

Dear St. Andrew Parish,

It is hard to believe that one year ago we were celebrating Holy Week and Easter in our homes! While this year has certainly brought various unique and difficult challenges for each one of us, this year has been an opportunity for tremendous growth as well. It is easy to get caught up in our day-to-day lives, chaotic schedules, family and work obligations, and endless demands on our time. Still, if this past year has taught me anything, it is the value of slowing down and listening to God rather than focusing on what the world around me is saying. While I am definitely still working on the slowing down and listening to God part, I have found wonderful resources to encourage me in my journey as a disciple of Christ.

Several years ago, I was attending Christmas mass at St. Joseph's Church in Fremont, Ohio, with my family. As we were exiting the church, someone offered me a book. Being a bookworm, I enthusiastically accepted the gift – "Rediscovering Catholicism" by Matthew Kelly. I had no idea who the author was or what this book would be about. Little did I know that this book would change the course of my spiritual life. From that one encounter, I was moved to google search "Matthew Kelly", which led me to more of his books, online resources such as Best Lent Ever and Best Advent Ever, and countless YouTube videos. From there, I found other strong teachers and advocates of the Catholic faith such as Bishop Robert Barron, Father John Riccardo, Emily Wilson, Jackie and Bobby Angel, Jason and Crystalina Evert, and Father Mike Schmitz, as well as St. Gabriel and Ave Maria Catholic radio stations. All of these, and so many more, presented the truth, beauty, and goodness of Catholicism in a way that ignited the spirit within me and awakened a desire to not just know about God, but to *know* God.

I hope each of you will grab a book after Easter mass and see what happens in your own life! I know I have a long way to go in my journey as a disciple of Jesus, but I can honestly say that I have found joy, and that has brought a true sense of peace amidst the persistent storms of life. Whether the book speaks to you or not, my prayer for this Easter season (and beyond) is that all our hearts will be open to the One who is longing to have a relationship, or a deeper relationship, with each one of us because His love and mercy for us knows no limits.

Happy Easter and God Bless You!

Sincerely,

A St. Andrew Parishioner