

Welcome! A letter from our Pastor

Dear friends in Christ,

Depending on when you are reading this, be it on Friday in the parish email blast, or on Sunday at church, I greet you from Paris or Rome. Complicating matters is that I'm actually writing it on Monday evening in Toronto on a layover. I'm on a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame in Paris, and then on to Rome with parishioners from my former parish of Christ the Redeemer, but I'm holding all of you at St. Vincent de Paul in my prayers. I'll be back in time for Mass next Sunday, but this week, wherever we may be, all will hear the beautiful readings from the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

I am particularly struck by the 2nd reading from St. Paul's Letter to Timothy. *"Beloved: I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and self-control."* Isn't that marvelous? I love the imagery that reminds us to "stir into flame the gift of God." I imagine a giant hand mixing those gifts, and creating a flame, a spark, which ignites our hearts. May we always be courageous in our use of it so that the love that emanates from us may likewise inspire others to follow the source of the gift, namely our God.

This month of October is always designated as Respect Life Month in the Church, and this first Sunday of the month is Respect Life Sunday. Of course, we pray for the protection and dignity of human life every month and every Sunday, (really, every day), but today we lift up our hearts in prayer in a special way that we might always work to protect God's great gift of life. At SVdP, we have an active ministry engaged in the Gabriel Project assisting mothers in need, as well as Walking With Moms in Need, for those mothers in difficult circumstances of life. It is my aim and hope that we will expand and strengthen all of our efforts in promoting the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of life, and it begins, as all things must, in prayer.

One of the best ways to pray for a greater respect for all human life is through the rosary, and not coincidentally, October is also the Month of the Rosary. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, has encouraged all Catholics throughout the world to pray the rosary daily in October for peace in the world. This coming Tuesday, Oct. 7, is the feast day of Our Lady of the Rosary, and World Rosary Day. To mark the occasion, all are welcome to pray the rosary in the Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel at 6 p.m., with Mass to follow at 7 p.m.

In other news, please join me in congratulating our former pastor, Msgr. Bill Young, who will be honored later this week with the Kirwin Award by St. Mary's Seminary. The award is named after Msgr.

James Kirwin, a legendary pastor in the then-Diocese of Galveston, in the late 19th and early 20th century. He was instrumental in helping the city of Galveston rebuild after the devastating storm of 1900, (he spear-headed efforts to build the seawall), and then later was President of St. Mary's Seminary at its original location in La Porte, where our good friend and former vicar, Fr. Houston Okonma, is now stationed. Talk about symmetry! Oh, and he served as staff chaplain for John J. "Black Jack" Pershing in World War I. The life of Msgr. Kirwin is one for the history books, and if you're interested in learning more about him, visit this link from the Texas State Historical Association: www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/kirwin-james-martin.

The award is in recognition of Msgr. Young's 55 years of service to our local church of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, and he is a most-fitting recipient. St. Vincent de Paul is a sponsor of the dinner, and we will have a group from the parish there to represent us and send up the loudest cheers. I know Msgr. Young would like nothing more than to be supported by your prayers, so in this month of the rosary, I invite all of us to pray a rosary for him in thanksgiving to God for his service to our community.

Lastly, let me offer a reminder to be cautious responding to any suspicious emails that appear to come from myself or Fr. Hai or any of the clergy at SVdP. It may list our name as the sender, but these are phishing attempts from scammers and should be marked as junk and deleted. Our clergy will never ask your "for a favor" or the need "for gift cards" in an email. If you look carefully at the account associated with the name, the return address will not be from our official SVdP accounts. A good rule of thumb is if it seems suspicious, it is! Our IT team is working to address these issues, but they crop up from time to time and it is always best to proceed with caution.

Peace, Fr. Sean