

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
michaelsr@stmoside.org
760-758-4100 x100

My Lenten Journey

This Season of Lent has been the most difficult, but the most meaningful of my life.

For a variety of reasons, my surgery which should have taken place at the end of January or the beginning of February was postponed until March 8—Mardi Gras, the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Coincidence? I don't think so...

The doctor told me that I would need some four to six weeks for recuperation. He said it, but I did not "hear" it. Fr. Rich Lewandowski was able to provide Parish coverage for three weeks. So, in my head, I said that I would be fully healed and ready to get back to the Parish, the day after he left. That would all be very convenient!

The three weeks of recuperation came and went, and I had, with great difficulty, to surrender to the reality that I was nowhere near being recovered and ready for Parish activity.

As this is being written, I am in the fifth week of recuperation, still a week short of what the doctor recommended.

I am feeling much like Lazarus from last week's Gospel. I am in the tomb waiting to hear the voice of Jesus saying: "Come out and live again."

But I am not hearing that voice yet, and my Lent may be more than six weeks, and my Easter may come after April 24. God does not follow our calendars. All things are in God's time and in God's ways.

Lent is a time when we often give up things or activities. This Lent I have been forced to surrender to my reality, to give up control, to give up being in charge, to allow others to do for me, and to simply wait quietly for the healing to take place at its own time and pace, not mine.

This has been, and is, very difficult for me. Next week is Holy Week, and I am not sure, at this point, if I have the energy for all the activities it entails. We will see.

To not be with my Parish family for Holy Week would be one of the greatest Lenten sacrifices for me, but in the spirit of Lent and my recuperation it may be necessary.

I hope, this week, to begin celebrating a Mass here and there. We will see.

Though I have not been present for Masses, the administrative work of the Parish has continued. Thanks to our very dedicated and competent Staff, we continue to move forward, thanks to the internet and e-mails that help to provide constant communication as if I was in the Office.

It is very important for you to know that the building program, the construction of our Permanent Worship Space and Parish Offices, continues to move forward. It has not been stalled due to my surgery and recuperation.

The Architect, Renzo Zecchetto, and the Liturgical Consultant, Robert Habiger, are in communication with me and with our New Construction Committee Chairperson, Brian Leahey, and with the Interior Design Team Chairpersons, Phil and Pat Goscienski.

Also, I want to thank each and every one of you for the cards, the gifts, the e-mails, the meals that were provided, and most importantly, the prayers. All is so very much appreciated, and is instrumental in the healing process.

Finally, I ask for your prayers for my brother Jack, and his family. Jack died on April 2.

I am the youngest of my siblings, the last of six. My brother Jack was fifth. Three of my brothers, Ray, Bob, and Jack, have now died. My oldest brother, Jerry, and my sister, Romaine, and I remain.

As we celebrate Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, we begin Holy Week. Let us once again unite our crosses to the cross of Christ. Let us surrender to the realities of our lives, let us let go of those things that take us away from Jesus, and grab hold of those things that will bring us closer.

In the union of our crosses to the Cross of Christ, we find not death, but new life, new hope, and new beginnings!

Fr. Mike