

From the Pastor
August 30th, 2020
The Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Dear Parishioners:

THE NEW NORMAL: I write to you as the summer season winds down. Of course, autumn begins on September 21st, but traditionally Labor Day has marked the end of the summer. Up until last year, Labor Day marked the return to school and end of vacation trips. This year all is changed, and we will have to see how schools and all of society will open again.

All things are different, but, as the beautiful window in our Church proclaims, Jesus Christ is the same, now, always, and forever.

SEVERE WEATHER AND LIGHTNING STRIKES: Like all of you, our parish has undergone unprecedented times. We still have not completely recovered from the lightning strike of July 22nd. Some may have noticed that three of the stations in the Way of the Cross are not illuminated. The great window of the narthex is not illuminated at night. The electricians are repairing the damage.

Like all of you, we suffered from the recent tropical storm and only last week did we finally repair the damaged trees. As we look at the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Grace, surrounded with so many flowers, we may forget what violent weather we have had this summer. Let us sit on the beautiful benches at the feet of Our Lady and beg her, in these extraordinary times, to grant us serenity and peace.

MASS SCHEDULE: The Churches have been reopened since Sunday June 14th. Bishop Barres has granted a dispensation from the obligation to attend mass, but it is a consolation to see so many attending Mass and receiving the sacraments. Those whose health is compromised due to illness or age should not physically come to Mass. If one is uncomfortable being among others, one should not attend. Please remember to wear the masks, as we do in so many other places.

Our Mass scheduled is slightly altered from the pre-Covid 19 days. I suppose everything is altered since those days. There are two Masses on Sunday (as

opposed to three) and there is the Saturday Evening Mass. Beginning Saturday September 12th, the Saturday Evening Mass will be at 4.00PM. Confessions will be on Saturday afternoon from 3.00PM until 3.45PM. this is our winter schedule and will remain in effect until Memorial Day 2021 when, once again, Saturday Evening Mass will move to 5. Weekday Masses are at 9.00AM on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. (There is no 9.00AM Mass on Thursdays or Fridays). On First Friday and First Saturday of each month Mass is also celebrated at 9.00AM. All Masses are in the Church.

It has probably been noticed that at this time altar servers, lectors, or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are not scheduled. This is for everyone's safety. Our sacristan William who is both an instituted Lector and Acolyte reads at every Sunday Mass and will assist in the distribution of Holy Communion as needed.

SECURITY IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC: Many have noticed the gates closing off the playground, parish property and grounds. These go back to the height of the Covid19. Sadly, many individuals were using the Church property as a public park. Cars were all over, games were being played on the fields, etc. Groups would come for picnics, beer cooler and all. Golf became a regular occurrence ruining the athletic fields, and, in one case I saw what I had never seen before: an individual parasailing while being harnessed to a car. Others came to fly drones. Our polite signs asking people not to enter the closed areas were largely ignored. The Brookville Police were always most helpful and were appreciative of our efforts not to have large gatherings on the property. The police advised that it is easier for them to ask small numbers to leave the property that to ask many people to leave. Our playground remains closed. It cannot be sanitized for various groups, and we are most grateful to the parents who are concerned for their children's health. Please help maintain a safe and healthy environment on Church property.

CONTINUING OUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS: With things now at Phase Four, construction projects have begun once more. It is my fond hope that the renovation of our beautiful Church will now be completed. There will be a glass curtain wall separating the narthex from the nave of the Church. This will allow for a welcoming space to be created to greet funerals and weddings. It will also provide a bright and airy space for parents to take children during the Mass. It will be different from the former Children's Room (which had originally been the Baptistry of the Church) in that those who are there will be participants in the Mass and not isolated in an airless room with no view of the sanctuary. There are

several additions to be made to some of the chapels and the safety rail is to be extended to safeguard entrance to the porcelain tile of the sanctuary, which is not made for public access. We must comply with the building codes for our parishioners' safety. Please pray that the renovation construction will be done soon. If you have not pledged to our Capital Campaign, please do so.

At the time of the beginning of the capital campaign, the parish was presented with the three-fold plan. The Church was to be renovated, the parking lot was to be sealed and restriped and Monsignor Costa Hall was to receive a general modernization with painting and new offices. We are presently beginning more work on Monsignor Costa Hall. The work will begin on September 8th, the Nativity of our Blessed Mother. The bids have gone out to three companies to do the parking lot.

You can continue to be of assistance to St. Paul's by taking pride in and care of your parish. So much damage is caused by gum being put under the pews. Please help keep the Church clean, and please do not eat or drink in Church, and do not let your children do so. I remember seeing a little toddler eating a sesame seed bagel with cream cheese on the new upholstery of our refurbished pews.

PARISH FINANCES: The fiscal year will end tomorrow, August 31st. I will be speaking to our parishioners soon about our parish finances. This will be the first year that the parish will close with a deficit (\$76,000), and with an even greater one projected for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Naturally, this was to be expected due to the closing of the Churches and the inability of our two major fundraisers (the Gala Casino Night and the Golf Outing) to take place. Obviously, the offerings given at the time of the collection at Mass are also down. We are most grateful to our parishioners who have kept up their sacrificial giving. It is my prayer that some parishioners would consider giving St. Paul's a special donation. Many times, we see fundraising for different Catholic entities. Perhaps some will consider making a donation to the very parish where they are fed with the Bread of Life week after week, where they hear the Word of God preached, where their children have been taught the uplifting truths of our faith and received the sacraments. If just several parishioners contributed according to their means the deficit for this fiscal year could be eliminated.

CONFIRMATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: First Holy Communion had been scheduled for the First Saturday of May. Sadly, we could not have it. First Holy Communion will be administered to our children on the First Saturday of

October. May God bless the little ones. On Saturday August 28th I confirmed 28 of our young parishioners. Originally Confirmation had been scheduled for May 9th. Bishop Andrzej was to have come. At this point, the bishops will not be coming to the parishes to administer confirmation for the foreseeable future, and Bishop Barres has asked the pastors to confirm the children of their own parishes.

BROTHER JOSEPH BELLIZZI, S.M.: Brother Joseph Bellizzi, S.M., has been the Director of Religious Education at St. Paul's for over 20 years. He has worked harmoniously with my two immediate predecessors and with me. Brother Joe has formed two generations of children and we will always be indebted to him. Brother is also the Principal of Chaminade High School. Recently Bishop Barres appointed the Marianist Congregation to head up the Morning Star Initiative, a program to revitalize Catholic education on Long Island. With this added responsibility, Brother Joe is no longer able to assist us at St. Paul's and we will miss him dearly. May God reward Brother Joseph for all he has done for us, and may God grant him many more years in health and happiness.

In Jesus and Mary,

Monsignor James F. Pereda