

Dear Parishioners:

I am Rev. Nelson Libera, the parochial administrator of St. Matthew's Parish and School, duly appointed by Bishop Thomas J Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix on April 9, 2016. I took charge of St. Matthew's Parish and School on July 1, 2016. It's with great joy and gratitude to God that I am assuming the responsibility of parochial administrator at St. Matthew's.

It's important to have a clear vision of the parish. The canonical legislation defines the parish as "... a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop" (Can. 515 §1).

First of all, the parish is a community of the faithful with two features: it's attachment to a particular church and it enjoys stability as an ecclesiastical organization. Another distinctive element of the parish includes its pastoral care in a dependent relationship with the diocesan bishop and is entrusted to a priest as its proper pastor.

Pope Francis reminds all of us: "The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters". This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented." (Ref. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), no. 28, 24th November 2013).

We want to buildup a family-friendly parish fully alive. Our parish is invited to become a family of brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. It is Christ who gives our parish community its identity and unity. St. Paul reminds us: "For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another" (Romans: 12: 4-5). In order to buildup a family-friendly parish fully alive, we need mutual prayers, trust, cooperation and collaboration. Let us put our heads and minds together. I am looking forward to working together for the good of St. Matthew's parish and school. *Oremus pro invicem* (Let us pray for each other).

Our motto is: "Buildup a Family-Friendly Parish fully alive in Christ".

Invoking God's abundant blessings upon all my parishioners,

Rev. Nelson Libera
Parochial Administrator