

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – MAY 2026

Create in me a clean heart, O God, put a new steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

From the Pastor's Desk

Greetings!

Easter has arrived and spring is in full swing—seasons that bring both the joy of resurrection and new life. Four people celebrated all three sacraments of initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist; we welcome these new Catholics into our parishes! From our four parishes, eight adults came into full communion with the Catholic Church, and 49 children received their First Holy Communion. In May, we will accompany our 53 Confirmation candidates as they celebrate the third of their Sacraments of Initiation.

Moreover, we should also acknowledge the remarkable generosity shown at this year's Auction 4 Education for Saint Mary's School, along with the countless gifts of time and talent so generously shared with Saint Mary's and the greater Melrose community.

In short, this Easter and spring season has been filled with many lively and loving deeds of faith and service. Thanks be to God!

But Easter and spring are also seasons of change. The 'All Things New' consolidation will take effect this July, merging our four parish communities into one. We also bid a fond thank you and reluctant farewell to Juliann Heller and Rita Meyer, who have served faithfully as our Faith Formation Directors. Succeeding them as Faith Formation Director, we welcome Mr. Mark Kociemba, nephew of Deacon Ernie and Denise Kociemba. Juliann and Rita brought great gifts and dedication to Faith Formation, and that legacy will continue through Mark's own excellence and enthusiasm.

Our thanks go to Juliann & Rita for all they have given our parish's sons and daughters over so many years, and our prayers go with Mark as he takes up this mantle of evangelization.

Friends, no matter how heavy the trials of Lent, the disciples looked forward in hope to the joy of the resurrection. No matter the April showers, we look forward to May sunshine. So too, in this season of change, may we remember the good already being done in our midst, and trust in the countless good works still to come.

Thank you, and a blessed Easter and spring to you all. God bless!

Father Mitchell Bechtold

Parish Life & Ministry Updates

Liturgy & Worship:

- A huge thank you to the sacristans, music ministers, liturgical ministers, environment committee, vigil hospitality bakers & servers, and to all who worshiped with us and helped make Holy Week a beautiful and prayerful celebration!
- We will honor our Graduates with a Baccalaureate Blessing at the 9:00 Mass on Sunday, May 17th. Seniors, please wear your graduation gown and be at church by 8:35 am.
- On Memorial Day Fr. Mitchell will have a Mass in the cemetery at 8:30 am. Please bring your own chair. In case of inclement weather, Mass will be held in church.

Family Faith Formation:

- In a lot of the literature about how to do Faith Formation well, church leaders and educators use the phrase **“The parish is the curriculum!”**
 - What they mean is: although young people can and do learn a lot about our faith from textbooks, most of us learn more about following Jesus by looking to the examples of people around us. So, if we’d like our young people to grow up to be followers of Jesus, we - the adults in the parish community - need to show them what that looks like!

- For that reason, the Faith Formation program would like to thank you, the church community, for providing such a good "curriculum" for our young people to learn from!
 - Thank you to all you parishioners who came to the Easter Vigil, or to one of our First Communion Masses, or to our Confirmation Mass - thank you for being there to welcome our young people into deeper communion with Jesus and with the church community!
 - Thank you to all the parishioners who shared their faith stories with 7th and 8th graders this year - you were amazing witnesses to those young people!
 - Thank you to all the parishioners who brought donations for the Food Shelf during Lent - our young people are learning from you that God calls us to sacrifice in order to help others.
 - Thank you to all you parishioners who bake and serve cookies after Mass, and to all who stay after Mass to eat cookies and visit with each other! You are showing our young people the importance of taking time to get to know your neighbor.
 - Thank you to all you parishioners who came to a bilingual Mass this year - thank you for teaching our young people that we Spanish-speaking people and English-speaking people are all members of the same parish, and it's good for us to pray with each other from time to time.
 - Thank you, One-in-Faith parishioners - you are the most important part of our young people's Faith Formation!
- If you haven't already, please register your family for next year's Faith Formation! Forms are online at www.oneinfaith.org (click the Education tab) and on the Faith Formation table (near the office) at church. We'd appreciate it if you could get your completed form and registration fee to the parish office by June 1st (many of our materials are less expensive if we order them now, in Spring).
- Lastly, a word from Juliann and Rita: We are deeply grateful for the gift of having been able to get to know so many families throughout our years of leading Faith Formation. You all have shown us how to love God and neighbor, in ways we never could have imagined!

Building, Grounds, Maintenance:

- We are currently working on a reciprocal overflow parking agreement with Stearns Electric. We will be communicating that information once the details are finalized.

- The baptismal font has sprung a leak and is under construction again. Thank you for being patient as we continue to solve this ongoing inconvenience.
- Lawn mowing is upon us and you may see a self-mowing lawn mower around the campus very soon. Our new lawn mower will be programmed and working hard maintaining the grounds.
- Cemetery rules and regulations have been updated. Please see the website or call the office for details.
- Cemetery Volunteer Day will be Monday, May 18 at 6:00 pm. In case of bad weather, it will be Tuesday, May 19 at 6:00 pm. Please bring lawn mowers, leaf blowers, weed trimmer, rakes, and brooms. Please remove all items that are not permanently attached to the headstone or cement, including flower pots and stands to make cleanup easier. They will otherwise be removed. Please see Roger about permanently installing items.

Finance:

- The Easter Collection total came to be \$21,375. Thank you to all contributors during this wonderful season!
- A special thank you to Vera Ritter for collection counting over the years, and to Chuck Walz for filling her position.
- Our 35th Annual Parish Raffle is underway and will be held in conjunction with Riverfest on June 27th! Ticket forms have been mailed out and can be turned in at the parish office. Watch the bulletin for details as the date approaches.
- Do you regularly contribute to the cemetery, maintenance, school, and/or Holy Days? We can set up an automatic withdrawal to use less envelopes. Please contact Katie in the parish office and she can help with the process!

Parish Administration:

- Expecting a baby or planning for baptism? Choosing their Godparent(s) is important. According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, those who serve as Godparents must be at least 16 years of age; must have received First Eucharist and Confirmation; must be a practicing Catholic, and may not be the parent of the person being Baptized. A person to be baptized needs only one Godparent though traditionally there are two: one man and one woman. If you have any questions, please talk to Fr. Mitchell or contact the parish office!
- If you want to discuss cemetery plots, please schedule an appointment with Pam at the office.

- What's happening with the old rectory? Volunteers are cleaning it this week, after which it will be listed for sale along with the adjacent parcels of land.
- Have you moved or changed your phone number recently? Don't forget to contact the parish office with updates so you continue to get information that is sent out!

Prayer for the Quarter

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of spring and new life.
Renew our hearts, help us grow in faith and love,
and guide us to share Your light with others.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



755 Kraft Dr SE
Melrose, MN 56352

320-256-4207
oneinfaith.org