
MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

FR. ROB MEROLA

Dear and Beloved Friends,

Oh, St. Matthew's—what a wonderful church you are!

In the pages that follow, you will see abundant evidence of this. It's glorious. In a year when pretty much everyone everywhere was trying to figure out what it means to do church after the pandemic, you just dove right in and did what needed to be done. You gathered for worship. You loved well. You served often. You kept on learning (so important!) You gave big. You faithfully kept our mission going, knowing and sharing God's love with such joy and enthusiasm!

Yes, it was a challenging year. But it was also sweet beyond all measure and expectation, with such good times and wonderful moments.

A huge part of this was the staff. They brought such creativity and commitment and passion to work each and every day. They brought the drive to work hard, and when necessary, to work long as well. Most of that is behind the scenes, without notice or commendation. But it is there, believe me. They do it for love.

But as much as the staff does, there simply aren't enough of us or enough hours in the day to do all that needs to be done. I believe as strongly as ever that there is nothing more important than the work of God; our future as individuals and a race hinges on that work more now than ever. Pain and suffering are relieved. Needs are met. Healing occurs. Hearts are changed. Divides are bridged and sometimes even disappear.

That means we need you. So much of the story of St. Matthew's, some of the most important chapters of all, have been written by lay people and volunteers. A huge part of that is that doing the work God has given each of us to do is how God brings connection, meaning, and fulfillment to our lives. I can't wait to see the ways you will keep our story going in 2023.

Some areas of focus this year will be:

- Better welcoming our guests,
- Strengthening our connections through small groups,
- Loving our youth like never before,
- Helping all of us better understand what it means to be faithful with gifts God has entrusted to us, and simply to have fun doing these things in ways that surprise and delight.

In 2023, let's love BIG. Let's keep learning more and more about how we do that. Let's commit ourselves to taking the next step in our spiritual journey, whatever that may be. Let's be bold and brave and courageous and, by God's grace and with God's help, make this a year we will never, ever, forget.

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With much love and affection,
Rob+

