April 25, 2020

Dear visitor to our parish website,

 Welcome! We are glad that you are visiting us. You may be here because you are simply curious about what is happening at St. Lawrence the Martyr. Or you may be looking for a parish family for yourself or your family. If you have any questions about our parish, please do not hesitate to call our parish office and either I or Father Yohan or Deacon Bill or Greg Szpunar (a deacon in training) or another member of the staff would be happy to help you.

 We are a Roman Catholic parish and are a part of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Diocese of Paterson, NJ. Our bishop is Bishop Arthur J. Serratelli.

As Catholics, we try to follow Jesus’ teachings as given to us by the Church and our parish life reflects that. In Chapter 2 of the Acts of the Apostles, St Lukegives us the following insights into the life of the Church at its beginning.

“They devoted themselvesto the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life,to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.

 Awe came upon everyone,and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.All who believed were together and had all things in common;they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need.Every day they devoted themselvesto meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes.They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart,praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

 I like to think that we as a parish, like many parishes, have patterned our life on the life of the Church at the beginning as it is revealed to us in the New Testament. Like the early Church, we devote ourselves to the “teachings of the Apostles.”These teachings of the apostles have been gathered for us in the New Testament and give us the foundation for our beliefs. In our parish, we offer adult Bible study courses. We have Bible-based, faith-sharing groups. We have Bible-based, faith-sharing groups for teens. We have family based catechesis for families, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for small children (Montessori method) and traditional religious education for grade school children. We offer middle school Confirmation preparation, aiming toward 8th grade Confirmation. We also offer RCIA, RCIC and special gatherings to which we invite speakers to witness to their faith.

 Like the early Church, we devote ourselves to “the communal life.” St. Lawrence the Martyr is a deeply caringand welcoming communityWealso have a monthly Welcome Sunday with socials after the morning Masses,a family Mass at 9 am on Sundays, regular family Mass socials, a special series called “Dining with the Deacons,” an annual parish picnic, pancake breakfasts, and an annual Lenten Fish Fry. We are in the process right now of forming a ministry to married couples. Men’s and Women’s Cornerstone groups, faith sharing groups, the Rosary Society, morning Mass and the various parish service committees also provide places where people can meet and socialize. Our parish youth ministry provides social, service and spiritual opportunities for middle schoolers and high schoolers. We participate in two Antioch retreats each year for high school youth together with St. Luke Parish in Long Valley. In early summer, we have a Vacation Bible School for our younger children. Teens and adults assist with the VBS.

 Like the early Church, we at St. Lawrence the Martyr try to care for those in need (Cf. Galatians 2:10). We care for the sick and the grieving and others who need assistance. Our Arimathea group helps families when there has been a death. We are coupled with the parish of St. Francois D’Assiseand its six missions in Dufailly, Haiti. We invite the Little Sisters of the Poor for an annual door collection and welcome each year one of the area crisis pregnancy homes to make an appeal at the Masses and to tell us about their work. Under the guidance of our Good Samaritan Committee, we take part in several food and clothing drives in the course of the year to assist local people and the people in nearby cities. Under the auspices of our Spanish Committee, the parish offers a play group for 4 year olds to help children acquaint themselves with English and to schooling in the US. The Spanish Committee also offers ESL for adults and after school help for youth with their homework. We also serve locally through our own extensive thrift shop called “the Barn,” which is located on the parish campus. In lieu of having a parish food pantry, we collect and distribute Shop Rite gift cards to help those who are in need.

 Like the early Church, we gather for “breaking the bread,” regularly joining together for celebrations of the Eucharist and to adore Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. We normally have daily Mass at 8 am and 9 amfrom Monday through Friday and have a morning Mass on Saturdays at 9 that includes novena prayers to Mary. We normally also have adoration on Fridays from 9:30 to 10:30 am and on First Fridays, we have adoration from 9:30 am to 8:30 pm. We have a monthly healing Mass on the third Wednesday of the month.

During the pandemic, we livestream on YouTube each day on our own channel, “St. Lawrence the Martyr Chester”. We have Mass at 9:30 am and adoration from8 to 9 am, from 10:30 am to 1 pm, and from 4 to 9 pm from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays, we have Mass on YouTube at 11 am in English and 12:30 pm in Spanish. We have adoration on Sunday afternoons from 3 to 5. We hope one day to have perpetual Eucharistic adoration in our parish.

 Like the early Church also, “we pray.” We have morning prayer each day, one half hour before the first Mass from Monday to Saturday. We also have the Novena of the Divine Mercy, following the morning prayer. A parish group meets on Fridays at 3 pm to pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and to offer intercessory prayers. We have a group for children that learns the message of Our Lady of Fatima and prays the rosary. This group is called the Armata Bianca.

 I hope you enjoyed this introduction to our parish family. We would be delighted to have you join us. If you have any questions, please do call. May the Lord Jesus and our Lady bless you and your loves ones! Peace.

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Nick

Father Nicholas Bozza

Pastor