



May, 2026

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Happy Easter!! As we journey toward Pentecost, I apologize for the delay in this newsletter and for the absence of the last several. It has been a challenging winter and spring. Over the past 2½ years, I have focused on listening, strengthening our staff and leadership, and reestablishing sound administrative structures—work that was often behind the scenes, but necessary for renewed growth. That foundation is now helping us move forward. In this newsletter, I'd like to share key updates and introduce several new initiatives for the months ahead. In this issue:

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## Holy Week and Easter

Thank you to our staff and volunteers for making the Holy Week liturgies so beautiful and prayerful, helping many encounter Christ in His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The Easter Egg Hunt was a joy—thank you to the Knights of Columbus and the Ladies Auxiliary (and to the Easter Bunny!). At the Easter Vigil, we welcomed 21 people into the Church through Baptism, Confirmation,

and Eucharist. Please keep these newest members of our parish in your prayers, and thank you to Dr. Lauri Przybysz, our Pastoral Associate for Evangelization, and her mentors, catechists, and team.



I give thanks to God always on your account  
for the grace of God  
bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,  
that in him you were enriched in every way,  
with all discourse and all knowledge,  
as the testimony to Christ  
was confirmed among you,  
so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift  
as you wait for the revelation  
of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
He will keep you firm to the end,  
irreproachable on the day  
of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
God is faithful,  
and by him you were called  
to fellowship with his Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

The Sunrise Mass on Easter morning was beautiful and drew over 500 people. Our two Masses at Archbishop Spalding High School were also well attended. Thank you to the Spalding administration and staff for their hospitality, and to our own volunteers for setting up and cleaning up. A special word of thanks to Ian Gill, our Youth Minister, and the young people who grabbed umbrellas when the rain began and escorted parishioners to the door. As at Christmas, it is a blessing to celebrate in a way that is both liturgically beautiful and spiritually fruitful.

I'm less interested in the numbers than in what they represent: more people are encountering Christ through our parish. The Spirit is drawing new individuals and families, increasing volunteers, and raising up leaders - growth that also brings real challenges of space and resources

## Sacramental Celebrations

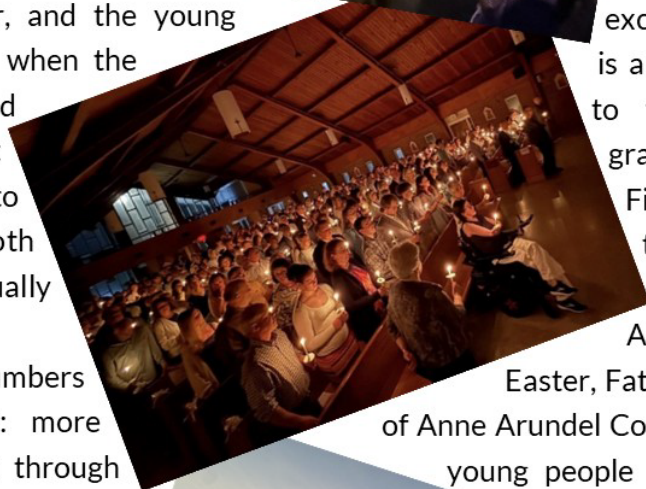
Earlier this spring we celebrated Confirmation. Bishop Adam Parker, a native son of our parish, confirmed 86 of our young people. Because of space constraints, we again faced the choice of limiting attendance or finding a larger venue. We chose the latter and, despite still needing two celebrations, we were able to welcome all of the family and friends of the confirmandi at the School of the Incarnation.

I'm grateful to administration and staff for such generosity and hospitality.

Just after Easter, we celebrated two group First Communions, welcoming more than 43 of our children to the Eucharistic table. Their excitement to receive Jesus is a beautiful reminder never to take the Eucharist for granted. A few individual First Communions will also take place at upcoming weekend Masses.

At a special Mass just after Easter, Father Ron - our "pied piper" of Anne Arundel County - helped welcome 13 young people into the Church through Baptism and/or Confirmation.

These students from Archbishop Spalding High School were drawn by his joyful chaplaincy and stepped forward to deepen their faith. They prepared carefully with their theology teachers and Father Ron, and their sponsors included classmates, teammates, family members, and friends. It is a powerful sign of what Pope Benedict XVI said when he came to visit New York, "The Church is alive; the Church is young!"



