

# The Pastor's Column - October 5th, 2023



## Greetings from the West Coast!

I am writing to you from the annual Paulist Fathers Pastors, Superiors, and Directors meeting being held in Palos Verdes, California near Los Angeles. We are at a retreat house that overlooks the coast. The views are quite stunning. I am with many past pastors and associates from St. Paul's, notably Paulist Frs. Chuck Kullmann, Gilbert Martinez, and Matt Berrios. They all send their fond regards. Current residents of the New York Mother House Community are also well represented including Frs. Dave Dwyer, Ron Franco, James DiLuzio, and Thomas Kane.

The meetings are intended to aid and resource Paulists in leadership. Plus, it is a time to connect with brother Paulists for mutual support. We had three presenters who gave talks that are particularly relevant to our parish: Collaborative Ministry; Mission, Charism, Spirituality; and Philanthropy as Ministry. The first talk emphasized the need to be a listening church that works together and is attentive to the signs of

the times. This is apt as we gather parish leaders to begin forming a new Parish Council and Church leaders worldwide assemble in Rome for the "Synod on Synodality." The synodal process is a fancy term that simply means we must accompany and listen to one another, discerning together how we can advance Jesus' mission in the world.

The second speaker spoke about the Paulist mission as it pertains to our parish. I'd like to think St. Paul the Apostle Church is blessed by the special charism of the Paulist Fathers, who founded the Parish in 1858. A charism is a specific manifestation of the Holy Spirit given by God to be a sign of His Goodness and to build up the Church. Hospitality and welcome are two key aspects of the Paulist Charism and St. Paul's. We put people first and seek out those who are on the periphery of the Church, making room at the table for them. The speaker likened us to the Marine Corps: the first to go into dangerous circumstances. This is true with our groundbreaking work with divorced and remarried Catholics, those who have left the Church, and LGBTQIA+ Catholics.

Paulists have always been pioneers and innovators in ministry. From our New York City headquarters, we were the first to use the press, radio, television, and the internet for ministry. We were the first campus ministers at secular Universities. While small we have always been able to "punch about our weight." I believe this is because our charism has captivated people like you, fostering collaboration to create a parish community that values its unity and diversity.

"Time, Talent and Treasure" are the three words most often associated with stewardship and fundraising in the Church, but the final speaker suggested that three more important words are "Faith, Gratitude, and Prayer." A worshipping community that has great faith in God's promises, is thankful for all God has given, and prays together for inspiration, will be in the best position to be good stewards of God's gifts. As we continue to be grateful for God's presence in our lives and one another, we will be able to overcome any deficit we have in ministering to others.

There certainly have been many great ideas to think about this week. God willing, as I return to the Parish this weekend, I'll be better equipped to walk with you in our continued mission to be a parish that is an outward sign of God's great love for us all!

I've missed you all! See you soon!

God Bless,

Fr. Eric

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