



# ACCESSIBILITY to Beauty

St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church  
2011 Clark St. | Whiting, IN 46394

November 2025

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Friends:

The newest Doctor of the Church, St. John Henry Newman, writes: "Christianity ... has long since passed beyond the letter of documents and the reasonings of individual minds, and has become public property." **St. Mary's in Whiting has been a clarion reminder that when we treat Christianity as a public asset, the results are transformative.**

Here is what Fr. Jack Custer, one of our friends and visitors, has to say:

## STIMULATING COMMUNITY

*"In 20 years as an academic without a Sunday assignment, I have served in some 50 Byzantine Catholic parishes, and I have never seen a parish quite like St. Mary's: embedded in the community, serving the community, indeed helping to define the identity of Whiting. Fr. Andrew and Pani Laura have called forth the community's gifts to build ministries of music, service, catechesis and fellowship. The parish gathers a diverse and growing congregation that embraces the neighborhood while reaching out to Chicagoland's universities, uniting them in an experience of Byzantine liturgy and spirituality that manages to remain both unabridged and vibrantly accessible."*



FR. JACK CUSTER

St. Mary's needs your help to keep our church a community hub and to raise **\$30,000** for the next phase in our **Accessibility to Beauty Project**. Through the generosity of some donors, and in honor of parishioner Nancy Hlebasko—

**Every dollar raised until the end of 2025 will be matched up to \$15,000.**

Today, I ask you to prayerfully consider contributing to this match challenge.

Here is what Lauren Beversluis, one of our collaborating partners, says:

## PROMOTING BEAUTY

*"As a Ph.D. candidate and instructor in religious studies at the University of Chicago, my students and I are blessed to have St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church so close to campus. St. Mary's immerses us in the rich Byzantine liturgical and artistic tradition. In communion with the Latin Church, it unites the spiritual heritage of East and West. The experience of worship here deepens our understanding of the faith's breadth and richness, inspiring both scholarly reflection and personal devotion. With its dedication to the preservation and restoration of beauty, **St. Mary's leads the way for those who study Christianity and for those who seek to encounter God.**"*



LAUREN BEVERSLUIS



GIVE TODAY!

**OUR PASTORAL YEAR HAS OFFERED BOTH PUBLIC WITNESS AND CELEBRATION!  
TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS:**



**The Bluegrass, Bourbon, and Bible Revival** with **The Hillbilly Thomists** and **Jennifer Newsome Martin** of the University of Notre Dame drew **over 150 people** in celebration of Whiting's Catholic culture and connection to bluegrass.



**Our Second Annual Gala** drew a capacity crowd of **over 215**, which supported and celebrated our **Accessibility to Beauty Project**, which aims to restore our stained-glass windows and upgrade our facilities.



**Over 220 Byzantine Catholics** from across North America gathered with representatives from the Vatican for the **North American Byzantine Catholic Assembly**. Together with the Knights of Columbus, we led **over 350 people** through the city in a witness of faith in the second annual **Whiting Catholic Procession**.



We have plenty ahead of us in 2026. At our **Annual Gala April 18**, we will celebrate the addition of St. Mary's to the **National Registry of Historic Places, the only Byzantine Catholic Church on the register in Indiana, Chicagoland and the Eparchy of Parma**. We are working with the City of Whiting to house important community-based projects, namely the Whiting Food Pantry and a local clothing exchange. Next October, we will host an eparchial pilgrimage in honor of the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God.

With all the public events and service opportunities at St. Mary's, I ask that you prayerfully consider helping us to preserve and share our sacred space with all who will come through our doors in the coming year. We have raised **\$125,000** for this next phase through the generosity of parishioners, friends and benefactors.

**I now ask you to help us meet our \$15,000 end-of-year challenge, which will allow us to restore the next set of stained-glass windows in spring.**



My sincere gratitude and may God bless you as we prepare for the Nativity of Our Lord!

Fr. Andrew Summerson, S.Th.D.