



February 2012

My dear parishioners,

As I write this letter, there is a little sleet and a few snow flakes! Though it has been a relatively warm winter, I'm sure we can expect at least one good snow storm before Easter!

2012 Cardinal's Appeal

The annual Cardinal's Appeal began this month. Last year you were most generous—our 2011 goal was \$268,429 and you pledged \$347,155.53!! Simply fantastic! Thank you. Muchas gracias. Those who gave were most generous! I appeal in a special way to those who were not able to donate last year to make a one-year pledge or give a one-time gift. As one of our 3,000 parishioners, *PLEASE* consider a sacrificial gift—whatever you can afford (\$1,000 or \$500 or \$100 or any sacrifice that you can make.) Those in most need in our archdiocese will be most grateful.

Allow God's Holy Spirit to Work on You This Lent!

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, **February 22!** The Lenten season is filled with many challenges and opportunities. The greatest of these is to recognize that we share this Lenten journey with our faith family, the Church. Lent is for the Church, the people of God who make up the Mystical Body of Christ, and as such, we journey as one.

Father Richard Berg, in "Turning Stones Into Gems", writes:

A year and a few months ago, the thirty-three Chilean miners were welcomed to the surface at Camp Hope after a sixty-nine-day ordeal underground. During their captivity in darkness, these men changed in remarkable ways. Jimmy Sanchez, nineteen, the youngest miner, was working in the mine temporarily to support his family. When his mother, Norma, saw him emerge from the rescue capsule, she said, "This was like watching Jimmy being born again...He was totally changed, a very different person, much more mature." Others commented that "we suffered so much, went through so much pain, so many anxious days together...In so many ways this was a life-changing experience."

In addition to the Lenten spirit of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the weeks of Lent bring us face to face, like the miners, with our temptations, some glimpses of God, our failings, the choices we face, personal sacrifices, and the sacrifice of Jesus himself for our salvation.

Human rough edges were rubbed off in the depths of the mine in Chile. It was as if people who were once like stones became cut and polished gems as they endured long days and nights in the depths of the earth.

The Lenten ministry of Jesus' Spirit fashions stones into jewels for Easter: loving us, finding us willing, then cutting and polishing us, each facet of our lives. This is the work of our loving God.

To the women of the parish, give the Holy Spirit the time and space to transform you this Lent. St. Matthew's **Annual Women's Retreat** will be held on **March 23-25** at Washington Retreat House in Northeast Washington, DC. To register, call Mary Latka at 202-232-3261 or pick up an information letter and reservation form at the Rectory.

Lenten Liturgies and Reconciliation

There is no better way to heed the clarion call of Lent than to join the Church in the celebration of the liturgies. The prayers and readings—the Liturgy of the Word—and the Liturgy of the Eucharist will give us the strength and the guidance to make the journey through the desert to the empty tomb of promise, to rise with Christ on Easter Sunday after being plunged into his death at our Baptism. If we make the journey with integrity, then we will arrive at the tomb and see the future, and, indeed, share in his resurrection.

Once again, the Cathedral will offer ample opportunities to prepare ourselves for this great Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord. Enclosed is our Lenten brochure (also on our parish website), which I urge you to keep close at hand.

The **Stations of the Cross**, in the form adopted by Pope John Paul II, will be celebrated in English on the Fridays of Lent at 6:00pm and in Spanish on Sundays at 2:15pm. The Stations of the Cross, or Via Crucis, are a journey made in the Holy Spirit, that divine fire that burned in the heart of Jesus and brought him to Calvary.

On the *Wednesdays of Lent* (except Ash Wednesday), priests will be available for the **Sacrament of Penance** (also known as confession or the Sacrament of Reconciliation), in both English and Spanish from 6:30 to 8:00 pm and on *April 4*, Wednesday of Holy Week, from 6:15 to 7:15pm. Regularly scheduled confessions will continue to be heard on weekdays from 11:00am to Noon and on Saturdays from 4:00 to 5:00pm. In addition, on Tuesday, *April 3*, we will hold a **Communal Penance Service** at 12:10pm with approximately 15 priests available for individual confessions.

