

December 12, 2023

Dear Parishioners of St. John's,

For almost 14 years, our parish has been using a hymnal called "Gather". After experiencing St. John's for several months now — observing the integrity of our worship style, the edifying traditional liturgy, and the congregation's penchant for certain musical genres — I am convinced that we are ready for a new hymnal: one that will be long-lasting, with accessible hymnody; timeless texts; and traditional melodies.

To my mind, a hymnal is the primary tool for congregational song and must be, at its core, user-friendly. To that end, the hymnal I have put forth, and that which has been accepted by our Parish Council, is the *St. Michael Hymnal*. It contains a rich collection of over 400 traditional hymns and recent compositions. We hope to introduce this hymnal to our parish in January and that it will infuse our worship with the sublime message of God's glory.

The publishers of this hymnal strive to "restore the nobility and splendor of the Church's music". Quoting Pope Benedict XVI: "Beauty, then, is not mere decoration, but rather an essential element of the liturgical action, since it is an attribute of God himself and his recitation."

To all who have generously supported our current hymnals through donations in honor or memory of a loved one, we thank you. We plan to donate those hymnals to a parish with limited means to purchase their own.

Fr. Robert and I echo the sentiments of the new hymnal's publisher: *we hope that the music offered in this hymnal will adorn the Church's liturgy with grace and beauty and move hearts and minds to the praise and worship of Almighty God*. We believe the parish will find it easy to use and navigate, as well as incline us all toward a deeper engagement in worship and song.

With deep gratitude for a musically vibrant parish,

Dr. Michael J. Diorio,
Organist & Director of Music