



From the Pastor's Desk

"[God] willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." (James 1:18)

Today's reading from James reminds us that, through Jesus Christ, we have been granted the gift of God's life through our faith and baptism in him, Jesus Christ.

The Chosen People in the Old Testament would recall their dependence on God's generous will for their own existence and for creation itself – and express their gratitude for being partners in God's covenant, by providing God the "first fruits" of their harvest, in the form of sacrifice.

These first fruits offered to God, which were the best part of the harvest, were an acknowledgement that the entire harvest came from God and belonged to Him.

Through Christ, we, too, belong to God as his adopted sons and daughters. Since the gift of eternal life that God offers to us began with the New Covenant established through his Son's Incarnate life, death, and resurrection, we enjoy the privilege of being among God's first fruits – the most valued portion of the harvest. (Nothing can be more valuable than participating in God's life.)

As St. James tells his listeners, we must always act in accordance with this most valuable endowment: inheritors and participants in God's life through Jesus Christ.

We do not want to simply assent to the truth of Jesus Christ in an intellectual way, as a comforting and uplifting idea that has little relevance to our daily activities. Such an outlook threatens our participation and possession of the divine life that Christ offers to us.

Instead, we want to express and manifest Christ's life through our behavior and activity. We want to *be* faithful disciples who bring Christ's love and hope into the world. Moreover, we want to be **Missionary Disciples** who actively invite and guide others to become, like us, first fruits of God's life and new creation.

This week in the **Riverside-Brookfield Landmark newspaper**, there was an article that implied the planned purchase by the local **Serbian Orthodox Church** of our south campus.

The article stated, "[**St. Nikola**] parish is interested in purchasing the St. Barbara Church campus, including the church building, parish hall, school and convent."

Although the reader might surmise from this statement that our south campus is listed for sale, it is not. **The only properties currently listed for sale on our south campus are the school and the convent.**

Further, **there has been no formal offer by St. Nikola to purchase our south campus.**

According to the article, St. Nikola parish is currently contending with internal dissension among her members over whether to build or purchase property for her planned growth as well as working to locate the financial resources it needs to fund such growth.

Our parish has no immediate intention to sell our south campus. Any future sale of a campus property would be a result of our community's inability to provide the time, talent, and treasure to maintain both campuses, while remaining financially solvent.

Our goal, as a parish, is to sustain and grow our two campuses through increased parishioner engagement (via our time, talent, and treasure) and a renewed culture of evangelization.

-Fr. Brian Kean