

Dear Friends,

On July 1, 2022, Archbishop Schnurr inaugurated a new chapter for Our Lady of the Visitation, St. Joseph and St. Jude parishes by bringing us together as a “new family of parishes”. As with any change we are faced with a range of emotions; joy, pain, excitement, and loss. Yet, we must work together to begin uniting our particular parishes while at the same time preserving that which makes our communities unique. Change will be inevitable and that can be frightening for some, but what will not change is our mission as a parish. Our mission is the same mission that Jesus gave to His disciples at His Ascension when He said, *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”* Mt 28:19-20).

Making disciples of all nations was not an easy task for the apostles. They encountered hardships, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom. Jesus never promised that it would be easy to carry his message of love and mercy to others. He was clear that sacrifice would be necessary. And the challenges we face are no different today as we begin to unite as a family of parishes committed to the work of “making disciples”—while also striving to become the saints that we were created to be. If we work together to face the challenges of the Church today by more effectively sharing ministries and resources and allowing our priests to focus on the spiritual work for which they were ordained, then we will together witness our unity as the Body of Christ that is essential to our mission.

One way that we can begin to unite is through a common name. Until now our family of parishes has been referred to as “SW-1”. This obviously is not the best name for a Catholic parish. The Archdiocese has given us permission to unite under a temporary (or perhaps permanent) name for our family.

When I was informed last December that I would be the pastor of “SW-1” I began to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet daily for our family which I continue to this day. I pray for the conversion of our minds and hearts so that we will be what God intends us to be: trusting in Jesus each step of the way. Our Lord once spoke these words to St. Faustina, *“My child, life on earth is a struggle; indeed, a great struggle for my kingdom. But fear not, because you are not alone. I am always supporting you, so lean on Me as you struggle, fearing nothing...”* What a beautiful reminder of Jesus to us as we begin the task of uniting as a new family. And so, rather than “SW-1”, I desire that we unite under the title, *“Divine Mercy” Family of Parishes*. We will retain

our individual parish names and saintly patrons but will unite under the family name of Divine Mercy. I cannot think of a better way to come together than to be Apostles of Mercy where we pray for each other, and show mercy and understanding, respect and patience toward one another. For to quote Pope St. John Paul II,



“Those who sincerely say ‘Jesus, I trust in You’ will find comfort in all their anxieties and fears. There is nothing more man needs than **Divine Mercy** – that love, which is benevolent, which is compassionate, which raises man above his weakness to the infinite heights to the holiness of God.”

May God bless us as we continue to work to become a parish family that witnesses His love and mercy to one another and to all the world!

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Donald Siciliano

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