

footage of every church across our diocese. I began flying drones in 2022. It was shortly after that I embarked on this effort to get drone footage of every church and chapel across our diocese. I have completed over 40 churches/chapels, with nearly 90 to go. It takes an average of 2 ½ hours to film each church, inside and out, and that's not including the travel. So ... you do the math.

Preservation and providing access to the history of our diocese is something that has been important to me for many years. Beginning in 2022 I also began the effort to digitize the Saint Cloud Visitor and Saint Cloud Register. Completing the work in 2024, the entire catalog of these two newspapers (dating back to ~1937) is now viewable as a searchable document at the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub online. I highly suggest you check it out. Using the search tab, select these two newspapers, and then try a word, name or event that interests you. Hopefully you will be as fascinated as I have been.

Also, in the midst of this I have created a digital copy of every parish history book found at the chancery. Out of respect to the authors, I am not reproducing these or distributing them in any way without their permission. However, this has also led to the discovery of cherished books like, 'In Charity Unfeigned: The Life of Fr. Francis Xavier Pierz.' This book, written by Fr. William Furlan, of happy memory, is now available on YouTube as an audio book. It presents in a vivid and inspiring way the life of this intrepid pioneer and

Catholic missionary. He is rightly called 'the father of the Diocese of Saint Cloud.'

This audio book may be found on my personal YouTube Channel. Simply open YouTube and search @avirtualfather and it can be found on the playlists tab.

I have other historical efforts in the works and hope to be able to share more about those in the future. These efforts allow me to both share my love God's Church and our diocese and better understand and cherish the diocese as it has been over the years.

Concerning 'All Things New', I am confident that the decrees concerning mergers will be coming very soon. This could result in many changes for our parishes. At the beginning of this process, I don't think any of us could realize just how much would change.

Careful attention and consideration is being given to every decision which may need to be made. Potential changes in: Mass times and locations, reduced availability of Mass intentions due to no longer having two priests, change in operating income and expenses and more. I assure you that the decisions have often been between two or more undesirable options (e.g. – Mass here and not there, this Mass time and not that), but many are trying to arrive at these decisions in a spirit of prudence and compassion.

FATHER MITCHELL'S PASTORAL BULLETIN

Sunday, April 26, 2026

To the parishioners of Saint Andrew's, Greenwald,
Saint John the Baptist's, Meire Grove, Saint Mary's, Melrose &
Saint Michael's, Spring Hill, of the One In Faith Area Catholic Community

Whatever changes will need to be made, there is an explanation for each one. That does not mean that you will agree with the choices, or that you have to. Even still, my encouragement and request is that we try, to the best of our ability, to continue to be solution-oriented and look to the future with hope.

I intend to make announce these future changes / decisions, as they concern our parishes, primarily using this pastor's bulletin. So, be sure to pick it up each week or check it out online.

Once more, please continue to pray for the process and for one another. May God bless you, and bless us, in the days ahead.

Mary, Help of Christians, pray for us.

In Christ,

Father Mitchell Bechtold

Greetings.

Please excuse the absence of my pastor's bulletin for a few weeks. I have been remarkably busy with projects and efforts for the parish and our diocese.

I begin by giving my congratulations to the many children who will be receiving their First Holy Communion in our four parishes, this weekend and next.

Thank you to the parents, teachers and all those who have helped to guide and prepare these sons and daughters to confidently say 'Amen' to receiving our Lord as the Blessed Sacrament. I still remember the day of my First Holy Communion, and I am confident that these sons and daughters will remember theirs.

By now, many of you may have heard about or seen the recent coverage by WCCO and Saint Cloud Live of my effort to get drone