

# The Goal is Union – Not Uniformity

## ***Happy New Year to you, one and all!***

*The final portion of the year, or more correctly, as we began the new Liturgical Year with Advent, I began reflecting with you on the question, “Why do I go to Church?” I didn’t realize the full importance of that question when I first asked you. There is a huge amount of data available on the question of why people don’t come to Church. (see CARA – Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate) However, not a great deal of information or research appears to have been completed as to why people go to Church.*

*What a very fruitful experience it has been for me to reflect on that question, and to hear your responses to that question. Thank you very much for taking time to respond (including those in Ireland). While we were reflecting on this question during the Advent Season, I was very happy to find Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditations were running a sort of parallel tract on the objective of Spirituality. (see CAC – Center for Action and Contemplation) So many wonderful reflections were presented from his writings, and many were a real insight into the question of “Why do I go to Church?” (I also had the opportunity to attend Richard Rohr’s conference on December 1 & 2<sup>nd</sup> in New Orleans, as did a number of our parishioners.)*

*On December 21<sup>st</sup>, Richard’s reflection on “Heaven – The Home of Love” had the following insights:*

**“Mutual presence or intimacy is the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey. Perhaps this is why images of bride and bridegroom are so commonly used by the prophets, the Song of Songs, John the Baptist, Jesus, and in the last verses of the Bible where the marriage is symbolically consummated (Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17).**

**Remember, presence does not happen in the mind. All the mind can handle is before and after; it does not know how to be present in the now. That is the mind’s great limitation. This is why all teachers of prayer give us methods for literally moving “beyond the mind” (meta-noia), which so many Bibles since St. Jerome’s unfortunate Latin (poenitentia) translate as ‘repent.’”**

*(It is not surprising then, that we have difficulty staying focused at Mass.)*

**Richard goes on to say, “You don’t have to figure it all out or get everything right ahead of time. You just have to stay on the full journey. None of us know how to be perfect, but we can practice staying in union, staying connected. “Remain in me and I remain in you,” says Jesus (see John 15:7). It is about abiding, not performing. It is about holding to your core identity more than perfect behavior—which would only make you proud and self-sufficient—even if it were possible.**

**If you are already at home in love, you will easily and quickly go to the home of love, which is what we mean by heaven. God doesn’t keep anybody from heaven. But some people are not choosing heaven. If you don’t want a trusting relationship of love now, why would you want one later? We must be honest with ourselves.”**

*Throughout this year, may we all continue to visit this question, “Why do I go to Church?” that we may be strengthened in our relationship with Him. —Fr. Gerry*

## **December 31, 2017    The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**

### **Mass Intentions ~ January 1 - 7, 2018**

*Monday @ 9:00 am — People of the Parish*

*Tuesday @ 9:00 am — Charles Cahill (RIP)*

*Wednesday @ 6:00 pm — Michael Hehir (RIP)*

*Thursday @ 7:30 am — Johnnie Null (RIP)*

*Friday @ 10:00 am — Healing Mass*

*Saturday @ 5:30 pm — Carl Rainey (RIP)*

*Sunday @ 8:00 am — Ed Shaw (RIP)*

*Sunday @ 10:30 am — Edna Mangialardi (RIP)*



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*Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*    Thursday — 8 am to 12 noon, Friday — 8 am to 10 am, in the Chapel  
(No adoration Mon-Wed when office is closed Jan 1–3rd)

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**See our website for announcements, full prayer list, contact information, and more!**

**website: [www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com](http://www.saintpaulcatholicchurch.com)**

**office phone: 601-992-9547**

### **January 2018**

**Jan 1st — New Year's Day Mass:** 9:00am; Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God; World Day of Prayer for Peace

**Jan 5th — Healing Mass:** 10:00am; followed by Brunch in the gym; all are welcome

**Jan 6th — Armed Forces Support Ministry Rosary:** 4:45pm in the Chapel; all are welcome

**Jan 6 & 7th — Second Collection for Saltillo, Mexico Mission**



*Altar Flower Reservations is open on our website.*

*Please register now for specific dates throughout the year.*

*We offer Altar Flowers for \$70*

*& Blessed Mother Flowers for \$40.*

An excerpt from Pope Francis' 2018 Message for World Peace —

*"The wisdom of faith fosters a contemplative gaze that recognizes that all of us 'belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth, whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded.' These words evoke the biblical image of the new Jerusalem. The book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 60) and that of Revelation (chapter 21) describe the city with its gates always open to people of every nation, who marvel at it and fill it with riches. Peace is the sovereign that guides it and justice the principle that governs coexistence within it.*

*We must also turn this contemplative gaze to the cities where we live, 'a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares, [...] fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice' — in other words, fulfilling the promise of peace.'*