



From the Pastor's Desk

"Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth." (Luke 1:39-40)

This weekend we celebrate **the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. On this day we celebrate the taking up – body and soul, of the Blessed Virgin Mary directly into heaven, at the last moment of her earthly life.

Mary is the most holy person, after her son Jesus, who ever lived. She was, and is, closer to God than anyone ever was or will be, both during her earthly life and, forever, during her heavenly life.

Today's gospel tells us that Mary, who was herself pregnant, traveled to her elderly cousin's home to assist her cousin during her pregnancy.

This event reminds us of the self-giving and compassionate nature of Mary, who is an example for us in our Christian lives.

In addition, just as Mary brought Jesus (growing in her womb) to her cousin and to her cousin's unborn son, John the Baptist, Mary, in her Queenship of Heaven, helps us to encounter her son through her intercession for us.

We are right to pray to Mary for her assistance in deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ and leading more holy lives.

With an increasing number of people having been vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus, we have entered a period (for the time being) of relaxed restrictions regarding the requirements for social gathering.

This means that we can begin re-activating ministries that had been dormant and pursuing new ministries and projects, as guided by current social distancing standards.

One such project is the **Men's Club's Pig Roast and Mixer** that will take place on Saturday, September 11th at 6pm, at the north campus' parking lot, or inside if it rains.

To this end, the **Parish Vitality Office (PVO)** of the Archdiocese of Chicago visited me last week. Among the members of this group were the **PVO Director Elizabeth “Beth” White** and two **PVO Coordinators Rick Moreno** and **Sr. Katarzyna “Kasia” Banasiewicz, VDMF**.

The PVO’s purpose is to provide direction and insight to parishes that have entered the **New Reality Phase of Renew My Church**.

Our parish entered the New Reality Phase following the Transition Phase, which was completed during 2019. (The Transition Phase includes choosing a parish name, combining the financial resources and reporting data of both parishes, creating one Parish Council and one Finance Council for both campuses, and the like.)

With the challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic shut-down and the ensuing social gathering restrictions, our parish was severely limited in her ability to fully engage in the benefit of the PVO team’s valuable insight and direction.

As such, **the Archdiocese is allowing us a “re-boot” of this very important step** in the transition from administrative combination to a New Reality of evangelization and vitality.

The first step in this process is gaining insight, as we learn about best practices, based on the strengths and charisms of our parish and the experience of other parishes, for deepening and sharing our faith, hope, and love in Christ with each other and the larger community in which we live.

To this end, our PVO partners have asked me to identify an **Evangelization Team** of eight to twelve parishioners who will support our parishioners and ministries in creating the New Reality in our parish.

The parishioners selected for the Evangelization Team, as a group, will represent young adults through elderly parishioners as well as different parish ministries and devotions. All of them will be faith-filled, prayerful, and joyfully disposed in following Christ. In addition, and very important, they will be people who relate easily and well to others.

The New Reality aims to cultivate a growing and intentional relationship with Christ, from one’s initial encounter with Him to one’s active participation in His mission, to gather others to His divine life.

My vision, in which I hope you will participate, is that **the New Reality will allow our parish to increase the number of people earnestly pursuing and sharing our Catholic faith, hope, and love** – a faith, hope, and love whose end is to grow in holiness and, ultimately, possess the vision of God forever.

- Fr. Brian Kean