November 7, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of November is a month of preparation. We do our fall chores: raking leaves, recycling summer garden plants, putting away summer furniture, installing storm windows, and mowing the grass one last time. Meanwhile, we also make sure the snow blower is running properly, snow shovels are ready at hand, and an ample supply of salt is nearby. Winter is coming, and we do all this in preparation for the unknown months ahead. If we are lucky, like last year, our winter preparations will let us sigh in relief with very little snow coverage. But if this winter brings rounds and rounds of fresh powder, then we will be ready.

Like the wise virgins in our gospel reading, we take time to prepare for the future. We do not know what this winter will bring, but through thoughtful preparation we can be confident that we will be ready for whatever comes our way. Similarly, in our spiritual lives we need to ensure that we have enough oil to sustain us through the night. In the midst of this pandemic we enter the winter months with some anxieties. How are we going to celebrate the holidays? Can I go to family gatherings? Or watch sporting events with friends? We worry about standard cold and allergy symptoms being Covid-19. We might feel isolated as cooler temperatures keep us indoors. These and many other worries are on our minds, and they can be overwhelming. But to those who prepare spiritually for the challenges that may come will know where to turn when these anxieties present themselves. Let us this week take time to reflect upon our spiritual preparations for the months ahead. Ask yourself: Do I have spiritual tools to help me grow closer to God and my neighbor this winter?

At the end of this month we will begin a new Liturgical year with the season of Advent. Many people have mentioned how appreciative they are to have a missalette to help participate in Mass. This summer I ordered next year’s edition of the Breaking Bread worship book. Not knowing when we will be able to sing publicly, I only ordered half the normal amount. I am grateful that so many people took the previous edition home and are using them. If you would like the next edition for the upcoming liturgical year, call or email the office to reserve one. The books cost the parish $6 each, and a donation to help offset the expense would be greatly appreciated.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, both parishes are participating in “We Give Catholic” on Giving Tuesday, December 1st. Saint James is raising funds to renovate the church hall kitchen and Saint Clement is raising funds to upgrade the lighting and electrical boxes for the church. Both projects will help parishioners engage with and support their parish community. On Giving Tuesday there are many ways to support different organizations. I ask you to consider your participation this year to make our projects a success. Attached is a description of this year’s project.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future. In preparation for the celebration of Christmas, the diocese has provided some reminders for us to consider as we navigate the season of Advent. The Sunday obligation, which includes Christmas, continues to be lifted. Space at public Masses will continue to be limited. Parishioners should consider other forms of participation in the Christmas celebration this year. The Christmas collection is a major source of income for the good of the parish, and I as that you continue to show your support even if not attending Mass in person. All forms of financial assistance are greatly appreciated.

Let us take a lesson from the foolish virgins in our gospel who were not ready for the bridegroom’s arrival. They were caught off guard. Let us not waver in our preparations for what lies ahead, so that the bridegroom will welcome us to the feast.

In Christ,

Fr. Workman