

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS ...



It is good to be back!

This is our first Newsletter since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. We have missed communicating with you. Please know that all of you are in our prayers constantly during these challenging times of sickness and division in our country. We believe that there is union in prayer and that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God, especially a pandemic and the darkness of division that prevails in our country and in the church at this time.

So as our prayer still joins us together from six feet apart to joining ZOOM meetings and when we can't be in each other's presence, we pray that you will know God's mercy, forgiveness, healing, hope, love, and compassion. We pray that you will continue to love God and neighbor and live your faith as a beacon of light and hope in midst of the fear, anxiety, worry, depression, hatred, violence and separation of these days. We pray that you share the love and presence of God in your life with family and friends in any way that you are able and continue to care for those most in need.

Although we are learning to live by new norms and according to the conditions and limits imposed upon us by the virus and the need to create healthy and safe environments in society and the workplace, nothing really changes about living the faith. It is the same faith handed down to us from our ancestors, the apostles, and the early church. It is the same faith that announces a year of favor from the Lord. It is the same faith that sets captives free and brings sight to the blind. We need only to keep the faith, witness to it, put our faith into action and spread the GOOD NEWS everywhere.



Our encouragement comes from the season of Advent and the approaching Christmas season. Now is the time to repent and welcome the kingdom of God into your heart. Now is the time to prepare the way of the Lord and make straight the path and level the mountains and welcome the gift of salvation. Now is the time to be kind, understanding and compassionate.

Now is the time to be generous, caring, helpful, selfless, and willing to sacrifice for the good of another. Now is the time to love unconditionally. Now is the time "to love others without stopping to inquire if whether or not they are worthy." (Thomas Merton). Now is the time to collaborate for the common good. Now is the time to work for peace and justice. Now is the time to respect life and promote its dignity on all levels.

Now is the time to pray, "Come Lord Jesus." Quickly, Come." And then, with gratitude and great joy, Now is the time to sing, "Joy to the World." The Lord has truly come. And Merry Christmas to all!

~ Fr. Jim



St. Leo's Prayer Wall is a place where all, regardless of age, race or creed, are invited to sing God's praises, give Him thanks, and/or call upon His presence for help in times of need. The wall, a place of prayer for all peoples (much like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem), captures the faces of the community, as well as peacemakers and saints who have inspired us through the ages.

The Wall is a place for staff and volunteers, youth groups, community meetings, and for individuals who pass through our parking lot on the way to work, school, etc., to pray, reflect and pause. We invite you to share in this special way of prayer, joy, and thanksgiving. Praise God! God cares about every need in your life and knows what you need even before you ask Him for help. Our St. Leo the Great parish community promises to remember you in our private prayer, as well as in our communal prayer, which is to say that we are praying for you all the time.

All prayer requests are held in strictest confidence. **Send your prayer request to:** Saint Leo the Great Church, 2573 Saint Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225.