## Vocations, Vocations, Vocations

More than our parish celebrations, we are also celebrating three vocations of service to the Church. On May 10, Chris Marron was ordained to the permanent diaconate by Archbishop Lori, along with 13 classmates. He will serve with Father Evan Ponton, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Leo's. I have already spoken with Father Evan about increasing our participation with St. Vincent de Paul. As you know, we have been supporting them with financial assistance and with food every Friday evening (thanks to the Annual Appeal for the funding, and to Peggy Tyler and her weekly team for their faithful service). As parish consolidations continue, this ordination gives us a new opportunity to deepen our relationship with St. Vincent de Paul and to remain close to their parishioners. Stay tuned for more details.

Second, Andrew Chase will be ordained to the transitional diaconate by Archbishop Lori on Saturday, May 17. The son of Deacon Keith and Mrs. Pauline Chase, Andrew grew up in our parish. He will continue his pastoral ministry at St. Joseph's in Cockeysville, and then return to Rome for two years to complete his studies in Church history. God willing, he will be ordained a priest at this time next year. One of Andrew's classmates is Michael Moore, who served as a summer seminarian here several years ago.

Third, Brother José Rosa, OSB - who is serving and studying with the Benedictines at St. Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania - will be ordained to the priesthood on May 23 in Latrobe. The son of Alex and Margaret Rosa, he grew up in our parish as "Jimmy." After attending St. Vincent College, he was drawn to Benedictine life and, after completing his degree, entered religious life and took the name Brother José.

Please pray for each of these men, that God will continue to open their hearts and configure them ever more closely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Please also pray for all our young people - those called to priesthood and religious life, and those called to marriage or committed single life - that each may discern God's will and be well supported in following it.

## Financial Updates

Last October we reflected on stewardship - giving to God from our time, talent, and treasure. I'm grateful to those who responded with renewed generosity, often at real sacrifice. In recent years, while we ended the year in the black overall, our operating income has not consistently matched expenses, requiring us to draw from savings. I'm pleased to report that offertory giving has increased by nearly 10%. Even so, rising costs - especially electricity, which has almost doubled - meaning we must remain attentive to our operating needs. Please be



especially intentional during the summer months, which are always our most difficult.

## Ministry and Service

We have seen a significant increase in volunteers across many ministries - sacristans, servers, ushers, lectors, and musicians. New groups (including the Ladies Auxiliary to the Knights of Columbus) and growing outreach efforts such as Walking with Moms in Need are helping us serve more effectively and reach beyond our walls. Scott Leroux, Associate for Evangelization, has also been working with ministry leaders to build on the momentum of our ministry fair. A future newsletter will focus on forming current leaders and raising up new ones to strengthen our mission.

## Liturgy at the Fields

With our growing number of liturgical ministers, it's time to review our liturgical policies and tighten them where needed. The Archdiocese has issued updated guidelines, especially regarding the Eucharist, and some of our current practices are holdovers from COVID or are simply outdated. In addition to our policies, we will also review how we use the sanctuary space and try a few configurations, including adjustments for the expanding choir. Over the summer, we will put our practices in writing (and create a few short videos) so they are clear, consistent, and efficient. Finally, thanks to an anonymous donor for a generous \$10,000 donation, we can improve our sacristies and other behind-the-scenes spaces.

## Parish Communications

Thanks also to an anonymous donor who came forward looking to help, expressly desiring to fund



one of our unfunded priorities. we can begin addressing a longstanding communications need. We have been without a communications director since Erma Leroux pioneered the role here under Msgr. Jay - transforming the bulletin, launching our web presence, helping us begin social media - and the need has only grown since she left two years ago. In consultation with staff and parish leadership, I asked the donor to fund the hiring of a communications director. We are beginning the search immediately. I'm deeply grateful for this support, which will strengthen our parish communications (including more timely monthly newsletters). More details soon.

## Welcoming Christ

*When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, Jesus resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?" Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village. Luke 9:51-56*

A key focus of the Pastorate Project and the Strategic and Pastoral Plans (see below) is forming missionary disciples and building a community that looks outward. In the months ahead, we will return to these themes - but we are not waiting. We are beginning now with Radical Welcome, one of the core mission priorities and a clear mark of a healthy parish. Radical Welcome means putting others first, especially those who are new, uncertain, or searching.

It begins with welcoming Christ and has two inseparable dimensions: first, we welcome every person who comes to us as we would welcome Jesus Himself - with enthusiasm, hospitality, and generosity. Second, we welcome each person as Jesus would—without judgment, prerequisites, or unnecessary barriers. These are two sides of the same coin: recognizing Christ who comes to us today in the presence of others.

Both dimensions challenge us personally and as a parish, but both are essential if we hope to grow as disciples and as a Christian community. Radical Welcome is not only an invitation to worship; it is an invitation to belong and to walk with one another on the journey of faith. It calls us beyond our comfort zones, invites us to set aside stereotypes and misconceptions, follow the example of Jesus, and share the Good News.



