

From the Pastor

May 20, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Our Beloved St. Paul,

Once again, I write to you on this day with a very heavy heart. How sad have not been these days separated from Our Lord in the sacraments of the Church and from Our Loved ones. But our holy faith teaches us that God our Lord permits evil, only to draw from it, greater good. Thus, must we believe, hope, and adore.

Our own beloved Deacon Ray, who celebrated the twelfth anniversary of his ordination to the Diaconate in Christ, on Sunday May 17th has been writing to us all with most uplifting messages in these sad days. May God grant him many more years in peace and in happiness.

One thinks with fondness of our parish bulletin on the First Sunday of Lent, March 1, 2020. You may recall that in that bulletin was printed all the activities of our dear parish for lent. They are beyond enumeration. Stations of the Cross, pasta supper, soup and bread supper, evening of recollection...None of them came to be. Now we think of the Golf Outing, First Holy Communion, Confirmation retreat, the Sacrament of Confirmation, Field of Honor, Communion Breakfast, Lenten Evening of Recollection.... All canceled; all gone. But our faith tells us that God permits evil, only to draw from it greater good. Such must be our faith, our hope, our charity.

In the Church's year of grace, we have come to a wondrous and mystical time. The month of May is the month of Our lady, of which I wrote in our last letter. But his time is especially most glorious.

The Vigil of the Ascension begins a special time of grace as we begin the Novena to the Holy Spirit who will be given to us at Pentecost. May 22nd marks the feast of St. Rita, the saint of the impossible and May 26th marks the feast of St. Philip Neri, so close to us at St. Paul's. May 21st is the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helen. These are mother and son who found the true Cross. Constantine was the first Christian Emperor and is given the title Equal to the Apostles. Many Americans who are named after him are called Dean or Tino. I have a good friend, formerly of Hicksville, and who now lives in Florida named Dean. I always call him on the 21st. He is of Greek descent and introduced me over 20 years ago to Uncle Pete's in Hicksville. When I go there now Joanne remembers me as coming to the restaurant years ago, with Dean, and his parents Mary and Peter. Mary has gone home to God several years ago. When I used to go there, I never imagined I would be at St. Paul's. I even to this day I remember Dean showing me to go into the far-right hand lane in turning left from Jerusalem Avenue onto Rt. 107. Yes, memory is a great happiness for all of us in these sad and lonely days.

Our beautiful Church is open each day from 9AM until 5PM. Please come to spend some time in quiet recollection with Our Lord. Visit the chapels and shrines. May 24th is the Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians. It is that statue which is at the front of the Church. Go to Her and ask her assistance in these sad days.

How blessed I am to have the opportunity to offer Holy Mass each day. I never feel alone at Mass because the angels and saints are there.

And finally, may I offer sincere gratitude to all of you dear and generous parishioners of our beloved St. Paul. It is quite amazing that our collections during this time of the Covid 19 are close to what they always are. I am grateful for your generosity. As probably is obvious after my

being here for seven years, I am usually not concerned about finances. My life has been one ever to move among what is eternal and spiritual. I always have relied on the providence of God. As Mother Theresa of Calcutta used to say, God has plenty of money. Our collections will be what God wants them to be.

Dear parishioners, in these troubled times look to Mary. With her for guide, we will never go astray; while invoking her, we will never lose heart; so long as she is in our mind, we will be safe from all deception; while she holds our hand, we shall never stumble; under her protection, we have nothing to fear; if she walks before us, we shall never stumble.

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor James F. Pereda