

# 50th Anniversary of Resurrection Parish, Laurel

*Spanish below*

## **Introduction**

Well, you've come a long way from the Daily Double Bingo Hall where Resurrection Parish got its start in 1963! Father Bialek, Father Jesus, dear parishioners, warmest congratulations as together we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Resurrection Parish! What a delight to be with you this afternoon to take part in this moment to give thanks to the Lord for the blessings of the past and to look ahead toward "a future full of hope."

And with you, dear members of this parish family, I join in giving thanks to Father Mark Bialek for his inspired leadership and devoted pastoral love for this parish and for all of you! Fr. Mark, thank you so much!

## **Looking Back**

When a couple celebrates their 50th anniversary, they might well go through their family albums, whether that album is electronic or a scrapbook with old photos. Those images may take us back to a time of humble beginnings when there was no house, an uncertain livelihood, little cash but a lot of heart and a lot of hope.

Such is the story of Resurrection Parish. Some of you present here this evening were also present "at creation" - I don't mean the creation of the world but the creation of this parish! And I want to thank you for your fidelity and love, working with successive pastors and lay leaders in building up this parish from about 90 families to over 1,000 families, with the great likelihood of more growth to come. It is on your shoulders that we are standing this evening!

Whether it was celebrating Mass in the Bingo Hall or providing religious education in the homes of parishioners, or whether it was purchasing the old house on Horsehead South or building the parish center which has served so well for so long, this community of faith, through thick and thin, has always been welcoming, has

always reached out to the wider community, and has always had a sense of drive and purpose, to borrow the title of Jim Collins' book, to go From Good to Great. And with us this evening, are priests who formerly served in this parish whose pastoral leadership and love have been instrumental in its growth through the years – warmest thanks dear brother priests!

### **Light from the Readings**

And the Scripture readings this evening hit us at exactly the right angle... the angle of looking back not so as to be stuck in the past but rather to derive our inspiration for moving ahead, or to quote your pastor, “the anniversary celebration is a tremendous opportunity to celebrate the many accomplishments of the parish ... as well as a springboard to a very bright future proclaiming the joy of the Gospel!”

What, then, do the Scripture readings say to us this evening? Let's begin with the Gospel. Here we find the owner of the vineyard, viz., the Lord, looking for laborers, and the laborers in question would be me and you. It might be said that we are “day laborers” – for in the Gospel of John Jesus tells us to do the works of the Father “while it is still daylight” – while we still have life and breath. What we notice about the owner of the vineyard is how persistent he was in going out to look for laborers – he went out five times in a single day to engage them in his work...

How well this Gospel resonates with your history, for Jesus has been at work in this community right from the start calling forth laborers for his harvest, both clergy and laity in a partnership. During these past fifty years he has called forth laborers persistently & consistently but the difference between your parish and the Gospel parable is that the original laborers of this parish have welcomed the newer laborers, including the growing number of Spanish speaking parishioners, and have rejoiced to receive the same reward, viz., the joy of the Gospel.

### **“Seek the Lord While He May Be Found”**

But there is another message in the Scriptures addressed to us this evening, this one coming to us from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, and it's this: While the Lord is always looking for laborers, always calling us to discipleship and service, we as individuals and as a parish community must always be looking for Christ, and seeking to know what vocation he has in mind for us, including the vocation to

marriage, to priesthood, to religious life, “Seek the Lord while he may be found” – ‘while it is daylight’ – ‘while we have life and breath, hope and joy.’ The Lord will call but we will never answer unless we are looking for Christ, looking to encounter Christ personally and looking for the grace of the Holy Spirit so that the Gospel will permeate our mind, our hearts, our lives, so that the mission of Jesus will in turn become our mission.

Pope Francis continually calls us to become missionary disciples and urges us not merely to maintain things as they’ve always been but rather to keep listening to the call of the Lord and keep going forth to help him find new laborers... This is how we bring the Gospel to those who have never heard it, to those who are alienated from the Church or hurt within the Church, and those who are poor, vulnerable, or just the captive of our secular culture. This anniversary is a moment for parishioners new and old, under the guidance of your wonderful pastor, to come together as never before, to bear witness to the Lord Jesus in this community of Laurel and beyond.

### **The Reward**

And what reward can we expect? Jesus gives all the same daily wage – not money but a peace and joy the world cannot give – “Eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God has prepared for those who love him!”

May the Lord bless this parish family abundantly as it looks to the future with hope and joy! God bless you, happy anniversary, may the Lord bless & keep you always in His love!

### **Spanish**

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, qué bueno es estar aquí con ustedes para celebrar los cincuenta años de aniversario de la Parroquia de la Resurrección de Nuestro Señor!

A través de estos cincuenta años, la Parroquia de la Resurrección se ha convertido en una comunidad muy diversa, en la cual casi la mitad de los feligreses son de países de habla hispana. Ustedes constituyen una parte fundamental de esta parroquia. Ustedes traen con ustedes una fe profunda, una devoción especial a la Virgen María, y un gran respeto a la familia. Las diversas culturas de esta parroquia,

las cuales incluyen descendientes de Polonia, Italia, Alemania, y Latino-américa, han florecido juntas, de una manera muy hermosa y se han enriquecido mutuamente para contribuir a la gran fe de esta comunidad.

En una Audiencia General el Papa Francisco dijo, “Allí donde vamos, hasta en la más pequeña parroquia, en el ángulo más perdido de esta tierra, está es la única Iglesia; nosotros estamos en casa, estamos en familia, estamos entre hermanos y hermanas. Y esto es un gran don de Dios. La Iglesia es una sola para todos. No existe una Iglesia para los europeos, una para los africanos, una para los americanos, una para los asiáticos, una para quien vive en Oceanía, no; es la misma en todo lugar. Es como en una familia: se puede estar lejos, distribuidos por el mundo, pero los vínculos profundos que unen a todos los miembros de la familia permanecen sólidos cualquiera que sea la distancia.”

La Parroquia de la Resurrección es realmente una familia que sigue creciendo. Es en contexto de la familia que las vocaciones son formadas y alimentadas. Por favor oren por vocaciones que nazcan de esta familia parroquial para que la alegría del evangelio y la vida sacramental de la Iglesia siga siendo compartida para enriquecer a muchas personas.

En este aniversario de cincuenta años de la Parroquia de la Resurrección de Nuestro Señor, no sólo recordemos su historia con nostalgia, sino también sigamos adelante, plantando las semillas de la fe, para que mucha más gente llegue a conocer el amor y bondad de nuestro Señor.