Hopefully you've noticed the progress in cleaning up key spaces - especially the narthex and breezeway. Along with the parking lot at our main entrance, these areas will support the first steps of Radical Welcome: making the experience of arriving at Our Lady of the Fields more inviting, clear, and accessible, especially for those visiting for the first time. In response to concerns about accessibility, we will add more handicapped parking in the upper lot. Inside, we will rework the small narthex by replacing mismatched seating with a simple welcome desk to greet parishioners and newcomers, answer questions, and provide

basic services (such as Mass cards), removing the need to open the parish office on Sundays. This will also help us to have better seating for those in wheel chairs. We will clear and refresh the breezeway to create a family-friendly space, including improved seating and displays where parents with young children can step out briefly without losing the sense of the Mass.

We will also clean out and simplify the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Over the years, statues and other items have accumulated and can draw attention away from the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus. Our goal is to restore the chapel's original simplicity so that all who come can pray more attentively. We are also developing an updated schedule to make visits to the chapel easier and more regular. Stay tuned for more details and opportunities.

## Strategic and Pastoral Plans

Radical Welcome is an important first step, but there is much more ahead. Two years of listening and observation have highlighted significant needs - both in our facilities and in our pastoral outreach. Building priorities include the organ reception (with related lighting and sanctuary updates), replacement of exterior doors, improved security, bathroom renovations, aging air conditioning systems, stronger livestream capabilities, replacement of the fire panel damaged in an electrical storm, and an expansion of the cemetery. These projects are costly and will require sacrifice and careful stewardship.

To address these needs wisely, we have received permission from the Archdiocese to engage a planning firm (including an architect) to help us assess our current facilities, set priorities, and develop a sustainable strategy for the future. This process typically takes about a year and includes listening sessions with parishioners and groups.

At the same time, we will be reviewing our pastoral needs and processes. In 2013, Pope Francis wrote the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), calling dioceses and parishes throughout the world to share the joy of Jesus Christ:

1. The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come...

28. The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation,

charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

Pope Francis,  
*Evangelii Gaudium*, ## 1,28 November 2013

In 2015, Archbishop Lori responded in our Archdiocese with his pastoral letter, *A Light Brightly Visible*, raising important questions about discipleship and mission based on a series of talks he gave at a series of regional meetings that were held all around the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"The subject of these meetings was the core mission of the Church of Baltimore - the same mission entrusted to the Apostles by the Risen Lord before He ascended into heaven: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19). These meetings dealt with the same questions that preoccupied the Apostles and the first disciples as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles:

Are we equipped to fulfill the great commission the Lord has given us?

Do we personally have the qualities of mind, heart, and spirit to take up this task?

Are our parishes ready to respond to the challenges of the mission in our times?

What decisions need to be made so that we can marshal the resources the Lord has given us to do the work of the Gospel?

Are there ways we can pull together as a Catholic community to proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel more effectively in the City of Baltimore and the nine counties of Maryland that comprise the Archdiocese?

How can we reach out more dynamically to those who have left and those who are searching?

Pope Francis... "reading the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel" ...and telling you and me to do the same. The Pope is telling me as your bishop to look with the fresh eyes of the Gospel at what the mission requires of us in our time and place... We do not wage war against the culture but recognize instead that in every age the Gospel we preach both engages the ambient culture and at the same time challenges it. Pope Francis is telling us to find those points of engagement and proceed with joy, just as St. John Paul II before him told us to evangelize the culture "from within." ... So, Pope Francis is challenging me at a deep and personal level. It is my hope and prayer that you, as priests, deacons, religious, parish leaders and parishioners, are feeling the challenge too ...We have to be willing to ask how we are responding to the vocation to discipleship we received on the day of our Baptism... We are seeking to create a team that can work with parishes and schools to help them do their job well, in areas such as fostering marriage and family, catechesis and missionary outreach. In other words, we are seeking to undergo missionary conversion from within so

that we might be a catalyst in missionary transformation across the Archdiocese.

Archbishop William Lori,  
**A Light Brightly Visible**, July 2015

These are not merely documents for history nor were they written to sit on the proverbial shelf somewhere. They led to the Pastorate Process, in which parishes assess themselves across six core mission priorities: Liturgy, Welcome, Encounter, Accompaniment, Sending, and Mission Support. Msgr. Jay completed much of this work here just before COVID; it was then placed on hold. My goal is to revive, review, and refresh that work in light of how much has changed in recent years. Deacon Brian Ribblett will lead this effort, in coordination with Jeff Matton and the strategic plan.

