

### From the Desk of the Pastor

Dear Friends,

September is almost half over. Fall is in the air. The days are getting shorter. School is off and running. Soon, summer will be a distant memory. September is also a time in parish life when we take a good and hard look at our stewardship. Today's Gospel helps us to do that in a proper perspective. The concluding words can sometimes ring rather harshly in our ears. "No servant can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and mammon." Sometimes it is difficult for us to not only hear these words, but to live them, and do so genuinely.

For months now, you have been hearing about the Archdiocesan initiative "Renew My Church." We have been faithfully praying the prayer since Pentecost Sunday. You may be asking why are we doing this, what does it all mean? Over the past ten years, all of our parishes have seen a dramatic decline in both church attendance and financial support. Some believe it is still stems from the sex abuse scandal brought to our attention in 2002. Some believe it is the fact that Catholic families are smaller, fewer children, and a changing family structure. Some believe it is the increasing secularization of our world society. I believe it is all of those things and perhaps even more. Whatever it is, the fact remains that in all parishes, pews are getting emptier and finances are becoming thinner. St. Tarcissus is no exception. Because of this reality, Archbishop Cupich has inaugurated this project to look at how we might become a different, yet stronger Church.

It has begun with the regionalization of our parish schools, Pope Francis Global Academy being the first one in this deanery. Now we will begin to look at how we might do this with parishes as well. All parishes will be grouped with others near them to begin to talk with each other and discern what we have in common with each other and how we can work together, sharing resources and personnel. St. Tarcissus will be grouped with St. Cornelius and St. Thecla to form one intentional group, hopefully moving in a direction that will lead us to a shared mission and vision for the future. This will require us to look at ourselves more honestly and ask "Am I a good and responsible steward of the gifts God has given me?" "Am I willing to make sacrifices in order to make the parish more vital and sustainable for the future?" "Am I doing all that I can do?"

In the weeks ahead, parishes will be asking these questions of their council members and staff leaders. It is my hope that the three parishes will come together in this effort and gather this information to be shared with the parishes at large. This information can help us get a clearer picture of ourselves and enable us to move forward in a positive direction, making us each stronger and more sustainable. Next month, you will receive the annual parish financial report, making all of this clearer.

In the meantime, I ask for your continued support and prayers as we do our best to serve the one Master, Jesus Christ, the pastor of every parish; to align ourselves with Him, His Gospel, and His mission. In doing so, we will have armed ourselves to fight the good fight and secure for ourselves a parish with strong mission vitality. While the future is always uncertain, it is ours to embrace with confidence, joy, and hope.

Let us do so, and make ourselves proud- proud to be St. Tarcissus Parish.

Fr. Mike



**RCIA** is a program for adult catechesis to both instruct and form people in the Catholic faith who are coming from either an unbaptized life or from another faith tradition.

**This program will begin in the latter part of September. If you are interested in joining us, please call the parish office at 773-763-8228 and leave your name and phone number and Fr. Solazzo will contact you.**