

*“We exist to **encourage, inform, and support** the faith journey of all who have come to UAF with a background in the Catholic tradition.”*

April 16, 2023

Fr Ross called for a town hall meeting on Sunday, April 16th to hear from parishioners of St. Mark. This forum gives all an opportunity to hear from others and learn what is happening with UAF students and plans for events. He reminded all present that he took over in June 2022 at a time when many changes were occurring in the diocese. As with other priests St. Mark’s has had, his duties in the Diocese also cover the shortage of priest giving him duties with other parishes and assignments (St. Mark pays 25% of his salary).

Longtime members of the parish continue to express their concerns regarding returning to campus. (See March 26th notes). Parishioners are invited to join students at their 12Noon Thursday Mass in Lathrop Building Room 112. (Note that the last mass of the school year will be held April 27th.) We will try to meet on a regular basis in the future (monthly during the school year). Students meet on Thursday’s for weekly 12noon mass and meetings at 7:00pm. This varies from semester to semester based on the students schedules and preferences.

The sacred worship space at Sacred Heart Cathedral was provided when UAF removed outside groups from campus due to COVID. We are extremely blessed in the city to have multiple options for Mass. Throughout the rest of the diocese, more than half of the parishes do not have Mass on a given weekend. If a deacon or lay presider is trained, then the parish may have a Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest. Fr. Piotr Oprych expressed his concerns regarding weekend masses on campus.

Church attendance and collections continue to increase in both attendance of students and non-students at SHC. We are actively seeking volunteers to sign up to be Eucharistic Ministers (EM), Lecturers, and participating during the mass by collecting donations and bringing up the gifts, and choir. With trained EM’s we can offer the cup at communion. As a group we are encouraged to think of ways we can continue to come together to be more of a community – as at gatherings once a month, celebrate birthdays ad anniversaries as in the past, etc.

Fr. Ross noted the following events coming up:

- April 20th Archbishop Andrew E. Bellisario, C.M. will be at SHC for “A Mass for Healing and Protection” at 5:30pm. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.
- May 27th – Pentecost Sunday - Fr. Robert Fath will celebrate at St. Mark’s 5:30pm and confirm candidates from St. Mark, SHC, St. Raphael, and ICC.
- Leonard Kennedy (CSA) was brought fully into the church at SHC Easter Vigil.
- Mary Pat Boger announced that the Deborah house lease has been extended for another year with current tenants.

Mary Pat Boger updated the parish on Catholic Student Association (CSA) regarding schedules:

- Feast of Saint Mark is April 25th. Fr. Ross Tozzi has offered to have Mass on campus in the CSA Lathrop Room 112 at 12noon. Parishioners are welcome to attend. The parish was formed in 1977.
- UAF school year classes end May 1st. Finals are May 2nd-5th. Commencement will be held Saturday, May 6th.
- CSA Advisor Devan Larson & Sydney Fulcher were married April 15th in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was noted the positive effect he has had on the CSA growth.
- CSA Budget has money that will allow Fr. Ross, Fr. Piotr, and Ben Colwell to take CSA members out for a special meal for the end of the year.

We will continue the town hall meetings on a monthly basis to keep ideas flowing on how to help students and remain a community. The next meeting TBA -- May is a busy month with graduation, confirmation, Mother’s Day, and Memorial Day. Please continue to think and pray for ideas on how to “encourage, inform, and support” our UAF students.