

“Pray. Serve. Receive.”

A Letter from Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis to the Parish

In 1920 Mathilda McGill and her daughters left her native Scotland for North America. She had already sent her sons to Canada to find a home, which they did. When Mrs. McGill and the girls finally arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia, the boys met their family at the train station, loaded up a truck with their belongings and drove to the house which they had rented. While things were being unloaded, Catherine, the oldest in the family, looked around for her mother and couldn't find her. Several minutes later Mrs. McGill showed up and Catherine asked where she'd been. *“I've been to the local parish church”* was the reply. *“I've registered and gotten our contribution envelopes.”* This was before she'd even set foot in her new house! That spirit was one that was passed down to her children, then her grandchildren and ultimately to some of the great grandchildren. This story is true. You see, Mathilda McGill was my great-grandmother, a Scot widow who packed up her family, and came to a new world after the devastation of World War I to begin a new life. She also knew what was of importance in their lives, and the Church and the support of the Church, were primary.

Ludwiga Stashinka and her husband, Wincenty, immigrants from Poland and Lithuania, had the same belief system. When they arrived in a coal mining town in Eastern Pennsylvania at the beginning of the 20th century they immediately became involved in their local parish, helping to build the new church. Ludwiga and Wincenty were my paternal grandparents.

When I think back on the hardships my ancestors and others like them endured in their passage to America, and how important their faith was to them I cannot help but marvel how the Holy Spirit impacted the beauty of their lives. To be sure, they were far from perfect but they took what talents they had and, emboldened by their faith, put them to use for the glory of God and the growth of His Church. Like the widow in today's gospel, offering her few pennies for the upkeep of the Temple, so did they for their Church. And the Lord was pleased.

In many ways I am an heir to their steadfast devotion to Christ and I'm sure they're prayers and example are part of the reason I am a priest today. I'm also sure that many of you share a similar story.

Our parish of San Rafael was built by people with a vision almost fifty years ago. We have established the Church in Rancho Bernardo that is the envy of many and we all certainly ought to be proud of what we have. Due to the generosity of this faith-filled community we have been able to maintain ministries for all levels of our people, provide quality religious education, build and maintain beautiful buildings that are a landmark of the presence of the Church in our neighborhood. During the recent pandemic we kept the parish alive by live-streaming our liturgies when we couldn't meet indoors, provided accommodation for Mass outdoors, often times in near freezing weather, kept the church open for private prayer and not for a single week did we not offer the Sacrament of Penance, confessions, when some parishes simply closed down. We have been able to do all of this because of the faith-filled generosity of all of us at San Rafael. Much of this was financially expensive (security cameras, live-stream equipment, outdoor speakers) but we did it – because it was the only thing to do!

For the past couple of years, though, as you look at the weekly offering received at Mass, you'll see that we rarely, rarely, meet our budget. As a result, I must come to you to ask for your help in keeping our parish the strong, vibrant place we know it to be.

As you know, inflation is hitting everyone hard. Fr. Niru and I do our own grocery shopping and I am struck by how much the cost of groceries has gone up. Inflation hits the parish, too, and we must meet the costs.

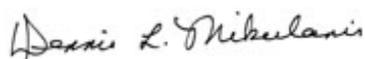
By this time you should have received information in the mail asking you to consider prayerfully how you can help us meet our goals. You all should have received a brochure and commitment card by this time which you can also find online by visiting the parish website. Some are also available in the vestibule of the church.

What I'm asking of you is to prayerfully consider increasing your donation to the parish *if you can*. If you are not now a regular contributor to San Rafael and consider yourself a parishioner, please – please – join us in our campaign. Please help us help each other. PRAY for guidance, reflect on what you RECEIVE here at the parish, and help to SERVE the parish with your financial contributions. Fill out the pledge cards and either drop them in the offering basket or mail them to the parish office. We are relying on everyone to participate.

Just to let you know, I return a portion of my salary back to the parish as my commitment to our community of Faith and I intend to increase my monthly donation along with you.

Please join us and know that what we do is done “so that in all things God may be glorified.”

Yours in Christ,



Msgr. Dennis L. Mikulanis, S.T.D.
Pastor