



February 2013

My dear friends,

Last month, I sat in front of the television witnessing the pomp and circumstance of Inauguration Day. Excitement! History! Hope! I remember many years ago being at the Capitol for the Inauguration of President Kennedy. That, too, was a day of challenge and hope. Now is the time to pray for our nation and our elected officials.

Coming Together as One

Thomas Jefferson, at his Inauguration, said “Let us, then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind.” Four years ago, President Obama encouraged us “to celebrate those common ideals, share our hopes for a brighter future and resolve to advance our bold experiment.” He reminded us of the realities of the day and invited us to share the perseverance and idealism that our founding fathers displayed. We are called to bridge partisan divides and look for practical answers to difficult problems. If we can “come together and summon that great American spirit once again, we will meet the challenges of our time and write the next chapter in our American story.” That call to unite is as necessary today as it was in 2009.

As we move in hope towards greater unity as citizens, let us remember that our true hope rests in Jesus himself. As members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ is where we truly unite with one heart and one mind. Remember Jesus’ prayer to the Father, “that they may be one as we are one.” (John 17:23) Let us turn to Jesus, our hope, and ask his blessing on our President and our nation!

Beginning—and Sharing as One—Our Lenten Journey

Believe it or not, Lent is almost here! Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is celebrated this year on **February 13**. The Lenten season is filled with many challenges and opportunities. The greatest of these is not to turn it into solely an individual journey, but to recognize it as a journey that we share with our faith family, the Church. Lent is for the Church, the people of God, and as such, we journey as one.

Lenten Liturgies at the Cathedral

Lent is a special time in the life of a parish. 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 having been 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 this Lenten season, the Cathedral will offer ample opportunities to prepare for the great Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord. Enclosed is our Lenten brochure, which I urge you to keep close at hand in the weeks ahead. And don’t be shy about picking up an extra copy or two for your family, friends and co-workers.

On Ash Wednesday, **February 13**, we will wear the sign of penitence as a reminder of the need for our inner conversion, for the rending of our hearts, not our garments, and for our return to the Lord our God. (*Joel 2:13*). On Sunday, **February 17**, our catechumens and candidates will travel to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to participate with Cardinal Wuerl in the Rite of Election. Please keep these men and women in your prayers.

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 6pm and in Spanish on Sundays at 2:15pm. The Stations of the Cross, or Via Crucis, is a journey made in the Holy Spirit, that divine fire that burned in the heart of Jesus and brought him to Calvary. I urge you to take advantage of this beautiful devotion, which is particularly fitting for Lent.

Each Wednesday of Lent beginning on **February 20**, priests will be available for confessions in both English and Spanish from 6:30pm until 8pm (and from 6:15pm to 7:15pm on Wednesday of Holy Week). We will continue our regularly scheduled confessions on weekdays, 11am-Noon and on Saturdays, 4pm-5pm. On Tuesday, **March 26**, we will hold a Communal Penance Service at 12:10pm with at least 15 priests available for individual confessions.

Lenten Faith Formation Offerings

Join us for “*Teach Me Your Way, O Lord, That I May Walk in Your Truth: Revealing My Faith in a Secular Culture*,” our Lenten Morning of Recollection, on Saturday, **February 16**. What does it take to grow in faith and share it in today's culture? Suzanne Nelson, Adult Faith Formation Coordinator at St. Raphael Church in Rockville, MD, will lead us as we pray and reflect on this important question. We will begin at 9am in the North Conference Room and conclude with our 12:10pm Mass. All are welcome. A freewill offering will be taken. Please RSVP to Heather Kinney at hkinney@stmatthewscathedral.org.

“Voices of Catholic Spirituality”: St. Matthew's Lenten Lecture Series will highlight some of the great saints and mystics of our rich Catholic tradition. The five-week series will include talks on St. Clare, St. Benedict, Meister Eckhart, St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Avila and Julian of Norwich. The series begins on Wednesday, **February 20** and continues every following Wednesday and Thursday in Lent in the North Conference Room. Wednesday lectures will be given from 12:45pm to 1:45pm, and Thursday lectures will be given from 7pm to 8pm. All are welcome at any or all lectures.

Did you know that, during the Easter season, St. Matthew's offers a 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 11, 18, and 25** and **May 2** from 7pm to 9pm with a retreat on Saturday, **May 4**. We will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on Ascension Sunday, **May 12**. Registration forms are available in the Cathedral rectory or on the parish website. Please plan to register no later than Friday, **March 15**. (This preparation is only for those baptized Catholics who have already celebrated their First Eucharist. For others, please contact Heather Kinney to discuss participation in the RCIA process.)

Know Someone Who Is Looking for Something? Maybe It's God

As you make your own Lenten preparations, I ask you to take advantage of the opportunity the season gives us to reach out to people who you know have drifted from their faith. Please, take a few minutes to think about people in your life who might appreciate a special invitation to come back to Church, for prayer, Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Parish Listening Session

On Saturday, **February 23**, the parish will sponsor a Listening Session in which parishioners of all ages and all levels of participation in the life of the parish are invited to come together to reflect on five key elements of parish life: Worship, Faith Formation, Community, Service, and Administration/ Stewardship. We will consider how the parish can be the best we can be by identifying strengths on which we can build and areas for renewal and development. The session will be a collaborative experience of clergy and laity, a structured conversation with the goals of assessing the vitality of the parish and identifying proposals for carrying on the mission of the Church. The day will begin in the North Conference Room at 8:30am with coffee, juice, and coffeecake. Following a discussion of the five areas mentioned above, lunch will be served at 1pm. I hope that many of you will be able to participate. **For our planning, please contact us at 202-587-5143 or reply@stmatthewscathedral.org if you do plan to attend.** This is a major event both in the development of a vision and strategic plan for the parish in the next five years, and in the Archdiocesan Synod process, which will benefit from our work at the session. Please join us. We need YOUR input!

The Lenten season is always a very busy one around the Cathedral. Please keep the staff and me in your prayers and be assured of my prayers and personal best wishes for a blessed season of Lent.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. Msgr. W. Ronald Jameson
Rector