

Mat was the bearer of gifts from God.

A few days ago I sat down with a calculator to estimate the number of Masses Mat attended at St. Raphael's. The number certainly approaches 10,000.

Today is his last.

There is so much I could tell you about Mat, but there is only **one thing** we all need to hear before Mat leaves this church for the last time. It starts with a conversation I had with Mat at lunch a week before he died.

We were discussing cell phones. Mat told me he read there are portable devices that can recharge a cell phone from a battery. I told him, yes, I had a portable charger I use on trips. Mat looked disappointed. He told me he had gotten me a portable charger for Christmas. He had already wrapped my present and now he was going to have to find something else for me.

The day after Mat's death Marybeth told me Mat came to her to buy a **Divine Mercy** yard flag as a Christmas gift. She gave me Mat's Christmas gift early - the day after he died.

To understand Mat we have to understand Mat's gifts to each of us. We have to understand the profound gifts he offered when each day he drove to church at 6:00am, each day he unlocked the church before anyone else arrived, each day he prayed before the Blessed Sacrament, each day he read his missal before Mass.

Each of us witnessed his reverence during Mass and his prayers after Mass. Mat purposely stayed after Mass so he could switch off the lights in the Narthex before he left church. These were all profound gifts Mat wrapped-up to give to us.

Each and every one of you - **you who have taken the time to honor Mat today** - are here because you are the recipient of one or more of Mat's profound gifts.

About a year ago I was telling Mat about some miracles streaming into my life through the church. I asked Mat if the same was true for him.

Mat surprised me when he responded his spiritual life was very dry. He didn't see any miracles, just routine.

I told Mat I thought God provided me with miracles because I was so dense if He didn't clobber me with miracles He knew I would lose my way. Maybe the truth is God had more confidence in him. He was honoring God more profoundly because he was doing it without the need for a reward.

A few months later Mat asked me to take him to the store to get a new television and a Blue Ray player. Mat had been talking about getting a Blue Ray player for the past 10 years and now that his old TV died he wanted to get the player and a new TV.

Mat had everything installed and invited me to see his new setup. I showed him how he could access **"The Wild Goose is Loose"** on YouTube and he figured out on his own how to view videos by **the Reverend Bishop Fulton Sheen**.

About a month later I asked Mat if his faith was still dry. He told me the dryness was all gone and he was now ready to meet God at any time.

In a few minutes Mat will **leave the church he loved** for the last time. Mat is here today bearing personal gifts for each one of us. **Right now** is the time we need to accept his **final** gifts as we say our **final** goodbye.

Mat is bearing **neatly wrapped gifts** of:

- Love
- Prayer
- Faithfulness
- Humility
- Generosity

Don't allow Mat to leave this church without accepting his personal gift to you.

When you return to Mass tomorrow, or over the weekend, bring Mat's gifts back to Mass with you. And when you do - take up Mat's example and lay God's gifts out before others as he did, so generously, before each of us.

May God bless you Mat.

May we remember you as the bearer of gifts from God.

May your memory help us to be a better instrument of God's Love.