

From the Desk Of Fr. John

Anniversary...of the dedication of our new addition was June 25 of this past week. We celebrated that dedication with Bishop Paprocki and all our parish family on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (which was moved to that Sunday).

What a gift the Lord has given us and how He has blessed us. All our guests and we have been marveling at how well it has served our needs and those who have come to worship with us. God has blessed our parish family with a real spirit of generosity to give to this special cause, providing for the present and looking to the future. Thank you to everyone who has given and pledged for our campaign... 'Growing, Living and Building Together'!

Thank you again for your generosity and commitment to complete this 'Master Plan'... and help our parish grow as a family with true hospitality. However...there is still more to do... and we cannot quit now. Parking is of a premium when in the center of Uptown. Therefore, the Johnson Street project is essential for accessibility for everyone...and a bit of refreshing in the lower level of the church and sanctuary.

Gifts and pledges are still needed to fulfill our plan and meet our needs. If you have not had the opportunity, please consider making that pledge or giving that gift...even remembering our parish family in your financial planning and your will. We see the present need and yet we want to provide for future generations a welcoming place to be a family and celebrate the wonder of God's love.

St. John the Baptist is a powerful figure in the unfolding of God's plan for salvation and the coming of His Son. God prepared a mission for him before he was conceived. God called him when the time was ripe while he was in the desert. God set him aside as a prophet to 'prepare the way of the Lord.'

John was not in the political and religious center of things...Jerusalem and the Temple. John was in the desert...free of all those power struggles. However, John was calling people to an authentic religious life and real relationship with God. He admitted that he was not the Messiah...so he was not drawing people to himself for selfish pur-

poses. He said he was not worthy to unfasten the strap of the sandal of the one who was coming after him. John even said... 'He must increase and I must decrease.'

John responded to the call...despite being judged and condemned by religious and political powers. We are called to be faithful to the call the Lord has given us, for each of us has a special mission in this world and are set aside by God to fulfill it. We must help each other realize that call and help our children and youth to see and understand their calling and their mission as missionary disciples.

Ss. Peter & Paul is the feast we celebrate this weekend...normally held on June 28-29. But we are special...since we have them as our patron saints and the title of our parish church...and so we can move the feast to the nearest Sunday...and we did!

There are many episodes of Jesus' encounter with Peter...especially we can remember when he was first called while in the boat and the miraculous catch of fish. Peter felt unworthy to be called and might have wondered what it meant to be 'catching men'...instead of fish. That helped him grow as a disciple, though that growth was not without challenges and mistakes...since we can all remember his fateful denial of Jesus during the trial. But the Lord did not abandon him... rather He restored him and entrusted His flock to his care... 'Feed my lambs...tend my sheep.'

Paul was not initially a follower of Jesus...but a persecutor of all who claimed Jesus as the Messiah. The Lord never let that stand in His way to touch and change Paul's heart and life. Jesus appeared to him and commissioned him to be His apostle to the Gentiles. Paul fulfilled that mission under great duress and finally gave the greatest witness with his own blood.

We are all called...we all have a mission entrusted to us...and we must be faithful to that mission. To be a disciple comes first...a real and intentional disciple...committed to Jesus. But we also must grow as a disciple, reach out, and share our faith while making disciples. That is our mission!