruits of faith I have seen, I have been thinking of how I might return the richness of what I have seen to our parish community.

After prayer and reflection I would like to share one thought with you. We are approaching a major milestone in our parish. Our 25th anniversary will be here soon, December 10, 2019, to be exact. I see our anniversary as a great opportunity for many things. To start, I plan on creating a committee to plan and prepare for this milestone. I would also like to begin our preparations with a personal gift to the parish that honors three people who planted the seed of faith in my life and set the course for where I am today, my parents, John and Joan, and my godmother, Efthemia (Sis). In their memory and in gratitude to God for the gift of faith present in our parish I am having a 25th anniversary altar cloth and matching cloth for the credence table made. These cloths should be at the parish in time for our celebration of Easter. The Eucharist is the center of all we are as the body of Christ on earth; celebrating the Eucharist for you is the greatest highlight of my life as a priest.

As I make my gift to the parish I would like to invite others to join me. There are a few items I have discussed and proposed to Cecilia Cortes-Peck, our Director of Liturgy. There are a couple of short-lead items that are significant and which will be unique, very special to our parish and which can be labeled, "In memory of _____." If you are interested in donating to these items I would ask you to please contact either myself or Cecilia for more information and details.

As we reflect on the gift of faith God has given us, and as we prepare for our 25th anniversary I invite you to pray about this gift-giving opportunity in memory of a loved one(s). Thank you for your faith, your consideration of this opportunity and for your prayers and support.

Peace and blessings,

Father John