

After the Heart of Jesus ...

“My sheep hear my voice;
I know them, and they follow me.
I give them eternal life,
and they shall never perish.”

This Fourth Sunday is often called Good Shepherd Sunday because the gospel reading is taken from the Gospel of John’s account of the Good Shepherd. The comforting words of Jesus remind us of the special care he has for each one in his flock. He knows us through and through, and when Jesus speaks to us, we listen because we know his words are meant for us.



Today is also designated by the Pope as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, a day set aside to offer fervent prayer for those who have responded to the call to serve as priests, brothers, and sisters, and to ask the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the vineyard. In all the gospels, the Lord only once asks his followers to pray for something specific. He teaches them to pray and exhorts them to prayer, but the only time he specifically asks them to pray for something was when he asked them to beg the Lord to send more workers for the harvest. Please take some time this weekend to pray for new vocations to priesthood and religious life. I am hopeful that within the next few years St. Walter Parish will have some young men in seminary and some women in religious formation.

This week I want to share some information on a number of topics regarding parish life. The groups charged with implementing the parish plan (called *core teams* and *task forces*) continue to meet regularly, sometimes twice per month. I have asked that they spend some time “painting the picture” of how we want our life in Christ to be lived, celebrated, and shared here at St. Walter Parish. This step is critical for not only the internal working of each group but for communicating the overall purpose to the parish community. The temptation could be to become tactical too early, which could lead to choosing strategies that do not ultimately help us grow in faith as we would hope. If we want to go someplace, we could decide to first get on a bus, but there is no guarantee it would be the right bus or that it would take us to the place we want to go. Setting the vision first is akin to selecting the destination for the trip before getting on the bus. I am grateful for the great work the groups have done so far. I am confident that we will continue to see some wonderful results as we move forward.

This weekend and next we celebrate the First Holy Communions. It is a special joy for a pastor to celebrate the love Jesus has for young people in giving the powerful gift of His Body and Blood. They are so excited and enthusiastic at this first time event in their lives. May they remind of us the zeal and reverence we should always have when we approach the altar to receive Communion. Jesus has a unique gift of love for us every Sunday. May we not reject the gift but look forward with joy each week to receive it.

The May Crownings are this week, and we begin the daily rosary prayers during May. I encourage families to come together often to pray the rosary at 6:30 PM outside Church by the statue of Mary. Individuals, families, and groups are invited to sign up to lead the rosary. The sign-up sheet for leading is in the narthex. We use the traditional rosary prayers with the standard Fatima Prayer; we do not use any other additional antiphons or prayers. As part of the May procession and crowning after Mass next Saturday, May 5, all are invited to bring images of Mary (pictures, statues, holy cards) and rosaries to carry in the procession and to be blessed.

Some landscape and planting work needs to be done around church. Last fall the Garden Angels focused on the circle drive. This Spring we will focus on other areas to make our grounds more beautiful. If you are interested in being a part of the Garden Angels this Spring come to the design and planning meeting on Saturday, May 5, at 9:00 AM. We meet at the Circle Drive entrance.

Congratulations to parishioner David Pierczynski, son of Ted and Johann, for becoming an Eagle Scout. His court of honor was held last Sunday. His Eagle project was completed at the Northwest Suburban Day Care Center in Des Plaines, which provides quality day care for low income families in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.



If you have not yet done so, please make your pledge soon to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal. This is the new name for what was previously called the Diocesan Annual Appeal. The name change was made to highlight the fact that all money contributed goes to support ministries and services of the diocese – not to fund the offices of the chancery. Those expenses are covered by a parish assessment. The Diocese serves as our partners in faith, helping us to do what we could not do on our own as individual believers or even as a parish. Our goal for this year’s Ministries Appeal is \$117,154. St. Walter Parish has a strong tradition of going over goal, and I pray that this kind of generous and sacrificial support will continue into the future. Please make a pledge or gift reflecting a desire to support the important work of the diocesan Church. Together in our love for the Lord, may we give

After the Heart of Jesus!

Father John