

*May you find Christ here... May you bring Christ to the world*

# ASSUMPTION Parish



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My Dear Family and Friends of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish,

I am writing in reference to the article "7 Ways to Be a Better Ally" which appeared in today's bulletin. This particular article was issued without my knowledge or approval while I was away from the Parish. While this terrible mistake represents a collective oversight of our parish leadership team, I am responsible for every word which appears in our communications. Our mission is to bring Christ to the World; this article is divisive, inappropriately political, and not grounded in the Gospel message of Christ's Peace.

Tonight, I visited our O'Fallon Police Department to make them aware of this issue, to personally thank them for their devoted service, and to apologize on behalf of the Church. I just returned a phone call to a retired St. Louis City Police Officer to deliver the same message to him. First and foremost, it is imperative the men and women in law enforcement, who serve so faithfully and bravely to protect us every day, know how thankful I am -- how thankful we all are for their sacrifice and service. They are in harm's way every moment of every day; many receive threats to their family and homes. They protect our freedom and way of life by putting their own lives at risk for us. After the tragedies of Dallas and Ballwin, for this indictment of law enforcement to appear in our bulletin on the very day we mourn the loss of more officers' lives in Baton Rouge is shameful and unacceptable.

Regrettably, for some, I know trust in the Church has been badly damaged. We will all have to make choices in the coming days about what we will share about this in our own conversations. As this is a community trying to be about the mission of Christ's love, I believe in the coming days and weeks, you will share your wisdom about how I and the rest of the parish leadership can begin the work of making amends and earning forgiveness.

To those who voiced your concerns to me directly, thank you. Your honest communication with me does so much to keep our community strong. I hope that you continue to come to me; to give me a chance to restore your confidence in our parish leadership. I share the condemnation of this article and believe we all want our community to recover from this. My prayer is that we can all start to rebuild from that common ground.

I, for my part, am committed to redoubling my involvement in reviewing the content of all Parish communications. This may mean less media, but I promise every communication will be aligned with our core mission.

While I am extraordinarily sad and embarrassed by this incident, I continue to believe that God is very much at work in all our lives and that good will come out of this adversity. While we express our anger and disappointment at the views expressed in this article, let us not forsake our mission. We must remain unified and connected as a Parish family in working through this. In next week's bulletin I will provide a more lengthy reflection addressing this issue. Right now, all my heart can say with deepest humility is **I am sorry**.

I commend all of you and our mission to Jesus through our Mother, Mary. God bless you all.  
Fr. Mitch