Special Faith Formation Offerings

Join us for “**Thirsting for Living Water**,” our **Lenten Day of Recollection**, on Saturday, *February 25*. Sr. Patricia A. Parachini, SNJM, DMin returns to guide us in prayer and reflection on the gospel passage of John 4:5-42, the Woman at the Well, and our own thirsts, longings, and desires, which we believe only Jesus, the One who gives us eternal life, can satisfy. An excellent way to begin your Lenten journey, this retreat will begin at 9:00am and will conclude with our 12:10pm Mass. Please RSVP to Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org.

“**Pray All – Ways**,” St. Matthew’s **Lenten Lecture Series**, will focus on cultivating a richer attitude and practice of prayer in our daily lives. The five-part series will include talks on “Prayer in the Christian Life,” “Praying Together,” “Praying Alone,” “Personality and Prayer, and “Praying Better.” The series begins on Wednesday, *February 29* and continues every following Wednesday and Thursday in Lent. Wednesday lectures will be given from 12:45pm to 1:45pm, and Thursday lectures will be given from 7:00 to 8:00pm. All are welcome at any or all lectures.

Join us for a miniseries on “**Portraits of Discipleship in Scripture**” on Saturdays, *March 3 and 17* from 10:30 to 11:45am. Brother Augustine Marie Reisenauer, OP will speak on “The Sacrifice of Abraham,” and Brother Albert Duggan, OP will speak on “The Beloved Disciple,” respectively.

Adult Confirmation Preparation—Register by March 23

Did you know that St. Matthew’s offers a five-week preparation program for active adult Catholics who have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation? We invite all baptized adult Catholics who have received First Eucharist but not Confirmation to take advantage of this great opportunity! Sessions will be held on Thursdays, *April 19 and 26* and *May 3, 10, and 17* from 7:00 to 8:30pm with a retreat on Saturday, *May 19*. We will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, *May 27* (Memorial Day Weekend). To register, please contact Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org by Friday, *March 23*. (This preparation is for baptized Catholics who have celebrated their First Eucharist. For others, please contact Heather to discuss participation in the RCIA process.)

Lenten Music

Special music events include the Georgetown University Chapel Choir on *February 25* at the 5:30pm Mass; a concert by the Trinity University Choir (San Antonio, TX) on *March 11* at 7:30pm; and the Georgetown Visitation Madrigal Singers on *March 24* at the 5:30pm Mass. Our annual Laetare Vespers with our own Schola Cantorum will take place on *March 18*. Our traditional Tenebrae Service will be sung on *April 4*, Wednesday of Holy Week at 7:30pm; and our Good Friday Reflections on “The Seven Last Words” will be celebrated on *April 6* at Noon with Rev. Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, Professor of Pastoral Studies at Catholic University of America, and the Schola Cantorum. Visitors and parishioners alike have come to expect beautiful music at Cathedral liturgies and concerts. Even with the participation of many volunteer parishioners, providing a high level of music at the Cathedral depends significantly on parishioner financial support. If you appreciate the music program and would like to make a special gift as we prepare for Lent, please use an envelope in the pews or mail a gift or donate online. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

A Closing Request

Finally, a word about your Easter donation. This year, many have been generous with their weekly Offertory gift; however, the Offertory covers less than 40% of our costs. Your much-needed Easter donation will help to offset some of our major expenses. I ask you to please be generous. Easter offering envelopes and Easter flower envelopes are in the pews, and can be mailed or dropped in the Offertory basket or brought to the Rectory. You also may donate online. On that note, thanks to all who have signed up for our electronic giving program. If you haven’t yet, please consider it and give me a call—I will sign you up!

Please check our website at www.stmatthewscathedral.org regularly to stay updated on events and offerings. Please also keep the staff and me in your prayers and be assured of my prayers and best wishes for a blessed Lent.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector