

FROM THE PASTOR

NOVEMBER 14, 2021

THIRTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

HOUSEKEEPING

PEWS: As is well known these weekly columns from the pastor try to address spiritual topics and try to help us all advance along the path of holiness. Next week will be the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, king of the Universe (Christ the King). And then the Advent Sundays will quickly follow in succession leading us to a Blessed Celebration of Our Lord's Nativity on Christmas. And that is why today I will not write of spiritual matters but rather of things that will help us all to live in a safe and healthy environment at the Church. I will call it *housekeeping*.

During our enhancement of the Church building one of the happier projects was the refurbishing of the Church pews. Our pews are of very exceptional quality oak wood. The grain is beautiful. In these days, oak is grown quickly by tree farmers so that there may be a quick turnover. As a result, the grain is not developed and remains unrefined. Such is not the case with our pews. All the pews were taken by Mr. Robert Keck of the Keck Company in Middletown, New York. Mr. Keck took the pews to his workshop and refinished them. The pews in the Church now are the ones that have always been there. They have been cleaned up and refurbished and cut to the size indicated in the original blueprints. They no longer extend over the lovely slate floors. With the extra oak a carpenter in the parish made the many tables and the wood framing around the shrines of Our Lady and St. Joseph. Nothing was wasted.

In addition, upholstered cushions were filled for the benches themselves and the kneelers. It is my hope that all have found this a little more comfortable. So many kneelers had been broken before the pews were refurbished. So much chewing gum was underneath the benches. Quite simply the kneelers will indeed break if they are continual thrown or kicked down. If we were to simply place the kneelers in the kneeling position they would not break and there would be less banging noise. The cushions on both benches and kneelers will not be soiled or damaged if we do not stand on them or allow children to do so. Sadly, some parents allow their children (who do not know better) so stand on the cushions and even use the cushions as a table onto which they place food. Please have pride in your Church and keep it clean.

RECEPTION OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST: Of late we have had difficulties with some carrying away the Holy Eucharist after they receive. Please remember to consume the Host immediately after receiving so the minister of the Eucharist may see you doing so. Please do not take Holy Communion in your hand and walk back to the pew and consume it. Please do not walk out the door holding the Eucharist. Please do not put It in your pocket or purse. (See covid directions below).

SOCIALIZING IN CHURCH: When Mass has ended, please leave the Church, and visit with friends and relatives outdoors. The weather has been beautiful and to stand in the open air is currently a very good health practice. To remain in the Church talking loudly and not social distancing distracts those who would like to pray in the Church. Many may have perhaps noticed that after each Mass the Church is sanitized. Please allow Carmen and her grandson Brandon to do their work by leaving the Church and talking outside. As St. Dominic teaches us, in Church one either speaks OF God or TO God. Please respect Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS: As we are all aware the Covid-19 virus seems to ebb and flow. Most of us know very little of these matters. But out of an abundance of caution, we ask our parishioners to follow our diocesan protocols which have been explained here and in every parish since the churches opened in June 2020. At the time of Holy Communion, those receiving on the hand may continue to come forward as usual. May we ask those who would like to receive on the tongue (which is laudatory and perfectly fine) to come to the corners of the Sanctuary where the green kneeling cushions are placed after the others have received. Please line up there and individually come forward to kneel or stand to receive on the tongue. As pastor, I am very disposed to grant a dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for those who may be paralyzed by fear to attend. If coming to Mass will cause one stress or anger, please simply stay home. Attending Mass should not cause a meltdown. Such should not be the fruit of the sacraments. Remember shortly before holy Communion the priest prays, *“Deliver us Lord...that we may be free from sin and safe from all distress...”* Please remember that per the Bishop’s instructions the clergy and staff (including the ushers) of the parishes are not enforcers of these guidelines. We are here to serve, not to be police. God bless you all, and remember the teaching of St. Augustine, *“in omnia caritas- in all things charity.”*

In Jesus and Mary,
Monsignor Pereda