

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTORAL STAFF



Dear Parishioners and Visitors,

This weekend we embrace the Body of Christ in so many ways: the body that is the Church (both local and global); the body and blood of Christ that feed us through the Eucharist; the family body that we belong to; and our own human bodies. Which-

ever way we choose to focus, our celebration honors Jesus Christ as our personal and corporate center, feeding us, guiding us and connecting us to one another. Later this week on Friday, June 12, the Church will celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, which reminds us of how God's love and mercy are at the "heart" of divine existence. And since the heart is what pumps life-giving blood through the human body, just so the heart of God circulates love into the Body of Christ, sustaining it. As members of Christ's Body, we are invited to imbibe God's love and manifest it to the world. The perspective here is indeed a Christian one, yet we must never forget that all people are our brothers and sisters, baptized or not, and deserving of our love and care. Let's take a brief look at each part of the body:

**THE BODY that is HUMAN** God has given each of us a human body to care for and to use for divine purposes. Our bodies are not really our own – they are a gift from God for God's glory. Early Church Patriarch, St. Irenaeus (130-202 AD) reminds us that the glory of God is a human being fully alive! Consider what you do to care for your body so that it will be at maximum potential and fully alive to God! At points throughout our life, our bodies will suffer illness and disease and the day will come when Sister death will eventually claim our mortal bodies. This we know. Yet while we have use of them, let us dedicate every part of our bodies to God's glory. For the last 25 years or so, part of my morning ritual after a shower is to bless every part of my body for God's purposes. The blessing prayer is somewhat like a cross between the prayer Catholics recite after the Gospel is announced and the Breastplate of St. Patrick. My version goes something like this: May God be in my mind, my words, my song, my heart (my emotional center), my digestive system, my bones (praying most especially for my spine these days), my hands and feet to serve, and my sexual energy (which I understand to be relational energy, the part that connects

me to others, in chastity, according to the life I have chosen and the vows I have made). I normally use blessed oil of some kind during this ritual. It is one of the ways I try to dedicate my entire self to God each day. I invite you to find a daily way to consecrate your body to God, since each of our bodies, through baptism, is an individual body of and for Christ.

**THE BODY that is FAMILY** God has arranged that we be born into families. A family will never give us everything we need and sometimes they offer us very little. The best of families, however, prepare us well to become life-giving members of the greater body. Consider how you might be a blessing for your family.

**THE BODY that is PARISH** The Catholic Church has divided the world into parishes within dioceses. Parishes are the means through which the sacraments are distributed, fostering the Body of Christ. Structurally, our parish has been showing her age and decrepitude and is in need of a makeover! The church renovation was completed a few years back and now it is time to breathe new life into the grounds and infrastructure which will begin this summer.

**THE BODY that is UNIVERSAL CHURCH** We must never forget that we are connected globally as a Catholic Church. Although our headquarters, the Vatican, lies in Europe, the greater population and practice of Catholicism lies south of the equator. It is difficult to find a balance that addresses the needs of all people in the world. We must trust in the Holy Spirit to find our way.

**THE BODY that is EUCHARIST** Christ has blessed us with the gift of his very self so that we might consume him and grow to be like him. He humbles himself, disguised as bread and wine so that we might humble ourselves before others. Let us never take for granted the precious gift we have in the Body of Christ shared around the table that gathers us each week.

Together with you in the Body of Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fr. Daniel F. Barica, ofm, Pastor".

Fr. Daniel F. Barica, ofm, Pastor