



MEET FATHER MIKE, PASTOR OF HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Growing in faith, love and grace

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Holy Family Confirmation

“I’ve always thought about being a priest,” says Father Mike, Pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church. Being a priest is something that he has been called to since childhood. “I also wanted to be a baseball player,” he jokes, “but I was too physically small and my hands were too small.”

Choosing to be a priest has made him happy. “I’m happier now being a priest more than I have ever been,” he reflects. Father Mike has been a priest for 36 years and Jesus continues to guide him. He arrived at Holy Family Catholic Church on July 1, 2021. Prior to that, he was the Pastor at St. Ignatius in Ijamsville, MD, for 13 full years. “It was on the second day of the 14th year at St. Ignatius, Ijamsville that I learned I was going to become the Pastor at Holy Family,” he recalls. He loves being a priest. Father Mike says, “It’s rewarding to walk with people and celebrate the joys of life, like a baptism or a wedding. I also get to be with people and hopefully minister the presence of Jesus in difficult situations, such as sickness and the death of loved ones.” That doesn’t mean being a priest is always easy. Father Mike is always trying to perfect the art of preaching. “I’m not saying I’m a good preacher now,” he admits, “but I’m a better preacher.” Trying to make the Word of God applicable and relevant takes understanding the Scriptures. “Hopefully, I’m doing better after 35 years,” he says. The other life lesson that he has learned through being a priest is not to get angry with people. “I realize that people are doing the best that they can do in difficult situations,” he says. “My anger is not going to help the situation – or me – in the long run.”

Father Mike has learned to excel in listening. He has taken professional counseling courses beyond what a priest is required to take. Letting people tell their story is important. “Everyone has a story,” he says. “People want to feel at ease to tell their story and not be judged harshly. People are carrying around a lot of crosses and a lot of pain in their life, including pain from their childhood and they might not recognize where their sadness is coming from.” Being sensitive to people’s needs and having compassion is what it is all about for Father Mike.

FATHER MIKE’S BACKGROUND

Father Mike, who came from a very educationally minded family, was the youngest of four children. “I knew education was very important in my family,” he says. His father was an accountant and his mother taught high school. “I failed first grade,” he admits. “I would try to hide that fact.” The trauma of failing first grade left a mark upon him, but something that has ultimately helped him. “We all encounter failures,” he says, “but we are not failures.” It’s important for parents to communicate that fact to their children. “It’s one chapter of your life,” he says. “It’s not the whole book of your life. I’ve said that in homilies.” People have thanked him for his honesty and

appreciate his transparency. “I try to make people feel comfortable in their skin as I walk with people and listen to their stories.”

A FRIENDLY PARRISH

Father Mike feels at home at Holy Family Catholic Church. He says, “I have a very friendly parish. A lot of friends of mine come to visit and they sense the friendliness.” To date, they have over 2400 families registered, from young families to seniors. “Holy Family Catholic Church also has 34 ministries,” adds Father Mike. From women sewing quilts for Bingo to those who pray for others, Holy Family is a connected congregation. Father Mike also has a heart of gratitude for the countless parishioners who pray for him each day. It makes a world of difference for this man of God. He comments, “We have parishioners who are trained in praying for others. There are four groups of members in each team who have been trained to pray for people for healing.” They pray for emotional, physical, and spiritual healing.

Other parishioners donate food, bring meals to others, and make a difference in the community. “Once a quarter, we have the seniors’ luncheon here,” says Father Mike. Eighty seniors come from local senior centers as well as parishioners and their guests, conversing with one another and finding community. “We also have another ministry called the Lazarus Ministry, offering families a luncheon after the funeral mass at Holy Family after the death of a loved ones,” comments Father Mike.

PERSONAL PURSUITS

When Father Mike isn’t holding daily Masses, visiting the sick, or attending meetings, he likes to ride his bike. “I also like to visit with friends, read the newspaper and always end with the comics. That lets me leave the house with a smile,” he says. “I also have a cat named Suzie,” he smiles. His four-legged friend gives him happiness in his household with her warmth and constant companionship.

He enjoys making disciples and strengthening disciples. Father Mike is always listening to the Lord, commenting, “Often God speaks to me through my staff.” Although he says that he doesn’t pray enough, he is eager to engage in prayer each day. He concludes, “I know I need to spend some time in personal prayer with the Lord Jesus.” This is in addition to his public prayer. “As a Pastor, you have to draw strength from the Lord Jesus.”

He is a man guided by God, eager to do His will, and is an inspiration to those around him. A committed follower of Christ, Father Mike is making a difference here at Holy Family with his heart for his parishioners and the community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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