



Second Homily

Dear Parish Family of St. Thomas,

Ash Wednesday has come and gone. I hope that you were able to receive ashes on that special day. And, I am sure, that by now those ashes are long gone from your forehead. But Lent has just begun. Lent becomes our spiritual journey with the Lord. It becomes much more real when we live those penitential practices of the season—prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Those traditional practices allow us to spend more time with the Lord and, in the process, become more aware of the gift of His presence and love.

Our Lenten Journey has begun. And it quickly picks up speed as we experience our Lenten Parish Mission. You heard our Mission speaker at all of today's Masses—Father Tom Allender. The theme of this Mission is "Transforming Anger into Forgiveness." Father Allender will be giving the same Mission talk twice each day—after the 8am Mass and in the evening at 7:00pm. Come join us on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Renew My Church continues to be a focus for us. This past week saw another input session for our Grouping. The Renew My Church Grouping consists of St. Colette, Mission San Juan Diego, St. Theresa and ourselves. We have been seeking to identify the strengths and the challenges of each parish and what are our common strengths and opportunities so that together we can build a renewed, vital and sustainable Catholic presence in our geographical area through Parish Collaboration. We will continue to meet to discern how we can collaborate, and structure ourselves so as to give feedback to the Cardinal. I would like to share with you some of the recent statistical data regarding our four parishes:

	St. Colette	St. Theresa	St. Thomas	Mission San Juan Diego
October Count, 2017	938	1,809	1,881	1,871
Spanish %	31%	0%	0%	100%
Polish %	0%	0%	30%	0%
October Count, 2016	936	1,977	2,021	1,666
Infant Baptisms, 2017	68	54	107	72
First Communions	60	81	163	97
Confirmations	48	103	145	0
Weddings	12	14	11	20
Funerals	61	72	65	4

Please mark your calendar for Monday, February 26 at 7:00pm We will be having a Town Hall meeting in Church where our Parish Grouping Feedback and Discernment Team will update you regarding the purpose and reality of the "Renew My Church" endeavor. It will be an opportunity to learn exactly how our grouping approaches "Renew My Church." I hope to see you there for your input. Also, we have scheduled a second Town Hall meeting on Monday, April 16 at 7:00pm.

Your Pastor,

Father Tom

Rev. Thomas R. Rzepiela