

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to start by saying congratulations to our First Eucharist Students on the beautiful job they did on their Blessing Cups. Linda shared with me that this has been a long standing tradition. St. Anthony's First Eucharist students have been making a blessing cup for 40 years. When St. Anthony's/St. Mary's twinned, the parishes continued the tradition and added making a loaf of bread. The cup is a symbol of our love for each other and it represents a shared love that grows by the love of our Lord. It is a sign of the trust we have in each other and the Lord. It also helps us to connect our family meal at home with the Eucharistic meal at Mass. The children use their cups for the very first time at their retreat dinner where they share their cup and bread with their families. Each child is given a Blessing Cup Book with meditations for family celebrations throughout the year. It is a wonderful way for the families to gather, pray and show support for one another, and this weekend I am pleased to bless these cups for our students.

Congratulations to Collin Mulryan who was baptized last Saturday at St. Mary's. Mr. Joe Widman (Collin's grandfather) shared that Collin is the 6th generation to be baptized at St. Mary!

This week the Catholic Church throughout the world celebrates the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. This year marks the 58th year of this celebration. The USCCB tells us: The purpose of World Day of Prayer for Vocations is to publicly fulfill the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). As a climax to a prayer that is continually offered throughout the Church, it affirms the primacy of faith and grace in all that concerns vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. While appreciating all vocations, the Church concentrates its attention this day on vocations to the ordained ministries (priesthood and diaconate), consecrated life in all its forms (male and female religious life, societies of apostolic life, consecrated virginity), secular institutes in their diversity of services and membership, and to the missionary life.

This Sunday is also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday." The Gospel this week speaks about the wolf who comes to "snatch and scatter" the sheep away from the fold. Jesus being the Good Shepherd, cares for us and keeps us safe. However, in our humanness, we can be drawn away from following Christ. Try to notice what are the wolves, the situations, the areas of your life where you are being drawn away. Jesus is the perfect shepherd. He is calling us and all we need to do is "hear" his voice and follow, especially when you feel you are being pulled away. Together, let us allow the spirit of the Risen Christ to guide us.

God Bless

Rev. Francis Mariadas, SAC