

EDITION - XIX

This next weekend we welcome Fr. Lawrence Muuna to our parishes for an annual weekend mission appeal. Fr. Lawrence directs Mission Support for the Catholic Diocese of Meru, in Kenya, whose work goes by the motto “Transforming Lives, Forming Integral Leaders.” Their vision is a simple and beautiful one: to transform children’s lives and to form integral leaders for the Church and for society.

His mission empowers these children with a clean, safe, and holistic education rooted in Christ, in faith, and in good morals. They construct classrooms and assist children who struggle to meet their educational needs; they feed the hungry, provide school supplies, and offer tuition assistance; they remodel hazardous buildings so that the young can learn in safety; and they raise up churches within the schools so that the children may grow in faith as surely as they grow in learning. Fr. Lawrence is seeking \$160,000 from across his mission appeals to begin the first phase of this project, and he comes to us simply to ask for our prayers and for whatever support we are able to give to this total goal. You can learn more about his work at tlmerumissions.org. Thank you for prayerfully discerning how God is inviting you to help Fr. Lawrence in his missionary efforts.

EDITION - XIX

Closer to home, our Faith Formation Director, Mark Kociemba, is hosting a youth retreat this next weekend for grades 6 through 12. A retreat is a deliberate stepping away from the usual rush of things to spend focused time with the Lord, in prayer, in the sacraments, and in the good company of others who are seeking the same. There is time for teaching and time for quiet, and time simply to laugh and to build friendships that are rooted in the faith. It is time set apart to listen for God’s voice and to return to daily life renewed.

The Church holds this practice to be so important that she requires her priests to make a retreat each year (Canon 276), and she asks the same of her religious sisters and brothers. Each of us are trying to give our whole life to God, and how important it is that we encourage our young people, growing up in such a busy and noisy world, to do the same.

It can be easy to say, “I am too busy,” especially when you could just as well spend the time with your friends, pick up another shift at work, or simply take in the summer sun. My recommendation to our young people is to work at faith and prayer this next weekend by spending it with your friends at what is sure to be a fantastic retreat, and a real chance to grow closer to Christ in the Catholic Church.

EDITION - XIX

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be Saturday, August 15th. Because it lands on a Saturday this year, the obligation to attend Holy Mass is abrogated in the United States. You are all still encouraged to attend, especially at our evening Mass at Saint Michael's Church in Spring Hill. Mass will be in the Church, at 7:30 PM. This evening celebration of the Mass at Spring Hill will use the Sunday readings and prayers, fulfilling your Sunday obligation. Two birds; one stone. I intend to post novena prayers on our parish Facebook page(s), for those wishing to honor the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary more intentionally. This novena would begin on Thursday, November 6th.

Let's make the most of what is left of these summer days. They will go quick. And let us keep one another in prayer, hold up our farmers and our families, and stay open to whatever God is asking of us, whether that be a gift to Fr. Lawrence's mission or a weekend given over to a retreat. Thank you, and God bless!

Our Lady, Assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

In Christ,

Father Mitchell Bechtold

EDITION - XIX

FATHER MITCHELL'S PASTORAL BULLETIN

Sunday, August 2, 2026

**To the parishioners of the Church of Saint Mary,
serving the communities of Melrose, Meire Grove, Greenwald & Spring Hill
on the church campuses in Melrose & Meire Grove**

The Holy Father's prayer intention for August: "Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community."

Greetings.

It has been an active weekend with plenty of fun, summer-time events across our communities: Albany Pioneer Days and a car show at Albany Chrysler, the Stearns County Fair, the esteemed 77th Annual Barley Day Festival and Parade in Greenwald today, and more. It has been good to see so many of you out and about, enjoying the food, the music, and one another's company. Minnesota summers are short and full, and these gatherings are some of the quiet gifts of small-town life.

Fortunately, both the weekend and the crops were aided by the soft rains of this past Friday. We are certainly praying for our farmers, for their safety and their success, as they prepare to gather in the harvest. So much of our time together depends on their long hours in the field, and they carry our gratitude and our prayers with them.