

## From the Desk of Fr. Patrick

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord reminds us that Jesus did not simply leave His disciples behind, but entrusted them with a mission filled with hope, faith, and purpose. In the Gospel of Matthew (28:16-20), Jesus gathers His disciples on the mountain in Galilee and gives them what we often call the “Great Commission”: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” Before ascending to the Father, Jesus sends His followers into the world to continue His work of teaching, baptizing, and proclaiming the Good News.

This Gospel speaks powerfully to us today as a parish community. The mission of the Church did not end with the apostles; it continues through all of us. Every baptized Christian is called to witness to Christ through faith, service, kindness, and love. Jesus also gives us a beautiful promise: “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Even when life is difficult, Christ remains with His Church, guiding and strengthening us.

As we celebrate this feast, we are especially grateful for all the catechists who dedicate their time and talents to teaching our young people in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Their ministry reflects Christ’s command to “teach all nations.” Through their patience, faith, and witness, they help form disciples who are ready to live their Catholic faith with courage and joy. This weekend, we also rejoice with our confirmation students who will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the hands of Bishop Timothy O’Malley. May the Holy Spirit guide them to become faithful witnesses of Christ in the world.

This celebration is also a joyful moment for our parish as we congratulate Deacon Brad Morris for accepting God’s call to serve as a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. His “yes” to God reflects the same missionary spirit that Jesus entrusted to His disciples at the Ascension. We are deeply grateful for his willingness to serve the Church and our parish community with faith and humility.

We also extend our gratitude to Janet Morris for the loving support and encouragement she has given to Deacon Brad throughout this journey. The vocation of a deacon is strengthened greatly by the prayers and sacrifices of family members who walk alongside them in faith. Let us continue to pray for Deacon Brad as he begins this new chapter of ministry and service.

The ministry of the deacon is rooted in the early Church. In the Acts of the Apostles, the first deacons were chosen to serve the community, especially the poor, the widows, and those in need. Today, deacons continue this sacred mission in many ways.

A deacon proclaims the Gospel and may preach during Mass, helping to spread the Word of God through teaching and evangelization. He assists at the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist and helps lead the faithful in prayer and worship. Deacons may baptize, witness marriages, preside at funeral services and burials, and lead prayer services and devotions. Above all, a deacon is called to be a servant – caring for the poor, the sick, the lonely, and those who are suffering.

In many ways, the role of a deacon beautifully reflects the message of Ascension. Jesus sends His disciples out to serve and proclaim the Gospel, and deacons continue that mission in a special way through lives of charity and humble service. As Jesus said, “I came not to be served but to serve.”

May this Feast of the Ascension renew in all of us the call to live as missionary disciples. Let us pray for our newly confirmed students, for our catechists, for Deacon Brad and Janet, and for our entire parish family. May we continue the mission of Christ with faith, joy, and trust, knowing that the Lord is always with us.

-Fr. Patrick