

THANK YOU TO VOLUNTEERS AT ABVM PARISH DURING VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

September 14, 2019

by

Fr. Michael Ume, PASTOR.

Good Evening, everyone!

It's been said that there are two words that are simple to say but not said enough "Thank You." I cannot begin to express how grateful I am to have you all here tonight. Thank you so much for coming. Tonight's Volunteer's appreciation dinner is not the first in the history of this parish, but it is my first one. As a new Pastor of this wonderful Catholic community, I'm truly thankful to everyone who volunteered their time and talent to keep this community going. Look around and see the number of people who are here. This is just a fraction of the number of people it takes to keep this community a truly Christian community that Praises, Adores and Glorifies God and tries to love their neighbors. Everyone here is committed to this parish. You keep our parish and our school going. I hope everyone will enjoy themselves tonight!

I invited you here tonight to say THANK YOU. Our community would not be what it is without the tapestry of your talents. A few months ago, I celebrated a funeral mass for one of my former parishioners. The family was hurting, and they preferred to stay in their pews rather than participate in the liturgy. So, I read the first reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second reading, Gospel, and the general intercession. I was the sacristan, the altar server. I also led the entrance and exit hymns. At the end of the mass, I realized what Sunday mass would look like if we didn't have Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Musicians, Altar Servers and Sacristans. So, I thank these ministers for helping us to focus on the main purpose of liturgy which is to Praise, Adore and Glorify God.

Few days ago, a man came to my office, and he wanted to know what the church does for social justice. He wanted to know how we help our neighbors. He also wanted to know how our parish reaches out to the wider community? I told him all about the marvelous ministry that St. Vincent De Paul, Knight of Columbus, Visitation Ministry, Ministry to the Sick and Homebound do. And how through Friends In Deed we collaborate with other churches in Pasadena to help our needy brothers and sisters. I explained to him what our Water Project and Habitat for Humanity do. At the end of our conversation he was surprised to know that our Catholic Community takes Matthew 25:31-46 seriously.

**Thank
You**

Then he asked me about the governing of the community. My answer was simple. It is a collaborative effort. We have professional, dedicated and enthusiastic members of both the Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council. We work together to make sure the community is going in the right direction. We also have a liturgy committee. We have about 29 ministries in the Parish, all working together like a fine-tuned machine. Our goal is to work together as one body as described in the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 12:12-46. We are one body. And every ministry at our Parish is important. There is no ministry that is insignificant. None of them is higher than another, just like no part of the body is more important than another. They are all equally important. The part you play makes the community grow harmoniously. I appreciate the part you are playing.

When we say the Catholic Community of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Pasadena, we mean the Parish and the School. Both must work hand in hand. The Parishioners must support the school by attending some of their activities and programs. The school must also support the Parish and participate actively in Parish events and activities. We are two sides of the same coin.

At 5 pm mass, a member of the Parish Pastoral Council asked everyone to participate in a survey about our church. The purpose of the survey is to hear what you think about our Parish. This will help us to formulate a mission statement for the Parish. Some people have returned their survey and I have read a few of them. There is something consistent in the ones I've read so far. They all mentioned "Hospitality" as our strength. People feel welcome and at home in the Parish. My dear brothers and sisters let us keep it that way. It is not the building that is hospitable; it is the people inside the building. It is you and I who are hospitable. And, it's reasonable for each one of us to occasionally ask ourselves, how hospitable am I? I made a name tag for everyone for this evening gathering. The reason is help us in deepening our sense of hospitality. That minister that you see every Sunday but does not know his or her name. This is your opportunity to know his or her name.

It is reasonable for you to anticipate changes when a new pastor joins your Parish. However, there is a Catholic song that says "Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. I am not here to change what my three predecessors have done. Rather I am here to continue where they stopped, update and deepen what was done. A case in point, while it is okay to build a Parish hall in the 50s without a bathroom, it is not okay to have a hall without bathroom today. While our Parishioners and our Pastors in the 50s, 60s and 70s gave us these beautiful buildings, it is now our responsibility to update them and make them functional for us today. I pray that when the time comes for us to update these buildings, I will receive your cooperation and goodwill.

St. Ambrose said; "No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." So, as I continue my ministry as your pastor, I want to again say THANK YOU for all that you have done, all that you are doing and all you will continue to do for this community. I also want to thank everyone who financially supports this parish. Without your support we wouldn't be here tonight.

Finally, I want to thank everybody who made this evening possible. I thank the staff, especially Ms. Mary Parra, Kathy Tracy, Mrs. Chandra Persard, Mrs. Araceli "Cheli" Valdez and Mrs. Pat Vidimos. I am very grateful to the coordinator of this event and our MC for tonight Mr. John Irwin for his great leadership. I also want to thank the environmental committee for this event, and the members of Knights of Columbus. You are all incredible.

Again, I thank you all for coming. Have a great evening! Cheers!