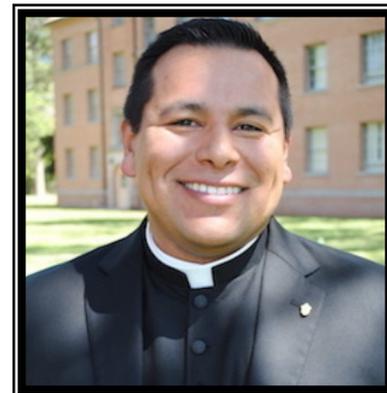


## From the Desk of Our Associate Pastor ...

Dear Faithful of Saint Joseph Catholic Community:

Many of you are probably unfamiliar with Saint Mary's Seminary in Houston, Texas. It is a beautiful campus adorned with tall pine trees, lush grass, and forty acres of untamed land behind the dormitories and administrative buildings. The heart of the seminary, however, isn't found in the back forty acres near the fire pit. It isn't found in the grand library or the classrooms. The heart of the seminary has a rather plain and unassuming brick façade. At the entrance of this building are two heavy wooden doors that lead you to the most important part of the seminary: The chapel.



The chapel of Saint Mary's highlights the Second Vatican Council's desire for noble simplicity without becoming an iconoclastic, whitewashed building. The chapel differs from most churches insofar as it has choir stalls, which are pews facing each other for the recitation of the psalms in the breviary. In the choir stalls the grand idea of the chapel begins to come alive. The outer banks of the choir stalls have a single vine with fruit carved into them. This vine travels down into the floor, where there are green strips of marble taking you all the way into the sanctuary and up the green pillars which support the baldacchino. These green pillars direct your attention directly to the Tabernacle, which is the center and heart of the seminary campus. Above the tabernacle and baldacchino is a mosaic background of a tall tree with lush fruit-bearing branches with birds nesting in them.

The architecture I have just described is based off of the Gospel for this week's readings and was meant to draw the seminarian to ponder the words Jesus said. ***Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.***

To us who live in the post-resurrection Church, God is no longer unknown. He has revealed Himself in the miracle of the Eucharist, which is the true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. The marble at Saint Mary's Seminary which linked the person sitting in the pew to the tabernacle gives us a clear image of Jesus' desire for us to abide in Him, and an image of exactly how we are to do that.

Join us this weekend as we explore the theme of the vine and the branches and what this means for us as members of the Body of Christ! May God, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, grant you peace and joy!

Sincerely,

Rev. Fr. Armando G. Alejandro, Jr.

*Parochial Vicar*