

## After the Heart of Jesus ...

*The LORD said to me: You are my servant,  
Israel, through whom I show my glory.  
Now the LORD has spoken  
who formed me as his servant from the womb.  
Isaiah 49:3,5*



This passage from Isaiah is from this Sunday's first reading. It tells us that we are formed by and known to God in the womb. God speaks to us, calling us there. What a powerful image of life's beginnings, capturing the purpose of life from the moment of conception. We do not just exist in the womb as cells – God has a plan for us. Unfortunately the fundamental right to life, the right to be born does not exist in our country. The sad reality is that abortion remains legal in our nation.

I sometimes wonder how many servants of God called from the womb were never able to fulfill their call. How many diseases go uncured, how many discoveries are left covered as mysteries, how many wars have been kept fighting because the doctors and discoverers and peacemakers were not permitted to be born?

Last year a group of us from St. Walter Parish went to Washington for the Annual March for Life that commemorates the anniversary of the most egregious violation of human rights through the Supreme Court decision Roe vs. Wade. It was amazing to see the crowds of young people, especially young Catholics, who came to add their voices for Life. It was not a group of senior citizens expressing their last gasp of energy for unborn babies – it was a vibrant gathering of over 100,000 teens and young adults who know the stakes are high if we do not fight for everyone's rights, especially of the unborn. The timing of the march this year does not allow us to attend this week's rally, but we will be there in spirit.



Please complete the Spiritual Life Survey which is available online through our parish website. The survey will be available only until the end of the month. The survey provides an independently collected, anonymous way to gather information about what people are looking for in the parish and how we are doing with what we provide. The results will be used to help us plan our future programs and efforts in ministry to adults. We want to provide the best service and programs possible.

Next week there is a special envelope and collection for the Church in Latin America. I have been to Latin America several times to visit our sister diocese of Sucre, Bolivia. The Church there faces many difficulties as it not only shares the Gospel message of Jesus Christ but also helps the poor with basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. You would not likely think of coming to St. Walter Parish House for medical attention, but in many areas, the Church is the only place for many to find help and hope with a wide variety of needs. Please be generous as we reach out to our brothers and sisters in Latin America.

Please mark the dates of February 17 to 20 aside for our Parish Lenten Mission. The theme of the Mission will be "By His Wounds we are Healed" and will focus on healing. The four evenings of prayer, celebration, and fellowship will invite us to encounter the power of Christ's healing either for ourselves or for others we love. The Mission will conclude with a special healing Mass celebrated by Father Mario on Wednesday, February 20. Please see next week's bulletin concerning specific needs we have for help with the mission. In the meantime, please pray for the mission's success.

Catholic Schools Week begins next Sunday, January 27. There will be special events planned throughout that week. Next weekend at the 5:00 PM Saturday, and the 9:00 AM, 10:30 AM, and 12:00 Noon Masses, children from St. Walter School will share a prayerful communion meditation. We are very proud to have the largest (and best!) Catholic school in the Diocese.



As we celebrate the many gifts God gives us, may we choose to serve ...

After the Heart of Jesus!  
*Father John*