These are not simply surveys where the highest vote wins. It is a season of prayer and discernment - honestly naming our needs, challenges, joys, and hopes - so we can recognize God's blessings and respond and go where He is calling us. Ultimately, we return to the Lord's command (Mt. 28:19-20):

*Go, therefore,  
and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,  
teaching them to observe  
all I have commanded you.  
And behold, I am with you always,  
until the end of the age."*

Even as we plan for buildings, policies, and procedures, we cannot lose sight of our pastoral mission. When these efforts are complete, we will have a clearer sense of where we are, where God is calling us, and the steps needed to move forward. The result will be a plan that addresses immediate needs while keeping site of the Mission and Vision for years to come.

WHEW! That's a lot to take in, especially the section on strategic and pastoral planning. In the

coming weeks, I will host parish meetings (and record them) to review these plans in more detail and answer questions. Stay tuned!!

## A Word of Gratitude

In the meantime, I want to express my gratitude for all of you who have really stepped up to the plate to share in the Mission and Vision we are discerning. So many of you have increased your giving and sacrificed additional hours of your time to help where needed. I know that there are so many challenges and that all resources, especially time and money, are short. What a grace and a blessing it is that, as we discern God's call for us as individual disciples and as a parish community, I see us coming together in so many new and creative ways not only to maintain what we do but reach out to do even greater things for God. I am most grateful for the prayers for our parish and for me. I often joke as I see someone entering the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, "Make sure you pray for your pastor!" Invariably they have responded that they already are and do so every day!

## A Personal Note

Let me close on a personal note. Thank you for your prayers and condolences for me and for my sister after the loss of her husband. Your support has meant a great deal to us. I hope she will be able to spend some time here with us this summer to meet you and offer her thanks in person. With the loss of my brother-in-law, I am trying to be more present to my family, especially my sister, so that she is not alone. I recently traveled to Milwaukee to surprise her for her 60th birthday, and we were grateful to be together - to laugh and to cry. Next week, I'll meet her in Philadelphia for the graduation of her son, my nephew, from Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University. Afterward, they (along with my niece and her husband) will go to the Jersey Shore while I

return home. On June 3, I will travel to Queens, New York, for the Confirmation of my nephew—my brother's son—who is also graduating from 8th grade this year. Hard to believe. Please keep them all in your prayers. And know of my prayers for you and for all those you love.

In the Risen Lord,  
*Fu. Jas.*

(Rev. Msgr.) Robert Jaskot, Pastor

## For Further Study and Reflection

I would encourage you very to take some time this summer to read the following resources to know more of the “what” and “why” we are working to accomplish. The documents from both the Universal Church and the Archdiocese here in Baltimore are easy to read and offer a great insight that can help you understand what it means to be a Missionary Disciple. Also, the book, **Rebuilt** offers a framework that we’re using to help discern and follow God’s will.

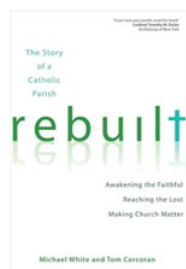


### **Evangelii Gaudium (the Joy of the Gospel)**

Pope Francis

Vatican Press 2013

Available on line at: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)

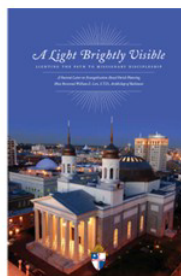


### **Rebuilt: Assisting the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Matter**

Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran

Ave Maria Press, 2013

Available in the Parish Office or on Amazon.com



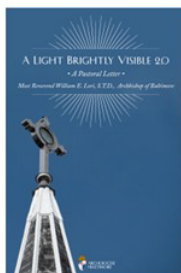
### **A Light Brightly Visible 1.0**

**Lighting the Path to Missionary Discipleship**

Archbishop William E. Lori

Archdiocese of Baltimore 2015

I am working to get this available on-line. If need be, I can send a PDF copy to anyone who requests it.

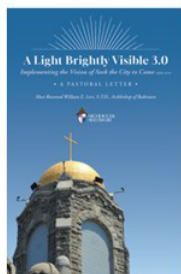


### **A Light Brightly Visible 2.0**

Archbishop William E. Lori

Archdiocese of Baltimore 2021

Available on line at: <https://www.archbalt.org/a-light-brightly-visible-2-0/>



### **A Light Brightly Visible 3.0**

**Implementing the Vision of Seek the City to Come**

Archbishop William E. Lori

Archdiocese of Baltimore 2025

Available on line at: <https://www.archbalt.org/a-light-brightly-visible-2-0/>

Let us leave a little room for reflection in our lives, room too for silence. Let us look within ourselves and see whether there is some delightful hidden place inside where we can be free of noise and argument. Let us hear the Word of God in stillness and perhaps we will then come to understand it.

Saint Augustine