



From the Pastor

September 27, 2026

Dearest Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

I have to begin this week's letter with a word of appreciation to our parish staff. JoAnn, Emmett, Cindy, Sean, Lizzy, Sharon, and Shelly have been a wonderful team. Watching them grow together and support one another has been a true joy. With a group of such talented and faithful people, I see no reason not to expect great things in the years to come.

I also want to thank those who have been so genuinely supportive. The initial welcome was great, but we are all in this for the long haul. Being supportive doesn't just mean the pats on the back for a good homily or a thank you for sincerely listening. Support does, indeed, include insights and suggestions as well as critiques given in charity which help us as a parish to move forward together in true unity of faith and heart. Some of these suggestions have led to some changes already and I look forward to more. In fact, one such suggestion lead to a change in BOTH parishes.

I do want to confess that I have been somewhat taken aback by some criticism. I'm still trying to understand why someone would be critical of holding a town hall meeting. I'd think anyone would be pleased about the opportunity to be heard. Also, there has been criticism of the way Fr. Kyle and I celebrate the sacrifice of the Mass. I would remind all that we each have our quirks and preferences. The way I offer the Mass, apart from wider questions of parish custom surrounding congregational participation, etc., has developed over 26 years of offering the Mass almost daily. It is what it is and I don't see it changing markedly. What I do at the altar I do at every altar. What Fr. Kyle and Fr. John do is a fruit of their formation and experience.

However, I have made mistakes. I heard what many of you said at our town hall meeting and, because I have not yet gotten our pastoral council formed (it is coming very soon), I went ahead and made a move after consulting only with my parish staff. I see now that was a mistake, particularly when I have been with you for so short a time. With that in mind I am pulling back on the seven-year preparation for the Jubilee of the Resurrection. That will be discussed thoroughly with the pastoral council with whom I will determine the best way to go about this preparation. I'm sorry.

We are together for the long haul. I again thank those who have asked questions and made critiques in charity. It is in this manner that we all continue to grow as a parish family and grow in charity.

"May Christ our Lord help us all with His bountiful grace, so that we may know His holy will and perfectly fulfill it." (*St. Ignatius of Loyola*)

Fr. Michael

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On Living the Vocation to the Holiness

In my article “From the Pastor”, I observed that Fr. Kyle and I have received comment and critiques on a number of things. Some of these things seemed to us to be “normal” things to be done when we are able, but they have been received by some as innovations, or “a return to traditions best left in the past”, or simply as “not the way we do things at Newman”. We have also noticed that the perceived reason for some of these things has been flat out misinformed. So, it seems good to give an explanation for why we do some things the way we do.

At the get go, I want to make one thing very clear. I have always felt the way to true communion is not by making everyone do things exactly the same way. Of course, spending most of my priesthood in more rural settings meant that someone leaving was often not a matter of simply changing parishes, but of leaving the Catholic Church entirely and going to one of the local protestant communities. So, I have always lived by a simple code I was taught by one of my former pastors: “What the Church allows is not to be disallowed.”

I have seen over the years that forced conformity does not bring about true unity of mind and heart. What it brings about is forced conformity or the loss of those who cannot, in good conscience, conform. Some are ok with this. Some have told me about parishioners being told to go to another parish if they are not able to conform. But when that conformity is an issue on which the Church herself does not require conformity, I am not ok with that. We are all called to unity where the Church requires unity, diversity where the Church allows for diversity, but charity above all things.

And that final point is the most important – **charity**. At baptism we were instructed that in asking for the sacrament we were committing ourselves to a life in which we would “follow the law of the Lord by loving God and our neighbor”. That is what this entire project is all about. When we do not love our neighbor because of how they receive Communion we put the traditions of man above the law of God – and that goes both ways. I had a parishioner leave some years ago because I told him I no longer wanted to hear his opinions in which he trashed people who received our Lord in the hand.

Over the next few weeks I will use this column to discuss other matters: Why we use bells; why we pray certain devotional prayers; why allow a diversity of practices in the same parish; and others brought to me by you. Know that I do so as a way to inform. I know I won’t always convince all, but then, that isn’t really the point. The point is to inform so we may be formed with facts rather than mere opinions or mis-information; but more to the point, so that we may go forward together in unity of heart and of charity.

Red, White & Blue Mass

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 - 6:30pm -
St. Patrick Church



St. Camillus - EMS



St. Michael the Archangel - Police



St. Florian - Fire

All members of our area **First Responders: Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services Personnel**, are warmly invited to participate in a Mass petitioning Almighty God for strength and safety in your service to our community.

Piano Recital

Sunday, September 27, 2026 • 2:00pm

St. Patrick Church,
316 Fulton Street, Eau Claire



Dr. Namji Kim

Professor of piano and keyboard area coordinator at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.