

## Pastor's Column

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### Gratitude and Intentionality

This weekend, as we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we close out the Christmas Season.

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I continue to thank God for having the opportunity to celebrate the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Seasons with you, the Church of St. Thomas More. This was my eighth Christmas with you as your Pastor!

This community is truly an “intentional” community. Everyone who is here truly wants to be here, and desires to enter into the celebration of the Mysteries of our Faith.

That “intentionality” is so evident in all that we do as a community—from active participation “in the pews,” to those who serve in various liturgical ministries in the Eucharistic Celebrations, to those who are “in the background” helping to “prepare the space and the ritual” for our celebrations, and to all who are involved in the over 100 ministries we undertake in order to be faithful members of the Body of Christ in our outreach to each other and to the wider community.

All this takes much effort and sacrifice on the part of many people. Schedules and agendas need to change or to be adjusted in order to make the Faith Community of St. Thomas More a priority. Please know that I am aware of this and know too that, as your Pastor, you strengthen not only my ministry, but also, my Faith, as I see Parishioners “being serious” about their Faith-life.

Your intentionality “feeds” me, as a pastor, as I, hopefully, feed you through leading you in the celebration of the Eucharist and breaking open the Word of God with you through my homilies. Of course, in all these efforts, we know that it is the Lord who feeds us. We are God’s instruments.

Thank you to each and every one of you who helped to make the celebration of these liturgical seasons once again so prayerful and meaningful. Know that my heart is filled with gratitude.

I will not single out any persons or groups. When that is done, so often, someone is missed. You know who you are and what you have done. I know that the Lord is pleased!

As all of us make the necessary efforts and sacrifices in order to continue to live our community life here prayerfully and meaningfully, be mindful that we do so for the Lord, in order to give our God praise and thanksgiving.

At times, our efforts may be taken for granted or go on noticed. We may be hurt or discouraged at times. Yes, it is nice to be recognized and acknowledged, but that is not the reason that we do what we do. All of our individual efforts come together in a community effort to give our Loving Creator praise and thanksgiving. When we keep that focus, our hurt and discouragement will dissipate.

One of the many challenges that we face as a community is to preserve this sense of intentionality. As we continue to grow in numbers and as we move into our Permanent Church and Parish Offices, we must resolve to make greater efforts in the area of hospitality, welcome, and personal invitation into the life of the community. I know that we can and will do that!

As we are mindful of our Baptismal Promises this weekend, we, once again, “intention” ourselves to follow the Lord Jesus and to be active members of the Body of Christ here at the Church of St. Thomas More.

*F. Mike*