

## From the Desk Of Fr. John

**Welcome Bishop Paprocki! We are rejoicing at the hope and promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit which will be imparted to our Confirmation Candidates through the laying on of your hands and anointing with Sacred Chrism.** This is a real celebration of the wonder of God's love to fill these young men and women with the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit that they may more fully live out their Catholic faith. Thank you Bishop Paprocki for coming and celebrating this special step in the faith life of our youth...and reinvigorating the life of our parish.

This is the Second Sunday of Lent and for our parish this year it is Confirmation Sunday. The preparation for the celebration of this sacrament has been ongoing for several years. The candidates have given themselves over to serious preparation in their faith formation, prayerfulness, and loving service to Church and the community. May this gift of the Spirit strengthen us all!

**Rite of Election & Recognition took place at the Cathedral in Springfield presided over by Bishop Paprocki.** The Rite of Election is the moment when the Bishop calls those Catechumens preparing for Baptism...it is their 'Election' or 'Call'...setting them on the path of intense preparation for full initiation at the Easter Vigil. Lent is that special six-week retreat that focuses on these Elect and renews those already Baptized. We pay special attention and devote special prayers for the Elect...especially with the three Scrutinies held on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. We all have recognized God's special grace and working in their lives and how the Lord is the one who has called them...chosen them...to be His disciples and witnesses in the world. We pray that they will be healed of all sin and strengthened in their resolve to embrace the way of Christ fully.

**We found ourselves following Jesus into the desert and heard that he was 'tested' by Satan.** Jesus overcame the temptations of the evil one whereas Adam had failed. Jesus will continue to be confronted by Satan's temptations throughout His life and ministry...but will completely overcome them on the cross.

Jesus comes to renew the face of the earth. Jesus comes to claim us and establish the reign of God. Jesus announces for us... 'The time of fulfillment...the Kingdom of God'...and invites us to believe in the Good News...the Gospel. We all have been tested in our Christian life and most of us (all of us) have failed in one way or another. But we find hope and strength in Christ Jesus who is our Savior and Lord. Jesus is to be the 'center of our life.' Jesus frees us from our sin and failures. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life who opens the way to the Father.

We may reflect at this time of new beginnings to see what we may need to change...what we need to turn away from... and how we can turn completely toward Jesus again. The Lord is counting on each one of us...he has called/ chosen/elected us as His own. He wants us to live and witness our faith to others and lead them along the path of life.

**This Sunday we are taken up with Peter, James and John on a high mountain.** It is a special moment of revelation for them, and we get the privilege of sharing in that moment. This is the experience of the Transfiguration of Jesus. We may recall that the disciples are on the journey with Jesus to the fulfillment of His mission and ministry in Jerusalem...but more importantly His passion, death and resurrection.

The disciples have been asked by Jesus two important questions. The one was about who people say that Jesus is...and the other Jesus directs toward the disciples...who do you say that I am. Peter responds with the correct insight... the Messiah of God. But we realize that they have a different picture of what that means... usually victory...mainly in a military and political way...over the occupying forces of Rome. But Jesus gives them a clearer and more complete picture of His true nature despite the humiliation He is about to undergo.

The voice of the Father could not be any clearer... 'This is my beloved Son...Listen to Him.' Our focus is to be on Jesus. We are to listen and follow...even to the cross. Jesus is the beloved 'Son of God.'