

# FROM FR. MIKE

May 4, 2025

Last weekend we had some special Masses with a 9:00 a.m. Mass honoring our First Responders and graciously hosted hospitality afterward by the school Parent's Club. The 11:00 a.m. Mass was our annual (Special Religious Education) SPRED Mass that had three First Holy Communicants; Conrad and Edward Peterson, and Jeff Heintz. Judy Castiglioni gave a powerful testimonial after Communion about the blessings of this ministry. Jesus said: ***"Let the children come to me."*** There is a need for another SPRED catechist, please contact Judy or the rectory office if you are interested. We also had a prayerful, bilingual Divine Mercy service at 3:00 p.m. when we asked for Jesus' mercy to come down upon the whole parish and we prayed for the repose of the soul of Pope Francis. *"Jesus, I trust in you."*

This weekend we have First Holy Communions at the 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Masses. You will find the First Communicant's names on the cover of the bulletin so you can pray for them and their families. The Eucharist is such a powerful and personal union with Jesus that can have a transformative effect on our lives. Our own patroness, St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, was helped by Jesus to overcome her tragic flaws of anger and willfulness as a girl, and He can help us too in the areas of life that we most struggle. *"The Eucharist is essential for us: it is Christ who wishes to enter our lives and fill us with his grace"* (Pope Francis).

On more universal Church news, the conclave to elect the next pope will begin on May 7<sup>th</sup> and while it took three years to elect the pope back in 1271 A.D., we will expect white smoke sooner than that. It's true that drama, politicking, and worldly interest surround this mysterious papal election process. Might I offer some gentle words of caution and council; let's remember who is really in charge: ***"Be still and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme upon the earth"*** (Psalm 46:10).

Human beings, including cardinals, might try to maneuver any process to their own opinions and advantage, but it's Jesus Christ Himself who instituted the papacy. Jesus promised that the faith of the successors of Peter ***"would not fail"*** and that the gates of hell would never prevail against the Church. Older Catholics have come to see many different popes, with their different gifts, experiences, insights and apparent limits on a personal, administrative, or intellectual level. Whoever is elected pope, the Lord will guide, bless, and protect the Church through him.

In short, our faith is in Christ and His promises and we should trust that the Holy Spirit is still with us in this process. I say this because as people we can overly associate the Lord's presence with creatures or divine gifts that aren't God Himself. Some ancient Jews overly attached themselves to the Ark of the Covenant and then the Temple at the expense of God's will, presuming on the Lord's promises such that they had to be warned by the prophets about their false security ***"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Reform your ways and your deeds so that I may dwell with you in this place. Do not put your trust in these deceptive words: 'The temple of the LORD! The temple of the LORD! The temple of the LORD!'"*** (Jer. 7:4).

Some Protestants are sometimes accused of "bibliolatry" where they seem to honor the Bible more than the living Lord. Catholics might fall into a type of "papalotry" where we honor and expect more from a pope than Christ intended. The Temple (now churches), the Sacred Scriptures, and the pope have been given by God in their time and place to help us to worship Him, know Him, and be guided by Him...but they are not God. Hopefully, these reflections can give us more freedom and confidence in faith so that we don't value the Lord's gifts more than the Giver of the gifts.

Happy Easter, the Lord is risen,

Fr. Mike