

Dear Parishioners in Christ,

Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

On this Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, I am reminded of the Gospel passage from the Gospel of Mark Mk 10:17-30, where we encounter a profound lesson on discipleship, priorities, and the ultimate call to follow Jesus. The rich man, who has kept all the commandments since his youth, is invited to take the next step, which requires detachment from worldly possessions and a deeper trust in God's providence. Jesus looks at him with love and challenges him to let go of what holds him back from fully embracing the kingdom of God.

This story reminds us that while keeping the commandments is essential, it is not enough. We are called to a radical trust in God, which may involve letting go of comfort, security, and wealth. Jesus emphasizes how difficult it is for those attached to material wealth to enter the kingdom. Yet, He also assures us that what seems impossible for us is possible for God.

For all of us, this passage is a reminder to reflect on what might be holding us back from fully following Jesus. It may not be material wealth, but perhaps something else—our time, priorities, or fears. Jesus calls each of us to be willing to surrender all for the sake of the Gospel, knowing that we will receive far more than we give up.

As I humbly step into the role of Parish Administrator at Our Lady of Mercy, I write to you with a heart full of gratitude and anticipation for this new chapter in our parish life. I want to take this moment to express our profound thanks to our former pastor, Fr. John McCarthy, for his seven years of spiritual leadership, dedication, and service to our parish community. His pastoral care and wisdom have blessed us all, and we will miss his presence here at Our Lady of Mercy.

Fr. John has guided us with faith and compassion, helping us grow in our relationship with Christ. As he moves on to his new ministry at St. Francis Assisi Church, Geenlawn, let us keep him in our prayers, asking God to continue blessing his work and service to the Church. Fr. John, we thank you for everything you have done and wish you every blessing as you embark on this new journey.

As I assume my new role, I ask for your prayers, support, and encouragement. Just as the rich man in today's Gospel was called to follow Christ more closely, I, too, am responding to the Lord's call to serve you with all my heart. I am confident that together, we will continue to build a strong, faith-filled community where everyone feels welcome and can grow in our love for God and each other.

Please know that I am here to serve you and walk with you in this journey of faith. I look forward to the times we share, the challenges we will face, and the many blessings that will come as we walk together in the footsteps of Christ.

May God bless you all abundantly, and may Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, continue to watch over and guide our parish.

In Christ's love,

Fr. Benedict